



The Love Letter

Volume 36

December 2008

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Worship Schedule

Sun. 8:00 a.m. Worship Service
Sun. 9:15 a.m. Sunday School
Sun. 10:30 a.m. Worship Service

Mission Statement: Created by God's gracious love, we are called, as a community of faith, to be witnesses and servants of Jesus to the world.

A Look Ahead

Happy Holidays! Christmas is near, and everyone is busily preparing for the season and enjoying time with family and friends. Therefore, there is not as much to report in this month's issue of *The Love Letter*. However, there are still plenty of ways that you can prepare your heart and mind for the Christmas season here at Lord of Love.

There are many **worship opportunities during Advent and Christmas** (see page 4, Worship & Witness) as well as fun opportunities for children, including the **Sunday School Christmas program** and a **holiday craft day** (see page 5, Education).

If you're looking for something special to do before the holidays, attend **Advent by Candlelight** (see page 12, Women of Love) or go **Christmas caroling** (see page 7, Organizations & Activities).

The holiday season is a wonderful time to **volunteer in our community**. The Lord of Love Missions Committee has several suggestions for how you can help now and throughout the year (see page 7, Mission & Outreach).

Finally, if you're wondering what happened at the **November Congregational meeting** or what is happening in the **transition process**, read the council meeting minutes and council president Doug Aden's Bits and Pieces article (see pages 8-11, Council Report & Transition/Call Process Update).

NOEL HALLELUJAH MERRY CHRISTMAS HAPPY NEW YEAR
Peace, Hallelujah, Merry Christmas, Happy New Year

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Hunger for Quietness and Focus on the Holy Days by Pastor Bob

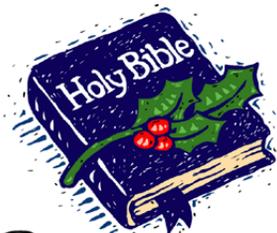
Dear Friends in Christ,

"For God alone my soul waits in silence."
– Psalm 62:1

My wife and I recently watched an older movie entitled *Nell*, in which Jody Foster plays a young woman who was raised in a secluded cabin in Appalachia by her mother whose speech was adversely affected by a stroke. Because Nell has lived her entire life without any other human contact, her speech is nearly unintelligible and she is seen by others as being incapable of coping in modern society.

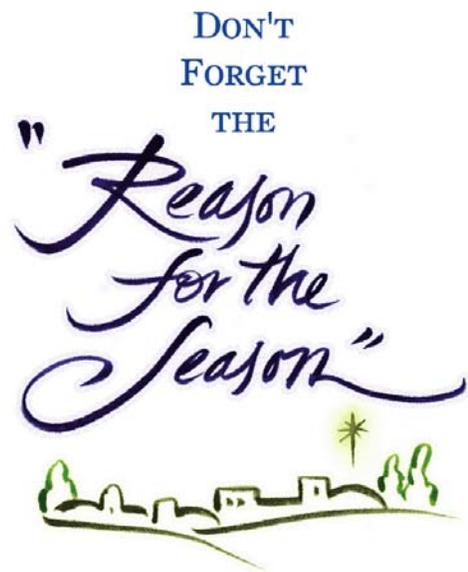
Near the end of the movie, Nell's future is to be decided by a judge. Through a translator, Nell tells those who are gathered in the courtroom (and us), "You have big things. You know big things, but you don't look into each other's eyes and you're hungry for quietness."

This hunger for quietness in our lives is especially real during the month of December. At times, we are nearly overwhelmed as we go about our Christmas preparations. In the midst of the chaos and noise of seemingly endless shopping, baking, decorating and partying, we begin to forget that the word "holidays" really means "holy days." As we are bombarded by merry Muzak in the malls and TV commercials encouraging us to spend more and more, we begin to lose our focus on who is at the heart of the Christmas celebration: Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.



*Preparing for the
Christmas Season*

During this hectic month of December, commit yourself to making time for quietness—for prayer and worship and contemplation about the meaning of Christ's birth. As you do this, you may want to use this "Christmas Pledge" to help you focus your thoughts during these holy days.



"Believing in the beauty and simplicity of Christmas, I commit myself to the following:

- To remember those people who truly need my gifts;
- To express my love for family and friends in more direct ways than presents;
- To rededicate myself to the spiritual growth of my family;
- To examine my holiday activities in light of the true spirit of Christmas;
- To initiate an act of peacemaking within my circle of family and friends."

May your holy days be blessed!

Pastor Bob

MONTHLY CALENDAR

December 2008						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 6:00pm LWT Study @ Old Country Buffet 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	2 9:00am Quilters 6:45pm First Place 7:00pm Vision & Coordination Mtg.	3 4:45pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm LWT Study 6:00pm Luther Kids 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Chancel Choir	4 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 5:30pm Escalante Hills Homeowners 7:00pm Boy Scouts	5 7:30pm AA	6 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 8:00am Worship Planning 8:15am Prayer Ministry 8:30am Crafting Day
7 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 5:00pm Advent by Candlelight	8 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	9 6:45pm First Place	10 4:45pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Luther Kids 6:00pm WELCA Board 6:00pm Brass 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Chancel Choir	11 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	12 8:00am Lord's Laughing Ladies 7:30pm AA	13 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 8:15am Prayer Ministry 9:00am Prepare Goodie Baskets
14 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship/SS Program & Communion 11:30am Chili & Caroling	15 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	16 9:00am Quilters 6:45pm First Place 7:00pm Church Council	17 4:45pm Confirmation 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Luther Kids 6:00pm Brass 7:00pm Advent Worship 7:45pm Chancel Choir	18 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 11:45am LoL Ladies Lunch 7:00pm Boy Scouts	19 7:30pm AA	20 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 8:15am Prayer Ministry
21 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion	22 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	23 6:45pm First Place	24 Church office closed 4:30pm Family Worship & Communion 11:00pm Candlelight Worship	25 Church office closed 9:30am Text Study @ Guthrie's 10:30am Worship & Communion 11:45am Lord of Love Ladies Lunch 7:00pm Boy Scouts	26 Church office closed 5:00pm Baker Wedding 7:30pm AA	27 7:00am Men's Breakfast & Bible Study 8:15am Prayer Ministry
28 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 1:00pm AA District 18 Meeting	29 8:00pm AA & AI Anon	30 6:45pm First Place	31			

Advent and Christmas Worship Opportunities

During Advent, we talk a lot about waiting. We wait for Christmas and the retelling of the story of the baby Jesus, but during this time, we recognize that all Christians are waiting for the second coming of Jesus as well. How do we prepare for that? What changes would we like to make in our lives as we wait?



Our **midweek Advent services** provide a quiet time during the week to pray, sing, and reflect on Advent and Christmas. We will use Holden Evening Prayer again for the service. If you haven't been to one of the Advent services before, please try coming to one for a meaningful and beautiful experience. Services are at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday nights, December 3, 10, and 17. Suppers are served at 5:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall.

We will have **two Christmas Eve services** that are quite different in feel. The 4:30 p.m. service is aimed at families—the music, prayers, sermon, and readings are chosen to be more easily understood by children. Our theme is “Go Tell It!,” and we will use readings and carols to talk about how Isaiah told the story hundreds of years before it happened; angels told Mary, Joseph, and shepherds; the shepherds told everybody they met; and now we need to tell the story about Jesus to everyone, too. Our 11:00 p.m. service will be full of beautiful music, readings, and candlelight. Join us at 10:30 p.m. for a pre-service Christmas concert.

Our **Christmas Day service** will be at 10:30 a.m. The readings and most of the music will be different from Christmas Eve, so feel free to come to this one even if you came the night before!

Lord of Love's Worship Servants

	December 7	December 14	December 21	December 28
Liturgist				
8:00 a.m.	Deb Lund	Paul Murphy	Lori Vandeventer	Liz Smith
10:30 a.m.	Don Rowen	Sunday School Program	Gary Krause	Rex Quadhamer
Communion Servers				
8:00 a.m.	Brian and Connie Walther	Doug and Cathy Aden	Vandeventer family	
10:30 a.m.	Rowen family	Edwards family	Kevin Krause, Brenda and Suzanne Mac	Quadhamer family
Altar Care				
8:00 a.m.	Cathy Aden	Doug and Rose Roberts	Deb Christenson	Ed and Marjorie Keiser
10:30 a.m.	Diana Haye, Marcia Roads	Randi VenHuizen, Debra Gillespie	Brenda and Suzanne Mac	Rowen family
Ushers				
8:00 a.m.	Kenn Garder, Craig, Peg, and Courtney Pennell			
10:30 a.m.	Rett Messerschmidt, Rob Anderson, Paul Barnett			

Fall Sunday School Review

I can't believe that the snow is about to fly.... It seems like it was just a beautiful warm fall Sunday that we kicked off Sunday School and all the children came back to learn about God's love. We started our season with a frog theme that seems to have stuck with us. F.R.O.G. means Fully Rely On God. The children explored the message of trusting in God at all times. We moved on to a study of the Book of John, focusing on the verse of John 3:16. We learned about the miracles of Jesus and the "I am" statements that Jesus made. The stories of Noah and of Sarah and Abraham taught us about listening to God's words.

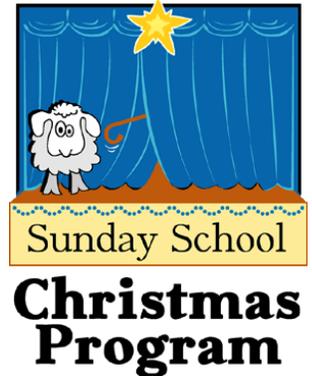
We are very lucky to have loving and supportive teachers who share their time to teach our children the wonderful love of God. I am blessed to witness the innocence of your children and their love of God as they learn and grow. I pray for our church's children that they will continue to hold on to their faith even as they grow and mature, as life gets tougher, that they know in their hearts that God will never stop loving them and will always be there for them. "God is Good! All the Time!"

Blessings to you all,
Heather Christensen,
(Outgoing) Sunday School Coordinator

Sunday School Christmas Program

The **Sunday School Christmas Program**, "My Dear Lord Gave to Me," will take place during the 10:30 a.m. worship service on Sunday, December 14. All are welcome to attend and hear the children's message.

Our **dress rehearsal** for the Christmas program will be on Saturday, December 13 from 9:00 to 10:30 a.m.



Upcoming Sunday School Events



Sunday School will be hosting a **holiday craft day** during the regular Sunday School hour on Sunday, December 21. All children are invited to attend.

There will be no Sunday School on December 28 or January 4 for **Holiday Break**. We will resume on January 11.

Weekly Education Opportunities at Lord of Love

Sunday

9:15 a.m. Sunday School (Preschool – High School) @ LOL Classrooms
Adult Studies @ LOL Abraham, Mary, and Joseph Rooms

Monday

6:00 p.m. *Lutheran Woman Today* Bible Study @ Old Country Buffet (first Monday of month)
7:00 p.m. *No Experience Necessary* Bible Study @ Vandeventers (every other Monday)

Tuesday

6:45 p.m. First Place Bible Study @ LOL Preschool Room

Wednesday

4:45 p.m. Confirmation (7th & 8th grades) @ LOL Abraham Room
6:00 p.m. Luther Kids (1st – 6th grades) @ LOL Preschool
6:00 p.m. *Lutheran Woman Today* Bible Study @ LOL Joseph Room (first Wednesday of month)

Thursday

9:30 a.m. Text Study @ Guthries

Saturday

7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast and Bible Study @ LOL Fellowship Hall

EDUCATION

New Sunday School Coordinator by Heather Christensen

I am pleased to announce that Cathy Petrick will become our new Sunday School Coordinator as I roll over onto the church council's Education Committee in January. Cathy is full of love, patience, and ideas. She will be a wonderful gift to our program! Thank you, Cathy!



Seminary Update by Paula Lawhead

Hello Lord of Love!

By the time you read this, I will have been to Omaha to visit you all. I always anticipate time shared with you at Lord of Love, and as much as I am enjoying seminary and my turn as an intern pastor, I still think of home often and miss the people there. This year will bring with it my first experience of not being able to travel for the holidays (due to church responsibilities), so I look forward even more to any time I can get with you all and my family.

I have been keeping busy at the church and have taken over the Adult Education Bible study on the book of Romans. It is a great group with lively discussion. I am also starting a small group for the 20s and 30s crowd. They are a population of this church that get a little lost in the shuffle, so I hope to have some good intentional time with them for fellowship and discipleship. There are so many other things I am doing as well but don't need to list them all. I am enjoying the things I do here and am blessed to enjoy my work so much.

Winter has come, and it is a beautiful time of year up here, despite the bitter cold, and while it gets darker outside and the days become shorter, I see many people fill their windows and walkways with candles and lit trees. David and I love driving or walking around an area where there is so much light set out for all to see. The warmth of that glow brings an anticipation of Christmas and knowing that despite what it may feel like, it won't be dark and cold forever. This makes an easy transition for me to talk about Advent because it is also a season of anticipation, yet not only anticipation, but remembering as well.

During this season, we anticipate the celebration of the birth of our Lord and Savior, but just as any other birthday celebration, we know that the birth has already happened. I anticipate celebrating the coming of the Light, but know that this Light has already come to us and is here now. I anticipate considering once again the mystery of God become fully human, and as wonderfully amazing as this is, I know that this coming to us was done at great cost.

Here my mind is drawn to *Luther's Small Catechism*, which may be strange, but as I anticipate celebrating the birth of Jesus, I am drawn to remember these words:

"I believe that Jesus Christ—true God, Son of the Father from eternity, and true man, born of the Virgin Mary—is my Lord. At great cost he has saved me and redeemed me, a lost and condemned person. He has freed me from sin, death, and the power of the devil—not with silver or gold, but with his holy and precious blood and his innocent suffering and death. **All this he has done that I may be his own!**"

This is most certainly true. Come, Lord Jesus!

Grace and peace and all blessings to you!
Paula Lawhead

ORGANIZATIONS & ACTIVITIES

Chili Potluck Lunch and Christmas Caroling

Christmas caroling will occur on Sunday, December 14 after the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please note the change in date for this event.

We will have a chili potluck lunch before we head out for caroling. Sign up to bring chili and fixin's!



Christmas Day Orphans Dinner

The annual "Christmas Day Orphans" dinner will be held at the home of Ruth and Dan Manning on Thursday, December 25. Anyone who would be spending the day without family members is invited to join other "orphans" at 2:00 p.m. at 4816 Ruggles Street. Meat, dessert, and beverages will be provided. Please bring a dish to share. We will eat at 3:00 p.m. Please sign up at the Information Center in the narthex so we know how many plates to put on the table! Any questions? Call Ruth at 455-7221.

Craft Day

Join us for Craft Day! This is a wonderful opportunity to work on handmade holiday gifts or other projects while enjoying the company of others. Join us for some fellowship and craft time on Saturday, December 6, from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. in the fellowship hall!



MISSION & OUTREACH

Lord of Love Missions Committee Update

Our mission emphasis for the rest of this program year is hunger. Lord of Love is giving our special offerings for Thanksgiving, Advent, and Christmas to Project Hope, Lutheran Pantry, and the Omaha Food Bank. Remember that our special missions' budget for 2008, 3 percent of our income, is also going to Project Hope, Lutheran Pantry, and the Omaha Food Bank this program year. These offerings and mission funds are above and beyond the 10 percent of our income that goes to the Nebraska Synod and the ELCA to be used for their varied outreach programs that include things like Lutheran World Relief.

Too many people here in Omaha are desperate for food now more than ever. Please continue to give generously. **Needed are non-perishable food and health care staples, money, and your time.** There are lots of short-term opportunities for volunteer service with the Food Bank and Project Hope. **Call the Food Bank (402-331-1213) or Project Hope (402-453-3774) or check the display board in the Narthex** and take a tab for contact information for a task you would like to do.

NEW VOLUNTEER
POSSIBILITIES

Thanks so much to all of you who have brought items for the barrel and wheel barrow and for your special offerings for our hunger projects. Thanks, too, to those who have already volunteered for jobs at the Food Bank and Project Hope. Your gifts are a model of love and commitment, and they are a witness of the Lord of Love in our community.

COUNCIL REPORT & TRANSITION/CALL PROCESS UPDATE

November 2008 Council Report by Don Rowen, Council Vice-President

The November Congregational Meeting was held on Sunday, November 9, and included approval of the 2009 budget and election of new council members. The November meeting of the Lord of Love council was held on Tuesday, November 18. The council held a short business meeting, and then Pastor Bob and council members discussed the organizational structure of the council. The minutes of these meetings are summarized as follows:

November Congregational Meeting

- 2009 budget – Doug Aden discussed the budget for 2009 developed by the church council, noting changes from last year. The proposed budget is \$289,000. The projected income is \$280,000. The budget was approved.
- Election of council members – Members were elected to the church council to fill the following positions:
 - Vice president – Don Rowen (2 years)
 - Treasurer – Lisa Meyer (2 years)
 - Education – Heather Christensen (2 years)
 - Education – Brian Vandeventer (1 year)
 - Daily Life – Angie Meyer (2 years)
 - Resources – Craig Pennell (2 years)
 - Worship and Witness – Debra Gillespie (2 years)
- Renovation committee report – A report from the Renovation Committee was distributed that outlined three options for how we could proceed with renovation of the church.

November Council Meeting

- Motions
 - Approved the forgiveness of rent due by the Lord of Love Preschool for the fall semester. The Preschool has had smaller-than-expected enrollment this fall due in part to the change of personnel.
 - Approved the use of up to \$4,000 of the major improvement fund to repair a drain in a wall in the fellowship hall that is causing water damage to the wall.
- Other business/reports
 - Church Organization Proposal developed by Pastor Bob – As part of the transition process, Pastor Bob reviewed our current organizational structure and committees and developed a proposal for an alternative organizational structure. The proposal was based on recommendations by respected church organization expert Herb Miller. The goal is to improve function, communication, and coordination while reducing time spent in meetings and empowering committees and ministry teams. The council discussed the proposal to gain a better understanding of how the committees and oversight boards would operate. After the discussion, the council decided to continue discussion of the proposal at its next meeting in order to see if we could implement most parts of the proposal within our current structure. The council would like to test the proposed organization and procedures for 6 to 12 months to see how well it works. If the council likes the new organization and procedures, then the council would develop a formal plan to implement the changes to the church organization and would likely propose amendments to the constitution. It was noted that if we decide to make these organizational changes, it would be better to implement them before a new pastor arrives. Therefore, changes to the constitution might be made at the November 2009 or February 2010 congregational meeting.

2008 Lord of Love Church Council

President
Doug Aden
Vice-President
Don Rowen
Secretary
Brian Walther
Treasurer
Brian Lund
Worship and Witness
Kathy Christiansen
Karen Mullen
Education
Brian Vandeventer
Joyce Madsen
Daily Life
Kim Gust
Liz Smith
Resources
Doug Roberts
Brad VenHuizen

Continued on the next page

November 2008 Council Report, continued

- Key changes to church structure and operation
 - Have a Strategic Planning Team composed of the major committee ministry chairs that meets every other month for 1.5 hours. At these meeting, each committee chair will answer any questions about the activities of his/her committee and the ministry teams it is overseeing, plan activities for the next 4 months, and vision about areas of strengths and areas that need attention. We thought that council ministry leaders from Education, Daily Life, Resources, and Worship and Witness could act as this team.
 - After the strategic planning meeting, each ministry committee would meet to oversee the various ministry teams and activities that it supervises and oversees.
 - Have a governing board that meets 4 to 6 times a year (usually the next month after the Strategic Planning Team meets). This board would receive reports from all the committees, vote on requests for expenditures not in the budget or changes to the budget, and develop the budget. We thought the Executive Committee (Vision and Coordination) could act as the governing board.
 - We could decide to change the number and organization of the current Ministry Committees. Each ministry team or subcommittee of the church would be overseen by one of the Ministry Committees.
 - The meetings of the Strategic Planning Team and the governing board would be short and replace the regular meetings of the church council, thereby reducing the length and number of meetings that church leaders attend.



COUNCIL REPORT & TRANSITION/CALL PROCESS UPDATE

Financial Report by Brian Lund, Council Treasurer

These comments are being made in mid-November based on end-of-October information (5/6 of the year). We are rapidly approaching the end of the calendar and fiscal year.

Financial Information as of October 31, 2008

	YTD Budget	YTD Actual	Ahead/ Behind	PCT Budget
INCOME				
Envelopes	233,333.30	209,684.38	(23,648.92)	-10.14%
Plate	2,500.00	1,932.90		
Other	3,333.30	1,979.00		
Total Income	239,166.60	213,596.28	(25,570.32)	-10.69%
EXPENSES				
Ministry of Worship/Witness	23,945.90	23,085.30	(860.60)	
Ministry of Vision and Coord	114,510.90	103,531.18	(10,979.72)	
Ministry in Daily Life	750.00	176.50	(573.50)	
Ministry of Education	8,590.00	5,462.15	(3,127.85)	
Ministry of Resources	49,416.90	49,774.54	357.64	
Missions 10%	23,333.30	21,166.34	(2,166.96)	
Major Improvement Fund 4%	9,333.30	8,387.38	(945.92)	
Cong Mission Project 3%	7,175.00	6,290.54	(884.46)	
Total Expenses	237,055.30	217,873.93	(19,181.37)	-8.09%
Income less Expenses	\$2,111.30	(\$4,277.65)	(6,388.95)	

Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. – Luke 1:68

As you can see from above, giving for the year is 10% behind our budgeted income. With expenses running 8% below budget, we are headed into a year-end deficit if giving remains at the current level.

The economy is one likely culprit in this scenario. Our country's financial future still looks uncertain, yet we have the lowest gas prices in 4 years and Omaha's economy appears stronger than many other parts of our nation. As we "tighten our belts" financially, please remember that our church still needs your commitment of time and money.

Attendance is down just under 3% for the year while it is up about 2% for the past 8 weeks. We have seen some members return to Lord of Love after a time away from us. Your personal invitation and welcoming attitude to others can make a difference.

Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you. – Luke 8:39

The 2009 budget has been passed by the congregation. It is a budget of promise as it includes funding for programs and services that we feel must be supported. It is a budget of financial challenge as it will take the financial and time stewardship of all of our members to successfully complete the year.

Stewardship will be a prominent topic in 2009. As many of us make our financial plans for the coming year and beyond, these resources can provide a framework for personal financial stewardship.

The Every Day Steward – www.everydaysteward.com

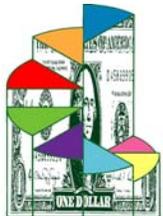
The Good Steward – www.thegoodsteward.com

Generous Giving – www.generousgiving.org

COUNCIL REPORT & TRANSITION/CALL PROCESS UPDATE

Bits and Pieces by Doug Aden, Council President

Since last month, Lord of Love has had its November Congregational Meeting, elected new council members, approved the 2009 budget, and continued in the transitioning process.



At the November Congregational Meeting, we approved the 2009 budget for \$289,500, which is an increase of \$5,200 over the 2008 budget and has a \$9,000 deficit when compared to projected receipts. The budget includes expenditures that needed to be increased, such as utilities, salaries, and maintenance items. In addition, the budget provides monies for the transition process and increased amounts for programs such as Vacation Bible School, the youth, and outreach.

New council members were elected at the meeting and are listed in the Council Report (see page 8). I want to give a big “Thank You” to the council members that have finished their term on the council. They are Kathy Christiansen, Joyce Madsen, Brian Vandeventer, Kim Gust, Doug Roberts, Don Rowen, and Brian Lund. Say “Thank You” to these individuals for their service when you see them.

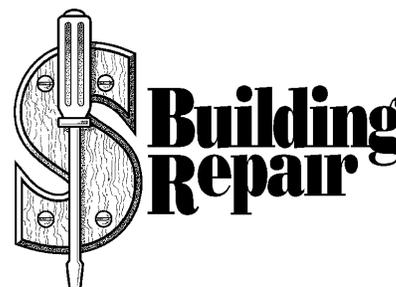
The transition process is beginning to move forward. This past month, the Bridgebuilder team met with Pastor Bob and discussed the issues that were not addressed completely in earlier meetings. We talked about leadership issues, including the pastors and church council; competing visions and programs at Lord of Love and how they affect leadership; how the congregation has dealt with the turmoil of the past and its effect on the church; and the disconnect between pastors and the congregation. Many good observations were made by members of the Bridgebuilder team.

Two things will happen with those observations. Pastor Bob will present those observations to the church council for discussion, and they will be used in the planning process for calling a new pastor.

The work of Bridgebuilder team is now complete and that committee has been disbanded. Again, thank you to all the individuals that participated in the Bridgebuilder process.

At the November council meeting, Pastor Bob presented ideas for a different organization of the council and the various committees of Lord of Love. A recap of that process is outlined in the Council Report (see pages 8 and 9). The council will continue to discuss and work on ways to make the leadership role of the council and its committees more effective. We will report to the congregation as those concepts are developed.

The gutter on the south wall of the Fellowship Hall is being replaced. The gutter had rusted and was leaking, which caused water to drain into the wall and caused damage to the wall. Our goal is to keep the building in good condition, but as the building gets older, repairs need to be made. Some of those repairs we can plan for, and others will catch us by surprise. We hope that the monies in the Major Improvement Fund can cover the cost of the repairs, but at some point in time we will probably be faced with a major cost and will need to discuss ways to fund the repair.



If you have any concerns or suggestions please talk to a council member, Pastor Bob, or me about them. It is easier to discuss an issue when it is small rather than to wait until it grows.

WOMEN OF LOVE

Blessings from Ruth Manning, President, LOL Women of Love

To my Sisters in Christ,

It happens every year! We promise ourselves not to get so caught up in the hustle and bustle of Christmas that we don't take time to focus on the "reason for the season." LOL Women of Love are offering a wonderful opportunity for **women and girls of all ages** to take a couple of hours to reflect on the true meaning of Advent in setting the stage for the upcoming holidays.

On Sunday, December 7, several women will be decorating tables reflecting our theme of "Advent by Candlelight." Beginning at 5:00 p.m., come and view the beautiful table settings, be inspired by a program enlightening us on the tradition of the advent wreath and candles, and enjoy a lovely dessert.

Tickets are \$5 and will be available at the door. Even the little girls will enjoy being a part of this afternoon. If you have any questions, contact Kelly Duffy at 203-5708.

Blessings and prayers as we prepare for the birth of Christ together.

Secret Angels

The revealing of Secret Angels will be earlier than usual this year. Because we will not be having an Epiphany lunch in January, please bring your signed card, Christmas token, or remembrance to the Advent by Candlelight event at 5:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 7.

Secret angel forms for 2009 will be available at the Advent event as well as at the Information Center in the narthex. You will have until mid-January to sign up to take part in the program.

What is a Secret Angel? A Secret Angel prays and sends notes and encouragement throughout the year for the person who is assigned to her. It's a great big secret, and it's fun to try and figure out who is praying for you throughout the year. Any questions? Check with Gwen Edwards, who along with her husband John, administers the program.



Women of Love Ministry Team Meeting

The Women of Love Leader Ministry Team will not meet in December. The next meeting will be held in the Joseph Room at 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, January 14, 2009.

Notes of Thanks

Thanks for your support of the 2008 Fall Festival celebration. We filled the wheelbarrow with food items for Project Hope and had a great time at the dinner, a very nice turnout for the craft fair, and some happy winners of great door prizes and silent auction items. Next month, we will report on the amount we sent Project Hope for their ongoing ministry.



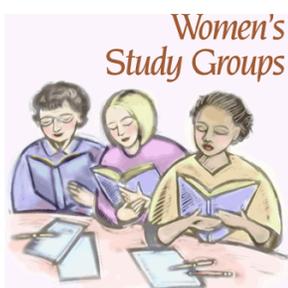
Also thanks for participating in the annual Thankoffering. Every dollar is appreciated by our Churchwide Women of the ELCA as they provide outreach and ministry.



WOMEN OF LOVE

Lutheran Woman Today Bible Study

The *Lutheran Woman Today* Bible study groups will focus on the book of Daniel over the next 3 months. *Daniel: Keeping the Faith* will focus on the first two chapters of Daniel at the December sessions. All women are invited to participate. Choose from two groups: 6:30 p.m. on Monday, December 1 at the Old Country Buffet at 145th & Center Streets, or 6:00 p.m. on Wednesday, December 3 in the Joseph Room at church. The theme verse is Daniel 2:20, *Blessed be the name of God from age to age, for wisdom and power are God's.*



Coffee and Lunch Fellowship

All women are invited for laughter and fellowship at 8:00 a.m. at Crane Coffee, 77th and Cass, on December 12 and 26. We extend a special invitation to teachers and others who have the day after Christmas off!

The annual Lord of Love Ladies soup luncheon will be held at the home of Amy Kragnes, 309 S. 55th Ave. at 11:45 a.m. on Thursday, December 18. In order to help Amy with her planning, please sign up at the Information Center in the narthex. All women are invited.



Project Hope

December monthly needs – Tomato products such as spaghetti sauce

Current urgent needs – canned fruit, canned meat, soup, bathroom tissue, bar soap, canned beans, macaroni & cheese, plastic and paper bags

Thanks to the Lord of Love Missions Committee for all of their work in promoting the mission and ministry of Project Hope. There were too many items for Ruth's yellow Focus, so Gary Ramsay delivered a large load. Please continue remembering this ministry as you shop.

Calendar of Events

December

1	6:30 p.m.	LWT Bible Study, Old Country Buffet, 145th and Center
3	6:00 p.m.	LWT Bible Study, Joseph Room
7	5:00 p.m.	Advent by Candlelight & Secret Angels
12	8:00 a.m.	Lord's Laughing Ladies, Crane Coffee, 78th and Cass
13	9:00 a.m.	Preparation of "Goodie Containers"
18	11:45 a.m.	LOL Ladies Lunch, Amy Kragnes's home
26	8:00 a.m.	Lord's Laughing Ladies, Crane Coffee, 78th and Cass

Coming Up

January 17 Nebraska Synod Women of the ELCA Retreat, Grand Island

December



Chili Potluck Lunch and Christmas Caroling

December is a busy month, so there's only one Youth Group activity planned. Youth members are invited to join the caroling party Sunday, Dec. 14 after second service. There will be a chili potluck lunch right after service, and then we will split into groups to go caroling to Lord of Love members.



What Does the *Jesus Justice Jazz* Logo Mean?

You've probably seen the logo for the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering many times by now. Have you thought about why this logo was created? What does this logo say? What does it mean?

This logo art emerged as we thought about the 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering being in New Orleans, the devastation and recovery from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, what we hope to learn about serving others in the manner of Jesus, and the promises of God's presence in the world.

The chaotic, dark, swirling on the left of the graphic reminds us of the darkness and confusion that we sometimes experience in the world. You can almost feel the powerful wind and destruction of a hurricane.

And in the midst of the chaos, confusion, and mess is the cross, drawing our vision to the light and hope of Jesus. It is Jesus who draws us into a life of compassionate justice wherever we are and whomever we're with. It is Jesus who sets us free into the world jazzed for justice, for kindness, and for humble walking with God.



Jesus Justice Jazz stands bold and connected to what seems confusing and disconnected. Our faith and our baptismal call to be bold, compassionate witnesses in the world are always connected and relevant to whatever is swirling around us.

Source: 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering website (http://archive.elca.org/youth/gathering_logo_description.html)

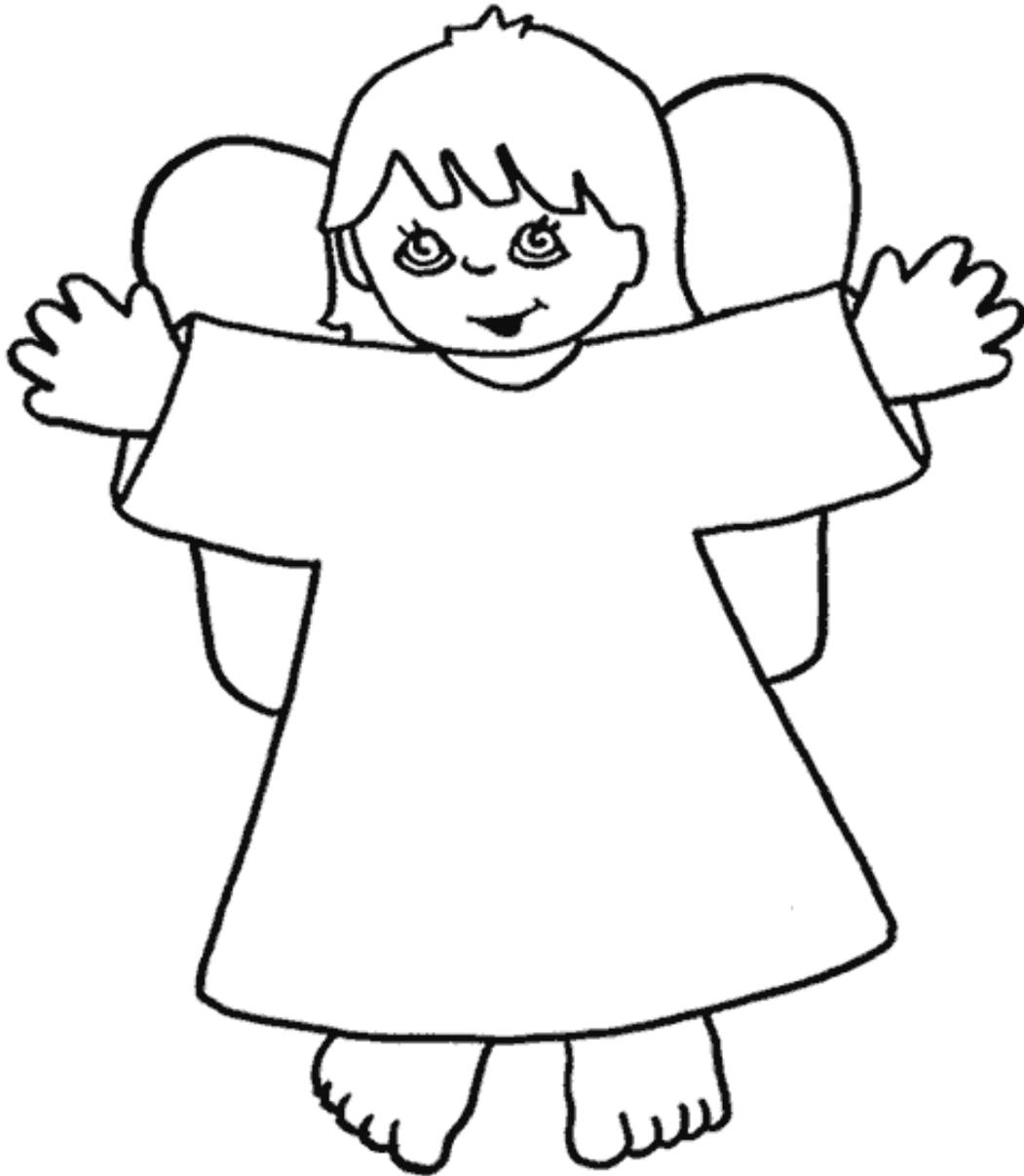
Calendar of Youth Events

December

14 Chili potluck lunch and Christmas caroling

Coming Up

July 22-26, 2009 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans



One of God's surprises at Christmas time long ago - An angel to bring the good news of that Jesus our Savior had been born!

a biblekidsfunzone.com color page

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The Story of Jesus' Birth

Jesus' birth is recorded in three New Testament chapters: Matthew 1 and 2, and Luke 2. Follow some important words about our Savior's birth by starting at a word beginning with the letter **A** and finishing with a word starting with the letter **Z**.



angels	Bethlehem	car	dance	easel	
cat	bear	child	donkey	egg	fast
holy	glory	flocks	Earth	feathers	gap
inn	jacket	grapes	peace	quiet	hat
Joseph	King	Lord	only	righteous	shepherds
kelp	loop	Mary	night	unique	tidings
last	maze	paper	wise men	virgin	water
open	nest	word	excitement	young	zillions saved by this baby called Jesus



IN OUR PRAYERS & LOVE NOTES

In Our Prayers

Chris Baker (brother-in-law of Ron Thom)
Dick and Jessie Bell
Ryan Bolen (nephew of Sandy Hall)
Jan Davis (aunt of Paula Foster)
Pearl Garnaas
Norma Gunter
Matthew Hayek (nephew of Sandy Hall)
Rachael Hueftle (student of Linda Christensen)
Cathy Johnson (friend of Marilyn Thomsen)
Gene Jordan (uncle of Paula Foster)
Bob Kasworm and his ministry in Tanzania
Hannah Knudson (neighbor of the VenHuizens)
Mike Koesters (friend of David Boarts)
Paula Lawhead (at seminary)
Carl Lueders (uncle of Dave Lueders)
Irene Lund (aunt of Brian Lund)
Rebecca Lund (at seminary)
Pastor Elisante Maimu
Chris Miller (nephew of Judy Egr)
Pastor Elibariki Mtui and all the saints of TPC Lutheran
Parish, Tanzania

Harry Naasz
Dianna Poledna (sister of Jan Miller)
Joe Policky (grandfather of Tamra Johnston)
Berniece Reitan
Joey Thompson (friend of the Murphys)
Zeffin Thurow (cousin of Deb Lund)
Brody Vermilyea (grandson of Brian and Nancy
Shinrock)
Harlan Walther (father of Brian Walther)
Kevin Wapelhorst (brother of Brenda Mac)
Agnes Wilson
Bernie Wolff (friend of Marilyn Thomsen)
Rob Zalk (cousin of Mary Lou Gustafson)

Men's servant ministry
Stephen Ministers and their care receivers
Those deployed around the world
Those seeking employment
Those who mourn

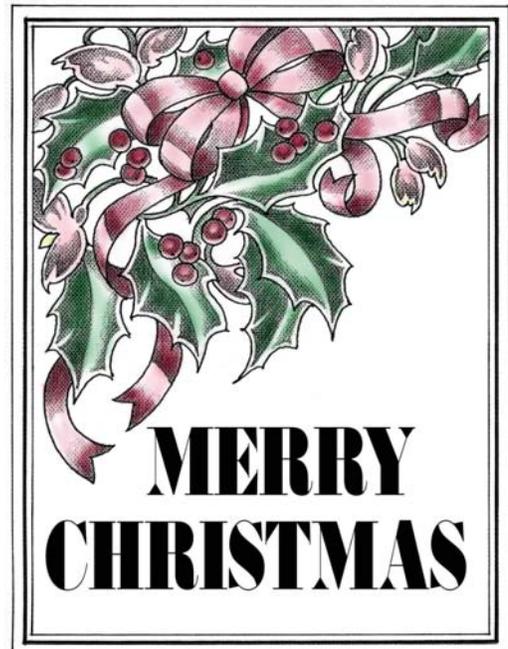
If you would like to add a name to the In Our Prayers section of *The Love Letter*, please contact the office at 402.493.2946, send an email to marylou@lord-of-love.org, or fill out a prayer request note available in the narthex and place it in the basket. **Please help keep this list current by informing us when a name can be removed.** Thanks!

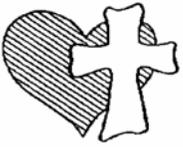
Love Notes

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your many kind expressions of sympathy—cards, caring words, visits, etc.—for Mom during her brief illness last month. Your loving concern helped to ease the sadness as she left us to be with our Lord.

Randi and Brad VenHuizen





The Love Letter
 Lord of Love Lutheran Church
 10405 Fort Street
 Omaha, NE 68134-1298

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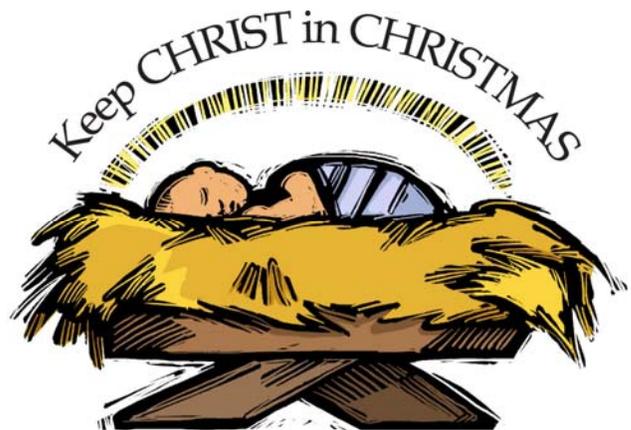
Return Service Requested

Mission Statement: Created by God’s gracious love, we are called, as a community of faith, to be witnesses and servants of Jesus to the world.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

This Month

- December 3 Advent Midweek Worship begins
- December 6 Craft Day
- December 7 Advent by Candlelight
- December 14 Sunday School Christmas Program
Chili and Christmas Caroling
- December 24 Christmas Eve Worship
- December 25 Christmas Day Worship



Articles for The Love Letter can be submitted to the editor, Kim Gust, in the Love Letter mailbox at church or by email at loveletter@lord-of-love.org. Articles must be received by the Love Letter editor by the 20th of the month.