



# The Love Letter

Volume 41

December 2013

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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: Celebrating and sharing God's love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others.

## A Look Ahead

Merry Christmas! December is an exciting month at Lord of Love as we anticipate and celebrate the birth of Jesus! Join us throughout the month for special worship services, education opportunities, fellowship events, and service activities.

On Sunday, December 1, join us for our first **Congregational Advent Gathering**, a fun-filled afternoon for youth and adults alike (see page 5, Nurture)! Then, beginning on December 4, all are invited to our **midweek Advent worship services** with the theme "Rejoice and Sing" (see page 5, Worship). Advent services will be held on December 11 and 18 as well.

On Saturday, December 14, we kick off a busy weekend with **dress rehearsal** for our Sunday School Christmas program (see page 5, Nurture). In addition, there will be preparation of **Goodie containers** for the elderly, shut-ins, and those with special needs, followed by a **Project Linus** "blanketeer" event (see page 15, Women of Love, and page 7, Nurture).

Then on Sunday, December 15, our **Sunday School Christmas program** will be held during the 10:30 a.m. worship service, followed by a **potluck chili lunch and caroling** (see page 5, Nurture).

On **Christmas Eve**, we will have two worship services, one at 4:30 p.m. and the other at 11:00 p.m., with special music beginning at 10:30 p.m. (see page 5, Worship).

Finally, in December, our mission focus will be on the **Siena/Francis House**. Our Advent and special Christmas offerings will go to the Siena/Francis House (see page 9, Outreach). In addition, the youth are holding a **sock, mitten/glove, and hat drive**, and we are also collecting **personal care items** for the Siena/Francis House (see page 9, Outreach).

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### Do Not Be Afraid! by Pastor Brad

*Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master. Matthew 25:21*

Time to put up the Christmas tree? Each year the adorning of our home with holiday decorations takes place the day after Thanksgiving. Numerous decorations are placed throughout the house, but the main focus, and the object that takes the most time and dedication, is the Christmas tree.



The tree is put up, the branches of the artificial tree are “fluffed,” and the lights are plugged in. That is the easy part! Now it's time for the placement of the ornaments. If it were just I, this task might take about fifteen minutes of unwrapping the ornaments and another fifteen minutes of flinging them on the tree. But that's not what happens! OH NO! Each ornament is taken out of the box or tissue and placed on the tree in a specific place. But once placed doesn't mean that it might not be moved later if a better place is found for it to be admired. After a couple of hours, the task has been completed, and I have to admit, it looks MUCH BETTER than if I would have flung the ornaments on the tree.

Having the patience of placing each ornament in the right location isn't one of my gifts or talents. But thankfully, it is one of Heidi's talents!

“Talent” has a double meaning. In Jesus' time, a talent was a measure of a very valuable amount of money. Today it is an ability that God has given us that is valuable to the world.

We, of course, do not have the same talents, but the issue is not how much talent we have. Notice that the two-talent man received the same praise and reward as did the man with five. What counts is that we use what God has given us.

In a season when we celebrate the greatest gift given to us by God through His Son, we also celebrate being able to use our talents to spread this wonderful message of the birth of the Savior. We are grateful for what God has given us and for the courage to use our talents however we can for God's people.

Let's celebrate Jesus' birth through using our talents by extending help to those in need, assisting someone in completing a task that has become difficult for them, giving of our time to listen to the concerns of another, or yes, even decorating the tree.

Wishing you a blessed Christmas!

Peace,  
Pastor Brad

**TIME** &  
*Talent*



# MONTHLY CALENDAR

December 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 2:30pm Congregational Advent Gathering 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal	<b>2</b> 6:00pm "Gather " Bible Study at Village Inn 3304 S 143 Plz 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	<b>3</b> 7:00pm Vision & Coordination Mtg.	<b>4</b> 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm "Gather" Bible Study 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm Luther Kids 7:45pm Sr. Choir	<b>5</b> 9:30am Text Study at Guthrie's 5:30pm Escalante Hills Neighborhood Mtg. 7:00pm Boy Scouts	<b>6</b> 6:00pm Rehearsal for recital 7:30pm AA Meeting	<b>7</b> 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 1:00pm Cosby Oboe & Violin Recital
<b>8</b> 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal	<b>9</b> 6:30pm Cub Scout Leaders 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	<b>10</b> 12:00pm Lutheran Women of Omaha Lunch	<b>11</b> 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm Ministry Team Mtg. 6:00pm Luther Kids 7:45pm Sr. Choir	<b>12</b> 9:30am Text Study at Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	<b>13</b> 7:30pm AA Meeting	<b>14</b> 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 9:00am Goodie Tin Prep and Blanketeer Project 9:00am Dress Rehearsal for Christmas Program
<b>15</b> 8:00am Worship & Communion 10:30am Worship/Christmas Program & Communion 11:30am Chili lunch & Caroling 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal	<b>16</b> 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 5:30pm Supper 6:00pm Brass 6:00pm Luther Kids 7:45pm Sr. Choir	<b>19</b> 9:30am Text Study at Guthrie's 7:00pm Boy Scouts	<b>20</b> 7:30pm AA Meeting	<b>21</b> 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry 4:00pm Recital
<b>22</b> 8:00am Worship & Communion 9:15am Sunday School 10:30am Worship & Communion 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal	<b>23</b> 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	<b>24</b> Church Office Closed 4:30pm Family Christmas Worship 10:03pm Christmas Eve Prelude Music 11:00pm Candlelight Worship	<b>25</b> Church Office Closed Merry Christmas!	<b>26</b> Church Office Closed Pr. Brad out of office 9:30am Text Study at Guthrie's	<b>27</b> Pr. Brad out of office 7:30pm AA Meeting	<b>28</b> Pr. Brad out of office 7:00am Men's Breakfast Ministry
<b>29</b> Pr. Brad out of office 8:00am Worship & Communion 10:30am Worship & Communion 1:00pm District 18 AA Mtg.	<b>30</b> Pr. Brad out of office 8:00pm AA & Al Anon	<b>31</b> Pr. Brad out of office				

# WORSHIP



## Lord of Love's Worship Servants

	December 1	December 8	December 15	December 22	December 29
Greeters					
8:00 a.m.	Ed and Marjorie Keiser	Woody and Mardi Fiske	Jessie and Kylie Kulp	Josh and Carissa Combes	Tom and Beth Olson
10:30 a.m.	Roger and Angie Meyer	Dave and Lisa Rieff	Brian and Nancy Shinrock	Paula Foster, Kathy Christiansen	Harry Naasz, Gary Ramsay
Liturgist					
8:00 a.m.	Kenn Garder	Deb Lund	Doug Aden	Paul Christenson	Shawn Lorenzen
10:30 a.m.	Lori Vandeventer	Tom Olson	Sunday School Program	Heather Christensen	
Communion Servers					
8:00 a.m.	Garder family	Brewer family	Doug and Rose Roberts, Cathy Aden	Morgan family	
10:30 a.m.	Vandeventer family	Olson family		Christensen and Yarger families	
Altar Care					
8:00 a.m.	Pauline Shaffer	Ed and Marjorie Keiser	Cathy Aden, Sue Dieter	Connie Walther, Lisa Meyer	Janet Guthrie, Nancy Shinrock
10:30 a.m.	Debra Gillespie	Rowen family	Brewer family	Karen Anderson, Mardi Fiske	Paul and Ann Kroll
Ushers					
8:00 a.m.	Kenn Garder, Matt Garder, Paul and Deb Christenson, Craig Pennell				
10:30 a.m.	Rett Messerschmidt, Rob Anderson, Paul Barnett				
Nursery Attendant					
10:30 a.m.	Anne Yarger		Lisa Rieff	Ashley Meier	Tracy Cadwallader
CD Recorder					
8:00 or 10:30	Pat Brewer	Paul Christenson	Dave Lueders	Paul Murphy	Jesse Brewer





## WORSHIP

### Wednesday Advent Worship Services

#### Rejoice and Sing

Mary sings with great joy because of all the wonderful things God has done. The Psalms proclaim the coming of One who will bring justice and peace, and God promises "You shall have a song" in Isaiah 30:29, even when things look the most bleak and hopeless.

As we anticipated the arrival of Jesus' birth, we gather on Wednesday evenings December 4, 11, and 18 at 7:00 p.m. for worship with Holden Evening Prayer and to sing a song with great joy as we await the arrival of the Son of God.

### Christmas Eve Worship Services

On Tuesday, December 24, we celebrate the birth of Christ at 4:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m. (with gathering music beginning at 10:30 p.m.).

For both Christmas Eve services, volunteers are needed for Greeters, Ushers, and Communion Servers. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board in the Narthex, or please call Pat Brewer at 402-496-4771. Thank you!



## NURTURE

### Congregational Advent Gathering

Join us on Sunday, December 1 from 2:30 to 4:30 p.m. for our first Congregational Advent Gathering! This will be an afternoon of goodies, gifts, music, crafts, stories, and more, geared towards both adults and children, as we enter into the season of Advent and prepare for the birth of our Savior. Stop by for a bit or stay all afternoon!



### Potluck Chili and Caroling

Please join the Chancel Choir for a "potluck" chili lunch after the 10:30 a.m. Sunday School Christmas program, followed by caroling for all ages on Sunday, December 15. Bring some chili or something that goes with chili for the lunch. The carolers will organize and leave by 12:30 p.m. to sing to folks who need some musical Christmas cheer. We should return to Lord of Love by 3:00 p.m. If you have questions, please contact Deb Lund.



### Sunday School Christmas Program



#### Christmas Program

Our Sunday School Christmas program—Operation Baby King—will be on Sunday, December 15 at the 10:30 a.m. worship service! Everyone is invited to attend!

The Sunday School students will be practicing each morning during Sunday School, so it is important to attend Sunday School each week. Dress rehearsal will be held on Saturday, December 14 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m.

If you have questions, please contact Heather Christensen at 402-206-9205 or [heather@lord-of-love.org](mailto:heather@lord-of-love.org).

## Sunday Donuts and Coffee

Thank you to everyone who has volunteered to pick up donuts or clean up coffee pots and cups through 2013. There have been donuts every Sunday, and clean-up has been a breeze! There is an open slot for clean-up on 12/15 and an open slot for pick-up on 12/22. There are also open slots for 2014. Please sign up or be willing to serve again! See Paula Foster or our new nurture committee member, Lisa Willard, to sign up!

## Junior Choir

Junior Choir practice times for December will be announced in the Sunday bulletins. In addition, watch for the date of our upcoming Pizza supper!



## Birthday Cards for Donnie by Karen Pickens

This year, we lost our oldest Lord of Love member, Anna Jensen, who was with us in spirit but resided at Crowe Nursing Home in Blair, Nebraska. Anna was a long-time member of Lord of Love, who moved here when Our Saviors Lutheran Church closed and built a mission church that they called Lord of Love. Anna and her husband, Andrew, were the grandparents of Donald Olson, who was the son of Josephine Olson, and with her children was very active in our church. Over the years, Donald has struggled with many afflictions but maintained a positive attitude. He has lived in Lincoln, Nebraska, for many years and is currently living there, where he receives some needed care from a person who comes in on a regular basis.



At Anna's visitation, I was thankful to visit with Donnie and learned that he thinks of Lord of Love as his home church and sends a Christmas card every year. I asked him if he ever got one back, and he didn't think he had. This year on December 3, **Donnie will be celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday, and I was hoping that we could make his birthday brighter by showering him with some cards.** Lord of Love is a very caring church, and I am sure he will hear from many of you. Thank you so much for being God's heart and hands.

Cards can be sent to Donald D. Olson, 1020 Garber Avenue, Apartment #1, Lincoln, NE 68521.

## Weekly Education Opportunities at Lord of Love

<b>Sunday</b> 9:15 a.m. Sunday School (Preschool – High School) @ LOL Classrooms Adult Forum and Other Studies @ LOL Sanctuary, Abraham, Mary, and Joseph Rooms	<b>Wednesday, cont.</b> 6:00 p.m. Luther Kids (1 <sup>st</sup> – 6 <sup>th</sup> grades) @ LOL Preschool 6:00 p.m. Senior High Wednesday Night Study @ LOL Paul Room 6:00 p.m. <i>Gather</i> Bible Study @ LOL Mary Room (first Wednesday of month)
<b>Monday</b> 6:00 p.m. <i>Gather</i> Bible Study @ Old Country Buffet (first Monday of month)	<b>Thursday</b> 9:30 a.m. Text Study @ Guthrie's
<b>Wednesday</b> 5:00 p.m. Confirmation (7 <sup>th</sup> & 8 <sup>th</sup> grades) @ LOL Abraham Room	<b>Saturday</b> 7:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast and Bible Study @ LOL Fellowship Hall

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual “Blanketeer” Event for Project Linus

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On December 14, starting right after the making of the Goodie baskets by the WELCA ladies, a blanket-making event for Project Linus will be held in the Fellowship Hall. Please bring enough fleece fabric to make one blanket. Each blanket can be made from two pieces of fleece, 1 ½ or 2 yards each. One piece should be patterned, and the second should be solid to coordinate with the pattern.

Since 1995, the Project Linus organization has brought comfort and security to children who are seriously ill, traumatized, or otherwise in need by donating quilts and blankets crafted with care by hand. Project Linus is named after the Peanuts character that always carried his security blanket. A recent update from Project Linus states that blankets for boys 9 years and older are especially needed, but many area hospitals and organizations are in need of blankets.

Last year, over 20 blankets were made. If you would like to participate, please bring enough fleece to make one blanket. Also, if you have scissors, please bring those, too. You can come long enough to make one blanket or stay for the entire time. If you would like to do this as a family, that is great, too.

Watch for a bulletin announcement and a sign-up sheet as the time draws closer. Please contact Jackie Combes at 402-301-5664 if you have questions.



### Open the Door!

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*Open the Door: A Journey to the True Self*, written by Joyce Rupp, will be offered Sunday mornings, 9:15 to 10:15 a.m. as an additional choice of study, reflections, and sharing, beginning in January 2014.

The book is designed as a 6-week daily prayer guide; however, we will be discussing and reflecting over it for 12 weeks. Each day has a scriptural reference, original prayer, and a thought provoking question. Journaling is encouraged! The book encourages the reader to open their hearts and “listen” to what God wants us to hear. This book discussion will be led by Gwen Edwards. The book can be purchased from Amazon.com.

Join us beginning January 12, 2014, as we explore how the image of the door can guide us in a process of discovering our true self. If you have any questions, please see Gwen Edwards or Judy Messerschmidt.

### Fall Festival

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The money is counted, the bills are paid, and the decorations are put away. After a hiatus of one year, the 2013 Fall Festival has been deemed a terrific success! Total income from the dinner ticket sales and the silent auction was \$2,864.75. Expenses totaled \$733.98, leaving a profit of \$2,102.77. Table Grace Café received \$1051.77, with \$525.50 going to the Women on a Mission Fund, and \$525.50 going to LOL Women’s Ministry operating fund. Thanks again for your part in this ministry!



## NURTURE

### Christ the King Sunday – November 24

On Christ the King Sunday, the children received crowns during Pastor Brad's children's sermon.



## LOL YOUTH

### Middle School Gathering – Save the Date!

Every year, the Nebraska Synod holds a Middle School Gathering (MSG). The 2014 MSG will be held January 18-19 at Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn. The MSG is a highly interactive experience for youth in 6<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup> grades and their adult leaders, and confirmation students are strongly encouraged to attend. Each year, the MSG lasts only about 24 hours, but the memories last a lifetime!

#### The Details

Dates: January 18-19, 2014

Place: Bethany Lutheran Church in Elkhorn (4200 N. 204<sup>th</sup> Street)

Time: 10:00 a.m. Saturday through 2:00 p.m. Sunday

Participants: Youth in grades 6-8 and their adult leaders

Theme: Do. Love. Walk.

Theme Verse: Micah 6:8

"He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"



#### Registration Fees

Early Bird Registration (submitted on or before November 15): \$45

Regular Registration (submitted between November 16 and December 15): \$55

Late Registration (Submitted between December 16 and January 6): \$65

We will be taking part in service learning projects throughout the Omaha area on Saturday afternoon and worshipping with area congregations on Sunday morning. "Work clothes" and closed-toe shoes are recommended for several service learning projects, so please plan accordingly. Project assignments will be handed out at the Middle School Gathering.

Look for more information and registration forms to come. Contact Heather Christensen with questions.



## Mission Possible Update



### SPECIAL OFFERING

Our Thanksgiving, Advent, and special Christmas offerings will go to the Siena/Francis House, a homeless shelter on 17<sup>th</sup> and Nicholas Streets. Thanks in advance for your generosity in helping to serve those without homes in our community

as the need is greater than ever this time of year. In addition, \$500 from this year's congregational mission project funds will also go to the Siena/Francis House, and another \$500 will go to the ELCA Lutheran Disaster Response. The remaining congregational mission project funds, roughly \$3500, will go to Lutheran Family Services toward the costs of programs that deal with human trafficking, domestic violence, and abuse.

## Blood Drive

The next Red Cross blood drive will be February 9, 2014. You can give blood every 56 days. So this notice is to give you time to plan ahead so you can participate in the Lord of Love blood drive.



## Siena/Francis House

The Siena/Francis House was founded in 1975. The organization's website states:

Siena/Francis House is Nebraska's largest shelter and is located in three facilities at 17th & Nicholas Streets in downtown Omaha, Nebraska. The Siena/Francis House provides emergency overnight shelter to men, women, and women with children. The Siena/Francis House also provides food to the homeless through our Meal Provider Program, clothing, and case management outreach services through our day services program.

Additionally, the Siena/Francis House operates a residential addiction recovery program, aptly named our "Miracles" Treatment Center.

The Siena/Francis House also provides facility space for personnel from the Visiting Nurse Association (VNA), Charles Drew Health Center, Creighton University Medical Center & Medical School, Community Alliance, and Legal Aid of Nebraska, all of whom provide medical and mental health care services and legal assistance to our homeless guests.



A representative from Siena/Francis House spoke to the Adult Forum recently on the mission and the needs of the organization. It was clear that other donations, along with your monetary offerings, were needed as well. During December, there will be a box in the narthex to collect donations of personal items for Siena/Francis House. **Please bring deodorant, bars of soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, toilet paper, shampoo, and combs.** A good place to shop is the Dollar Tree, which is the only dollar-type store in Omaha where items are never over \$1, so you'll get a big "bang for your buck." Dollar Trees are located at 3066 N. 90<sup>th</sup> Street, 12305 W. Center Road, and 2930 K Street. This would be a great family project, encouraging your children to make some purchases from their allowance. Thank you for your help for this important ministry in Omaha.

In addition, the Senior High Class will be organizing a **sock, mitten/glove, and hat drive** for Siena/Francis House. A box will be placed by the Christmas tree in the Narthex to collect your items.

### Philippines: ELCA's Lutheran Disaster Response Commits \$1 million to Lutheran World Relief to Respond to Super Typhoon Haiyan

Lutheran Disaster Response – International is committing \$1 million to Lutheran World Relief to collaboratively address the needs of the people impacted by Super Typhoon Haiyan.



Damage caused by Super Typhoon Haiyan.  
Photo credit: Jessica Dator Bercilla/ACT

Early November 8, 2013, one of the world's most powerful storms on record, Super Typhoon Haiyan, swept through the Philippines' Eastern Visayas Region. Some areas experienced 235 mile-per-hour wind gusts, 16 inches of rainfall, and waves as tall as 45 feet. Several of the areas impacted by Haiyan include communities with high levels of poverty and regions still recovering from the October 15 7.2-magnitude earthquake, both of which are areas more vulnerable to the impacts of the disaster.

Approximately 9.5 million people have been impacted by the storm, and local officials estimate that up to 10,000 people have died in the city of Tacloban alone.

Lutheran Disaster Response – International is working with ACT Alliance partners—Lutheran World Relief (LWR), Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Philippines ACT Forum Coordinator, the National Council of Churches in the Philippines (NCCP)—to coordinate response plans.

Lutheran World Relief's assessment team has traveled to Northern Cebu and Western Leyte identifying immediate needs. The LWR Philippines office in Mindanao is in communication with other ministry partners, non-governmental organizations, the United Nations, and local government officials.

LWR's prioritized response plans include

- Distribution of water
- Distribution of non-food items in evacuation centers, specifically cooking utensils
- Revitalization of economic life through cash-for-work programs and restoration of affected fishing villages
- Debris removal and road reconstruction

Lutheran World Relief's skills, competencies, and capacity with local organizations in the Philippines make them a trusted partner for Lutheran Disaster Response – International to coordinate with for long-term recovery and rebuilding after Super Typhoon Haiyan.

Lutheran Disaster Response – International will also respond within the capacity of our companion church, the Lutheran Church in the Philippines, and in coordination with LWF.

We are committed to working through these partners. Their on-the-ground presence will best steward our resources so that our brothers and sisters in the Philippines can be assisted both now and through long-term recovery.

## RESOURCES

### Christmas Offering Envelope

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It has come to our attention that the “Christmas” envelope included in your monthly mailing says “Building Fund” on it. This was sent by our envelope provider by mistake. All offerings in that “Christmas” envelope will be directed to Siena/Francis House. You do not need to change anything on the envelope; the counters know where to direct these offerings.



If you are not using an envelope, please clearly write “Christmas” in the memo area of your check.

Also, it is helpful for the counters if you use your envelopes and mark the amount on the outside of the envelope. Having the envelopes streamlines the counting process. Thank you for your continuing generosity for the ministries of Lord of Love.

### Hands to Serve by Heather Hansen

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“The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give, to make of all the earth a better place to live.”  
ELW Hymn #538

What a perfect time of year to hear and sing this verse as we get ready to celebrate the birth of our Savior. This is a time for giving and spreading good cheer. But we can get so caught up in the non-stop shopping, planning, and holiday parties that we forget what this time is about. God gave us hands to serve and give, whether it is helping a neighbor with yard work, volunteering at a shelter, or helping serve our church family. Serving others brings happiness to all involved, and the more we serve and give to others, we are that much closer to making the world a better place to live. So before we get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the season, take a moment to sit back and reflect on what you can do to serve your neighbor, co-worker, local homeless shelter, our church, or whoever else could use your hands of service now and into the new year.



### Found Faithful

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“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found trustworthy.” 1 Corinthians 4:1-2

King Henry III lived in Germany long ago. The king grew tired of his royal duties, so he applied to a monastery to become a monk. The religious superior said to Henry, “Your Majesty, do you understand that to join this monastery you must become obedient to me as you religious superior? That will be hard because you have been king.”

Henry replied, “I understand. The rest of my life I will be obedient to you, as Christ leads you.”

“Then I will tell you what to do,” said the religious superior. “Go back to your throne and serve faithfully in the place where God has placed you.”

That is exactly what King Henry did. When King Henry died, this statement was written about him: “The king learned to rule by being obedient.”

We too can tire of our responsibilities. Like King Henry we need to be reminded that God has called us and equipped us to be faithful in our unique roles—be it as a plumber, accountant, mother, pastor, or teacher. God expects us to be faithful in our relationships with each other as well as with our resources.

The story about King Henry and what he learned about being faithful to his call has implications for each of us. Jesus taught us that faithfulness starts with the simple and everyday things of life. It should be our goal to sign off each night to God with the words “Faithfully Yours.”

By Beryl Jantzi—the stewardship director for Everence; a stewardship agency

## CHURCH COUNCIL

### From the Council President – December 2013 by Brian Lund, Council President

Luke 3:4-6 (NRSV) *as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"*

This is my last Love Letter article as president of our congregation council. It has been a busy four years for all of us. We have had such good council members during this time. My hope is that we have provided good leadership for the congregation and helped establish a strong framework for our ministry together.

During the pastoral call process, our congregation was able to identify our strengths: strong worship and music, being a welcoming family of faith that supports members and others, and having a desire for mission. We called Pastor Brad based on this vision for our congregation. Pastor Brad continues to work with us to identify who we are and to strengthen each of our ministries at Lord of Love. We are truly blessed people of God.

Our congregation remains a work in progress. We need to continue to pursue ministries to meet the needs of our members, our community, and the larger church. This takes commitment by all of our members to participate fully in the life of our congregation through worship, faith formation, prayer, and responding to God's love by sharing of your time, talents, and treasures so that we may continue to serve others.

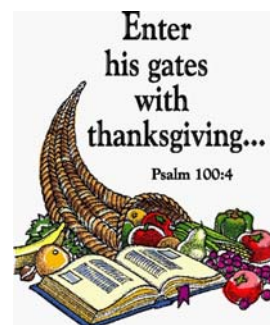
During Advent and Christmas, continue to reflect on God's wondrous gift and share the joy of the season with those you encounter on life's journey. Rejoice and be thankful for His blessings.

Psalm 100:4 (NRSV) *Enter his gates with thanksgiving, and his courts with praise. Give thanks to him, bless his name.*

Thank you for your wonderful support of our ministry together. Blessings to all of our members in this joyous Advent season. Thank you for sharing God's gifts with Lord of Love.

Please continue to pray for the ELCA, Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, our Nebraska Synod, Bishop Brian Maas, Pastor Brad, our staff, Brian Walther, our church council, our members, our ministry together, and all of those who are in need.

Blessings in faith and service,  
Brian Lund



#### 2013 Lord of Love Church Council

Executive Committee: Brian Lund, President; Kenn Garder, Vice-President; Judy Messerschmidt, Secretary; Barb Haskins, Treasurer

Nurture: Paula Foster, Lori Vandeventer

Outreach: Mike Klos, Karen Anderson

Resources: Rex Quadhamer, Paul Concannon

Worship: Randi VenHuizen, Pat Brewer





## CHURCH COUNCIL

### Our Giving Status by Lisa Meyer

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General Fund financial information for October 2013 is as follows:

- Income: \$28,949.00
- Expenses: \$24,116.38

While this looks very good, we must also look at the total for the year.

General Fund financial information for the year to date (through October 31, 2013) is as follows:

- Income: \$248,126.25
- Expenses: \$261,236.11



We are very grateful for your continued support of our mission here at Lord of Love.

## MEN'S NEWS CORNER

### Be Thankful. Be Blessed.

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In a holiday season where we have so much to be thankful for, we have been given the greatest gift of all, Jesus Christ. He was born to bear our sins. Through Him are we washed clean from sin. Through Him we have been saved for eternity by accepting Christ's gift of Grace....

Currently, in the Saturday morning Men's Ministry breakfast meeting, we continue to study Grace through a book by Max Lucado. By scripture and various peoples' insight, we continue to be astounded by the depth and vastness of Grace. We are reminded that Grace is freely given, and all we have to do is accept it. By this acceptance, God arms us to do battle for Him in a world of temptation and sin. Come and be informed, become armed, and be a part of this fellowship Christian of men.



A continuing invitation is extended to all men to participate in this part of Lord of Love's men's ministry. We meet every Saturday morning at 7:00 for breakfast, discussion, and fellowship. All men are welcome—whether you come weekly, occasionally, or even once. We support each other through a gathering of Christian men.

### Men's Ministry Events

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#### What's Happened: Past events since the last issue of *The Love Letter*

Six men from Lord of Love responded to the Omaha area invitation on Tuesday, November 19, to meet with Doug Haugen, Executive Director of Lutheran Men in Mission. Billed as a fellowship event that included food and fun, Doug gave us an update on exciting events and programs happening with LMM. Tagged as *Good News and Manly Brews*, this was a great opportunity to learn and discuss what LMM is currently doing and how we can grow our men's ministry programs.

*Continued on the next page*

### Men's Ministry Events, continued

#### What's Happening: Future events

Baptismal Box Building – The majority of the materials for this event have been purchased. We are moving ahead with plans to fabricate pieces and assemble these baptismal boxes during a men's event on dates that, at the time of this writing, have yet to be determined. We have several opportunities for all men to participate, no matter what woodworking skill level you may have. Please say yes when you are asked, or just sign up when the sheets are made available for registration for this men's fellowship event.



Plan to attend/participate in the 2014 Nebraska Lutheran Men in Mission annual meeting to be held in Lincoln, NE on February 22. More details available later...

This is an invitation to attend the annual Friday night fundraiser held on Good Friday, March 29, 2014, in support of the overnight prayer vigil.

#### MARK YOUR CALENDARS / SAVE THE DATE

**Guys, Guts & God's Glory**  
LUTHERAN MEN'S GATHERING  
Nashville - July 18-20, 2014 - Loews Vanderbilt Hotel

*Keep alert, stand firm in your faith, be courageous, be strong.*  
1 Corinthians 16:13- (NRSV)

[www.lutheranmeninmission.org](http://www.lutheranmeninmission.org) - (800) 638-3522 ext. 2566

We are moving ahead with planning our trip to Nashville for participation in Lutheran Men in Mission's triennial event, Guys, Guts, and God's Glory. Please save the dates of July 18-20, 2014, and plan to attend this national men's Christian event. Those who have experienced previous national gatherings will be happy to share their stories of their involvement and the impact it has made in their lives.

**LUTHERAN  
MEN IN MISSION®**

#### Calling All MEN

All we need is YOU.... We are missing you and your great ideas of what the men of Lord of Love can do to involve you. There is a standing invitation for you be involved in any current activity or to initiate an activity for men. Feel free to approach Pastor Brad, any council member, or anyone attending our men's breakfast ministry with your idea or activity.



At a recent men's event, it was pointed out statistically that, on average, the men are outnumbered by women in church attendance 2:1. And also if the current trend of men's inactivity in church isn't turned around, the church is one generation of losing men altogether. Let us do our part to be involved and re-engage our spiritual journey.

## WOMEN OF LOVE

### Lutheran Women of Omaha

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#### Volunteers Needed

Lord of Love will be hosting Lutheran Women of Omaha at noon on Tuesday, December 10. If you can help with serving and cleanup, please contact Ruth Manning at 402-451-0221 or [cranecoffeechick@gmail.com](mailto:cranecoffeechick@gmail.com). Thanks in advance!



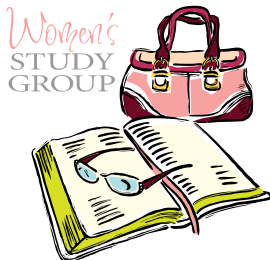
#### All Women Are Invited

All women are invited to attend Lutheran Women of Omaha at noon on Tuesday, December 10, at Lord of Love. The program is "Yesterday's Kids," and the project offering will go to "ELCA Good Gifts." Please call Ruth Manning at 402-451-0221 with your reservation by Friday, December 6.

### Gather Bible Study

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In December, we'll look at the life of Miriam, a loving protector. "When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him." Exodus 2:3-4



All women are invited to attend one of two study groups. The Monday evening group will meet on December 2 at 6:00 p.m. at Village Inn at 3304 S 143<sup>rd</sup> Plaza at Oakview Mall (note: new location). The Wednesday evening group will meet on December 4 at 6:00 p.m. in the Mary Room. If you have any questions, contact Gwen Edwards for the Monday group and Ruth Manning for the Wednesday group.

### "Goodie Containers" and Project Linus Blankets

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It's time to prepare Christmas "goodie" containers for the elderly, shut-ins, and those with special needs. Please join us at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, December 14. Please bring 2 dozen cookies for the containers. We'll start with coffee and some goodies and then set up the assembly line, which goes quickly. Any questions? Contact Ruth Manning at 402-451-0221.

Immediately following this, you are invited to stay and help make blankets for Project Linus. Please bring enough fleece fabric to make one blanket, or just come to help. Each blanket can be made from two pieces of fleece, 1-1/2 to 2 yards each. One piece should be patterned and the second should be solid to coordinate with the pattern. Let's try to match or beat last year's number of 20 blankets! For more information, please call Jackie Combes at 402-301-5664.

### Ladies Coffee Fellowship

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Ladies, you're invited to join the coffee fellowship at Crane Coffee, 77<sup>th</sup> and Cass Streets, on Fridays, December 6 and 20 at 8:00 a.m.

COFFEE  
FELLOWSHIP



### Women's Ministry Team

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The women's ministry team will meet on Wednesday, December 11, at 6:00 p.m. in the Mary Room. All women are invited to participate.



## WOMEN OF LOVE

### Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Join us as the Women of Love celebrate Epiphany at their biennial Epiphany Potluck Luncheon on January 5, 2014, at 11:45 a.m. All women are invited. The Monday night Bible study group is the hostess for this year.

Our theme for the day is “Happy Birthday, Jesus,” including birthday presents to benefit Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska—Centers for Healthy Families®. Take some time to walk through the baby aisles to help provide gifts in honor of Baby Jesus for little ones whose parents need help providing healthy babies and toddlers.



The Centers have an unlimited need for these items used to stock their Boutique: diapers (newborn to 6T), baby wipes, shoes (up to children's size 12), car seat combos, and clothing (newborn to 5T). Other items for children ages newborn to 5 years is also welcomed. Look for fliers in the Information Center at Lord of Love.

The event will also enable us to do the following:

- Hear some reflections on Epiphany
- Hear from Lutheran Family Services of Nebraska on the Centers for Healthy Families®
- Reveal 2013 Secret Angels
- Sign up for 2014 Secret Angels
- Install our 2014 Ministry Team, which will be done by Gwendolynn Edwards, Women of the ELCA Churchwide Executive Board Member.



Mark those calendars now for January 5, 2014, at 11:45 a.m. Mark your to-do list for items to bring: potluck dish and birthday present for Baby Jesus via LFS.

If you are unable to attend, then yes, we will still accept your birthday present for Baby Jesus; in fact, all are welcome to donate a gift—women, men, and youth. Let's help those families who need some assistance and incentive to raise healthy babies and toddlers.

 **Lutheran Family Services**  
of Nebraska, Inc. [www.LFSneb.org](http://www.LFSneb.org)

**Centers for  
Healthy Families**





## Winter Retreat

The annual Nebraska Synodical Women's Organization Winter Retreat will be held on Saturday, January 18 in Grand Island at St. Paul's Lutheran Church. The focus is on "Faith Trends," and the retreat theme is "Concrete or Clay." Coffee and registration is at 8:30 a.m., with the session beginning at 9:00 a.m.



The retreat leader will be Sunni Richardson, Associate in Ministry in the ELCA. She is director of Discipleship at First Lutheran Church in Lincoln, NE. Sunni is also a retreat and workshop leader, program consultant, mentor, and life coach. She served 17 years with Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries as Director of Programs. Our Bible study presenter is Bishop Brian Maas. Offering will go to Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry.

Registration is \$18 and includes the noon meal and materials. A registration form is enclosed in this issue of *The Love Letter*, and additional forms are at the Information Center in the narthex. Please submit your registration by January 11.

## Triennial Gathering



Want some information on the speakers at the Triennial Gathering July 24-27, 2014? Check <http://www.welcatg.org/speakers> for the list of dynamic speakers scheduled for this event. This will be a wonderful opportunity to hear presiding bishop of the ELCA, Elizabeth Eaton, the first woman bishop of the ELCA. Registration is \$325 up to January 6 and \$350 after that. Won't you join us?

## Dates to Remember

### December

2	6:00 p.m.	Gather Bible Study, Village Inn at Oakview Mall
4	6:00 p.m.	Gather Bible Study, Mary Room
6	8:00 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Crane Coffee, 77 <sup>th</sup> and Cass
11	6:00 p.m.	Ministry Team Meeting, Mary Room
14	9:00 a.m.	Goodie Tins for elderly, shut-ins, and those with special needs, Fellowship Hall
20	8:00 a.m.	Coffee Fellowship, Crane Coffee, 77 <sup>th</sup> and Cass



### Looking Ahead

January 18, 2014	NSWO Winter Retreat, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Grand Island, NE
March 1, 2014	Metro East Spring Gathering, St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Omaha, NE
May 9-10, 2014	Annual Women's Retreat, St. Benedict's Retreat Center, Schuyler, NE
July 22-24, 2014	Ninth Triennial Convention of the Women of the ELCA, Charlotte, NC
July 24-27, 2014	Ninth Triennial Gathering of the Women of the ELCA, Charlotte, NC

# WOMEN OF THE ELCA NEBRASKA SYNODICAL WOMEN'S ORGANIZATION

## WINTER RETREAT 2014



Saturday, January 18, 2014,  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church  
1414 Harrison St., Grand Island, NE

### Focus: Faith Trends Retreat Theme: Concrete or Clay?

We have a choice. We (individuals/congregations/Women of the ELCA groups) can be concrete or clay. Concrete is hard, rigid, has to be pushed and manipulated and once it sets up, it is permanent. Clay is soft, pliable and something we can mold into a new creation. Concrete or clay – which do we want to be? Let's look at the church, try to digest what it means to be spiritual but not religious, examine our heritage and grounding as Lutheran Christians and reflect on the call and challenge of being a disciple of Christ in the year 2014. What are the facts? Where are we headed? What are we called to do? What's the point? Concrete or clay?

Winter Retreat will be led by Sunni Richardson, Associate in Ministry in the ELCA. She is Director of Discipleship at First Lutheran Church in Lincoln, NE.

Sunni is also a Retreat and workshop leader, program consultant, mentor and life coach. She served 17 years with Nebraska Lutheran Outdoor Ministries as Director of Programs. As professional with Camp Fire she served in Iowa, Alaska, Minnesota and then in Lincoln. Her roles included District Director, Camp Director and Executive Director.

Bishop Brian Maas will ground us in scripture with a morning Bible Study.

**Come! Be informed  
and energized by others!**

Coffee/Registration – 8:30 a.m.  
Singing & devotions – 9:00 a.m.  
Bishop Maas, Bible Study  
Session I  
Lunch  
Session II  
Closing devotions 2:45 p.m.

**Offering will go to Nebraska Lutheran Campus Ministry (NeLCM).**

**Driving Directions:** From I-80, take US Highway 281. Turn East onto W. Stolley Park Road. Turn North onto S. Harrison Street to 1515.

#### REGISTRATION FORM REGISTRATION DEADLINES:

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or PO Box \_\_\_\_\_  
Town \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail \_\_\_\_\_  
Church Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Church Town \_\_\_\_\_  
Special Needs (hearing or sight impaired, wheelchair, dietary, etc.) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Conference:

☐ Midlands  
☐ Metro East  
☐ Southeast  
☐ High Plains  
☐ Northeast  
☐ Central  
☐ Southern Prairie

Please make check payable to NSWO. Registration is transferable, but not refundable

Send registration form and \$18 to: JoAnn Rohrs

1409 10<sup>th</sup> Street

Auburn, NE 68305-1414

402-274-3058 (Home)

[joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com](mailto:joannrohrs1409@yahoo.com)

## IN OUR PRAYERS & LOVE NOTES

### In Our Prayers

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Antoinette Anania (cousin of Deb Lund)  
Chris Beckman (friend of Jane Gehringer)  
Dick Bell  
Jan Davis-Hughes (aunt of Paula Foster)  
Florence Egr (mother-in-law of Judy Egr)  
Beth Feldhaus (sister-in-law of Judy Egr)  
Claire Foral (friend of Dave and Lisa Rieff)  
Mike Gillotte (neighbor of Bill and Karen Pickens)  
Ken Gustafson (husband of Mary Lou Gustafson)  
Claude Hall  
Wyatt Nathaniel Hansen (infant grandson of Delina Wiater)  
Barb Haskins  
Marilyn Haworth (friend of Brenda Mac)  
Cheryl Jones (friend of Nancy Shinrock)  
Bill Jorgensen (husband of Carolyn Jorgensen)  
Jude Konvalina  
Matt Kreikimeier (friend of Brenda Mac)  
Glenna Lee  
Lisa Lueders (sister-in-law of Dave Lueders)  
Jim Mahler (brother of Jane Hawkins)  
Marj Mahler (mother of Jane Hawkins)  
Dan Manning  
Debbie Michalak (co-worker of Jackie Combes)  
Dawn Neumann  
Brenda Nobles (friend of Gwen Edwards)  
Karen Pickens

David Pippin (nephew of Lynda McGraw)  
Judy Quest (friend of Jane Gehringer)  
Isaac Schroeder  
Shirley Schuchard  
Charles Schultz (father of Pat Brewer)  
Jill Sheridan (sister-in-law of Rebecca Lund Sheridan)  
Don St. Ours (brother-in-law of Lynda McGraw)  
Brenda Thom  
Roslynn Thom (sister of Ron Thom)  
Alice VanHoosen (friend of Judy Egr)  
Bill Wallway (uncle of Kenn Garder)  
Ted Whitfield (former co-worker of Brian Shinrock)

Those deployed around the world:  
Veronica Barnes and her fiancé Jake Harmon  
Jeffrey London  
Jeff Teton

Those who suffer with depression  
Children waiting to be adopted & those seeking to adopt  
Men's servant ministry  
Stephen Ministers and their care receivers  
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](mailto: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

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## Return Service Requested

Mission Statement: Celebrating and sharing God's love in a welcoming community of faith, while serving others.

## MARK YOUR CALENDAR

### This Month

December 1	Congregational Advent Gathering Endowment Fund application deadline
December 4	Advent worship at 7:00 p.m.
December 10	Lutheran Women of Omaha meet at Lord of Love
December 11	Advent worship at 7:00 p.m.
December 14	Dress Rehearsal for Sunday School Christmas Program Goodie Tin preparation and Project Linus "Blanketeer" event

### This Month, continued

December 15	Sunday School Christmas Program at 10:30 a.m. Chili potluck lunch and Caroling
December 18	Advent worship at 7:00 p.m.
December 24	Christmas Eve worship at 4:30 and 11:00 p.m. (music at 10:30)
December 25	Merry Christmas!



*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](mailto:loveletter@lord-of-love.org). Articles must be received by the Love Letter editor by the 20<sup>th</sup> of the month.*