



St. Paul's/ St. Peter's *notes*

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF ST. PAUL'S AND ST. PETER'S LUTHERAN CHURCHES
FEBRUARY/MARCH 2014

A Year in Review...

Dear friends,

I want to share with you some of the ways I have seen GOD AT WORK in and around our congregations during the past year:

- Weekly, mid-week prayer services continue. Various congregational leaders and members and I gather each week to pray together for our congregations. This has been a powerful and important ministry. I pray that our devotion to prayer and to seeking God will continue to strengthen.
- Several small group Bible studies (mid-week and Sunday morning) helped their participants to grow in their knowledge of the Word of God (both the Bible and Jesus!). Notable among these are studies of the "That the World May Know" video series by the WELCA groups in both congregations; a study based on Bruce VanNatta's book about hearing God; small group study linked to the TV drama *The Bible*; and a couple of small group women's Bible studies.
- St. Peter's again hosted Vacation Bible School in July, 2013. Many adults and older youth made it possible for dozens of children from our parish and community to grow in their love of Jesus.
- Each congregation again hosted their own Sunday School. Dozens of children learned more about Jesus' love for them
- Our youth continue to grow in faith through strong participation in Youth Encounter's Faith Quake retreat [in March @ Wisconsin Dells] and a number of youth from our parish and the community attended TEC [Teens Encounter Christ, a youth version of Via de Cristo] which gets them really fired up with love of the Lord!

Mission Trip Opportunities

Youth Mission Trip to Canada!

Bethany Church in Clintonville has invited our youth along on a mission trip to Canada. It will include helping at a Christian Camp which is affiliated with Silver Birch Ranch in Wisconsin. The youth will assist with physical projects of the camp—e.g. roofing and trail making. It will also include fun and fellowship in a God-centered environment. The dates are Sunday, July 13th—Friday, July 18th. Cost will be around \$280. Grades 7th– 12th are welcome! If interested, contact Shawn or Kim Peebles (715) 754-4867.

Love Packages Mission Trip

Date: March 23-26, 2014
Location: Love Packages, Butler, Illinois
Main Task: Warehouse work, reading Bibles for overseas shipment
Cost: \$90 per person (scholarship available)
See Pastor Janice, Louine Malueg or Kelly Zillmer for more information.

A Year in Review...(continued)

- Various members of our congregations participated for the first time or continued to participate in the Via de Cristo renewal movement. This has resulted in a strengthening of their faith and of the ministry of our congregations.
- Several members of our parish strengthened their faith and calling by continuing further studies in ministry and theology through distance-learning classes at Andersonville Theological Seminary and Beyond the River Academy. Several are working on MDivs [in preparation for ordination]; several are working on Bachelors degrees.
- Karen Riemer received a call from First Lutheran Church in Ogdensburg to serve as their interim pastor as she continues her studies for her MDiv and ordination. Our parish mourns our loss of her services as our Parish Coordinator and St. Peter's bookkeeper [plus all the other volunteer ministry she did!] and sends her on to this new adventure with God'
- The Men's Outdoor Ministry group meets regularly and again put on a fabulous Wild Game Feed in March. They also did several other projects, including making sausage, leading Centershot for the Sunday School, and giving Christmas baskets to needy families in the community.
- BeFriends Ministry: Several new BeFriends were trained to befriend others in Christ's name and on behalf of our parish and will be officially commissioned to their ministry in March, 2014. Current BeFriends made a total of 208 visits in 2013.
- Our Joint Music Committee continues to work with me to choose music and plan meaningful, Spirit-filled worship services. We continue to experiment with making our worship music more varied and Spirit-filled. This year we were blessed with special music provided by Don Shire and teaching and ministry of Bruce VanNatta.
- We continued to support the ministries sponsored by the Marion Area Ministerial Association. HOPE Counseling continues to offer counseling at an office in the United Methodist Church in Marion. The food pantry which has been running in Marion since February, 2005, is housed at St. John's Lutheran Church in Marion and is consistently serving dozens of families. The Clothes Closet [a thrift store] opened in the House of HOPE early in 2007 and is thriving.

90 DAYS OF PRAYER

Behold, I am about to do a new thing! Now it springs forth; do you not perceive it?

Isaiah 43:19

God is doing a new thing in our church, and that new thing is us! Our Lord wants to make us new creatures, to transform us into the very likeness of Jesus so that we may be completely awakened to God and awakened to do God's work in the world.

God invites us to pursue God's presence through prayer. God responds to such seeking with an unmistakable presence in our lives, an experience known as an "awakening." The work of the Holy Spirit in our awareness of sin, our enjoyment of grace and our alertness to the presence of God are heightened and intensified.

Rather than simply being a set of doctrines, religious practices and denominational loyalties, faith begins to shine through the hearts and lives of Christians, and they become a vibrant community irresistible to outsiders. Like Jesus, they love the world with God's love, which brings new life. Surrounding communities are transformed, social injustices are overturned and the Kingdom of God spreads. This is the missional work of God.

In our yearning to become such a community – a joyful, contagious, Christ-centered community devoted to loving and serving God and our neighbors – we have been given the opportunity to seek after God's presence through ninety days of concerted prayer.

Imagine an entire church community committed to praying wherever they are each day for ninety days to enter into God's presence!

What would happen if everyone connected with two others for a

A Year in Review...(continued)

The transitional housing [second story of the House, above the Clothes Closet] continues to be used for families in need. I continue to serve as the MAMA [clergy] rep on the House of HOPE Board.

- The Spirit is Alive at St. Peter's: worship attendance is up; new members are joining; people are giving financially both generously and faithfully; a Great Room was added to the building over the summer, to make room for Sunday School, Youth, ALPHA, fellowship events, and a new dart-ball team. Many St. Paul's members gave to the life and ministry of their congregation by helping out with various fund-raisers [brat fries and food tents @ auctions, etc., and of course the Annual Soup Supper] for their capital improvement fund. The churches again jointly staffed a food stand at the Lola Old Car Show as a fundraiser and St. Peter's was visible in the community at the Big Falls Corn Roast at the Annual Pie Shop.
- We made preparation for an ALPHA course to run Jan-Mar, 2014, trusting that the faith of those who will participate will be increased and nurtured!
- A group of senior high girls and one boy were confirmed in June, 2013, after meeting diligently for 2 years with me and Karen Riemer—all growing in faith together.
- A new constitution and by-laws for St. Peter's [necessitated by our changing denominations] was presented to the congregation in 2012, and begun to be enacted. Various provisions of these new by-laws were 'tried out' in 2013, notably, the formation of a Board of Elders [see special report on By-laws/Constitution].

*I praise God for all these evidences of
God at work among us.*

*May we continue to grow in faith and grace
in the year to come!*

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Janice

90 DAYS OF PRAYER

(Continued)

time of reflection and prayer? What would that community learn about God and God's mission in the world? About themselves? Their loved ones? How would that community be changed? What impact would that leave on the surrounding community? In the wider world?

Our culture exalts the individual and self-reliance. Self-centeredness is our natural condition. We believe we can accomplish anything through our own efforts, a notion contrary to what we learn in Scripture. God is the prime mover and all we do that is fruitful happens as we are connected to Jesus, the Vine, and dependent on our Lord's blessing.

God, who has already called us with the whole church into relationship, desires for us to go deeper.

This depth results in transformed lives when we surrender to God, seek God's truth, and receive God's grace, peace, and joy as disciples. Prayer is central to that process.

God desires to transform us into the people of God, a reflection of Jesus. Prayer is central to that process.

God, who sends us into the world just as Jesus was sent, desires that we seek God's will and God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. Prayer is central to that process.

The framework for this ninety days of prayer experience is based on Jesus' response to his disciples' appeal, "Lord teach us to pray!"

Prayer is a conversation with God and God's beloved people.

90 DAYS OF PRAYER

(Continued)

Jesus instructs us to pray the pattern of the Lord's Prayer for a purpose – we come before our loving God, not as equals, but as children who praise and honor God first.

During the first six weeks, one week will be spent focusing on each aspect of the pattern Jesus teaches: Our Father...Your Kingdom come...Your will be done... Give us this day...Forgive us as...Lead us not into temptation.

During the second six weeks, the pattern is turned into a daily rhythm for prayer: Sunday: Worship and Rest; Monday: Praise and Adoration; Tuesday: God's Work in the World; Wednesday: God's Work in Us; Thursday: Petitions; Friday: Forgiveness and Confession; Saturday: Protection.

We will learn how to read, reflect and respond to God's word as we pray about the issues on our hearts. St. Augustine saw meditation as "the soul's ascent into God." When we meditate on scripture, we pray the truth until it holds us personally, shapes our thinking, changes our emotions and drives our actions. We move from knowing "about" God to knowing God directly from the heart. We adore, marvel, rest in God. We are humbled, troubled, changed and given peace as we pray.

This ninety-day adventure will offer you the opportunity to experience new dimensions in your personal prayer life. You will also experience the joy of praying with two other people for an extended period of time and discover the new depth in personal friendship that takes root.

Worship Assistants Calendar

February—St. Paul's

Date	Comm. Asst.	Lay Reader
2	Nancy Heiman	Rosie Wepner
9	X	Nancy Heiman
16	Peggy Davis	Chuck Adams
23	X	Rosie Wepner

February—St. Peter's

Date	Comm. Asst.	Lay Reader
2	Pat Ambacher, Tom Miller, Connie Bestul	Pat Ambacher
9	X	Dave Eisele
16	Dan Gunn, June Rambo, Pete Fannin	Dan Gunn
23	X	Faye Miller

March—St. Paul's

Date	Comm. Asst.	Lay Reader
2	Nancy Heiman	Nancy Heiman
9	X	Chuck Adams
16	Ken Inger	Rosie Wepner
23	X	Nancy Heiman
30	X	Chuck Adams

March—St. Peter's

Date	Comm. Asst.	Lay Reader
2	Brandon Blashe, Faye Miller, Krista Enoch	Julia Peebles
9	X	Lola Zaug
16	Dave Schmidt, Margie Schmidt, Dale Rambo	Dale Rambo
23	X	Tiffany Bestul
30	X	Kelly Zillmer

Econofoods Fundraiser

The Econofoods fundraiser provided St. Peter's with \$753.98 in 2013. These funds were put toward debt reduction. We are continuing to be a part of the Econofoods program for 2014. Please save receipts and deposit them in the receptacle on the kiosk. Any questions, please ask Louine Malueg.

Looking for A Christian-based Place to Vacation?

Nestled in the heart of breathtaking scenery, Heartwood Conference Center and Retreat is located on 700 acres of natural woodlands surrounding two private lakes and the nationally protected Namekagon River near Trego, Wisconsin. This pristine setting is the perfect place for individuals and families to enjoy God's creation. It is truly a place apart to relax, reflect and grow. Heartwood is a property of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. Thrivent benefit members who come to Heartwood (not as part of a Lutheran group) will receive 25% off general public rates. To learn more about this opportunity, visit heartwoodcc.com.