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The Nativity (1887) by Edward Burne-Jones

# the *Voices* of english lutheran

the SEASON of ADVENT, CHRISTMAS AND EPIPHANY

## PASTOR'S PRESS

It is hard to believe that two months at English Lutheran have come and gone. As I have sat and reflected on my experiences over these two months, my thoughts and my heart are filled with a tremendous amount of joy. My joy comes from the learning opportunities that have been afforded from an incredible team of colleagues, as well as a congregation that has shown me a tremendous amount of encouragement and support. Pastor Mark commented early on that I could have many mentors during my internship. He was spot on; some of the most powerful learning opportunities have come from projects and conversations that have come from many of you in the congregation. I mentioned to the Vision Board recently that the amount of good work and the solid ministries going on inside of English Lutheran is a testament to the congregation's abilities to envision and act on God's calling.

My excitement comes from  
*continues on page 5*

## The Christmas Cycle: How did it Come into Being? by Pastor Becky Goche

Early Christians did not observe Jesus' birth in any way, but today nearly all Christians celebrate Christmas as the day of Jesus' birth. We do not know what time of year Jesus was born and scholars have different ideas of how Christmas came into being. Most scholars propose that by the late fourth century, after Christianity became the official religion of the Roman Empire, Christians around the Mediterranean world had begun to celebrate the birth of Jesus at the time of the winter solstice as an alternative to both the Roman Saturnalia and the Birthday of the Unconquered Sun. Since the ancient calendar was not properly synchronized with the stars and such, Christmas came to be celebrated on December 25, not on December 21.

In "Christianizing" the winter solstice observance, Christians borrowed the imagery of the sun as a way to praise Christ as the light of the world,

proclaiming that the life associated with sunlight is symbolic of the life received from God in Christ. Early Christians may have also hoped to end the wild partying associated with the solstice festival and instead place people's focus on prayer and praising God. As typical of human nature, Christmas celebrations grew over the centuries and several times throughout history, church leaders attempted to put a halt to the excessive festivities. In fact, the settlers of the Massachusetts colony from 1659 to 1681 outlawed the celebration of Christmas! Christmas is by far the most shared Christian festival with the rest of non-Christian society. Although the theology behind it may be misplaced, the evidence of Christmas can be seen in most stores across the United States by late summer.

Scholars also debate of how the time before Christmas (Advent) and after  
*continues on page 5*

IN CHRIST  
We Welcome, Worship & Work  
IN THE WORLD

# WORSHIP TIMES

Saturday ... 5:00 p.m.  
 Sunday..... 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.  
 Nursery Sun ... 8:30 to 11:45 a.m.



## Worship Service HIGHLIGHTS

**November 21** - 7:00 p.m.  
 combined Thanksgiving Eve Service  
 Pastor Harald at Good Shepherd

**December 1, 8 and 22** - 5:00 p.m.  
 Advent Services in South Hall

**December 9** - 8:30 and 10:45 worship  
 service with the Senior Choir and  
 orchestra performing Vivaldi's Gloria

**December 15** - 5:00 p.m.  
 Sun. Sch. Christmas Program in  
 Sanctuary

**December 23** - 9:30 *one service*

**December 24** - 3:00, 5:00 & 10:00 p.m.  
 Christmas Eve services

**December 25** - 9:30 a.m.  
 Christmas Day service

**December 29** *no Saturday service*

**December 30** - 9:30 a.m.  
*one service*

**January 5 and 6** all regular  
 scheduled services return to  
 normal times

## ADVENT IS ALMOST HERE

### SATURDAY ADVENT SERVICES

December 1, 8 and 22 at 5:00 p.m. - South Hall

The South Hall has a cozy atmosphere with fireplace, lighting options and two decorated evergreen trees. The service will be a structured Advent service with communion. There will be an Advent message that will complement the following Sunday's messages, but will not be the same as the Sunday message. The Saturday service will allow us to take time to reflect on the stories that prepare God's People for the birth of The Messiah!

### VIVALDI'S GLORIA

December 9 at 8:30 and 10:45 a.m.

Our Senior Choir will perform this marvelous work with orchestra.

Antonio Vivaldi (1678-1741) almost certainly composed this Gloria for the girls at Ospedale della Pietà, a home for abandoned children in Venice in the early 18th century. Rediscovered in late 1920's, this work has become the most popular of Vivaldi's vocal works. The text for this piece comes from the ancient Christian hymn Gloria in excelsis Deo, the angel's song from Luke 2:14.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

December 15 at 5:00 p.m.  
 Sanctuary

### ACTIVITIES TO FOLLOW THE CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Ornament making, storybook time, games, crafts, etc.

Please come and celebrate our church family together around the Christmas season!



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# Advent and Christmas Decorating Day

Saturday, December 1  
8:30 a.m. to noon

*Lunch and nursery provided*

Welcome Center sign up  
or call the church office.

On Saturday, December 1, from 8:30 until noon, all members of English Lutheran Church are invited to decorate our sanctuary and the rest of our building for the Advent – Christmas season. Lunch will be served and a nursery will be provided.

Please sign up at the Welcome Center or call the office so we know how many people to expect for lunch. Everyone is invited and there will be work for all ages and abilities.

We will set up and decorate the

Christmas trees in the sanctuary and rearrange the sanctuary chairs. We will set up and decorate two Christmas trees in our Fellowship Hall. We will give our sanctuary, narthex and fellowship hall a good cleaning in preparation for the holidays. If enough people come, we will give our Sunday School rooms, youth room and choir room a good cleaning too.

When we were preparing for construction back in 2012, we had a hundred people show up for a work day. We cleaned every table, every file cabinet and every piece of chalk out of Stoffel Hall. We worked hard and it was great fun working together. We look forward to a similar experience as we clean and decorate our building in preparation for our celebration of our Savior's birth!

## ANNA MOORHEAD TO PREACH NOVEMBER 17 AND 18

Anna Moorhead recently returned from South Africa where she served the church as a Young Adult in Global Mission (YAGM). Anna will preach at all three worship services on November 17 & 18. She will also lead the adult forum on Sunday morning at 9:45.

Anna served near Johannesburg at the church development office working with gender-biased violence initiatives, the HIV and AIDS Prevention Program, and

communication for the office. She also served at a daycare with over 100 kids and a daycare for kids with disabilities. Anna enjoyed spending time with her host family and congregants, as well as singing and dancing to choruses in church.



The ELCA Young Adults in Global

*continues on page 7*

### CHURCH OFFICE

main phone ..... 784-9335  
direct line..... 784-8876

### SENIOR PASTOR

Pastor Mark Solyst .....ext 205  
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### PASTOR

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### CUSTODIAN

Terry Welch

## HISTORICAL REVIEW

Editor's Note: In this article and subsequent articles, Pastor Solyst will review the early history of English Lutheran Church and the Lutheran bodies that eventually formed the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA).

In 1898, there were Lutherans in La Crosse who worshiped in German and there were Lutherans in La Crosse who worshiped in Norwegian but there was no regular English language Lutheran worship service. Two Lutheran laymen from Minneapolis provided money to the Synod of the Northwest for the purpose of establishing Lutheran home mission congregations in Wisconsin. La Crosse was chosen and the Rev. Dr. Ernest Trabert began work as a mission developer in the spring of 1898.

Rev Trabert held his first English language Lutheran worship service on Trinity Sunday, June 15, 1898. It was a small crowd that gathered for worship in a third floor room in the Lienlokken Hall on Fourth Street. The Lienlokken Hall is now Fayze's Restaurant. Most Lutheran clergy at the turn of the century opposed the use of the English language claiming that English speaking Lutheran congregations lacked sound doctrine. Furthermore, German and Norwegian pastors did not like the idea of losing members to an English speaking congregation. Establishing an English speaking Lutheran congregation in La Crosse would not be easy, but those early members of English Lutheran persevered.

On September 9, 1898, seven people representing four families signed the original charter of our



Rev. Dr. Ernest Trabert

congregation. Worship services moved to the YMCA on the corner of King Street and Market Square. At the first annual meeting of the congregation on January 4, 1899, the treasurer reported they had a balance in the treasury of \$7.39. The people of English Lutheran Church needed their own house of worship and the next big challenge for the fledgling congregation was building a building.

## Feature Volunteers

~ We would like to Thank you  
So very much for paying for  
a motel room @ the Econolodge  
for a few nights for our children,  
& Duwayne + I when we were  
homeless with no place to stay.  
Your thoughtfulness + help means  
more to our family than words  
could ever express + we will always  
remember + forever be thankful for  
your help. We appreciate you all  
so much. You are wonderful;  
kind, compassionate gifts from  
god ☺

Thank you  
& God bless you all  
♥



Kristin Trohkimoinen has been volunteering behind the scenes in the area of Discipleship for many years. She is always willing to step in to set up Sunday School rooms, prepare projects, help to set up events, run errands, prepare mailings, and assortment of **many** other things. There are many times she is also accompanied by her husband, Jeff.

Thank you Kristin and Jeff for all you do for your church family at English Lutheran Church.

We appreciate you Kristin and Jeff



### Christmas Cycle from front page

Christmas (Epiphany) developed. At one time Advent was treated like Lent and was a time to deny oneself. At other times it was a preparation period for baptism at Epiphany. By the year 600, we began to understand the Christmas cycle as a season beginning with the first four Sundays in Advent, peaking on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, and ending twelve days later with the Epiphany of the Lord.

Advent starts the new church year so happy new year! This year Advent begins on December 2 and includes four Sundays. Advent is meant to prepare us for the coming of Jesus. The color of the season is blue perhaps to remind us of darkness in the world. At English we use an Advent wreath with candles, lighting an additional candle each week until all four are burning. As the days grow shorter and darker, the increasing light signifies our prayer for the coming light of Christ into the world.

In Christian tradition, Christmas Day is the primary celebration of the

incarnation of Christ. However, in keeping with an ancient practice that celebration of a day begins on the prior evening, the church's celebration of the birth of Christ is celebrated on Christmas Eve. You will hear the familiar narrative of the birth of Jesus from the Gospel of Luke. At English we offer three services on Christmas Eve and one on Christmas morning. Since Christmas Eve and Christmas Day are major church festivals, the liturgical color is white.

The Christmas cycle ends on January 6 with Epiphany of Our Lord. Epiphany is the celebration of the visit of the Magi to Jesus. This day is also a festival so the liturgical color is white. The time after Epiphany includes eight Sundays in 2019 and ends on March 3. The liturgical color for this season is green. Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, is March 6.



Interested in the painting *The Nativity* shown on the front? Click link below.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Nativity\\_\(Burne-Jones\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Nativity_(Burne-Jones))

## Welcome Center Needs Helpers

Do you enjoy greeting people and providing the information they need?

We are looking for help in staffing the Welcome Center on Sunday mornings. Volunteers need to be available about 20 minutes before and then again about 20 minutes after each service. You can help at the 8:30 am or 10:45 am service or at both. If you are interested, please contact Pastor Becky.

### Pastor's Press from front page

seeing the many ways in which I am afforded a place at the table to learn and grow. I find life in our weekly text study at Fayzes. I was energized and blessed to be with the 8th graders recently at Bay Lake, MN. I have had the privilege to bring the Good News twice now, with many more preaching opportunities to come. There are also worship opportunities monthly at Hillview. Pastoral Care at the hospital as well as walking with a family in their time of need as funeral arrangements were needed. I have started settling into various ministry councils and groups. Additionally, there have been gifts afforded and shared with me, and for a single person who doesn't know how to bake; a fresh loaf of bread was priceless! There have been beautiful meals prepared and shared, along with rich and intimate conversations that were filled with the Holy Spirit.

I often wonder about the Apostle Paul and the love he had for his congregations. As I read and imagine Paul, explaining the many ways in which his congregations were living into their calling, I can't help but feel humbled to be a part of this congregation who is living faithfully into their calling.

Vicar Chad Rademacher





# Community CONVERSATIONS

## NOVEMBER 21

### Sandy Brekke

At our November 21 Community Conversation, Sandy Brekke will address the inequities in health outcomes for Americans and the implications for our community. As Sandy says, “Picking the right set of parents has a great influence on your ultimate health outcome.” Sandy brings a deep passion for establishing a more equitable health care system. In particular, she has a huge heart for those whose life situation creates challenges that affect their health and wellbeing.

Sandy is the Senior Consultant in Population Health at Gundersen Health System in La Crosse. She also serves as the Director of the St. Claire Health Mission, which serves members of our community that lack access to affordable health care.

## DECEMBER

### No Community Conversations

## NEW MEMBERS - SEPTEMBER 9

Matthew and Mallory Randall and daughter Stella, and Mikaela Hunter and Lucas Schulz

## AFFIRMATION OF FAITH - OCT. 28

Daniel Baggett, Eli Carr, Kjerstin Cosby, Tia Endrizzi, Calvin Fennie, Abbey Gerleman, Hannah Gerleman, Nathaniel Green, Will Larson, Carson Markussen, McKenna Oettel, Jasmine Siegel, Luke Stimac, Rebecca Strittmater, Avery Trohkimoinen, Damian Welper (Henry Kline and Joel Restel were confirmed earlier this year)

## JANUARY 16

### Faith in Business Leadership

Come hear from a panel of business leaders whose faith guides their business decisions and how they use their gifts to impact the world around them. Facilitated by Vicki Markussen, volunteer with English Lutheran and executive director of the La Crosse Area Chamber of Commerce, who will share examples she sees of business leaders incorporating faith into their business cultures, their projects and more. In addition to Vicki Markussen, Cliff LeClaire, owner of Hampton Inn and Central States Warehouse, and Mark Bertrang, owner of Bertrang Financial, will share how their faith guides their business decisions.

Visit [www.interfaithleaders.org](http://www.interfaithleaders.org) to find information on future Community Conversations and to register for events. Pre-registration helps us determine how much food to prepare.

# Adult EDUCATION

*Sunday*

**11/4/18**

Czech Republic Report  
Pastor Becky

**11/11/18**

Children's Worship  
Kerri Jahnke

**11/11/18**

Introduction to Thrivent and  
Member Benefits  
Heather Young and Sarah

**11/18/18**

YAGM (Young Adults in Global  
Ministry)  
Anna Moorhead

**11/25/18**

No Forum - Holiday

**12/2/18**

Communion Fund Ministry  
Pastor Mark

**12/9/18**

Music in Worship  
Vivaldi's Gloria  
Trevor DuPey, Eddie Kim and  
Pastor Mark

**12/16/18**

No Forum - Holiday

**12/23/18**

No Forum - Holiday

**12/30/18**

No Forum - Holiday

**January 2019 TBA**

*Faith Family from back page*

good things and serve our community and the world together.” Most notable (and visible) is Grace’s warm personality serving as a volunteer at the Welcome Center. Recognizing from personal experience how essential a simple “hello” can be to newcomers’ faith journey, she has served as the coordinator for the Welcome Center for the past five years. Having also served on the Evangelism Council for a period of time, assisted with Keep the Vision Growing campaign, and played a large role in organizing English Lutheran’s former Comunidad de la Esperanza (‘Community of Hope,’ community events and worship that celebrated Hispanic culture), it’s no surprise she was the recipient of the 2014 Evangelism Council Volunteer of the Year.

Ivy and Maya have held actress roles in the past two Bethlehem Events. This past summer Ivy led the 4K class during a week of Vacation Bible School. Both girls enjoyed hosting Sugar Creek counselors at their home during VBS week.

**What do your faith practices look like at home?**

“I recently heard that it isn’t fame or riches that brings happiness to

people. It’s connection with others that brings happiness, and to have that through God is the best feeling in the world.”

Faith practices at the Engen home are mixed into the full schedules that accompany their days. Grace is happy her girls have a strong foundation of faith and says she tries to lead by example; praying at meals and nightly routines, and sharing conversation about the girls’ highs and lows. Ivy, having decided not to join the confirmation class this year, explores her faith through attendance at youth activities. Grace supports and encourages this decision saying, “She is not at a point in her life where she feels ready to confirm her faith,” noting that it’s opened the door for meaningful conversations.

Grace adds that faith conversations with friends outside of church are not a taboo topic and generally strengthen her own beliefs and practices.

**Do you have any faith challenges right now?**

“I am so grateful that there is a place where people gather in the name of love, in the name of God.” Grace admits their lives are “messy” right now, as her and her husband of 14 years navigate divorce. Also,

Grace’s mother, who suffers from Alzheimer’s, has recently moved in with her, Ivy, and Maya so they can help care for her. Grace recognizes without God, she would be lost during these rocky times, stating, “On the positive side, my faith is strong.” On especially tough days she simply recites the prayer, “God, be with me.”

**Why is attending worship and church important for your family?**

“It is amazing how often the sermon relates to something that is happening in my life at that very moment. And often I can see that others are also relating to the message as well. That’s God speaking to us.”

Grace feels the support of the English Lutheran faith community and says the best part of church, especially during this transition period, is always feeling welcomed “flaws and all.” She notes the sermon topics are often “exactly what I need to hear.” This community plays a large role in helping shape the girls’ faith. Maya has many friendships among her age group and is excited to make her First Communion with the 5th Grade Class this year.

*Kristen Duchrow*

*Anna Moorhead from page 3*

Mission program invites ELCA young adults ages 21-29 into a transformative, year-long journey in international service. As they offer themselves in service, ELCA young adults are shaped by the wit-

ness of our global neighbors. They share in the journeys of companion churches and organizations in one of nine countries around the world.

With a membership of 500,000, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in

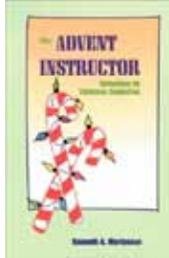
Southern Africa is organized into seven dioceses. Throughout Southern Africa numerous ecumenical and community-based organizations are deeply committed to working for justice, reconciliation and sustainable development.

# BOOK REVIEW

## *The Advent Instructor*

by Kenneth A. Mortenson

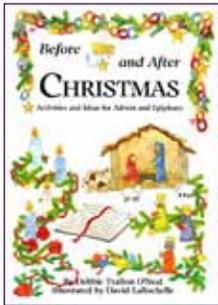
What is the significance of the poinsettia at Christmas? Why do we hang stockings and display lights? *The Advent Instructor* explains the history and meaning of symbols of the Advent/Christmas season that inspire and instruct us in our understanding of the Christian faith.



## *Before and After Christmas*

by Debbie Trafton O'Neal

*Before and After Christmas* is a treasury of ideas and activities for celebrating the days before Christmas and things to do after the Christmas tree is taken down. It is a wonderful resource for individuals and families alike. Activities such as crafts, service projects, worship ideas and more are included for each day in Advent through Epiphany.



# GIFTS AND MEMORIALS

## Endowment

- In honor of Rick and Janell Stewart's 50th Wedding Anniversary by Chris and Beth Weiss

## Music Fund

- In memory of Joanne Tomalka by Jean Davis, Chuck and Carmen Gustafson, Steve and Linnea Mueller, Bernice Facticeau, Carol Taebel, Nancy Borgen, Shirley Ryan, and family and friends
- In memory of Shirley Christensen by Lou Wuensch

## Quilters Fund

- In memory of Joanne Tomalka by Boyd and Marla Engbloom, Judy and Dave Konop, Gary and Beth Munding-er, Karen Guptill, Sharon Odahl, Lou Wuensch, John Monson, and family and friends

## Undesignated

- In memory of Joanne Tomalka by Bob and Pat Sullivan, DeLaney Gilster, Joan Doescher, Ruth Kuntz, Scott and Karla Strangstalien, Art and Jennifer Sexauer, Jim and Claudette Giblin, Kent and Mary Sween, Lorraine and Denise Gainey, Pete and Deb Bemis, Ruth Olson, Todd and Pam Strittmater, Bruce and Pam Walters, Dan and Jill McGarvey, Jon and Cara Hartfield, Marilyn Wildt, James Sill, Mark and Roxie Flaten, Larry and Sharon Norris, Mark and Sharon Jolivette, Steve and Vicki Stromberg, Tom and Ann Monson, Arnie and Barbara Berg, Howard

and Nancy Mills, Shirley Ryan, and family and friends.

- In memory of Shirley Christensen by Ruth Kuntz
- In memory of Dianne Naumann by Dennis Naumann

## Baptisms

- 8/26 ....Naomi Eileen Collins, daughter of Gifford and Sarah Collins
- 9/02 ....Stella Jean Randall, daughter of Matthew and Mallory Randall
- 9/22 ....Anna Leigh Nelson, daughter of Jennifer Wilder and Nik Nelson
- 10/20 ..Lucas Charles Oates, son of Christopher and Melissa Oates
- 10/2 ....Evelyn Lucille Giraud, daughter of Brian and Kelsi Giraud

## Marriages

- 07/21 ...Paul Napierala and Maryl Fennie
- 08/04 ..Andrew Barth and Megan Amann
- 09/01 ..Ryan Scheel and Taylan Johnson
- 09/08 ..Joseph Zinniel and Amy Breyer
- 10/05 ..Daniel Mandujano and Lauren Groene

## Deaths

- We extend the sympathy of the Gospel to Larry Peterson and family on the death of wife and mother, Marianna Peterson, who died on August 31.
- We extend the sympathy of the Gospel to Candice Brieske and Jeff Miller and family on the death of their mother, Bev Miller, who died October 11

How does your portfolio measure up?



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For Everyone & every Household

### A Blessing for Every Home

#### For Couples of All Ages

What would you give to know the best (highs) and the worst (lows) things in the life of your spouse each day and to be able to do something meaningful about it- like listening, sharing God's word and praying for each other? Would it be worth as little as five minutes?

#### For Parents

What would it be worth to you to have a child who won't go to sleep without talking to you about their day? What would happen to your family over time if you were able to keep this open, caring communication going every night? How might this type of five-minute conversation change your family if you were intentionally consistent about it? Would the benefits outweigh the hassle of trying to invest this time of care, listening, and prayer each night in your home?

#### For Single Adults

Imagine being so well connected that you can't wait to tell about your day to a trusted friend or family member—and can't wait to hear about their day too. Think of the gift you can give to a friend or family member as you share your highs and lows of the day and practice the Faith 5 in person or via the phone or internet. Wouldn't it be worth five minutes a day?

### What is the FAITH5

The FAITH 5 connects church to home, faith to life, and parents to kids in a powerful way. 5 steps to create a faith conversation and prayer in our homes!

#### The five steps of the FAITH5 are:



**Step One:** Share highs and lows. Name something good

and bad you experienced today. Can't think of a personal one? What brought you joy today, what was something that made you feel sad or hurt today?



**Step Two:** Read a verse/ story from your Bible. Any verse or bible story works! I have a few listed below for you to try!



**Step Three:** Talk about how the verse relates to highs and lows. Unpack the verse a bit. What does it mean in your own words? How might it relate to where you are today in your highs and lows? How might it relate you or your family?



**Step Four:** Pray for one another's highs and lows, for your family, and for the world. Simply talk to God, thank Jesus for the good, and ask the Holy Spirit for guidance in specific problems. Encourage everyone to pray together.



**Step Five:** Bless one another. Trace the sign of the cross on one another's forehead or palm as a reminder that you belong to God and to one another. "Jesus loves you and so do I!"

Ephesians 3:16-19

John 3:16

John 15:9-10

1 John 4:19

Ephesians 2:4-7

Ephesians 4:32

Romans 8:37-39

1 John 4:8-10

Questions? Contact Kerri Jahnke  
kerri@englishlutheran.org

### Upcoming Events

High School Youth Group  
1st and 3rd Sundays  
monthly 6:30 p.m.-8:00 p.m.

NEXT STEP  
7th and 8th grade youth  
Sunday mornings  
9:45 am-10:30 a.m.

Peer Ministry Leadership  
10th -12th grade  
4th Wednesday monthly  
6:30 p.m.

HS Youth Praise Band  
1st and 3rd Wednesday  
night 6:15-7:15 p.m.

PACK  
4th - 6th grade youth night  
once a month

**For event updates, *click here or go to our website> News and Photos>Weekly Newsletters.***

# Thanksgiving Dinner Donations

Donations are needed for the Community Thanksgiving dinner at the La Crosse Center.

Drop off all *green beans and cranberry sauce* at "Turkey" display in narthex. *Industrial size cans preferred.* Items will be collected *November 1 through the Monday before Thanksgiving.*

Thank you very much.  
Mary Fitzpatrick -Ministry Council



## Sunday School Schedule

9:45-10:30, ages 2 yrs.- 6th grade

**November 25 - no class**

**December 16, 23 and 30 - no class**

**January TBA**



Small Group Ministry  
Fall Session, January Session  
and Lent Session

We are getting excited to start our next phase of Small Group Ministry in 2018 -19! "Walking with God is a 40 day Journey of Authentic Faith Conversation."

### Testimonies:

"As co-leaders of a "Walking with God group, we have felt our faith strengthen. Anytime you are reading and discussing scripture this is bound to happen. Exploring the book *We Make the Road by Walking* is a challenge our group wants to continue. We encourage you to join or lead a small group in January. You will witness your faith strengthening as you enjoy the journey of Walking with God together."

*Carol Taebel and John Monson*

"Walking with God" was a won-

derful way to connect with members of the church that I don't normally have a deep connection with. It was great to have other people to share spiritual experiences with and realize that God is all around us!" *Anna Mueller*

"I really enjoyed my experience during "Walking with God". I loved not having to do any homework before our group gatherings. I could just show up and have amazing conversation with others. I truly enjoyed meeting other members of English Lutheran and getting to know them on a deeper level."

*Heather Young.*

### What is Walking with God?

It's a commitment to practicing your individual faith through reading, prayer, and small group fellowship. It's a commitment to supporting others in their faith through listening... a commitment to sharing your faith even though you don't have all the answers. This is a definite period of time during which we can build relationships that will strengthen

our congregation and a chance to reach out to others and find a deeper sense of belonging in this congregation.

### What does a Journey Group meeting look like?

Our conversation will be centered around faith, the texts, and the happenings of our lives. There will be time in intentional prayer, and groups will meet approximately 90 minutes each week.

We thank God for many blessings. These blessings include praying with one another, studying the bible, and being in authentic relationships and conversation together!

**We invite you to pray** about joining a "Walking with God" small groups. There will be a Fall Session, January Session, and a Lent session.

**If you are interested** in joining PLEASE contact Kerri Jahnke [kerri@englishlutheran.org](mailto:kerri@englishlutheran.org) or 507-884-7972.

# Welcome Marsha Kurth

Since 1995, I have developed, planned, organized, and taught classes to adult learners. I am certified to teach to the principles of adult accelerated learning. As the Director of Learning Systems for Luther College, I leaned more towards technology integration into curriculum and the instructional design side of teaching rather than the computer application skills side of education, and lead a campus wide training program for faculty, students, and staff.

As a Rotarian, and world service chair, I have lead innovation initiatives around the world. Partnering with the Smoke Hills Rotary Club of Aurora, CO and Project Cure, we traveled to Oradea, Romania to assess their medical needs. Upon returning to the United States, we secured the needed medical equipment with a fair market value of \$1.5 million, and sent three shipping containers to Europe. I have worked on two service projects in Afghanistan with our military. I am a founding member of The La Crosse Area Friends of Cameroon. This is a group dedicated to strengthening the connections between the La Crosse community and the Tertiary

Sisters of St. Francis in Cameroon, West Africa, and La Crosse's Sister City, Kumbo Cameroon.

Locally, working with the YWCA and the local court system, I recruited and trained over 30 volunteers in our restorative justice program. I developed, installed, and support the indigent drug program's database at the St. Claire Health Mission. I am a past board member of the Coulee Region Business Center. Currently, I am working with Catholic Charities supporting the effort to end homelessness. I volunteer at both the Franciscan Hospitality House and the La Crosse Warming Center. Three terrific individuals call me Mom, and I have seven very busy grand-daughters.



## THE SEEKERS BIBLE STUDY

**Thursdays, 9:30 a.m.  
Room 106**

We will continue our study of St. Paul through Thanksgiving.

For Christmas, Janet Melby and Mike Schnitziuts will offer a study on angels in the Bible.

When we return in January, our study will be the minor prophets of the Old Testament.

Before we begin our Bible study we have devotions followed by requests for prayers. Although we are a lay-led group, we frequently invite guest speakers to share their expertise with us.

For information contact Susan Link  
608-789-2005

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

**November - January**  
ADVENT, CHRISTMAS, EPIPHANY

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*Faith Family*  
featured

Grace Engen will tell you she's always had God in her heart, but it wasn't until becoming involved at English Lutheran Church that she actively began living her faith. She is thankful to be part of a faith community that encourages and supports her and her two daughters, Ivy (12) and Maya (10) in their faith exploration and journey as a family.

**What are spiritual milestones that led your family to English Lutheran?**

"I think that the most significant

thing about my faith journey is how I went from praying quietly at home to becoming a member of a faith community."

Born and raised in Los Angeles, Calif., Grace grew up in the Catholic faith and attended a Catholic school. As a young adult she was confident about her relationship with God; praying individually, but not outwardly expressing her faith. She was drawn to an ELCA Church in Pasadena. When she moved to the Coulee Region about 14 years ago, it was a mixture of attending English Lutheran's Bethlehem Event, the newness of worshiping with a community, and a friendly environ-



ment that kept her coming back and eventually joining as a member.

**How does your family enjoy contributing to the English Lutheran community?**

"We gather to worship and to do  
*continued on page 7*

