

The Visitor

December 2016

St. John's Lutheran Church ELCA • 2190 Jackson Hwy Chehalis, WA 98532
360/748-4741 • office@stjohnschehalis.net



The 67th Chehalis Santa Parade is December 3. We will have an entry in the parade again this year. The theme, *Miracle on Market Street*, made me think of a discussion we had in Middle School Youth Group in November.



We were discussing the meaning of Communion and I asked the kids, "What is the difference between a miracle and magic?" Their answer: A miracle is something amazing that is real, magic is something amazing that is a trick.

Communion is something amazing that is real. Pulling a rabbit out of a hat is something amazing that is a trick. Authentic Christian community is something amazing that is real. Putting up with someone for the sake of getting along is a trick.

Christmas is a miracle that creates real community among people who are used to the magic of just getting along. Real community doesn't pretend that

differences don't exist for the magic of good feelings; real community challenges us to see the other through the eyes of Christ — to see them as truly human.

The real *Miracle on Market Street* (or any street) is not the music or decorations or entertainment that creates the temporary magic of Christmas. The real *Miracle* is found in the baby born in Bethlehem in normal everyday circumstances to a couple no-name people from a backwater town called Nazareth. The real *Miracle* is that we find that baby active in the everyday normal lives of people on Market Street and your street.

This Christmas, I pray that we will experience the magic of Christmas because magic is fun and temporarily feels good. I pray more fervently that we will experience the miracle of Christmas because the miracle is real and changes lives and community forever.

Pastor Matt

My St. John's Story

When we moved to Chehalis 13 years ago, we didn't know a soul here, other than our real estate agent. But that was never a worry for us because we knew we had a family waiting - the congregation at St. John's.

I was baptized at First Evangelical Lutheran Church, Tacoma, on my oldest sister's 18th birthday when I was 2-1/2 months old. Church with all that it encompasses was central in my family's life. I remember my first Sunday school teacher, and the Sunday school rooms in the church basement divided by curtains. I sang in the children's choir and remember when the new "red book" SBH was introduced to us. And I remember in my family, church attendance was never optional.

Although my parents never studied music, it was always emphasized and encouraged in their four daughters. I started piano lessons at age five from my sister who was then a piano major at Oberlin Music Conservatory and studied piano and pipe organ through college. I sang in the children's choir at church and continued with the adult choir through high school. The piano in our conference room here at St. John's is the piano I played from a very young child until 16 years ago.

I particularly liked being an accompanist, starting as a 6th grader with the school chorus. In junior high, I was the accompanist for the orchestra, which meant lots of sight reading - absolutely the

(continued on page 2)

St. John's Lutheran Church Statement of Mission:

Rooted in the gospel of Jesus Christ, we exist to:

- **PROCLAIM** God's unconditional love as an invitation to all,
- **GROW** in discipleship as we follow in Jesus' steps, and
- **SERVE** others as instruments of God's Holy Spirit.

St. John's
Lutheran Church, ELCA
2190 Jackson Hwy
360/748-4741

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Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday
8:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Editor:
Linda Lowery

Worship Schedule:

- 8:30 a.m. Worship
- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Class
- 11:00 a.m. Worship

Summer Worship Schedule:

- One Worship Service at 9:45 a.m.

My Story . . .

(continued from page 1)

best training I've had. I can remember coming home from church as a young girl with a new hymn in my head and sitting at the piano to play the hymn over and over again. Little did I know where that love of hymns would lead me. God had planted a seed.

During my high school and college summers, I had organ jobs at a Methodist and a Lutheran church. Upon graduating from college, I was the choir accompanist at our church in Bothell for 20 years.

Upon arriving in Chehalis and coming to St. John's, we were greeted with smiles and invitations to join groups. Our family in Christ was here! I started playing for the Lenten services. Once I retired from teaching, two of my young adult interests were re-ignited: knitting and playing the organ. Prayer shawls were introduced at our first women's retreat at Black Lake. So I took up the knitting needles I hadn't touched for 35 years, and taught myself to knit again - experimenting with different cast on methods until I found the one Grandma taught me when I was 8 years old!

Regaining my organ skills took a little longer. After many hours of practice, and when my feet were ready to work again in coordination with my hands, I could feel a physical "click" in my brain. I knew those skills were still there; they just needed to be revitalized. And so I was off again playing hymns! I never dreamed I would play the organ again. It had been 35 years!!

The Holy Spirit is working at St. John's in many ways.

Some of the most powerful experiences have come to me in the form of the youngest among us. A few months ago during a children's sermon, Pastor Matt asked the children to lead adults, whose eyes were closed, all the way to the back of the church. It may have looked like a young boy firmly holding my hand, but I felt the hand of Christ, who was not going to let me go until I was safe.

For the last two Palm/Passion Sundays, we have used "The Cry of the Whole Congregation" as the service. Palm Sunday service always begins with "All Glory, Laud and Honor," a powerful, rousing hymn. When the hymn was finished, the children's choir started singing and I was swept away. It was as if I were there watching Jesus enter Jerusalem on the donkey and the children were there to sing their hosannas to Him. I sat on the organ bench with tears streaming down my face.

The children's Christmas programs are always special, but a few years ago during "The First Christmas," I was once again filled with His presence in the form of the children among us.

There have been changes in the St. John's family over the last 13 years. What remains constant is hearing the Word, eating the Meal, and knowing that the Holy Spirit is always present, encouraging and comforting us, giving us a nudge when we need it and reminding us of whose we are. I am ever thankful for our life in Chehalis and our St. John's family.

Vicki Graham

Youth Corner

Looking at the calendar I am wondering where did the year go? I truly can't believe that Christmas is a few weeks away. Again we are reminded of the miracle of Christ's birth. I know I can speak for myself and the St. John's Youth that we are really appreciative of and grateful for all we have accomplished this past year including Youth Quake and topped off with an amazing Mission trip to the Blackfeet Nation in Montana – especially meeting our new lifelong friends, Bill and Muriel Oldchief. We are truly blessed beyond words.

December events:

- November/Dec: Adoption of Blackfeet Indian Reservation Children (Giving Tree)
- December 3: Santa Parade
- December 3: Walk n Knock after Santa Parade
- December 11: Christmas Caroling to Seniors/Shut-ins
- December 11: Christmas Program and Dinner
- December 15: Nutcracker Performance

Sunday school is amazing. You can feel God's spirit up and down the halls of St. John each and every Sunday. Did you notice we had to add another table

in the Narthex for fellowship time due to the growing number of children attending Sunday school? Our St. John's family is growing both in numbers and spiritually. In closing, with Christ's birthday right around the corner, we are thankful and blessed for the Spirit of God that surrounds us at St. John's. Wishing all of you a wonderful and a Blessed Christmas season.

Pat Soderquist

The Start of the Reformation

Contributed by Brad Meagher

2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the start of the Reformation. Martin Luther pounded a large iron nail in the door of the local parish and hung his hit list of 95 theses. And thus it began. I'm going to spend 2017 getting back to my theological roots.

I picked up a copy of *The History of the Lutheranism* by Eric Gritsh, and, quite by accident, picked up a novel by a nineteenth-century English writer named Elizabeth Rundle Charles. That book is entitled, *Chronicles of the Schonberg-Cotta Family*. I'm reading the two books side by side.

The novel tells the story of a sixteenth-century German family who knew Martin Luther. While the story line is fiction, the descriptions of sixteenth-century life and Martin

Luther's activities are surprisingly accurate. It's a great read, and if you have a Kindle you can get it free from Amazon.

Mrs. Charles makes a number of cultural observations which are quite intriguing. Mind you, she wrote these in 1863, and she was describing

Reformation

a culture that existed in 1517. But the irony is that her observations are equally applicable to the cultural challenges the Church faces today. She wrote:

“It is the truth which is assailed in any age which tests our fidelity. It is to confess we are called, not merely to profess. If I profess, with the loudest voice and the clearest exposition, every portion of the truth of God

except precisely that little point which the world and the devil are at that moment attacking, I am not confessing Christ, however boldly I may be professing Christianity. Where the battle rages the loyalty of the soldier is proved; and

to be steady on all the battle-fields besides is mere flight and disgrace to him if he flinches at that one point.”

In Luther's day, the challenges to God's truths included indulgences and Papal authority. So I wonder: Which of God's truths are being assailed in our time? Where are the battles raging? Rest assured the battles exist. All we have to do is correctly identify them, steep ourselves in scripture, and dive in.

December Celebrations

Birthdays

1 Craig Mitchell
4 Jan Cosser
5 Ann Salzer
Sam Teitzel
6 Chuck Ziegert
8 Michael Thomas
9 Candice Tobin
10 Jim Gilliland
13 Anna Kreutz
14 Luanna Deming
15 Bruce Graham
Linda Lowery
Andrew Michal
16 Courtney Cox
17 Jack Cosser
18 David Nelson
Allen Unzelman
20 Sara Blair
Lynette Gage
Kellen Justice
Lauri Kreutz

24 Keith Birchard
Mary DuBois
28 Brynne Bailey
Katrin Kreutz
30 Katrina Kirsch
Pastor Matthew March
31 Travis Newman

Anniversaries

8 Joann and Bill Hulse
30 Mindy and Jon Judd
Nancy and Wally Jordan
Cathy and John Torvik
31 Pat and Al Soderquist

Baptism Anniversaries

2 Heidi Meier
4 Mariah Unzelman
9 Michael Grega
10 Steve Kostanich
12 Steve Dean
15 Bob, Jan & Dave Cosser
Kathryn & Russ Cox
16 Nathan Suhrbier

17 Barbara Grega
20 Ann Salzer
21 Ben Suhrbier
22 Jackson Humphrey
Rachel March
23 Zach Stanfield
Johnathan Vlach
26 Jamison Scott
27 Ashleigh Cox
31 Katie Meier

If we missed your birthday or anniversary, let us know! Call the church office at 748-4741 or e-mail: office@stjohnschehalis.net.



Bits and Pieces

Address Change:

Curt and Myra Volland
2178 Pawnee Drive
Kingman, AZ 86401

HELP! Please help us out by plainly marking items left here at the church if intended for a designated purpose – especially food items. Just a simple note indicating who or what the item is intended for will avoid misunderstandings or being used for the wrong purpose. Thank you for your cooperation.

On Friday, December 2 at 7:00 p.m., we need help to Decorate the “float” for the

annual Chehalis Santa Parade. We need lots of tinsel, garland, ornaments, battery-operated lights, etc. to decorate our golf cart. Hot chocolate, cider and cookies will be provided to inspire our decorating.

We need volunteers for the **Santa Parade, December 3 at 11 a.m.** to walk with the golf cart and hand out candy (we are not allowed to “throw” candy). Bette White will ride as our official St. John’s representative.

Please let Linda, 748-4741, know if you will join the fun in decorating the golf cart or participating in the parade. **Let’s bring home another trophy!**

St. John’s Altar Guild will again have fresh cedar, holly (both regular and variegated) and pine cones for sale in the church narthex (great for your home decorating projects or as gifts for family and friends). Cost is \$1.00 per package for cedar and holly. Packaged pine-cones are 50 cents.

Sound System Update

Thank you to those who have contributed funds for the update to our sound system. We have met our down payment goal and the equipment

has been ordered and will be installed before Christmas. We continue to accept contributions to the sound system fund so that we can pay the total bill

early in 2017. We are looking forward to having a new sound system soon so that everyone can hear God’s Word.

December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Wednesday's Together!</i>				1	2	3
4:15 p.m. Kids of the Kingdom 4:30 p.m. St. John's Knitting Ministry 5:00 p.m. Children's Chime Choir 5:30 p.m. Dinner is Served – All are welcome! 6:00 p.m. High School Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir Practice 6:30 p.m. Confirmation Class 7:00 p.m. Adult Choir Practice				9:00 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy	7:00 p.m. Decorate Christmas Parade Float Pastor Matt's Day Off Office Closed	8:00 a.m. Walk and Knock 8:30 a.m. Line up for Christmas Parade at 11 a.m.
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Study Class 11:00 a.m. Worship	11:00 a.m. Altar Guild 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:00 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball 6:00 p.m. Social Ministry 7:00 p.m. Youth and Family	3:00 p.m. Church Secretary Poverty Taskforce Training 3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center 7:00 p.m. ELCA Women's Advent Event	6:30 a.m. Men's Bible Study 1:00 p.m. Agate Hospital Auxiliary 4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule) 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop #301 6:30 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball	9:00 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center	Pastor Matt's Day Off Office Closed	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Study Class 11:00 a.m. Worship 12:00 p.m. Youth Christmas Caroling 4:00 p.m. Sunday School Christmas Program, <i>Once Upon a Starry Night</i> 5:00 p.m. Christmas Smorgasbord	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:00 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball	11:30 a.m. Women's Lunch Bunch at Denny's 3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:00 p.m. Mutual Ministry 6:30 p.m. Church Council 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center	4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule) 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop #301 6:30 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball	9:00 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship 12:00 p.m. Young at Heart Luncheon and Program 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center Deadline for <i>Giving Tree</i> Gifts to be returned Visitor Deadline	Pastor Matt's Day Off Office Closed	2:00 p.m. Dodge Ball Event
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Study Class 11:00 a.m. Worship <i>Gifts of Hope</i> Deadline	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:00 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball 6:00 p.m. Worship and Music	5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center 7:00 p.m. Book Guild	4:15 p.m. <i>Wednesday's Together</i> (see schedule) 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop #301 6:30 p.m. Advent Service 6:30 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball	9:00 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center	Pastor Matt's Day Off Office Closed	7:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service 10:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
9:45 a.m. Lessons and Carols Worship Service 	1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Habitat for Humanity 5:00 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball	3:00 p.m. Chehalis Girls Basketball in Community Center 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center	No Wednesday's Together 6:30 p.m. 4th Grade Basketball 6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Troop #301	9:00 a.m. Bible Study Fellowship 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo in Community Center 6:30 p.m. Soccer Academy in Community Center	Pastor Matt's Day Off Office Closed	

Advent . . .

Advent Services begin on Wednesday, November 27 at 6:30 in the Conference Room and will continue through the Advent season. We will be using

the Joyous Light service for worship.

The Advent themes are:

1. A People of Promise;
2. Bearing Fruit;

3. Healing of the Whole World; and

4. God in Unexpected Places. Please plan on being a part of celebrating Advent.

Help Others Through The Giving Trees

St. John's has a tradition of sponsoring a Giving Tree as part of the Christmas season. Each year a tree is "decorated" with tags that represent people in our local community who are experiencing tough times. This year there will be two trees – one for our local community and one to benefit the children of the Blackfeet Nation. The tags on the "traditional" tree

contain information about a local specific family or individual. The "Blackfeet" tree tags include information for a school-aged child that lives in a dormitory on the Blackfeet Reservation. St. John's members are encouraged to take a tag off either or both trees. Wrapped gifts (and the tags) need to be brought back to the church no later than **Thursday, December**

15 – the date families will pick up the gifts. Arrangements have been made to get the gifts to the Blackfeet students.

For questions concerning the local Giving Tree, please contact Sue Austin, 360-520-4527. For questions regarding the Blackfeet Reservation Tree, contact anyone on the Social Ministry Committee.

ELCA Women of St. John's

The Women's Advent Event will be held on Tuesday, December 6 at 7:00pm in the Conference Room. We will share an Advent Devotional called "Advent Waiting." Advent is a period of waiting and anticipation — a time of preparation and making ready. This will be a time for us to follow Mary's example and ponder things in our hearts. Each lady is asked to bring one dozen Christmas cookies to share for our fellowship time.

Our Annual Christmas Smörgåsbord will be held in conjunction with the Children's Christmas Program. The children will present "Once Upon a Starry Night" on Sunday December 11 at 4:00 p.m. in the sanctuary. We will then proceed to the community center for punch, coffee and tea with dinner served at 5:00 p.m. Each family group is asked to bring a salad or hot dish to share plus one dozen cookies. Please RSVP

on the sign-up sheet in the narthex so we have enough seating for everyone. It has been our tradition to have tables decorated by different members of the congregation. If you are interested in decorating a table, please indicate that on the sign-up sheet. After dinner there will be a special activity for the children while the adults are treated to some additional entertainment.

The Women's Book Guild will meet on Tuesday, December 20 at 7:00 p.m. Nancy Lynch and Pat Kullberg will be our hostesses. We will leave the church at 6:30 p.m. to carpool to Pat's daughter's house in Rochester. Linda Lowery will lead the discussion on

the book *Unorthodox* by Deborah Feldman. If you are interested in reading this book and joining our group, contact Joan Jahnsen at 748-3901.

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you!"
Isaiah 60:1

The Christmas Chorale

A Service of Lessons and Carols
Featuring Concordia's music ensembles

Friday, December 2 | 7 pm
Saturday, December 3 | 7 pm
Sunday, December 4 | 3 pm

St. Michael's Lutheran Church
6700 NE 29th Avenue
Portland, Oregon

ADMISSION IS FREE. DONATIONS ACCEPTED.

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY
PORTLAND, OREGON

www.cu-portland.edu/christmaschorale



"It is very difficult, but I know that the ELCA is my backbone—my prayer support and financial support."

Wal Reat

RETURNING HOME WITH A MESSAGE OF HOPE

"The Lutheran church is growing here," said Mawien Ariik, an ELCA missionary serving in South Sudan.

As ethnic conflict abates in the country, ELCA missionaries Ariik and Wal Reat are finding new opportunities to proclaim the gospel.

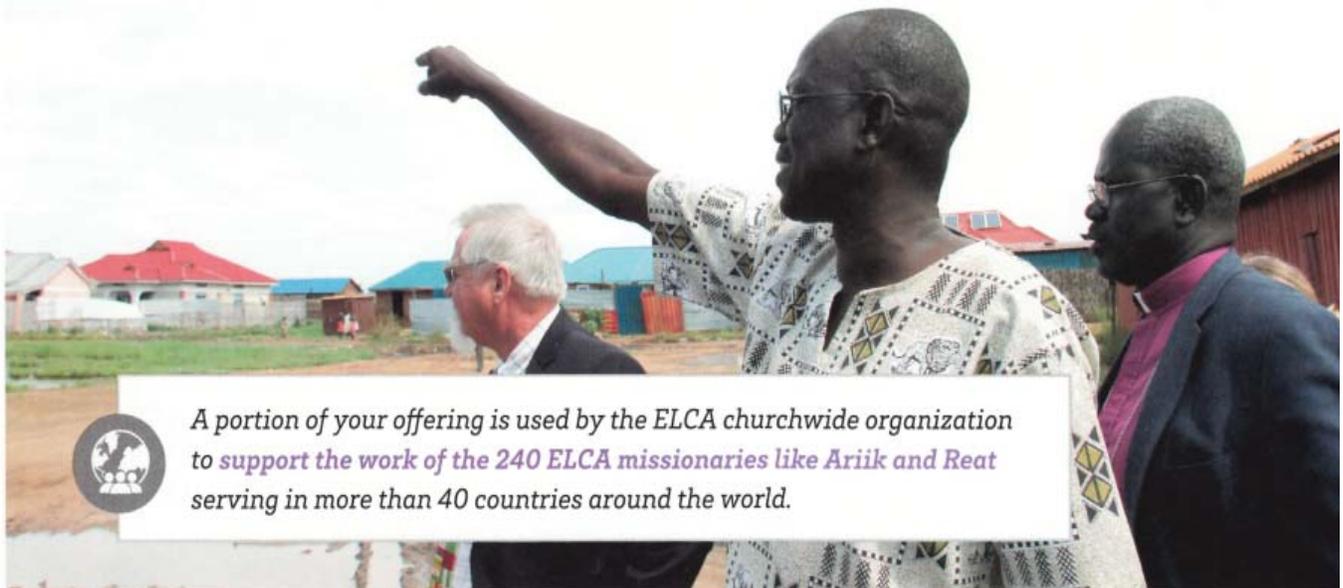
Getting from place to place is still tough for Reat as he evangelizes in the refugee camps where 1.5 million displaced Sudanese live. Ariik, who facilitates outreach and proclamation in the emerging Lutheran church, encounters many who were wounded by inter-ethnic violence.

"It is not bad to have different tribes, but to love others as one body of Christ—it is a big challenge for us to convey that," he said.

Civil war drove both men to seek asylum in the U.S., where they attended seminary and were ordained as ELCA pastors. After several years pastoring Sudanese congregations in Minnesota, they wanted to share God's message of grace and forgiveness in their native country. The ELCA called Ariik as a missionary in 2012 and Reat in 2015.

With no worries about their daily living expenses—because ELCA Mission Support covers the majority of their support costs—they can focus more on responding to the gifts and challenges around them.

"It is very difficult [work], but I know that the ELCA is my backbone—my prayer support and financial support," said Reat.



A portion of your offering is used by the ELCA churchwide organization to support the work of the 240 ELCA missionaries like Ariik and Reat serving in more than 40 countries around the world.

Poinsettias for the Sanctuary

St. John's Altar Guild members are asking for your help in decorating the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas Services. Poinsettias will be used to decorate the sanctuary and are available through the Altar Guild for \$8 each. Poinsettias can be given in honor or memory of a loved one, or

given to the glory of God. You are welcome to bring your own poinsettia (mark your name on the bottom and take it home after Christmas services). To donate toward the purchase of a poinsettia, fill out the form below and give it, along with the money for the poinsettias, to any Altar Guild member, or

mail the form to the church office. Please make checks out to St. John's Altar Guild.

Altar Guild members are Jan Cosser, Gail Dean, Mary DuBois, Marilyn Fenn, Clara Gilliland, Joann Hulse, Nancy Lynch, Janie Mauel, Patty Olsen, Mary Rogers, Diane Rudorfer and Kim Wright.

Name: _____

I wish to donate # _____ poinsettias at \$8.00 each. Total amount: \$ _____

In Honor of _____

Memory of: _____

To the Glory of God

I will provide a poinsettia



St. John's Lutheran Church
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