

The Visitor

January 2016

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

New Year/New Creation



Romans 5:17 *So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!*

The New Year is the chance to make New Year's resolutions. We make promises to ourselves to make changes for the better. Often we don't keep those resolutions because we say things in the heat of the moment on New Year's Eve that really aren't realistic for us.

2016 is the year we change all that. Over this past year, we have written, studied, discussed, wrestled, reviewed and prioritized action plans for our congregation. Starting with the observations of Dr Kent Hunter, we have written almost 100 action plans. You could call them our congregation's New Year's resolutions. We spent the entire last year working hard to make these action plans something that will be helpful for our congregation and move us forward as a congregation.

We are also not going to try to change everything the first year. Some of the action plans are already completed. The rest of them have been scheduled over the next three years. It was not an overnight process to get us to this point. It will not be an overnight process for us to complete our action plans.

This is what it means for us to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. We are called to continue to improve ourselves and our congregation. We are called to continually be remade in our Baptism into a community of disciples sent into the world to share the Gospel of Jesus Christ. In the process of working our action plans, we are becoming a new creation as a community of faith.

2016 promises to be a year full of promise and building up of God's community of faith planted here in Chehalis and called St John's Lutheran Church.

Pastor Matt

Congregational Annual Meeting Slated for January 24

The Annual Meeting is your opportunity to get involved! Please mark your calendar and plan on attending. We will be discussing the business of St. John's and reviewing the budget for 2016. Copies of the budget will be available at the meeting. Keep in mind that the budget reflects our goals, as well as the vision and mission of our congregation. This is your opportunity to hear the annual reports from our Council, clergy and committees. We will hold elections for the slate of nominees to the Church Council.

The meeting will begin promptly at 9:45 am., between worship services.



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



Dr. Donna Beegle

“See Poverty . . . Be the Difference!”

Coming to
Chehalis, Washington!

March 19, 2016

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Where: St. John's Lutheran Church
2190 Jackson Highway,
Chehalis, WA 98632
360-748-4741

Cost: \$20.00 (Includes lunch)

A conference for all persons, organizations, faith communities, institutions, and agencies interested in learning about *Communication Across Barrier's* technique for addressing barricades to success when working with poverty.

Dr. Donna M. Beegle is an authentic voice who speaks, writes and trains across the nation to break the iron cage of poverty. She is the author of “See Poverty, Be The Difference,” and “An Action Approach to Educating Students Who Live in the Crisis of Poverty.” Donna's inspiring story and work have been featured in newspapers around the nation, on local TV and on National programs such as PBS. For 25 years, Donna has worked with educators, justice professionals, health care providers, social service agencies, and other organizations who want to make a difference for those living in the crisis of poverty. She was selected 2008 National Speaker of the Year by the New Mexico State Bar Foundation. In 2010, Portland State University's School of Social Work dedicated the Donna M. Beegle Community Classrooms in her honor. In 2011, she won the Oregon Ethics in Business award.

Donna co-founded *Communication Across Barriers* with her mentor, Dr. Bob Fulford in 1989. She currently serves as President.

The Question of Poverty

The following article appeared in the Fall 2015 Communication Across Barriers electronic newsletter:

Dr. Beegle teaches us that poverty is not just a question of economic distress. Poverty impacts our neighbors' self-confidence, hope, and physical and mental well-being. Efforts to address poverty barriers must include approaches that remove

the shame, rebuild the hope, increase self-confidence, and reduce the isolation

Add to that Harvard professor Robert Putnam's latest book in which he states that, “It is sometimes difficult for the affluent to understand the texture of poverty, since they don't interact with people in poverty.” Economic sorting at the neighborhood level leads to social sorting

(continued on page 3)

Question of Poverty . . .

(continued from page 2)

in terms of schools, churches, and community groups. "This represents," he warns, "an incipient class apartheid." Dr. Beegle has for years shared that the social class divide in our communities perpetuates the crisis.

Professor Putnam goes on to say that with fewer social ties and connections between the haves and have-nots, it becomes harder for people to see themselves in the others' shoes: the economic gap becomes an empathy gap. When social ties

weaken, stereotypes flourish. Yes, this does sound like the core issue the Opportunity Communities were designed to address. United and poverty-informed, we can fight the poverty and empower children and families.

A recent University of Essex study in the UK finds that social isolation supports poverty – another thing Dr. Beegle has been telling us for years; one of the overarching goals in her trainings is to reduce this isolation by making connections and creating opportunities! The

Social Ministries Committee here at St. Johns has a vision of adopting Dr. Beegle's Navigator and Opportunity Community here in Lewis County. We pray that all of us here at St. Johns can participate in this ministry challenge. Plan to attend the See Poverty...Be the Difference workshop here at St. Johns on March 19th. Registration: \$20 (includes lunch). Starting January 1, go to the United Way Lewis County web page to register on-line; or complete and return the hard-copy registration form available in the Narthex.G

St. John's Women's Ministries

Women's Bible Study Group meets **Mondays at 1:00 p.m.** led by Nancy Lynch. This is a great opportunity to dig deeper as we learn and discuss the scriptures.

WELCA Brunch and Bible Study will meet on **Saturday, January 16 at 10:00am** in the conference room. We will begin a 4-month study on the book of Philippians. Session 1 is titled

Confidence in God's beginnings and endings (Philippians 1:1-26)

The Women's Book Guild will meet on **Tuesday, January 26 at 7:00 p.m.** at the home of Cindy Cummings. Donna Moir will lead the discussion on the book, *The Gold of Exodus* by Howard Blum. If you are interested in reading this book and joining our group, call Joan Jahnsen at 748-3901.

Young-at-Heart will meet on **Thursday January 21 at noon** for lunch and a program — there is always room at the table for you! For more information about Young At Heart, contact Nancy Lynch, 748-2124.



From the Library Shelf

The Gold Exodus by Howard Blum will be the subject of January Book Guild's discussion.



Mount Sinai. For many, it is the most sacred place on Earth-- the site where God descended to give Moses the Ten Commandments. Yet for centuries, mankind has not known its exact location. In this heart-pounding true story, award-winning journalist and bestselling author Howard Blum tells the enthralling account of two modern-day adventurers-- Larry Williams, a two-time Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate from Montana and a self-made millionaire, and his friend Bob Cornuke, a retired policemen and former SWAT team member. Lured by the prospect of finding the fabled fortune in gold that the ancient Hebrews took with them when they fled from Egypt, the two men set out to find the true site of Mount Sinai-- with only the Old Testament as a guide. Eminent biblical scholars at Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania have argued that Mount Sinai is not in the Sinai Peninsula at all, but rather in northwestern Saudi Arabia. However, they were never allowed into the kingdom to prove their argument. When Cornuke and Williams are also denied entry, they daringly sneak into Saudi Arabia. And what they discover at the mountain known as Jabal al Lawz will astonish the world — and inspire readers to rethink the role of the Bible in history. They find the remains of the stone altar at which the Golden Calf was worshiped, the twelve pillars that Moses ordered to be erected, the cave where Moses slept, and, most sensationally, the unnaturally scorched spot on the mountaintop. Join us! Check the Visitor calendar and/or contact Joan Jahnsen for details.

Team 316

I'd like to let you know about a new youth ministry initiative called Team 316. Our vision for Team 316 is to build up funds to serve our Savior Jesus Christ through our ministry. Whether sponsoring a youth to go on a retreat who can't afford it, funding a local outreach event targeting kids who have no church home, or supporting a mission trip, we want to do what God has called us to do.

This letter is to ask you and your family to pray about becoming a team member for the next year. As a Team 316 member, you would pledge to support our youth ministry outreach by donating \$3.16 per week for one year, which comes to a total of \$164.32. You may choose to give it all at one time, or give on a weekly or monthly basis. Some may even give above the suggested amount while some others may consider Team 316 as a way to make a memorial or honorary gift. Our general operating budget is sufficient for regular program activities, and Team 316 will allow our youth ministry to increase its impact on students and through students who serve.

However you choose to give, please remember that this amount is to be above your normal tithe. We do not want in any way for the church budget to be affected by your gift. It is also important to note this will be the only student ministry support event for the entire year, so we hope you will join the Team. By eliminating other fundraising projects, we can then better focus our energy on serving, and you will not feel obligated to purchase products or services just to help the youth ministry. Our church has a wonderful legacy of generously supporting our youth ministry, and we hope Team 316 will make it even easier to do so.

Our goal for this year is to have over 40 team members, which will add an additional \$6,500 to our youth ministry, opening up so many doors that have previously been closed due to financial restraints.

Please consider becoming a Team 316 member today. Look for the signup table in the lobby of the church January 24, or contact the office to receive a Team 316 pledge card. Our Team 316 Celebration Sunday is January 31st and we hope you'll become a member of the team. If you have any questions concerning Team 316, please don't hesitate to contact me. As faithful and committed disciples of Christ, may we follow His lead for His church and His people. Thank you!

In His name,
Youth Minister



January Celebrations

January Birthdays

- 3 Joe Buda
- 4 Melody Braaten
Kevin Hoffman
- 7 Diane Rudorfer
- 9 Jane Margaret Birchard
Arnie Suhrbier
Patty Wilson
- 11 David March
- 21 Ezra Birchard

- Cheryl Vance
- 28 Sara Lunders
- 30 Steve Grill
Tom Larsen

Baptism Anniversaries

- 3 Jane Margaret Birchard
Scott Pollock
- 4 Carl Tobey
- 9 Bette White

- 12 Jonathan Isaacson
- 17 Tyler Carlson
- 23 Cheryl Vance
- 24 Jerry Carlson
- 30 Sara Blair

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

Thank you . . .

Pastor Matt, Rachel, Elizabeth, Angela, and David thank you for all the cards and gifts for the Christmas season. Thank you also for being disciples of Christ in our community.

Thank you to our St. John's family and Pastor Matt for your prayers, cards and calls during the illness and passing of my sister and our children's aunt Edith. Such a comfort for our family.

*Lorna and Deane Johnson
Cheryl and Kerry Vance*

Thanks so much to the youth and Pat who came and caroled and also for the very good cookies.

Mary Lou Sterner

Thank you to all of you who helped make Christmas special for some of our local families as well as client from the Agency for Aging.

Your support and generosity for this project is so appreciated.

Sue Austin

HELP! Our sign along Jackson Highway is the most obvious way to reach the community and advertise special services and events. It is vital that the sign be changed regularly and kept up to date.

For the past several years, Jerry and Jill Carlson's family have faithfully and diligently maintained the outdoor sign. The Carlson's have moved to Centralia, making it more difficult for them to update the sign on a regular basis, and are offering this ministry opportunity to others in our congregation.

That being said, we need someone to maintain the sign! (This would be a great family ministry.) We have all the resources needed, including input from Pastor Matt, to do the job. Please consider helping out St. John's in this important ministry to us and the community. Contact Pastor Matt if you need more information.

The 2016 January – March "sponsor" chart for helping to enhance our worship services is available in the narthex. Areas where you can help are providing coffee and "goodies" (a simple plate of cookies will do), paying for the cost of producing the bulletins (\$5 per week), paying for the Chronicle newspaper ad (\$8 per week) and providing flowers for the altar. Please take a moment and see where you might be able to provide service. Your help is very much appreciated!

Mark your Calendar:

Shrove Tuesday pancake dinner, February 9 at 5:30.

Ash Wednesday, February 10, services at **1 p.m. and 7 p.m.**

Lenten services, every Wednesday at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. during Lent.

| Dollars and Sense | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Operating Income and Expenses: | |
| November 2015 | |
| Income | \$16,055.85 |
| Expenses: | (18,596.77) |
| Total: | \$(2,540.92) |
| Year to Date as of November 15, 2015 | |
| Income | \$214,600.12 |
| Expenses | (244,485.87) |
| Total | \$(29,885.75) |

January 2016

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|--|--|
| <i>Wednesday's Together!</i> 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 | | | | | 1 Pastor Matt's Day Off | 2 |
| 3 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Adult Class 11:00 a.m. Worship | 4 11:00 a.m. Altar Guild 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 6:00 p.m. Social Ministry 7:00 p.m. Youth and Family | 5 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo 7:00 p.m. Church Growth | 6 6:00 a.m. Men's Morning Bible Study 10:00 a.m. Lewis County Genealogical Society Board 1:00 p.m. Agate Hospital Auxiliary Wednesday's Together (see schedule) | 7 6:30 p.m. Chehalis Basketball | 8 Pastor Matt's Day Off | 9 9:00 a.m. Youth Help with Mobile Mission Meals |
| 10 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School 11:00 a.m. Worship | 11 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study | 12 11:30 a.m. Women's Lunch Bunch at Denny's 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo 5:45 p.m. Mutual Ministry 6:30 p.m. Church Council | 13 10:00 a.m. Lewis County Genealogical Society Board Wednesday's Together (see schedule) | 14 9:30 a.m. DAR 5:30 p.m. Staff Meeting at March's 6:30 p.m. Chehalis Basketball | 15 Pastor Matt's Day Off February Visitor Deadline | 16 10:00 a.m. ELCA Women's Bible Study and Brunch |
| 17 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Class 11:00 a.m. Worship | 18 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study | 19 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo | 20 10:00 a.m. Lewis County Genealogical Society Board Wednesday's Together (see schedule) | 21 12:00 p.m. Young At Heart 6:30 p.m. Chehalis Basketball 7:00 p.m. Men's Bible Study | 22 Pastor Matt's Day Off | 23 |
| 24 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Annual Meeting 11:00 a.m. Worship Team 316 Sponsor Sign Up | 25 1:00 p.m. Women's Bible Study 7:00 p.m. Music & Worship 7:00 p.m. Habitat for Humanity | 26 5:30 p.m. Taekwondo 7:00 p.m. Book Guild | 27 Wednesday's Together (see schedule) 10:00 a.m. Lewis County Genealogical Society Board | 28 6:30 p.m. Chehalis Basketball | 29 Pastor Matt's Day Off | 30 9:00 a.m. Church Council Retreat |
| 31 8:30 a.m. Worship 9:45 a.m. Sunday School and Adult Class 11:00 a.m. Worship Team 316 Celebration Sunday | | | | | | |

An Open Letter to the Muslim American Community

December 11, 2015

Dear Muslim Sisters and Brothers,

Grace and peace to you. I am writing on behalf of many Christians in this country who wish to share a word of solidarity, love, and hope with you in these difficult days.

In this season of Advent, we, your Christian neighbors, are preparing to celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who commanded that “you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart... [and] you shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30-31, NRSV).

In our love for you, our neighbors, we are distressed by the ways in which you are being forced to bear the fears held by

many in our nation. Therefore, we renew our commitment to find even more effective ways to protect and defend you from words and actions which assault your safety and well-being. We believe God calls us to resist what is divisive, discriminatory, xenophobic, racist, or violent, and we want you to look to us as allies and friends.

The global refugee and migrant crisis and the acts of terror committed in this country and around the world are challenges that demand our collective efforts, and our common prayers. Therefore, we will seek to stand shoulder to shoulder with you as agents of peace, justice, understanding, welcome, and reconciliation, for the sake of the world that God so loves.

In this holy season, when we anticipate the light that the darkness cannot overcome (John 1:5, NRSV), we are reminded of God’s gift of life abundant for all. Together with you, we are committed to building a stronger society based on the dignity of each human being, the value of diversity, the holiness of creation, and the common good. We pledge our partnership, and invite our local communities into continued dialogue and engagement to this end.

In peace,



Bishop Eaton

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton
Presiding Bishop,
Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Everything Has Become New



The Rev. Rick Jaech

Dear Friends in Christ,

In the Academy Museum in Florence, Italy, you find

Michelangelo’s incredible statue of David,

but in the hallway leading up to David, another statue catches your attention. It is Michelangelo’s unfinished statue of St. Matthew. St. Matthew looks as though he is trapped in the rock and trying to escape.

Michelangelo talked about this when someone asked him how he did his work. He said, “I went to the quarry and looked for a block of stone with the stirring of life in it. My task was then to chip away the marble to

free the figure within.”

As we celebrate the birth of Christ and also enter into a New Year, we are in a time of new beginnings. Even as God stirred miraculous new life in Mary, so God comes to breathe new life into us and into our world. Yet, as we look around and within us, we realize that creation is still a work in process. In tragic and painful ways, we remain trapped by the stony shells of fear, suspicion, judgment and violence. Families are shattered; children die daily; nations are locked in war. Therefore, through the incarnate Christ, God comes to chip away the stone that entraps us in order to free us to new life.

As Mary and Joseph modeled for us, God also invites us to share in the task of setting

creation free.

Mary said, “Let it be with me according to your word.” In trust, she allowed her own life to be made into something entirely new. In so doing, she became a co-creator with God of a new world, enabling the new Way of grace and peace to be born.

“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I pray that God’s gift of new life first come to you in this season of Christ’s birth. I further pray that this new life come to all the places in our world where we remain trapped in stone. Through our “Yes” to God, we join Mary in giving birth to a new creation.

Time to Start Thinking About . . .

Lenten Devotions! Bill Blair is looking for Lenten Devotional writers. **Ash Wednesday is February 10, 2016 and the deadline for devotions is January 24.** This year's theme is characters in the Bible – who is your favorite and why?

If you have questions, please contact Bill Blair, 748-6878.

Thank you,
Church Growth Committee



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