

# January Calendar of Events

## Dates to remember:

**Sunday, January 13th—Services with Healing**

**Sunday, January 27th—Congregational Meeting 11:00 am**

- Please bring non-perishable food for Hope House on Sundays.
- Please bring your aluminum cans and Campbell labels on the second Sunday, January 13, **ONLY**.
- Dorcas Circle meets Tuesdays at 9:00 am.
- Knitting & Crochet group meets Tuesdays at 1:00 pm.
- Sunday School at 10:00 am—meets in church Sunday, January 13th.
- God's Young Voices—meets Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm, beginning January 9th.
- Senior Choir meets every Wednesday at 7:30 pm beginning January 9th.
- Health and Wellness meeting, Thursday, January 3rd, 7:00 pm
- Worship & Music meets Tuesday, January 8th, at 7:00 pm
- Ladies Aid meets Wednesday, February 13th at 11:30 am.
- OWLS meet on Thursday, January 10th, at 8:30 am at Forum Restaurant
- Property committee meeting Tuesday, January 8th at 6:30 pm.
- Christian Education meeting Tuesday, January 8th at 7:00 pm
- Women's Bible Study meets Thursday, January 17th, 7:00 pm.
- Friends meet Tuesday, January 29th at 9:30 am.
- Parish Nurse, Barb Estrada is here on Wednesday mornings but not January 16th she will be here on the Friday, January 18th of that week
- PICK N SAVE WPLC *WE CARE* NUMBER IS # 934480



**Reports are due on January 3rd.**



## How's Your Thyroid?

January is National Thyroid Awareness month. Your thyroid gland is a large, butterfly-shaped gland located in the front of your neck. Its job is to release thyroid hormones, which regulates your body's metabolism, or the rate at which you burn glucose. Thyroid hormones help control the function of many of your body's organs including your heart, brain, liver, kidneys, hair, and skin. Symptoms can involve almost every function of the body, such as digestion, elimination, thinking and memory, the heartbeat, movement and muscle function, energy, and fatigue. Many times the changes are slow to develop and you do not realize that you are sick. These disorders can easily be overlooked since symptoms are so subtle or because they mimic other disorders. Thyroid problems seem to occur with greater frequency in women and in people over 60. In the older adult, the course of the illness and the outcomes can also differ from those in younger persons.

The most common thyroid diseases are hypothyroidism (in which your thyroid makes too little hormone), and hyperthyroidism (in which your thyroid makes too much.) Both disorders are believed to be the result of an autoimmune process that destroys or over stimulates the thyroid gland. Both disorders can be diagnosed

with simple blood tests and the concentrations of the thyroid hormone, thyroxine (T4) and the pituitary thyroid-stimulating hormone (TSH) are measured. Persons with obvious thyroid failure require treatment. If you are started on medication, be sure to stay on the same type of medication and take it at the same time every day.

### Other Things People Should Know About Thyroid Disorders

1. Up to 27 million Americans may be affected by thyroid disorders, about half remain undiagnosed.
2. Thyroid disorders tend to run in the family.
3. Fatigue is a common complaint for under and over active thyroid conditions.
4. TSH testing is the most useful test for thyroid screening.
5. Regular checkups are the key to successfully managing a malfunctioning thyroid.
6. Changing brands and dosage of thyroid medication should only be done under the supervision of your physician.
7. Thyroid conditions can be associated with pregnancy and warrant close attention.
8. Younger women may be diagnosed due to complaints of menstrual irregularities or fertility problems.
9. Thyroid cancer is a fairly

common malignancy with the vast majority of persons having excellent long-term survival.

Please feel free to ask me questions about this or other concerns you may have during my normal office hours on Wednesdays, during my Sunday worship presence, or by phone either at WPLC or at my Luther Manor number (414-464-3888, ext. 341). Have a safe and warm January. Peace,  
Barb Estrada, RN, PN

### Journey of the Heart

This February the Health and Wellness Team will be providing a chance for all of us to travel a special journey, a Journey of the Heart. This journey will be help us to seek spiritual harmony by seeking and answering some spiritual questions like—

- Do you have a forgiving heart?
- Do you have a Just Heart?
- Do you have a Kind Heart?
- Do you have a Clean Heart?
- Do you have a Peaceful Heart?
- Do you have a Strong Heart?
- Do you have a Prayer Filled Heart?

This Journey will raise up our spirits and help us grown in faith. Watch the February Leaf and the bulletin for more details. This Journey is appropriate for all ages.

—Barb

## *Social Ministry Update*

Social Ministry sponsored two projects during December 2007—the annual “**Mitten Tree**” and the on going collection of non-perishable food for Hope House. A varied collection of scarves, gloves, hats, caps and mittens for men, women and children plus eight grocery bags full of food items were delivered to hope House before Christmas. Thanks to everyone who helped make these projects successful!

## **Mark your calendars for the February 3, 2008 Souper Bowl of Caring!!!**

Again in 2008, Social Ministry is offering WPLC congregation this opportunity to help transform the *nation's biggest weekend of football* into the **greatest weekend of giving!**

Church members will be asked to bring cans of soup (any size and any variety) on **Sunday, February 3rd**. In addition, “*Soup Kettles*” will be placed at both entrances to the church sanctuary for monetary donations from congregational members.

The donated cans of soup will be delivered to the **South Side Food Pantry at Hope House**. The monies collected will be disbursed to the Hunger Task Force and America's Second Harvest to assist in the distribution of food for the needy in our area.—Marilyn Schoenleber

## **Thanks to you from Luther Manor for the donation from the Picnic funds—**

Thank you for Whitnall Park Lutheran Church's recent and generous gift of \$400 to Luther Manor. We are pleased you designated your gift toward the purchase of a bench to be placed in Luther Manor's new **Serenity Garden**.

With your gift, the transformation of the outdoor space between the Health Care Center and the Welcome Center is now near completion. We will be sure to let you know when “*your*” bench is in place.

We continue to receive many positive comments about the Serenity Garden. We all look forward to spring when we will be able to witness our donor gifts “*at work*.”

Again—many, many thanks to you for helping to bring this dream to fruition. I look forward to sharing the joy with our leadership and others of the Luther Manor community

Thank you again for your continued support of Luther Manor's ministry

Sincerely,  
Pastor David J. Keller  
President/CEO

## **Thanks from Hope House—**

We would like to thank Whitnall Park Lutheran Church for their most recent donation to Hope House. Please convey our gratitude to the members of your congregation. Support from people such as yourselves allows us to keep our doors open and continue serving the Milwaukee community. I hope your annual picnic was great fun and a huge success. Thank you for your support!

Sincerely,  
Molly Szymanski

## Birthdays

- 1 Brook Hoffmann
- 2 Ralph Cook
- 3 Sandy Baumgart  
Jennifer Sorvick
- 4 Sidney Arthur  
Daniel Hareng  
Patti Jenna
- 7 Teri Collins  
David Koralewski
- 9 Janine King  
Dolores Porath  
Roger Steckhan
- 10 Janice Swan
- 11 Jennifer Seaks
- 12 Carol Kelley
- 13 John Hembrook
- 14 Georgi Llanas
- 15 James Gaffney  
Alec Potter  
Diane Remington
- 16 Scott Brothen  
Marilyn King
- 17 Shirley Hibbard  
Mark Sparacino
- 19 Sandy Abraham  
Alyse Arthur  
Lois Essers  
Bob Everts  
Joseph Suchla
- 20 Roger Brinkmeier  
Bernice King  
Bonnie Zak
- 21 Nancy Blachowski  
Harold Hackbart  
Christopher Halper  
Charles Herfurth  
Henry Poehler
- 23 Derek Crawley
- 24 Gerald Pagel
- 25 Michael Fazio
- 27 Robert Labott  
Michael Remington  
Mickie Wills
- 28 Karen Heinrich  
Gerald Hibbard
- 29 James Halper  
Joseph Romans
- 30 Gary Stein
- 31 Britta Bukowski  
Teri Rouse

## Anniversaries

- 7 Brent & Ruth Rice
- 12 Dean & Jolen Krychowiak
- 23 John & Betty Hembrook

*Say hi and introduce yourself to the new members—*

Welcome to the new members who went well on Advent Music Sunday, December 16th.

Not only did we welcome Pastor Fazio and his wife, Kathy but—Brady and Kim Aderman; Andrew and Krista Bainbridge, daughter Madison Brainbridge; David and Angela Cotey, daughter, Hannah Cotey; Dr. Erv and Marion Kuglitsch; David and Darlene Mecikalski and grandchildren, Angelina Mecikalski and David Valleau; Andrew and Catherine Paremski; Tony and Shannon Rubenzer, children Melody King, Michelle and Miranda Rubenzer— *their pictures are on the kiosk—thanks to Roger Brinkmeier!*



## COUNTDOWN TO THE *New Year*

Celebrate the blessings of the previous year and the hope of the New Year with this fun party idea and craft.

### What you need:

- Brown paper lunch bags or colorful bags
- Construction paper
- Markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Stickers (optional)
- Inexpensive prizes or treats (see ideas below)

### What you do:

1. Before New Year's Eve, assemble a bag for every hour before midnight that you plan to celebrate.
2. Use construction paper and markers to make a clock with a different time for each bag.
3. Glue a clock onto each bag.
4. Decorate the bags with stickers or other designs.
5. Fill the bags with inexpensive prizes or treats, each accompanied by a Bible verse. Here are a few suggestions:
  - Plastic party-favor watches ("The LORD will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore" Psalm 121:8, NIV.)
  - Bookmarks ("Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture" 1 Timothy 4:13, NIV.)
  - Small notepads and pencils ("Let love and faithfulness never leave you ... write them on the tablet of your heart" Proverbs 3:3, NIV.)
  - Sweet treats ("Taste and see that the LORD is good" Psalm 34:8, NIV.)
  - Party noisemaker, in a bag to be opened at midnight ("Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth" Psalm 98:4, NRSV.)
6. Open each bag at the time shown on its clock.

## Condensed Council minutes from November 20th, 2007

### Pastor Lund Transition

Pastor Lund's last day will be 12/9. Friends has donated \$50 toward a cake. The council decided that the congregational gift will be a \$100 gift card in the form of a VISA/Mastercard, plus any additional donations that individuals would like to make towards this gift.

### Pastor Fazio Start

Pastor Fazio's first day here will be 12/13/07. Roger Brinkmeier will be on hand to help with getting him up and running – showing him the computer, etc. Pastor Fazio's first day preaching will be 12/16. The council will ask for contributions from the congregation of baked goods for a reception after 2<sup>nd</sup> service. The reception will take place in Hibbard Hall. Marjorie Pagel will do a press release announcing Pastor Fazio's arrival and another when he is installed. She will submit an article to the religious editor who writes articles for the Saturday paper.

### Barb Estrada's Salary

Per Prue Smith, WPLC's contribution to Barb's salary is not expected to increase in 2008.

Stewardship and attendance trends per Synod report  
The report asked that WPLC increase their contribution for the synod stewardship drive. They have requested \$12,000. This has already been covered in the budget proposal for 2008.

The report states that confirmed communing members has decreased by 14% since 1999. In 1980 there were 1109 baptized members and in 2006 there were 588.

The council discussed the need to think about ways to increase church membership. It was recognized that the Time and Talents sheet should be summarized and volunteers should be contacted by the person in charge of each particular area. This may be something that an office volunteer could help with. Kyle said that he would work on a spread sheet to help tally this incoming information.

The council also recognized that it might be helpful for ushers and greeters to receive reminder postcards or emails like the acolytes and nursery staff receive. This may also be something an office volunteer could assist with.

### Secretary's report

Ruth was not present. However, there was one correction to the Evangelism Report from the October minutes. Kathy Sonntag had delivered envelopes in the past, but did not do so recently.

### Treasurer's report

A statement was received from the board of pensions stating that they will send a bill shortly for Pastor Fazio.

### Pastor's report

Pastor Lund was not present.

### Education Committee: Kyle Sorvick

The committee is looking for volunteers to help with the kids during the Christmas program. It was mentioned by the council that maybe this is something the Youth Group would be able to help with to allow parents to see their kids performing.

### Endowment Committee

Contributed \$2,300 to help cover Pastor Fazio's moving expenses.

### Fellowship: Kris Laposki

Baked goods will be needed 12/16 for the reception for Pastor Fazio as well as welcome to new members.

### Health and Wellness: Jill Underberg

Barb Estrada's report was submitted which included her visits and activities for September and October. The "Matter of Balance" program ended with 13 participants with additional sessions requested. An exercise program will start in March 2008 – specifics to be determined. A final version of the Health and Wellness Mission Statement was distributed. Barb also discussed a "Jump Start" program focusing on memory strengthening in older people. "Back Door Reading" fliers will be displayed on a poster board starting early 2008. Bless the Years Sunday has been set for 5/4/08.

### Stewardship: Kris Laposki

A letter was sent to the congregation. More will be happening with this in the near future.

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Council meeting minutes continued from page 6

**Evangelism/Publicity:** Gloria Brinkmeier  
A letter had been sent to all people on the Inactive List inviting them to the Meet and Greet for Pastor Fazio and Kathy. On December 9<sup>th</sup> there will be an orientation for new members after church and the installation of the new members will take place on December 16<sup>th</sup>. The council suggested that it would be nice to have pictures taken of the new members that can be displayed at the installation. It was also suggested that all members of the congregation wear name tags on that day.

**Mutual Ministry:** Jill Underberg  
Randy Sannes and Jill met to discuss the purpose of this committee and how it will proceed. It was decided that the committee will support the Pastor as well as other paid staff. The specifics of what this committee will do will be discussed with Pastor Fazio to be sure that his needs are met.

**Green Committee:** Kyle Sorvick  
Boxes to recycle bulletins will be placed in church soon. A list of "Caring for Creation" was given to Kyle listing things to do in 2008 to be green. This will be placed in the Sunday bulletins or included in an upcoming Leaf.

**Old Business**  
Budget items for consideration for 2008 should be submitted now if there are to be any changes.

Insurance review needs to take place before March 2008. This will need to be a separate meeting with all council members present.

**New Business**  
Committees to submit reports for the annual report – should be done by 12/31/07.  
Date of annual meeting is 1/27/08.  
Consider moving dates for Council to 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month in 2008 in time for Leaf publication.  
At this time will schedule January meeting for 1/22/08.  
Respectfully submitted,  
Jill Underberg

Deaths: December 9<sup>th</sup>—Bea Flewelling

*Dear Church Family,*

*Resolutions come and go at this time of year. I resolve to eat better, exercise, clean the basement. All of which disappear by the second week in January. The cover of the LEAF demonstrates one of those resolutions that should be kept. Bringing food and toiletries for Hope House and the South Side Pantry makes such a big difference in so many lives. We have a wonderful opportunity to "serve where we are."*

*A Bible study I took recently brought this to the extreme. The pastor showed us a map, made an "x" and circled our location with a big red marker and said "you are here". This is where you should be serving.*

*I so often ask the Lord "what should I be doing", am I doing the "right things"? "How should I serve you." (I often envision Him saying "sell all and leave for Africa"). The Bible Study was of great comfort to me—"you are here, serve here."*

*It's not dramatic but like the missionaries in Africa and the members of Whitnall Park Church we are the arms and feet of Jesus. He wants us to embrace people, do His work where ever we are.*

*My friend, Bea Flewelling just died. She was one of those "arms and feet of Jesus". A member of Dorcas, making quilts to comfort people around the world. As she was leaving Dorcas on Tuesday she stopped and talked with me and we had one of the nicest conversations. I didn't know of course it would be the last time I saw her. We shared such a nice connection that day. I thank God we weren't "too busy" to miss the opportunity to be company to one another. My memory of that day will always be precious to me.*

*Bea was such a wonderful example of serving "where we are". Always here every Tuesday morning making the quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Bringing in food for Hope House and making bakery for coffee hour. Singing in the Regency chorus, the apartment chorus where she lived. My resolve to "make a difference" will be a little easier and more determined when I remember my friend, Bea. Love, Sandy*

**January 6 *Epiphany***

**8:30** Assisting Minister **Marjorie Pagel** Acolyte **Jenna Laposki**

Ushers **Ron Hause, John Dobogai, Carl Hanson**

Greeter **Patty Sparacino**

Altar Guild **Bernice Sparacino**

**10:00** Assisting Minister **Tom Laposki** Acolyte **Cassidy Stein**

Ushers **Sid Arthur, Steve Mason, Ron Noeske**

Greeter **Nancy Sherman**

Altar Guild **Julie Ann Sorenson**

Nursery **Susan Schlueter**

**January 13 *Baptism of Our Lord—Services with Healing*—Sunday school begins in church**

**8:30** Assisting Minister **Lou Graef** Acolyte **Maddison Underberg**

Ushers **Dorothy Perkl, John Hembrook, Don Jensen**

Greeter **Nancy Winger**

**10:00** Assisting Minister **Ron Labott** Acolyte **Tyler Henneberry**

Ushers **Tom Laposki, Brian and Kristi Peyer**

Greeter **Nancy Sievert**

Nursery **Jill Underberg**

**January 20**

**8:30** Assisting Minister **Marjoarie Pagel** Acolyte **Alyssa Kaboskey**

Ushers **Jim and Linda Shea**

Greeter **Ellen Dallmann**

Altar Guild **Evelyn Schubert**

**10:00** Assisting Minister **Mike Sparacino** Acolyte **Amber Martin**

Ushers **Larry Pfeil, Jack King, Brian Martin**

Greeter **Susan Schlueter**

Altar Guild **Elaine Johnson**

Nursery **Tricia Henneberry**

**January 27 *Congregational Meeting at 11:00 am***

**8:30** Assisting Minister **Jane Dillon-Perkl** Acolyte **Melanie Saari**

Ushers **Jim Gaffney, Duane Hause, Lyle Lance**

Greeter **Audrey Grabarczyk**

**10:00** Assisting Minister **Kris Laposki** Acolyte **Andrew Schlueter**

Ushers **Jerry Pagel, Norm Zimmer, Walter Sievert**

Greeter **Gary & Dawn Stein**

Nursery **Tammy Johnson**

**February 3 *Souper Bowl of Caring***

**8:30** Assisting Minister **Linda Shea** Acolyte **Sarah Schlueter**

Ushers **Ron Hause, John Dobogai, Carl Hanson**

Greeter **Evelyn Klug**

Altar Guild **June Jensen**

**10:00** Assisting Minister **Ron Labott** Acolyte **Jeffrey Johnson**

Ushers **Sid Arthur, Steve Mason, Bob Wamser**

Greeter **Jerome Thome**

Altar Guild **Marilyn King**

Nursery **Jennifer Just**

**February 6 *Ash Wednesday***

**12:00** Assisting Minister **John Hembrook** Altar Guild **Evelyn Schubert**

**7:00** Assisting Minister **Kim Mason** Acolyte **Kylie Just**

Altar Guild **Dorothy Wamser**

**From M.E., Kelly Brown  
Minister of Education**

Happy New Year!

With a new year ahead of us, we are looking forward with much excitement.

Our Sunday school worship program was again, a big hit. Thank you to Kathy Graef for her hard work putting it all together and to the youth group for their delicious refreshments following the program.

We are looking ahead to Lent and are planning our Lenten Mission project. In the past we have contributed to Hope House both at Christmas time and at other times throughout the year. I am considering Hope house as our mission project, since they continue to appreciate and need help. Here is a list of suggested items they could use:

Shampoo and conditioner  
Soap  
Deodorant  
Toothpaste and toothbrushes  
Diapers  
Cleaning supplies  
New adult blankets  
New children's blankets  
New children's books

In addition to the items listed, canned goods would also be appreciated. **Items will be collected from February 6<sup>th</sup> thru March 23<sup>rd</sup>.** There will a box located upstairs in Hornburg Hall.

Best wishes for a healthy and happy new year.

*A little boy was waiting on his mother to come out of a store. As he waited, he was approached by a man who asked, "Son, can*

*You tell me where the Post Office is?"*

*The little boy replied, "Sure,.....Just go straight down the street two blocks*

*And turn to your right."*

*The man thanked the boy kindly and said, "I'm the new Preacher in town and*



*I'd like for you to come to church on Sunday. I'll show you how to get to Heaven. The little boy replied with a chuckle, "Aawww, come on; you don't even know the way to the Post Office.*

## Youth Group



House of Prayer and Whitnall Park Youth are having a lock-in on Friday night December 28th at 7:00 pm—until Saturday morning at 8:00 am, at House of Prayer. All youth attending need a permission slip.

The cookie dough sale went well and we want to thank the congregation for their support.

The youth group had a great time making cookies for the WPLC shut-ins. We appreciate the *Friends* who delivered them.—Kathy Graef

# January 2008

## Whitnall Park Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p><b>A New Year of Giving</b></p>		<p><b>1</b></p> <p>New Year's Day</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Parish Nurse</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p>7:00 PM Health &amp; Wellness</p> <p>ANNUAL REPORTS ARE DUE</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>Pastor's day off</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>
<p><b>6</b></p> <p>8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Worship</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday school</p> <p>Epiphany</p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>7:00 PM Dartball</p>	<p><b>8</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Dorcas</p> <p>11:00 AM Pastor's Study</p> <p>6:30 PM Property</p> <p>7:00 PM Christian Ed</p> <p>7:00 PM Worship &amp; Music</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Parish Nurse</p> <p>6:30 PM God's Young Voices</p> <p>7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p>8:30 AM OWLS meet at the Forum Restaurant</p>	<p><b>11</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>Pastor's day off</p>	<p><b>12</b></p> <p>*Sunday school meets in church tomorrow</p>
<p><b>13</b></p> <p>8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Worship</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday school</p> <p>5:00 PM 6th grade Confirmation</p> <p>6:00 PM 7th &amp; 8th grade Confirmation</p> <p>Baptism of Our Lord</p> <p>Services with Healing</p>	<p><b>14</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>7:00 PM Dartball</p>	<p><b>15</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Dorcas</p> <p>11:00 AM Pastor's Study</p> <p>LEAF Articles are due</p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p>6:30 PM God's Young Voices</p> <p>7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p>7:00 PM Women's Bible Study</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>9:30 AM Parish Nurse</p> <p>Pastor's day off</p>	<p><b>19</b></p>
<p><b>20</b></p> <p>8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Worship</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday school</p> <p>5:00 PM 6th grade Confirmation</p> <p>6:00 PM 7th &amp; 8th grade Confirmation</p>	<p><b>21</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>7:00 PM Dartball</p>	<p><b>22</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Dorcas</p> <p>11:00 AM Pastor's Study</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Parish Nurse</p> <p>6:30 PM God's Young Voices</p> <p>7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p>Assemble the LEAF</p>	<p><b>25</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>Pastor's day off</p> <p>Youth Group</p>	<p><b>26</b></p>
<p><b>27</b></p> <p>8:30 AM - 10:00 AM Worship</p> <p>10:00 AM Sunday school</p> <p>11:00 AM Congregational Meeting</p> <p>5:00 PM 6th grade Confirmation</p> <p>6:00 PM 7th &amp; 8th grade Confirmation</p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p>9:00 AM - 11:00 AM Office hours</p> <p>7:00 PM Dartball</p>	<p><b>29</b></p> <p>9:00 AM Dorcas</p> <p>11:00 AM Pastor's Study</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p>9:30 AM Parish Nurse</p> <p>6:30 PM God's Young Voices</p> <p>7:30 PM Senior Choir</p>	<p><b>31</b></p>		



*Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

I'm writing this article during our time of transition. We've just left the familiarity of our home in Pennsylvania and are preparing for the newness that is awaiting us in Wisconsin. It's an exciting time...the kind of excitement that I don't want to experience on a regular basis...but exciting none the less.

As I've spoken with friends and family over the last few weeks, some of the support that Kathy and I have received has been along the lines of, "*just wait until you get settled, then things will calm down.*" I appreciate this advice; it's true that with a sense of settlement come feelings of peace and contentment. However, I also know that life is not stagnant and unmoving...if it weren't our 850 mile move, then we'd be faced with some other challenge of change; that's just the way life is.

All throughout the four gospels, we hear report of the movement and travels of Jesus and his followers. They always seemed to be "*on the way*", constantly going from place to place, leaving the comforts of family, friends and work, to head off into the great unknown carrying out the task that God handed them; namely to tell the story of Jesus with all of its significance. Their lives were in a constant state of flux and their sole reliance was on the grace and mercy of a loving and caring God.

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about these stories of being "*on the way*" as they are particularly relevant to our time and situation. But being in a state of change doesn't necessarily have to involve a change in location or physical movement. I'm sure that some of us reading this article now are "*on the way*" with some sort of health issue, either moving in the direction of sickness or in the way of healing. Some of us are "*on the way*" in terms of relationships, growing closer to those around us or pulling further away. Some of us are "*on the way*" in regards to our financial situations, perhaps wondering how we're going to recover from a fiscally taxing holiday season.

Whatever the situation may be, if we look at the reality of our lives, we're all in some state of fluctuation, and that type of uncertainty can bring about feelings of anxiety and depression. It's very difficult to wade through the difficulties of life not knowing what the outcome may be.

However, we are not alone in the midst of change. The disciples had the privilege of walking with the living Lord Jesus, and we too enjoy that same privilege through the Holy Spirit. We too can know the peace of the unchanging and unending Good News of the presence of God as we walk through life's changes.

That's the great fact for us who call upon the name of Christ; that even in the midst of the world's chaos and anxiety, we can rely on the complete order and encouragement of the gospel. Life will always change, we will always be "*on the way*", but with the gospel of grace as our constant companion, we can look beyond the fear of change and embrace the divine promise that awaits us all.

God's Peace,

Pr. Michael