

*Word Of Hope*  
The *Amazing*  
*Grace*  
Place

DECEMBER 2009

*ADVENT WEDNESDAY EVENINGS*

On the Wednesday evenings of December 2, 9 & 16 we will gather in the sanctuary at 7pm for midweek worship and small group conversation. Come and reflect on what it means to prepare our hearts and souls for the coming of the Promised One (Our Wednesday evening small discussion group, "Live the Faith" is being folded into this worship experience. It will return with a new emphasis in January.)



*CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE*

THE THIRD SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, Dec 13

8:15 am Classic Grace

9:30 am **TRUE NORTH** ~ Birthday Party for Jesus & TN 'Family Feud'

10:45 am Celebration Worship

THE FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT

Sunday, Dec 20

8:15 a.m. Classic Grace

9:30 am **TRUE NORTH** – The Christmas Story

10:45 a.m. Celebration Service

11:45 am "The Hanging of Greens" ~ church decorating

5:30pm A Blue Christmas: "Service of Light"

CHRISTMAS EVE

Thursday, Dec. 24

7 pm Christmas Eve ~ worship with a family feel

10 pm The Christ Mass ~ the reflective celebration

CHRISTMAS DAY

Friday, Dec 25

9:30 am

Communion & Christmas Carols

CHRISTMAS II, Sunday, Dec. 27

8:15 am & 10:45 am Worship

9:30 am Coffee & Conversation

EPIPHANY, January 4,

8:15 am & 10:45 a.m. Worship

9:30 am **TRUE NORTH**

*TIME WELL WASTED WORKSHOP*

At noon on Sunday, December 6, we'll have a special gathering to help folks cope with the hectic seasonal madness—and each participant will receive an individually crafted gift. We'll begin with a simple meal and finish up promptly at 2:30. Plan to join us for this unique experience. (The only cost will be \$5 for the meal.)

*"A ONE-OF-A-KIND CHRISTMAS STORY"*

You are invited to the debut of WOH's original motion picture "A One-of-a-Kind Christmas Story" on Sunday, December 13 during our worship (8:15 & 10:45). The movie is a delightful depiction of the story of Jesus birth. It is set in the hills of nearby Richmond with the cast of characters including many familiar faces. It's not Bethlehem and nothing close to the quiet scenes we're used to seeing ~ and while it probably won't be up for the 'Best Picture' category, it's sure to be one you'll enjoy. So come be a part of this grand world premiere ~ or at least, WOH premiere.



## FROM THE PASTOR



(Curious about the roots? See below)

As many WOH folks know, when I come across a good article I'm inclined to share it. With its reference to Thanksgiving this one obviously was geared for November reading. Yet it touches on that hectic sense we all feel in this season and for which we all need a calming promise and presence. (And since this article comes from The Lutheran Magazine it's also a reminder that if you don't already receive that publication, this is why it would be worthwhile.) [www.thelutheran.org](http://www.thelutheran.org)

**When the world overwhelms** *Don't run with the turkeys, but walk with God*  
*By Linda O. Norman*

It's the time of year when thoughts turn to sitting down at the table together for holiday meals. Images of gatherings filled with laughter and conversation and plates piled with turkey and stuffing abound. But recently I've been introduced to another and newer Thanksgiving tradition — the turkey trot, with runners organizing races to raise money for a variety of charitable purposes. And just like that, my thoughts are filled with images of running turkeys.

Purportedly, wild turkeys can run up to 25 mph. Although technically a limited number of people in the world can run as fast as a wild turkey, many of us, regardless of our physical abilities, have developed quite an aptitude for fast running.

When there's uncertainty, we're ready to run. The stock market soars one minute and plunges the next. We're ready to run.

When there's dissension among us, we're ready to run. When we're a people, a church, going through trials, trying to make sense of how this will all work out in the end, we have a tendency to become anxious and fearful. We may become distrusting and sometimes even downright mean. Before we realize it, we're each running in our own directions, for our own reasons, from our own panic.

It's overwhelming to think about all of the changing circumstances to navigate, dangers to avoid, injustices to fight, wars to stop and diseases to cure. It only takes one news flash or e-mail or that one wrong conversation to set us off — and we often have a host of issues at once from which to choose. And when we do start running, it usually takes much longer for us to slow down. We have to force ourselves to take deep breaths and slow our panicky feet. To wind down in the midst of a wound-up world.

There is nothing and no one who can quiet our spirits, soothe our souls in the time of trial other than God. Neither money nor job security is sufficient. Not even our closest loved one will be adequate.

Rather, it's being in the presence and under the watch of the Savior that slows our feet. So that, "Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil: for you are with me; your rod and your staff — they comfort me" (Psalm 23:4).

We have a Savior who was struck down and deserted, who was also raised up, and who has gone through and come through. And by the power of his resurrection, he is able to go before us.

In the midst of whatever today's uncertainty, fear or craziness brings, Jesus gives us this moment to breathe in the promise and to slow our running feet. We might have to fight the fear that sometimes grips us and makes us want to run. We might have to drag today's trials with us, kicking and screaming, until the promise of tomorrow breaks through. But we can hold on because we know that God is holding on to us. God is pulling all of our days into a resurrected future.

Resurrection brings the promise of new life to bear upon whatever messiness is going on in our world. God who was able to raise Jesus from the dead will resurrect every broken place in our lives — pardoning our iniquity, casting our sins into the depths of the sea, executing justice, taking delight in showing mercy.

This image is ours — the promise of tomorrow running faster than we can, running backward from tomorrow to meet us today. For this promise, and for the turkey dinner, I'm thankful this year.

## HOUSE-OF-GOD KEEPING THE ADVENT CONSPIRACY

And when they could not find them, they dragged Jason and some of the brethren before the city authorities, crying, "These men who have turned the world upside down have come here also, and Jason has received them; and they are all acting against the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." Acts 17:6-7 (RSV)

During Advent we encourage each other to proclaim "another king, Jesus" by the very way we celebrate. "The Advent Conspiracy" is a project by which followers of Jesus are urged to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, & Love All. Specifically the focus is on the need for clean water for all people, but you can also turn the world upside down with contributions to other organizations which support the poor and needy. (See the display in the entryway.)

(**Getting to the roots:** while on sabbatical last year I was in northern California among the giant redwoods and read a plaque which noted a rather astonishing fact. Those massive trees can grow to a height of 360 feet but because of the abundant rain readily available at the surface, their roots only go down about 6-10 feet into the soil. That, of course, makes them very vulnerable to high winds—of which that coastal region experiences plenty. The trees survive though because their roots are intertwined and the roots of one reinforce the weakness of another. That and the fact that they can lean on each other. It seems like nature's way of confirming that we only make it through tough times *together*.)

**ADVENT FAMILY ACTIVITY**

ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 29, in our between-the-services time we will gather to make Christmas ornaments to decorate our WOH tree. There will be projects for every age and skill level and if power tools are more to your liking, you can put those talents to use as we put together the manger scene for our outside decorations. Everyone is asked to bring a simple breakfast pastry, holiday goodie or beverage to share. It's a delightful way for people to take a break from the chaos that the holiday's can bring and spend some time remembering together the great joy and celebration of the gift of Jesus. We will receive a freewill offering to cover the cost of materials with the extra to go to World Hunger. Watch the weekly sheets for more details.

**ADVENT PRAYERS**

Hark, the glad sound! The Savior comes,  
The Savior promised long;  
Let every heart prepare a throne  
And every voice a song (LBW # 35)

IN THIS ADVENT SEASON we are providing a list of Lutheran Book of Worship hymns which can be used for daily prayer. If you need a copy of the Prayer Guide or LBW, see the display at church.

**WOMEN'S LUNCHEON**

Mark your calendars for the Annual Women's Christmas Luncheon at 11:30am Saturday, Dec 5<sup>th</sup> at the Bronte Café in the Joseph Beth Bookstores. Bring your friends and join us for this wonderful time of celebration. We will have a relaxing lunch, enjoy some fellowship and fun and, if you wish, you can bring a \$5 gift to exchange (gift exchange is optional.) Note: Joseph Beth Gift Cards can be used at the Café - be sure to get yours! If you are interested watch the clipboard or call COLLEEN BLACK (223-3877). All are welcome!

**STRESSED!**

In our Sunday morning, between-the-services adult group on the Sundays of December 6 & 13, we'll have a look at a video from a PBS special on the effects of stress and how to cope with it. Be part of the conversation on each or both weeks. Walk-ins are always welcome.

**CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS**

See the sign up sheet for Christmas poinsettias to decorate the church "in honor of" or "in memory of" an important person or event. Each poinsettia is \$10. Watch the bulletin for details

**CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE**

The KICK-OFF FOR OUR ANNUAL CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE will be Sunday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> when the tree will be trimmed! We will again be providing assistance for some local families in need. Check out the display - it will include a variety of gift ideas.

Even if you are able to buy just one gift it will be a gift of love for that recipient. On Sunday, December 13<sup>th</sup> all gifts must be returned in preparation for our GIFT WRAPPING LUNCH & FELLOWSHIP. So plan to stick around and share in some fun and fellowship while helping those in need.

**"BLUE CHRISTMAS" SERVICE**

Blue? Yes, blue as in "the blues." As in "I am feeling blue." Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities. There is a growing attentiveness to the needs of people who are blue at Christmas. Increasing numbers of churches are creating sacred space for people living through dark times. Such services are reflective, accepting where we really are, and holding out healing and hope. On Sunday evening, December 20, at 5:30, we will have a "SERVICE OF LIGHT" for those who sit in darkness at this time of year. In the process we will discover that we are not alone nor left hopeless.

**BUDGET 2010**

On Tuesday, Dec 4, 7 pm, your comments and questions are welcome at a meeting concerning the make-up of our 2008 budget. Please plan to participate; your input is vital.

## FELLOWSHIP/HANGING GREENS

We're having a special fellowship at noon on Sunday, December 20. We'll enjoy some food, a brief prayer to mark this Advent season of preparation and then decorate the sanctuary for the celebration of Christ's birth. It'll be a great time to catch your breath, enjoy a meal with others, and participate in a deeply meaningful congregational tradition. Call 272-8515 if you'd like to help. **Bring a friend, we'll be done by 1 pm.**

**CHURCH COUNCIL - December 8<sup>th</sup> at 7pm**  
**BUDGET FORUM to follow at 7:30.**

Your comments and questions are welcome as we take a look at our 2010 budget. Plan to participate; your input is vital. **AND IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CONSIDER SERVING ON CHURCH COUNCIL IN 2010, SEE JOHN MCMULLEN**

## WOH WISH LIST

If you would like to consider the possibility of making a special gift to the congregation 70 new folding chairs have been added to our "Wish List." The fellowship hall folding chairs are beginning to show the effects of time and use so if you'd like to help, just let Pastor know.

## CHRISTMAS SHOPPING AT WOH...

We have opportunities for some easy gift giving, things that take the hassle and hustle out of holiday shopping and we even promise you can find a convenient parking spot!



**ALTERNATIVE GIVING** is an opportunity to give a unique gift while supporting someone in a third world country with a live-able income. There will be catalogs available from Lutheran World Relief, the Heifer Project and others. It's a great way to give the gift that keeps on giving! (Display in the church entry).

**JOSEPH-BETH** and **KROGER GIFT CARDS**...these will make great gifts AND will support WOH programs!

**OTHER GIFT GIVING IDEAS....God's Pantry** - Food Donations are accepted from 9am-12 noon Monday thru Thursday and 9am-12 noon on Fridays. You can also place food donations in the designated barrels at area Kroger stores or grab a 'Checkout Hunger' coupon at the checkout lane to make a cash donation; **Ronald McDonald House** - A Wish List of items is available in the church entry; **Catholic Action Center** - A Wish List of items is available in the entry.

## ANNUAL REPORTS

It's that time of year again—we will need annual reports from all teams and leaders by Sunday, January 3. Those summaries will then be compiled into our Annual Report, which will be available on Sunday, January 10 in time for review before our Annual Meeting on January 24. And you thought nothing happened soon after the holy days!



## WOH NEEDS YOUR HELP.....

to volunteer for cleaning the building. The facility will be divided into sections so the work schedule can be easily assigned. You can sign up for cleaning a section (or more) once (or more) each month. (Approximate cleaning time is 1 hour per week per section). **Your time can be tax deductible**—contact **MARJORIE FLORO** at or stop by the church office.

## A OPPORTUNITY TO LEND-A-HAND

It is during this Advent time that we wait with great anticipation that magnificent celebration - the Birth of our Savior. It is also during these times that those less fortunate are left with the same hunger and want that they face each day. On Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup> we have an opportunity to reach out to them. With the help and generous donation from *Mark Cantrell, owner of Masterson Lawncare*, we have been able to purchase food to prepare a bountiful breakfast for the folks at Catholic Action Center. Watch for details. It's an enjoyable and fulfilling opportunity to give of yourself! And thanks to Mark and his crew for this amazing gift!



## COMING SOON

We are in the process of pulling together a class that would provide an overview of the Bible for those with minimal experience. If you'd like more info, please touch base with Pr Duval—272-8515.

## GET A BETTER LOOK...

We often include photos of recent WOH events in our newsletter. If you'd like to get a better look at those, check out our website: [WWW.WORDOFHOPECHURCH.COM](http://WWW.WORDOFHOPECHURCH.COM) and click on "News & Events" where you'll find all the latest Newsletters and Weekly News updates. And if you'd like a copy of the WOH "One-of-a-Kind Christmas Story" let us know. We'd love to share it with you!



**CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP ~ THURSDAY, DEC 24**  
7pm Family Worship & 10pm Christ Mass  
**CHRISTMAS DAY WORSHIP ~ FRIDAY, DEC 25 ~ 9:30am**





*OUR FAITHFUL  
SERVANTS*

There are many who serve our congregation faithfully and without thanks:

- Church Council – JOHN McMULLEN, MARJORIE FLORO, BOB COOK, JOANNE BROWN, CHARLOTTE WONG, JANICE ADAMS, & JASON LAMBIRTH and COLLEEN BLACK for her help with the finances.
- Care Team – JULIE McEWEN & COLLEEN BLACK and the many others who provide care and support for this congregation.
- Preaching Team – TOM FEDORKA, JEREMY KISLING & JOHN McMULLEN.
- Assisting Ministers – TOM BROWNING, JOANNE BROWN, JANICE ADAMS & DARLENE TAYLOR.
- Communion Care Team - JILL & MOLLY WATSON, MARY REIBOLD, TINA VANNOY & ROBERT LIPINSKI and KAREN POLNISCH for caring for the Communion linens.
- LAURIE JOHNSON, DAWN WEBB & THE PRAISE BAND/SINGERS for their faithfulness in worship & music preparation.
- GAIL CLAYTON for the beautiful music she provides.
- Mowing Team - TODD COTTRELL, DENNIS METZLER, STEVE ADAMS, JASON LAMBIRTH & PASTOR DUVAL and DAWN WEBB for the care and tending of the flower beds;
- JOHN POLNISCH & DAVE EARNEST for their many fix-it jobs and ZAC DUVAL for the many odd jobs does around the place.
- TRUE NORTH TEACHERS – JENNIFER & DENISE POLNISCH, KELLY METZLER, BOB & SUE COOK, STEVE ADAMS and DARLENE TAYLOR.

There are so many who do the work of the servant in this place and to all we say 'THANK YOU' for your faithfulness and commitment in service to this place.

**WEEKLY FAITH GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES**

**WORSHIP EACH SUNDAY:** 8:15 Classic Grace  
9:30 "TRUE NORTH"—Christian education for all ages  
10:45 Celebration Service  
6:30-8 pm "Bible Basics" Confirmands AND adults

**LIVE THE FAITH**, our small, care group meets on Wednesdays, 7-8 pm. **All are welcome**

**LIFE LINE**, our Sunday morning, between-worship-services, small, care group with a variety of topics. **Walk-ins expected**

Pastor Thom Duval: 272-8515  
Office times: Monday- Friday 7:30am-10:30am

*WOH FOLKS ...*

OUR THANKS to GINA & TODD COTTRELL and JANICE & LAMARE ADAMS for the donation of televisions for use in our small groups and activities. They are very much appreciated. Thanks much!

WE PRAY GOD'S BLESSING on newborn JEREMY BUTCHER and we give thanks for the safety of both mother, CHARLOTTE MARY WONG, and child.

OUR HEARTFELT SYMPATHY goes out to TOM MESSNER upon the death of his lifelong friend, KEN HESSER. Receive him, Lord, into the arms of your mercy and love.

WE THANK ALL THOSE who were part of our Contentment Sunday Celebration, especially JANICE ADAMS, MARJORIE FLORO, PASTOR DUVAL and all the members of the VISION & STEWARDSHIP TEAM. While many have faced trying times recently, we look forward with much hope to the opportunities that lie ahead. It is with glad and generous hearts that we continue to share in God's vision & ministry for this place.



MANY THANKS TO OUR 'UNSUNG HEROES' There are those who serve diligently and with little recognition and yet, without them countless lives would be lost. We are talking about our blood donors who faithfully give the 'gift of life' several times throughout the year. Please honor these folks with a sincere 'Thank You': STEVE ADAMS; DON BLACK; CAITLIN, JOANNE & DERRICK BROWN; THOMAS BROWNING; DAVID BUSHNELL; SUE COOK; GINA COTTRELL; MISTI DRURY; AMIE DUNN; PASTOR, EMILY, LUKE & ZAC DUVAL; TOM FEDORKA; MARJORIE FLORO; JANICE ADAMS; KENNY HOLBROOK; LAURIE JOHNSON; JEREMY KISLING; JASON LAMBIRTH; ROBERT LIPINSKI; JOHN McMULLEN; KELLY & DENNIS METZLER; KRISTIN SLAVIK; JILL SMILEY; BILL STEWART; DARLENE TAYLOR; TINA VANNOY; BOB VERHOEVEN; CASEY & DIANE WARD; JILL WATSON; VICTOR WONG; RANDALL WRIGHT. You are greatly appreciated!

*WHY IS IT THAT WHEN WE THINK ABOUT  
THE FUTURE  
WE SO EASILY FORGET / OVERLOOK THE  
FACT  
THAT GOD WILL BE JUST AS LOVING AND  
PRESENT THEN  
AS HE IS NOW AND HAS BEEN FOREVER?*

## ADVENT CONSPIRACY....

...has a hint of intrigue to it, doesn't it? This year, Word of Hope will be joining churches from around the world in a grassroots effort to look at the Christmas season with different eyes. Each year, Americans spend \$450 billion just on Christmas. Yet, we still strive for that "perfect Christmas". Is our money really "buying" us the joy of the season?



We are asking people to step back from their usual Christmas routine and consider giving "presence versus presents". We're not asking you to buy "nothing". We are asking you to think about each gift you give. Rather than that gift card or present that you give out of obligation, consider giving gifts that will really change the world: quality time with a friend or family member, providing clean water or food for the hungry. A gift in honor of someone.

Start small. This year try to think of one gift you can give as an alternate gift that is one of "presence versus presents". Then take the money you would have spent on that gift and place it in the water jug in the front of the church. All of the money will be donated to ELCA World Hunger to provide clean water to those who do not have such a luxury.

As Advent progresses, we will be offering gift ideas of 'presence' that you can give. For more information about Advent Conspiracy, please visit [www.adventconspiracy.org](http://www.adventconspiracy.org).

## AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY CHRISTMAS

Christmas is coming soon! Here are some ways to have an environmentally friendly Christmas.

- Use less wrapping paper. Americans throw away a million extra tons of garbage each week, including holiday wrapping and packaging. Did you know that if every family reused just 2 feet of holiday ribbon, the 38,000 miles of ribbon saved could tie a bow around the entire planet. That is a lot of trees to sacrifice for one moment of enjoyment. Use newspaper, cloth bags, or give a presence gift, which does not need to be wrapped.
- Do not use a real tree. Get a fake tree, recycle your live tree after Christmas, or get a live potted tree and then plant it in your yard next spring.
- Use LED lights on your tree and outside. They are a bit more expensive but will save you money in the long run. If you cannot get LED lights then at least turn your lights off during the day when you cannot see them anyways.

As you can see, Christmas can be just as environmentally friendly as any other part of the year.

By *Mary Webb*

## TEN YEARS OF MISSION

In 2001 Word of Hope embarked on a ministry that would come to influence the lives of many. Over the years this ministry has taken us to Coahoma, Mississippi; Indianapolis, Indiana; Toledo, Ohio; Lexington; Georgia; Parkersburg, Iowa; Cleveland, Ohio and back again to Mississippi. We have seen what the ravages of tornado, hurricane, flooding and *life* can bring to homes and families, and yes, we have been impacted by it all. We have also experienced the joy of meeting many like-minded Christians who have a real heart for Jesus – folks who are overwhelmed by His Spirit in worship, who thank God each and every day for the blessing of a simple home and food for a day, folks who are thankful for life itself. We have encountered children who endure countless surgeries and unbelievable pain and yet, who smile and carry on with such grace, a grace which can only be a God-gift. We've seen homes left in splinters - piles of rubble and yet people whose voices echo '*hopefulness*' not '*helplessness*'. In all the pain and tears, love and laughter, one message is very clear – God is in this place. The seed that is planted in our hearts and theirs in these times continues to grow even years later – an endless blessing. I believe that our youth, chaperones and even this congregation have shared in some of the most life-changing and faith-stretching experiences of our lives on these journeys – journeys that we all have been a part of. It is with enormous gratitude that we continue in this Ministry – gratitude to the youth who share their willingness and their heart; the communities of faith who open themselves up to the stranger in their midst; to this congregation who supports this with such constancy and enthusiasm and most of all to a God who shows us the way and makes the path a clear one. May He continue to bless this ministry and this congregation.



**"I want to be your hands, I want to be your feet.... I'll go where you send me..."**

### FRIENDS ~ A Christmas Edition

**EVERYONE IS INVITED** to a special Christmas gathering of our "FRIENDS" dinner group. Bring an easy casserole on Saturday, December 12, 6 pm. We'll enjoy informal conversation laced with holiday cheer.

## WOHLY-WORD OF HOPE LUTHERAN YOUTH

**SUNDAY MORNINGS IT'S TRUE NORTH!!** Don't miss this opportunity to join in some conversation and get-to-know-you time! It all **STARTS AT 9:30am!!**

### WATCH FOR THESE YOUTH EVENTS COMING UP:

- **SATURDAY, DEC 5 - CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION KID'S NITE OUT 5-8pm!** We'll celebrate the fact that we're all gifts to be celebrated! We'll have plenty of fun and games as well as some Christmas goodies to decorate and share. Please bring a pair of gloves or socks, hat or some small gift that will be taken to the folks at Catholic Action Center. Send your parents on their way and join us! Watch for signups on the clipboards and mark your calendars now and don't forget to **BRING YOUR NEIGHBORS & FRIENDS!**
- **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 – CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS MOVIE PREMIER** The movie made by our own WOH Youth (and Steve) will be shown during worship (8:15/10:45). Don't miss it!
- **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 – TRUE NORTH CHRISTMAS PARTY FOR JESUS & TRUE NORTH "FAMILY FEUD"** We'll head out, along with the rest of the True North crew, to one of the area Nursing Care Facilities to share some Christmas songs with the residents there.
- **SUNDAY, DECEMBER 13 - AT NOON – CHRISTMAS ASSISTANCE WRAPPING PARTY** -We'll help wrap gifts for WOH's Christmas Assistance. Lunch will be provided!
- **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18 - SENIOR HIGH CHRISTMAS PARTY** Details to be announced!



**Please Come and Join Us – All Are Welcome!!**



## WOH Folks at Ronald McDonald House



# Fair Trade "Fair" at WOH

