

Trek Downtown to Holidazzle & Macy's

Woodlakers of all ages are invited to bus together to Nicollet Mall attractions on Dec. 20. It's a great intergenerational bargain: Adults and youths keep an eye on the kids and the little ones lend their excitement and awe.

The cost is \$9.00 each, provided a minimum number of participants sign up. Those who wish can share a light meal at church at 3:30 p.m. before departing. Sign up in the church office this weekend.

16th Annual Interfaith Event

MARC Holiday Exhibit Opens

The Mall Area Religious Council (MARC) presents "One World, Many Faiths" Dec. 11-13 at the Mall of America (3rd floor, Food Court Area). Visit the exhibit 9:30 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Optimists to Hold Pancake Breakfast with Santa

The Richfield Optimist Club hosts a Pancake Breakfast with Santa on Saturday, Dec. 20, 8:00-11:00 a.m., at Oak Grove Lutheran Church, 7045 Lyndale Ave. So.

Adult tickets (\$5.00) can be obtained at the door. Children under 12 are admitted free.

Exultate's "Tidings of Joy"

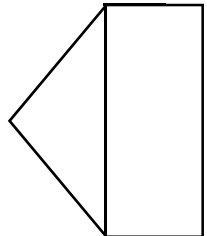
Exultate Chamber Choir and Orchestra presents the Christmas Festival, "Tidings of Joy," at three venues on Dec. 12, 13 and 14. Get details (and tickets for \$20.00) at 651-707-0727 or at www.exultate.org.

Future Adult Forum

Essayist, poet and author Julia Dinsmoore will speak at the next Sunday Adult Forum on Dec. 21.

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Woodlake Lutheran MESSENGER USPS 690-540
Editor: Susan Ohmesorge, 612-866-8449
Copy Deadline: Sunday, noon
Published weekly except monthly in July & August.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to:
Woodlake Lutheran Church
7525 Oliver Ave. So., Richfield, MN 55423
Periodicals postage paid at Minneapolis, MN.
Subscription Rate: \$1.00 per year
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WOODLAKE LUTHERAN MESSENGER

Vol. 62, No. 41

Minneapolis, Minnesota

December 11, 2008

Sunday School Christmas Program is Dec. 14

Woodlake's Sunday School students will present an adaptation of the children's book, "B is for Bethlehem," during the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, Dec. 14. The children will tell the Christmas story in A-B-C style, complete with beloved songs and carols.

(Parents, see page 3 for instructions for the cast.)

Water is a Good Gift Choice

"Let justice roll down like water," the prophet Micah says, linking two life-giving necessities. Justice is hard to gift-wrap, but shoppers seeking alternatives for someone who "has everything" should look to the ELCA's Good Gifts Catalog.

Give a gift that digs a well, creates a cistern, or buys a length of pipe so that pure water can do its work. You will get an attractive card to use to inform recipients that they are the inspiration for your choice.

Catalogs were distributed last week; copies are still available. Make a project choice and visit the Good Gifts table on Sundays before Christmas.

Shop the Bake Sale

Woodlake youth will have delectable treats for sale beginning at 8:30 on Sunday morning. Support their effort to raise funds for mission trips and Bible camp.

Mid-week Advent Worship

A final Wednesday Advent service is Dec. 17 at 7:00 p.m. Join us for a quiet time of preparing for Christmas.

Order Poinsettias

Buy a beautiful poinsettia in memory or in honor of a loved one. Plants will decorate the church for Christmas and dedications will appear in holiday bulletins, then the flowers are the buyer's to take home and enjoy. Dec. 14 is the last day to order.

Worshippers on Sunday

will leave with a "parting gift"—postcard invitations to Christmas services.

December 13 & 14

The Third Sunday in Advent

Services:

In the Chapel:

5:00 p.m. Saturday

In the Church:

8:45, 10:00, 11:11 a.m. Sunday

Christmas Program at 10:00 a.m.

Texts: Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11

Psalm 126

1 Thessalonians 5:16-24

John 1:6-8, 19-28

Holy Communion at all services.

Nursery available Sundays.

ASL interpreted at 10:00 a.m.



Couples 'n' More

Bill and Pam Bullock are hosting this year's Christmas gathering at their house at 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 13. Making last-minute plans? Call them at 612-869-6394.

Small Group Leaders

Meet Saturday, Dec. 13, at 11:30 a.m.

Recharge Registrants

Kids headed to the faith "recharge" at Luther Park Bible Camp need to turn in forms and \$70.00 payments by Dec. 21. Wii: What a Ride! is Jan. 9-10 for grades 6-8.

Greeters

Don and Betty Hassenstab are looking for greeters for each Christmas service. There are still openings at 5:00 and 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Call them at 952-835-3133.

WWYGs

"Class time" on Wednesday, Dec. 17, will consist of Christmas caroling at 7500 York and Edina Care Center. Meet at church at 6:00 p.m. for rides; cars will return at 7:30 or so.

Bible Camp on Sale

The best price for Bible Camp is available to those who register and make a deposit by Dec. 28. Get a discount, qualify for a campership by signing up now for July 5-10 (grades 6-8) or July 12-17 (grades 3-8).

Matins/Wednesday A.M.

Organized Wednesday A.M. programs wrap up for 2008 on Dec. 17, but early prayer, Matins, fellowship and conversation continue during the holidays with one exception: There will be no events on Christmas Eve.

From the Pastor

The Doctrine of Original Sin is alive and well. It is, however, not very popular. After all, who wants to believe that we are "conceived and born in sin," as the Augsburg Confession puts it? Or that "from birth we are full of evil lust and inclination and cannot by nature possess true fear of God and true faith in God"? Wouldn't we rather think that we are able "to make human nature righteous through natural powers"? Aren't we all inclined to assume we will grow more civilized and tolerant as the years progress?

And then we hear about a temporary holiday employee at the Wal-Mart store in Valley Stream, New York. A few minutes before five o'clock in the morning on the day after Thanksgiving a mob of over 2,000 shoppers broke through the door and trampled him to death. The evening before he was enjoying a Thanksgiving dinner at his sister's house; the next day, killed by out of control shoppers. It gives new meaning to the term "Black Friday."

From time to time we hear about soccer fans being trampled by a crazed crowd somewhere in Europe. Or about the deaths of religious devotees among throngs of pilgrims at some shrine in Arabia or India. But here? In America? At a Wal-Mart, of all places? What an ignominious way to die!

It goes to show what greed and fatigue and frustration and anger can do to people, even people like us. It is a reminder that human nature is not necessarily inclined to become more and more enlightened or tolerant or caring or understanding over time.

The Doctrine of Original Sin may not be popular, but it just may be the most realistic thing the church ever invented. Which is why we need Christmas, and the birth of a Savior.

— Pastor Mark Wegener

Christmas Eve

3 o'clock - Family Service



5 o'clock - Service of Lessons & Carols



10 o'clock - Candlelight Service



Christmas Day 10 o'clock



Holy Communion at All Services

You're invited to
**Christmas
Worship Services**

IRA Provision Extended

Emergency economic legislation passed in October extended the IRA charitable rollover rule for two years.

Under its provisions, donors over 70½ can contribute to qualified charities such as Woodlake directly from their IRAs. Rollovers count toward a Required Minimum Distribution but are not taxed. Contact your IRA custodian for assistance.

The same rules will apply in 2009, but transactions for 2008 must be post-marked by Dec. 31.

VEAP Gifts Doubled, Tripled Thrivent Provides Match

Recent cash contributions to the food shelf at VEAP (Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People) have been the highest-earning investments around.

Woodlake members and friends contributed a total of \$1,819.00 to the agency in November. That was matched 2-to-1 by Thrivent Financial for Lutherans.

The fraternal organization also matched the money raised by last week's sale of food certificates, but on a 3-to-1 basis. A couple of wise donors made good-sized gifts through that program, bringing Woodlake's total for those certificates to \$930.00.

Those with "wish lists" of items for VEAP's Holiday Store are reminded that their purchases should be returned to church, unwrapped, by Dec. 14.

Pageant Production Notes

Parents can refer to the reams of written and emailed materials they received on the Sunday School Christmas program, or just flash on this list:

◇ Packets with scripts, lyrics, etc. are still available outside Room E, or have Tisa Zachau email you a copy. Write to tzachau@woodlakechurch.org.

◇ Rehearsal on Saturday, Dec. 13, is from 10:00 a.m. to noon.

◇ Each child will need a hand-held battery-operated faux candlestick.

◇ Children made costumes last Sunday. If your child did not attend, find out what you need to know by calling Zachau at 612-866-8449.

◇ The curtain goes up on Dec. 14. Please have your child at church no later than 9:30 a.m.; a little earlier is even better.

Singing for FMF

Woodlake was well-represented in the choir at the Dec. 5 benefit for Families Moving Forward. At least ten singers performed in a fun event headlined by the Lake Wobegon Brass Band.

Wednesday A.M. - Dec. 17

7:30 a.m. Prayer Group

8:00 a.m. Matins Service

8:30 a.m. Coffee and Fellowship

9:00 a.m. "Normandy to Iwo Jima"

Author Dr. John Linner shares stirring stories of WWII.