



# SPIRIT LUTHERAN Newsletter

Happy New Year!  
January 1, 2017 Newsletter



**Help needed to "un"  
decorate the church from  
Christmas! We are looking  
for a jolly group to help out  
on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 2 p.m.  
to take down the  
Christmas trees, and  
other decorations  
around church. The  
more the merrier!**



## Christmas Gifts at Spirit Lutheran

For the second time in our brief history as a new congregation we celebrated Christmas with 614 people of God worshipping during the Christmas weekend at Spirit Lutheran! We heard once again the familiar gospel of Christmas. Another powerful Christmas message comes to us as we discover the glorious words of the letter of Paul to Titus: "*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all..*" (Titus 2:11a)

We thank God for the visitors and guests who joined our community to celebrate Christmas. We also thank God for our musicians, our ushers and greeters who worked to make Spirit Lutheran a "welcoming congregation".

We are thankful as we celebrate the gift of God for the people of God!

Thanks be to God,

Pastor Roger Benrud

Office hours:  
Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 12 p.m.  
1310 Main St.  
Eau Claire, WI 54701  
715-832-2421  
office@spiritlutheran.org  
www.spiritlutheran.org

We return to regular worship times on January 8, 2017.  
8:30 AM Organ-led Worship, 10:30 AM Band-led Worship  
9:30 AM Sunday School

CONNECTIONS resumes January 4, 2017

## Spirit's Life Transitions

### A funeral service was conducted for:

The mother of Dan Anderson—  
Ardith L. Anderson on December  
29, 2016 at Stokes, Prock & Mundt.

May God grant peace and  
love to those who mourn.

The congregation of Spirit  
Lutheran gratefully accepts  
memorial gifts in memory  
of the saints who have gone  
before us.



## SMALL GROUPS

### Men of Spirit News

#### January Meeting

Saturday January 7, 2017 at 9:00 a.m.  
Hardee's on Clairemont Ave.

#### Annual Christmas Gathering

Sunday January 8, 2017 at 4:00 p.m.  
Pizza Ranch restaurant  
2451 Truax Blvd  
Detailed mailing/info coming soon!

### Women of Spirit News

#### Women's Circles

If you are interested in joining a Circle, please see the Women's bulletin board for times and locations. There are four Circles from which to choose. We meet monthly for a Bible study from the Gather Magazine. Please join us!

### All Anew

"All Anew," the tenth Women of the ELCA Triennial Gathering is coming to Minneapolis on July 13-16, 2017. Mark your calendars and register now for "four days of conversation, prayer, laughter, worship, praise, lament, and invitation -to be women who act boldly on their faith." You can find registration packets on the Women's bulletin board outside the church offices or go online to the [womenoftheelca.org](http://womenoftheelca.org).

### Adult Choir

Practice is every Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. Contact Marie Thorlacius for more information, [mthorlacius@spiritlutheran.org](mailto:mthorlacius@spiritlutheran.org).

### Neighborhood Potluck and Folk Dancing

**Saturday, January 7, 2017** – Bring a dish to share from your culture or family tradition.

**5:30 p.m. -6:30 p.m.** Potluck

**6:30 p.m. -8:00 p.m.** Folk Dancing lead by Mark Helpsmeet of the Eau Claire International Folk Dancers. Thank you to Spirit Lutheran for hosting us!

In an effort to limit waste, please bring your own dishware and flatware, as you are able. There will be some activities for children as well. We will provide notecards for noting ingredients of dishes for those with restrictions.

*humanKIND* is dedicated to Building Community and Celebrating Diversity in the Eastside Hill Neighborhood. Everyone is welcome! See poster in office hallway for info!

### SOUP TO GO

We have you covered for lunch!  
We will be having a Mission Trip fundraiser on January 15!  
Stop buy the narthex and choose a favorite soup to take home with you after worship.  
(Free will offering).



# **BISHOP RICK HOYME'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR CONGREGATIONS:**

## **Dear Sisters and Brothers of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin,**

*"The world in front of you is nothing like the world behind you."*

This is a quote from a book I am currently reading titled: "Canoeing the Mountains" by Tod Bolsinger.

It is a book directed to pastors and church leaders to help them navigate the changes that are necessary to take the church to places it has never been before. I chose this quote for this annual report because, this will be my third year using a nautical theme to help us all to look forward to a new year and plan the best we can to take on what the future may bring.

The title of the book comes from the journey of Lewis and Clark as they led their team into uncharted territory on what was called the Corps of Discovery Expedition. When they arrived at the Great Falls of Montana they realized that their expectation of canoeing the Northwest Passage all the way to the Pacific Ocean was not a reality. All that lay before their eyes was mountains, "the most terrible mountain we have ever beheld." To go forward, they must learn a new way. They must learn to canoe the mountains.

This is where we stand as a church; this is where our churches stand in our communities and country sides. We know what got us here, but we don't know how to move forward. "The world that is front of you is nothing like the world behind you."

But move forward Lewis and Clark and their team

did...and they continue to inspire leaders over 200 years later!

And so can we move forward. And, so must we! 2017, and the years following will be years requiring leadership, risk, unknown, danger and more failure than success. They will be years when the Spirit will be needed more than any time in my lifetime. But they will be years of adventure and wonder. I believe that with all of my heart and soul.

I encourage all of our Pastors, Deacons and Synodically Authorized Ministers to challenge the lay leadership of their ministries to come together and learn...learn how to canoe the mountains: read books on leadership; scour the great leaders of scripture; take time for prayer and visioning. And stop relying totally on what got you here to take you where God wants you to go.

You will stumble. You will get lost. You will be afraid. You will question. But you will keep moving. Sometimes, that is all you can do, until the skills you need become more sure and the questions you ask begin to find answers.

And trust. Trust in God who brought the children of Israel to the land God had promised.

One of my favorite songs was written by Don Moen. It is titled "God Will Make a Way" and I type every one of these words from memory: "God will make a way, when there seems to be no way. He works in ways we cannot see, he will make a way for me. He will be my guide. Hold me closely to his side. With love and strength for each new day, he will make a way, he will make a way."

It is a song that sings to my soul when I stand at those places where the world in front of me is nothing like the world behind me. It is a song that sings when I must learn how to canoe the mountains.

It is a song for all of you as well. God WILL make a way. Now start paddling!

—Bishop Rick Hoyme



## The face of the church is changing

Here is the church and here is the steeple. Open the door and see all the people. This well-known nursery rhyme, complete with hand motions, has likely been taught in Sunday school classes for generations. But it might be time to retire it.

As church membership across denominations continues to decline and the number of religiously unaffiliated increases, some leaders are thinking outside the box to find ways to reconnect congregations with their neighbors and bring back the emphasis that the church isn't the building but the faithful who gather to share the good news.

Around 190 of the ELCA's new congregations have thriving ministries that don't involve any steeple—some don't even involve doors.

Chicken Coop Church in Grantsburg, Wis., an ELCA synodically authorized worshiping community, is one of those nontraditional congregations—in more ways than just its unique name.

The “chicken coopers,” as mission developer Peter Johnson refers to them, worship in a converted chicken coop. Instead of a pew, chicken coopers take a seat on a sofa or recliner. For music, they sing contemporary Christian songs, but they've also been known to belt out the words of “Jesus Just Left Chicago” by ZZ Top.

While all of these components sound fun, and Johnson said they do have a lot of fun, make no mistake that this worshiping community is serious about keeping the focus on God and sharing the gospel with their community. “We live in mission with and for others who are beautifully broken, made new by the power of the Holy Spirit,” he said.

Most of the people who attend Chicken Coop Church, which started in 2014, are between their late 20s and early 40s with families and live at or



below poverty level. Most are also in recovery or dealing with addiction and mental health issues, Johnson said.

“Our church is the unchurched and the marginalized, and that isn't embellishing anything,” he said. “One could classify them as being some sort of statistic, but what you have is a faith community of survivors.”

“Community” isn't a word Johnson uses lightly. The first-time mission developer begins every Sunday evening worship service by introducing everyone by name and sharing a story that all gathered are from the family of God through Jesus. Simply, worship services are “family reunions.”

Thomas Johnson began attending Chicken Coop Church on Easter Sunday this year and is now part of the leadership team. “I felt like I was in a big, beautiful family from the first service I attended,” he said. “I'm a recovering alcoholic and addict, 6 foot 3 inches and 330 pounds, covered in tattoos. Every church I checked out I felt like an outsider. Chicken Coop Church doesn't judge. It's inspired me to be a better person and my heart feels full and at ease.”

Mission is at the heart of Chicken Coop. One of its ministries is a food distribution program called



A group photo of some members of the Chicken Coop Church in Grantsburg, WI.

“God’s People Serving,” a shared mission between 10 area Lutheran congregations.

“We have people who were at one time marginalized and felt not empowered who now feel bold enough to go into the community in the public eye with the power to share the gospel with people,” Peter Johnson said. “It’s beautiful.”

The mission developer thinks Chicken Coop is a reflection of the changing church of today. “This is a contextualized version of the Spirit at work. We need to make Jesus relevant and church applicable, and that involves empowering people,” he said. “It’s about the person who comes in and says they’ve been up for three days on meth and are looking for grace.

“The Spirit is at work in all people and we’ll become a vibrant and vital church by acknowledging the Spirit and allowing it to shape us.”

By: Megan Bransrud  
Associate editor of Living Lutheran

*Living Lutheran* is your source for news, reflections and stories from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and its local and global companions. We cover religious news and social issues, congregational life, global and domestic mission, family matters, spiritual practices and resources, and more.

## YOUTH, FAMILY, & ADULT OPPORTUNITIES DECEMBER 2016 - JANUARY 2017 (PLUS TWO IN FEBRUARY!)

### Help Needed!

Our congregation will come together on January 26 to help one of Spirit Lutheran’s Family. The Zarnis family needs our help with a fundraising goal of \$3000.00. This would complete the amount needed to get a wheel chair accessible van for the family. We’re asking ALL of Spirit members to come out to have **fun with a purpose**.

Sign up’s sheets are in the narthex. Please stop by and sign up to.....

- Help wash potatoes on Wednesday morning
- Help by Hosting
- Help with Kitchen Help
- Help by donating an item for the silent auction
- Help by donating a toppings (see signup sheet)
- Help by coming up with an act for the variety show
- Help with Clean-up

Come, invite others to come and eat dinner with us and enjoy the variety show.

Matthew 25:40 “*Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.*”

## Age 3 - Grade 6

Classes will resume on January 4 & 8.

## Middle School

**January 25** - This is a night for all Confirmation youth, high school youth, and parents. The activity is interactive and will be led by presenters from Thrivent Financial. Our event will go from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

## High School

**January 4** - We resume Connections and High School Youth Group.

**January 13-14** - 9th Grade Retreat - This scheduled Confirmation retreat will deal with other faiths and will include visiting other churches. We will be staying overnight at a church. We will start Friday night and will wrap up on Saturday evening. Please mark your calendars and watch for details to be mailed out in early January.

**January 25** - This is a night for all Confirmation youth, high school youth, and parents. Led by presenters from Thrivent Financial, this activity is interactive and cross-generational. Our event will go from 6:30-8:00 p.m.

**February 17-19** - Ski Trip! We will leave Friday night and return Sunday night. We'll stay in a cabin and ski at Whitecap. Stay tuned for more details.

## Family Opportunities

**Family Fun and Fundraiser Night - January 26**  
-Our congregation will come together to help one of our own Spirit Lutheran families at a night of fun with a purpose. We'll have a baked potato dinner, silent auction and a variety show. The Zarins family held an event last September to

raise funds toward the purchase of a wheelchair-accessible van, but the amount raised was short of what was needed. Anna Zarins is seven years old and confined to a wheelchair, and the family needs the van to improve their mobility. There are so many ways for members and friends of Spirit to help! In addition to donations of Silent Auction items, we will be looking for folks to donate potato toppings, to help set up for the event, to wash potatoes, to host, clean up, and perform in the variety show. So many opportunities to help! Watch for signup sheets to go up after the holidays.

## Adult Opportunities

See **Family Fun & Fundraiser night** – January 26.

**February 25** - WE ARE CALLED... to Act with Justice: Anti-racism Day for high school youth and adults 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. at Metropolis Hotel

This is a special opportunity for you to engage in a day sponsored by the Northwest Synod of WI Synod Youth Board. The day will deal with tough situations. You will hear stories of racism in your own communities, and you will learn how to make a difference in your community to stop racism. We'll have a keynote speaker and a time to watch selections from the movie, *Selma*. The afternoon will include time with anti-racism trainers that will equip us so that we can act with Justice.

Cost is \$10.00 and includes a pizza buffet. A signup sheet is on the bulletin board located near the main offices.

## Fundraisers

**Lunch to Go! - Sunday, January 15** following each worship service. *What is Lunch to Go?* Exactly that... stop by the narthex at Spirit to pick up a cup of soup and crackers to take home for lunch. We'll have many kinds of soup from which to choose. A free-will offering will be accepted to help those going to Montana to build houses next summer.

## Mission Trip Dates

**January 15** - Mission Trip monthly meeting and committee sign-ups. 9:30 a.m. in the Youth Room.

**January 15** - soup Lunch to Go fundraiser for 2017 Mission Trip, following each worship service. Mission Trip team members, please bring a crock pot of soup to the back of church by 8:30 a.m.

**February 26** - regular Mission Trip meeting @ 11:30 a.m. in Youth Room. (Meeting must be made up if you miss.)

## ELCA National Youth Gathering Kickoff "This Changes Everything"

**January 22 at 11:30 a.m. in the Youth Room** - Prep begins for our trip to the ELCA National Youth Gathering in Houston, Texas from June 27 through July 1, 2018. At minimum, you must be entering Grade 9 in 2018 to attend the Gathering.



A group photo of some youth from the Christmas Program



Caroling at the Meadows

## COMMUNITY NEWS

### *Aging & Disability Resource Center Workshops*

Get the support you need to make lasting lifestyle and behavior change with one of the health promotion programs offered through the Aging & Disability Resource Center of Eau Claire County. All workshops are interactive and meet for 6, 7 or 10-weeks. They are FREE and fun!

- **Strong Bones** – One hour strength training classes meet twice weekly. Four Information Sessions for new participants and seven workshops start on January 3, 4 and 9
- **Stepping On** – Comprehensive fall prevention program - starts January 18
- **Living Well with Chronic Conditions** – Learn 13 self-management tools to live better with an ongoing physical or mental condition - starts February 8
- **Healthy Living with Diabetes** – Designed for adults with type 2 diabetes, pre-diabetes or their caregivers; proven to improve in management of the condition and reduce adverse effects – starts March 29

These evidence-based programs work! Sign up today - some workshops fill quickly. Register online at [www.adrcevents.org](http://www.adrcevents.org) or call 715-839-4735. Please share with others who can benefit. For more information about local services, check out Eau Claire County's website, monthly ADRC newsletter, or call 715-839-4735.

# UPCOMING EVENTS:

## Sunday, January 1

9:00 AM Organ-led Worship

## Monday, January 2

Offices Closed

4:00 PM Visitation for Donna Riekemann  
at Smith's Funeral Home

## Tuesday, January 3

10:00 AM Visitation for Donna Riekemann

11:00 AM Funeral for Donna Riekemann

5:00 PM Al-Anon Meeting

6:00 PM Children's Choir Practice

## Wednesday, January 4

8:30 AM Wednesday Quilters

9:00 AM Staff Meeting

4:15 PM Spirit Ring handbell rehearsal

5:00 PM Dinner - Pork Sandwiches

5:50 PM CONNECTIONS worship w/  
Noisy Offering

6:25 PM Confirmation Class

6:25 PM Education and Mission Projects

7:00 PM Choir Rehearsal

## Thursday, January 5

6:00 PM Health & Healing Committee  
Meeting

7:00 PM AL-ANON Meeting

## Saturday, January 7

9:00 AM Men's Group Meeting at Hardees

10:00 AM Visitation for Boyd Relyea

11:00 AM Funeral Service for Boyd Relyea

2:00 PM Un-decorating the church

5:30 PM Neighborhood Potluck & Folk  
Dancing

## Sunday, January 8

Noisy Offering to be collected at worship

8:30 AM Organ-led Worship

9:30 AM Sunday School

10:30 AM Band-led Worship

## 9:00 a.m. Helpers

**Greeters:**

**Ushers:**

**Communion Assistants:**

**Rover:**

**Reader:**

## Spirit Lutheran Urgent Contacts

Bridge Pastor  
David Wall  
952-484-0593

Visitation Pastor  
Roger Benrud  
715-836-7158



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