

others. Women, faced with unintended pregnancies, are called to be good stewards of life by making responsible decisions in light of these relationships. Women and men share equally in the responsibility and accountability for procreation, although it is women who are most intimately affected by decisions about abortion.

· All of life is a mysterious, awesome gift of God. Biblical passages express the God-given mystery of creation (Psalm 139; Jeremiah 1:5; Isaiah 40:26ff; Luke 1:41; Acts 17:24-25). God creates life, redeems it through Jesus Christ, and fulfills it in the coming of the reign of God. Personal human life is a part of this divine drama. God creates a human being through complex genetic, physiological, and relational developments.

Human life in all phases of its development is God-given and, therefore, has intrinsic value, worth, and dignity. Guided by God's Law, which orders and preserves life, human beings are called to respect and care for the life that God gives.

· What God has created has become corrupted by sin. Sin is both a condition of alienation from God and the acts that issue from this condition. Human judgments, actions, organizations, and practices are marked by a distortion of God's will and purpose for life. Sin is evident in the many ways human lives are not given equal respect or treated with high value, but are subject to abuse, violence, and neglect by individuals, groups, and entire societies. We are caught up in a web of sin in which we both sin and are sinned against.

What is the status of this conversation in our local faith community today? What words or phrases seem important to you today?

The next **Sleep in Heavenly Peace** Community Build is TODAY from 2-5 at Welter Storage in Monticello. Here is the sign-up link,

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050F4AA5A62FA5FA7-shpcommunity3>.

Wednesday, January 8th

Ushers: WD4 Students
Reader: WD4 Students
Comm Prep: Dorothy Wood
Comm Server: WD4 Students
PowerPoint: WD4 Students

Sunday, January 12th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Merlyn & Marlaine Wilken
Reader: Mary Lou Schipper
Comm Prep: Merlyn & Marlaine Wilken
Comm Server: Mike & Nancy Bickford, Pete Bungam
PowerPoint: Lois Ocenosak
Video: Linda Kenny

Sunday, January 12th 10:30 a.m.

Ushers: CJ Sullivan family
Reader: Shawna Giegerich
Comm Prep: Dan & Lynn Rickels
Comm Server: Shawna Giegerich, Dan & Lynn Rickels
PowerPoint: Ruby Robertson
Video: Sebastian Goldsmith

Sunday, January 12th

- * 8:30am Worship
- * 9:30am Coffee Hour (Communion Dist Mtg)
- * 10:30am Worship
- * 1:00pm Reduced to Joy study
- * 4:00pm Confirmation Class

Monday, January 13th

- * 4:30pm Worship Team Meeting
- * 6:30pm Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 14th

- * 1:30pm Prayer—in side chapel
- * 2:00pm Sisters Ecumenical Study—LL CE
- * 2:30pm R & R - in side chapel
- * 6:00pm Grief Support—LL CE
- * 6:30pm Mary Circle
- * 8:00pm AA—LL CE

Wednesday, January 15th

- * 7:00am Good Guys Bible Study—McOttos
- * 8:00am Lutheran Men in Mission
- * 6:00pm Worship
- * 6:00pm WD4

Friday, January 17 Pulse Deadline

Church Office Hours: There is typically church staff in the building Monday through Friday. **Lois' office hours** are: Mon. & Th 9-2; Tue. 12:30-5:30; Wed. 9-4; Fri 9-12. Outside these hours call ahead to see if someone is here.

Phone: (319)462-4841

Office: 103 E. Cedar Street, Anamosa, IA 52205

Website: www.stpaulanamosa.com

Church Secretary email: stpaulanamosa@gmail.com

Wednesday, January 15th

Ushers: Darla Algoe
Reader: Darla Algoe
Comm Prep: Darla Algoe
Comm Server: Summer Parks, Laura or Marcy
PowerPoint: Beth Hora

Sunday, January 19th 8:30 a.m.

Ushers: Mark & Rhonda Bickford
Reader: Lois Ocenosak
Comm Prep: Wilma Anderson & Verna Lewison
Comm Server: Wilma Anderson, Wayne & Becky Embree
PowerPoint: Grant Lubben
Video: Grace Lubben

Sunday, January 19th 10:30 a.m.

Ushers: Curtis Weaver family
Reader: Paula Sisler
Comm Prep: Serge & Paula Sisler
Comm Server: Sally Clapp, Addie Dales, Paula Sisler
PowerPoint: Emma Dales
Video: Logan Dales

Sun., Jan. 12, 2020

Baptism of our Lord

Welcome Pastor Kathryn & Patrick



Liturgy setting one can be found on pages 57-74 in the green Lutheran Book of Worship

All Are Welcome to commune with Christ in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. We serve the fruit of the vine under two forms: wine and

grape juice. The inner ring of the tray is grape juice. If in doubt, please ask the distributor. Gluten free hosts are available; please notify an usher before service begins.

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

Prayer Concerns: Kara Butterworth, Dennis Heth, Peter & Claire Mannon; Zack, Aspin & Livi Covey; Darlene Hellman, mother of Deb Oldham; Sharm Sisler and for the family of Ruth Ann Bungum. (Names will be removed from the prayer list after four weeks unless there is a change in the person's condition. Requests need to be made by an immediate family member.)

Synod Book Club January 16th - *Let Your Life Speak*, by Parker Palmer

Join others from around the synod for a short on-line discussion of the book. This book about purpose and vocation is for everyone. Learn more from the summary on the author's website. "Is the life I am living the same as the life that wants to live in me?" With this searching question, Parker Palmer begins an insightful and moving meditation on finding one's true calling. *Let Your Life Speak* is an openhearted gift to anyone who seeks to live authentically. The book's title is a time-honored Quaker admonition, usually taken to mean "Let the highest truths and values guide everything you do." But Palmer reinterprets those words, drawing on his own search for selfhood. "Before you tell your life what you intend to do with it," he writes, "listen for what it intends to do with you. Before you tell your life what truths and values you have decided to live up to, let your life tell you what truths you embody, what values you represent." January 16th, 7:30 pm, all are welcome. Register at <https://zoom.us/join/joinMeeting?meetingId=78d6829a4787d4b1dc2040ba88984b7b>

Jones County Food Bank Although anything and everything is appreciated, the following items are the most needed: diapers; sizes 4, 5 & 6; toothbrushes & toothpaste; feminine pads & tampons; dish soap; deodorant. December found 160 families in need of help. Thank you for your contribution for those in need.

Quilt-In January 26: St. Paul Quilters host an all day quilt-in on January 26 beginning at 10 am. Bring your machines, scissors, threads, etc. and join us for a day of fellowship and Lutheran World Relief work. We will do a potluck lunch.

Potluck & Prayer for Christian Unity: On Mon., Jan. 20, observe Martin Luther King, Jr. Day by joining together with people of all faiths for the Christian Unity prayer service hosted at St. Patrick Catholic Church in Anamosa. Potluck will start at 5:00 p.m. and service at 6:30 p.m. More information is available in the Pulse.

Please take a moment and pick up your 2020 'My Offering' box in the southwest corner behind the pews. If you do not have a box and want one please place your name on the list at the table.

Those interested in providing home communion and current providers: We will meet January 12th between services in the Fellowship Hall for donuts and coffee. We look forward to answering any questions regarding home communion. This also gives those currently providing home communion the opportunity to share experiences and field questions for our new partners. Thank you for making this a priority to serve those unable to attend services.

Dinner with Friends (yes, you are a friend).

Scooters! Anamosa. Friday, January 24th. 4:30 pm, we will order closer to 5:00. More friends are always welcome, Please join us! See you there!

Thank you to everyone that purchased gifts for the families from our HACAP Giving Tree. The families were very appreciative & thankful for the gifts given to them. Your generosity helped to make Christmas a little brighter for families needing assistance during the holiday season.

We want to **Thank You** for your support through the donation of pill bottles to the Community Health Free Clinic. They have notified us that they are no longer accepting pill bottles. Thank you. Janeece Lasley, AUMC

This Sunday marks the end of the Christmas season and begins the first week of ordinary time after Epiphany. This feast of the Lord Jesus' Baptism is another *epiphania* - showing forth of God's presence - so you will see white vestments and hear readings that are reminiscent of Epiphany joy. Through his baptism, Jesus is revealed even further as the chosen anointed one of God, the *Messiah*, the Christ. Following this feast, we will be in Ordinary Time until the beginning of Lent. Ordinary Time is ordinary only in that it is not part of a special season. Actually, ordinary time is not very ordinary at all for Christians because it is when we mark time's passage in the reign of heaven by the regular celebration of Sunday. Sunday is the identifying mark of the Christian community when we come together to remember that on the first day of the week (Sunday) Jesus was raised from the dead and all life was redeemed. Sunday is also the eighth day, a day outside time; it is a day of play and worship when heaven and earth meet in the activity of creation. Sunday Worship is a sacrament of redeemed time. How we live Sunday proclaims to those around us what we believe about the gifts of redeemed time and life.

Reading I: The Book of the Prophet Isaiah 42: 1-9 NIV

Take off your Christian glasses and put on those of a Jew who has been living in exile (away from home) under foreign rule for nearly 50 years. You have longed to know the freedom your ancestors knew, and to be able to freely worship your God and practice your faith without reprisal. You desire to see the Temple of Jerusalem rebuilt and have the anointed one of God, the king, sitting in authority over your household again. You want more than anything to believe that God has not abandoned you to suffering.

Amidst these feelings and longings stands Isaiah the prophet who offers the good news that through these trials God has not punished so much as strengthened the people of Israel to be a light for the entire world. It is in your suffering that you have recognized your need for God and are reminded of your call to be a people of the covenant. In this reading, Isaiah's words describe the one who has endured these hardships for the sake of the nations; it is the first of what we call "the four servant songs."

Isaiah portrays the election of this servant by God: "Here is my chosen one with whom I am well pleased, upon whom I have put my spirit." It sounds like he is describing the role of one person, but in fact, he is describing the mission of the entire nation of Israel as a collective body. The message the servant gets to deliver is great and glorious, but whoever delivers it is going to suffer for it. Yahweh would free Israel from Babylon not so they could merely go home and pat themselves on the back for being loyal. They had instead been prepared for a greater challenge—to bring the covenanted love of Yahweh to all people. As children of Abraham, with whom Yahweh made the original covenant, they were being blessed by God to be a blessing to others. The "reward" for

their faithfulness was not to be held for themselves but rather was to be shared with all of God's creation. They would be asked to welcome the foreigner, the eunuch, the infidel, and the sinner.

The image of the suffering servant is fulfilled by the prophet himself when he brings his challenging, spirited message to the Jews, and then by the nation of Israel as she brings the challenging message of faith in Yahweh to the world. It was challenging because it meant that the people had to turn away from their participation in the Babylonian culture, and people usually resist this caliber of change.

Later, according to Matthew, Jesus himself would claim this image when describing his mission and ministry to the people of first century Palestine. He would indeed be a light to the nations, but not in the powerful way the Jews expected. The story of Israel was embodied in him; Jesus would usher in the kingdom of God anew through his own loyalty, suffering and eventual new life in God.

Reading II: Acts of the Apostles 10:34-43 NIV

The early community of Jesus' followers was comprised primarily of Jews, many of whom struggled to accept the Gentiles (non-Jews) into the body of believers. They had been led to believe all their lives that the promises of God were meant for them in a unique way (Isaiah's words encouraging inclusivity did not catch on fully, especially as greed and power infiltrated the leadership.) But this story conveys Peter's own epiphany (clarity) that indeed the Spirit of God *had* been given to the Gentile household of Cornelius because they professed faith in the actions of God through Jesus of Nazareth. Peter (a Jew) was overwhelmed by his new understanding and he shared it with those gathered in Cornelius' house (this means the extended family, servants, friends, etc.; a sizeable group). Cornelius was a Roman centurion stationed in the northwest port city of Caesarea Maritima, Israel. Unlike many of his Roman cohorts, Cornelius had a reputation for being kind to the Jewish people, was a god-fearer, gave alms to the needy, and dedicated himself to prayer.

Prior to his encounter with Cornelius, Peter had received a dream in which a white tablecloth descended from the heavens and unfolded to reveal all sorts of foods, including some, like pork, that Jews wouldn't eat because of their dietary laws and disdain for any critters associated with Gentiles. Peter was invited to eat, but he protested, saying it would violate the law of the believers. The meaning of the dream troubled him, but his experience with Cornelius' household clarified it for him. Basically, the table of the Lord is prepared for everyone, Gentile and Jew, who approaches God with a just heart and the desire to live God's Word. To affirm this revelation, while Peter was still sharing his new understanding of Jesus with the people, Holy Spirit descended upon them. Then they were

baptized. The water bath of baptism confirmed and celebrated what had already been shown to be true; they were believers and God had shared the gift of salvation with them. This event reveals that salvation is not synonymous with being born into the right household or the waters of baptism; rather, baptism ritually expresses the relationship established by God with those who hear and profess their belief. {This is why parents seeking baptism for their infants are asked to express their intent to live and teach the faith.}

This story is very significant, because following this event, Peter becomes one of the main voices in support of accepting uncircumcised (Gentile) believers into the group of Jesus' followers. After the Council of Jerusalem in 49 CE, in which the young church agreed to accept this idea, missionaries including Paul, Barnabus, Silas, and John Mark, were actually sent out to Gentile communities throughout the Mediterranean region. They accepted many converts because of the story and spirit of Christ at work in the world.

Gospel: Matthew 3:13-17 NIV

In Matthew's telling of Jesus' baptism, John the Baptist appears to already know Jesus' identity. When Jesus requests the water baptism in the river Jordan, a symbolic action of his faithfulness to conversion towards God's will, John protests and asks to be baptized by him. But Jesus insists on the baptism in order to create the opportunity for Isaiah's words to be fulfilled in him. Like the suffering servant of Isaiah's story, God's voice is heard to say, "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased, (upon whom I have put my spirit)." The voice from heaven re-emphasizes Jesus' honor in this honor-driven society when he is named and claimed by his heavenly Father. It also reveals to Jesus that he is being called to a prophetic mission. Matthew has gone to great lengths to establish Jesus' honor to his readers. The genealogy of chapter one recalls that Jesus is a descendent of Abraham and David; He has honorable spiritual origins because His very conception is from God and announced by the angel; His parents are honorable people who seek and follow God's will, and; Jesus is called out of Egypt like his honorable ancestor Moses.

Jesus' mission then is the same one given to Moses, to the prophet Isaiah, and to the nation of Israel through their spiritual anointing: to usher in the reign of God on earth through teaching, healing, and *justice*. Like them, he is to lead the people on an exodus from slavery to freedom. It is an epiphany, a manifestation, a showing of God's power and presence with the people in this one person named Jesus (*God saves*). Jesus did not come to replace the mission of the nation of Israel. He was sent to lead them in living it. He was the light born into a

world darkened by sin because the Jewish nation was either unable or unwilling to be that light.

Jesus was to be the suffering servant leader referred to by Isaiah (*he shall bring forth justice to the nations, not crying out, not shouting, not making his voice heard in the street*). The kind of messiah Jesus would be is powerfully symbolized in this story when the sacrificial dove offered by the poor and humble Mary and Joseph at the infant Jesus' dedication in the Temple, is now given back to him by the heavenly Father through a sky rent asunder. In the form of a dove, a creature of the sky, Holy Spirit alights on the earthly human Jesus, reminding the people present that the two worlds are intimately joined together and destined for peace.

The members of Matthew's community were particularly interested in this message because they were filled with fear and suffering (death) at the thought that God had abandoned them. They had lost Jerusalem, the Temple, their homeland, and the priesthood to the Romans; and many had been cut off from their families when they chose to follow Jesus as the Messiah. The good news for Matthew's community is that those who put their faith in Jesus and follow his example can overcome fear and death as well. The spirit of Christ unites his followers into a new family built on the foundation of love, generosity, and forgiveness. They certainly are not abandoned by their God; He lives through them!

Taking it to the World:

--If you are in a time of suffering, can you see any good that is being created: i.e. bringing family together, increased prayer and awareness of needs, vices being lost, a new sense of dependence on God or others...?

--Kneel down to pray at least once a day this week.

--If you were baptized as an infant, can you identify a time in your life when you seriously reflected on what it means to be Christian and said, "Yes" to living for God? If not, perhaps now is the time!

--Make up your mind now to attend a religious retreat, event, conference or class this year.

--John and Jesus and their disciples challenged the leadership of their day to stay focused on God's will by seeking justice, healing, and unity. Can you identify leaders who need to have this reminder? Can you identify people who are reminding the leaders? Are you a leader in seeking unity, healing, justice?

--Find a way to communicate to another that you are well pleased with her/him. Even though it may be uncomfortable, imagine how it might strengthen esteem and bolster confidence for doing good.

A Social Statement on: ABORTION [This social teaching statement was adopted by a more than two-thirds majority vote at the second biennial Churchwide Assembly of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, meeting in Orlando, Florida, August 28-September 4, 1991.]

- II. CONVICTIONS OF OUR FAITH

Some basic faith convictions undergird our judgments on abortion:

· Human beings, created in God's image as male and female (Genesis 1:27-28), are persons of intrinsic value and dignity. Human beings live in community, with responsibility and accountability to God, self, and