

# the sower

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... sowing the seeds of a new creation. . .

reflections. . .



A couple of weeks ago, I had a chance to do something I haven't done in a long, long time. I sat in the back of the congregation and worshiped along side my family! It was the annual Thankoffering Service hosted by the women of the church! Gretchen presided and preached! Dorothy read! Marilyn assisted!

All I "had" to do was sit and listen and, when appropriate, stand or speak or sing with everyone else! And everything was going just fine until it was time to receive communion. That's when it hit me. . .

Together, we stood up and we walked down the aisle. Heads bowed. Hands folded. Together, we gathered around the table. Some kneeling. . . others standing. And, together, we held out empty hands to the ministers. Waiting for a bit of stale bread. . . for a sip of warm wine. . . While we waited, we listened to the words spoken over and over and over. . . again and again and again. . . to one person. . . then, the next. . . and the next. . . Like a chant. A mantra. "For you!" "For you!" "For you!"

Together, we were beggars! Each of us! All of us! We're beggars, still! But even more, we are beggars FED! Filled with the Body. . . with the Blood. . . of god!

"And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth. . ." And she place him on a plate. . . She poured him into a cup. . . .

Till next month!

pastor bob



# News Briefing

Congregational Newsletter Insert. More information available at [www.ntnl.org](http://www.ntnl.org)

December 2011

Celebrating our Ministry together  
in the NT-NL Mission Area



## *DiscipleLife Alive!* *Transforming the Future*

The congregational phase of the *DiscipleLife Alive!* appeal is underway. Nearly 80 NT-NL congregations sent leaders to one of the Leadership Training Celebrations offered this fall. The celebrations invited the participants (about 500) to share in the excitement that DLA! has generated and to learn about the resources available to tell the DLA! story in their congregations. NT-NL congregations will launch their DLA! campaign during January, February and March of 2012. Results of the campaigns will be tallied for the 2012 NT-NL Mission Assembly in April. The goal is to raise \$3 million in order to enlarge our capacity for mission -- \$1.5 million to help resource congregations through a leadership development center; \$1 million to support leaders with scholarships, events and missional projects to grow our common mission; and \$300,000 to help our companion church in Sierra Leone complete their mission center as well.



Remaining DLA! Leadership Training Celebrations: Dec. 4 (noon) – Briarwood, Argyle; Jan. 14 (10 a.m.) – Advent, Arlington; Jan. 29 (12:15 p.m.) – Calvary, Richland Hills



## *Dreaming Together*

What will the future look like in the NT-NL because of the DiscipleLife Alive! Initiative? How will we fulfill our vision of *Leadership Formation for Mission*? And how will we use, equip and purpose the new DiscipleLife Center for Mission at Briarwood to help us achieve our goals? These are the kinds of questions that a team of people from the NT-NL are asking as they attempt to describe in greater detail the next steps as we move forward in mission together. The kick off meeting for the “Dream Team” is December 8. Guest speaker, Reggie McNeal (Missional Leadership Specialist for Leadership Network of Dallas) will help frame the day’s discussion. The team is chaired by Pastor Jane Mar ([Jane.Mar@ntnl.org](mailto:Jane.Mar@ntnl.org)).

## ELCA Malaria Campaign

The 2011 Churchwide Assembly in Orlando overwhelmingly approved participation in a campaign to help stamp out malaria. Over 800,000 people die each year from malaria – most live in Africa; most are children under 5. The ELCA Malaria Campaign will help gather the resources to end this scourge. Learn more about the effort and ways to help support the campaign at [www.elca.org/malaria](http://www.elca.org/malaria).

## FYI (Go to [www.NTNL.org](http://www.NTNL.org))

December Emphasis: *Holiday Greetings*

- ❖ The NT-NL **Congregational Leadership Academy** can help congregational leaders learn about congregations as dynamic systems, about the management of conflict, and the practice of healthy leadership. The academy will be hosted by **Zion Lutheran Church in McGregor**. Learn more at [NTNL.org](http://NTNL.org) under “Leaders”.
- ❖ **Immigration:** In a recent letter to President Barack Obama, ELCA bishops expressed concern over new state immigration laws and called for an overhaul of federal immigration policy. Learn more at [www.ELCA.org/immigration](http://www.ELCA.org/immigration).
- ❖ **Pray your way through the NT-NL** in 2012. The annual prayer list of congregations, conferences and ministry partners is now available online. Go to [NTNL.org](http://NTNL.org) and look under “Congregations”.
- ❖ **NT-NL Lutheran Men in Mission** sponsors a gathering for all men on Jan. 20-21 at Briarwood. The keynote presenter is Richard Ray, Anchor 4 News, speaking on *Living DiscipleLife*. Info contact Davis Tubre ([hdtubre@gmail.com](mailto:hdtubre@gmail.com)).
- ❖ **Feeling a Call to a Church Vocation?** High School Seniors, college students and second career folks are invited to meet the members of the NT-NL Candidacy Committee and attend a *Vocations Day* on Dec. 17 at Briarwood. Learn more at [NTNL.org](http://NTNL.org) (go to “Leaders” and then “Vocations Day”).
- ❖ **The Apprentice Conference** at King of Glory, Dallas, Jan. 27-28, features James Bryan Smith, C.J. Fox and Matt Johnson talking about the exciting adventure of being continually transformed into the likeness of Jesus. Learn more at [www.KingOfGlory.com](http://www.KingOfGlory.com).



**The Northern Texas – Northern Louisiana Mission Area: *DiscipleLife: Sowing and Growing Disciples of Jesus***  
To receive *News Briefing* electronically, sign up at [www.ntnl.org](http://www.ntnl.org) or call 214.637.6865

# The Season of Advent

## *A Time of Anticipation and Hope*



*According to the Christian worldview, humans need God to bring us life and salvation, and Christmas celebrates this coming of God in the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Christians affirm that Christ comes not only in a past event but is also in our present life and the world's unfolding future. So it is that Advent is not about Mary's pregnancy but about the church's continual prayer that God will come (the root meaning of "advent") to us, bringing life to a dying world. Advent is a time to meditate on the meaning of life and what is in our*

*own hearts and to pray for God's salvation and wholeness for all. Advent is the only season in the church's year that does not have a distinct day to initiate it.*

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**The Advent Wreath:** In Advent, the first season of the church year, the light becomes brighter on Advent wreaths in our churches and in our homes as we anticipate and acknowledge the presence of the light that no darkness can overcome, Jesus Christ. The wreaths also symbolize expectant anticipation for the fullness of God's presence in Jesus Christ and the faithfulness of God in the gift of eternal life. Consider using all white candles or blue candles that coordinate with the vestments and paraments of the season. The older practice of using a pink candle on the Third Sunday of Advent as a symbol of joy is no longer consistent with the current lectionary.

**Proclamation:** The biblical readings for the Sundays in Advent give voice to a jarring reality: This violent, tragic, sin-filled world desperately needs the healing, reconciliation and peace of the presence of the Savior who is God-with-us, Jesus Christ. The proclamation of the word of God in Advent carefully balances the realistic confession of our human brokenness and longing for Christ's healing with the tangible presence of Christ's presence that is already at hand.

**Go in peace. Serve the Lord.** Advent is an ideal time to emphasize the places where the expectant hope of Christ's presence intersects with the needs of the local community and world. Try making the announcements that pertain to the church's participation in God's mission in the world just before the blessing and dismissal to emphasize the connection between worship and mission.

## LIVING LUTHERAN

A daily blend of stories, culture and community

(Text taken from the ELCA's online magazine [www.LivingLutheran.com](http://www.LivingLutheran.com)).

# The Briarwood Vine

The monthly newsletter of Briarwood Retreat Center  
December 2011



Briarwood Retreat Center  
[www.briarwoodretreat.org](http://www.briarwoodretreat.org)  
Phone:  
(940) 241-2099  
Email:  
[bw@briarwoodretreat.org](mailto:bw@briarwoodretreat.org)

Many exciting things continue to happen at Briarwood this fall. Retreat business has been bustling and in the spirit of the season we are very thankful for our wonderful customers and supporters. We would like to thank Via De Cristo, Denton area Walk to Emmaus, North Texas Tres Dias, The ACTS community, numerous NT-NL Mission Area groups, LISD, and plenty of others for their patronage and support this fall.



Briarwood held its annual meeting on November 6th. It was an afternoon full of fellowship, food, and a positive energy about Briarwood. Our advisory council adopted the minutes, voted in new board members, and heard the annual reports from staff and board members. The advisory council was given the chance to make suggestions, ask questions, and help shape the role of Briarwood into the future.

During the coming year we will be providing the advisory council members with minutes from the monthly board reports and updates on upcoming projects and programs. If you didn't make it to the meeting but would still be interested in representing your congregation in this group simply contact our office and speak with us. We welcome your ideas, partnership, and input.

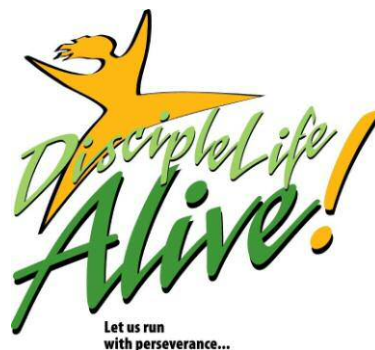
## Advent Retreat for 4<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grades December 3-4<sup>th</sup>, 2011

Briarwood's Advent youth retreat is coming up soon. This event will begin on Saturday December 3<sup>rd</sup> and end the following day. The cost will be \$60 per participant and adult chaperones are free. Come explore the Advent season with us. Brochures and registration forms are available on our website:



[www.briarwoodretreat.org](http://www.briarwoodretreat.org)

We believe that God's purpose for Briarwood is to provide a natural setting where people experience God's love.  
Thank you for your partnership in the camping and retreat ministry of the synod.



## DiscipleLife Alive Brunch and Program, December 4, 2011

A very special "free" Holiday Brunch will take place on December 4, 2011 to discuss the future of Briarwood and the DiscipleLife Alive initiative. In addition to our usual brunch fare there will be a program led by Bishop Kevin Kanouse starting at noon.

The program will include:

- Celebrating the current progress of DLA
- Discuss upcoming changes and opportunities
- Presentation of resources available to help explain the DLA initiative
- Update on the Briarwood Master Site Plan

This is a free brunch but RSVP's are strongly encouraged, please contact us by phone or email to reserve your place or for additional info.

## 2011 ASK Letter

Be on the lookout for a new mailer coming your way from Briarwood. As you may know Briarwood relies on your generous donations for more than 30% of our operating budget. With this in mind our 2011 "ASK" Letter is headed your way in early November. Please consider returning the mailer with a small gift to help us complete our 2011 budget or possibly signing up as a Sustaining Member for 2012. All donations made to Briarwood can be used as a tax deductible charitable contribution.



# Meet Auhora

EGYPT



Auhora Gendy lives in rural village several hours outside of Cairo, Egypt. The community of 30,000 is faced with poverty, with the average daily income coming out to \$1.80. That's less than \$2 to feed, clothe and shelter your family. Health care is limited and hard to afford. And eye care? It's unheard of.

It is estimated that 90 percent of people who are blind live in developing countries. More than half of these cases are caused by cataracts and other preventable, treatable eye diseases. Blindness has a profound socioeconomic impact in society. Not only is the blind person unable to work, but at least one other family

member often has to drop out of school or skip work to care for them.

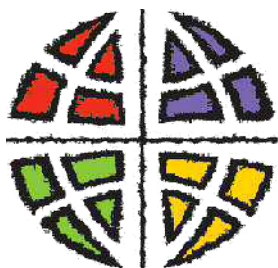
Like many adults worldwide, Auhora slowly developed cataracts as she aged. With no preventative care or treatment, she eventually went blind.

Last year, Auhora experienced what some might call a "miracle." She got her sight back.

It is your gifts to ELCA World Hunger that made this possible. Since July 2007, a mobile eye clinic has provided free eye exams, eyeglasses and simple surgeries to prevent and treat blindness in 3,000 patients. In Auhora's case, it was a simple, \$270 surgery that restored her sight. "Now, I see." Auhora says with a smile.

*Your gifts to ELCA World Hunger support this program and others like it in more than 60 countries around the world. Please make your check payable to "ELCA World Hunger" and place it in your congregation's offering plate or mail it to: ELCA World Hunger, P.O. Box 71764, Chicago, IL 60694-1764. To give online with a credit card, please visit:*

**[www.elca.org/hunger](http://www.elca.org/hunger)**

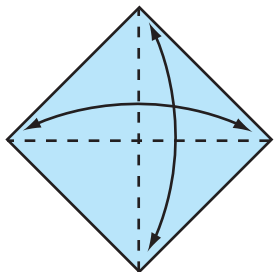


**ELCA World Hunger**  
**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

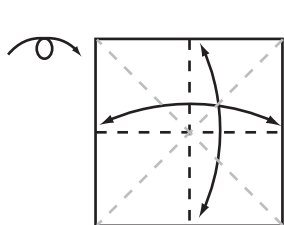


# Origami Crane Instructions

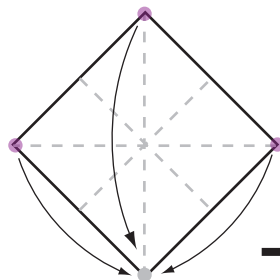
origami-fun  
www.origami-fun.com



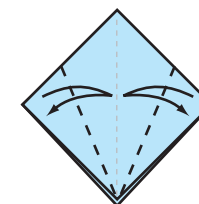
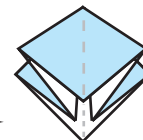
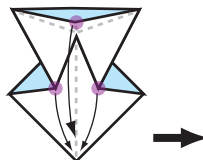
1. Start with a square piece of paper, coloured side up. Fold in half and open. Then fold in half the other way.



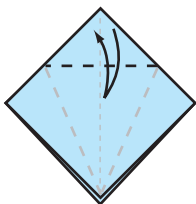
2. Turn the paper over to the white side. Fold the paper in half, crease well and open, and then fold again in the other direction



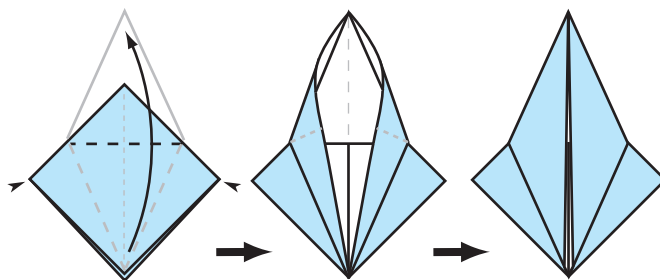
3. Using the creases you have made, Bring the top 3 corners of the model down to the bottom corner. Flatten model



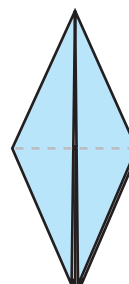
4. Fold top triangular flaps into the centre and unfold



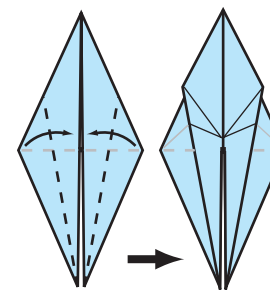
5. Fold top of model downwards, crease well and unfold



6. Open the uppermost flap of the model, bringing it upwards and pressing the sides of the model inwards at the same time. Flatten down, creasing well.



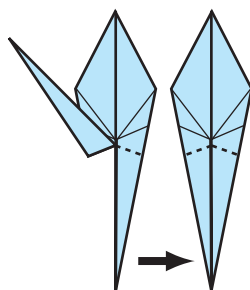
7. Turn model over and repeat Steps 4-6 on the other side.



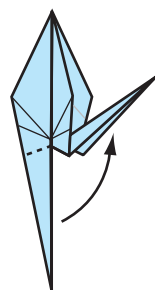
8. Fold top flaps into the centre.



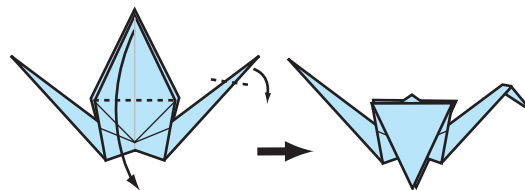
9. Repeat on other side.



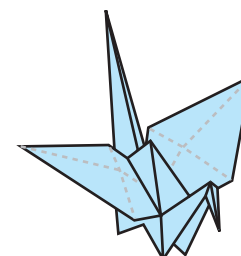
10. Fold both 'legs' of model up, crease very well, then unfold.



11. Inside Reverse Fold the "legs" along the creases you just made.



12. Inside Reverse Fold one side to make a head, then fold down the wings



Finished Crane

**UNFORTUNATELY, THE CHURCH HAS BEEN** and continues to be as guilty as anyone, this time of year, for using the "less fortunate" as nothing more than window dressing for the holidays. For thirty days, we care. For 335, we hardly look twice. So, this year, we begin a new tradition. . .

*HOLY DAY GIVING,  
ABOVE AND BEYOND,  
ALL YEAR 'ROUND*

Take a look at these ministries. . .

WORLD HUNGER APPEAL

WEST TEXAS FOODBANK

CASH FOR SHOES

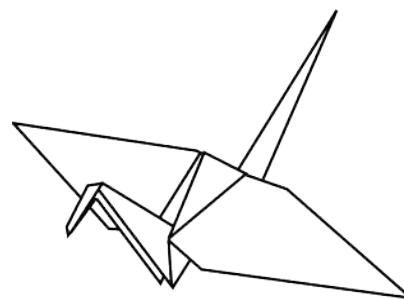
(something new we're doing  
for the students of Lamar Elementary School)

They need help – in one way or another – all year long! So this year, please consider how you might support them, on a regular basis, throughout the year. . . not just at Christmas! To find out more, run a search – on **www.goodsearch.com**, of course –for "World Hunger Appeal" and for the "West Texas Foodbank". Or, if you'd like to know more about the shoe drive, give Sherice a call or drop her a line. . . 689-9274 \* **sbarndt@juno.com**

And, on behalf of god. . . Thank you!  
For all that you've done!  
And for all that you're doing!

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**FOR THIS MONTH'S MIND GAME,** try origami! Take a square sheet of paper, write a prayer on one side, and fold it into a crane – a symbol of peace! The instructions are on the previous page! Then, place it in your tree at home – or on the one here in our worship area! – as a reminder to you and to god! If you have a problem with the folding, take a look at **<http://origami.org.uk/origamicrane>** It worked for me! Or, just wait till Sunday morning and look for Joshua Yee! He's a pro at it!



**IF YOU'RE HOLDING THIS ISSUE OF THE SOWER,**

the "newsletter preparation committee" has already met for the month! But, if you'd like to help with next month's edition, the meeting will



convene at 10:00, Thursday morning, January 5<sup>th</sup>, in the "office" behind the office! We usually adjourn before noon! If you have any questions, call Pastor Bob or drop him a line:

**694-1373 + bbarndt@juno.com**

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**THE CLUSTER CONFAB** between us and Christ's Lutheran in

Odessa has broken new ground! The group is planning a joint retreat sometime in late January or early



February! The topic: FaithTalk (or something like that)! More information as plans unfold! Also, we started talking about a year long, Basin wide celebration of the Quincentennial (or 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary) of the Reformation for 2017! If you'd like to take part in next month's discussion, mark your calendar now! 7:00, Thursday evening, January 5<sup>th</sup>, place to be announced!

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**AS YOU'VE HEARD BY NOW,**

Janette Jenson, one of the founding members of the congregation, died earlier this month and her funeral was held at the Rock Church in Cranfills Gap. This Sunday, Dec 4<sup>th</sup>, however, during worship, we will have "our" time - to remember, to say goodbye, and



to commend her to god's keeping. . . the place she's been throughout her life! Also, please remember to keep her family, friends - and each other - in your thoughts, words, and deeds! If you'd like to send condolences to Janette's children, their addresses are:

- Sharon (& Wally) Roach  
3601 Springmont Dr., Midland, TX 79701
- Steven (& Paula) Jenson  
750 Fern Valley Rd, Waco, TX 76708

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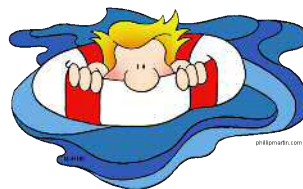
**THE TUESDAY EVENING STUDY GROUP**

is taking a break until after new years. "Disciples" chose to defer to the Advent Midweek Gatherings, instead. Keep your eyes and ears open for more information!



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**SPEAKING OF. . .** the Advent Midweek Gatherings will continue, this year, through the week before Christmas!



Wednesdays - Dec 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, **AND the 21<sup>st</sup>!** Supper's served

from 5:45 - 6:45pm. Devotions and Evening Prayer follow from 7-7:30 (+/-). The topic: *SURVIVING!* Are we called by god merely to keep our heads above water or are we called to be/do more? Join us as you're able and willing! It's a great way to get ready - faithwise - for Christmas Eve! Any questions - or if you need a ride - give the pastor a call!

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**BELIEVE IT OR NOT,** our ministry on the **PATIO** is now in its fifth - count 'em! - **FIFTH YEAR!** Through it, we provide an



afternoon off once a week for those taking care of older family members or friends who can no longer safely be alone! And, once a month, we've, also, begun hosting a support group for those caregivers! Susan Frederickson, caregiver program specialist at the Area Agency on Aging of the Permian Basin, is the facilitator. The group meets from 2-3:30 (or so), the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday afternoon of each and every month and is for anyone and everyone who needs the chance to talk with others like themselves! If you have any questions, just give Susan a call or drop her a line or two, at. . .

**432.563-1061**

**sfrederickson@aaapb.com**

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**PANCAKE BREAKFAST #95!**

Served from 9-11:00am, Satur-day, Dec 10<sup>th</sup>! If you'd like to lend a hand, feel free to come earlier or stay late! Otherwise, come when you can, stay as long as you'd like, and enjoy! It's meant to be "a time, a place, and a reason for people to get together!" And, off to the side, if you'd like to join in. . . **FAITH TALK!** A relaxed conversation (from 10-11) about things that matter! Everyone's welcome. . .

**ESPECIALLY YOU!**

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**OUR 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL NEIGHBORHOOD CAROLING PARTY** will be held Saturday evening, Dec 17<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 6:00! We'll

meet "out back" around a fire, sing some songs, tell some stories, eat



some s'mores! Then, we'll head inside to warm up with hot chocolates and hot spiced cider! Be sure to invite your kids and grandkids! Friends and neighbors! You might, even, consider coming yourself! For more information, give Sherice a call or drop her a line. . .

**689-9274 + sbarndt@juno.com**

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**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** It's that time of the year, again! With poinsettias and with blankets! Of course, the poinsettias we'd just borrow the poinsettias for worship Christmas Eve! But the blankets would be our gift to those who need them. They'll be donated to and distributed through Casa de Amigos on the Eastside of town! If you'd like to help out with either, just. . .

give a call - **694-1373**

or drop a line - **bbarndt@juno.com**

Oh! And, by the way, the women of the church are collecting food and personal items for Teen Challenge (Men)!

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**THE CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION SERVICE** will begin at

7:00, Saturday evening, Dec 24<sup>th</sup>! Be sure to come early and stay a little later. We'll be having spiced cider and hot chocolate as well as some goodies. Hear "good news of great joy for all"! And, then, share some time with the rest of god's family! You don't have to bring anything. Just come with an open heart!



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**WE'RE STILL COLLECTING CANS!** For the E.L.C.A. Youth Gathering next July in New Orleans and,



also, for another trip to summer camp! So, please, keep those aluminum cans coming!

And, while you're at it, keep on using  
[www.goodsearch.com](http://www.goodsearch.com)  
 when you're looking for something online.

It's Yahoo's special site for non-profits



and every search you make, we get a penny! In fact, we just received another check for \$34.60! Be sure you type in "Midland Lutheran Church (Midland, TX)" where the home page says, "Choose your cause"! And thanks. . . for everything!

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**"CHRIST IN OUR HOME"** - the lectionary-based devotional published by Augsburg Fortress for the E.L.C.A. - for the last quarter of the year is now available! Be sure to pick up your copy next time you're at worship! Or, if you can't get here right away, drop a line or give us a call. . .

**694-1373** or [bbarndt@juno.com](mailto:bbarndt@juno.com)

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**THE "RICE BOWL" OFFERING - YTD -**

taken up by the kids after the "sermonito" Sunday mornings for World Hunger Appeal, as of last Sunday is. . . drumroll please. . . **\$ 1,801<sup>05</sup>**



BTW, since we began "passing the rice bowls" six years ago after Hurricane Katrina hit New Orleans, we've collected somewhere around \$14,000. . . one penny. . . one nickel. . . one dime. . . one quarter. . . at a time!

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**PLEASE KEEP THESE PEOPLE** in your thoughts, words, & DEEDS. . .

Adrian; Marv & Yvonne Armock; Bessie Arthur; Bob Bales; Sandra Burress; Speck & Dorothy Chambers; Ted Cheuvront; Ann Cihonski; Burgess & Sally Cooke; Linda Courtice's sister Laura; Adam Engram; Gene & Terri Gordon; Evelyn Herrera; family and friends of Janette Jenson; Larry Keene; Lynelle Kestler; Ann Knittle; Bill & Shirley Landureth; Bob & Nancy Martin; Cassie Martin; Frances Matthews; Jackie & Martin Meissner; Kristen Muehlbrad; Cindy Nelson; Lawanna Nelson; Eden Nicole; Jeanette Price; Bill Reinert; Bob & Gwen Ristow; Jim & Nick Roop; Norma Saenger; Morris Snider; Maria's mom; Marie Walker; Mary Yee & her family

For telephone prayer chain requests - or if you'd like to be a link on the chain - please call Barbara Porsch (**683-4474** \*

[bporsch@sbcglobal.net](mailto:bporsch@sbcglobal.net) )

or Ginny Behnken (**262-3374** \*

[fred\\_behnken@grandecom.net](mailto:fred_behnken@grandecom.net) )

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the BIRTHDAYS

dorothy chambers	12/01	connie saenger	12/21
ron meyer	12/01	chita meyer	12/27
amanda taylor	12/10	rachel meyer	12/27
matthew keys	12/16	barbara porsch	12/27
carol reinert	12/20		

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the ANNIVERSARIES

speck & dorothy chambers	12/11	63 yrs
henry & carole holstein	12/19	48 yrs
charles & barbara wolle	12/30	44 yrs

if we've - unintentionally - omitted a birthday or anniversary, please let us know

## the LEADERSHIP of the CONGREGATION

president			
secretary	marylin boomer	carol reinert	treasurer
ministry team	council representative/team leader		
building and grounds	lonnie yee		
education	sherice barndt		
fellowship			
outreach	fred behnken		
stewardship & finance			
worship	norma saenger		
nominating team	bob & marylin boomer		delegate(s)
organist	chad hauris	bob barndt	pastor

## the WORSHIP MINISTERS

	acolyte	reader	worship ass't	tellers	altar flowers
dec 04	lanie barndt	fred behnken	lonnie yee	del bowie & lonnie yee	
dec 11	eden brown	marylin boomer	marylin boomer	tom daneker & lonnie yee	
dec 18	jonathan yee	gretchen shults	joshua yee	gerald & ruth mendenhall	
dec 25	joshua yee	lanie barndt	gretchen shults	fred behnken & alan sewell	the BARNDTs
altar guild	norma saenger & mary yee		lonnie yee	cantor	
			sherice barndt	lockup	

*“What you do  
to your neighbor in need  
you do  
to the Lord Christ himself!,*

Martin Luther, 1483-1546

average sunday attendance for november: **40**





**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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## **midland lutheran church**

2705 west michigan avenue \* midland, texas 79701-5840

bob barndt, pastor

office: 432.694-1373 \* home: 432.689-9274 \* fax: 432.694-4631

webpage: [www.midlandlutheranchurch.org](http://www.midlandlutheranchurch.org)

email: [midluth@att.net](mailto:midluth@att.net) or [bbarndt@juno.com](mailto:bbarndt@juno.com)

sunday morning schedule: **learning hour @ 9:15 \* worship @ 10:30**

office hours: monday-thursday, 9am-noon & by appointment

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**midland lutheran church**

2705 w michigan av + midland, tx 79701-5840



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*december 2011*



## the PROPERs for december

the **SECOND SUNDAY** of **ADVENT**, December 04

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Stir up our hearts, Lord God, to prepare the way of your only Son. By his coming strengthen us to serve you with purified lives; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

the **READINGS**: Isaiah 40:1–11 + Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13 + 2 Peter 3:8–15a + Mark 1:1–8

the **THIRD SUNDAY** of **ADVENT**, December 11

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Stir up the wills of your faithful people, Lord God, and open our ears to the words of your prophets, that, anointed by your Spirit, we may testify to your light; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

the **READINGS**: Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11 + Psalm 126 + 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24 + John 1:6–8, 19–28

the **FOURTH SUNDAY** of **ADVENT**, December 18

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: Stir up your power, Lord Christ, and come. With your abundant grace and might, free us from the sin that would obstruct your mercy, that willingly we may bear your redeeming love to all the world, for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

the **READINGS**: 2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16 + Luke 1:46b–55 + Romans 16:25–27 + Luke 1:26–38

the **NATIVITY** of **OUR LORD**, December 25

the **PRAYER** of the **DAY**: All-powerful and unseen God, the coming of your light into our world has brightened weary hearts with peace. Call us out of darkness, and empower us to proclaim the birth of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

the **READINGS**: Isaiah 62:6–12 + Psalm 97 + Titus 3:4–7 + Luke 2:[1–7] 8–20

