



This Changes Everything.

St. John's attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston this past July, and came back with positive messages. Youth members Nadine Riddle and Anna Huber share their experiences and tell us what they learned from the event (cont. on page 2)



God's Work. Our Hands.

Rebekah Turnbaugh, Director of Community Organization, gives a new perspective on this annual ELCA tradition.

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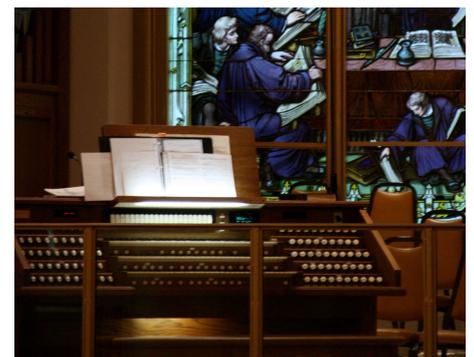


LUMINARIA
DISCOVERING THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Luminaria

Read Steve Schoff's account of his experiences as a Luminaria leader and what it means to him.

(Page 3)



Upcoming Concerts

Learn about the exciting and diverse musical events coming to St. John's over the next few months.

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After my experience at the ELCA Youth Gathering, I have to tell the congregation...

By Nadine Riddle

...how amazing it was for this gathering to be my very first adventure with youth group. As an incoming freshman, I have never attended a youth group meeting or any sort of gathering. Spending a week with people I had not know very well before drew us all closer together and created a beautiful and accepting community. Not only was that friendship within our own church, but with people we'd never met before, people from all over the country. Every day we were doing something different and meeting new people. On Synod Day, we connected with many people from the Sierra Pacific Synod, making new friendships and rekindling old ones. On Service Day, we sorted and boxed over 15,000 books to send to book fairs all over Houston. Splitting up into small groups with people outside our church allowed us a lot of time to befriend people from other churches.

For me, the most powerful part of the trip was the mass gatherings that were held every night. All 30,000 Lutheran youth gathered in the arena for one huge service. During those, we heard several different bands, including the amazing house band. We also had a great DJ who played a lot of music for us. It was almost like going to a concert each night. And every night, there were speakers who shared their story in front of everyone, to show what God can do for us. We heard many powerful and emotional stories about the struggles these people have gone through, and how God's salvation has gotten them to the point they are today. All of this has shown how God changes everything. ■

By Anna Huber

...THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING! Our theme for the week was base on the verse:

“For by grace, you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.” Ephesians 2:8

Twenty-one of us headed for Houston, Texas to meet up with 30,000 of our Lutheran friends from around the country. Every night we came together at NRG Stadium for a mass gathering where we sang songs like Oceans, listened to inspiring speakers like Nadia Bolz-Weber, danced to the music of various singers such as Chef Gordon Ramsey's younger brother, Ronnie, awed by testimonials, and praised God. Some of us even rallied for compassion for refugee families at the immigration centers. During each day we were challenged, no - more like shaken, from our comfort levels to truly engage in our relationship with God. Each day was a theme: God's call, God's love, God's grace, God's hope, and Jesus changes everything.

It was a welcome reminder to live God's love in the world. This is my second youth gathering as I was blessed with the opportunity to attend the ELCA Youth Gathering in Detroit three years ago as well. These youth gatherings are a faith journey and did not disappoint.
(cont. on page 10)

What Luminaria means to me?

By Steve Schoff

As one of several leaders involved in Luminaria for the last few years, it has been my privilege and pleasure to get to know many wonderful folks through this outstanding program. Our Luminaria (aka Catechumenate) program is the way folks make their way into membership at St. John's. It's actually an ancient practice that the early church used to prepare believers for baptism and to become disciples in Christ. We have discovered that it accomplishes even more.

Although class formats are similar, with the time split between Bible study and Lutheran theology, each class develops its own identity, making each session a new experience, especially for us as leaders. Each class brings its own unique backgrounds, insights, and faith

perspectives. Class discussions are rich, diverse, and meaningful. In fact, many times I have felt the presence of the Holy Spirit "burning within my heart" as truths were revealed, spiritual gifts were recognized, God's will clarified, and the Gospel lived out. Walking together, Lumens, Companions, and leaders discover how truly connected we all are in Christ, that faith is a journey and we don't always get it but rather we need to continually reform and grow our faith, study the scriptures, encourage one another, and use our spiritual gifts to "live God's love in the world". ■

New Connections

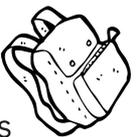
You may have already noticed many new faces at St. John's, and we would like to officially introduce our newest staff members to the congregation.

Join us Sunday, August 5 and 9am and 11:30am services for a short introduction and blessing of all staff members. This is a wonderful opportunity to acquaint yourself with our office team and learn more about our roles at St. John's. ■

Youth Ministry Dates

August 26

- Blessings of the Backpacks
- Sunday School Registration Begins
- Teacher Training (1pm - 3pm)



September 2

- One Room Sunday School Opportunity

September 16

- Official Start of Sunday School

Our Director of Community Organizing

By Pastor Frank Espegren

Rebekah Turnbaugh has hit the one-year mark as a staff member at St. John's, and wow, what a difference she has made to our mission and life of faith as a congregation. Rebekah's original job title was "Community Organizer". A primary aspect of her charge was to spur St. John's to get to know you better - who you are as a person, what you find important, and to help you discern and put to good use your gifts, talents and passions for the sake of the Gospel. Rebekah is working her way through the congregation, engaging in one-on-one conversations - to help you discover just how important you are in God's redemptive plan - to make sure your gifts and talents are put to good use in ministry both within our community of faith, and also out in this world God loves so much. But there is another aspect of Rebekah's work that has made a big difference around here - her deep call to justice, and to help

lead all of us to be a people who "strive for justice and peace in all the Earth," as our baptismal liturgy puts it. Because Rebekah is both these things to us - an organizer that leads through deep listening, and also through strategic planning and action, we have changed her job title to reflect her crucial role to us. - Rebekah is now our "Director of Community Organization". Rebekah joining our staff level of "Director" reflects the immense value and blessing of Rebekah's leadership work to us. Thank you Rebekah!! May we be blessed by your leadership for many more years to come. ■

DON'T MISS IT! TWO EVENTS IN ONE!

Sunday, August 26 • 9:00am - 11:30am • Oehler Hall

WELCA Craft Boutique

to benefit:

My Sister's House

Stitches 4 A New Start



Framed Art/Posters/ Sports Memorabilia

to benefit:

Family Promise

(items donated by a St. John's family.)

**WELCA would LOVE to have more donated handcrafts to sell.
To donate items, contact Susan Shambaugh at sshambaugh58@aol.com.**

God's Work, Our Hands: September 9

By Rebekah Turnbaugh

I have a confession to make: I am not a big fan of God's Work, Our Hands Sunday.

I don't think it is a bad thing to engage as a congregation in service throughout our community, but I also don't remember Jesus and his disciples wearing brightly colored clothing so they could be visible while doing nice things in the communities they visited.

I know this sounds snarky. It is, in part, but I also want us to have a bigger sense of what God has done, is doing in this world, and how we can engage in what work.

The world does not need little saviors because the work of liberation is already done. We are called to live into that liberation, that freedom. What can that look like? The possibilities are endless... and they are probably uncomfortable too. With that in mind, this God's Work, Our Hand Sunday, I want to challenge us to break open our imaginations while our hands are busy. If we are paying attention to what kind of waste we are picking up and where it is located, look around and see if you notice any nearby public trash or recycling receptacles. Imagine



who might have left garbage out for others to pick up and why. What can we learn about our community while we are engaged in service?

I am also going to invite those who are interested to do something a little off the beaten path for the Day of Service. We just wrote a new welcome statement. It is expansive and is a living commitment that we are making about who we are as people of St. John's. But I don't suppose that we are perfect in our welcome of all people, though I know we sincerely desire to be. We cannot begin to live into the liberation of God when our communities remain separate and divided, when relationship is not present. I believe that we can learn about what welcome could look like for different populations by going to worship in other congregations or houses of worship that weekend. What can we learn about other communities by going to them instead of waiting for them to come to us?

So mark your calendars for Sunday, September 9! Look in your bulletins and the e-weekly as we get closer to the day for opportunities to sign up for various activities. I hope you'll join in! ■

Healthy Families

By Cindy Carroll

We hope you are enjoying your summer! We would like to take this time to reflect on the value and blessings of family life. We hope that during this month and before all the activities of fall begin, you are able to enjoy some special time with your loved ones.

What do we mean when we use the word family? Today we have many family forms. Family means two or more persons who are committed to one another, who relate to one another on an intimate level and have a sense of identity.

In order for a family to be healthy, the members need a strong commitment to one another. This includes both adults and children. Without this commitment, the family can't serve as the refuge that God intended it to be.

Here are some tips for having a healthy family:

1. Get outside and play together.

Take a 30-minute walk around your neighborhood, go for a bike ride or take a trip to the beach or the mountains and go for a hike. This gives your family time to bond.

2. Have a NO PHONE zone.

As a family, come up with a plan that outlines times and spaces when no "screens" are allowed, then stick to the plan.

3. Organize your schedules with a family calendar.

Get a large calendar and put it in a place where everyone can see it. Then use it - schedule who is in charge of dinner, kid's sports practice/events, church activities, the family bike ride, etc.!

4. Communicate and relate to one another.

God has intended for many of our personal and emotional needs to be met by families. It is not always easy to share ourselves intimately with our family. Schedule time to share about your day and what is going on in each other's lives. Adults and children need to feel that they are both an essential part of the family as a whole.

5. Wind down together at the end of the day.

The whole household (parents too!) should be winding down the hour or so before bedtime. Read together or individually, play a game, but no electronics! This will set everyone up for a good night's sleep and in the morning everyone will feel healthy, strong and well rested.

God created families for our blessing. Enjoy this gift today and every day. May you be blessed and affirmed in your family life.

Meet the Staff - Esperanza Foft

Since taking on the position of Assistant Director, Communications in May, I have had the extreme pleasure of learning more about St. John's and its rich history with Sacramento. I am so amazed by all the services, events, concerts, ministries and all that we offer! I am looking forward to sharing our resources with the public through my communications role.

I am a Sacramento native who graduated from St. Patrick's and St. Francis High School. Growing up, I attended Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Rose Catholic Church, and I am thrilled to be so welcomed here at St. John's. I look forward to learning more about the Sacramento Lutheran community.

My background includes 15 years experience in promotion and marketing. I have worked at Clear Channel Radio (including stations NewsRadio KFBK and Talk 650 KSTE) and Arden Fair. I also have local and franchise restaurant marketing experience in the Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Denver markets. Most recently, I was on the campaign team for Tamika L'Ecluse who ran for Sacramento City Councilmember of District 5 - my home district.



In my short time here, I have:

- Increased e-weekly subscribers by 10%
- Effectively communicated St. John's events that have resulted in increased web traffic, donations, and social media presence.
- Enriched my own family's life through St. John's. My 5-year-old son loved attending VBS, and my 2-year-old daughter enjoys visiting the nursery during Sunday worship.

My next project is to revamp the website. Being new to the staff and congregation has given me the advantage of looking at all the information we have available, and organizing it in a way that may be easier for a newcomer to navigate.

If you ever want to discuss any new ideas or just want to chat, you can find me in my office on the second floor during the week or by the cookie table during Coffee Hour on Sundays.

We are a community that works to honor the wholeness of persons who live in all kinds of bodies.

If you are someone who lives with a disability or someone who identifies as able-bodied; if you are typically-developing or someone with a developmental difference; if you live with chronic pain or chronic disease, or are an athlete; if you are small, large, or somewhere in between,

You are welcome here.

-St. John's Welcoming Statement



In an effort to expand our Welcome Statement, we will be dedicating the use of the parking lot next to St. John's to those who live with a disability or mobility issues. Due to limited space, we want to make sure that everyone who attends our services has access to our church, including our parking lot.

As always, our parking garage (located at 18th and K Streets) is open and available for Sunday services.

During the week, the parking lot will be limited, via signage, to St. John's members only to allow easier access to our services.

Thank you,
St. John's Staff

A Promise to Reward Those Who Give

By Vern Gore

Family Promise is a gift for those who give and a promise for those who receive our gift of God's love. This last week in July, our promise to the families we hosted was to brighten their day ending at St. John's with a smile, a kind word, holding a newborn child as one of God's children. The joy and happiness is limitless and

will stay with me always to our member giving so much care and love to these families.

Seeing it happen with our members is truly a miracle.

During our host week in July we assisted four families the entire week with Christian fellowship, boundless love and care, safe and (cont. on page 9)

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secure overnight housing and truly wonderful meals that nourished the body, fed the heart and soul and lifted everyone's spiritual awareness. Our seven parents, four children and one three-month-old infant were a true delight for all of our volunteers. Even in their greatest time of need by being homeless, these families inspired me in the true gift of faith and knowing that our sharing is very powerful in Christian fellowship. I invite you to be a part of our

next Family Promise host week and experience the gift that we receive and give each day in our commitment to live God's love in the world. Our next host week is Sunday, October 21st through Saturday, October 27th.

Please plan to join us in this wonderful and rewarding ministry. Contact Verne Gore at 916-533-2924 or email vernegore@comcast.net for more information in how you might be a part of this St. John's ministry.



Upcoming Concerts



Mara Guseynova

Sunday, August 19, 2018 at 3:00pm

Free, but donations are welcomed

Join us for a live performance of Soprano, Mara Guseynova from Baku, Azerbaijan and award winning pianist Aida Elhazade

Fork to Fellowship

Sunday, September 8, 2018, (Time TBD)

Tickets are \$25, \$50 for families.

St. John's Lutheran Church and the Sacramento Gay Men's Chorus will partner up for this amazing event! Our own Steven Johnson will cater and conduct. Detail to come in next month's Spokesman.

Nathan Laube

Sunday, September 16, 2018 at 3:00pm

**General admission is \$17 in advance or \$20 at the door;
students and seniors are \$13 in advance or \$15 at the door;
children 12 and under are free.**

Nathan is one of America's foremost young organists. A frequent performer at AGO conventions and in Europe, he is an Assistant Professor of Organ at the Eastman School of Music and an organ studies consultant at the Royal Birmingham Conservatory in the UK. We are especially thrilled to have someone of his stature this fall, which will be the 10th anniversary of the inaugural concert for our Bedient organ.

For questions, call the church office at (916) 444-0874 or go to stjohnslc.org/events.



Continued from Page 2.

I had quite the faith journey in Houston and what I learned prepared me for what was yet to come in my life. I began the week agreeing with my boyfriend that we need to take a break, especially with him preparing for basic training at West Point. It was hard and no message from God was going to make me feel any better. Well, God's call did change everything. He knows the road I need to take even when I question it. I was where I needed to be. God's love was found within all the people we met. Each evening we played games with youth from different states. My favorite was playing "Head's Up" on the iPhone screen, where words flash on the screen and your group is giving you clues to help you guess the correct answer. We laughed and connected with people we may not have otherwise. As the week was wrapping up, we gathered in small groups to dive deeper into this personal faith journey. As people opened up about their fears and insecurities and questioning life, we were reminded that we are not alone in our journey, and by God's grace and our faith in Him, we are never alone on our journey and His kingdom has no end. Finally, our service day began with sorting more than 15,000 books. We boxed a mixture of books for all ages to be distributed to different book fairs around the city. After Hurricane Harvey, school books and simple reading books were scarce. I experienced God's hope for all of us that day when we were able to bring hope to these kids impacted by the hurricane. Each child received seven

donated books that will help them to continue to read and learn in school. Many book titles were familiar that most of us agreed we took for granted, but to these kids it meant everything to them. I was reminded and reinforced in the understanding that my relationship with God gives me hope, comfort, and purpose to my life. Throughout the week, we were given clothes pins and wrote encouraging messages that we could "pin" on others and be pinned to put a smile on someone's face or cheer someone up. These ELCA Youth Gatherings are life changing, especially as I prepare to go off to college 3,000 miles away from home. I know I have a calling if I just listen, I know I am loved, I know I am saved, I know with hope anything is possible, and I know I am never alone with God by my side. You could say; everything has changed!! ■



September Spokesman

Soulful connections, human abundance and celestial resonance abounded at the Oxford Choral Institute. More to come on Steven's experiences next month.

Return Service Requested

POSTMASTER: Dated Material

Mailed on: August 1, 2018

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Want to get The Spokesman by email?

Send a request to info@stjohnslc.org

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