Time for a Check Up

By Pastor Janet Karvon-Montgomery

“My dear friend, I pray that everything may go well with you and that you may be in good health - as I know you are well in spirit” (3 John 1:2).

Setting health and fitness goals seem to go part and parcel with the beginning of a new year. Whether it is the idea of moving one’s body more or adjusting one’s diet, making lasting lifestyle changes is easier said than done. As the pastor for wellness, I am here to support you in your pursuit of wellness in body, mind, and spirit: through prayer, coaching conversation, as well as new and ongoing wellness programming.

You will find these offerings in the ministry opportunity sheet on Sundays and on the website under “Wellness”.

As followers of Jesus Christ saved by God’s gift of grace and love, it is important to be mindful of the world’s messages that often shape our perspectives about our bodies. The messages we hear in the media first tell us we are “not enough” in physical terms - all while offering a profitable solution to weight loss and wellness quick fixes.

Caring for our bodies is part of living as faithful stewards of what God has given us. Sure, there are many benefits for us to enjoy. But Martin Luther believed caring for our body demonstrates that we are children of God for the purpose of caring and working for the well being of others. He said, “If the body is healthy and fit, we are able to work and save money that can be used to help those in need. In this way, the stronger member of the body can serve the weaker.”

Scripture tells us we were made in God’s image as part of God’s creation and that God called all of creation “good” (Genesis 1). What if we thought more positively about our bodies as vehicles in service to the gospel of Jesus Christ? How can we support one another in caring and strengthening our bodies for service to others? Let’s keep the conversation going - together.

From The Staff

Erin Thorstad

Being of Scandinavian descent and Lutheran isn’t a rare thing in Minnesota and certainly isn’t rare at all at Incarnation. People seem to take an interest in learning about their heritage from Norway and Sweden and I too grew up with certain traditions. There were Swedish meatballs, lefse, and lutefisk at Christmas, I know the proper usage of “uff da”, and I even find some Ole and Lena jokes funny. (I have been assured by my non-native Minnesota friends that they don’t lack a sense of humor, the jokes are, in fact, not funny. I tell them that they have been deprived of the upbringing that would help them appreciate fine Scandinavian humor.) I’ve also read about some of the old Norse folklore, about the nisse, the huldra, and the trolls so when I heard that one of my favorite authors was writing a book about the Norse gods, I was sure to order a copy.

While I was reading Neil Gaiman’s book Norse Mythology, I was struck by two thoughts repeatedly. Firstly, how foreign the stories felt to me in regards to culture and secondly how fortunate I am. The stories are interpretations of translations from the old Norse eddas about the Norse gods, but written in a way to be accessible for a modern audience. Gaiman tries to stay true to the spirit of the tales and in doing so, gives the reader a window into the lives of those who first told these stories. The gods are mighty, true, but they can also swing drastically between being heroic figures to being petty, arrogant, prone to violence and betrayal, and quick to anger. I try to imagine what life must have been like for the people who held these gods in high esteem and while I’m sure their culture was complex and rich, I’m also sure that their lives must have been hard. Death, rebirth, betrayal, violence, sacrifice . . . these are reoccurring themes in both old Norse and Christian stories, but what the stories in Norse Mythology lack are themes of grace, forgiveness, mercy, and peace. Thor is not about to make himself humble to die for your sins so that you may live together forever in a perfect peace. I wouldn’t count on him to turn the cheek either.

Which leads me back to my original two thoughts - that the old Norse culture is foreign to me and that I am lucky. It’s strange to read about gods who seemingly think about themselves first and can be capricious when I’ve been raised in a religion where God is steadfast in his love for all of humanity and strives to have a personal relationship with us. It reaffirms how fortunate I am that I live a life where the fear of death isn’t a constant reality and that I don’t have to worry about the wrath of an angry God. In a year where there is a short time between the end of Christmas and the beginning of Lent, I am struck at the selflessness and the enduring commitment God makes to meet people where they are in their lives instead of demanding that they reach a certain standard before being allowed a place at his table.

While I am grateful to those who came before me for things like Swedish meatballs and a quirky, self-deprecating sense of humor (less so for the lutefisk), I am also grateful that somewhere along the way someone broke with tradition and chose to instead worship a God that loved them back without reserve.
A Positive Impact on Tanzania

By JoHanna Pokorny, Incarnation member and Sue Nelson, JoHanna’s mother, 2016 Tanzania Delegation

When you hear the appeals for Tanzanian youth scholarships, do you know who will benefit from your mission commitment?

In 2016 we traveled to Tanzania to represent Incarnation on a visit to our two partner churches, Kigamboni and Mkawa, the Huruma Orphanage in Iringa, and two secondary Lutheran boarding schools. Lutangilo Secondary School left a lasting impression as we met positive, happy Christian teens living and learning in a remote mountainous area. It is hard to describe the welcome we received from the children at Lutangilo. It felt like we were rock stars entering an arena. They welcomed us with dancing, singing, and praise for Jesus. They made us feel so welcome and the deep appreciation they had for our support was so heartfelt. Supporting the education of these children is so important for the future of Tanzania.

When we toured the school we also saw the girls dormitory that Incarnation helped build. Before it was built, the girls slept each night on the floor of a classroom. Again, our support matters in ways that are hard to imagine. I tuck my children into bed every night and it so easy to take for granted the gifts we have. This trip reminded me how fortunate we are and how our contributions can be so impactful to God’s children throughout the world.

As a substitute teacher in White Bear Lake, Sue had a chance to ask 8th grade geography students what they wanted to know about the kids we would meet. They were interested in sports, clothes, school subjects . . . the usual. So, at Lutengilo she visited a class. Very politely, they stood when we teachers entered and whenever they answered a question. They told about soccer and netball (for girls). She learned about studies, foods, and love of music and dance. At the end of the visit, she asked those African teens what they would say to the U.S. teens. There were several thoughtful answers (in English because all secondary schools are taught in English). Her favorite was from a young girl who said simply, “Remember to go the good path and always exercise.” Here was the person to person, “human connection”. Incarnation is helping to sustain and grow this in the world!

As we waved goodbye to the inspiring teens and their dedicated staff, we asked God’s blessing to be on them as they committed to higher education on that mountain. We hoped for a roof on the science lab so they could do their experiments as well as studying textbooks of biology, physics, and chemistry. We saw these young people as the future of Tanzania.

These are the students who need and value the scholarships you send. This is where your money goes! Thank you for caring.

Worship Arts: Epiphany

By Jane Gehrking

Epiphany is the revelation of Christ to all nations. The Epiphany season commemorates events in the life of Jesus. Two liturgical colors are used during the season. White is the color associated with the festivals of Christ and symbolizes joy and light. White is the color for the first Sunday after the Epiphany when the Baptism of Jesus is celebrated and the last Sunday of the season when the Transfiguration of Our Lord is celebrated. Green suggests spiritual growth and is the color used from the second week after the Epiphany through the Sunday before the Transfiguration of Our Lord. A new banner to symbolize the Epiphany season has been created for Incarnation Hall services. A white star representing the Epiphany and white panels representing the Baptism of Jesus and the Transfiguration of Our Lord appear on a background of green.

Preschool Registration

Registration packets for the 2018-19 school year are available for pick up at the Preschool or Incarnation Office. Forms may also be downloaded from the Incarnation website and submitted anytime. Forms will be date stamped when received and held for processing following the registration timeline below. Call Kirsten Barie at 651-766-0723 for more information, to schedule a tour or to have a packet mailed to you.

Thursday, January 4 - Thursday, January 18
Open enrollment period for currently enrolled children. Confirmation of placement will be sent home in school bag.

Friday, January 19
Processing begins for forms received from returning/previously enrolled families and NEW children from Incarnation families.

Monday, January 22
Processing begins for enrollment forms received from NEW families for both age groups.

Forms and fee submitted by the above dates will be processed in the order received. Forms and fees may be submitted early, but will be held for processing on the appropriate date. Confirmation of enrollment status will be mailed within two days of processing.

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Don Martin - President
Gary Trettel - Treasurer
Kristi Jacobson
Sally Lawless
Brenda Roloff
Megan Schornstein
Emily Schwiebert
Gary Tolkimen
Dan Zibell
Gary Medin

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INCARNATION LUTHERAN CHURCH

GENERAL FUND - INCOME & EXPENSE REPORT
FOR THE MONTH ENDING NOVEMBER, 2017

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue</th>
<th>YTD Actual</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
<th>YTD Variance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Member Envelope/Lose</td>
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<td>Special Env./Misc.</td>
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<td>Total Offering</td>
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<td>Other Income</td>
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<td><strong>$1,669,621</strong></td>
<td><strong>($121,323)</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expenses</th>
<th>YTD Actual</th>
<th>YTD Budget</th>
<th>YTD Variance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Missions</td>
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<td>$203,500</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salaries/Wages</td>
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<td>Ministries</td>
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<td>Building</td>
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<td>Total Expenses</td>
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<td><strong>Net Income (loss)</strong></td>
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<td><strong>($170,129)</strong></td>
<td><strong>($10,871)</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Youth Choirs

There is more room in all the choirs and all children and youth are invited to join one of the youth choirs; Joyful Noise (Gr. K-5), Chapel Bells (Gr. 3-12) or Good News Singers (Gr. 6-12). Rehearsal locations: Joyful Noise - Fireside Room, Chapel Bells - Bell Room, Good News Singers - Choir Room.

When: Rehearsal times: Wednesdays 4:55 - 5:25 p.m.

Primary Music

Age appropriate music classes for three - five year olds. A 10-week spring session is offered. Information letters and registration forms are available in the Incarnation Office. There is still room in the Monday 11:00 a.m., and Tuesday, 11:00 a.m. and 11:40 a.m. classes. The deadline for registration is 4:30 p.m. Wednesday, January 17. Classes begin January 22.

Camp Sunday is set for February 11

The Children, Youth and Family staff are excited to share with you what ministry opportunities we have planned for this summer! On Sunday, February 11, stop by the Children, Youth and Family table in the Atrium/Gathering Space following all worship services to pick up information about the ministry that is being offered this summer for children 4 years of age through High School.

When: February 11, after all worship services.

Feed My Starving Children Monthly Packing Group in January

The monthly Incarnation packing group will assemble meals at Feed My Starving Children in Coon Rapids, on Tuesday, January 30 alongside the Faith in Action group from 6 - 7:30 p.m. Make your reservation by following the links at https://incarnationmn.org/finc.

When: January 30, 6 - 7:30 p.m.

Donations welcomed for Incarnation Preschool Silent Auction/ Carnival

Preparations for the Preschool’s 21st Annual Silent Auction and Carnival are underway! Donations of hand crafted items, event tickets, gift certificates, etc. are welcomed and greatly appreciated to support this event. If you would like to donate any items personally or as a promotion for your business, contact Kirsten Barie, Preschool Director at 651-766-0723 or kbarie@incarnationmn.org. The event will be held February 25 in Grace Hall. The Silent Auction runs from 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. and the Carnival from 1 - 3:00 p.m.

When: Donations will be accepted through February 16.
Ash Wednesday and Lent Schedule

Ash Wednesday - February 14
Worship - 12:00 p.m., 5:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Imposition of ashes and communion
Nursery available from 5 - 8:00 p.m.

Lenten Worship
February 21, 28, March 7, 14, & 21
Worship at 12:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.
Nursery available from 7 - 8:00 p.m.

Soup Lunch & Supper
Following 12:00 p.m. in Grace Hall
5:30 - 6:30 p.m. in the Gathering Space
Cost: $5/person or $15/ max/family