

Dear Main Street Church Family,

As you know, December is a busy month. Our calendars fill up quickly and our to-do lists have far too many items on them. It is easy to get caught up in the whirlwind of activity and lose track of the meaning of Christmas. The church calendar fills up too. We have extra worship services, programs, and mission projects. We plan these special events and activities so that we can keep the meaning of Christmas alive in our hearts. My current sermon series, ***The Advent Conspiracy***, is designed to help us "conspire" to celebrate Christmas in a meaningful way. You can watch a video promo for the series by [clicking here](#). This week, December 4, we will consider the words and ministry of John the Baptist, the New Testament prophet who prepared the way for the Messiah. Invite a friend to join us. (Hint: forward the video link to your friends.)

The Lighted Spire, the weekly eSpire, and Sunday's bulletin have information about all that's happening at the church this month. I hope you will attend any or all of them and invite your friends and family. Don't forget that on Sunday December 11 during the 11:00 service, the Chancel Choir, accompanied by an orchestra, will present *How Great Our Joy*, a Christmas Cantata. **There will no 8:30am service on December 11.** On Christmas Eve, we will have three (3) services: 5:00pm, 7:00pm, and 11:00pm. I'll give you a few more details in future eNotes, but I hope you'll plan to attend one or more of the services. Then on Christmas Day, which is a Sunday this year, we will have a single service at 10:00am, and there will be no Sunday School. You can check out the church calendar on our website. (Click [here](#).)

LARCUM Conference

As I write these words, the State LARCUM Conference is being held in Waynesboro. Bishops (including our own Bishop Charlene Kammerer) and Ecumenical Officers from the Lutheran, Episcopal, Roman Catholic, and United Methodist Churches are meeting to discuss how we can be in mission and ministry together. Then this evening (Friday), laity and clergy from all over Virginia will gather at Main Street for a welcome reception at 6:00pm, the opening session at 7:00pm, and a worship service at 8:00pm. The conference continues tomorrow at St; John Episcopal Church and Grace Lutheran. If you haven't registered for the conference, you can still register this evening. The worship service is open to everyone. Come join us. A number of you will be at Main Street this evening to help with hospitality and with the worship service: thank you very much!

Stewardship Update

The last report I received from our Financial Secretaries was that we have received 99 Estimate of Giving Cards for 2012, for a total of \$362,341. I want to thank all of you for prayerfully considering what offering you will make to God through our church in the coming year. Your gifts are an act of worship and an investment in opportunities for God to work through us. Last year we received 120 cards and I'm hoping we'll receive the same number or more this year. If you haven't yet turned in an Estimate of Giving for 2012, it's not too late. We use this information as we plan for next year, so I hope you'll bring or send us your card. Additional cards are available in the narthex of the church.

WARM Shelter

In the December edition of our newsletter, [The Lighted Spire](#), I told you about the **Waynesboro Area Refuge Ministry (WARM)**, which will provide shelter for homeless persons in our community. The reason I didn't tell you about it earlier was that some of the details were still being worked out. Since I wrote that article, some of the plans have changed. As of this week, it looks like Main Street will not be able to be one of the host churches. However, Main Street will still be helping with this vital ministry. You will be hearing about opportunities to volunteer as we know more of the details. We will still be collecting gloves, mittens, scarfs, etc. And our Christmas Eve offering will go to the WARM Shelter ministry. In my sermon last week, I said that part of The Advent Conspiracy is to give hope to people who otherwise have little or no hope. We need to remember that Christmas is not our birthday and that the question is: how do we celebrate the birthday of someone who was born in a stable and laid in a manger? If we spent just a little bit less on ourselves, we could give the gift of hope to someone who really needs it.

Finally, you may have noticed how many times I've encouraged you to invite someone to Main Street. It is often during the Christmas season that people who don't regularly attend church services either come back to church or visit a church for the very first time. People are desperate for good news, and the Christmas message is summed up in the words of the angels, "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you **good news** of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:10-11, emphasis added.) Many people are primed and ready to discover the meaning of Christmas and will respond if only someone would invite them. That someone may be you.

I look forward to seeing you on Sunday.

In Christ,

Neil

PS Don't forget to come to the Open House at our home (2817 Plantation Lane) on December 11 between 2:00 and 5:30pm.