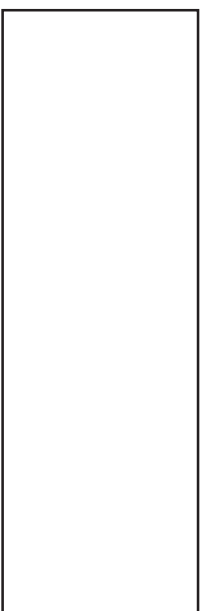


St. Johns Lutheran Church
3607 45th Street
Two Rivers, WI 54241

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St. John's

January/February, 2007

The Most Important New Year's Resolution



Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

The turn of a new year leads to the hope that in the time about to come, things will be better than in the time just gone by. So in hope we find people vowing to make changes. People resolve to lose the weight that they have carried for so long.

They resolve to quit smoking and live a healthier life style. Many resolutions are made at this time of year. Many are kept, but the failures of these good intentions are legend.

If you had to pick one resolution which had the promise of bringing your life more joy than all the others, one stands about from the list. That is the resolution God addresses in Matthew 6:33. He urges us to follow the faith in our hearts and set our priorities properly in the new year. God urges us to "put first things first". So often we allow things of lesser value to fill our time and our activities, while the things we consider most important sit unattended in our life. Now God comes on the threshold of the new year and urges us once again to "*seek first his kingdom and his righteousness...*" Now is the time to put service to the Lord, worship of the Lord, time with the Lord in his word ... all into the rightful place in our lives, first ahead of all else.

And to encourage us, God promises that when we follow such a path, we will find all the other things we seek along the way. The world likes to tell us that if we put God first, we will miss out on the things of the world. But God assures us that all blessings come from him alone. In the new year, may God this be a resolution that we make and keep, to put God first above all things.

Christmas, 2006 A Review!

For the members of St. John's congregation, Christmas is an event that we celebrate over an extended period of time. This year the formal celebration began with the Advent By Candlelight gathering. On Sunday, November 19, 2006, the women of St. John's gathered to begin to prepare their hearts for Christmas. The ladies created ornately decorated tables, graced with the colors and messages of the season. They shared specially prepared seasonal desserts and focused their attention on unique messages of Advent preparation, messages taken from the heart of what it means to be a Christian woman waiting for the Lord. Almost 200 women gathered for this wonderful event, and with it, the Christmas celebration was begun.

The Church Decorated

The decorating crew appeared in the church itself on Saturday, November 25, 2006. Their job was to transform the church into a vision of Christmas joy. They set up the Christmas trees in the front of church. They decorated the walls with wreaths and pine branches. And in a matter



of hours, with lights and bright colors Christmas had descended once again upon the worship life of St. John's.

Holiday Parade

On Saturday, November 25, the city of Two Rivers held its annual Christmas parade. Members of St. John's prepared a "float" for the parade. Riding on a wagon decorated with the message of Jesus' birth and drawn by two large horses courtesy of Dick Messman, children from St. John's sang Christmas hymns announcing the coming birth of Christ. The weather was seasonally comfortable and St. John's had the chance to spread the good news to the hundreds of people that attended the parade.

Advent Begins

Sunday, December 2, 2006 marked the first Sunday in Advent this year. In worship the congregation marked the moment by lighting the first candle of the Advent wreath. The members of St. John's gather for three special Wednesday Advent worship services as they prepare themselves for the Christmas celebration. We held the first of these services on Wednesday, December 6. This year as the members gathered on the Wednesdays in Advent, we followed a special service built around a song called "the Jesse Tree." Each week families from St. John's would read portions of the Bible describing the Old Testament members of Jesus' family and how each of those members waited and watched for the coming Savior. Worship attendance grew each week in these services. The final Wednesday in Advent over 200 attended. Christmas preparation was in full swing.

The Live Nativity – Saturday, December 9, 2006

Each year St. John's Evangelism Committee organizes members of St. John's to present the message of the birth of Christ through a

“live nativity” scene. Over 100 members volunteered their time and talents this year to recreate the town of Bethlehem on the street and in the park in front of the Church in the heart of Two Rivers. We invited the whole community to come and walk through Bethlehem, making sure to register in the census and to visit the stable where a wondrous event occurred.



There were angels and shepherds and Roman soldiers and innkeepers. They walked among sheep and donkeys and goats. At every stop visitors heard pieces of an amazing birth that was happening this very night. Choirs sang the good news for all to hear. And at the end of the journey through Bethlehem, visitors were invited into the fellowship hall at St. John’s for a chili supper. St. John’s holds this event each year to share the news of the birth of Christ with the people of Two Rivers. It is our Christmas Card to the city. This year the census booth in Bethlehem reports that registration tripled in Bethlehem that night. Somewhere between 800 and 1000 people came to see and hear the news.

Christmas Weekend!

Christmas came on Monday in 2006. For St. John’s the celebration took two days. On Sunday morning we finished our preparations lighting the fourth candle of the Advent Wreath on the fourth Sunday of Advent. Then over 600 gathered in the gymnasium of the

school at 5:00pm to hear the children stand in the place of the angels and announce the Christmas message first heard by the shepherd of Bethlehem. Later that night, 200 people gathered in St. John's church at 10:00pm to take part in the traditional Service of Nine Lessons and Carols. Here a Christmas Choir after almost two months of practice announced the Christmas message in song.

Finally the day was upon us. After months of preparation, St. John's was ready to gather in the house of God and celebrate the birthday of Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Christmas Day 230 members gathered in God's house to give thanks to the Lord for his wonderful gift. The adult choir enhanced the worship with two songs announcing the news Christ was born. And six families from the school brought children to join the choir in one of the songs.



And as the songs of worship died away and God's house filled with silence, the people carried the message of the birth of Christ off to their families and friends, even as the shepherds did so long before. Christmas at St. John's involves hundreds of people preparing over many weeks. But in the end, we spread the news of Christ once again to a world that needs that news more than ever.

Worship Events in 2007

Nametag Sunday!

No Strangers in God's Family

Celebrate the Children Sunday!

*A Time to Value the Future of
God's Family*

Teen Sunday!

*The Teens Lead us in renewing
the vows we have made to serve
the Lord!*

Celebrate Christian Parents Sunday!

*We gather to give thanks to
God for working to connect their
children with the Lord and His
church*

Mission to the World Sunday!

*Celebrate the chance God gives
us to carry His message to all the
world*

Senior Leadership Sunday!

*Give thanks for the mature
Christians and the leadership
they provide*

Bring a Member to Church Sunday!

From the President

Dear St. John's Members,

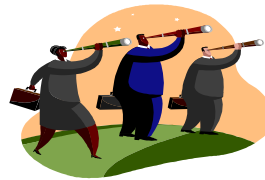
My last message for this year is written with reflections on what has been accomplished this year and a look forward to the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ on Christmas Day. May all of "US" have grown closer to each other this year and most of all closer to our Savior. Let "US" continue to become an even stronger family of believers. One way we can do this is by sharing our lives and offering assistance and encouragement to those in our church family who are carrying heavy burdens. In return we strengthen "US" as a body of believers and grow closer to our Lord by the Holy Spirit working in "US".

Accomplishments this year are many. The Lord has blessed the efforts put forth under the **FOCUS 2006 Plan** where "U" grew in your relationships with God and the members around you to make a stronger "US". The year end report will show an increase in church

(Continued on next page...)

service attendance, overall church membership, and an increase in offerings. These are significant changes from the past several years where all of these trends were declining. By having a plan in place and by the Committee's of the Church Council working hard to carry out their plans to bring "US" closer together, the Lord has blessed those efforts. A huge thank you goes out to all of the Committees for their sacrifice of time and talents to make their efforts God pleasing.

When you read the Annual Report you will see the reversal of the declining trends and the Lord's blessings. Also, you will see the Committee plans for 2007. It is hoped these plans will continue to lead "US" on a path to growth for years to come. Without a plan in place and something to work towards we are more likely to experience failure than accomplishment. A plan is better than having none.



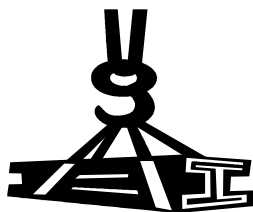
The Annual Meeting is planned for Sunday January 28, 2007 at 1:30PM at the Church. The Informational meeting is planned for Sunday January 21, 2007 at 1:30PM also at church. Please plan ahead to attend these important meetings.

Specific plans for next year are for Stewardship to continue the encouragement and education of our members in taking advantage of the privilege to use their time, talents, and treasure to serve our Lord in his Church. Congregational Life plans to hold several special worship services that enhance our personal relationships with God and each other. Evangelism plans to improve upon the efforts to reach out to the community around us and identify those who show interest in St. John's. Christian Education plans to continue to and improve on efforts to bring our families with children closer to the cross and each other. This will help them become a stronger Christian Family with increased involvement in church and

(Continued on next page...)

school activities. Finance plans to continue to bring awareness of our financial status and to report on the stewardship of our financial blessings. Building & Grounds plans to continue to keep the Lord's property in good repair, bring attention to any physical needs as they arise, and reduce energy consumption by reviewing how our equipment is used. Called Workers Care is planning to prepare

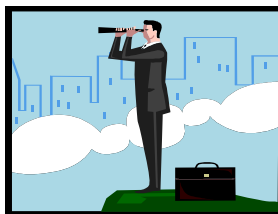
events that bring our called workers closer to the congregation and service their needs while here at St. John's.



My desire to write these letters for the Newsletter this year was to keep you the members of St. John's informed as much as possible as to what the Committees of the

Council were doing as their work progressed. My feelings are that if you know what is going on you will more likely become involved in the work or at least be willing supporters of the efforts being made. Communication of timely information eliminates rumor and hearsay from developing. These can be destructive if the rumor and hearsay are incorrect. To avoid this was also one of my desires. I hope this was accomplished and that you felt these messages were useful and informative.

Two quick closing notes; the demolition of the old school continues at a slowed pace. The discovery of additional asbestos in the building has delayed the demolition progress. At the time of this writing it is hoped all of it has been discovered and removed. Also, on the financial front it appears we will be in better shape than what was anticipated earlier this year. Offerings are up, expenses vs. the budget are down, and the Endowment Fund will earn more than anticipated if the gains hold up until the end of the year. This does not remove some difficult decisions for next year's



budget. We still will have a deficit on offerings vs. expenses that will have to be made up by drawing monies from the Building Fund. The good news is that the deficit will be smaller than anticipated but still significant enough to force some hard decisions. Please come to the Informational & Annual meetings to discuss these issues and have you opinions heard.

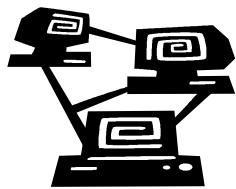
I wish all of you a Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Sincerely,

Glenn Gates
Council Chairman

Church Website!

sjtworivers.org



The Church Website for St. John's is now in operation. There you will find an accurate and updated calendar for the events of the church. You will find pictures of St. John's at work or play. The church newsletter and sermons can be downloaded from the site. There also are daily Bible readings and prayers. For members who sign in, there will even be questions confronting the church and opportunity for you to share what you think.

At this time there are pictures of the most recent "Live Nativity". There are also pictures of St. John's at worship in the blended worship services and in the Christmas Eve service of "Nine Lessons and Carols." Visit the sight and see what is happening at St. John's.

Blended Worship Resumes!



The Blended Worship service is about to resume! In 2006 we began to hold “blended worship”, a combination of traditional and modern worship, once each month on the fourth Saturday. We held these services to see if this worship approach might be more comfortable for people, more instantly

familiar and welcoming. God gave us visible blessings in the experiment. Worship attendance increases by 15% each week that the service is held. More visitors attend the blended worship service than all the other services combined. The service attracted a younger worship group, generally speaking. And it was not unusual for the blended service to be the largest service on the weekend it is held.

We suspended the services in November and December due to the schedule conflicts of the holidays. Now we are ready to begin holding them again. The next blended worship service will be held on Saturday, January 27, 2007, at 4:00pm, in the gymnasium.

Going forward with God’s blessings, if this service is to become a featured tool for presenting God’s word to the benefit of our congregation, we need to test the reception of blended worship in our regular worship schedule. We also need to increase the frequency of the services to measure the appeal. Therefore in 2007, the congregation will need to consider moving the service to Sunday morning at 10:30am once a month on a trial basis. And if that move proves to be well received by the people, the congregation needs to consider increasing the frequency of this service to twice each month. The Council will bring these matters to the information and voters meetings in January for discussion, reaction and decision.

New Bible Class!

The Edge of Eternity!



**Learn what God says about
Heaven and Hell!**

Sunday, January 14, 2007
(Fellowship Hall, Between Services)
Wednesday, January 17, 9:30am,
Fellowship Hall

When we plan a trip to a far away place, we spend hours planning. We spend time learning about the place to which we are going and the things that we can do and see at that place. In our next Bible class you will have the chance to follow that same procedure as we plan for eternity. Our Bible class begins in January on the dates listed above. The subject will be "*Heaven and Hell: the Edge of Eternity.*" *Is hell a place where real flames burn people forever? Are there levels of hell and levels of heaven? How old will we be in heaven and what will be the condition and age of our resurrected bodies? What do we do in heaven? Who goes to heaven and who goes to hell? We will discuss and search the Bible for answers to these and many other questions in our study.*

If you some day plan on going to heaven or to hell, you would be wise to make time for this important study about your future. Come and bring your friends. Students will be given a study packet for the eight lessons. They will be available in the office January 8. You can also pick one up at the class when you come. Make sure you bring your Bibles, a pen or pencil, and your questions.

MLHS Partner's In Christ Completed!

(Note: The Partners in Christ was the name of the capital fund raising effort begun in 2003 by Manitowoc Lutheran High School among the congregations of the MLHS Federation. With the close of 2006, the Partners in Christ program has come to an end. What follows is a report regarding the offerings members of St. John's contributed to that effort over the last three years.)

In 2003, the Partners In Christ joint capital appeal between Manitowoc Lutheran High School and the Federation congregations began. Over the past four years, 18 congregations participated and members made gifts to the effort to support ministry projects at MLHS as well as home congregations.



As we approach the end of 2006, many congregations and individuals have asked for an update as to the success of this appeal, and whether pledges have been met.

With great joy, I report to you that the Lord continues to truly blessed this appeal, with over \$5.7 million being pledged in the appeal. Almost \$2 million of this was earmarked for the high school (addressing debt repayment, tuition assistance, construction of the student commons, and replacement of the roof and boiler), with the balance going to local congregational projects! Through the end of November, over 93% of the amount pledged in this appeal has been collected.

What follows is a summary of your congregation's progress in its Partners In Christ appeal commitment to the high school.

(Continued on the next page)

Total Pledged through CAP: \$1,916,216
Total Collected thus far: \$1,819,564 (93% of total pledged)
St. John's total MLHS CAP commitment: \$136,385
**St. John's MLHS CAP submissions: \$131,005 (96% of
commitment)**

On behalf of your high school, I extend my sincere thank you for your gifts and sacrifices!

As volunteers work to implement the next appeal – *Proclaiming Christ Today and Tomorrow* – we truly look forward to the blessings and challenges our Heavenly Father will provide us with in the future. By His grace, Manitowoc Lutheran High School and all our Federation congregations will continue to proclaim His Good News for generations to come.

God's blessings to you all!
Scott Reinhard
MLHS Development Director

COUNCILMEN AND THEIR COMMITTEES

Glenn Gates, 794-8019 Council President

Richard Messman, 553-2665, Council Vice President,
Building & Grounds Chairman

Ed Hinshaw, 553-3007, Secretary, WELS

Dennis Evers, 553-8555, Christian Education, MLHS

Todd Hermann, 467-6611, Called Workers Care Committee

Ed Morley, 793-4064, Congregational Life Chairman, Financial
Secretary

Preston Jones, 794-1664, Christian Education Committee

Joe Cook, 684-3205, Treasurer, Financial Committee

Dean Jacobs, 553-1628, Stewardship

Jim Smith, 553-1240, Evangelism Committee, Financial Secretary

Jerry Retzlaff, 682-8732, Stewardship

Al Rodewald, 793-1794, Stewardship

Treasurer's Report

September Balance	25.63
October Receipts	56,716.38
Borrowed from BLDG Fund	<u>2,450.00</u>
	\$59,192.01

Payroll	\$34,578.50
Worship Supplies	2,132.68
Office Supplies	63.49
School	242.48
Utilities	2,025.09
Maintenance	557.37
Insurance	5,011.94
Car Allowance	
Pastor Scherbarth	154.17
Pastor Arndt	154.17
MLHS Commitment	5,507.93
WELS Commitment	6,008.33
MLHS Tuition Assistance	2,400.00
Miscellaneous	<u>306.77</u>
	\$59,142.92

\$59,192.01 October Receipts
\$59,142.92 October Expenses
 \$ 49.09 As of 10/31/06

October Balance	\$ 49.09
November Receipts	52,850.72
Borrowed from BLDG Fund	<u>3,100.00</u>
	\$55,999.81

Payroll	\$31,515.23
Worship Supplies	195.69
Office	772.71
School	154.26
Conference Expenses	954.12
Utilities	2,688.89
Maintenance	462.74
Insurance	4,977.50
Car Allowance	
Pastor Scherbarth	154.17
Pastor Arndt	154.17
MLHS Commitment	5,507.93
WELS Commitment	6,008.33
MLHS Tuition Assistance	2,400.00
Miscellaneous	<u>21.00</u>
	\$55,966.74

\$55,999.81 November Receipts
\$55,966.74 November Expenses
\$ 33.07 Balance as of 11/30/06

Year to Date Reconciliation	
Offerings and Interest Year to Date	\$553,955.34
Expenses Year to Date	<u>\$683,847.27</u>
Operating Gain (Loss) Year to Date	(\$129,891.93)
Money Borrowed from BLDG Fund to Date	<u>\$129,925.00</u>
Total Reconciliation Year to Date	\$ 33.07

MLHS Commitment Fund	\$1,111.00
Partners In Christ	\$130,890.70
Recorder Fund	\$317.45
Building Repair	\$2,763.80
Schwake Estate CD	\$15,726.40
(Estate was given for the purchase of land for the church)	

Building Fund

Money Borrowed in earlier years	\$115,086.81
Actual Cash in Building Fund 1/1/06	\$153,904.54
Donations	1,000.00
Year to Date Interest	<u>\$ 1,262.23</u>
	\$271,253.58
Past borrowed from Building Fund	\$115,086.81
Borrowed in 2006 from Building Fund	<u>\$129,925.00</u>
Cash Value as of 11/30/06	\$23,279.54

Endowment Fund

Value 1/1/2006	\$1,031,771.72
Value As of 11/30/2006	\$1,100,171.47

Memorials

Esther Markusen

MLHS \$ 60.00
St. Johns School \$ 50.00
St. John's General Fund \$ 20.00

Darlene Siebert

MLHS \$ 10.00
St. Johns School \$ 10.00

Official Acts

Baptisms

Gage Alan Glaser, *son of David & Cheryl Glaser*
Born October 2, Baptized November 5

Abigail Judith Ernst,
daughter of Patrick Ernst & Marilyn Krueger
Born October 9, Baptized November 26

Dominic Lee Grimm, *son of Aaron & Sara Grimm*
Born October 11, Baptized December 9

Deaths

Ada Koska -- *Died December 24, Funeral December 28*

Membership Matters

Profession of Faith

Mr. & Mrs. Brian & Michelle Osterloth, and children
Stephanie & Brandon DePas

Members Transferring from St. John's

Mrs. Sandra Bialek to St. Peter's, Mishicot
Ms. Tracy Petrashek to Bethany, Manitowoc

January Greeters

Thursday, January 4th – 6:30

Mildred Stegemann – Main Entrance
Don Oestreich – Side Entrance

Sunday, January 7th – 8:00 & 10:30

Glenn & Maxine Gates – EM Helen Bialkowski – ES
Theresa, Sydney & Taylor Jacobs – LM
Randy & Connie Kramer – LS

Thursday, January 11th – 6:30

Bill & Kathy Marshall – Main Entrance
Jean Kennedy – Side Entrance

Sunday, January 14th – 8:00 & 10:30

Lon & Mari Grimm – EM MaryEllen Graham – ES
Ed & June Hinshaw – LM Gail Arndt – LS

Thursday, January 18th – 6:30

Elaine Buyeske – Main Entrance
Jack Polifka – Side Entrance

Sunday, January 21st – 8:00 & 10:30

Mike & Karen Meyer – EM Morrie Ribble – ES
Preston & Sandi Jones – LM Jean Eckley – LS

Thursday, January 25th – 6:30

Marvin & Debbie Jahnke – Main Entrance
Neysa Behnke – Side Entrance

If a Greeter is unable to greet as scheduled, please arrange a switch with another greeter and notify the Church Office of the schedule change beforehand (794-7300)

Sunday, January 28th – 8:00 & 10:30

Bernice Sowboda – EM
Polly Zelinski – ES
Howard & Pearl Schultz – LM
Charles & Ruth Schwake – LS

February Greeters

Thursday, February 1st – 6:30

Mary Lou Beninghaus – Main Entrance
Caroline Everson – Side Entrance

Sunday, February 4th – 8:00 & 10:30

Tom & Lori Garceau – EM Duane Schulz – ES
Dave & Sue Wiesner – LM Adeline Waskow – LS

Thursday, February 8th – 6:30

Sharon Hansen – Main Entrance
Leona Siebert – Side Entrance

Sunday, February 11th – 8:00 & 10:30

Todd, Beth, Kaylee & Brian Messman – EM
Robert & Bonnie Vanne – ES
Gary & Jelane Stone – LM Wayne Machut – LS

Thursday, February 15th – 6:30

Ron & Pat Thiel – Main Entrance
Claire & Charlie Messman – Side Entrance

Sunday, February 18th – 8:00 & 10:30

Allan & Audrey Shambeau – EM Jim & Shawn Smith – ES
Ron & Renee Prausa – LM Phyllis Barner – LS

Thursday, February 22nd – 6:30

Ed & Marlene Morley – Main Entrance
Tom Messman – Side Entrance

Sunday, February 25th – 8:00 & 10:30

Dick & Rose Mary Zastrow – EM Joe, Amy & Hannah Cook – ES
Richard & Lillian Bero – LM Jackie Schaefer – LS

Ushers Schedule For January 2007

Trustees

Thursday, 6:30 P.M., *Dean Jacobs, Jerry Retzlaff*
Sunday, 8:00 A.M., *Preston Jones, Jim Smith*
Sunday, 10:30 A.M., *Todd Hermann, Dennis Evers*

Ushers

Thursday, 6:30 P.M.

Main Floor, *Robert Specht, Charles Mixa*
Balcony, *Wayne Meissner, Paul Jung*

Sunday, 8:00 A.M.

Main Floor, *Mark Stelter, Tom Garceau*
Balcony, *Duane Schulz, Lee Glaser*

Sunday, 10:30 A.M.

Main Floor, *Alan Rodewald, Mark Anderson*
Balcony, *Gerald Nelson, Gary Stone*

Ushers Schedule For February 2007

Trustees

Thursday, 6:30 P.M., *Ed Hinshaw, Ed Morley*
Sunday, 8:00 A.M., *Glenn Gates, Joe Cook*
Sunday, 10:30 A.M., *Dick Messman, Al Rodewald*

Ushers

Thursday, 6:30 P.M.

Main Floor, *Gordon Pautz, Charles Schroeder*
Balcony, *Randy Hansen, Carver Hansen*

Sunday, 8:00 A.M.

Main Floor, *James Wondrash, Duane Swoboda*
Balcony, *Walter Christoffel, Larry Shambeau*

Sunday, 10:30 A.M.

Main Floor, *Russel Strutz, Randy Kramer*
Balcony, *Jeff Wolf, Brandon Wolf*

Ushers who are unable to usher at their scheduled time should call the trustees who are scheduled with them and the trustee will find someone to fulfill their responsibilities.

Dates to Remember

Monday, January 1, 9:00 a.m. New Year's Day
with Communion Service, No School, SJS & MLHS,
Church Office Closed

Tuesday, January 2, Classes Resume, MLHS & SJS

Friday, January 5, 8:30 a.m. Children's Worship Service at SJS

Friday, January 12, 11:30 a.m. SJS Dismisses

Monday, January 15, No School, MLHS

Friday, January 19, 12:20 p.m., MLHS Dismisses

**Sunday, January 21, 1:30 p.m., Congregational
Information Meeting at Church**

**Saturday, January 27, 4:00 p.m. Blended Worship Service
at SJS in gym**

Sunday, January 28, 1:30 p.m., Voter's Meeting at Church

Friday, February 2, 8:30 a.m., Children's Worship Service

Wednesday, February 7, SJS Kindergartener for a Day &
Preschool Open House

Wednesday, February 7, 11:30 a.m., SJS Dismisses

Thur.-Fri., February 8-9, No School, SJS, Teacher's Conference

Wednesday, February 21, 6:30 p.m., Ash Wednesday

Wednesday, February 28, 6:30 p.m. Lenten Worship Service

St. John's In Charts

Offerings at St. John's for 2006 average \$12,221 vs \$11,600 last year, an increase of over 5%

Worship attendance is averaging 517/wk compared to 512/wk last year at this time.