

GRACE SPOTLIGHTER

THY ROD AND THY STAFF

***“Thy rod and thy staff,
they comfort me”*** (Psalm 23:4b)

The rod was an extension of the shepherd's own arm. With amazing speed and accuracy the hard wood rod was the main weapon of defense for the flock. The shepherd's power, authority, and strength was the security for the sheep. It was the Shepherd who safeguarded the sheep. He was their comfort.

When God called Moses, a desert shepherd, to deliver Israel from Egypt and Pharaoh's bondage, his rod was used to demonstrate the power of God. Through Moses' rod miracles convinced Pharaoh of Moses' divine commission and reassured God's people. There is comfort and solace in a rod used by the shepherd's skillful hands.

The shepherd's rod portrays the Word of God, the Law of which expresses His potent, divine authority, the extension of God's mind and will regarding us. How heartening to have God's clear-cut, powerful Word under which to live. The Law separates us from alien attitudes and immoral standards that confuse and corrupt many this deceitful age.

The rod of God's law also disciplines His flock. By His Word, God rebukes and chastises. He expects us to live by the ways of righteousness. He demands of us what is good and right. God's law deters both the predator without and the pigheadedness from within. With the skillful use of His rode, the shepherd cares for the sheep.

We live in times when a majority of people believe and live in ways completely contrary to Christ. Temptations of every sort swirl around, but *“Thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.”*

No sign of the shepherd is more familiar or more unique than his staff—the shepherd's crook. Exclusively designed for the care sheep, it is no good among cattle or hogs. Shaped and smoothed, it is gentle enough to lift newborn lambs to the side of a mother ewe or to gently draw a

timid or injured sheep close to the shepherd for his care.

The shepherd's staff depicts another comforting thing we know about God's Word. The good news is trustworthy and soothing. It tells of the Good Shepherd who leads His flock in paths of righteousness and brings the sheep to streams of living water and pastures of peace and nourishment.

The staff is never used to spur or strike the sheep but to reassure each creature by its affectionate touch, the tender touch of the shepherd himself. When a wandering lamb or alarmed member of the flock should fall among the rocks, be trapped upon a ledge, or tumble into the sea, the comfort of the staff is very real as the loving shepherd wraps its crook around the vulnerable and helpless one to bring it to safety.

The sheep, of their own foolishness, will hook their wool to brambles or drift away from the flock into predicaments from which they cannot free themselves. But the shepherd takes his staff, finds them, and rescues them.

As we enter a new year once again at Grace, I am mindful there is one reason only for the existence of our congregations. It is the care and comfort of Christ for His people through Word and Sacrament and the increase of Christ's flock by loving ministry exemplified perfectly in Jesus Christ Himself, our Good Shepherd.

Our intention must always be to effect such a ministry for all. As we enter another year of grace, a year which will complete the first half century of our congregation, the rod and staff of Christ must be carried to God's people.

For those affiliated with Grace but inaccessible to ministry from here, we need to commend them to those who can provide the benefit of God's Word where they are.

To those who have wandered or become entangled in other concerns, we need to rededicate ourselves to finding them and urging upon them the benefits of the gifts of Christ.



We've had a need here at Grace to update the records of our member families. Reaching some has been difficult. People these days are away from their homes at non-traditional intervals because of work or recreation. Land line phones are giving way to cell phones, but ministry via voice-mail is insufficient. In many cases we don't know email addresses which frequently change. Sometimes we may not have been informed of other changing circumstances.

The primary concern is never just to have a tidy data base for its own sake. However, a shepherd must know the flock for which he cares. He carries little as he tends the sheep. Perhaps a knapsack with some first aid remedies for his flock and other bare essentials because the terrain is rough.

But indispensable for the comfort of the flock will always be the presence of the Shepherd with his rod and staff.

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, always rightly divides Law and Gospel. He comforts His people with the commanding Word which profiles how we should live. And, best of all, He consoles those He loves with the Word of forgiveness and concord.

May the “rod and staff” of Christ comfort you in the new year and minister to you the truth and grace of Jesus.



Pastor

MIRACLE: INCARNATION FOLLOWED BY FAITH

Who says God quit performing miracles among us? Not I! At least not any more. And, by miracles, I'm not referring to miraculous healings, getting a passing grade on a calculus test, or even Michael Phelps winning 14 career Olympic gold medals. I'm referring to the miracle of faith. Today is the Third Sunday in Advent, also named Gaudete (GOW-de-tay) in Latin, meaning "Rejoice!"

I just got home from my usual three services on Sunday. This morning in Mühlhausen we had about eighteen folks in attendance - almost all in their late 60s, 70s and 80s; in Nürnberg we had just twelve; and in Ansbach, eight. Keep in mind that Germany claims more than 28 million Lutherans, about a third of their population, and almost twelve times the size of our little Missouri Synod. The parish I serve here has about a 200 mile radius.

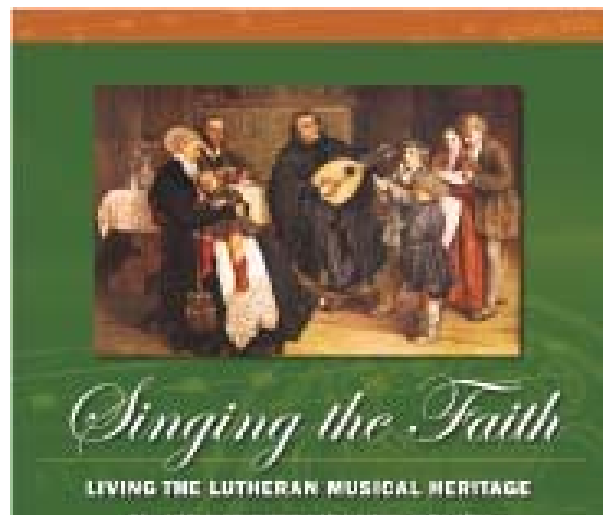
I bring up these low attendance numbers not to complain but to Rejoice! As I worshiped with these saints (and from time to time peeked out at the small gathering of God's baptized) I felt like I was witnessing a miracle. What were these people doing here this early on a cold, snowy winter morning? Surely they would feel more comfortable getting a few more hours of sleep, having a big breakfast, then maybe another nap before the big game on T.V. And why are they giving freely of their hard-earned money? On top of that, they were singing their hearts out. Each of the three congregations sounded like they had the volume of ten times their size.

God is performing miracles before our very eyes! He is still multiplying the fish and the loaves. He is creating and sustaining faith, all as

pure gift. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8,9)

And while we're on the topic of miracles, let us not forget the greatest miracle of all - the Incarnation of Our Lord. Incarnate means "to become flesh." That is what God, who is a Spirit (John 4:24), did when the Holy Spirit came upon the Blessed Virgin and the power of the Most High overshadowed her (Luke 1:35). And Jesus, the Word, was made flesh, and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Miracles never cease!

Pastor Wade Seaver



Singing the Faith

Living the Lutheran Musical Heritage

Singing the Faith invites you to discover God's Word proclaimed in a rich heritage of music that faithfully confesses Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

This beautiful resource has been prepared by the Good Shepherd Institute of Pastoral Theology and Sacred Music at Concordia Theological Seminary, Fort Wayne, to help today's church see and hear the rich theological and musical roots of Lutheranism . . . To show that this beautiful inheritance is not simply history, but it is alive. It is an ongoing sung confession of faith that serves Christ's church — Yes . . . even today.

This study of the history of Lutheran congregational song features:

Christopher Boyd Brown, *Boston University School of Theology*
 Kevin J. Hildebrand, *Concordia Theological Seminary*
 Martin Jean, *Yale University*
 Robin Leaver, *Westminster Choir College*
 Richard C. Resch, *Concordia Theological Seminary*
 Carl F. Schalk, *Concordia University Chicago*
 Stephen P. Starke, *St. John Lutheran Church, Bay City*
 Daniel Zager, *Eastman School of Music*

With featured performances by:

Martin Jean, *Yale University*
 The Bach Vespers Choir of Holy Trinity Lutheran Church,
 New York City, Rick Erickson, Cantor
 Craig Cramer, *University of Notre Dame*

The sessions will meet in the main sanctuary. Please join us for this valuable examination of the richness of the Lutheran musical heritage.

In 1944, forty-eight Lutheran organists and choir directors gathered in Valparaiso, Indiana, for the first Valparaiso University Church Music Seminar. They knew it was time to bring American Lutheran church music home to its chorale-based roots. A textual and musical treasure was just waiting to be used in this country. They knew it, but the rest of the country seemed to be ignoring it.

How prophetic. Already in 1944, American Lutheranism was headed solidly on a course that embraced all that surrounded it in American culture. Dr. O. P. Kretzmann wrote in a volume of essays printed after this first conference, "The greatest contribution of the Lutheran Church to the culture of Western civilization lies in the field of music." Even at that early date many saw something was very wrong because that "greatest contribution" had been left behind.

What followed was an effort to wake up the church to its musical heritage. This was done in every way possible by this influential group of theologians, scholars, and church musicians. Their annual conference grew, and chorale-based publications flourished, as did the influence on the Concordia colleges and seminaries that helped to make them significant teachers of this heritage.

Their encouragement for the Lutheran chorale tradition is still applicable for the twenty-first century Lutheran church. Join us, won't you, Sunday mornings during January for a valuable study of our Lutheran musical heritage.

Mission Focus for the Month

Lutherans For Life

*Witnessing to the Sanctity
of Human Life,
Through Education,
Based on the Word of God*



Election 2008: Reactions and Reflections

Rev. Dr. James I. Lamb, Executive Director, Lutherans For Life

Losing Ground – Moving Forward

Respect for the value of human life lost more ground on November 4:

- We elected the most pro-abortion president ever to sit in the White House.
- The State of Washington legalized assisted suicide.
- Michigan legalized unrestricted destruction of human embryos for research purposes.
- California said no to requiring that minors obtain parental consent for an abortion.
- Colorado failed to pass an amendment affirming that life begins at conception.
- South Dakota failed for the second time to ban most abortions in the state.

Yes, respect for the value of human life lost ground, but the value of human life itself cannot be diminished, for it comes from God:

- Every human life is created and gifted by God.
- Every human life is someone for whom Jesus Christ paid the price of His blood.
- God desires to call every human life into His Kingdom according to His purpose.
- The objective reality of the God-given value of human life increases the travesty of what we did in the election, but what we did does not decrease that reality.

The Good News is that Jesus Christ continues to live and reign to all eternity. God has put all things under His feet. He is in charge of the nations and governments. We trust in Him to use governments according to His will for the sake of His people. But we do not trust in government to restore respect for the value of human life.

That is why Lutherans For Life will continue to assist pastors and congregations to connect the Word of Life to the life issues so that hearts and lives will be changed. That is needed more than ever.

Many Christians, undoubtedly not understanding the full scope of what they were doing, were part of November’s collective voice that diminished respect for life. Fear of the economy, fear of pain and suffering, fear of embarrassing and difficult situations overrode their fear of God and trust in His love demonstrated in Jesus.

Ground was lost on November 4.

But Lutherans For Life will continue to move forward striving to do all we can to help Lutheran congregations apply the life-changing message of the Gospel to the life issues.

We will continue to seek to restore respect and reverence for the gift of life within the Church so the Church will once again be part of a collective voice that restores this respect in our country.



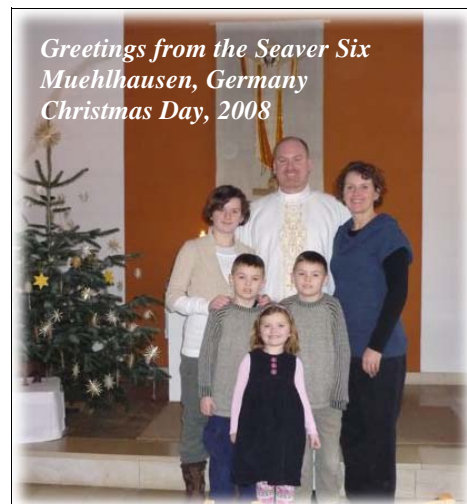
Men Study the Confessions

The word of God is not only inerrant, it is also effective (Isaiah 55:10-11).

VDMA stands for *Verbum Domini Manet in Aeternum* and means “The Word of the Lord Endures Forever.” This “is the motto of the Lutheran Reformation, a confident expression of the enduring power and authority of God’s Word. The motto is based on 1 Peter 1:24-25.”

The symbol VDMA set around a Greek cross “first appeared in the court of Frederick the Wise in 1522. He had it sewn onto the right sleeve of the court’s official clothing, which was worn by prince and servant alike.”

Men of Grace congregation continue in the spirit of this motto with a Study of the Lutheran Confessions every Monday (7:30-9:00) All are welcome.



*Greetings from the Seaver Six
Muehlhausen, Germany
Christmas Day, 2008*

A NEW YEAR FOR FAMILY DEVOTIONS

What New Year's resolutions have you set for 2009? Maybe less ice cream and more exercise, or perhaps more reading and less television? These are excellent goals and important to the physical and educational development of your children. Please, do not forget your family's spiritual development. Any time is a good time to recommit to worship as a family.

"Teach them to your children, talking about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up." Deut. 11:19.

God's Word is for us and for future generations. God assigns the task of passing this on to parents. Our church and our school are here to help you in this endeavor. Your ability and desire to do this comes from God Himself. Family devotions are a wonderful way for you to pass on God's teachings to your children. You will be blessed to watch as their faith grows and develops along with their bodies and minds.

Setting aside time for family devotions is often easier said than done. When your children are young, scheduling family devotions right after supper seems to be a popular option. As our children get older and there are evening activities that interrupt the family schedule, encouraging your children to read a devotional before bedtime and scheduling a once-a-week family devotion time can be a more workable option. Once you have determined a routine for devotions, the next step is to find resources that meet the faith needs of your family. Many resources for teaching the faith can be found through

Principal Report Peter Fredrich

Concordia Publishing House, which serves The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod. The Web site for CPH is www.cph.org.

As a parent, if you are going to be able to instruct your children in the faith, you need to be spiritually fed too. Regular church attendance and Bible study are important ways to grow in the grace of God. God created the family as a method of passing on faith from generation to generation. When the family works with God's plan, this goal is accomplished. However, the job of creating faith is not ours as parents. It is God's job. He sent His spirit into the hearts of our children at their baptism and as they read and hear His word. This is how faith is born and grows in the heart of a child. What a wonderful blessing we have as parents to be a part of this process and to watch it happen. May God bless all of your New Year's resolutions.

January marks the beginning of our basketball & cheerleading season. The players are excited and the coaches are enthusiastic. Teamwork, good sportsmanship, and an improvement of skills will be stressed. We truly hope and pray for a season of safety and friendly competition. Ray Ralph, Mike Clare, Jim Heading, Heather Gillespie, Terry McNally, Rob Feinauer, Craig Harrison, and Christine Fiebke will coach our players. We thank them for their hours of dedicated service. The Grizzlies will play every Monday and Friday evening. Our first game of skill will be played on Friday, January 9 home against Trinity, Monitor.

The only calendar item this month is the end of our second quarter marking period. The last day of the quarter is January 16, with the students receiving them for take home the next week, January 23.

JUNIOR HIGH HIGHLIGHTS

In our American History studies, the U.S. Constitution has been written and ratified as the law of the land. We spent several class sessions reading and attempting to understand the importance of the time-tested document. We recently applied the Constitution to our lives as we discussed what it means to be a citizen of the United States, civic virtue, and key democratic values that we all should have. As citizens, we must accept our own civic responsibilities. Only if government and citizens work together can we meet our needs as a democratic society. As we struggled with comprehending these responsibilities, so did the young American country struggle with the implementation of the new government as it sought to grow and stand alone in an ever changing world of the 1700s. Eighth grade algebra continues to work with solving linear equations. The seventh grade will soon be introduced to algebra. On an easier scale, they too will learn to solve linear equations with one variable. Religion for the month of January will return to our study of the Old Testament. We are examining the life and times of the Israelites as they moved to the Promised Land. These stories are recorded in Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers. The earth beneath our feet is dynamic – constantly changing. The theory of plate tectonics states that the surface of the earth is broken into about twenty large sections called plates. The plates contain the crust and deeper rock of the lithosphere. The plates are rigid and they move over the softer asthenosphere of the mantle. The asthenosphere is a plastic, or moldable, zone in the mantle. The asthenosphere is partly melted. This concept will be examined during January's earth science.

Miss Rudick's Classroom

What a beautiful winter we are having! Of course, our students are extremely excited by all the snow.

Thank you to those who were able to attend our Christmas Program on December 21st. We pray the message of God's Word remains in your heart during this Christmas season and through the New Year.

We also enjoyed our Christmas party on December 23rd. Mrs. Mantei planned a very fun and messy craft. We put paint inside of clear glass ornaments and shook the ornaments to make colorful and unique Christmas ornaments. We then played Christmas bingo. It was a full and fun afternoon!

We did have time to fit in some subjects during the month of December. In religion we learned

Alexis and Cameron make Christmas ornaments.



that God sent prophets many times through the Old Testament to remind the people of His promise to send a Savior.

When we come back from Christmas break we will continue learning about all the different people who worshipped Jesus when He was born.

In Social Studies we will begin learning about being good citizens. We will learn how

there are many rights and responsibilities as citizens. There are also many rules and laws we must follow as responsible citizens.

Math continues to be more challenging. Our 2nd grade students have a good grasp on addition with carrying. They will now move on to subtraction with borrowing. They also continue to have more challenging word problems. Our 1st grade students are also tackling more difficult word problems. They will also begin learning more about measures such as cups, pints, quarts, gallons, inches, feet, yards, and so on. Our kindergarten students are being challenged as well.

They are focusing more on patterns, time and coin identification.

We pray that you had a joyous and peaceful Christmas season. May the message of Christ's birth remain with you through the year. God be with you!

Gledhill Gators

"**Whew** the 'year' is finally over." The students have been waiting to say this. They are ready to close 2008 and welcome 2009 with exhilaration and zest. We had a wonderful send-off with a smash of a Christmas party led by Ms. Venix, Ms. Feinauer, and Mr. and Brandon Storey. The children had a blast.



Christmas Bingo !!

Since we have to return the science kits soon, we will be ready to begin another unit. I

have ordered a special mini-curriculum to educate the students on the incredible and highly versatile Soy Bean.



Soy Field

This is fully encompassing and includes reading, assessment, and study sheets. I know they will enjoy it.

The latest religion lessons have been following the life of Moses from birth, to the burning bush, to the pleadings with Pharaoh, to the ultimate wandering of God's people in the desert. We



Baby Moses

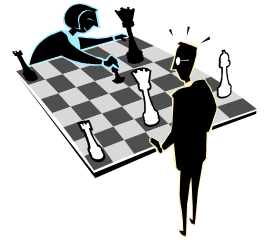
have had some wonderful discussions and question/answer times. The students are all incredibly astute in their queries, as well as the deductions to questions from other students. I personally enjoy these very much as I see their sincere desire to learn outside the text book. All three grades are exceptionally bright in their own mathematics. We are only beginning to get into areas that they are requiring more practice for. I have great hopes for their future with numbers.

In Social Studies we are exploring the New England states. The students will return from the break and begin studying and ultimately writing their own song about the northeast. I look forward to the outcome...I think. Happy New Year!!



YOUTH NEWS

The Youth had fun when they got together for their Christmas party. We ate, played games, exchanged gifts and had a great time together. Kevin and Kye got tangled up play-



ing Twister while Jessica made sure that the rules were strictly enforced. Chris received the coveted gift of a year's supply of Fun Dips candy. If anyone has a craving for Fun Dips, see Chris!

The Youth sponsor Robinson Jimenez, a child from Columbia, through Compassion International. We keep in contact with him and here is the letter we received from him recently:

Dear sponsor Grace Lutheran Youth Group,

Hi! May God always bless you and keep you. My family and I are well. I fractured my arm one month ago. I was practicing Kapoeira, but I am already well and on Monday they removed me the plaster. I feel very well. At home, we are celebrating the day of love and friendship (it is similar to your Valentine's Day). Do you have it? School goes very well for me, although I am not doing well in a subject, but I hope to retake it. In the project, I have learned a lot about couple's relationships. I want to know. How are you? What have there been in your lives lately? What will you do in December? I hope you pray for me and for my family so that I do well in my studies. I pray for you too. Thank you for the gift. With it, I bought a shirt and a pair of jeans.

Robinson Jimenez J

The Youth Group sends a monthly check to help support Robinson with necessities. We take a collection Sunday mornings during Youth Bible Study to send to him. The gift he referred to was a special donation we sent as a Christmas gift. We are happy to be able to help him to have a better life and to share our faith with him. He often makes reference in his letters to his studies about Jesus. Please take a moment to say a prayer for Robinson to keep him safe and strong in his faith in Jesus Christ.

Memorials



Soli Deo Gloria

Given in Memory

Pat Haut

By
Al & Edie Ousterhout

Walter Brandt

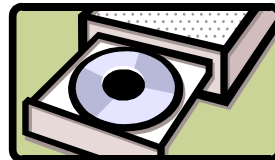
By
Mike & Leslie Clare



LIBRARY CORNER

If you start weeding out your children's books or CD's after Christmas please remember that our

school library can always use second-hand books and CD's in good condition. Any questions call Lynn at 662-6161.



A big round of thanks to all Thrivent members that contributed to the "Giving Plus" program which helped generate matching funds to help defray operating expenses to the tune of \$23,000.00

Let's keep going for the year 2009!!



Virgina Behmlander helping-Jacob Vennix wrap presents from Hollyland mall.



Sue Reed helping Casey Kent and Morgan Harrison.



Craig Dufresne and Allyse Feibke buying presents..

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Jamaury

Grace Church Calendar



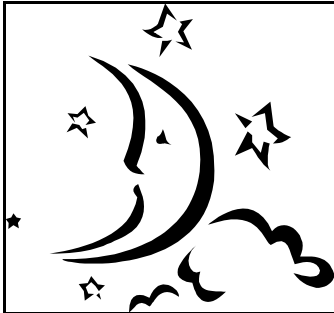
4 8:00 (H.C.) & 10:30 Worship	5 7:30 pm Men's Bible Study	6	7 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 7:00 Midweek Worship with Holy Communion	1 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	2	3 8:00 am Women's Bible Study
11 8:00 & 10:30 (H.C.) Worship 9:30 Sunday School	12 B.B. at St. Paul 7:30 pm Men's Bible Study	13 7:30 Board of Elementary Education	14 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 7:00 Midweek Advent Worship	15 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	16 B.B. at Amelith	17 8:00 am Women's Bible Study
18 8:00 (H.C.) & 10:30 Worship 9:30 Sunday School	19 B.B. vs. Midland 7:30 pm Men's Bible Study	20 7:00 Board of Elders	21 6:30 am Men's Bible 7:00 Midweek A Worship with Holy Communion	22 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	23 B.B. vs. Beaver Zion	24 8:00 am Women's Bible Study 7
25 8:00 & 10:30 (H.C.) Worship 9:30 Sunday School	26 7:00 pm Executive Board	27	28 6:30 am Men's Bible Study 7:00 Midweek Worship	29 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	30 B.B. at Zion B.C.	31 8:00 am Women's Bible Study

Grace Lutheran Church and School
303 W. Ruth Street
Auburn, Michigan 48611

Rev. David H. Reed, Pastor
Mr. Peter Fredrich, Principal

Return Service Requested

NON PROFIT ORGANIZATION
U.S. Postage
#19 PAID #19
Bulk Mail



January

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

Birthdays

1 Joel Herbolsheimer, 1 Logan LeBeau, 1 Margaret Petrosky, 2 Casey Kent, 4 Larry Keidel, 5 Ryan Hyatt, 6 Tammy Hyatt, 6 Kaly Kraatz, 6 Merry Lee, 7 Diondra Heading, 9 Walter Barber, 9 Dorothy Greenleaf, 9 Julie Lemke, 10 Donald Rauschenberger Jr., 10 David Seaver, 10 William Seaver, 10 Mirinda Taglauer, 11 Pamela Kent, 11 Ethel Smith, 12 Kelly Arnold, 12 Dustin Wegener, 13 Kevin Feinauer, 13 Wesley Meyer, 15 Wanita Smith, 16 Kristina Leach, 16 Nicole Meyer, 16 Jessica Rolfe, 17 Bridgitte Feinauer, 17 Jessica Wegener, 18 Gene Bartz, 18 Scott Bickham, 18 Molly Mantei, 20 James Mantei, 21 GeriAnne Schmidt, 21 Carlene Tocco, 22 Donald Pfannes, 23 Corey Arnold, 23 Paul Wood, 25 Jeanette Harper, 25 Edyth Ousterhout, 25 James Prah, 25 Sheryl Seaver, 25 Debra Stieve, 26 Joshua Mularz, 26 Elaine Prah, 27 Chase Horneber, 28 Kathleen Pickelman, 30 Debra Garcia, 31 Mark Horneber, 31 Richard Klimaszewski

Anniversaries

1 Dave & Kelly Arnold, 26 Gene & Angie Meyer