DRIVE SOBER this holiday season

Parties, family gatherings, office celebrations – often such festivities equate good cheer with drinking. Getting behind the wheel of a car after having a few drinks is never wise; driving when drunk is highly dangerous – and illegal.

Here is some sobering information about alcohol:
• A drink is a drink is a drink. A typical bottle of beer, glass of wine, or mixed drink contain virtually equal amounts of pure alcohol, and they all register the same to a Breathalyzer.
• Moderate drinking is one drink a day for women or anyone over 65 and two drinks a day for men under 65.
• Some people should not drink at all: children, pregnant women, and people on certain medications or with certain medical conditions.
• Binge drinking – downing five or more drinks at a time – increases your risk of an auto accident. Many young people are binge drinkers. Many older people are, too: Duke University Medical Center researchers revealed recently that 22% of men and 9% of women 50 to 64 engaged in binge drinking in the past month.
• The greatest single cause of death for persons aged 6 - 33 is traffic crashes. Almost half are alcohol-related.

But this holiday, you can give your spouse, your family, and your friends a truly loving gift. Volunteer to be the designated driver. Decide not to participate in any drinking games. And do whatever it takes to keep your friends from driving drunk.

This December, be sober and safe when you drive.

National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

Prayer: Thank you, God, for all the joy in my life. This holiday season, help me remember that having fun and acting responsibly are not mutually exclusive. Amen.

DRIVE FOCUSED in 2010

Concentrating on driving while you drive seems like basic common sense. But in a recent study, 80% of crashes and 10% of all fatal accidents were related to driver inattention.

Eating, picking something off the floor, drowsiness, fiddling with the radio, gawking, and polishing nails can be disastrous while you drive. Using a cell phone is especially dangerous.

If you use a cell phone while driving:
• You are four times more likely to have an accident.
• You are more impaired than someone having a blood alcohol level of .08 percent, legal intoxication in Illinois.
• You reduce your driving brainpower by 37%.

Illinois laws about cell phone usage while driving:
• Banned for drivers under 19 and school bus drivers.
• Banned in a school zone or a highway construction zone.
• Hand-held devices are banned in Chicago.
• Text messaging is banned for everyone driving anywhere in Illinois, beginning January 1, 2010.

A new year is almost here. Consider a resolution to use your cell phone – phoning and texting – off the road only:
• If you need to make a call while you are driving . . . pull off the road before you begin.
• If a call comes in while you are driving . . . pull off the road before you answer or call back.

In 2010, take personal responsibility for safe driving.

Resources for Safe Driving:
• Advocatehealth.com
• cyberdriveillinois.com
• aa.org (Alcoholics Anonymous)
• madd.org
• youtube.com/watch?v=qpYq9CBZoKQ

Related to the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America and the United Church of Christ (www.advocatehealth.com)