

April
2014

St. John Lutheran Church

Mission Statement

St. John is a living witness to the love of God as shown in Jesus Christ.

We gather faithfully in His name to worship and praise Him; and we go forth in peace to share the Good News and to serve the world around us.

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St. John Lutheran Church <http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org>
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420 Beaver Street Office email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Mars PA 16046 Pastor Mark's email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

This is the most important time of the church year. Bigger than Christmas (way bigger), bigger than Pentecost (the birthday of the church), this is the time of the year when we celebrate that death has been defeated forever. I encourage you, as we continue through Lent and prepare for the celebration of Easter to find ways to journey with Jesus.

That could be a denial of self – as a reminder that Jesus emptied himself for us (Philippians 2:5 – 11). That could be working to serve others as Jesus and the disciples did. That could be an intentional love of neighbor, or giving generously to others, or reaching out to someone in your community that needs a sister or brother.

It could be re-engaging with God's word, reading it in the morning or evening (or listening to it online – by purchasing one of these:

<http://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/> or downloading one of these:

<http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/> for your drive to work (or at home).

It could be being intentional in prayer – perhaps asking for help in the morning for yourself, for friends, for family, for the community, for the world and giving thanks for blessings to all of these people and places in the evenings.

It could also be engaging with community. It is interesting that for all the conversations today about a personal relationship with Jesus, that in the New Testament – the norm for relating to Christ is communal – that Christ is most experienced through a community of believers where others are gathered together in his name. “For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them.” (Matthew 18:20)

This Lent offers you many opportunities to gather with believers in the name of Christ to connect with your faith. We have opportunities to put your faith into action, but we also have chances to gather together in prayer, in faith, in unity, in love and hear the story that is central to us and to the entire world.

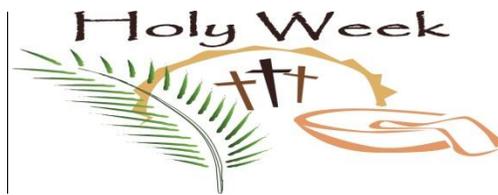
We invite you to join us in prayer and worship, which we do because of our devotion and love of God, because he has done so much for us. To hear that God created you, made you, loves you, and claims you as his is a story that we need every day, and that this season, and this Holy Week uniquely gives you the opportunity to hear.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mark

Pastor Mark Away
April 23 through April 26
For an emergency, please contact
Pastor Dave Saylor at 724-799-
3743.

Weekday Lenten Services

These services will continue on **April 2** at 7:00 pm, **April 7** at Noon and **April 9** at 7:00 pm



In Remembrance of Him

A Seder Dinner and Meal – April 12 – 4:30-7:00 pm

Jesus' last supper was a Passover or Seder Meal. We invite you to join us for a Seder Meal as we talk about the meaning of the last supper and communion for the daughter of our congregation preparing for her first communion. St. John's will be preparing the food for the first part of the meal--the Seder itself is going to be predominantly symbolic—food as worship, not as supper. After that, we will have a potluck and fellowship. Please bring an item to share and sign up on the sheet in the greeting area. Please choose a side dish, salad, dessert or main dish. Also, please bring items to donate to the Food Bank.

Holy Week Services

Passion Sunday – April 12 – 8:00 am and 10:30 am

Passion Sunday begins with great celebration, when we wave the palm leaves and shout "Hosanna to the King of Kings." We celebrate Christ's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Then, with heavy hearts, we begin the long and weary march to Golgotha, to the place of the skull, as Jesus is handed over to the powers of the world, to execution and death.

Note that there will be a palm procession preceding the service, so we will gather in the front of the church for procession.

Holy Monday – April 14 – 7:00 pm

Based on Mark 11:12-19

Based on the chronology of Mark's gospel, Monday is when Jesus threw the money changers out of the temple. Our readings this day will remember this event and will remember Jesus, the sacrifice to take away the sins of the world.

Holy Tuesday – April 15 – 7:00 pm

Based on Mark 11:20-13:37

This day is a great day of teaching in the temple, when the powers of the world sought to discredit Jesus. We will be reminded of his teaching on this day—including highlighting the two greatest commandments, when we remember that Jesus is the lens through which we can see and understand God's law.

Holy Wednesday – April 16 – 7:00 pm

Based on Mark 14:1 -11

On this day, Jesus was anointed at Bethany—a preparation for his death. When we were baptized with Jesus, we were baptized into his death and resurrection. We will be anointed on this day, as a reminder of the gift of the Spirit that we have in Christ Jesus, Our Lord, and in preparation for the journey with him.

The Three Great Days

Maundy Thursday – April 17 – 7:00 pm

Maundy comes from the Latin word that means commandment. Hear Jesus give a new commandment to his disciples and all people: to love one another. As part of this service, we will wash each other's feet, following in the footsteps of the one who washed the feet of his disciples. We are encouraged to celebrate the meal of salvation to renew our commitment to serve God and each other.

Good Friday Community Service – Lunch & Service at Mars UP Church

Pastors from the Mars Ministerium will lead worship at Mars United Presbyterian Church. There will be a luncheon served (lamb stew) before the service beginning at Noon, the service will begin at approximately 12:45 pm. This will be a service of scripture, prayer and hymn. We hope you can join us.

Good Friday Service at St. John's – April 18 – 7:00 pm

This service, perhaps the most solemn of the Christian year, is at the heart of the great Christian paradox, how the cross can be considered good. Please join us as we hear of how God will let nothing stand between us, as a symbol of death and torture is transformed into a symbol of hope, love and peace. Please gather around the cross of Jesus with us.

Holy Week (continued)

Easter Vigil – April 19 – 7:00 pm

In the Easter Vigil service we hear about God's mighty acts of love for his people, from creation through today and the promise for all time. We reaffirm our baptismal vows, and share the first Eucharist of Easter. This service is rich in ritual and symbolism, beginning in the darkness and ending in light, beginning in the sorrow of the tomb and ending with the joyful news that Christ is risen.

Easter Day – April 20 – at Mars Home for Youth

Mars Ministerium Service – time to be determined.

Easter Day – April 20 – at St. John's – 8:00 am and 10:30 am

Easter is the Queen of Feasts, the day we celebrate God's conquering death. In celebrating Christ's resurrection, we remember that because Christ has been raised from the dead, we also shall be. We will be having a breakfast between services celebrating the good news that Christ is Risen.

All About the Resurrection

Sundays at 9:15 a.m. in Pastor Mark's Office



Who came to the tomb first – what did they see there and most importantly, what does it mean for us? The resurrection is what gives us hope as Christians, come learn what the evangelists Matthew, Mark, Luke and John say about it.

Brown Bag Bible Study - Mondays



Our Monday Brown Bag Bible Study group continues through April. **On April 7 we will meet after Lenten Services.** For the remainder of the month we will return to our regular schedule of lunch at Noon and Bible Study at 12:30. Please feel free to join us even if you have not participated previously.

Bibles

You may have noticed there are Bibles in the pews and that Pastor Mark has been mentioning Bibles more often in his sermons. The Bible is our book of faith. We print the lessons so you may read the word of God for us, so it is accessible for all. These lessons are what the sermon, hymns, and theme of any given Sunday focus upon.

However, those lessons are not meant to be limiting, they aren't meant to be the only places we touch with scripture during the week. We want our experience with God's living word to be full, so we have been providing lessons for the coming week to give you an opportunity to read ahead.

We would like to encourage you to bring your personal Bible to follow along in worship, to read more, to learn where the books of the Bible are located, and to hear God's word for you. Please bring your Bible with you to worship.

Luther Club

Thursday, April 3, 10, 17 – 11:30 am at
Panera's – Cranberry

These sessions are going well and continue into April. If you would like to learn more about your Lutheran heritage and join a discussion about what it means to be Lutheran, then talk to Pastor Mark or join us at Panera's on Thursdays at 11:30 am. You may purchase the Book of Concord (which is the confessions of the Lutheran Church) on Amazon.com or find an older translation on the internet.

Ladies Book Study

In March we will meet on the third Monday of the month at 7 pm (April 21) to review and discuss a chapter. Currently, we are reading "Bad Girls of the Bible" by Liz Curtis Higgs. Please read the assigned chapter prior to the meeting.

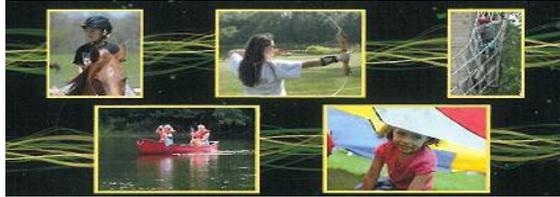


Join us for a day of FUN! – Saturday, May 10, 2014

Camp Blast is going to be a fun-filled day highlighting all that Lutherlyn has to offer!

There will be a sampling of all the fun things to do at camp – horseback riding, campfires, crafts, gaga ball, archery, high ropes course, zip-line, bouldering room, hikes, nature activities, canoeing, hay rides, games, sports, archaeology, rockets, disc golf, kayaking and biking! There will be tours, displays and activities that highlight the “second season” (non-summer) things going on at camp, great food, worship, presentations and the new Woodland Pottery Studio.

The best part is -- **EVERYTHING IS FREE!** No registration necessary, just show up for a fun, free day!



Schedule

11:00 am – Worship in the amphitheater

Noon – 3:30 pm – Lunch in the dining hall

Noon – 4:00 pm – Tons of activities

4:00 – 4:30 pm - Campfire



Spring Clean-Up-April 12

We will be doing our annual clean-up of the grounds around the church on April 12 from 8:00 am till Noon. All help will be greatly appreciated.

Desserts for Meals-on-Wheels



Anyone who is able to help provide desserts for Meals-on-Wheels we would appreciate your help. Volunteers will bake at St. John's on Thursday, April 10 beginning at 7:45 am.

Theology on Tap

Third Wednesday of the Month

8:00 pm – April 16

Men from Lutheran churches in our area will be gathering for fellowship and to speak on matters of faith and life. We will meet at Domenico's Restaurant in Cranberry which is located at Piazza Plaza 20550 Rt. 19 N, Cranberry Twp., PA 16066. (724) 776-6455. Invite a friend for theology and a great gathering.

Exercise Program



**Tuesdays and Thursday Evenings –
6:30-7:30 pm through April 10**

St. John's is having classes to benefit all ages and physical limitations. The program is designed to improve strength, flexibility, balance and overall health. Join us!



St. John's will have an Easter Egg Hunt and Continental Breakfast on Easter Sunday, April 20. We hope you will join us for these Easter celebrations! Check the weekly announcements for more details.

From Winter to Summer by Matt Claus

I woke early one morning,
to hear my feathered friends sing.
It's one of my precious treasures,
in these early days of spring.
The long, dark days are history now,
and winter's chill has passed.
And soon the fun-filled days of summer,
will be upon us at last.
But, stuck there in the middle,
a season came and went.
The wonderful, reviving time,
the overlooked season of Lent.
The time to start all over again,
a time we need to renew.
A time we should remember,
what our Savior did for you.
In a sign of love never seen before,
He died upon a cross.
He did this for all his little children,
so that none would be lost.
All we need do is believe in Him,
as God's one and only Son.
Admit our sin and change our ways,
and the rest is already done.
We passed through the winter of death,
survived the spring of strife.
We approach the joy of summer,
which is the gift of eternal life.
I woke up early this morning,
and I began to sing.
For He is my greatest treasure,
Jesus, my Lord and King.



APRIL BIRTHDAYS

4/07 Zachary Claus
4/11 David Hrach
4/11 Todd McCormick
4/13 Nicholas Schnelle
4/13 Jonathan Brower
4/16 Raymond Hackworth
4/18 Lyndsey Murphy
4/20 Martha Ward
4/22 Benjamin Knauff
4/24 Susan Bielo

Cold December Flies Away from Evangelical Lutheran Worship

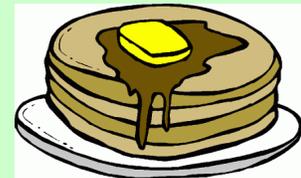
Cold December flies away at the rose red splendor.
April's crowning glory breaks while the whole world
wonders at the holy unseen power of the tree which
bears the flower. On the blessed tree blooms the
reddest flower. On the tree blooms the rose here in
love's own garden, full and strong in glory.

In the hopeless time of sin, shadows deep had fallen.
All the world lay under death. Eyes were closed in
sleeping. But, when all seemed lost in night, came the
sun whose golden light brings unending joy, brings the
endless joy of our hope, highest hope, of our hope's
bright dawning, Son beloved of heaven.

Now the bud had come to bloom, and the world
awakens. In the lily's purest flower dwells a wondrous
fragrance. And it spreads to all the earth from the
moment of its birth; and its beauty lives. In the flower it
lives, in the flower, and it spreads its heavenly
brightness sweet perfume delightful.

First Breakfast – April 6 @ 9:15 a.m.

The first Sunday of each month we
gather together for first breakfast.
We take this time for fellowship and
to enjoy a meal together. Please join
us!



Sunday School News

We would like to remind parents and children that every Sunday Children's Bulletin's are printed for the kids. They are intended to help provide continuity of message from what the children hear in church, while at the same time provide some fun activities for them to complete at their convenience. We encourage you to have your kids utilize the Children's Bulletins to further reinforce the message they hear each Sunday during worship.

April 13 – Egg-stravaganza – Mars UP Church

On April 13 from 1:00 – 3:00 pm, our brothers and sisters at Mars United Presbyterian Church are having an Egg-stravaganza and they have been kind enough to invite us to share in their festivities. For now, we ask that you keep this day circled on your calendars. More information will follow in upcoming weeks. I am told you will have an egg-celent time!

Brothers and sisters of St. John

I hope this message finds you all well. As we are all undoubtedly looking forward to spring here in southwestern PA, I wanted to share a few items and random thoughts to ponder during the remainder of what has been a rather harsh winter.

First, a few months ago a friend of mine mentioned that he started noticing a coworker of his use an interesting tag line in his email correspondence signature. You know, the pithy or trite little lines that people add below their signatures. Something like, "Remember the environment before printing this e-mail". What stuck out to my friend was that this particular individual's tag line was not what we would consider one of modern society's "feel good" issues. Instead, the co-workers tagline was this – "Remember, the Titanic was built by "experts". The Ark was built by an Amateur". When my friend told me this, I was struck by the simplicity and irony of the message. In a society more and more concerned with the trappings of the next new, bigger, better "thing", I was shocked that someone would actually put their faith on their sleeve for all to see. You see, I work in "corporate America" and am grateful for the income my job provides. After all, it puts food on our table; a roof over our heads; clothes on our back; heat in the winter, and a cool place to lay our heads in the heat of summer. But I never felt comfortable expressing my deep and fervent faith at work, at least until I heard about my friend's coworker. Now, I added the same tag line to MY e-mail signatory. Most people acknowledge the tag line in rather innocuous ways. A few give me thumbs-up while one individual was openly antagonistic. However, I am reminded of Mathew 5:11-12 "Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you." Granted, being made fun of at work is towards the low end of the "persecution totem pole", but it is nice to know God is smiling at me! Brother's and Sister's, I encourage and implore you to be bold in your faith and your convictions this Lenten Season and beyond!

Secondly, from the "Kids say the darndest things" diary, I wanted to share a conversation I had with my 7-year-old son recently. I picked him up from an afterschool activity and the conversation found its way to John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life." So, trying to break it down for his 7-year-old ears I told him that God loves us SO MUCH that he allowed His Son, Jesus, to die so that our sins would be forgiven and all we have to do is believe in Jesus. Not too difficult, right? WRONG! Dominic told me that he didn't believe it. He said there has to be something "more", that certainly you don't just get to go to Heaven for simply believing in Jesus! Realizing I had a powerful opportunity and important responsibility to get what I was about to say right, I proceeded to tell him that God's gift to us is grace. That, indeed, the Promise is kept simply by a true and heartfelt belief in Christ Jesus. You see, it took me most of my life to accept God's gift of grace. And now that I have accepted it, I want nothing more than to share His love. I do that by being an elder, acting as Sunday School superintendent and teacher, being on council, volunteering at various church events, and trying to be as good of a witness to Christ in my daily life as I possibly can. For you see, brothers and sisters, I was a very different man from the one you see in the back of the Church every Sunday at 10:30. I chased after every wonderful and tantalizing "fruit" our world has to offer. All it brought me was pain, misery, and suffering. It wasn't until I was born again that I found peace, tranquility, and joy in my life. I am comforted by the fact that I was called and am now saved by the blood of Jesus Christ and the free gift of grace God offers to us. All we need to do is BELIEVE!!!

Finally, I want to leave you with words the Apostle Paul wrote to the church at Philippi. Ch 2:5-11 – "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." Brothers and sisters, I am a bond servant, nay a slave, to Christ Jesus. And I am here to tell you that being a slave to Jesus has made me freer and more joyful than any other time in my life. My hope and prayer for each of you is the same.

May God's peace be with you. May His Will be made obvious to you and may you follow His Will. May the freedom that is found by being a slave to Christ bring you as much joy as it has me!

Your brother in Christ,
Keith Cardinal

Worship Helpers

There is a sign-up sheet in the greeting area for all who may be interested in being a lector (the person who reads the lessons on Sunday morning, a communion assistant (someone who shares the presence of Christ on Sunday morning), or an acolyte (the candle lighter who also assists with communion). Your help is requested. Please consider signing up for services.

Pew Pads

In an effort to get more visitors to use pew pads, to be more welcoming and to focus evangelism, as well as to make use of them for our annual reports, etc. Please sign the pads and pass them to your neighbors.

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org>

Save the Date

May 10 – Camp Lutherlyn
May 17 – Annual Tea

Worship Helpers for April

Please look in the Greeting area for worship helper sign-up sheets for acolyte, usher or acolyte for any Sunday in

Ushers

8:00 am

10:30 am Bates

Assisting Ministers

8:00 am Clarence Strabel

10:30 am Carolyn Jarrett

Address service requested

ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
420 BEAVER STREET
P.O. BOX 411
MARS, PA 16046