

March
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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Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Lent is one of my favorite times in the church year. The focus on the cross and discipleship, the haunting and melodic hymns, the readings that reveal to us all that Christ goes through to serve us, the delicious fish dinners, our spaghetti dinner, the opportunity for more worship services.

Mostly Lent brings us face to face with our own mortality, reveals for the lie the idea that we can do anything on our own and reminds us on the necessity of trusting in God. I love the opportunity for reflection, the focus on prayer and fasting.

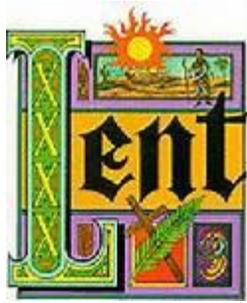
I would encourage you to use Lent as a time to re-engage. A typical practice is to attempt to remove a harmful aspect of your life and to add something positive. Some in our congregation give up chocolate, soda, candy, fatty foods or meat. Others attempt to exercise more often, read the Bible for five minutes every morning, pray 5 more minutes every day or to be kinder to their neighbors. These are examples – but they should reflect the idea that our body is God's temple and that we are to care for that which God has made. "For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple." (1st Corinthians 3:17b)

I encourage you to consider your faith journey this Lent, to think about how you can build on the temple that God has made, how you can renew your awareness of God's Holy Spirit blowing through our world. I hope that you can take advantage of Lent here at St. John – to worship with us on Mondays or Wednesdays, our Bad Girls of the Bible women's group, exercise on Tuesdays or Thursdays, our new Luther group meeting Thursday mornings, our Sunday morning worship or one of the many ways that we have of connecting with the author and originator of our faith.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mark

Pastor Mark Away March 15-18

Pastor Mark will be away for a wedding in Maryland on those dates. Pastor Ralph Storm will be leading worship on March 16. Since Pastor Mark will not be here on March 17, please note there will not be Bible Study or Lenten worship that day.



Ash Wednesday Worship Services 12:00 Noon and 7:00 pm – March 5

Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return. These are the words we hear on Ash Wednesday as we begin Lent and the time of fasting and preparation. We invite you to join us for worship as we gather in penitence, in prayer, and in fasting and enter into the great 40 days of Lent.

Lenten Services

Mondays at Noon – March 10, March 24, March 31
Wednesdays at 7:00 pm – March 12, March 19, March 26

We will have brief worship services on the days listed, entitled "Making Change." We will be looking at God, the originator of all change, Jesus Christ, who came to change all relationships and make them whole, and the Holy Spirit who helps us as well.

Luther Club

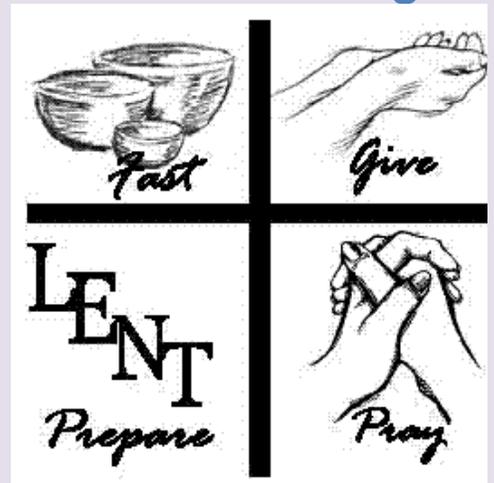
Thursday, March 6, 13, 20, & 27 – 11:30 am at Panera's – Cranberry

A few people (Sally, Pastor Mark, Christine and Janet) are interested in reading more about what inspires our faith, so we will be reading Luther's large catechism together beginning in March. 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 beginning March 6. 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.

Conferences

On March 12, during the day, Pastor Mark will be at a conference at Geneva College in regard to addiction. **On March 14**, in the morning, Pastor Mark will be downtown for a conference on human rights concerning Jews in Russia.

Lent is Coming



Lent starts quite late this year – March 5th, however this season of reflection, fasting and preparation is a central one of the Christian year and it's good to prepare for this time of fasting, giving of our selves, preparation for the cross and prayer.

This year we will have services on Mondays and on Wednesdays. We will also be giving out a devotional book and encouraging members to respond on our Facebook page to items there.

I encourage you this Lent to prayerfully consider what you could give up and/or what you could add? This can be as simple as committing to saying the Lord's prayer in the morning to as complicated as working through the service of the hours, living out a budget, etc. It could be working at VOICE or the Lighthouse or another agency. It could be giving more to LDR (Lutheran Disaster Response) or LWR (Lutheran World Relief).

The Bible Miniseries – Learn the Basics of the Bible – For Beginners and Experts Alike

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

One of the resolutions in the recent church-wide assembly was to continue connecting with the book of our faith, the Bible. We will be watching “The Bible” miniseries to start. As a part of that, our Adult Discussion Group will be meeting in Pastor Mark’s office on Sundays at 9:15 a.m. We invite you to join us!



Brown Bag Bible Study – Mondays – Schedule Change for March

Our Monday Brown Bag Bible Study group continues through March with a few changes. **There will not be a Bible Study on March 17 since Pastor Mark will be away.** Also, there are Lenten Services at Noon on March 10, 24, and 31. Lunch and Bible Study will take place after services. If you haven’t joined us in the past, Lent would be a great time to join us!

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.

Ladies Book Study

In March we will meet on the third Monday of the month at 7 pm (March 17) 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.

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.

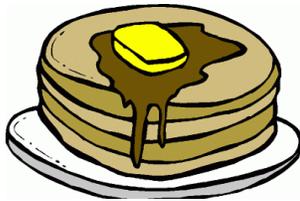


Spaghetti Dinner March 8 – 4:00 to 7:00 pm

St. John's Spaghetti Dinner, Saturday, March 8 from 4:00 to 7:00 pm. Tickets for adults are \$8 and children age 5 and up is \$5. There is no charge for children under the age of 5. Various items have already been donated, but a list of items needed is in the church greeting area. We will be preparing meatballs on Saturday, March 1 from 8:00 am till Noon. Anyone willing to help is welcome to join us. Volunteers are also needed to help with dishwashing and clean-up after dinner. Contact any member of the Deacons with questions or to volunteer. Bring your family and friends and join us!

Purple Pancake First Breakfast – March 2nd @ 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!



Men's Night Out – March 4 Beacon Hotel – 5:30 pm

We are headed to the Beacon for a Fat Tuesday pre-Lenten feast! If you can join us, this event is for all the gentleman of the congregation and we always have a good time.

Theology on Tap

Third Wednesday of the Month 8:00 pm – March 19

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

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!



Quilting Group

The Quilting Group at St. John's meets on the second Monday of each month from 6-8:30 pm. If you would like to join, please stop by the next meeting!

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope you have been successful in staying warm these last few months. What a bitterly cold winter we have been experiencing. I have lived in the Pittsburgh area about three-fourths of my life and I would struggle to identify a winter where we had so much snow and extreme temperatures as we have had thus far. Don't fret though! Spring is less than a month away!

There are a few items I would like to discuss this month. The first being our recent split in the Sunday School program. As I am sure you have seen, our attendance at Sunday School has roughly doubled year-over-year. As such, we have separated the single class into two smaller classes. One tailored for the Pre-K thru 1st graders and the other for 2nd grade & up. We only have a few weeks under our belt with this new split and we have a few items left to be worked out, but for the most part I think the children have found the transition seamless. Because of the split, we put out a call for additional teachers and I am pleased to share with you that Nick Brower, Denise Hager, and Katie Nicklewicz have volunteered their time to help teach our little ones. Please join me in thanking them for their commitment. Christine, Bonnie, and I remain dedicated as well while Kim Richards has elected to refocus her stewardship in a few of the other areas in which she is heavily involved. I have also received word from a few other people of their desire to teach next year. It is marvelous that we have so many involved people willing to donate their time and wisdom to our young ones. Of course, we are always looking for help so if you are interested please give me a call.

Another item I would like to discuss is that of fellowship activities. Our Elders expend much thought, time, and resources organizing and preparing fellowship events. Generally speaking, participation at these events ranges from moderate to wonderful. For instance, we recently had a White Elephant Bingo that drew around 25 people. The question though is what other types of activities do YOU – the Congregation of St. John Lutheran Church – want to see at our church? When should these events take place? My family has certain days of the week that work for us, but those days may not be ideal for everyone or even the majority of the people! And what time should our events take place? One of the goals of our Elders is to provide a backdrop for bringing us together for fellowship. We would love to have any ideas that you think you would participate in. Feel free to contact Kim Richards (Elders Chair) or anyone of the other Elders.

Thank you and may the peace of Jesus Christ be with you.

Keith Cardinal

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>

March Birthdays

3/01 William Greb
3/05 James Ward
3/09 Douglas Bishop
3/11 Tatiana Brower
3/13 Ellen Hrach
3/22 Patricia Smith
3/24 Kaylee Parr
3/24 Sydney Brower



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.

Worship Helpers for March

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

Leikauf

Assisting Ministers

8:00 am

10:30 am

Marlene Strabel

Martha Ward

Save the Date

April 12 – Spring Clean-Up

April 12 – Seder Dinner

April 20 – Easter

Thanks for helping with communion

Thanks to our altar guild for setting up communion, to our communion assistants, to Fritz Bielo for making a new batch of wine, to Aimee Wolfe and the Leikauf's making a new batch of wine. Thanks everyone!

Mission Emphasis for 2014

First quarter	Camp Lutherlyn
Second quarter	Voice
Third quarter	Lutheran World Relief
Fourth quarter	Lighthouse Foundation

Holy Week Worship

Just a heads up, that we are doing something a bit different for Holy Week this year. We will have services every night of Holy Week, as we go through Christ's passion and love for us. The readings will center on Mark's gospel – which goes to great lengths to chronicle Christ's last week. We will then go to the standard readings for the great three days.

Monday, April 14	Worship	7 pm
Tuesday, April 15	Worship	7 pm
Wednesday, April 16	Worship	7 pm
Thursday, April 17	Maundy Thursday	7 pm
Friday, April 18	Community Service Good Friday	Noon 7 pm
Saturday, April 19	Easter Vigil	7 pm
Sunday, April 20	Easter Morning	8 & 10:30 am

Address service requested

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