

May
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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Sisters and brothers in Christ,

What a deep and meaningful Lenten season that was. Thank you for such a wonderful season of worship. The season culminated with the resurrection of Jesus Christ, with the promise that death has no sway over us.

Our Sunday morning adult class has been going through the gospels and looking at what each one has to say about the resurrection. There are some differences in what the focus is for us. What I mean by that is that the gospel writers, inspired by the Holy Spirit, had different aims in writing their gospels. All of them want to teach us about Jesus – but choose to highlight different aspects of his life.

For instance Mark's gospel presents the disciples in the worst possible light. The original ending of Mark has the disciples fled to the four winds and the women terrified (Mark 16:1 – 8). We are encouraged to succeed where the disciples, in Mark's gospel at least, failed. When you read Mark – you might often think that you could do better than the disciples (if you don't have this experience of reading Mark, give it another try).

Matthew ends with the great commission – with Jesus' charge to his disciples that they go to every nation and teach them to obey everything that he has commanded them. You might consider this to be the Sunday School ending to the gospel – it highlights our commission as Christians to go out into the world and teach about Jesus. (Matthew 28)

Luke's gospel ends with his disciples singing a hymn and being told to await the coming of the Holy Spirit. It is a reminder that the Holy Spirit is truly what unifies us together as a people and that the blessing of it is what makes St. John (and all Christian communities) awesome.

John's gospel is a bit different. Without a doubt, the 20th chapter of John was the first 'edition' ending to the novel. It focuses on the gift of peace being given out by Jesus' Holy Spirit. It also commends us – those who have believed without seeing.

How are you inspired by the resurrection? What is your favorite part of Easter? Come to St. John as we continue to hear the tale.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mark

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

Luther Club

Thursdays – 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.

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

May 19-7pm

Currently, we are reading "Bad Girls of the Bible" by Liz Curtis Higgs. Please read the assigned chapter prior to the meeting.

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.



On Sunday, May 4th, **Emily and Lindsey Greb and Giovanni Sunseri** will be celebrating their First Communion.

Communion is one of the two sacraments (meaning a visible sign of grace) in the Lutheran Church. These are visible signs, open to all, that change our nature when we partake of them. Communion is sometimes called the Eucharist (meaning thanksgiving-this is why we say the Eucharistic prayer beforehand).

At the most basic, Luther emphasized that the critical point of Communion is the words given for you and shed for you. These words remind us that Christ was born, lived, died and rose from the dead for each and every one of us; that His presence with us may never end.

The Lutheran perspective on Communion is unique. We believe that Jesus is present in Communion when we partake of it – that is when we eat and drink. This differs from the Roman Catholic Church that proclaims that the bread is 100% the body of Christ when the words of Institution are spoken and denominations such as the Methodists that view Communion as a purely symbolic act.

For us, it is the meal of salvation, the meal of forgiveness. We give thanks that Emily, Lindsey and Gio will be joining us for their First Communion on May 4th.



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!

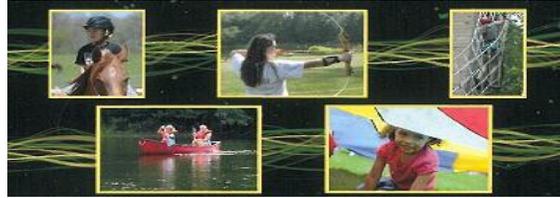


Join us for a day of FUN! – Saturday, May 10, 2014

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



Calendar Tea

Saturday, May 17, 2014

At Noon

Tickets: \$12

Ladies -- Our annual calendar tea will be held on **Saturday, May 17 at Noon** here at St. John's. **Tickets are \$12 each.** To purchase a ticket please see Erin Weaver. Please join us for an afternoon of entertainment, great food and good conversation. Feel free to invite your friends!



Gardening Help Needed May 18

We are looking for a few people with green thumbs to help beautify and brighten the outside of our church. We will fill the flower beds and planters with God's glorious flowers! Please bring your gardening gloves, hand tools and a few sun-loving annuals to help. Light refreshments and snacks will be served between services.



May 18 – Pizza Party and Golf

After the late service on May 18, we will have a pizza party and then go to Mars-Bethel Golf Course (next to Mars High School) about 1pm. Miniature golf, driving range and Par 3 course all available! Enjoy a fun time with your brothers and sisters of St. John. All are invited!

6th Annual Mars Band on the Run
5k, 10k, & 1k Children's Fun Run
May 24, 2014
8:55am

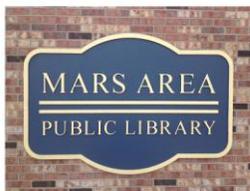


Presented by Mars Area Band Boosters Inc. and benefits the Mars High School Marching Band.

Register online at www.marsband5k.com.

LIFE – Butler County

LIFE serves low income elders in their own homes. Are you in need of help or know someone who could use help? LIFE Butler County program, a partnership of Lutheran Senior Life and Butler Health System, is a comprehensive health care and supportive services program designed to enhance the ability of frail, low income, older adults to live safely and independently in their homes. Based on need, LIFE can provide primary and specialty care, rehabilitation, adult day care, transportation, medications, medical equipment, home care and much more, all **at no cost** to the individual or their family. To enroll, the person must be 55 years of age or older and meet certain medical and financial requirements. For more information, call (724) 287-5433 or www.lutheranseniorlife.org/LIFE.



Library Day at Mars Area Public Library
107 Grand Ave., Mars

Saturday, May 17, 2014
10:00 am to 3:00 pm

Fun & Food All Day!

To celebrate Library Day Mars Library will be hosting a model train display, children's story time, petting zoo, information about historical Mars, and how to use a telescope. Join us and learn what your library has to offer! For more information, go to www.marslibrary.org.

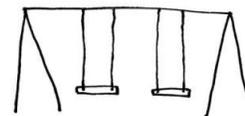


To everyone who helped bake or donated goodies for Meals on Wheels. Margaret from Meals on Wheels was very excited to receive all of the fun stuff that was donated. St. John has a lot of creative and talented people and the items donated are sure to put a smile on the faces of the recipient's. Sometimes it is the littlest things that make the biggest impact on one's day.

**THANK YOU
VERY MUCH**



It's May....



don't forget to play

Sunday School Announcement

Our last day of Sunday school for 2014 will be Sunday May 18th. Less than a month away! Is it me, or is this year FLYING by?! In continuation of the wonderful tradition started many years ago, our Sunday School class will be planting flowers outside on this day. Please make sure your little ones are properly dressed to do a little digging in the dirt and if they want to bring gardening tools that would be fine, if not, no worries.

To that end, we are putting a call-out for help supplying flowers to plant on this day. If you are interested, you can bring a flat(s) with you on Sunday May 18th. Or you can purchase them ahead of time and deliver to the church, or simply give me a monetary donation and I will purchase some lovely flowers for the occasion.

Finally, since this is the last newsletter before the summer vacation, I would like to take a moment to personally and publicly thank each of our Sunday School Teachers. Sally Foster and Kim Richards who helped earlier this year; Nick Brower, Denise Hager, and Katie Niklewicz who stepped up when the need arose; and, of course, Bonnie Bates and Christine Dishong who I continue to have much to learn from. Please join me in thanking them for their dedication and service this school year and hopefully next.

Peace in Christ.
Keith Cardinal

Father Forgets

by W. Livingston Larned

Listen, son. I am saying this as you lie asleep, one little paw crumpled under your cheek and the blond curls stickily wet on your damp forehead. I have stolen into your room alone. Just a few minutes ago, as I sat reading my paper in the library, a stifling wave of remorse swept over me. Guiltily I came to your bedside.

There are things I was thinking, son: I had been cross to you. I scolded you as you were dressing for school because you gave your face merely a dab with a towel. I took you to task for not cleaning your shoes. I called out angrily when you threw some of your things on the floor.

At breakfast I found fault, too. You spilled things. You gulped down your food. You put your elbows on the table. You spread butter too thick on your bread. And as you started off to play and I made for my train, you turned and waved a hand and called, "Goodbye, Daddy!" and I frowned, and said in reply, "Hold your shoulders back!"

Then it began all over again in the late afternoon. As I came up the road, I spied you, down on your knees, playing marbles. There were holes in your stockings. I humiliated you before you boyfriends by marching you ahead of me to the house. Stockings were expensive - and if you had to buy them you would be more careful! Imagine that, son, from a father!

Do you remember, later, when I was reading in the library, how you came in timidly, with a sort of hurt look in your eyes? When I glanced up over my paper, impatient at the interruption, you hesitated at the door. "What is it you want?" I snapped.

You said nothing, but ran across in one tempestuous plunge, and threw your arms around my neck and kissed me, and your small arms tightened with an affection that God had set blooming in your heart and which even neglect could not wither. And then you were gone, pattering up the stairs.

Well, son, it was shortly afterwards that my paper slipped from my hands and a terrible sickening fear came over me. What has habit been doing to me? The habit of finding fault, of reprimanding - this was my reward to you for being a boy. It was not that I did not love you; it was that I expected too much of youth. I was measuring you by the yardstick of my own years.

And there was so much that was good and fine and true in your character. The little heart of you was as big as the dawn itself over the wide hills. This was shown by your spontaneous impulse to rush in and kiss me good night. Nothing else matters tonight, son. I have come to your bedside in the darkness, and I have knelt there, ashamed!

It is a feeble atonement; I know you would not understand these things if I told them to you during your waking hours. But tomorrow I will be a real daddy! I will chum with you, and suffer when you suffer, and laugh when you laugh. I will bite my tongue when impatient words come. I will keep saying as if it were a ritual: "He is nothing but a boy - a little boy!"

I am afraid I have visualized you as a man. Yet as I see you now, son, crumpled and weary in your cot, I see that you are still a baby. Yesterday you were in your mother's arms, your head on her shoulder. I have asked too much, too much.

Instead of condemning people, let's try to understand them. Let's try to figure out why they do what they do. That's a lot more profitable and intriguing than criticism; and it breeds sympathy, tolerance and kindness. "To know all is to forgive all."

As Dr. Johnson said: "God himself, sir, does not propose to judge a man until the end of his days".

Why should you and I?

Don't Criticize, Condemn or Complain

Brothers and Sisters,

I received this message from a friend at work. It was obviously written in a different time and place, but it took my breath away. I freely admit I had tears running down my face when I finished reading it. I forwarded it to a few colleagues, one of whom could not finish it – he sent it home to read later that evening. One gentleman, with a boy close in age to Dominic, openly admitted weeping in his son's bed because of how hard he is on his boy.

We could all learn a lesson from Mr. Livingston Larned. You see, if you replace the word 'stockings' with 'jeans', and bring the text up to 21st century standards, this could be me writing about my experiences with Madison and Dominic. (Blessedly, Abigail is too young for me to have such high expectations). I'd be willing to bet some of you see yourselves in this situation, much as I do. I have made a pledge to try to remember that my children are just that – children. They are not adults and should not be treated as such. This does not mean I am throwing discipline out the window. It simply means when I see Dominic run down the hallway in his brand new jeans yelling, "Daddy! Watch this!" as he transforms into a knee-slide into the couch (thus wearing holes in the knees of his new jeans) that I focus more on the joy of him being 7 years old and less worrying about making those new jeans last more than a few days. For you see, I still maintain that God blesses children with a blissfully wonderful joy for life. I can LEARN from my children! I can learn what it means to simply enjoy life without worrying about money, bills, keeping the grass cut, keeping the cars clean, or any other countless bothers of life. Though these things need to be done and are important, I need to remember to ultimately trust in God and He will provide! My children are blessings from God Almighty. I need to realize He is trying to teach me through them!

Keith Cardinal

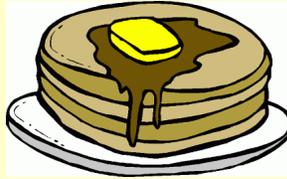


MAY BIRTHDAYS

- 5/05 Nick Brower
- 5/07 Jill Schuster
- 5/07 Jessica Ward
- 5/08 Amy Werner
- 5/08 Erin Weaver
- 5/11 Ruth Ann Tully
- 5/14 Valerie Cardinal
- 5/18 John Tully
- 5/23 Steve Schnelle
- 5/25 Andrew Schnelle
- 5/28 Janmarie Leikauf
- 5/30 Lee Schriver
- 5/31 Grace Kratz
- 5/31 Carolyn Jarrett

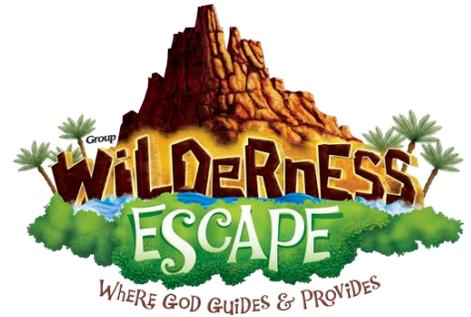
First Breakfast – May 4 @ 9:15 a.m.

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!



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.



Vacation Bible School July 7-11 6:00 pm

Mark your calendars now to enroll your child for the Group Wilderness Escape at VBS! More details in next month's Newsletter.



Theology on Tap

Third Wednesday of the Month 8:00 pm – May 21

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.

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>



**June 8 – Confirmation
July 7-11 – VBS – Group
Wilderness Escape**

**Worship time will change at the
end of May to one service on
Sundays at 9:00 am.**

Worship Helpers for May

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

Ushers

8:00 am

10:30 am

Jarrett

Assisting Ministers

8:00 am

Matt Claus

10:30 am

Yvonne Thickey

May Newsletter

Address service requested

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MARS, PA 16046