

September
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.

Individual Highlights:

Sisters & Brothers in Christ	1
Events/Invitation	2, 3
Letter/Sunday School	4
Birthdays, etc.	5, 6

St. John Lutheran Church <http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org>

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Mars PA 16046

Pastor Mark's email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Until we meet again.

Christians never say goodbye. We say until we meet again. God's promise is that we will be rejoined with all the saints who have gone before us, that we will celebrate with the Lamb at the feast that has no end. So whatever happens – wherever we live, whenever we join the church triumphant, whatever life brings, nothing shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Knowing that God's love joins us together, that the Holy Spirit makes us all one eases the sorrow in moving. Moreover knowing that I leave St. John in the great and competent hands of God – for we are doing God's work with our hands here at St. John and throughout the ELCA – makes packing easier. Knowing that the Holy Spirit has richly blessed St. John with a strong council, with dedicated Sunday School teachers, a great organist and secretary – with dedicated leaders working in social ministry means that St. John is in good shape.

I don't know what the future holds – only God alone does – but I do know that the triune God, Father, Son and Spirit has us in his care and keeping. I am excited to begin a new life with Vanessa, to celebrate the gift of God's love in our lives. I am also excited about where God will take St. John, about the ways that the Holy Spirit flows through this place.

The one who makes all things new, who gives water from the river of life is alive here. He has you in his care and keeping. He will watch over St. John, he will continue to guide and bless you. New things are happening here, for you are God's and he has claimed you.

Sisters and brothers, I will miss you, I will continue to hold you in prayer and think of you. I will do so confident that God who made and formed you will watch over you.

Peace in Christ,
Pastor Mark Bringman

Our mailing address will be 2670 Collingwood St. SE, Albany OR 97322

The church office will be closed on Monday, September 2 for the Labor Day holiday and on Friday, September 19.



QUILTING FOR LUTHERAN WORLD RELIEF

We hope you have enjoyed the beautiful quilts that have been on display in our worship space. We have been using one of the green ones on the altar, a reflection of the care and love that Cindy Knauff, Sally Foster, Martha Ward, Winnie Stefko, Sandy Hill and others have given. St John's can be quite proud of our continuing contribution of lovely quilts to Lutheran World Relief.

In order to continue, supplies that you may have at home are needed. When making a quilt, it's like making a sandwich. The quilt top and backing are the bread and the batting is the peanut butter and jelly. Gently worn flat sheets of any size and color can be used as backing; blankets, cotton sheet blankets, and fleece blankets all make great batting and are warm and easy to tie. Also in need of embroidery thread (any color) to tie the quilts to hold the layers together.

If you have any of these things that can be donated, or find them at yard sales, flea markets, etc., please think of us. Cotton fabric scraps can become a work of art! You may also donate your time. If you can tie a knot, you can help. The Quilting Group meets on the second Monday of each month at 6 pm in the church hall.



Chair Aerobics

September 2 – November 20
Tuesdays and Thursdays
6:30-7:30 p.m.

All ages welcome!
 Improve strength, flexibility,
 circulation, balance, boost your mood
 and improve your overall health.

Get up – get stretching and join us!

Brown Bag Bible Study Mondays – Noon till 1:30 pm

Note: No Bible Study on Labor Day – September 2.

We are now reading through St. Paul's letter to the Romans. All you need is a willing spirit (though you may wish to bring your own Bible.)

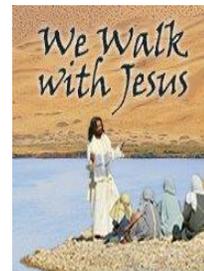


Ladies Book Study September 18 7:00 pm

Please read the assigned chapter prior to the meeting.



Walk to Tanzania



Our journey of 4,600 miles has come to a close. Many thanks to all who participated. Please remember to return your barns so that we may tally the funds to be donated to ELCA World Hunger – God's Global Barnyard.



Wedding Invitation – September 27, 2014 at 2:00 pm

Pastor Mark Bringman and Dr. Vanessa Papalazaros are getting married on September 27 at 2:00 pm at St. John Lutheran Church. We are very happy that God has put us in each other's lives, excited for His plans for us, but saddened to be moving away from friends, family and St. John.

We would love to have you join us as our love is blessed in worship, as Christ's name is proclaimed and as vows are made.*

Following the worship service, there will be a brief coffee and cookie reception (the cookie table being the best Pittsburgh wedding tradition). We hope you can join us for our wedding and reception at St. John.

*Marriage vows, like baptismal vows contain multiple promises – the promises from husband to wife, the promises of wife to husband, and the promises of the community to support and uphold the couple. In many ways, this promise given by family and friends is as important as those the groom and bride make – for without a community of support, no marriage can thrive. The most important vow is the one made by God – the continuance of the vow given to all of us in our baptism, that we are his and nothing can separate us from his love.

Rally Day – September 7

We will have services at 8:00 am and 10:30 am on this day. In between we will have Sunday School, ice cream, and the start to a great year of teaching the young among us about God's love.

Pastor Storm Preaching on September 7

Pastor Mark will not be leading worship on September 7. Pastor Storm will be here to preach and lead worship. We will also have our installation of Sunday School teachers and students on that day.

Holy Cross Day – September 14

September 14 is the festival of the Holy Cross – a reminder that the cross is at the center of human life, a reminder that God can take the most grim of instruments, two rough pieces of wood, and transform them from an implement of torture into a reminder of the promise.

The new liturgical practice is on festivals related to apostles and on Holy Cross day we use red as a reminder of the power of the Holy Spirit flowing into us all and making us one. We will be using new red vestments on that day.

Thank You to The Strabel's!

Thank you to Clarence, Marlene and Cliff Strabel for the beautiful worship vestments – red and purple – donated in loving memory of Wally Strabel, son and brother. We will be using these vestments for the first time on September 14 and dedicating them on that day.

Pastor Mark's Last Sunday – September 21

September 21 will be Pastor Mark's last Sunday at St. John Lutheran Church. We will have one service at 10:00 am on that day and having a picnic meal following the service. We hope you can join us and say goodbye.



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

May this message find you well and joyful in the promise of salvation freely given to us through the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ! I want to start our discussion by sharing with you some of my favorite verses in the Bible. This comes from Philippians Ch. 2:

- Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;⁷ rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant, being made in human likeness.⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

So let me share a few thoughts. In verse 7, Paul states that Christ “...made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant.....” Some translations use the term “bond servant.” My understanding is the true meaning of this term is best translated as “slave!” Think of that for a moment.....Christ became a SLAVE to God the Father and HIS will. And because Christ was ABSOLUTELY obedient, at the very mention of His name, EVERY knee will bow in heaven and on Earth and under the earth! Let me tell you that my knee, indeed, bows when I hear the name Jesus! I can't sing a song or even type this message without tearing-up. I truly look forward to the day when I can bow before my Lord and Savior. I doubt I will even be able to muster the words “thank you”, so I am just glad that Christ will already know that my heart and soul ache for Him! My desire is that you too find these verses as inspirational as I do!

Since I was born again only 11 short years ago, I have stumbled around trying my best to be a slave of Christ. Admittedly, I have MUCH room for improvement, but I continue to get just a little bit better every day. I commit to you, my brothers and sisters, that I will do my best to exemplify the values Paul espouses in the first half of the passage above as we as a congregation move towards the next chapter in our church family. I want to thank Pastor Mark for his leadership and guidance these last half-dozen years and I wish him and Vanessa all the best as they themselves start a new chapter in their lives. I pray God continues to bless Pastor Mark in his stewardship of whatever calling he finds himself in next. I also pray that God bless Vanessa and her hands as a surgeon, for as with most doctors, she is doing powerfully important work for God.

And finally, it is that time of year again where we welcome back our little ones for another year in Sunday School. This year, as in the past, we kick-off our school year with our ice cream social on Sunday, September 7th. We welcome EVERYONE from youngest to oldest and everyone in between to come enjoy ice cream and fellowship at 9:00am.

I am excited to report that our average attendance year-over-year grew by roughly 50%! So much so, in fact, that we needed to split the class into distinct age brackets halfway thru the year. This year, we will continue to offer a Pre-K thru K class and a second grade thru fifth grade class. We will provide the first graders the flexibility to attend either class depending on their individual comfort level. A particular point of interest is the decision to move back to the SPARK curriculum. Though our curriculum for the 2013/2014 school year offered a fresh look at alternatives available, the teachers and I decided SPARK still exemplifies the very best option for helping you – the parents – teach the Word of God to our little ones.

I close by asking you to reread the above verses from Philippians and pray over its message. I also ask that, should you find the Spirit guiding you, that you volunteer your time and talents as a Sunday School teacher. This year, the request is especially urgent. One of the pillars of our Christian education staff has graciously and humbly submitted herself to taking over the Confirmation class once Pastor Mark gives us his final blessings as the Pastor of St. John Lutheran Church. There are precious few people I feel more confident in teaching the advanced concepts of the Bible required for a Confirmation class than Christine Dishong. I continue to look to Christine to provide insight into scripture where I myself struggle. We are truly blessed to have her fill the role to teach our confirmands. The obvious implication, of course, is that she must step down from teaching Sunday School on a regular basis. So though we have a great group of teachers remaining, it does present us a strenuous situation as far as staffing is concerned. So again, I ask each of you to prayerfully look into your hearts and contact me if the Spirit is guiding you to be a slave to Christ by helping teach our little ones. I can be reached by phone (724-504-3693), e-mail (kvcardinal@yahoo.com), or in person by stopping by at the back left-hand side of the church on any given Sunday.

May the Peace of Christ touch your hearts. May God's love for you make your soul sing. And may the Holy Spirit continue to give you the strength, courage, and guidance to carry out His will!

Keith Cardinal



September Birthdays

- 9/02 Jacqueline Black
- 9/04 Larry Werner
- 9/06 Nick Claus
- 9/09 Sally Foster
- 9/09 Angelina Passione
- 9/10 Winifred Stefko
- 9/13 Clarence Strabel
- 9/15 Jamie Weaver
- 9/17 Kelly Greb
- 9/18 Mary Waibel
- 9/18 Joshua Zimmerman
- 9/20 Ardyce Rigg
- 9/27 Roy Werner
- 9/27 Susan Fritz
- 9/29 Danielle Dishong
- 9/30 Matt Claus

Rally Day Ice Cream Social September 7 @ 9:00 am



We invite the congregation to join us for an ice cream social as we begin a new year of Sunday School classes. All are welcome!

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.

VNA Hospice Volunteer Program

VNA Hospice volunteers are needed in the area. If you are able to assist in any way with this program, please contact Tammie Cramer at www.vna.com or via phone at 724-431-3502. Free training is provided for potential volunteers.

Mary's Annual Applefest October 4



St. John's will be making haluski this year. Donations of noodles would be greatly appreciated. **We will be preparing food on Oct. 3.**

In addition to the haluski, we would like to have items for a bake sale. If you are inclined to be "Betty Crocker" and would like to donate a baked item for us to sell or are willing to assist in any way, please contact Kim Richards.

Ice Bucket Challenge

The recent increase in giving to the ALS foundation with the ice bucket challenge is a great thing. It is a reminder of how many needs there are both nationally and internationally.

I would encourage you to give to groups like ALS, the American Heart Association, UNICEF, LWR, NIH and others (this is just a partial list). There are many worthy charities to help with the ill.

Jesus healed the sick as a reminder of the kingdom of God come near. How can you help the sick amongst us?



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.



September 27 – Pastor Mark’s wedding

October 3 – Bake for Applefest

October 4 – Mars Applefest

Worship Helpers for September

Please look in the greeting area for worship helper sign-up sheets for acolyte, lectors, usher, or communion assistant for any Sunday in September.

Ushers

8:00 am
10:30 am

Assisting Minister

8:00 am Laurie Passione
10:30 am Martha Ward

We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org>

September Newsletter

Address service requested

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