

December
2015

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.

St. John Lutheran Church <http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org>
PO Box 411 (724) 625-1830
420 Beaver Street Office email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Mars, PA 16046 Pastor Bob's email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org

Dear friends in Christ,

We begin the season of Advent and prepare for the coming of Christ, the "Prince of Peace" into our midst. It is a time to reflect on all the ways that Jesus, the One who was, is, and shall be, comes and calls us to himself. But as Advent dawns this year I am reminded of the verse in Jeremiah where the people are saying, "peace, peace but there is no peace". (Jer. 6:14) As we reel and react to the attacks in Paris on November 13, I see many people reacting in **fear**, not in faithful deliberation.

Someone once said that the opposite of Peace is not War, but Fear. There cannot be peace when we are afraid. Science fiction author Frank Herbert I believe accurately described fear when he wrote, "Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration." (Dune, 1965). We do not think clearly when directed by fear, it propels us down paths we may not take if we pause for prayer and reflection on who and whose we are. Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, in a statement in response to reaction in the United States to the attacks commented, "We Christians and all others of good will cannot let fear rule the day. Fear paralyzes, divides people, fosters distrust and clouds judgments."

In Advent, as we turn to all the ways God in Christ breaks in among us, I am reminded of the prophet Isaiah describing the coming of God's reign:

"A spirit from on high is poured out on us... Then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever." (Isaiah 32:15a, 16-17)

It is the description of the work of the Holy Spirit as justice and righteousness is poured out for all, and the result will be peace -- there will be no place for fear, only trust. As we await the fullness of the kingdom of God, how do we live as the kingdom of God is breaking in upon us today? As those born again of water and the Spirit in the font, how do we strive for true righteousness and justice in the world now, rather than be paralyzed by fear?

As so many think this time of year about the coming of baby Jesus, I am thinking on the crucified and risen Jesus who comes to the disciples fearfully hiding and tells them, "*Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you.*" When he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "*Receive the Holy Spirit.*" (John 20:21-22) Like those first disciples, we too are sent in the peace of Christ with the Holy Spirit to bear witness to the love of God. We cannot let fear stop us, but instead live in and into the peace Jesus gives us in the midst of difficult times.

May the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus this Advent, Christmas, and always.

Pastor Bob Zimmerman



Bible Studies

Evening Bible Study will resume on Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 7:00 pm at the parsonage. We will continue these evening studies through December 23 for this month.

Brown Bag Bible Study will also continue through December 23 on Wednesdays at Noon.

No Bible Studies on Wednesday, December 30.

Adult Sunday School Class

We will meet each Sunday between worship services in the Pastor's Study. For additional information, please speak to Pastor Bob.

Vestry Election – Sunday, December 6

The election of the 2016 members of Vestry will be held *following each worship on Sunday, December 6, 2015*. Please plan to remain for a few minutes after worship on that day. There will also be a fellowship breakfast between services.

Dawned has the Day *A Service of Lessons & Carols for Advent*

Join us for readings and music celebrating the season of Advent, as we journey from darkness into light. The service will feature choral music, instrumental music for organ and flute, and congregational song.

Sunday, December 13 at 4:30pm



December 24 & 25 Worship Services

Christmas Eve – Services at 3:00 pm and 7:30 pm.
Christmas Day there will be one service at 10:00 am.

December 24 & 25 – Church Office Closed



Church Decorating Sunday, December 20 after late service

If you are able to help to decorate the church for Christmas, please stay after the late service. Your help will be greatly appreciated.

Christmas Holiday – The church office will be closed on December 24 & 25 for Christmas.

Youth Group and Interested Adults

Day of Service - Packers at World Vision in Sewickley

9:00-Noon, Saturday December 5th

We will leave the Church parking lot at 8:30 A.M.



World Vision®

Building a better world for children

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the root causes of poverty and injustice.

Meals on Wheels Baking

December 5 – 10 am

Group baking is planned for **Saturday, December 5 at 10am** at St. John's for all who wish to help. Roughly 1,000 desserts are needed for the month. Assistance is needed all day to bake, frost, and package items. Donations are also needed (jimmies, Hershey kisses, nuts, M&Ms, etc.).

Please contact Kim Richards at 724-316-2263 or kimrich03@consolidated.net if you are able to help or donate items. Deliveries to MOW will be weekly and home-baked items may be placed in the refrigerator and marked as MOW.



Angel Tree

During this holiday season, we will be sponsoring an Angel Tree for the residents at Glade Run Lutheran Services in Zelienople. Do not wrap the gifts. Please put them in a gift bag with the tag attached to the outside. There is a list of gift guidelines. **Please return your gift by Sunday, December 6.**

Fellowship Breakfast

Sunday, December 6

Join us between services for good food, fellowship and fun!

Quilting Group

December 14 – 6:00 pm



If you already know how to quilt, or would like to learn, join us as we make more quilts to be distributed to LWR and other worthy causes.

Ladies Book Group

December 16 – 7:00 pm

Join us as we continue to read "What's So Amazing About Grace" by Phillip Yancey.

We are also collecting socks, underwear and toiletries for Glade Run Lutheran Services. If you purchase these, place them in the appropriate bins in the greeting area. Socks and underwear need to be adult sizes. The children prefer bikini or low-ride for girls and boxers or boxer briefs for boys. They prefer low-cut or no-show socks.

Hopefully you can find it in your heart this holiday season to help those who are less fortunate. Thank you for your participation, the kids will really appreciate it. If you have any questions, please contact Denise Hager.



DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- 12/01 Dominic Cardinal
- 12/02 Cindy Wills
- 12/04 Tim Wolfe, Jr.
- 12/10 Wanda Weidner
- 12/10 Aimee Whitehouse
- 12/11 Serafina Julio
- 12/12 Beth McElhinny
- 12/13 Reed McDonough
- 12/18 Tess Bielo
- 12/24 Christine Dishong
- 12/25 Jim Hager



January 3 – Fellowship Breakfast
January 16 – Family Bingo

Communion Bread Schedule

December – Denise Hager
January – Missy Kramer



Worship Helpers for December

Please check the bulletin board in the greeting area for worship helper sign-up sheets for acolyte, lectors, usher, or communion assistant for any Sunday in December.

Usher

8:00 am	Bob Dishong
10:30 am	Carolyn Jarrett

Assisting Minister

8:00 am	Christine Dishong
10:30 am	Sally Foster

Address service requested

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