

March
2017

St. John Lutheran Church

St. John Lutheran Church
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Mars, PA 16046

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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.

Dear friends in Christ,

We have enjoyed a long Epiphany season this year, but now at the beginning of March, Lent is upon us. It is an intentional time of self-examination and reflection as we ready ourselves for Holy week and Easter. In the ancient church it was a time of preparation for Baptism, which makes it a perfect time to reflect on the promises and calling of our own baptism as we focus on our relationship with God and others.

I am reminded of promises parents make at the baptism of their children that are reaffirmed at confirmation, that we shall, "proclaim Christ through word and deed, care for others and the world God made, and work for justice and peace." Recently in Bible Study we were looking at the Ten Commandments and I noticed you can find this emphasis lived out in Luther's explanation of the fifth commandment (You shall not murder) where he writes, "we neither endanger nor harm the lives of our neighbors, but instead help and support them in all of life's needs."

This year during Lent we will be participating in "40 Days of Giving" as special opportunity to learn about and serve the needs of our neighbors on issues of justice, hunger and sustainability both in the United States and abroad. Elsewhere in this newsletter are details about this emphasis, which will connect Sunday worship with our Wednesday Lenten soup supper study and offer an opportunity for the tradition Lenten practice of almsgiving, as we participate in a month long special offering toward ELCA World Hunger.

This is a busy time in the life of St. John: we have the Spaghetti Dinner coming up on March 11, there are plans to begin a new monthly kid's program, we have the Easter Surprise outreach event on April 8th and the celebrations of Holy Week. In the midst of all this, may we take the time to rest and prayerfully reflect in this Lenten season on why we do all that we do: the power of God's love through Jesus the Christ, and our calling to share that love.

Let us pray,

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ Amen.
(prayer of the day for the second Sunday in Lent)

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Bob Zimmerman

ELCA World Hunger's
40 DAYS of Giving

Lent is traditionally a time of fasting. Through the prophet Isaiah, God reveals to us the depth and breadth of authentic fasting in the alternate reading for Ash Wednesday: "Is not this the fast I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke?" (Isaiah 58:6).

This Lent we will participate in the World Hunger emphasis **40 days of Giving**, a special opportunity to lift up the church's hunger and poverty ministry. The goal is to raise \$1 million from across the ELCA during Lent to help give our brothers and sisters around the world opportunities to earn a fair, sustainable living with dignity. Information will be shared during worship and you will have the opportunity to support this ministry with your special offerings. In addition, we will be collecting loose change in the greeting area all during Lent, and the children will each receive special banks to collect their own offering.



**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

Wednesday, **March 1 is Ash Wednesday**. We will have Holy Communion and Distribution of Ashes at **Noon and at 7:00 pm**.



Soup Suppers and Study

On Wednesday evenings **March 8, 15, 22, 29, and April 5**, join us as at 6:00 pm as we gather to set up and have fellowship before a soup supper at 6:30 pm.

The meal will be followed by a devotional study that will help us explore how our Lutheran faith shapes our perspective and role in the economy. Each of the five weeks we will look at on key aspect of the economy and explore questions related to economic justice and faith.

Purple Pancake Breakfast Sunday, March 5



Join us for our traditional Purple Pancake Breakfast for the beginning of Lent. This will be held between services on March 5.

If you wish, you may wear purple to be even more festive!



Scripture calls the church to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and care for the sick as Jesus says, "Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." (Matthew 25:31-46) and describes how the early church cared for one another and "distributed to each as any had need." (Act 2:45), so that there was not a needy person among them. (Acts 4:35) It is consistent with our call to be the people of God in the place to create a means that St. John can assist

those in our congregation and community that are in need. Local agencies are very effective at helping in certain circumstances but not all, and it seems appropriate to have a mechanism to do that when other avenues fail.

Last fall the congregation council approved establishing a special fund with its own bank account and specific guidelines to serve as a pastor's discretionary fund called the "**Good Samaritan Fund**" for those in need. The account was established in January. The fund will be sustained by special designated giving specifically to the fund. No general funds from the congregation will be used, so it is dependent on your needed special contributions.

This special fund shall provide an immediate means to assist financially or provide resources while maintaining essential confidentiality for those in need. Only the pastor and treasurer of the congregation will know the recipient of assistance.

If you wish to give an offering to help establish this fund giving, please designate that on the memo line of a check.



SPAGHETTI DINNER

Saturday, March 11, 2017

5:00 – 7:00 pm

St. John Lutheran Church

420 Beaver Street

Mars, PA

Price: Adults - \$8 Children - \$5 (Age 6-13)

Children Age 5 & under - FREE

Take-out available

Youth Group News

March 4 – Senior Bowling @ SJLC – 1:45 pm
March 5 – Food, Fun & Faith – following worship

Bible Study Wednesdays – Noon

Bring your lunch and your bible and join us for bible study each Wednesday at noon. All are welcome! ***Please note that bible study on Ash Wednesday, March 1, will be after the noon service.***

Quilting Group March 13 – 6:30 pm

Our group meets on the second Tuesday of each month. If you have an interest in quilting or would just like to learn, please join us!

Ladies Book Group March 29 – After Lenten Supper & Devotions

Come and enjoy our discussion. New members are always welcome! If you have any questions, see Denise Hager or Sally Foster



Cards Anyone?

Are there any card lovers at St. John? Come join us for a card party at the Knauff's home (464 Browns Hill Road, Valencia) on ***April 22 at 6:00 pm.***

We'll have a light supper, then play a variety of card games – 500, Spades, Euchre, Hearts, Rummy, Sequence...you choose!

Please RSVP by April 16. There is a sign-up sheet in the greeting area of church or call 724-504-7871.



The Great Surprise.....Jesus is Alive

Saturday – April 8, 2017

10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Here is another opportunity for St. John to reach out to not only our families but those of the surrounding community. Parents and children enjoy activities and learn together and it all focuses on Jesus. There are seven stations for families to visit and through these activities discover that Jesus is Alive.

Families are warmly welcomed and given sacks to collect activity station goodies.

At the amazing Animation Station everyone hears the Easter story. At the Confounding Creation station, they will make colorful bouncing balls, a reminder of the Resurrection. Joining hands at the extraordinary Energy station causes energy sticks to spring to life. Guess what floats or what sinks and get a prize, a Bible Tag with a Jesus centered Bible verse.

Silly props make for memorable family “fotos”. Enjoy a snack and interact with other families. At the Marvelous Mirascope small things float in the air. Everything points to the ultimate Easter truth: Jesus is alive.

Hold the Date!



April 2 – Youth Group @ 11:45 am
 April 9 – Confirmation Class
 April 21-23 – Youthfest @ Lutherlyn
 April 29 – Ladies Tea

MARCH BIRTHDAYS

03/01 Robert Zimmerman
 03/01 William Greb
 03/05 Jim Ward
 03/11 Janet Ford
 03/11 Tatiana Brower
 03/13 Ellen Hrach
 03/22 Patricia Smith
 03/24 Sydney Brower
 03/24 Kaylee Parr

Communion Bread Schedule

March – Carolyn Zimmerman
 April - Kim Richards
Counters for March
 Martha Ward & Ruth Ann Tully



03/26 – Jim & Martha Ward - 51years

MARCH

Worship Helpers

Please check the bulletin board in the greeting area for the new worship helper sign-up sheet for all worship helpers for each Sunday for the remainder of the year.

Assisting Ministers

8:00 am Matt Claus
 10:30 am

Ushers

8:00 am Bob Davidson
 10:30 am Jim Ward

Communion Assistants

8:00 am
 10:30 am

March Newsletter

Address service requested

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