

February
2019

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
PO Box 411
420 Beaver Street
Mars, PA 16046

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Church Office: (724) 625-1830
Office email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Pastor Bob's email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org
Pastor's Cell #: 412-585-1628

Dear friends in Christ,

This year we have a longer season of Epiphany since Lent does not begin until March 6th. A few more weeks to focus on the emphasis of the season: the revealing of who exactly Jesus the Christ is, and what that means for humanity and the world. Our Epiphany lectionary readings began with his baptism by John and will conclude with the transfiguration of Jesus on the mountain, revealing his glory- and both events accompanied by the heavenly voice proclaiming, "This is my Son!" In between these bookends we hear Jesus' mission to reveal God's abundant grace; to raise up the lost and least among all people; that the poor, the hungry and the outcast are blessed; the calling believers to leave stuff behind and follow; to love others and to show mercy. (John 1, Luke 4-6)

These texts from the gospels are reminders that the focus of all we do as the church must remain centered in Jesus, the very reason the church is here, and reminders of the work of Christ we have been called to in our baptism. The first line of our mission statement (printed each month on the left margin of this page) centers why we are here, "St. John is a living witness to the love of God as shown in Jesus Christ." As the church we have the opportunity to model what it looks like to live in this abundant grace and have all we do point to the incredible love and compassionate mercy of God to the community around us.

At our annual meeting we will receive the final recommendations of our Mission Planning Task Force. Based on prayer, study, conversation and your input, there has been developed a three year plan to implement specific actions or activities that will help us be that witness to the love of God in Christ by together moving closer to God, moving closer to each other, and moving closer to our community. None of the planned events are difficult or earth shattering. There are new opportunities for worship, to build relationships and service to others. At the center of all these plans is the intent to witness in new ways to the Christ revealed over these weeks of Epiphany.

May the Christ revealed to us and among us always be at the center of all we do, and through sharing his great love may we grow closer to God, one another and our neighbors.

In the light of Christ,

Pastor Bob Zimmerman

Annual Meeting – February 10, 2019

The annual meeting of St. John has been rescheduled due to inclement weather on the original date and will now be held on **February 10**, immediately following worship. We will have one worship service that day at 10:00 am. The agenda of the meeting includes receiving the annual report and voting on the 2019 congregational budget.

All Vestry Retreat February 9, 2019 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

Our All Vestry Retreat will be held on February 9, at St. John Specialty Care Center. All vestry members are encouraged to attend.

Morning Prayer, Brown Bag Lunch and Bible Study on Wednesdays in February

All are welcome! Morning Prayer begins at 11:30 am, Brown Bag Lunch (bring your own) at Noon, and Bible Study at 12:30 pm. See changes for Lent schedule.



Ash Wednesday Worship and Imposition of Ashes 12:00 Noon and 7:00 pm

On Wednesday, March 6, there will be a noontime spoken service of Confession and Imposition of Ashes.

A Soup Lunch and Bible Study will follow the brief service

At 7:00 pm there will be a service of Holy Communion with Imposition of Ashes.

Lenten Wednesday Afternoon Worship, Soup Lunch & Study Begins March 13, 2019

During Lent, there will be a weekly Noon time Worship that will begin at 12:00 noon with a simple soup lunch to follow. Those able to remain will have the opportunity to participate in a five-week study on our baptismal vocation as children of God, and the promises made in baptism.

Live Online Bible Study to be Offered



As part of our mission to grow closer to God, Pastor Zimmerman will be offering an interactive live online video bible study so that you can participate from the convenience and comfort of your home. A pilot study will be held on five Wednesday evenings during Lent, as we look at our baptismal vocation as children of God and the five promises made in baptism (in conjunction with the daytime Lenten study). The tentative time will be at 7:30 pm, beginning on March 13.

If you are interested in participating, please sign up on the sheet in the greeting area or email Pastor Zimmerman at pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org and you will be contacted about details. To be a part of the group, you will need to have an Internet connection and download some free software for a free app if you are using a phone or tablet.

Stewardship of loving relationships

Jesus said, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." – Mark 12:31b

Jesus said, "Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you." -- Matthew 5:43b

Red hearts, roses and chocolates are everywhere, so it must be February – the month of love! There's certainly nothing wrong with celebrating romance between you and a special someone, or love among family members, or best friends who are always there for one another.

But our inner-circle folks represent only a sliver of the people Jesus calls us to love. And let's face it: they're the easy ones to love. Jesus calls us to a higher plane of love; to love everyone. This means not just the people about whom we are ambivalent, but our actual enemies and those who persecute us.

Such love is a tall order, especially today, when hatred and demonization is rampant. Our political, media and social cultures encourage us to demean everybody with whom we disagree or who is different from us. Though it may be impossible to reach Jesus' ideal, as stewards and disciples of Jesus, we can do better.

- Turn from hate. It may be too much to love our enemies, but we can start by turning from hatred. When negative feelings arise, refuse to marinate in them. Pray for guidance and strength.

- Remember that loving your enemy doesn't mean approving of who they are, what they do, or letting them escape responsibility for their actions. It also does not mean you cannot protect yourself or others from harm.

- Imagine them as a broken, imperfect child of God (just like you!), who needs God's love and mercy.

- Pray for them. Ask God to lead them, guide them, fill their lives with healing. Ask God to give them the kind of loving heart that you are hoping to develop in yourself. If you do these things consistently, with God's help you will have transformed your heart, your life and our world.

--Rob Blezard

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Connections

Do you ever feel lonely or disconnected from everyone?

St. John would like to restart a program that we had years ago.

To participate, you need only to agree to make one phone call per week.

You would be partnered with another person from the congregation who also is looking for a friendly ear.

If you are interested, please call the church office 724-625-1830 and leave your name. We will connect you with a similarly minded person.



**Family Game Night and Potluck Dinner
Saturday, February 2 – 4:00 pm**

Join us for this fun family event. Bring a board game or puzzle and your favorite dish to share. All are welcome!

Ladies Book Group



Wednesday, February 6 & 27 – 3:00 pm

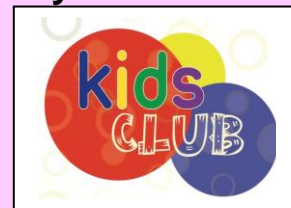
We are currently reading “In the Midst of Winter” by Isabel Allende.
The book club welcomes anyone who would like to join us in our discussions. We meet in the church hall.

No Quilting Group Meeting in February



♥ *Happy Valentines Day* ♥

**Kid’s Club
February 22 – 6:30-8:00 pm**



We will have music, stories, games, free play, a craft to take home and a snack. Come and join us! If you have any questions, please speak to Chuck Olescyski or Valerie Cardinal. This program at St. John is for kids age 4-10 (or if they attend Sunday School).



Saturday – February 2

Assist with Bowling League at St. John Specialty Care Center – meet in lobby at 1:45 pm.

The Second Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday.



February Birthdays

- 02/05 Emily Greb
- 02/05 Lindsey Greb
- 02/05 Herman Boehmig Jr.
- 02/11 Geneva Hackworth
- 02/20 Harry Cole
- 02/21 Laurie Passione
- 02/21 Keith Cardinal
- 02/23 Frieda Carbo
- 02/25 Suzanne Berol
- 02/27 Dorothy Delp

Upcoming Events
Feb. 9 – All Vestry Retreat
Feb. 10 – Annual Meeting
March 6 – Ash Wednesday
March 13 – Lent Worship/Soup Lunch
March 13 – Online Bible Study

Communion Bread Schedule

February – Karen Collins
March – Cindy Knauff

Counters for February

Karen Collins & Ruth Ann Tully

**February
Worship Helpers**

Assisting Minister

8:00 am Matt Claus
10:30 am Missy Kramer

Usher

8:00 am Larry Werner
10:30 am

Communion Assistants

8:00 am
10:30 am

February Newsletter

Address service requested

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