

November
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
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Mars, PA 16046

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Pastor Bob's email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org
Pastor's Cell #: 412-585-1628

Ministry Has a Face

Dear friends in Christ,

At the end of last year this congregation helped a refugee family from Nigeria. Over 20,000 people have died in Nigeria and more than 2 million have fled their homes because of famine and the violence, abductions, and conflict between ethnic groups. Escaping a dangerous and uncertain future this family fled their homeland and were resettled here in Pittsburgh.

Through the Mission Endowment and Outreach Fund, and your special offerings through the 2018 fourth quarter mission emphasis, we provided much needed basic household items like beds, mattresses, blankets and such. It was much appreciated by the family. In addition, a gift card for Wal-Mart was to be given to the family with the offering that remained. Recently Sally Foster and Cindy Knauff drove to Crafton to present the gift card and enough hand made quilts for the whole family, and got to meet the recipient of these gifts for the first time. It was a joy-filled encounter filled with smiles and hugs.

Sally and Cindy met Daini Olayinka Abosede who goes by Yinka. She has three boys and a girl who were in school when they visited. The daughter has received a scholarship to attend Vincentian Academy. This is the face of our mission.



We place our offering in the plate, our gifts in a bin, through a desire to help others.

Most of the time we do not see the faces of those we help. But know, just as the thankful face of Yinka greeted Sally and Cindy, each gift affects the life of a person with a face. So many faces receive your offering to the mission of the church. The faces of Sunday School children, children at Glade Run, those receiving backpacks in our neighborhoods, children in another hemisphere of the world, homebound seniors, missionaries and so many, many other faces.

Jesus said, "...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 25:40). In the faces those that receive our gifts we find the face of Christ.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Bob Zimmerman



**Celebration and Commitment Sunday
November 10 – One Service at 10:00 am
Luncheon to follow**



Don't forget to turn your clocks back this Saturday, November 2 before you go to bed. Worship services are at 8:00 am & 10:30 pm Sunday morning.

Morning Prayer

Wednesday Mornings at 11:30 am

We pray for those on our prayer list and any special intentions necessary. Even if you have not joined us in the past, or are unable to come weekly, please consider taking time to participate.

Wednesday Brown Bag Bible Study

Join us for fellowship and intriguing faith discussions!

All are welcome to join us for our Wednesday Bible Study sessions. We will begin with a brown bag lunch (bring your own) at noon and begin our study sessions at 12:30 pm.



**Confirmed in Christ
October 27, 2019 – 10:30 am Worship Service**

Madison Cardinal was confirmed and welcomed into the church at the 10:30 am service on Sunday, October 27.



Book of Remembrance

The Book of Remembrance is on the table in the greeting area. Please add the names of your deceased loved ones and we will remember them in prayer throughout the month of November.

Thanksgiving – Church Office Closed



The church office will be closed on November 28 & 29 to celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday. We hope you enjoy time with your family and friends and be thankful for your blessings.

**FIRST, WE GIVE OF OURSELVES:
Giving in Generosity
Celebration and Commitment Sunday – November 10**



How do you understand and live each day in God's abundance and generosity? How can you grow in your own generosity? What would that mean for you as disciple and growing steward? These are questions that have accompanied us in our stewardship journey, First, We Give of Ourselves: Giving in Generosity.

God's generosity lies at the core of our discussion. It is a generosity that is enveloped by grace and the gift of grace. God generosity is made known in the sacrificial giving of Jesus Christ, who died and rose again that we might live in the abundance of God's forgiveness, grace, and life giving love. **Giving in Generosity** is the delight of responding to God's generosity with open hearts, thankful lives, and a spirit of generosity in our own sharing of gifts.

There are two principles that lie at the core of our giving. The first is that our sharing of gifts, whatever they might be, is a joyful and faithful response to God's giving of Jesus Christ and the grace filled life that comes through Him. The other principle that underlies our giving is an intentional act of sharing gifts so the ministries of our congregation can remain bold and vibrant in sharing God's grace by what we do in Christ's name for our members and community.

Grow and Giving in Generosity

This fall, each one of our members is being invited to prayerfully consider how one can give in generosity. In your prayerful contemplation, you are invited to consider sharing a tithe (10% of one's income) as your thankful, joyful, and generous response to God's giving in Christ. If this response will involve growing over time, prayerfully consider growing your present giving by 20%. In other words, if you are presently giving \$50 per week, a 20% growth would bring your giving to \$60 per week. We are praying that the overall growth in giving this fall would be an increase of 15-20%. Just think of what we could do in proclaiming God's grace if we were blessed in this way!

Celebration and Commitment Sunday and Luncheon

Celebration and Commitment Sunday will be on Sunday November 10th. We will have one worship service at 10:00 am that day followed by an all-congregation celebration luncheon. At that time you will have the opportunity to place your confidential commitment on the altar (commitment cards are available in the greeting area). Over these next few weeks, please enter into a time of prayer considering how you can give of yourself, give in generosity, and grow in sharing your gifts in response to God's generous and abundant grace in Christ.

Exchange of Peace

“The Peace of the Lord be with you. And also with you.” Then share the peace with one another. What does this really mean?

It is not saying “hello” to the people sitting beside you. It is not time to “catch up.” You do not have to offer a sign of peace to every single worshipper present.

It is an act of reconciliation that is a transition between the Word and the Meal. It is an announcement of grace, a summary of the gifts given to us in the Word. Then gathered by the Spirit we turn to the meal.

The Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:23-24) is a foundation for sharing God’s peace. It essentially says we should be reconciled to our brother or sister and then lay our gift at the altar. In the *Didache*, an early Christian writing, the community is encouraged to come together on the Lord’s Day having first confessed your sins. “Anyone who has a quarrel with his fellow should not gather with you till he has been reconciled, lest his sacrifice be profaned.” This passage confirms the pattern Jesus spoke about in the Sermon on the Mount that becomes a weekly practice of Holy Communion. The preferred place in the service is after the prayers, before the setting of the table which is what we do. The prayers of the church pray for peace in the church, peace in the world, and peace for all in need. Then the congregation offers reconciliation and peace to one another. Then we receive the gift of Christ’s peace in Holy Communion.

Some churches practice this with a handshake to those sitting nearby and say the words “peace be with you.” In other churches, people move about extending the sharing of peace for a long time. The benefit of this is time given to celebrate this assembly, but it frequently becomes a time to greet friends. It is important that we greet visitors, not just those we know. What is important is that we share this peace as a sign of our baptismal unity as children of God.

Christians are a people who seek reconciliation with one another. Making peace is a daily action in our lives. We don’t need to wait till Sunday morning to make peace with our neighbors and family. It is a daily opportunity.

Evangelical Lutheran Worship
Didache

Mission Endowment and Outreach Committee

Coming up on the end of the year, we look back on what we have accomplished with the gifts we are given. The first quarter we shared with Bethesda Lutheran Services, 2nd quarter was Glade Run Lutheran Services, third quarter we supported education for girls through the Good Gifts Catalog* so 40 girls can go to school. This pays for tuition and a school uniform.

In this 4th quarter we will help 15 seminarians from our synod. Money from the ME fund will through the Good Gifts catalog send money for seminary education. We will also send Care Packages to them in time for final exams.

Items needed for the Care Packages are: stress balls, granola bars, cup-o-soup, devotionals, hand sanitizer/lotion, Hershey kisses and small puzzle books. Please place items in the box in the greeting area by November 17.

As we look forward toward 2020, the emphasis will be feeding the world.

*Good Gifts Catalog is items from the ELCA that grow the church, fight hunger and transforms lives. The web site is www.ELCA.org/goodgifts.

Proposed Trial Period for One Sunday Worship Service

For your consideration and conversation and prayer,

A recent discussion that originated at an Elders meeting has begun on if there is a need to go to a single Sunday worship service year round. There are reasons both for and against such a move. To see if this is practical, the Elders brought the suggestion to the congregation council of having a trial or test period of a few weeks to see if such a change would work both practically and attendance wise. Council moved that the congregation vote on a trial period at the January annual meeting.

The proposal would be to have a trial period where there would be a single worship service and Sunday school on the six Sundays between Easter and Pentecost. This would be time enough to evaluate while not having to worry about weather or other issues. The time of such a service and if Sunday school will be before or after, are decisions yet to be made. More information about this proposal will be given out at the December congregational meeting and you will be invited to share your thoughts. A vote will be taken at the January annual congregational meeting on whether to proceed with the trial period only. During and after the trial period the conversation will continue.

Some reasons that favor a single Sunday service emphasize the sense of community there is when we all worship at the same time. Instead of essentially two congregations that get together occasionally, we would be together. There would be more opportunity for fellowship, simpler for the choir, and the children would all sing together. In addition the increased attendance at a single service would bring more energy to worship (such as we see during the summer with one service). Halving the number of weekly ushers, acolytes and assisting ministers needed would put less of a strain on the lay volunteers we have.

Reasons not to go to a single service include the reality that people's schedules and responsibilities on a Sunday vary, and multiple times provides more opportunities to worship. For some this is a weekly reality, for others occasional commitments conflict with one service time or the other. Do we want to reduce that option? Also, very few area churches have an early service such as 8:00 am, is that a significant factor to consider?

Next month look for more discussion in this space. Please prayerfully seek to discern what direction we should go as a congregation, apart from just personal preference, and the willingness to experiment for a short time as we ask the Spirit to guide our deliberations.



Saturday, November 16, 2019

7:00 am – 10:00 am

St. John Lutheran Church

420 Beaver St., Mars, PA 16046

Adults - \$8; Kids under 10 - \$5; Under age 5 – FREE!



Amazon Smile Program

Two things brought this program to mind. We are in the midst of the final year of a stewardship program emphasizing Giving in Generosity, and a letter received by the Mission Endowment Committee from Lutherlyn.

Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop on Amazon. The prices are the same whether or not you designate a charity, so why not do it? The process is simple. Go to smile.amazon.com and select the charity you wish to support. All products available on the web site are eligible for the Smile Program at the same price and 0.5% of the purchase price will go to your chosen charity. Choose the charity of your choice before you begin to shop and you may change it at any time.

We are emphasizing Lutherlyn because it is a camp of the ELCA, it is local (in Prospect), and any of our children can go there for a wonderful experience.

Lutherlyn needs to replace or update many items before next summer, including 50 picnic tables and 25 benches. They hope to construct a new pavilion prior to camp next summer as part of the "Jump into Fun" project. This includes a jump pillow and surrounding fence. They also need to remove and replace the basketball and volleyball courts and add a new shuffleboard court.

Amazon Smile is a great way to help Lutherlyn and other charities at no additional cost to you.

Meals on Wheels



Meals on Wheels is in need of dessert donations for the month of December. When you are doing your holiday baking, please keep them in mind and make an extra batch of cookies, brownies, cakes or candy. We will make weekly deliveries on each Monday in December of all donated items. There is a sign-up sheet in the greeting area for each week.

Also, **on November 29, we will have a group baking day for Meals on Wheels.** Please see Kim Richards to help. Thank you for helping those in need.

The second Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday

Baby Shower
Saturday, November 9, 2019
2:00 – 5:00 pm



Everyone is invited to a baby shower celebrating Maizy and Dan Fisher's upcoming bundle of joy!
Invitations with all the details are in the greeting area by the baby shower bag. Please take one, and don't forget to grab their registry information and your "Diaper Raffle" entry form.
If you have any questions, please speak with Christine or Ruth Ann.

Ladies Craft Night
November 13 – 7:00 pm

We will make snowman ornaments for the holidays. Last day to register is Nov. 10. Limited to 15 people, only a few spots still available. Sign-up sheet in the greeting area or contact Cindy Knauff at 724-504-7871.

Quilting Group
November 11 – 6:00 pm



We meet on the second Monday of each month to make quilts for Lutheran World Relief. Newcomers are welcome! See Cindy Knauff if interested.



Chair Aerobics
Mondays at 6:00 pm



Join us each Monday evening at 6:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall as we get fit with gentle chair aerobics. See Kim Richards if you have any questions.

Ladies Book Group
Wednesday, November 20 – 3:00 pm



Our current book is "Paris Wife" by Paula McLain. It is about a woman who meets and marries Ernest Hemingway and they move to Paris and become part of a literary elite called The Lost Generation. They find themselves ill-equipped for the life of jazz age Paris and while Hemingway writes The Sun Also Rises, his wife struggles to hold onto herself as wife and muse. Ultimately they face a deception that leads to their unraveling.

Kid's Club
November 29
6:30-8:00 pm



Music, Bible Story, Crafts,
Games & Snacks.
Ages 3-8.
Bring a friend, neighbor or relative!



- 11/02 Ariel "Buzz" Kelly
- 11/05 Tanya Nagel
- 11/07 David Knauff
- 11/14 Katie McClure
- 11/17 Cheryl Davidson
- 11/17 Linda Sabbagh
- 11/22 Brooke Claus
- 11/23 Nancy McCormick

Upcoming Events
December 6 – Synagogue Visit
December 7 – Youth Group Bowling
@SJSCC

Communion Bread Schedule
 November & December – Denise Hager
Counters for November
 Missy Kramer – Nov.3 & 24
 Sally Foster – Nov. 3
 Valerie Cardinal – Nov. 10 & 17
 Carol Zimmerman

Worship Helpers
October
Assisting Ministers
 8:00 am **Kelly Greb**
 10:30 am **Martha Ward**

Ushers
 8:00 am **Matt Claus**
 10:30 am **Jamie Weaver**

November Newsletter


 11/01 Matthew & Jeannette Claus – 33 yrs.
 11/03 Keith & Valerie Cardinal – 18 yrs.
 11/05 Charles & Cheryl Davidson – 42 yrs.

Address service requested

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