

February  
2020

# 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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***I love to tell the story; I'll sing this theme in glory  
and tell the old, old story of Jesus and his love.  
(ELW #661)***

Dear friends in Christ,

Many of us are familiar with the above classic hymn. It is a theme song for evangelism, sharing the gospel. For what is evangelism, other than telling others the story of Jesus and his love? That is the mission of the church, to share the good news of Jesus Christ; to invite others to hear the promise of grace. To be an Evangelist literally means to "gospelize" people, fill them with good news. Our annual congregation meeting expressed a need to grow our church and charged the Elders to collect ideas and come up with a plan to be introduced at a special congregation meeting in March.

Evangelism takes many forms from a simple invite to "come and see!" to being living witnesses of faith active in love, there are many ways to tell and to live out "that same old story." Did you know that the above hymn was written in 1866 by Annabelle Catherine Hankey, a woman from England that was the daughter of a wealthy banker. However she did much more than write hymns for worship. She promoted the abolition of slavery, and was involved in improving the lot of England's working classes. Hankey taught Bible classes for shop girls in London, visited the sick in local hospitals, and used the proceeds of her writings to support mission.

As we begin this emphasis, we remember, the reason to grow the church is not to fill pews, have more people at a spaghetti dinner, or to help balance the budget, those may be a few results, but can never be the reason. The reason to grow Christ's Church is always to fulfill the great commission and great commandments Jesus gave us. *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,"* And, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'" Christ and God's love are always at the center of the story. (Mat 28:19, Mat 22:37-39)*

Let us pray.

"By your word, eternal God, your creation sprang forth, and we were given the breath of life. By your word, eternal God, death is overcome, Christ is raised from the tomb, and we are given new life in the power of your Spirit. May we boldly proclaim this good news in our words and our deeds, rejoicing always in your powerful presence; through Jesus Christ, our risen Lord. Amen." (ELW pg. 75)

Your partner in Christ's mission,  
*Pastor Bob Zimmerman*



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

**On Wednesday, February 26**, there will be a noontime spoken service of Confession and Imposition of Ashes.

A Soup Lunch will follow the brief service

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

### **Weekday Lenten Study** **“Making Sense of the Cross”** Wednesdays during Lent at 12:30 pm

Whatever we say about the cross, we are also saying about God. So what does the cross mean? What can it tell us about God? How can it help us approach, understand, and know God better? This six-session video based course will take us to the cross and beyond on Wednesdays beginning March 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Online Study** **Next Session** February 12 at 7:30 pm

The online discussion and study of **Martin Luther’s “On the Bondage of the Will”** continues. He chided Erasmus for trusting in human abilities rather than in God’s grace, and for attempting to solve the problem of evil by defending unfettered “free choice,” when in fact human beings are (to use the words of ELW’s confession of sin) “captive to sin and cannot free themselves.” We will read Luther’s work and discuss together how we as humans continue to be captive to sin, and its empty promises.



### **All Vestry Retreat** **Saturday, March 7** **9:00 am – 2:00 pm**

Our special guest presenter will be Pastor Melissa Stoller, Director for Evangelical Mission and assistant to the Bishop for the SWPA Synod.

We will spend time in worship, discussion and planning at Vesper Hall at St. John Specialty Care Center. Save the date and make every effort to attend.

## Steward your life: Cultivate a heart of love

*Jesus taught, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” –Matthew 5:43-45a*  
Red hearts, flowers and chocolates remind us that February is the uncontested month of love.

It's excellent (and easy) to love those close to us, but Jesus tells us to go wider, deeper, riskier – to love even our enemies. In so doing, Jesus says, we become children of God.

This challenges us to embrace love as the key discipline and develop a heart so full of love that it flows to even our enemies. Isn't that how we're supposed to live as disciples? It's just good stewardship of our lives.

For this “month of love,” practice loving your enemies.

The effort is especially timely in our season of discord, when our loudest voices encourage us – through name-calling, denigrating, lying, smearing – to hate those with whom we disagree. Even calling them “enemies” is too much (they're really neighbors!). Loving our “enemies” doesn't mean we agree with them or tolerate bad behavior. It means respecting, listening, discussing, refraining from anger and revenge. Here are some ideas for loving our enemies:

- Jesus gives us the first step: Pray! For them and for you!
- Stop seeing them as enemies. They're our neighbors whom God loves
- Resist hate, the very thing our culture encourages.
- Treat everyone as you would want to be treated.
- Lastly, keep praying.

By embracing love as a spiritual discipline, we cultivate a heart of love that opens our lives to the transformation Jesus dearly desires for us -- to be children of God. Now that's good stewardship.

--Rob Blezard

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**Sunday School  
Valentine Party  
February 9**

Sunday, February 9, will be our children's Valentine Party. Each child will have a box and you may bring valentines for them if you wish.

***The childrens names are:  
Emma, Ava, Ella, Abigail,  
Julianna, Luca, Gabriella,  
Anna, and Nathan.***

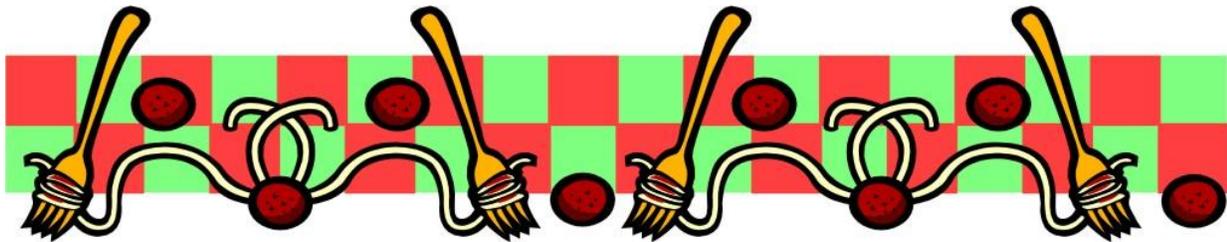


**Purple Pancake Breakfast  
Sunday – February 23**

Join us for our traditional Purple Pancake Breakfast Party as we celebrate before the beginning of Lent.

This will be held between services on Sunday, February 23.

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



# **SPAGHETTI DINNER**

**Saturday, February 29, 2020**

**4:30 – 6:30 pm**

**St. John Lutheran Church**

**420 Beaver Street**

**Mars, PA**

**Price: Adults - \$8 Children - \$5 (Age 6-12)**

**Children Age 5 & under - FREE**

**Take-out available**



## Family farm

Help a family break the cycle of hunger and poverty — for good. A cow, a couple of goats, a dozen chicks, two pigs, farming tools, seeds and agricultural training can create a world of opportunity for a family living in poverty. With eggs, milk and meat to eat and sell, and tools and training to increase the harvest, this gift can make all the difference.

**Family farm \$715**

### 1Q20 Mission Emphasis

During the first quarter of 2020, all Mission Emphasis gifts will be used to purchase **Family Farms through the ELCA Good Gifts Catalog. The cost of one farm is \$715.00, and it will “help a family break the cycle of hunger and poverty — for good.** A cow, a couple of goats, a dozen chicks, two pigs, farming tools, seeds and agricultural training can create a world of opportunity for a family living in poverty. With eggs, milk and meat to eat and sell, and tools and training to increase the harvest, this gift can make all the difference.” What a wonderful way to share Christ’s love and mercy with families in need. If you would like more information, please speak with a member of the Mission Endowment and Outreach Committee. Thank you!

### Chair Aerobics

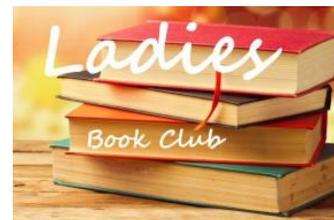


**Join us each Monday evening at 6:00 pm** in the Fellowship Hall as we get fit with gentle chair aerobics. See Kim Richards if you have any questions.

### Quilting Group February 10– 6:00 pm



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



### Ladies Book Group Wednesday, February 19 – 3 pm

Our group chooses a book to read and discuss at our monthly meetings. If you are interested in joining us speak to Sally Foster.

**The second Sunday of each month is Food Bank Sunday**



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

**Upcoming Events**  
 February 29 – Spaghetti Dinner  
 March 7 – All Vestry Retreat

**Communion Bread Schedule**  
 February – Karen Collins  
  
**Counters for February**  
 Karen Collins & Melissa Kramer

**Worship Helpers**  
**February**  
Assisting Ministers  
 8:00 am Matt Claus  
 10:30 am Melissa Kramer  
  
Ushers  
 8:00 am Clarence Strabel  
 10:30 am Jim Ward

Address service requested

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