

May  
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  
PO Box 411  
420 Beaver Street  
Mars, PA 16046

Web site: [www.stjohnchurchmars.org](http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org)  
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Pastor Bob's email: [pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org](mailto:pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org)  
Pastor's Cell #: 412-585-1628

Dear friends in Christ,

First of all, I hope you are doing well in this time of isolation and self-distancing. Know you are in my prayers. If you need some assistance getting through this, please let me know, or if you just want to hear another voice, give me a call.

I am grateful for the adaptability of everyone, as we have moved our worship together and meetings online. Your continued faithful support of St. John has enabled us to continue our ministry in this difficult time. It is a joy, in the midst of being away, to see your faces on ZOOM.

Soon we will be transitioning into a reopening of businesses and other venues and I have been thinking about this time to come and what it will look like. I have disliked the term "new normal" since the first time I heard it used. It was almost ten years ago; I stood graveside at the funeral of my stepfather. His son was giving the eulogy and talked about how we all must adjust to this new reality, the "new normal," of life without his dad. At first blush those words seemed appropriate, but the more I thought about it the more trite and dismissive the term seemed. There was nothing normal about my mom burying two husbands who died of cancer. Of shattered dreams of a quiet retired life together in their newly built home, that suddenly seemed way too big for my mother alone.

So, in the same way I am uncomfortable with the way a "new normal" is bandied about as we move out of this COVID-19 crisis into whatever will come after. We are indeed moving into a new time, but nothing about it will be "normal" for us.

We will never treat washing hands or an uncovered sneeze the same way again. For a while we will continue to work and gather in small groups with masks on. Large public events have been cancelled for the summer. We have found it is possible for a great many people to work from home productively, how will this shape the workplace of tomorrow? Hopefully, we will never take those underpaid, overworked "essential workers" for granted again. We have discovered many things that we thought were priorities can be lived without, while others are sorely missed. We are eager to get back to "what was", but will soon find that "what was" won't be back.

Jesus said you cannot put "new wine put into old wineskins." (Mat 9:17) As we move forward into the post-corona reality things are going to be different. However, though we hate to admit it, life is never static, always changing. We are always adapting to what unpredictably comes next. In faith we can live into change, as everyday we live into our baptismal promise that "daily a new person is to come forth and rise up to live before God" (Luther's Small Catechism) May we trust in the one who is making all things new. (Rev 21:5)

Easter Blessings,  
Pastor Bob Zimmerman

## **Gift Cards Available**

A Message from the Mission Endowment and Outreach Committee

Because of the current situation caused by the Covid - 19 virus, loss of jobs and income has become critical in the ability to put food on the table for many. Our theme this year for the Mission Endowment and Outreach Committee is to “feed the world”. The world has become much smaller as we become concerned about our church family and community. At our meeting on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup>, this quickly became the topic of discussion and what could we do about it. What we all agreed to do is to use the money from our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter distribution to provide Giant Eagle gift cards for people in need in our congregation and community.

The distribution of the gift cards will be strictly confidential. Pastor Zimmerman will have the gift cards and only he will know who they are given to. **If you or your family needs assistance or you know someone in the community who does, please contact Pastor Zimmerman 412-585-1628.**

We have no idea when this crisis will end and people will “get back on their feet” so please do not suffer in silence or go hungry. Let Pastor know if we can help you.

If you wish to help in this endeavor you can contribute to our 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter using the mission emphasis envelopes.

### **Upcoming Zoom Meetings and Worship Services**

#### **Virtual Sunday School – Sunday, May 3 at 9:00 AM**

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81775445757?pwd=N0VnSUFDc0htTkR3bDZ5c0laVmdvdz09>

Meeting ID: 817 7544 5757 Password: 086762

Sunday School log on information will change weekly.

#### **Sunday Worship – 10:00 AM**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

#### **Sunday, May 3 – 1:00 PM – Trustees Online Meeting Meeting information has been sent to Trustees.**

#### **Wednesday Evenings– 7:30 PM – Bible Study**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411>

Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

#### **St. John Congregation Council**

**May 14 - 7:00 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411>

Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

#### **Worship Planners – May 17**

Zoom Meeting following worship. Information will be sent to participants.

#### **St. John Executive Committee**

**May 21 - 7:00 PM**

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411>

Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

#### **Confirmation Class**

**May 24 – 1:00 PM**

Zoom Meeting information will be sent to participants.

# Will COVID-19 help us become better stewards?

Toilet paper. Seriously. Will we ever take lowly “TP” for granted again?

Toilet paper is just one of the countless everyday blessings that the pain of COVID-19 has taught us to savor – along with worshiping beside loved ones, going to work, getting paid, shopping, going to the movies, and on and on. (What’s on your list?)

Pain teaches us, focuses us, molds us. Pain strips away pretensions and defenses. Pain shows us what’s real, what’s true, what’s valuable. Pain cleanses our spirit and draws us closer to God.

Easter reminds us that our faith journey is all about death and rebirth. Explaining baptism in *The Small Catechism*, Martin Luther taught that baptism’s waters must *daily* drown our old sinful self, so that *daily* we may be born anew. As we walk in God’s sanctifying light, parts of us should be dying *daily* and being reborn. Pain? It serves as midwife in our death and rebirth.

And COVID-19 has given us pain aplenty, far beyond the shortage of bathroom supplies. Many have lost loved ones, jobs, security, healthcare, homes, retirement, well-being and relationships.

Pain will be long with us as we slowly inch back towards normalcy. But “normal” will probably look much different than what we’ve known. A “new normal” is already emerging. Do you sense it? That the pandemic has changed you? Us? Forever? With the Holy Spirit’s help, may COVID-19’s pain prune from our lives what needs to die in order for us to be reborn as God’s people in this “new normal.” May the “new normal” find us better stewards of our lives -- less greedy, less self-focused, less preoccupied with silly things, and more centered in Christ, more loving to our neighbor, more generous, more hopeful and more tolerant.

--Rob Blezard

*Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod, ELCA, and works as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). He blogs at [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com).*

## **Bible Study**

### **Online – Wednesday Evenings at 7:30 PM**

Pastor Zimmerman has begun an evening bible study through Zoom meetings.

If you would like to join the group use this link: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411>

**Please remember that the expenses of the church continue, even if we do not gather physically for worship. Your tithes and offerings still are needed. You can mail your offering envelopes to the church, or go to our website to arrange to give electronically. [www.stjohnchurchmars.org](http://www.stjohnchurchmars.org)**

## Handmade Fabric Masks for Lutheran SeniorLife

As the global supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) continues to become more uncertain, Lutheran SeniorLife would like to invite you to donate hand-sewn fabric masks. Face masks protect our staff from expelled droplets that could enclose the COVID-19 virus and other germs.

Masks can be dropped off Monday through Friday between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. at the **Lutheran SeniorLife Corporate Office** – 191 Scharberry Ln. Mars, PA 16046 (across from Springfield Grill)  
For more information and a pattern go to:

<https://www.lutheranseniorlife.org/news/support-our-staff-with-handmade-fabric-masks>

## STAY AT HOME MISSION WORK CAMP



**Sunday, June 21 (4:00pm) thru Friday, June 26 (ending early afternoon)**  
St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland, 311 Cumberland Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Adults and youth (who have completed 6th grade to 12th grade) are invited to follow Jesus throughout the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod through a variety of hands-on service projects and activities. Participants will work on homes of elderly and low income people to make their homes more livable and secure. We can participate as a group or youth can attend on their own. Everyone is welcome. If you are interested contact Pastor Zimmerman.

## Bells Across Pennsylvania Day Sunday, May 3 - 7:00 pm

Bells Across Pennsylvania Day, an initiative of the Pennsylvania State Mayors' Association will take place this Sunday, May 3 at 7:00 p.m. The threefold purpose of this initiative is:

- To recognize and honor first responders, healthcare workers, and employees of grocery stores, pharmacies and other life-sustaining businesses who have maintained essential services while at risk of infection from COVID-19;
- To show solidarity with elected officials and residents of municipalities across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, all of whom are fighting COVID-19 on the frontlines together; and
- To demonstrate a collective resolve that Pennsylvanians will prevail over COVID-19 and work tirelessly to ensure that their businesses and civic life will thrive once again.

At 7:00 p.m. on May 3, all Pennsylvanians and churches will be encouraged to ring bells for three minutes – one minute for each of the above purposes. Jim Ward has graciously agreed to ring the bell at St. John Sunday evening.



05/07 Jessica Woomer  
05/08 Erin Weaver  
05/08 Amy Werner  
05/11 Ruth Ann Tully  
05/14 Valerie Cardinal  
05/18 John Tully  
05/20 Olivia Claus  
05/23 Steve Schnelle  
05/24 Ella Kay Niklewicz  
05/28 Janmarie Liekauf  
05/31 Carolyn Jarrett  
05/31 Grace Kratz

**Assisting Ministers  
May**

**May 3, 17, 31 – V. Cardinal**

**May 10, 24 – R. A. Tully**

# May Newsletter

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Address service requested

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