

July
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
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,

The past months of being the church in the midst of self-distancing have been a challenging time of finding new ways to stay connected. In just a few days after you receive this newsletter though, we will be able to gather in the sanctuary on July 5th for Sunday worship. It will be wonderful to see one another again in person. However, returning to the church building will not be a return to what was. As it has been for the past few months, our primary concern has and will be for the health and safety of everyone, especially the most at risk. Elsewhere in this newsletter are the guidelines for a safe gathering, including social distancing, wearing of masks and special procedures for Holy Communion.

These procedures are in place so that we can continue to care for one another. Even as we are getting ready to be together, there has been an increase in Covid-19 cases in the country including right here in Butler and Allegheny counties. As anxious as we are for things to "get back to normal," and how much we pride ourselves on our individualism, I am reminded of Paul writing to the church in Galatia "*do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love become slaves to one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'*" (Galatians 5:13b-14)

As much as we are looking forward to getting together, for some of you it would be unwise to attend for cautionary reasons if you are at high risk for the corona virus. Others may find the wearing of a mask intolerable, and choose to remain home. Know, you too are of concern, and there will continue to be an online option for you to be part of worship, and I hope you can find ways to stay connected to the ministry we are about.

I am available to meet with anyone while practicing social distancing: in my office or perhaps in an outdoor location, and my phone is always handy if you just wish to talk, so feel free to give a call.

As we begin this new phase of this unique time, let us pray, "Direct us, O Lord God, in all our doings with your most gracious favor, and extend to us your continual help; that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in you, we may glorify your holy name; and finally, by your mercy, bring us to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**" (ELW Pastoral Care)

Summertime Blessings,
Pastor Bob Zimmerman

RE-OPENING FOR WORSHIP

The Pastor, Re-opening Task Force, and Congregation Council have been working to develop a plan for return to in-person worship at St. John. The priorities have been to return safely following CDC, state and ELCA guidelines; to provide meaningful worship opportunities of Word and Sacrament; and to continue offering an online option for those that are unable to attend worship. To fulfill this St. John has new routines for cleaning and established the below requirements and procedures as we look ahead to returning to in person worship on **July 5, 2020 at 9:00 A.M.**

REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES FOR RETURNING TO WORSHIP:

Health & Safety:

If you or any member of your household has any of the following symptoms within 48 hours prior to your planned attendance at St. John, we ask that you choose to remain home:

- Fever or chills
- Fatigue
- New loss of taste or smell, nausea or vomiting
- Cough, muscle/body aches, sore throat, diarrhea
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, headache
- Congestion or runny nose

If you or any member of your household have been exposed to anyone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, we ask that you self-quarantine for 14 days and do not come to St. John.

All members of your household, ages 3-years and older, are required to wear a mask during the entirety of worship; before, during and after. As Christians it is our called responsibility to care for the community. If you do not have a mask, one will be provided to you.

Entrance to the church building will be restricted to the door nearest the parking lot only. Please read and follow all posted signage inside the church building

Worship

Social distancing is required, entry to worship will be staggered and seating is planned with that in mind. Ushers will direct you to your seats and dismiss the congregation after worship through the front and back. Please use the provided antibacterial cleaner in the pews. Masks are to remain on during worship.

Worship will be spoken. Hymns will only be sung by the cantor/organist. You are asked to silently and prayerfully read along with the hymns.

Pastor, assisting ministers and musicians will maintain distance from each other and parishioners. Offering & attendance cards will be received hands free in baskets at the entrance/exits to the sanctuary.

(Guidelines – continued)

The Sacrament will be offered using a safe distribution method:

- Using wafers instead of bread; prior to worship elements will be placed in pre-filled cups on trays on a large table in front of the altar
- Parishioners will come forward to receive by families, wearing masks
- Pick up elements from table receiving the words: “The body & blood of Christ given and shed for you”
- Move to a side table; remove masks and consume elements. Replace masks, place used cups in provided waste basket and return to pew

Attendance cards must be completed so those in attendance can be notified in case of an outbreak. After you have attended worship if you are diagnosed with COVID-19, we respectfully ask that you contact the church office as soon as possible to report the diagnosis. Your name will remain confidential. We will want to let others in attendance know that they may have been exposed.

By attending any worship or event at St. John, you and your family assume the risk of exposure.

Be aware that worship will be recorded, including any background sounds.

Expect these plans and procedures to change and be adjusted as the weeks go on as we determine best practices. Please share these requirements and any changes with your family to ensure that everyone understands the most current protocol.

CHURCH OFFICE

To respect the safety of our staff while we continue to monitor the active coronavirus pandemic, they will continue primarily to work remotely. The Office Manager, Margie Baker, comes into the office one day per week. Pastor Zimmerman also will be in his office one day a week as possible. Pastor Zimmerman is also available to meet in the office by appointment.

Maintaining social distance and wearing masks is required. We ask those coming into the building during the week to sign in on a sheet in the greeting area. This will allow you to be notified in case of an outbreak.

To make an appointment or to access the building, please call 724-625-1830. The church voicemail and email is checked daily.

Thank you for your patience and understanding during these difficult days, and especially for your own exercise of care for the sake of your neighbors.

Contact Information

Pastor Zimmerman: Cell: 412-585-1628

Email: pastor@stjohnchurchmars.org

Margie Baker Office: 724-625-1830

Email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org

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. What the committee agreed to do is to use the money from our 2nd 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.**

Upcoming Zoom Meetings and Worship Services

Thursday, July 2 - 7:00 PM – Elders Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

Sunday July 5 -- 9:00 AM

Returning to in-person worship in sanctuary.

For those who cannot attend, use Zoom meeting information.

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

Sunday, July 5 – 10:15AM – Trustees Meeting

In Sunday School Room

Thursday, July 9 - 7:00 PM - St. John Congregation Council Meeting in Fellowship Hall – Zoom info for those unable to attend.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

Thursday, July 16- 7:00 PM - St. John Executive Committee Meeting in Fellowship Hall – Zoom info for those unable to attend.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

Sunday, July 12 – 9:00 AM

In-person worship in sanctuary. Zoom info for those unable to attend.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO GROW THE CHURCH AND BRING IN NEW MEMBERS!

At a recent Council meeting a survey on how to grow the church and promote evangelism was approved.

Please review the following survey and select those items that you best feel would match your abilities and talent.

Upon returning to church there will be a congregation meeting to further discuss the survey and your role in helping St. John to "grow the church".

Completed copies can be returned when you come to worship service or mailed to the church office. It may also be returned to one of the Elders mailboxes in the greeting area.

The Elders thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Recommendations on how to grow the church and bring in new members:

Name: _____

	Assist with Planning (Before)	Assist with Activity (During)	Take the Lead of Activity	Donate Items
Community Event Day/Evening at the church on the lawn. Church tour, campfire worship, sing-a-long, movie with popcorn and snacks				
Phone tree to call members that don't get out to check on them as well as "Missing members" from worship				
Advertising - Increase social media presence other than just Facebook, post fliers on Community/Clubhouse bulletin boards, yard signs (i.e. WeRhere4U.com - link to website) at intersections/member yards. Upgrade website (possibly professionally)				
Make church more visible - Upgrade/replace sign, light up front of church and steeple at night				
Sponsor a public speaker (Anchor Point) nights on various subjects - Finances, Parenting, Drug/Alcohol Addiction, Sexuality, Assisted Living, etc...				
Christmas caroling cookie giveaway in the community				
First Responder Sunday - Invite and recognize 1st responders to breakfast and worship when the Sunday falls on the 1st day of the month (Next occurrence is November 1, 2020)				
Community carwash activity for both youth and adults				
Increase Community presence - Applefest, Community Days, Mars New Year, and other events where interest is shown				
Produce a church history/memory book in conjunction with the 125th Anniversary				
Youth Group Events & Bring your own friends - Lutherlyn LEEP, Fun Fore All, Bowling, Trampolines, etc...				
Bring a friend to church day				

Thank you for continuing to give as you are able, as our ministry and mission of sharing Christ's love continues. Your prayers, your offerings, and your creative service even while practicing social distancing is inspiring. Truly you are God's hands, eyes, heart, and feet in this world. You can mail your offering envelopes to the church, or go to our website to arrange to give electronically.
www.stjohnchurchmars.org



Family Putt-Putt Golf Outing July 26 – 10:30 AM

Join us at Mars-Bethel Golf on Rt. 228, Valencia for a fun family outing!

Age 11 & up - \$6; Age 10 & under - \$5

Age 4 & younger – Free with paying adult.

Enjoy miniature golf with lunch to follow.

Please use sign-up sheet in greeting area or call the church office to let us know how many will attend.

Save the Date!

St. John Campfire Worship August 15 – 5:30 PM

Details in August Newsletter and upcoming announcements.

Steward your *new* community

Like a caterpillar emerging from a cocoon to new life as a butterfly, our congregations and communities are awakening from Covid-19 to a more excellent reality that brims with faith, hope and love.

Covid-19's hardship, deprivation and grief have inspired an outpouring of kindness, generosity, selflessness, neighborliness and courageous service. Suffering has given us a glimpse of what our communities can and should be, following Christ's two principal commands: love God and love one another.

Our stewardship opportunity and challenge is clear: Can we cultivate this renewed spirit of loving neighborliness as a "new normal"? As our community's central, defining ethos?

The last several months have taught us much:

Life is precious. Everyone counts. No exceptions.

We suffer together. Shared pain creates strong bonds.

Serving brings fulfillment. Many sacrifice joyfully.

We need each other. We can't go it alone.

We miss each other. We require human interaction.

Personal contact is sublime. Nothing beats face-to-face.

We are grateful. Thank God for what we have.

We are wiser. We know what's important.

Covid-19 is receding, though slowly. Much pain lies ahead. Before it's through, the virus will claim more of our friends and loved ones. Many families will suffer economically.

But the virus is also teaching us anew how to be loving neighbors. As Covid-19 abates, we can deepen these lessons and steward our communities to live more closely aligned with God's purposes, to discover life abundant with joy, connection, fulfillment and generosity. With God's help, our congregations and communities can emerge from our Covid-19 cocoon to a more excellent reality, centered in faith, hope and love.

--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. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com



- 7/03 Amber Zalewsky
- 7/12 Victoria Lydon
- 7/12 Kathleen Schnelle
- 7/13 Christopher Julio
- 7/13 Marcia Shepard
- 7/14 Katie Richards
- 7/19 Jean Claus
- 7/20 Luca Julio
- 7/20 June Siembieda
- 7/22 Jeff Ward
- 7/26 Chester Carbo
- 7/28 George Leikauf
- 7/30 Robert Dishong

- 7/12 – Dave & Cindy Knauff – 44 yrs.
- 7/14 – Todd & Katie Niklewicz – 13 yrs.
- 7/20 – Chester & Frieda Carbo – 58 yrs
- 7/21 – Larry & Amy Werner – 41 yrs.
- 7/25 – Mike & Cheryl Sauers – 56 yrs.

July

Assisting Minister
Kelly Greb

Ushers
Jamie Weaver
Clarence & Marlene Strabel

Counters
Kelly Greb & Dave Knauff

Communion Bread
Sally Foster

July Newsletter

Address service requested

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P.O. BOX 411
MARS, PA 16046