

July
2022

St. John Lutheran Church



St. John Lutheran Church
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Be still, and know that I am God
Psalm 46:10a

Summer is typically seen as a slow, quiet time in the church. But as you peruse this newsletter, you will see that we are quite busy!

We are busy getting ready for service opportunities in the beginning of the fall. Find out how you can help and be involved! Both physically and virtually there have been some new things happening around St. John. We have a new website, a new Facebook page, and a new garden area! We have been trying some new things in our worship services in the past several weeks. Check out some information from the ELCA about worship in this newsletter. In June I had the opportunity to attend the 2022 Synod Assembly of our church. It's a wonderful opportunity to not only participate in the wider church but also to hear about the wonderful things the church is doing in our synod and in the country and world. I've included a summary of the assembly as well as a link to the synod's official report of the assembly. And there are LOTS of upcoming events! Be sure to have your calendar nearby to write it all down! One of the perks of our new website is that we will be able to keep the website up to date with all the information in this newsletter and more!

Yet even in the midst of all of this, I am brought back to a very familiar verse found in the Psalms: "Be still, and know that I am God." Luther has a famous quote that says, "I have so much to do that I shall spend the first three hours in prayer." I will confess that I do not spend the first three hours of each day in prayer, but in the days that seem to be overwhelmed with things to do, I do intentionally take to pause, breathe, pray, and marvel in God's goodness. If we wait for the opportune time to pause and marvel at God's goodness, it might not come. So be intentional about having still moments. Whether you're someone for whom summer is very chill or very busy, remember to take a moment, smell the metaphorical (or quite literal!) flowers. Remember to pause, breathe, pray, and marvel in God's goodness. Be still and know that God is God, and God is with you in the busyness and in the quiet.

Peace,
Pastor Katie

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.*

Upcoming Zoom Meetings and Worship Services

Sunday Worship – July 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 – 9:00 AM

Join Zoom for Worship: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther
Available on our **YouTube Channel:** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMqDRNmkyKssxvQ>
and the church Facebook group: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnLutheranChurchMarsPA) later in the day.
Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther

Serving Others

God's Work Our Hands Sunday – September 11

God's Work Our Hands Sunday has been a tradition in the ELCA for a number of years. Typically the second Sunday in September, **"this day is an opportunity to celebrate who we are as the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America – one church, freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor.** Service activities offer an opportunity for us to explore one of our most basic convictions as Lutherans: that all of life in Jesus Christ – every act of service, in every daily calling, in every corner of life – flows freely from a living, daring confidence in God's grace," (<https://www.elca.org/dayofservice>). St. John will be joining in the national observance of this day by altering our **worship service to be focused on an act of service** – making and offering lunch to our local first responders.

Mission from Mars



Mission from Mars is a Sunday lunch outreach organization. They provide approximately 75 meals, fellowship, and other services for the homeless on the North Side of Pittsburgh. This is an organization which originated in Mars. Kim Richards is coordinating a joint effort including her work family, St. John, and MUP to provide for the homeless this October. **Our goal is to provide a Sunday lunch, a sack lunch to go, and toiletry bags for the 75+ people** who are served by this

organization. From now until October, we, along with Kim's work family and MUP, are going to do a collection drive to provide much needed items for the homeless to help them as the weather turns colder. There will be bins in the greeting area to place your donated items. (If you are cleaning out your closet and have any gently used coats that you want to donate, we would love to pass them along)

For the **month of July, we are asking for towels, peanut butter, and gently used books.** Any questions, please contact Kim Richards (724-316-2263) or Pastor Katie. Thank you in advance for your generosity for this worthwhile cause.



Around the Church

New Website



After a lot of effort from many people, we have a new website! The URL is the same (stjohnchurchmars.org), but the look is all new! **A lot of people use a church's website to learn more about a church before visiting for the first time**, so the site will be filled with information helpful to the first-time visitor. But a website is also a great hub of information for long-term members! **We'll have the church calendar and other useful tools for members on the website.** Be sure to check it out! We're adding more and more stuff to the website, so be sure to keep checking back!

New Facebook Page



In addition to the website's facelift, **we have a new Facebook page!** Currently, we have a Facebook group that serves as a great communication tool among members.

Facebook pages are public-facing points of contact for all of Facebook. People will be able to contact the church as well as learn more about everything we do!

As part of the kickoff for our new Facebook page, we will have several regular posts: **Monday Meditations** will offer a brief prayer that recounts the lessons from Sunday for the beginning of the new work week; **Wednesday Wonders** will offer a brief reflection on a "God Moment" a person of the community has had; **Saturday Sampler** will include a brief scripture excerpt that will be read on Sunday morning along with a comment on the theme of the upcoming sermon. And as things are happening in the church, there will be other posts coming!

To **help us keep our Facebook page active and vibrant**, send the office your "God Moments." God Moments are things (images, brief videos, etc.) that caused you to pause and reflect on God's goodness in the world. We will develop a library of these to use over several weeks. Blurbs may be edited to help the post fit well in Facebook's stream, and we may not be able to use all submitted God Moments. **Be sure to "Like" our new page and invite others to do the same!**

New Garden

One of Pastor Katie's favorite hobbies is vegetable gardening, and the trustees graciously offered to till a spot in the lawn for a small garden. Be sure to **check out the progress of the plants** over the summer! If you're someone who enjoys gardening, feel free to **enjoy this garden as your own**. As the garden grows and matures, feel free to **enjoy the fruits of the harvest!** If you have any questions about the garden or the plants, please reach out to Pastor Katie. She is always happy to talk about the garden!



Worship Notes

The Order of Service

You may have noticed that we have been **trying some different things in worship in recent weeks**. Sometimes it's a new song or a different order of already familiar elements. Sometimes it's something totally different like streamers in worship! As Lutherans we do not have a prescribed worship service. **We are free to worship and praise God in a number of ways**. By exploring just a few of the different expressions of worship, we open ourselves to welcome and appreciate the rich diversity of God's church.

As Lutherans, "**worship stands at the center of our life of faith and it nurtures us for our work in the world through God's word, water, bread, and prayer.**" "Worship unites us in celebration, engages us in thoughtful dialogue, and helps us grow in faith. It grounds us in our Christian and Lutheran roots, while demonstrating practical relevance for today's world." "Central to our worship life is the presence of God through word and sacrament." "**There is also a basic pattern for worship among Lutherans. We gather. We encounter God's word. We share a meal at the Lord's table. And we are sent into the world.**" What words and songs and specific elements we use as we gather around God's word and table and as we are sent into the world may be different each week. But what always stays the same is our celebration of worship as an encounter with God, who saves us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. (quotes taken from elca.org/worship)

From the Wider Church

SWPA Synod Assembly



SWPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022

In June, the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA held its annual Synod Assembly. Synod Assemblies are the highest legislative authority of the synod. The decisions made impact each of the 151 congregations of the synod. Representatives from each congregation are invited to take part in this important process and offer their voice and vote to each item on the agenda.

This year's **theme was "I love to tell the story."** The devotionals, the Friday night worship, even most of the reports focused on how we, as a synod and as a people of God, tell the story of the Gospel. Rev. Michael Curry, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church kicked off the assembly with a keynote address. **His message: Share love and we share the Gospel. Build relationships and the differences become something to embrace. Be willing to reach out to those you do not know, learn about them, understand them, and love them.**

Synod council is working to **restructure the synod to better meet the needs of the church today.** The Synod Council proposed five Standing Committees of the synod: Care and Leadership for Congregations, Care and Leadership for Rostered Ministers, Care and Leadership for All Generations, Church in Society, and Church Throughout the World. **You are invited to offer your feedback on this restructuring through the synod website. If you'd like assistance finding more information on the restructuring and/or the feedback form, contact Pastor Katie.**

Rev. Carmelo Santos, Director for Theological Diversity and Ecumenical and Interreligious Engagement joined the synod assembly and offered an update from Churchwide. He offered a review of the social statements of the ELCA, reminding people that they are intended to "offer a theological and ethical framework for [people] to wrestle with [questions about important social issues]." He also shared that the ELCA is in active dialogue with the Roman Catholic Church and the Disciples of Christ to further ecumenical relations. Declarations have been authored to both the Muslim and Jewish communities. Rev. Santos also shared that the ELCA is actively involved in hundreds of new start ministries, though the ELCA is still trying to figure out how to sustainably do ministry in different settings, such as low-income areas.

There were **four additional memorials (resolutions) brought before the assembly:**

(1) **A Domestic Violence Task Force** will be created to work with the Presbyterians Against Domestic Violence Network. The task force will be charged with encouraging and holding accountable the domestic court judges to enforce the existing law requiring convicted domestic violence offenders to surrender firearms. The task force will also work to create workshops and resources to equip clergy and laity to identify signs of domestic abuse and to help address and prevent domestic abuse. (2) The synod council will direct the Committee of Appeals of the ELCA to **establish a clear and uniform process for investigating misconduct** within the church. (3) A Mustard Seed Initiative that will focus on **seed planting missions within each conference of the synod** was approved. (4) It was resolved that when **synod facilities are closed, consideration should be given to the giving of the building and land to "the descendants of those peoples, races, or nations that first lived on that land."**

The synod assembly also **approved the proposed budget** for 2023.

For a complete report of the proceedings, visit tinyurl.com/swpaassembly2022.

Upcoming Events

Adults Only Dinner – July 22nd



We will be having an adult dinner at the **Hardwood Cafe** on Route 8 in Penn Township at 6:00 pm on Friday, July 22nd. If you are interested in attending, please sign up on the **sign-up sheet in the greeting area**. Upon signing up, a **nonrefundable \$10 deposit** per person is due. Deposit money will be applied toward your dinner. **Reservations need to be in by July 5th**. Any questions see Denise Hager (724-333-0274). Deposits can be given to Denise. **There will be babysitting available at the church.** Contact Pastor Katie to sign up your child(ren).

Campfire Worship – July 28th

We had so much fun the first time, we're going to do it again! Join us at the campfire on the lawn for a **brief worship service at 7:30 pm** on Thursday, July 28th. We will have a **sing-along beginning at 7:00 pm** as well as a chance to get to know the songs that will be used during worship. After worship, be sure stay and enjoy s'mores!

We all have our favorite camp songs, so **if you have a song that you would love to sing during our next campfire worship, tell Pastor Katie!** We may not be able to sing it, but you never know! Song submissions are due by Sunday, July 24th.



Burgers on Beaver St – August 13th



As we have done in the past, we will be having Burgers on Beaver St! Contact the office if you'd like to volunteer. We will have (of course) **burgers and several delicious side dishes and dessert**, and there will be a place for you to sit and enjoy your meal. This is always a **popular fundraiser**, so be sure to invite friends and neighbors!

Outdoor Worship Service and Church Picnic – August 14th

Service is at 9:00 AM followed by a picnic. All food and drinks will be provided. There will be games and fun for kids and adults! There is a fee of **\$6.00 per adult and children ages 10 and up** to defray the cost. For **children ages 3-9 the cost is \$3.00**, and **children 2 and under are free**.

RSVPs are requested by August 7th along with payment. **RSVP by completing the form attached to this newsletter.** Checks are to be made out to St. John Lutheran Church. Checks and RSVPS can be placed in Denise Hager's mailbox outside of the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Denise (724-333-0274).



Craft Night – September 13th



Calling all crafters! Are you looking for a "novel" (get it?) gift idea for the person who has everything? Join us **September 13th at 6:30 pm** to learn how to make this unique gift. The class will take about 2 hours and if you don't finish you can take the pattern home and complete it there. **The cost is \$5 dollars for materials.** If interested, please see Cindy Knauff (724-504-7871), or sign up in the greeting area of the church. Let's get crafting!

125th Anniversary



St. John will be celebrating its 125th anniversary on **October 30th**. In preparation for this milestone, **we would love to borrow any pictures, old documents, or fun stories you have from any point in St. John's history.** Stay tuned for how you can help with and sign up for the celebration!

Children and Youth

Grades 2-5 Kids' Club



As a joint effort with Mars United Presbyterian Church, we are so excited to be starting a **Kids' Club in the fall for kids in grades 2-5**. While there are still some details that we are working out, we do know that it's going to be **fun!** This group will be an opportunity for kids to spend time with **old friends** and make new friends. We will talk about how **God's message is relevant to their lives** in ways that are approachable and meaningful to them. We will work together to **serve the community**. And of course, we will have plenty of **games and snacks!**



To sign up to receive updates on the group's schedule and meeting details, fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/zyueShBkCo28ZyuE8> or scan the QR code.

Contact Pastor Katie if you'd like to volunteer to help!

Worship Helpers

We love having our young worshippers participating in worship and helping with worship leadership! We will be **publishing the monthly schedule of youth worship helpers in the newsletter**. If you are unable to be present for your scheduled service, please try to find someone to cover and tell the office of the change. If you are unable to find someone to cover the week, please let the office know.

	Acolyte	Offering	Offering
3-Jul	Emma Niklewicz	Jules Knauff	Abigail Cardinal
10-Jul	Olivia Claus	Nathan Kramer	Anna Kramer
17-Jul	Ava Niklewicz	Olivia Claus	Nick Claus
24-Jul	Nick Claus	Emma Niklewicz	Ella Niklewicz
31-Jul	Emma Niklewicz	Ava Niklewicz	Ella Niklewicz
7-Aug	Ava Niklewicz	Jules Knauff	Abigail Cardinal

VBS Reunion

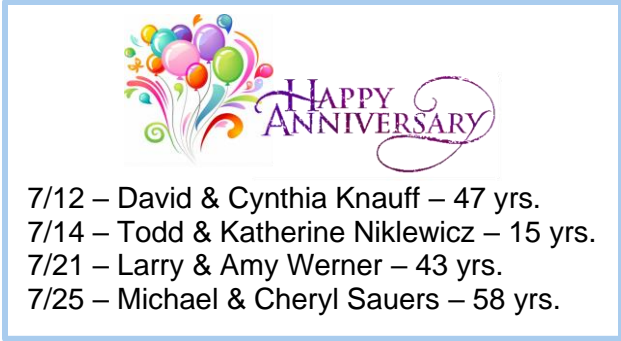
We had so much fun at VBS, we cannot wait until next year to get back together! Join us for a VBS Reunion on August 7th, 1:00-3:20p at Mars United Presbyterian to see all your VBS friends, sing songs, play games, do a craft and some science, and of course hear a Bible story... it's a bonus day of VBS!



Register at <https://forms.gle/Hs5xxBhMPMJYGjZa7> or use the QR code.



7/12 Victoria Lydon
 7/12 Kathleen Schnelle
 7/13 Christopher Julio
 7/13 Marcia Shepard
 7/14 Katherine Richards
 7/19 Jean Claus
 7/20 Luca Julio
 7/20 June Siembieda
 7/22 Jeff Ward
 7/26 Chester Carbo
 7/30 Robert Dishong



7/12 – David & Cynthia Knauff – 47 yrs.
 7/14 – Todd & Katherine Niklewicz – 15 yrs.
 7/21 – Larry & Amy Werner – 43 yrs.
 7/25 – Michael & Cheryl Sauers – 58 yrs.

Assisting Minister
 Kelly Greb

Counters
 Kelly Greb
 Erin Weaver

Bread Baker
 John Tully

JULY NEWSLETTER

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