

June
2022

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 God's name to **worship** and praise God; 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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Believe
There is
Good in the world.

The other day I got snared into a nasty bit of traffic. And it just so happened that the traffic stopped me right in front of a Unitarian Universalist church with a big LED sign out front. As I was waiting for traffic to move, I was casually watching the slides come and go on the sign. But one slide caught my eye. It was formatted like above, calling people to not only believe that there is good in the world... but to *be* the good. Traffic was rough that day, so I watched that slide come across the sign several times. Other than keeping an eye on the traffic to see when it would move, watching the sign became meditative. I'd see the phrase and contemplate what it meant to not only believe there is good in the world, but also to be the good that is in the world. My mind would wander into thinking of things to do and people to call when I got out of traffic, but then the phrase would come back on, bringing my thoughts back to being the good in the world.

In Luther's explanation of the Eighth Commandment ("Thou shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."), Luther expands it to be more than just "don't lie." Luther calls us, in keeping with Jesus' words in the book of Matthew, to "come to [the defense of our neighbors], to speak well of them, and interpret everything they do in the best possible light." And isn't that part of being the good in the world? To not only refrain from bringing down the people around us, but to lift them up and offer them grace and give them the benefit of the doubt? Certainly, being the good extends out beyond that – offering help and kindness to those in need, advocating for justice for the marginalized or oppressed, speaking up against hateful or harmful words or actions. But what if we started being the good by focusing on what's in our own hearts? What if we focused on being the good by "[coming to the defense of our neighbors], [speaking] well of them, and interpret[ing] everything they do in the best possible light"? In every interaction we have, even if it's just in the way we deal with frustratingly slow traffic, we have an opportunity to not only believe that there is good in the world... but to be the good.

Let us be the good the world so desperately needs.

Peace,
Pastor Katie

Join us online for worship services!

Sunday Worship – June 5, 12, 19, 26 – 9:00 AM

Join Zoom for livestreamed service: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411>

Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther

Available on our **YouTubeChannel**: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmkyKssxvQ>
and the church Facebook page: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](#) later in the day.

May Pictures

The youth group did a great job leading worship at Mars United Presbyterian Church at the beginning of May! It is so wonderful to have a partnership with MUP that invites such opportunities. Stay tuned for a youth-led service hosted by St. John in the fall!



Our annual Ladies' Tea was a huge success! 106 people came to drink tea, eat delicious food, and enjoy the company of friends. Between admission and tickets for the nearly 40 donated baskets, we raised over \$3,400 in addition to over \$400 to contribute to MUP's fundraiser for Skyla's family through this popular event! A HUGE thank you to all those who gave so generously of their time, talents, and treasures to bring everything together!



Many thanks to our Sunday School class for planting flowers in the pots that go around our church building during the summer months! This is a fun way to celebrate the end of the school year!



Around the Church

Elders' Intentions

As our Sunday School program comes to a close, the Elders are shifting their focus to summer worship. Future plans include a mid-week evening campfire/vespers worship to include, snacks, fun and worship that will be open to the community (volunteers & ideas welcomed). This year we plan to have our Annual Sunday Morning Picnic & Worship on the church lawn sometime in August. During the summer the Elders will be working on plans for Rally Day, an Installation Service for Pastor Katie and working with the Deacons as we approach our Commemorative 125th Anniversary Service in the fall. Stay tuned!

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 right here 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 next four months 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. Each month will have specific items in focus. 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 June, we are asking for donations of toilet paper, deodorant, and 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.

Campfire Worship



Thursday, June 23rd, join us outside around a campfire on the lawn for an evening worship service! We will have a sing-along time beginning at 7:00pm. Worship will begin at 7:30pm. S'mores will be available for after worship. Bring your own chair/blanket and come for this brief worship service including several camp favorite songs!

Mark Your Calendars!

Burgers on Beaver St – August 13th

Stay tuned for more information about this familiar favorite!

Annual Church Picnic – August 14th

This year we will be having our picnic on the lawn next to the church. We will have worship, picnic food, and games! It's a great time for all!!



Children and Youth



Youth Group Kennywood Day

Our joint youth group with Mars United Presbyterian Church will be going to Kennywood on **Wednesday, June 22nd**. We are asking that families pay what they are able to pay toward the ticket prices (\$50 if we have less than 10 tickets sold, \$35 if we have ten or more). Contact Pastor Katie to reserve your space or ask questions. Non-youth group members may also purchase tickets for that day to help us get the group discount.

Vacation Bible School

Register now for VBS held in partnership with Mars United Presbyterian Church **June 26th-30th, 6:00-8:20p**, with a special opening on Sunday at 5:00pm! All days of VBS are held at Mars United Presbyterian Church (232 Crowe Ave). Online registration is available at <https://www.mars-up.org/>.

A note from Keith Cardinal about VBS:

"I run the "upper classman" group at VBS and I can tell you as a person who commutes 50 minutes one way and works 12hr days this is a BRUTAL week...

but I gladly do it every year because there is ALWAYS a "moment" where I see that cartoon lightbulb appear above a child's head when they finally "GET IT". Those moments are quite literally priceless! To see that understanding in a child's eyes knowing that they have truly experienced God in a personal and meaningful way is breathtaking and inspiring."



Summer Camp Registration is OPEN!

If your child wants to go to camp, let us know in the office! We would love to pray for your child as they experience life-changing adventures in faith at Lutherlyn! Lutherlyn promises to never turn a child away for financial reasons. (to learn more, go to lutherlyn.com/summer) Programs are filling quickly, so register today!



Stay Tuned!

125th Anniversary



St. John will be celebrating its 125th anniversary as a congregation in October 2022!

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. Please send all materials to the office. Stay tuned for more details about the celebration!

Community News



CONGRATULATIONS

We will celebrate with 2022 graduates on **June 12** during the worship service.

Our St. John graduate!



Kayla Julio graduated magna cum laude from Gettysburg College on May 14, 2022. During her years at Gettysburg, she created an individualized major in neuroaesthetics, combining her love of art & interest in neuroscience. She also double majored in Spanish (receiving departmental honors) and minored in neuroscience. She will be relocating to New Mexico where she will work for the nonprofit, Mind Research Network. She will be a research assistant focusing on aging research and diseases such as Parkinsons and Lewy body dementia.

Synod Assembly



SWPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2022

Synod Assembly is a time to gather with members of the 151 churches of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA. Synod Assembly is an opportunity to hear updates from the ministries of the synod as well as participate in the legislative process of the synod. This year's theme is "I Love to Tell the Story," based on the hymn. Katherine Hankey, the author of the poem from which the hymn is taken briefly summarizes the whole story of the Bible. The hymn reminds us that the story of God and God's people throughout the ages should be a focus of Christians. During Synod Assembly, we will tell the story of God and God's people in the synod as well as consider what it means to say "I love to tell the story... the old, old story of Jesus and His love."

Much of the assembly is limited to registered voters, but there are **two public events**:

Presiding Bishop Curry of The Episcopal Church, widely regarded as one of the most dynamic preachers of our times, will be offering the **keynote address on Thursday, June 16th at 6pm**. This address will be publicly available on the synod's Facebook page.

On **Friday, June 17 at 7pm there will be three simultaneous in-person worship services** with coffee hour following. All are invited to join in worship, though registration is requested. Worship services will be at Camp Agape, Camp Lutherlyn, and Harrold Zion Lutheran Church in Greensburg, PA. Worship held at Harrold Zion Lutheran Church will be livestreamed on the synod's Facebook page.

In Worship

Prayer List Updates

We would like the list of names we lift up in prayer as a community each Sunday to be as current as possible. We are therefore asking people to review the prayer lists and let the office know whether the names you have placed on the prayer list should continue to remain on the weekly prayers or if the name can be removed.

Hymn Stories



During June, we will be singing “Take My Life, That I May Be!” for our offertory hymn. Here is how author Frances Havergal describes the events that inspired the writing of this hymn:

“I went for a little visit of five days. There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for; some converted, but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer: ‘Lord, give me all in this house.’ And He just DID! Before I left the house everyone had got a blessing. The last night of my visit, after I had retired, the governess asked me to go to the two

daughters. They were crying, etc. Then and there both of them trusted and rejoiced. It was nearly midnight. I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise and renewal of my own consecration; and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another till they finished with ‘ever, only, all for Thee’” (*Lutheran Hymnal Handbook*, 486). This hymn is a beautiful prayer that God would both draw us closer to Himself, and use us to bring others to Him. God calls us to a life of discipleship, and our only response should be, “Here am I. Send me.”

(originally published on https://hymnary.org/text/take_my_life_and_let_it_be)

Church Calendar Notes

On June 5, we celebrate Pentecost (the Greek word *pentekostos* means “50th”). In the Christian church, we mark Pentecost as the 50th day of Easter. In the ancient Jewish faith, Pentecost was celebrated at the Feast of Weeks, which took place on the 50th day after the priest celebrated the first grain that had been harvested in the spring. It was at this time that people were gathering together in our reading for the day in the book of Acts. We read the story of when language barriers were broken down and the Holy Spirit came down by way of tongues of fire after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. This story marks the beginning of the book of Acts, a book that is then all about the very beginning days of the Christian church and its mission in and to the world. Pentecost is therefore often called the “birthday of the church.” While it is often not celebrated with as much occasion as Christmas or Easter, it is considered a major festival within the church. We will celebrate Pentecost with red throughout the church and streamers to celebrate the joy of this birthday celebration. Join us for cake after worship too!

The week after Pentecost is Holy Trinity Sunday, when we grapple with the doctrine of the Holy Trinity: God as three in one and God as one in three. Then we enter what is called “Ordinary Time,” marked by the Sundays after Pentecost. This season lasts until Advent, so expect to see green cloths on the altar and pulpit for the next few months. While the season after Pentecost might seem like a long stretch of time with limited points of celebration or highlights, it is a great time for us as a church to focus on living out the gifts we have been given and how we can use these gifts as we put our hands to God’s work.



6/05 Gerald Brunson
6/06 Henry Ford
6/08 Cindy Knauff
6/12 Janet Senka
6/13 Laura Gold
6/21 Katie Niklewicz
6/24 Reed Richards
6/26 Alaina Nagel
6/28 Abigail Cardinal
6/29 Gabriella Julio



6/11 – Jamie & Erin Weaver – 17 yrs.
6/29 – Henry & Janet Ford – 59 yrs.

June Worship Assistants

Assisting Ministers

Matt Claus 6/5
Kelly Greb 6/12, 6/19, 6/26

Ushers

Larry & Amy Werner

Counters

Ruth Ann Tully
Matt Claus

Bread Baker

Missy Kramer

JUNE NEWSLETTER

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