

August
2023

St. John Lutheran Church



St. John Lutheran Church
PO Box 411
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Mars, PA 16046
Office Hours: MWF 8a-1p

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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.*

So I finally got a house! The closing was the end of July. After a year and a half of looking, it feels a bit surreal to have a house. Looking for a house had become my full-time hobby. Many days off were spent touring houses. Scrolling through real estate listings was my way to pass time in the grocery store line or while relaxing in the evenings. I lost count of how many offer letters were written. But for as much time and energy as went into the house hunting process for the last year and a half, I know it is just the beginning of a whole new crazy chapter! Now begins the process of packing, moving, and unpacking. Now begins the process of taking this house and turning it into a home. Now begins the process of mapping out what life will look like in this home. It's all a very big transition that will take a long time to unfold. (I'll be taking a week of vacation to start the process, see information about that later in this newsletter)

I would like to thank you for all your kindness and support over the last year and a half as I navigated the house hunting process! Over the months, I received countless words of encouragement and notes about houses for sale in the area. Thank you for your understanding and patience as the process lasted FAR longer than any of us could have anticipated. And I thank you in advance for your continued kindness and support as I replace my house hunting hobby with my new house owning hobby.

Church is a good place to find a steady beat in the midst of big transitions like this... as individuals become parents... as kids become young adults... as parents become grandparents... as working people become retired people. We all face a multitude of major transitions in life. And I am so grateful that Church, the Word of God, the love and grace of God are constants through it all. Dear church, I pray that as you face the big transitions in your life, you find a steady rock in God, you find a safe harbor in God's grace and love, and you find a steady beat in the life of the Church. Thank you. Thank you for being a steady beat. Thank you for being a place where God can be met, where God's love can be the safe harbor we all need in big transitions.

Peace,
Pastor Katie

Online Sunday Worship

Join Zoom for service: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther
Available on our YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMqDRNmKkYKssxvQ>
and in the church Facebook group: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](#) later in the day.

Worship Notes

Young Worship Leaders

We love having our young worshippers helping with worship leadership! 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.

	Acolyte	Offering	Offering	Young Reader
6-Aug	TBD	Ava N	Ella N	
13-August	Ava N	Anna K	Nathan K	
20-August	Emma N	Luca K	Eva K	Emma N
27-August	Abigail C	Ava N	Emma N	
3-September	Anna K	Jules K	Abigail C	

Adult Worship Leaders

	Greeters	Usher	Assistant Minister	Bread Baker	Counters
6-August	TBD	TBD	Jonathan C	Cindy K	Matt C Denise H
13-August	TBD	TBD	Jonathan C	Cindy K	Matt C Denise H
20-August	TBD	TBD	Denise H	Cindy K	Matt C Denise H
27-August	TBD	TBD	Valerie C	Cindy K	Matt C Denise H
3-September	TBD	TBD	Valerie C	Denise H	Denise H Cindy K

College Sendoff – August 13

For many of our college students, this Sunday will be their last Sunday in town for a while. Join us as **we bless their learning journey and wish them well!**

Campfire Worship – August 17

Bring your own chair/blanket and join us outside around a campfire on the lawn for an evening worship service, singing, and s'mores! **Worship will begin at 7:00pm.**



Blessing of the Backpacks – August 20

Before long folks will be heading back to school! Whether a teacher or a student, going back to school after summer vacation is a big transition! Bring your backpack, messenger bag, or book strap to worship on August 20th. **We will bless these symbols of learning and transformation as we get ready to head back to school!**



Serving Others



Third Quarter Mission Emphasis Project

Our third quarter (July, August, September) Mission Emphasis project is Lutherlyn. **Lutherlyn is a God-given place to be accepted, challenged, and sent out into the world to make a difference.** In keeping with their mission, **Lutherlyn promises to never turn a child away from camp for financial reasons.** This year, Lutherlyn celebrates 75 years of camping and outdoor ministry as it takes on a capital campaign to fund some much-needed maintenance and growth projects in their Building for the Future Campaign. To contribute, **please mark your envelopes “Mission Emphasis.”**

God’s Work Our Hands Sunday - Sept. 10

We are going to be observing God’s Work Our Hands Sunday again this year! **On this Sunday we will restructure our worship to incorporate a service project as an integral part of how we worship.** This year we will be packing and decorating school bags for Church Wide Services (CWS). CWS helps people in need throughout the world through various kits and blankets. **We need volunteers to help make bags.**

Patterns can be picked up in the Greeting Area at church. All bags should be returned to the church by August 20. We will also be collecting the requested school supplies to fill them. Back-to-school sales are great! **We need rounded-tip scissors, 70-page spiral bound notebooks, 12” rulers, handheld pencil sharpeners, large erasers, unsharpened wooden pencils, and boxes of 24 crayons.** **Donations can be dropped off in the bin in the Greeting Area.** Let’s see if we can fill 40 bags!

“God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday



September 10, 2023



Lutherlyn Campaign – Building for the Future

The Lutherlyn Board of Directors has authorized the **Building for the Future capital campaign to provide the funding necessary to retain Lutherlyn’s capacity for year-round programs and increase the number of youths, adults, and congregations served by this ministry for generations to come.** Through this campaign, Lutherlyn is raising money to cover several key projects to carry Lutherlyn into the future. **The well-used Shaulis cabins have deteriorated beyond repair,** so the old cabins will be removed, and new cabins will be built to continue to serve campers year-round. **The beloved amphitheater has also deteriorated over the years, sinking into the dirt below it;** a second project is to secure the structural integrity of the space so that it can be enjoyed for years to come. Other projects to ensure the safe, hospitable, and welcoming atmosphere at camp are also included in this project. **Stay tuned for details about how you can support this campaign!**

St. John Food Pantry

Maintaining the food pantry is a community effort! Help us to keep it stocked with items with a long shelf life, especially **personal hygiene, cleaning, and paper products.** And be sure **to invite people to make use of the food pantry as they need!** Outdoor pantries can be tricky with the fluctuating weather, so we want to be careful of what we keep in it. **Items that will not last in hot summer weather can be kept in the indoor pantry.**

Around the Church

New Member Conversation – July 30

When people want to officially become members of St. John, we invite them to a “New Member Conversation.” **These conversations invite people to learn a little about the ELCA, a little about St. John and what membership means, and continue to intentionally develop relationships within the congregation.** We will be having a New Member Conversation on July 30th. Stay tuned for when we will welcome these individuals as members of the congregation!

Pastor on Vacation

Pastor Katie will be on vacation August 2-8 as she prepares to move. We are grateful to Denise as she leads worship on August 6. Any **pastoral emergencies can be directed to Pastor Brian Hauser** (Mars United Presbyterian Church). He can be reached at 724-689-3412.

Adult Education Forum – Beginning August 23

After a summer break, we are back to our regular forum meetings! On August 23 we will begin our **new series on the influences of Luther.** Who was Luther reading? Who were his theological and academic mentors and guides? How did Luther become the face of the Reformations? **Join us for this series at 7:00pm on Wednesdays August 23-September 27. Contact the office if you'd like to receive the weekly information sheets and Zoom links.**

Birthday and Anniversary Celebrations

On the last Sunday of each month, we have a **coffee hour after worship to celebrate the birthdays and the anniversaries** in the congregation for that month. **If you would like to host a coffee hour** (generally includes: getting a cake, making sure there are enough plates/forks/napkins/etc., making the coffee, and cleaning up afterward), please contact the office.

Contemplative Walks – August 10 and 24

The idea is to **enjoy nature with a shared intention of being in the present moment, harvesting joy and creating connectivity.** Along with other churches in the area, we will be hosting contemplative walks in North Park, taking time to pray and connect with God and creation. **Participants are welcome to walk in solitude or together, with kids or pets, or just the grown-ups.** The last walks of the season will be Aug 10 and 24 and Sept 7. We will meet at the **Pie Traynor Parking Lot at 6:30p.**

Community Garden

After a delayed start, more of the garden is beginning to produce! As the garden grows, feel free to weed and harvest as you like! Let Pastor Katie know if you'd like to help water too. If you have any questions about the garden, check out the signs throughout the garden or contact Pastor Katie.



Applefest – October 7

Fall is around the corner, and with it Applefest! **Applefest is a big deal in Mars, so this is a great opportunity to be an active presence in the community.** It takes a lot of hands to get ready for the event as well as to sit at the booth and talk with people. **Mark your calendars now** and talk to one of the Elders or Pastor Katie if you'd like to help prepare for the day!



Children and Youth

Vacation Bible School – A Success!

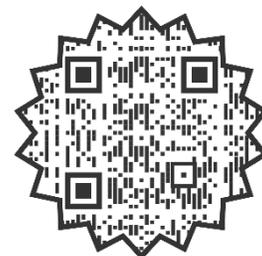
We had a fantastic week at Vacation Bible School! **With over 40 kids and over 30 volunteers, the church was busy with lots of fun and laughter and shining Jesus' light!** Thank you to all who make this week possible! There are dozens and dozens of people of all ages who look forward to this every year, and **it could not happen without your amazing support!**

VBS Reunion – August 13

Our VBS Reunion is on **August 13th, 1:00-3:00p** at Mars United Presbyterian. It will be filled with VBS friends, songs, games, a craft, some science, and of course a Bible story... **it's a bonus day of VBS!**

Please Register by August 7th using the QR code or the link below:

<https://forms.gle/9mCmLVaWvUH71dtT7>



Kids Club and Youth Group Ohiopyle Trip – August 19



As the summer comes to a close, join us as we take on some family-friendly rafting at Ohiopyle! Participants are asked to **bring a brown-bag lunch** (no glass), a bottle of water, sunscreen, and bug spray. **Youth Group and Kids Club participants are \$15/person**, other children and youth are \$20/person, and adults are \$30/person. **We will leave at 8:30am and anticipate returning around 4:30/5:00pm.** Contact Pastor Katie to register or with any questions.

Coming Soon – A New Ministry Opportunity

We are looking to try a new ministry opportunity within St. John that will give people of all ages a different way to gather, explore, and worship. **Following the model of Messy Church, our time together will include science, craft, and game activities, eating together, and worship that is designed to be accessible to people of all ages and of all levels of connection to church.** We are anticipating starting this ministry in October, meeting once a month for a few months as we gauge interest and response. **If you would like to help dream or plan or prepare for this ministry, contact Pastor Katie.**



Sponsor a Bible

Having a personal Bible is an important part of our faith journey. **To help our children on their faith journeys, we give students Bibles that match the Bible used during Sunday School.** Our youngest class will receive a copy of the Frolic Preschool Bible, our middle class the Whirl Story Bible, and our oldest class the Collaborate Study Bible. **Bibles cost \$15-25 depending on the specific version.** After missing a couple of years, we have lots of students in need of a Bible! To supply the Bibles for this year as well as to have some on hand for future students, **we have a goal of 16 Bibles (about \$350).** **To sponsor a Bible, simply mark your offering as for a Bible!** Bibles will be ordered by the end of August to allow shipping time before we present them to our students on September 17th.



Rally Day – September 10

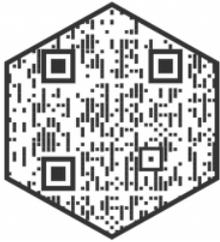
On **September 10**, we will have our service worship day and while we are in the basement, we will **bleed the space that will be used by students and teachers to explore their faith** during our Sunday School classes for all ages. After worship, we will **celebrate the kickoff of the academic year with good food and games at Rally Day!** Sunday School classes for all ages will start September 17th after worship, at 10:15 am.



Grades 6-12 Youth Group

The Mars Area Youth Group (a joint venture between St. John and Mars United Presbyterian for youth in grades 6-12) will be **starting again in the fall** (first meeting 1-2:30 pm, October 8th)! Meetings are at Mars United Presbyterian (232 Crowe Ave).

Stay tuned for a full schedule of meetings and events! To sign up to receive updates and the group's schedule, please fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/eQEjU43wXju4Agsk9> or scan the QR code.



Grades 2-5 Kids' Club

Our Joint Kids' Club with Mars United Presbyterian is back this fall for kids in grades 2-5. We will talk about how **God's message is relevant to their lives**, work together to **serve the community**, and of course play plenty of **games!** **To sign up to receive the group's schedule and meeting details**, fill out the form at <https://forms.gle/YXESKSj6jc9Xiqqa5A> or scan the QR code. Our first meeting will be Oct 8th, 1-2:30p at St. John. **Contact Pastor Katie if you want to help!**



Faith in the Home The Ordinary Summer

Living Lutheran published an article by Lisa A. Smith. The full article can be found at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2023/07/have-an-ordinary-summer/>. The article talks about **the value of an ordinary summer**. In May, there are often big plans for the summer. We plan all the ways that we will cram in as much as possible in the brief summer months, and sometimes we forget about all the **small, ordinary parts of summer that can sometimes be the best parts of the summer**. Smith says, "Summer is "ordinary time" in our lectionary cycle, the assigned readings for each Sunday's worship service. No special church season, no high church holidays—just one regular Sunday after another. Or are they? Several readings this summer highlight small, ordinary things: bread, water, yeast, fish, a mustard seed. **Ordinary things can teach us important lessons, bring great delight and even carry the holy**—just as water does at baptism and bread and wine do at communion." Smith ends her article by encouraging us to find "**find joy in the little things and, in them, experience God's presence.**" August is the tail end of summer. If you're disappointed at what didn't get crossed off the summer list, it's okay! There are still several weeks of brilliantly ordinary summer ahead, several weeks to soak up the ordinary and revel in God's presence through it all. If you're looking for ideas, Smith offers the following suggestions: "**Take a micro-hike and explore.** Grab a photo frame (or cut one out from cardboard), go outside and set it down in a yard or park. What do you notice? Look closely, observing flora, fauna, patterns, shadows and light. You might use a magnifying glass or bring along a sketchbook to record what you see. **Keep a running list of little joys and simple pleasures.** Write them on a poster board, type them in a document or put them on slips of paper in a jar. Then read them together at summer's end. And share small moments. **At mealtime invite each person to share something that brought them joy, peace or delight that day.**"

August 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1 Elder's Meeting 7 pm	2 Pastor Katie Vacation Pastoral Emergency Contact - Pastor Brian Hauser (MUP)	3	4	5
6 Worship 9:00 am Trustee's Meeting 10:15 am Pastor Vacation	7	8 Deacon's Meeting 7 pm	9	10 Contemplative Walk 6:30 pm Worship Planners 7 pm	11	12
13 Worship 9:00 a College sendoff Mutual Ministry VBS Reunion 1:00 - 3:00 MUP	14	15 Council Meeting 7 pm	16	17 Campfire Worship 7 pm	18	19 Ohiopyle Trip 8:30am - 4:30pm
20 Worship 9:00 a Blessing of the backpacks Newsletter Articles Due	21	22	23 Adult Forum 7 pm	24 Contemplative Walk 6:30 pm	25	26
27 Worship 9:00 am Birthday/Anniversary Coffee Hour 10:15 am	28	29 Pastor Katie Penn Mar 1:45 pm	30 Adult Forum 7 pm	31	Office Hours Food Pantry	MWF 8am - 1pm MW 9am - 1pm



8/02 Emma Niklewicz
8/05 Denise Hager
8/08 Anne Olescyski
8/08 Frederick Bielo
8/14 Laura Greb
8/14 Ava Niklewicz
8/17 Todd Niklewicz
8/17 Kayla Julio
8/24 Beverly Crislip



8/25 – John & Susan Fritz – 44 yrs.

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