

November
2023

St. John Lutheran Church



St. John Lutheran Church
PO Box 411
420 Beaver Street
Mars, PA 16046
Office Hours MWF, 8a-1p
(please call ahead to confirm availability)

Web site: www.stjohnchurchmars.org
Church Office: (724) 625-1830
Office email: office@stjohnchurchmars.org
Pastor Katie's email: pastorkmcneal@gmail.com
Pastor's Cell #: 412-407-3166

We remember before our God and Father your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Thessalonians 1:3

Every now and then someone asks if I made a mistake in my writing when I talk about “being church.” It sounds a little funny from a grammar perspective, but I like what it suggests when we talk about being church rather than being a church. Being church means that we embody God’s mission in the world. We embody the grace and mercy, the love and justice proclaimed throughout the scriptures. To expand on the ELCA’s motto, we are the hands doing God’s work in the world; we are the voices proclaiming God’s word in the world. As I look over this newsletter and think of all the things we have done and the things we will do, I am in awe. I am in awe of the energy and excitement people bring to sharing the Good News. I am in awe of the dedication to supporting the ministry of this church. And I am in awe that I get to work with such incredible people as we all try to figure out how to be church in Mars in today’s world. Or, in the words of Paul, I am in awe of “your work produced by faith, your labor prompted by love, and your endurance inspired by hope.”

We are in need of a new roof. It can be easy to get caught up in worrying about scarcity. It can be easy to get bogged down in the details of the logistics of needing a new roof. It can be easy to let fear rule us and allow the roof and the associated costs to become a focus of our work. The roof is important. We need it. Without a new roof, we run the risk of leaks and other property damage. And yes, it is uncomfortably expensive. But we are not a church. We are not a building that we maintain for the sake of having a building. We are church. We are the hands and voices doing God’s work, proclaiming God’s Good News. The building is a tool in our ministry and mission in and around Mars. And we trust that God provides for our needs to do God’s work in this community. So as we navigate the process of a new roof, as we navigate new board members and transitioning into a new calendar and fiscal year, let us remember that we are church. God’s love and grace, mercy and justice, are at the center of everything we do and say. And may we continue to engage in work that is “produced by faith, labor prompted by love, and endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ.”

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 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.

Find Us on Social Media

Like us on **Facebook** (@stjohnchurchmars) or Follow us on **Instagram** (@stjohnchurchmars)

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/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmKsYKssxvQ>

Congregational Meeting Notice

We will have a special congregational meeting to discuss a loan and capital campaign to cover the cost of a new roof for the church building and parsonage on **Sunday, November 19th, immediately following the 9:00am worship service.**

Worship Notes

Young Worship Leaders

If you are unable to be present, please find someone to cover and tell the office of the change.

	Acolyte	Offering	Offering	Young Reader
5-November	Abigail C	Ava N	Emma N	
12-November	Anna K	Jules K	Abigail C	
19-November	Nathan K	Ava N	Ella N	Emma N
26-November	Ava N	Anna K	Nathan K	
3-December	Emma N	Luca K	Eva K	

Adult Worship Leaders

	Greeters	Usher	Assistant Minister	Bread Baker	Counters
5-November	VOLUNTEER	Larry W	Missy K	Denise H	Missy K Jill W
12-November	VOLUNTEER	Larry W	Missy K	Denise H	Missy K Jill W
19-November	VOLUNTEER	Larry W	Missy K	Denise H	Missy K Jill W
26-November	VOLUNTEER	Larry W	Missy K	Denise H	Missy K Jill W
3-December	VOLUNTEER	Dave K	Denise H	Denise H	Denise H Katie N

Volunteer Spotlight: Greeters

When you walk into a church, **how you are greeted can really set the tone.** Does someone say hello... hand you a bulletin... answer questions about where to find things? Does someone make you feel welcome? These are roles the Greeters have. **It's best to have someone at each entrance looking to welcome people to worship and help everyone know that we are glad that they are here.** Please sign up in the Greeting Area to help us fill this role of hospitality on Sunday mornings.

Flowers in Worship

If you would like to **provide flowers for our altar during worship**, please sign up in the Greeting Area. Stay tuned for information about purchasing poinsettias for Christmas!

Adult Choir

For major festivals (like Christmas Eve!), there is a **choir of dedicated singers** who prepare and offer a song for worship. If you'd like to be a part of this group, contact our Music Director, Maizy.

Worship Notes (continued)

All Saints Worship – November 5

Commemorating the saints of the church has been a practice since the 4th century. In the 8th century, the festival commemorating all saints was set on November 1st. Protestant churches (including Lutherans) believe that all Christian dead are saints, and there is no need for release from purgatory. In our bulletin on November 5, we will be remembering all of our loved ones who have died. **As we remember them, we recall the witness they gave through their lives, what they meant to us as fellow Christians, where they have led the way, and what they have left for us yet to accomplish.**

Joint Youth-Led Worship – November 12

Our Joint Kids Club and Youth Group with Mars United Presbyterian Church will help curate and lead worship on November 12 at 9:00am. **To celebrate this joint ministry, the members of Mars United Presbyterian Church will come to St. John and Pastor Brian will preach.** In addition to our youth leading us in worship, we will have the **local scouts join us to pray for the veterans in our community**, and we will be **blessing the hands that will serve with our friends at Harvest Street Mission.** It's going to be a wonderfully busy day!

Advent Begins – December 3



Advent is the **season of preparation** as we get ready for Christmas. Regardless of what day of the week Christmas is, Advent is always the **four Sundays leading up to Christmas.** Because Advent is defined as the four Sundays before Christmas Day, this year the fourth Sunday of Advent will fall on December 24. Join us in worship as we wait for the coming Christ child and get ready for the gift of Christmas. Make sure your child gets their own **Advent calendar to count down** to Christmas during worship on November 26, the last Sunday of the church year. If you and/or your family would like to volunteer to participate in worship by **helping with lighting the Advent Wreath, please contact the office!**

Christmas Worship Schedule

We have an abundance of opportunities to come together to celebrate Emmanuel, God with us. At Christmas we celebrate God coming among us in the baby Jesus. December 24 is the fourth Sunday of Advent in the morning (stay tuned for details about that service!), then later in the **day we celebrate the birth of Jesus with services at 3:00pm and 7:30pm. On Christmas Day, December 25, we will gather for a relaxed and interactive retelling of the story at 9:00am.**

Around the Community

Mars Light Up Night – November 25



Mars Borough is once again hosting Light Up Night! This is a great community event to kick off the Holiday season! Light Up Night will include a **Holiday Market** on Pittsburgh Street from 4:00-8:00 pm, **Tree Lighting** at the Saucer at 5:30 pm, and a **Parade** at 7:30 pm. Hope to see you there! For more information, visit marsborough.com/light-up-mars

Around the Church

Blurb from the Deacons

The October Deacons meeting was a busy one. First a decision was made to change the date of the **pancake breakfast** to December 9th due to a conflict in the Mars community. The time will be 8-11 and we will ask for a free will offering. Next a series of decisions were made about the contents of the **Advent Boxes** which will be filled and delivered in November. Lastly a report was given on the **Stewardship workshop** that Pastor Katie, Kelly Greb and Cindy Knauff attended. It was decided to do a **Stewardship campaign starting in January.**

Thank you – College Cards

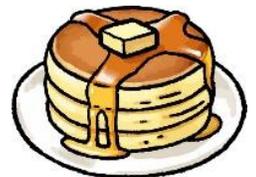
In October we sent cards to our college students letting them know that we are thinking about them and praying for them. To brighten their day a little further, we also included gift cards to Dunkin Donuts. The students have appreciated these tokens. **Thank you to everyone who helps us to care for our young people away from home by offering cards and prayers.** One student texted Pastor Katie saying, **“College is tough, but knowing that my church family is supporting me is really helping.”**

Living Nativity – December 8

Mars United Presbyterian Church is once again hosting the Living Nativity! **This year it will be a one-night only event on Friday, December 8, but you’re not going to want to miss this!** There are going to be lots of live animals joining the performance. Stay tuned for more information about how you can get involved!

Pancake Breakfast – December 9

Who doesn't love a plateful of delicious pancakes?! Join us on **Saturday, December 9th from 8:00am-11:00am for a Pancake Breakfast at the church!** We will be collecting a free-will offering, but there will be no specific entrance fee. **Invite your friends and come eat pancakes with us!**



Serving on the Boards

St. John is run by three boards, the Deacons, the Elders, and the Trustees. We also have a Mission Endowment Fund Committee and a Mutual Ministry Committee. Each December we elect individuals to serve on each of the boards and the Mission Endowment Committee (the Mutual Ministry Committee is filled by appointment). **We are always in need of new people willing to serve. Each term is 2 years long and individuals are welcome to serve for 1 or 2 terms.** Though there is often some overlap, each board has its primary areas of responsibility. The **Deacons** are largely responsible for visiting the homebound, overseeing stewardship practices and events, and planning fellowship opportunities. The **Elders** are largely responsible for Christian education and faith formation, evangelism, and worship life within the congregation. The **Trustees** are primarily responsible for taking care of the physical property of the church and overseeing the finances and budget. The Mission Endowment Committee listens to the community and disburses funds collected as interest on an account set aside for mission support. **If you have interest in serving or know someone you think has gifts for serving in one of these areas, contact the office to be put in contact with a member of the nominating committee** (the committee in charge of preparing the ballot for election to the boards/committee).

Faith Formation for All Ages

Sunday Morning Learning and Fellowship

All adults are welcome to join us during the Faith Formation hour (Sundays, 10:10am-11:10am) to discuss the scripture read during worship and how it applies to our daily lives. **Questions to guide and prompt discussion will be available as well as time to bring your own questions. Grab a cup of coffee and join us in the basement.**

Our younger students are invited to participate in one of our three age-appropriate classes (pre-readers, elementary school, and middle/high school). All our younger classes begin Sunday School together, learning a song and about the Apostles' Creed.



Confirmation Classes – Third Saturdays (9:30-11:30am)



Confirmation is a faith formation opportunity that helps our young people (typically grades 6-8) engage with their faith and prepare to take ownership of the promises made on their behalf at baptism. **Our first meeting was in October and the students explored some of the places we hear about in the Bible as well as learning a little about the structure of the New Testament, how it is similar and how it is different from the Old Testament, and the different books that are in the New Testament.** We also started learning to identify the books of the Bible by playing Bible Bingo... all the more fun with edible bingo chips!

Messy Church – Third Fridays (5:30-7:30pm)

We had so much fun at our first Messy Church in October! We cannot wait until the next one! **Messy Church is an intentionally intergenerational place for people to meet and experience fun and messy ways to engage in faith, including crafts and activities, celebration, and a shared meal no matter their connection to church. At Messy Church, we celebrate the creative, joyful God revealed in Jesus Christ.** Faith formation topics and Bible stories are explored in ways that invite our whole messy selves into God's story of the good news of Jesus Christ - that we are freed and forgiven in God's abundant grace and that God's love is for us, all of us. **If you would like to help with this ministry, contact Pastor Katie.** No registration is required for this free faith formation opportunity. Check out our pictures below from our first Messy Church! Come to the next one on November 17th and bring your neighbors and friends to share in the fun!



Faith Formation (continued)

Adult Bible Study

After we complete our series on the Lord's Prayer, we will take some time off before diving into **our next series: the Lutheran perspective on Mary**, the mother of Jesus. We will read various places in scripture where we see her faith in action as well as discuss how she impacts our own faith stories. **We will continue to have two different opportunities each week to engage with the material to allow people flexibility in their schedules. Our next series will meet on Sundays, 6:30-7:30 pm Nov. 26-Dec. 10 and Wednesdays, 7:00-8:00 pm Nov. 29-Dec. 13.** As always, weekly information sheets and zoom links are available. Contact the office to be added to the weekly emails with this information.

All are welcome to participate in the conversation!

Serving Others

Harvest Street Mission – Nov. 11 and 12

We will be heading back to the North Side to **serve a hot meal and distribute necessary items to approximately 100 people with Harvest Street Mission** on November 12. On November 11, we will be preparing and packaging everything.

There are still a few items that would be great additions. If you or someone you know would like to sponsor or donate an item, please contact Kim R or the church office. **We also provide a meal to go, and we still need fruit and bottled water.**

On November 5 representatives from Harvest Street Mission will come and share with the congregation a little bit about the work that they do before worship.

See a picture from our last time serving with Harvest Street Mission in June 2023 below!



Meals on Wheels Cookie Baking – December 2

Get ready for an epic baking party! **We will be baking enough cookies for all the participants in the Meals on Wheels program to enjoy throughout December.** It's going to be an all-hands-on deck affair! Some cookies will have pre-made dough; some we'll make from scratch during our baking time. All levels of bakers are welcome to join us! We start baking at 9:00 am. To bake goodies at home to share, sign up in the Gathering Area at the church.

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. **Access to the indoor pantry is every Monday and Wednesday 9a-1p** with additional times available by calling Pastor Katie or the office.

Serving Others (continued)

October, November, December Mission Emphasis – Boaz House

Our fourth quarter mission emphasis is the Boaz House. **The Boaz House is an independent clothing and food ministry** that serves in affiliation with Glade Run Presbyterian Church. The Boaz House serves 20-30 families with pantry food items each month and runs a continuous clothing closet for people from all over, offering as many clothes, coats, and sheets as they need. **There is no limit to who they will serve. They are particularly in need of children's clothing.** To contribute to the Boaz House through our mission emphasis, mark your offering "mission emphasis."

Angel Tree



Stay tuned for more information about how you can participate in this opportunity to **brighten the holiday season for children and youth** served by **Glade Run Lutheran Services** by getting a gift for a child or family in need! Beyond the gifts under the tree, donated items received through Glade Run's annual drive provide joy, relief, and comfort all year long.

Updates from October Events

Applefest Follow Up

The games and crafts were a hit with community children and youth and gave us a wonderful opportunity to engage with local families. The baked goods and hot dogs were a hit too! **Thank you to everyone who made this community event a success!** We are always in need of more people to help us get ready on the day before and to help set up, serve, engage, and clean up on the day of. **So go ahead and mark your calendars and consider volunteering to help next year!**

Soup Sale Follow Up

It is officially soup weather, and there are now lots of people enjoying hot bowls of homemade soup thanks to the Soup Sale hosted by the Deacons! **Lots of time, talent, and treasures went into this sale, and we are so grateful for all the ways people supported it!** Thank you to the people who graciously made soup; thank you to the people who bought soup; thank you to the people who encouraged others to buy soup; and thank you to the people who held this sale in prayer. **Over 100 quarts of soup were sold!**

Blessing of the Pets Follow Up

The weather was not the best, but we had fun blessing the pets who were able to come out! **Two dogs, one parrot, and five humans were all blessed on the lawn** as we remembered our role as caretakers of God's good creation, including these beloved pets!



An Advent Activity

Attention glue gun slingers and craft store fanatics, here I got a project for you!



Go find five tealight candles, five mason jars, a small box, some blue or purple paint, glue, and something to use as a base (think of the cardboard base of a frozen pizza).

Then paint four of the mason jars blue (or three purple and one pink), glue them onto the base, and put tea lights inside the jars. Then set the box in the center and put the Advent Centerpiece Wreath you've just made in a place of gathering in your home or a place you regularly spend time (i.e., a dining table).

Next to the Advent Centerpiece, place a stack of small papers and a pen to be used throughout the coming Advent season.

As many times as you'd like throughout the week, do as follows:

- Between **November 27th and December 3rd** light one tealight, and consider the following question: "What has made me **hopeful** about the future this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you hope in your life.
- Between **December 4th and 10th** light two tealights, and consider the following question: "Where have I found **peace** this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you peace in your life.
- Between **December 11th and 17th** light three tealights, and consider the following question: "What has given me **joy** this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you joy in your life.
- Between **December 18th and 24th** light all four tealights, and consider the following question: "Where have I found **love** this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you love in your life.
- Then, on Christmas morning or any of the **12 days of Christmas** before Epiphany on January 6th, remove the box, replace it with the 5th mason jar and tea light. **Light all five of the candles and read through all the hope, peace, joy, and love** accrued over the season of Advent! All a blessing come to full fruition in Christmas!

May the coming Christ bless you all!

*Please take these materials as a suggestion and have fun modifying it as makes sense for you!
Originally created by Pastor Chris Halverson (ELCA) in 2017.

November 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Bible Study – Lord's Prayer 7 pm	2	3	4
5 All Saints Worship 9:00 am Sunday School 10:15 am Trustees' Mtg. 10:15 am Mission Endowment – 11:15 Youth Group / Kids Club 1 – 2:30 Bible Study – 6:30 pm	6	7 Elders' Meeting 7 pm Deacon's Meeting 7 pm	8 Bible Study – Lord's Prayer 7 pm	9 Worship Planners 7 pm	10 Office Closed	11 Harvest Street Mission Packing 9:00 am
12 Combined Joint Worship 9:00 am Harvest Street Mission Serving 11:00 am	13	14	15 Pastor Katie -----	16 ----- (@)-----	17 Messy Church 5:30 – 7:30 FC/TE	18 Confirmation 9:30 – 11:30
19 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School 10:15 am Congregational Mtg 10:15 Youth Group / Kids Club 1 – 2:30 Mutual Ministry 11:15	20 Newsletter Articles Due	21 Council Meeting 7 pm	22	23 (Thanksgiving)	24	25
26 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School 10:15 am Birthday / Anniversary Coffee hour 10:15 am Bible Study – Mary 6:30	27	28 Pastor Katie Penn Mar 1:45 pm	29 Bible Study – Mary 7 pm	30		



11/01 Matthew & Jeannette Claus – 37 yrs.
11/03 Keith & Valerie Cardinal – 22 yrs.
11/05 Charles & Cheryl Davidson – 46 yrs.

11/02 Ariel "Buzz" Kelly
11/05 Tanya Nagel
11/07 Michael Sauers
11/07 David Knauff
11/07 Vern Miller
11/17 Cheryl Davidson
11/17 Linda Sabbagh
11/23 Nancy McCormick
11/23 Dan Kramer

November Newsletter

Address service requested

ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
420 BEAVER STREET
P.O. BOX 411
MARS, PA 16046