

May
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 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
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Mars, PA 16046

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Pastor's Cell #: 412-407-3166

*How good and pleasant it is
when God's people live together in unity!*
Psalm 133:1

Dear church,

April was such a wonderfully, blessedly busy month! I enjoyed every chance we had to be together in the worship, educational, and social lives of St. John. As the psalmist says, "How good it is when God's people live together!" We celebrated the First Communion of six young people together. We observed the wide array of emotions in Holy Week and Easter together. We had Sunday School and confirmation class and youth group together. We played bingo together!

But as wonderful as April was, I am looking forward to May! In May we will participate in worship together, we will learn together, and we will have fun social events together (check out the rest of this newsletter to learn more). But I am excited for the ways that we will continue to get to know each other over the month. To help me get to know you, I'd love to arrange times to visit with households over May and into the summer. We can meet at the church, the park, Mars Brew House, your home, or wherever is comfortable for you! Soon I will have an online sign-up for times to meet and visit, but for now, give me a call and let's set something up! I'd love to have the opportunity to visit with each household of St. John by the end of September, my six-month mark.

We are one month into what I hope will be a long and wonderful time together. In our time together, we will celebrate traditions and we will try new things. But it all starts with sitting down and being together so that I can learn your stories and get to know each of you and you can get to know me!

Peace,
Pastor Katie

Zoom Worship Services

Sunday Worship – May 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 – 9:00 AM

Join Zoom for service: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther
Available on our YouTubeChannel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmKkYKssxvQ>
and the church Facebook page: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnLutheranChurchMarsPA) later in the day.

April Pictures

We had the joy of six children taking their First Communion on April 10, 2022! Many blessings on them!



Many hands make light work! It took a lot of work to collect all the goodies for the Easter Eggs... and then to fill the Easter Eggs with goodies and hide them for the kids to find. Thanks to all who helped with the fun event for the kids!



Check out the beautiful flowers that we had for Easter Sunday! Thanks to all who purchased flowers to make the day extra special with so many beautiful colors!

Worship Notes



Calling all bakers!

We are looking for some more people to volunteer to make and bring bread for communion. The typical rotation is a one-month commitment. Never made bread before? No problem! Below is a tasty (easy) recipe for pita bread that works well for communion. And it's done in just an hour!
Contact the office to sign up to be a bread baker.

Pita Bread (Communion Bread)

5 to 6 cups flour	1 Tablespoon sugar
2 teaspoons salt	1 package dry yeast
2 cups very warm water (120°-130°)	

When baking the bread for communion, you can mix it by hand, and cut the first rising time down to 1/2 an hour. The second rising is about 10 minutes. It still works well, though not all the loaves form pockets. It takes about an hour, start to finish. If you want to be sure that pockets form for personal use, follow the below directions more closely.

In large bowl, thoroughly mix 2 cups flour, sugar, salt, and undissolved dry yeast.

Gradually add warm water to dry ingredients and beat 2 minutes at medium speed of an electric mixer, scraping bowl occasionally. Add 3/4 cup flour. Beat at high speed 2 minutes. Stir in enough additional flour to make a soft dough. Turn out onto lightly floured board; knead until smooth and elastic, about 8 - 10 minutes. Place in greased bowl, turning to grease top. Cover. Let rise in warm place, until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour.

Punch dough down. Turn out onto floured board. Cover. Let rest 30 minutes. While the dough is resting, preheat oven to 450°. Put a baking sheet on the lowest rack to preheat.

Divide dough into 6 pieces. Shape each into a ball. Roll or pat each ball into a 8 inch circle.

Take the baking sheet out of the oven and quickly put 2 or 3 rounds on it. Put it back in the oven. Bake 5 minutes or until done. Tops will not brown. Repeat with remaining rounds. If desired, tops can be lightly browned under a hot broiler. Watch them closely. It takes less than a minute.

Children and Youth

A note from Keith Cardinal

Hello fellow Sunday School parents. It has been an amazing year for our Sunday School program with attendance exceeding ten (10) children per week for much of the school year. I am honored that you continue to have confidence in our curriculum and in our Teachers to properly teach that curriculum to your children. The work we are doing for our children is TRULY God's work and I want to personally thank Denise Hager, Missy Kramer, Katie Nicklewicz, Ruth Ann Tully, Erin Weaver, Cindy Knauff, Maizy Fisher, and you - the PARENTS who bring your children each week so they can be guided in their Faith Journey.



Sadly, all "good things" must come to an end and the 2021 / 2022 school year is nearing that end. As is our usual custom, on May 22nd we ask the kids to dress in gardening clothes so they can plant flowers in anticipation of beautifying our church for the spring / summer. Please bring potted or flats of flowers to the church the weekend of the 22nd and we will let the kids get to WORK planting that Sunday!



In closing, I ask that you pencil into your calendars our annual VBS program in conjunction with Mars United Presbyterian June 26th-30th, 6:00-8:20p, with a special opening on Sunday at 5:00pm. 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. Please consider bringing your child to this event! I PROMISE you they will be giddy with excitement at the end of the weeklong event.



God Bless,
Keith Cardinal

Acolyte Training

Sunday, May 15th, after Sunday School

We will be training new acolytes! Being an acolyte is a great way for young worshipers to participate in the service and learn more about our worship services. During training we will talk about why being an acolyte is important and the various jobs an acolyte has during worship. Then we will practice going through a service and lighting the candles (it can be trickier than it looks!).

We all learn better with food, so we'll have some food for the acolytes-in-training.

If your child would like to participate, please contact Pastor Katie.

Children and Youth (continued)

National Youth Gathering 2024



The location for the 2024 National Youth Gathering has been announced: New Orleans! Stay tuned as the theme develops, but mark your calendars for any youth who will be in 8th-12th grade in the 2023-2024 school year! From the National Youth Gathering website: “Every three years, 30,000 high school youth and their adult leaders from across the ELCA gather for a week of faith formation known as the Gathering. Through days spent in interactive learning, worship, Bible study, service and fellowship, young people grow in faith and are challenged and inspired to live their faith in their daily lives.”

Lutherlyn



CampBlast!

Saturday, May 7, 2022

11:00 am - 4:30 pm

FREE!

RAIN OR SHINE!

There are a ton of awesome indoor and outdoor activities to enjoy at CampBlast! Horseback riding, campfire, crafts, gaga ball, archery, high ropes course, zipline, bouldering room, hikes, nature activities, canoeing, hay rides, games, sports, archaeology, disc golf, kayaking, biking, tours, great food, worship, and MORE! No registration is needed. Just show up with all your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone else looking for a fun, free day. (to learn more, go to lutherlyn.com/campblast)



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!

Fellowship

Ladies' Tea

Saturday, May 14, 2022

12:00pm

Join us for a fun afternoon of tasty treats, fun entertainment, and a silent auction!
Please contact the church office to purchase tickets; tickets are \$20 each.

Didn't get a chance to get your basket in for the silent auction? There's still time!
Baskets are due by May 1. Contact Erin Weaver for more information.



New Opportunities

Small groups are a great way for people to form supportive relationships and to deepen their faith. Some small groups are focused on a particular demographic while others are topic based. Some meet over a meal to socialize and pray together and some meet over a focused discussion plan. If you'd like to join a small group, contact Pastor Katie.

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!



Stay Tuned!

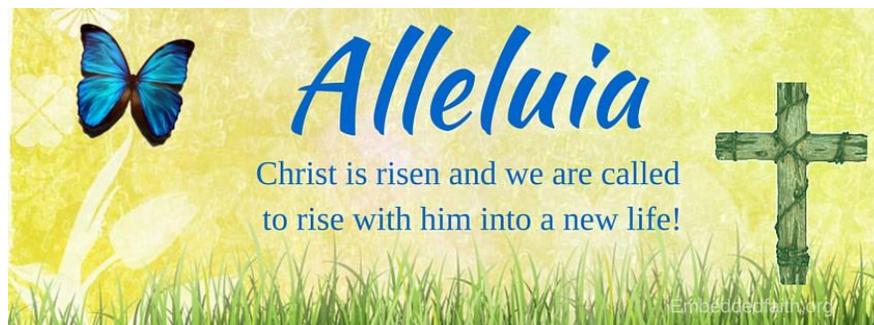
Annual Church Picnic

The date of the annual church picnic will be announced soon.
We will have worship, picnic food, and games! It's a great time for all!!!



Burgers on Beaver St

This familiar favorite will be back this year! Date TBA, but it's never too early to get excited!





Notes from the Wider Church

The Way Back to Our Center

By Bishop Elizabeth Eaton (Presiding Bishop of the ELCA), April 7, 2022

Originally published in Living Lutheran

587 B.C.E. was not a good year. The siege of Jerusalem ended with the destruction of the city, its walls and Solomon's temple. Many died of starvation during the siege. The Babylonians, at the direction of King Nebuchadnezzar II, brutally removed the population of Jerusalem to exile in Babylon.

For three generations Judah lived in exile. Babylon was powerful. Babylon was wealthy. And Babylon was cruel. We hear in Psalm 137:1-3: "By the rivers of Babylon—there we sat down and there we wept when we remembered Zion. On the willows there we hung up our harps. For there our captors asked us for songs, and our tormentors asked for mirth, saying, 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion!'"

With the temple and Jerusalem destroyed, the identity of the people of God was shaken. Who were they now? Where was the Lord now? This was more than a political, military or economic crisis. This was an existential crisis.

The prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel took this head on. This exile wasn't about the faithlessness of the Lord. Quite the contrary, it was a demonstration of the Lord's unwavering faithfulness, compassion and fierce love. The people and leadership of Judah had trusted in their own agency quite apart from depending on the Lord, as humankind too often does to terrible consequences.

So there in Babylon, the people carved out a life for themselves while remaining faithful and resisting assimilation. The Torah, the living word of the Lord, held them together. The prophets, through chastisement and comfort, gave hope. And, I imagine, they often thought of home—the beauty of Jerusalem and the majesty of the temple.

This was more than a political, military or economic crisis. This was an existential crisis.

My cousins and I spent a good part of our childhood with my maternal grandparents. They were both immigrants from Transylvania and, with much hard work, built a life, raised a family and founded our family's beer distributorship. Our grandparents' house seemed palatial. The living room ceiling was two stories high, and each year there was the most amazing Christmas tree. Often, I go over every corner of that house in my memory, and I long for it. It was a shock when I drove past that house a few years ago and saw how small it was.

Back to Babylon. A new power arose in the region. Cyrus, king of Persia, defeated Babylon and decreed that the people of Judah should return home and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah gives the account. In 52 days, withstanding violent plots by enemies, the walls were rebuilt. And then the people gathered to hear the Torah.

I was surprised to hear that they wept. Why? Some say that when hearing the Torah they were grieved by their disobedience. I think it is much more than that. Not everyone came back to Jerusalem. The city of their memory was destroyed. It wasn't grand anymore. They were utterly spent from repairing the walls. There was exhaustion, relief, grief and hope. Their long years in exile imagining the return to Jerusalem were not met with reality.

We have been in this pandemic for two years. We have been longing for the "Before Times" that in our imagination seem as magical as my grandparents' house. The return to a post-pandemic world, like the return of circulation, is initially painful. We will need to rebuild those structures necessary for a healthy society—compassion, respect, sacrifice for the greater good, the celebration of diversity, justice.

And we will need the word of the Lord—the Word that calls us back to our center, which is the steadfast love of God, law and gospel, judgment and promise. We will weep with exhaustion, relief, grief and hope. And there, drawn by God who is our center, we will find each other again.

A Note of Thanks

Thank you so much for all the support and thoughtful prayers and well wishes as I celebrated my ordination on April 24th. It was so wonderful to look out into the congregation and see some faces from my new church home there to celebrate with me, and I loved coming home and seeing notes from people online too! I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to serve and worship with St. John in the month leading up to my ordination, and I am so excited to have my next chapter of ministry with you. Thank you for being so gracious, welcoming, and supportive! Soon we'll start planning an installation service at St. John, and we can really celebrate this new chapter that we are embarking on together.

Gratefully,
Pastor Katie

Hymn Stories



During May, we will be singing “The Day of Resurrection!” for our offertory hymn. This hymn is an ancient text, written by John of Damascus who lived in the early 8th century. While its long history leaves some room for the story of the hymn to be at least part legend, the story that has been passed down with the hymn is still inspiring. It is said that a group comprised of the archbishop, priests, and the monarchy were gathered in Athens on a platform the night before Easter. They stood there while people anxiously awaited the midnight hour, and thus the beginning of Easter. In their

waiting, priests offered a melancholy chant to hold the space for the grief and solemnity of the crucifixion. Then a canon went off to mark the midnight hour. Instantly the crowd cried out and broke through the mournful silence, calling out “Christ is risen! Christ is risen!” They lit their tapers, filling the area with light, while the priests joyfully began a new chant, “Christ is risen from the dead, having trampled death beneath His feet, and henceforth they that are in the tombs have everlasting life.” And from this moment, John of Damascus penned the hymn we will sing with joyful hearts throughout May.

(information taken from <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/neale/easternhymns.edcanon.html>)

Church Calendar Reflections

From Sundays and Seasons, Year C 2022 edition (the church’s resource for worship planning): “The Easter season is a foil to the season of Lent. If Lent teaches us to prepare for the resurrection, Easter teaches us how to live in a post-resurrection world.” “The richness and progression of [the] gospel readings remind us that... the season is a gradual unfolding of the implications of Christ’s resurrection. Not everything has to be said on Easter Sunday; rather... the season can be a long, slow turning of the gemstone in the light to see all the facets sparkle.”

*By Linnea Clark, Paul Damico-Carper, Sharolyn Browning;
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5/07 Jessica Woomer
5/08 Erin Weaver
5/08 Amy Werner
5/11 Ruth Ann Tully
5/14 Valerie Cardinal
5/18 John Tully
5/20 Olivia Claus
5/23 Steve Schnelle
5/24 Ella Niklewicz
5/31 Carolyn Jarrett

Chair Aerobics Continuing through May

Our chair aerobics continues at 6:30 PM in the church hall. Any questions, speak to Kim Richards. Last session will be May 23.

May Worship Assistants

Usher

Keith Cardinal

Acolyte

Abigail Cardinal

Assisting Minister

Valerie Cardinal

Bread Baker

Denise Hager

May Newsletter

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