

September
2022

St. John Lutheran Church



St. John Lutheran Church
PO Box 411
420 Beaver Street
Mars, PA 16046

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

*There is a time for everything,
and a season for every activity under the heavens:*

Ecclesiastes 3:1

Dear church,

There are certain times of year when we become more aware of how right the author of Ecclesiastes was when they reflected on the transitory nature of our lives. This is one of those times, as we transition out of summer and into the fall and school year. Even for those whose schedules are not connected with the school year notice a shift as the days get cooler and shorter and we feel the encroachment of the fall and winter holidays. Check out the summary of the article from Living Lutheran in the Children and Youth section of the newsletter to hear one author's thoughts on how to maintain balance as the schedules get a little busier and more complex this fall.

As church too, we have a transition in the way ministry unfolds in the fall months. We shift from Vacation Bible Schools and Campfire Worship to Sunday School, Bible Studies, and church festivals. Check out this newsletter for updates on our fall schedule and some highlights of things coming in the next month or two.

This summer has been a great time of slowly getting to know Mars and the congregation of St. John. And as we slide into the transition to the fall months and fall schedules, I would love to continue to be as involved in the events of Mars and of your families! So... is there a sports game that your child is involved in? I'd love to come! A school play or band concert? Count me in! You're a part of a community event that's not necessarily connected to the church? Call me up! I love supporting St John (young and old alike) as you be your awesome selves in the world!

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.*

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/UC35PpgMPeMqDRNmkyKssxvQ>
and in the church Facebook group: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](#) later in the day

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 shaped by an act of service** – making and delivering lunches and cards to our local first responders. We will **come together at 9:00 am** to pray, read scripture, sing songs, gather at the table of Holy Communion, **and offer our act of service as an act of worship. To facilitate this marriage of worship and service, we will be meeting in the basement.**

Mission from Mars Update



The response to the collections for Mission from Mars (now known as Harvest Street Mission) has been inspiring. Thanks to the combined efforts of several organizations, we will be able to supply homeless individuals with a number of much needed items. But **we still need peanut butter and deodorant (particularly men's deodorant),** so please help us reach our goal of serving the needs of the 75 homeless people who need the gifts of this ministry. We will be **packaging**



items together for distribution on Saturday, October 8th. Stay tuned for details! Please contact Kim Richards (724-316-2263) or Pastor Katie with questions.

Blessing of the Quilts

Have you noticed **the abundance of quilts hanging in the back of the sanctuary?** Each year the church supports quilters in our community to lovingly construct these beautiful, warm quilts. When disasters strike or war drives families from their homes, a quilt can be a welcome gift. "Quilts can be used as warm bedding, simple tents, or floor coverings." But no matter how they are used, **"each one reflects God's loving presence in a world rife with suffering."**

(Information taken from LWR.org/quilts) So as you take in all the care that went into each quilt, **say a prayer for the people who will be blessed with these offerings.** Quilts will be shipped out in October.



Sharing the Harvest



As summer fades away, many gardens are still producing delicious, homegrown fruits and vegetables. **If your garden is producing more food than you need or want, feel free to share your abundance at church! Bring your produce on Sunday mornings to share with fellow worshipers.**

Thank You!



A big thank you goes out to all who helped make the church picnic on August 14 a success. The weather was perfect (we should put in a request for the same weather next year), the food delicious, and the fellowship great. It was also wonderful to see Maizy, Dan, Sabrina, and new baby Samantha Hope.

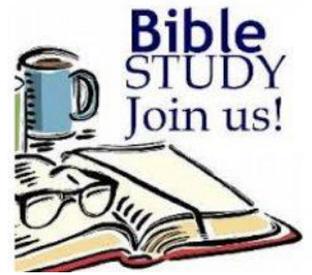
The Deacons would like to thank all those who helped with and supported Burgers on Beaver Street. We could not have done it without your generosity. Thank you!

Around the Church

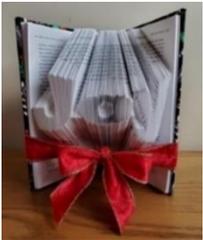
Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

In the fall we will be starting a **Sunday morning Adult Bible Study class!** This class will focus on the lectionary readings of the day and give us an opportunity to **dive deeper into the day's texts**. Grab a cup of coffee and **join us in the basement after worship starting Sept. 18th**.

We will also be starting **mid-week studies** (scheduled in 6-8 week sessions)! These studies will focus on a **book of the Bible**, a particular **topic in the Bible**, or a **topic relevant to our faith lives**. Our first group will start in October; let Pastor Katie know if you would like to participate.



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.

Pastor Katie's Installation – September 25th

After several months of ministry together, Pastor Katie will be installed as the pastor of St. John on September 25th. The **service will be at St. John at 3:00pm in the sanctuary**. We are excited to welcome Pastor Brian from Mars United Presbyterian as our preacher. Representatives from the synod will also be with us to help celebrate this new chapter in ministry for St. John and Pastor Katie. Please plan to join us! There will be a brief reception following the worship service.

125th Anniversary

St. John will be celebrating its 125th anniversary on **October 30th in worship and with a celebratory meal**. Sunday School and **Faith Formation Classes will be at 9:00 am and worship will be at 10:00 am**. We are excited to have Bishop Kusserow join our worship for this day! After worship there will be a time for remembering the last 125 years, imagining the next 125 years, and enjoying a delicious catered meal in the basement.



Children and Youth

Sunday School News

Dear Parents,

As we conclude our respective “summers”, we now look forward to the start of another Sunday School year. I would like to begin this letter by providing some highlights from last year.

- We consistently held three (3) separate classes each Sunday broken down into Preschool – 1st Grade, 2nd – 5th Grade, and 6th and up. This is in stark contrast to the Sunday’s just a few short years ago when it might have been one of the Cardinal’s.....or (2) of the Niklewicz’s. To regularly have 8, 10, 14 (!) kids is amazing!
- We continue to find success in our rotation schedule mimicking a VBS style schedule with Music, Lesson, Craft, and Snack.
- We started the year with our tithing emphasis focused on the repair of the front retaining wall and sidewalk with a lofty goal of raising \$300. I am happy to report the children (and their families) supported this effort by collecting in excess of \$470!
- The children continue to learn key Bible Verses and are excited to recite them upon learning so they can earn their “Stars”. In fairness, will these verses stick with them months later? Probably not, but the point in the effort is to gain familiarity and confidence in reading and learning God’s Word. To that end, I say Mission Accomplished!



So what lies ahead of us in the 2022 / 2023 school year? Well, much of the same!

- We will continue to support three (3) classes broken out by the same grade ranges with Missy Kramer leading the littlest learners, myself taking the middle age group, and Ruth Ann Tully leading the older students. Although our Whirl Lectionary Curriculum seems to speak well to the middle age group, Pastor Katie provided Missy a few ideas to help better engage the younger crew. As for Ruth Ann, we recently discussed three (3) paths forward for her class with the Children being the deciding vote on what works for them.
- Meanwhile, Mazie, Matt C. and Denise H. will support the music program with the intent of practicing a simple song during the course of a month. The kids will then LEAD the Congregation on the last Sunday of that month by singing the song during the Children’s Sermon which would be followed by a 2nd run-through of the song by the entire congregation. Basically, exactly what we did last year but with an even greater emphasis on the kid’s leading. What better way to get our Children engaged in Worship by giving them the opportunity to “teach” the Grown-ups!?
- Erin W. will continue to support snack and our bulletin boards. I encourage you to PLEASE check out the craftsmanship Erin puts into the bulletin boards. Erin has a creative gift that we are blessed to have shared with us!
- We also have Denise H., Katie N., and Martha Ward managing crafts. These ladies work wonders with the kids during this time and some of the crafts are still present in the Cardinal household YEARS later!
- And finally, I would certainly be remiss without mentioning the quiet dedication of others like Cindy Knauff, Todd Niklewicz, and Jamie Weaver! These folks help grease the wheels of the program and provide support wherever and whenever needed.

(continued on following page)

(Sunday School News, continued)

As usual, we do have a few “needs” that I am formally presenting to all St. John Congregants! These needs include:

- Simple Dollar Store / Dollar General / 5 Below Items. These items are placed in the Sunday School Shop for the kids to frequent the same Sunday the Children’s Choir teaches us a song. The kids love “shopping,” and we could always use donations! Feel free to shop yourself and bring the items to the Church or simply donate directly to myself (or let’s be honest my wife Valerie...), Denise Hager, or Katie Niklewicz (make sure you fill out a tithing sheet located outside the church office!) We will need both Boys and Girls items since we have a nice mix of both in our school.
- Beginners Bibles are needed for a few of the younger kids that joined our school recently. In this case, the simplest way to donate would be in the general offering with a note on the envelope indicating “Sunday School Bibles”. The expense is not great – we only need roughly a half dozen at a cost of \$22.99 ea. We already have an account through Augsburg and our Church Secretary can place a bulk order very easily.
- Our tithing emphasis this year will be AlwaysBsmiling.org. We plan on having representatives of the organization meet with us on Sunday October 2nd, so please join us to learn more about this fantastic organization.

One final note.....I believe we are all truly blessed that Pastor Katie joined us recently. Our kids LOVE her in how she engages them....speaks at their level....and talks TO them. This is a gift that not all Pastor’s have, but Pastor Katie simply crushes it! St. John – we are extremely fortunate to have such a wonderfully engaging Pastor and I wanted to take this brief moment to thank her for what she brings to our Congregation and to our kids!

The men and women who help support the Sunday School program do an amazing job. They give freely of their talent, time, and treasure and I thank each and every one of them! I encourage you, my fellow Sisters and Brothers in Christ, to reach out to anyone of the individuals named above with a heartfelt “Thank you” this next Sunday!

God bless!
Keith Cardinal

Worship Helpers

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
4-Sept	Nick C	Emma N	Ella N
11-Sept	Emma N	Ava N	Ella N
18-Sept	Abigail C	Luca K	Eva K
25-Sept	Olivia C	Jules K	Abigail C
2-Oct	Nick C	Nathan K	Anna K

Blessing of the Sunday School Space and Rally Day

On **September 11**, 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 will start the next week (September 18th) 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) will be **starting again in the fall!** Meetings are about twice a month held at Mars United Presbyterian (232 Crowe Ave) on **Sundays from 1:00 to 2:30p**. Our first meeting will be on **October 2nd**. **Stay tuned for a full schedule** of meetings and events!

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**. 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!** Meetings are about twice a month held at St. John Lutheran Church on **Sundays from 1:00 to 2:30p**. Our first meeting will be on **October 2nd**. **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!**



The Back to School Transition

Back to school is an exciting time for a lot of kids, but it can also come with lots of challenges. However your child and family feel about transitioning from summer to the routine of school, it's important to recognize the impact this transition can have. **Living Lutheran recently published an article about navigating this yearly transition.** In it, the writer calls us to remember the famous verses in the book of Ecclesiastes: "For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven ... a time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted" (3:1-2). We have had our summer time, and now it is time for fall and the school schedule. But the end of summer is not the end of leisure and calm. The author writes, "One way to lessen the rocky road of transitioning into a school year is to recommit to sabbath time for your family. **If the school year feels like a rat race, perhaps the sabbath can be your saving grace.** As we head into the busyness of the school year, let's resolve not to lose the sabbath." Hooper (the author of the article) then encourages several practices to help in this endeavor: **" Discuss as a family your goals and expectations for sabbath days during the school year.** Find mutually agreeable ways to honor the sabbath that provide for rest and unscheduled time. **Find time at meals or in the car to discuss the impending transition and all it entails.** Allow for lamentation and excitement over the changes. Verbalizing it will help children prepare for the change. **Create a family calendar that allows input from everyone.** Make it visible to the whole family and take a temperature check on how others feel about the balance between scheduled versus rest time." Check out the entire article at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2022/08/embrace-the-transitions/>. Living Lutheran regularly offer other helpful youth and family resources, check them out at <https://www.livinglutheran.org/category/children-and-family/>.

Summer Pictures

From campfire worship to Vacation Bible School to adult dinners out to a summer worship series to Burgers on Beaver St, it has been a busy summer! We were so busy that we couldn't get pictures of it all! And then we brought the summer to a close by blessing the backpacks that kids would then carry off to school with them at the end of August.





September 2022

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4 Worship Service 9:00 am	5	6 Deacon's Meeting Elder's Meeting 7 PM	7 Worship Planners Meeting 7 pm	8	9	10
11 God's Work Our Hands Worship 9:00 am Rally Day 10:15 am Trustees Mtg 10:15	12	13 Ladies Craft Night 6:30 pm	14	15	16	17
18 Worship 9:00 am 1st week of Sunday School 10:15 am	19	20 Council Meeting 7 pm	21	22	23	24
25 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School Pastor Katie Installation 3 pm	26	27	28	29	30	October 1 Applefest
October 2 Youth Group Starts Kids Club Starts						



- 9/02 Nicholas Claus Jr.
- 9/04 Larry Werner
- 9/06 Nicholas Claus
- 9/09 Sally Foster
- 9/10 Winnie Stefko
- 9/15 Jamie Weaver
- 9/17 Kelly Greb
- 9/27 Susan Fritz
- 9/27 Roy Werner
- 9/29 Danielle Dishong
- 9/30 Matthew Claus



9/29– William & Kelly Greb – 21 yrs.

September

Assisting Ministers
Ruth Ann Tully

Ushers
Matt Claus & Cardinal Family

Counters
Valerie Cardinal &
Katie Niklewicz

Bread Baker
Denise Hager

September Newsletter

Address service requested

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