

February
2023

St. John Lutheran Church



St. John Lutheran Church
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*And he said to them, "Go into all the world and
proclaim the gospel to the whole creation.*

Mark 16:15

Throughout our mini-stewardship series, we are asking the question of "why is church important?" And so I ask you that question. Not "why is *faith* important?" But why is *church* important? Why is it important that we exist as the institutional, organized church of St. John?

To answer this question might look like considering the ministry and service the church does. It might look like considering the ways the church has fed and nourished you in your life. It might look like any number of things. But it's a question worth considering. There is no one right answer. That's part of the beauty of church. We come together from a multitude of places in life, and we come together to gather at the cross and celebrate God with us.

I was recently at a continuing education opportunity where the speaker encouraged us to come up with an "elevator speech" for church. If someone on the street asked you why do you go to church, or why is church important to you, or what is it about the gospel, the good news, that speaks to you, what would you say? In 50 words or less, how would you summarize what church is to you? Or, alternatively, in 50 words or less, what is the message of the church?

So I pass along that challenge to you. It's harder than you might think! And to add to the challenge, I'd encourage you to think how this elevator speech would sound to someone who has either never been in church or has not been in church for a while. When you come up with these statements or stories, I invite you to share them with me! I'd love to share them on our website, if you're comfortable with that!

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/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmKkYKssxvQ>
and in the church Facebook group: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](#) later in the day

Worship News

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
5-Feb	Abigail C.	Ava N.	Emma N.	
12-Feb	Anna K	Jules K	Abigail C	Emma N.
19-Feb	Nathan K	Ava N	Ella N	
26-Feb	Emma N	Luca K	Eva K	Abigail C.
5-Mar	Abigail C	Anna K	Nathan K	

Adult Worship Leaders

	Greeters	Usher	Assistant Minister	Bread Baker	Counters
5-Feb	Niklewicz Family		Matt C.	Missy K.	Erin W Sherry D.
12-Feb	Niklewicz Family		Matt C.	Missy K.	Erin W Sherry D.
19-Feb	Niklewicz Family		Matt C.	Missy K.	Erin W Sherry D.
26-Feb	Niklewicz Family		Matt C.	Missy K.	Erin W Sherry D.
5-Mar	Denise H. TBD		Dave K.	John T.	Erin W Cindy K

Ash Wednesday – February 22

We begin the season of Lent with Ash Wednesday. Marking our foreheads with ash (dust), we remember that we come from dust, and to dust we shall return. At the same time, the ash traces the life-giving cross marked on our foreheads at baptism. We mark Ash Wednesday in the church with **a service of Holy Communion and the Imposition of Ashes at 7:00 pm in the sanctuary.**



For those who are unable to come to evening worship, Pastor Katie will be available in the church for prayers and to offer ashes and communion between 10:00 am and 1:00 pm.

Lenten Mid-Week Worship – Wednesdays in Lent (March 1 – March 29)

Lent is a time for us, as Christians, to take extra time in prayer, devotion, and/or worship. We begin the season with ashes, remembering our humanity and mortality. Then, as we journey to the death and resurrection of Jesus, we **reflect on our faith and strive to deepen our connection with God**. This year, we are **focusing on the many questions of faith**: the questions we have in scripture, the questions we have about our faith, the questions we have about God and life. This year, we will have **two opportunities for midweek worship, fellowship, and discussion**.

If you are able and willing to provide a simple meal for one (or more) of these worship and fellowship opportunities, please sign up in the greeting area or by contacting the office.

Mid-Day

12:00 pm – Worship

12:30 pm – Lunch-time Fellowship and Discussion

Evening

6:30 pm – Dinner-time Fellowship

7:00 pm – Worship

7:30 pm – Bible Study and Discussion

Worship at Penn Mar

Pastor Katie has begun offering a **simple communion service for residents at Penn Mar Apartments** on the **last Tuesday of each month at 1:45 pm**. If you know someone living in the building who would like to participate in this worship opportunity, please let them know or have them contact Pastor Katie for more details.

Serving Others

First Quarter Mission Emphasis Project

Victim Outreach Intervention Center (VOICe) is a private, non-profit organization located in Butler County that provides services to any **victim of domestic violence, sexual assault or other crimes**. Their services are **also available to family and friends** of those who have been assaulted. Many people believe that VOICe only provides support services to woman, this is untrue. They provide **advocacy services** to those in Butler County regardless of age, gender, race, color, religion, culture, national origin, sexual orientation, and economic status. The range of services provided is extensive, including, but not limited to **crisis intervention, advocacy-based counseling, emergency housing, legal advocacy**...all services are **confidential and free**. If you have need of their services, the emergency **24-hour hotline is available at 1-800-400-8551**.



St. John Food Pantry

Our **food pantry has been seeing an increase in usage**. If you notice that the outdoor pantry is looking empty, **please move stuff from the inside shelves**. As the weather drops below freezing more regularly, **please be aware of how any items might store in freezing temperatures**. People who use our pantries have asked that we focus our offerings on **toiletries, cleaning supplies, and paper products as well as easy-to-make meals** (e.g., soups or other microwaveable meals).

Around the Church

Stewardship

The four Sundays from January 29 and February 19 will have a focus on **stewardship**. Jesus talked about *stewardship* in his parables. *Stewardship* is how we manage and use our resources, including our **time, energy, skills, and money**. How do we look at our *stewardship* of St John? Why is being a member of St John important to **you**? How do **you** contribute to the *stewardship* of St John?

Serving the Church

There are many opportunities to be involved in the leadership of worship life at St. John! Whether you are a **detailed-oriented person** who can keep track of a to-do list of opening and closing the building or you **enjoy reading in front of people** or you are an outgoing person, **eager to meet and greet people** or you prefer to work with numbers keeping a **record of the offerings** of the day, there is a place for you! Sign up in the Greeting Area to serve in the worship life of St. John. Not sure where you can best use your skills? Pastor Katie is happy to help you find a place for you to offer your time and talents in worship leadership!



Birthday/Anniversary Coffee Hours

We are excited to return to celebrating birthdays and anniversaries in the church each month. Plan to join us for a **coffee hour the last Sunday of each month**. Volunteers to help host a coffee hour are appreciated!

Office Hours

The church office is open Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 8:30-1:30pm. If the door is locked when you arrive, **please ring the doorbell for assistance**. Occasionally, we need to leave the building during these hours, so **it's always a good idea to let us know if you are planning to stop by (weather and holidays also may affect office hours)**. Pastor Katie is typically in the office on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9:00am-1:00pm. However, because of the nature of ministry, there are many things that may interrupt the schedule; **please call Pastor Katie's cell phone (included on the front page of the newsletter) in case of pastoral need**.

Spaghetti Dinner

The Spaghetti Dinner is back and coming soon; mark your calendars for **March 18th**! The Deacons are handling the organization aspects, but *many hand make the work light*. We are hoping that **all** members of St John with share their **time and talents** to make the dinner a success. **Help is needed with the set-up, cooking, serving, bussing tables, preparing baked goods, clean-up and more**. Sign-up posters will be stationed in the greeting area. Of course, we are also hoping that you will **invite 10-12 of your friends**. 😊 Thank you.



Children and Youth



Ski Trip

It's not too late to sign up for our skip trip to Peek'n Peak, but group discounts are only available to those who **sign up by February 5th**! **All are welcome to join us** and take advantage of group rates (not just Kids Club/Youth Group families)! We will depart from the Mars United Presbyterian parking lot at **7:00 am on February 11th**. Carloads can choose to leave at any time, but the **final car will return to the Mars UP parking lot around 11:00 pm**.

The cost per person is **\$59 for an adult lift ticket, \$48 for children ages 6-11. Rental equipment is \$35 per adult and \$31 per child aged 6-11.** There is a **discount available to children and youth who have participated in Kids Club or Youth Group.**

Any questions, contact the Mars UP church office at (724) 625-1365.

Faith Formation

Bible Study – Minor Prophets and Beyond

February 8 will be our last meeting of our survey of the minor prophets. **You do not need to have previously attended to join us** – all are welcome!

In Lent, we will carry our midweek worship theme into a time of discussion. **Throughout Lent we will be opening ourselves to the questions the scripture invites us to ask and other questions we have in our faith lives.** We will be sure to include a way for people to participate via Zoom.

Adult Sunday School Class

It's not always easy to figure out how what we hear in scripture speaks to our daily, modern lives. **Join the adults downstairs for discussion about the week's scripture readings in our daily lives.** Pastor Katie is with children's Sunday School opening, but **sheets with thoughts and questions for prompting discussion will be available** each week by the coffee pot in the kitchen.

Daily Lenten Devotional Emails

Would you like to receive **daily devotional emails throughout Lent**? Sign up by contacting the office. Each week will focus on a particular scripture passage, and each day will offer different questions and activities for reflection and a prayer that consider a different aspect of the week's scripture reading.

Valentines for Sunday School

Sunday, **February 12th**, will be our children's **Valentine's Party**. The whole **congregation is invited to join us** for fellowship, some refreshments and fun. The Sunday School will be making valentine collection boxes the Sunday prior. **We the congregation to please bring valentines to share with our children.** **The children's names are** Abigail, Anna, Ava, Ella, Emma, Eva, Hunter, Jules, Luca, Nathan, Nick, Olivia, Sabrina, and Wyatt. (If you know of another child that would like to participate, please let us know so that we can include their name!)



Faith Formation (cont'd)

Purple Party in Sunday School



Purple is the traditional color for Lent, so to help us get in the mood for Lent, we are having a Purple Party! Join us for our traditional **Purple Pancake Breakfast Party** as we celebrate the last Sunday before Lent.

This will be held **after worship on February 19th**. Purple attire is encouraged!

Trip Opportunity

Hope Lutheran in Cranberry is exploring the possibility of taking a bus trip to see **Moses at Sight and Sound Theater in Lancaster, PA** in **October 2023**. The cost is estimated to be around \$500 per person. The typical trip has an overnight, breakfast at the hotel, dinner, and a show one night, lunch and time for shopping, and another dinner and the big show the next night. **If you are interested in this trip, please contact Pastor Katie.**



Lutherlyn

Grown-Up Winter Retreat

Are you too old for traditional camp at Lutherlyn? Do you want to have all the fun of camp as a grown-up? Lutherlyn has just the retreat for you! **Grown-Up Camp includes all the fun and excitement of camp with some relaxation, fellowship, and extras for adults!** This grown-ups only retreat is the perfect opportunity to enjoy all the fun of camp but with some changes and additions specifically for grown-ups. Anyone **age 21 or older** is invited to join in the fun!

Grown-Up Winter Retreat is **February 24-26, registration deadline is February 13th**. Check out <https://www.lutherlyn.com/forms/retreateventreg/grown-up-winter-retreat.html> for more information.

Lutherlyn Summer Camp Registration

Lutherlyn Summer Camp Registration is **OPEN** as of **February 1!** Many of the camps fill quickly, so plan to register early! If your child would like to attend Lutherlyn, but finances are standing in your way, please contact Pastor Katie. **Finances should never stop a kid from being able to experience the life-changing adventures in faith at Lutherlyn**, a place where each child is accepted, challenged, and sent out into the world to spread the love of Christ.

Community Art Project

Burying the Alleluias in Lent

The omission of alleluia during Lent goes back to at least the fifth century in the western church. Because of the penitential character of the season of Lent in the Western church, the word "alleluia" has been historically suspended during Lent. This period of individual and congregational reflection on the quality of our baptismal faith and life suggests that the joyful nature of alleluia is more appropriately reserved for our Easter celebrations.

Help us prepare to **bury the alleluias on Transfiguration Sunday (February 19th)** by **picking up an Alleluia card to color and bury**. The colored alleluias will be brought back out on Easter!

February 2023

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Bible Study- Meeting the Minor Prophets 7 pm	2	3	4
5 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School Trustee's Mtg 10:15 Youth Group 1 pm Kid Club 1 pm	6	7 Deacons Meeting 7 pm Elders Meeting 7 pm	8 Bible Study- Meeting the Minor Prophets 7 pm	9	10	11 Ski Trip Peek N Peak 7:00 am - 10:00 pm
12 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School Valentines Party (in Sunday School)	13	14	15 Worship Planners 7 pm	16	17	18
19 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School Purple Party (in Sunday School) Youth Group 1 pm Kid Club 1 pm	20 Newsletter Articles Due	21 Council Meeting 7 pm	22 Ash Wednesday 7 pm	23	24	25 Confirmation Class 9:30 - 11:30 am
26 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School	27	28				



02/05 Emily Greb
02/05 Lindsey Greb
02/05 Herman Boehmig
02/11 Geneva Hackworth
02/20 Harry Cole
02/21 Keith Cardinal
02/27 Dorothy Delp

February Newsletter

Worship Leaders February

See our calendar of worship
leaders inside this
newsletter!

Address service requested

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