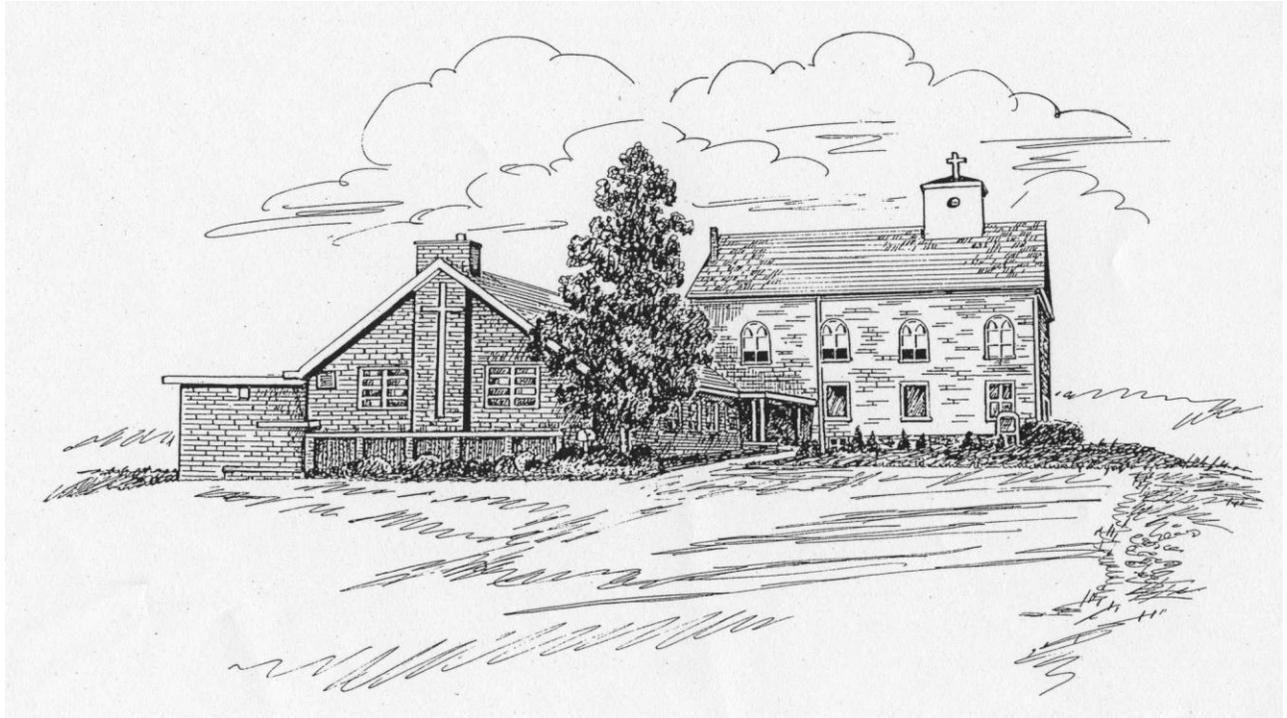


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

March 2011

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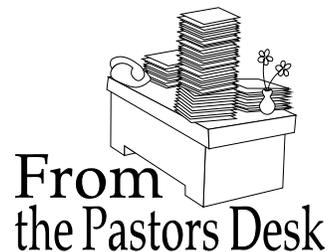
*“Serving Christ in Word and Deed”
for over 260 Years*

The Pastor's Letter

Dear Friends,

So anything that is to be done well ought to occupy the whole man with all his faculties and members. As the saying goes: he who thinks of many things thinks of nothing and accomplishes no good. How much more must prayer possess the heart exclusively and completely if it is to be a good prayer! Martin Luther

We are now entering into the season of Lent in the life of our church. I would like to invite you to be a part of our Lenten journey together, "focusing" on strengthening our relationship to God by participating not just on Sunday or Saturday, but by taking the time to attend special services for the season, beginning with Ash Wednesday on March 9th at 7:00 pm.



On the following Wednesdays of Lent in March there will be a simple "soup and sandwich" supper at 5:45 pm, concluding with a brief service of Holy Communion. If you wish to stay, we will then have our Bible study on the gospel of Matthew in the Pastor's study at 7:00 pm.

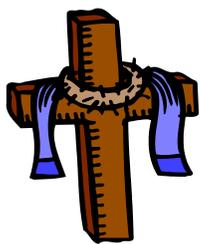
As this season unfolds, you will be hearing of more opportunities for worship marking this season of the church year. Make the time to attend. We all hunger for God's presence in our lives, but as Luther reminds us in regards to prayer, it must "possess the heart exclusively and completely".

So as best as we are able, let us put God's kingdom first as we walk in Lenten journey on the road to the cross and resurrection.

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. John

Lenten and Easter Schedule



We Christians are about to enter the most solemn time of the church year, the forty day season of Lent. Commencing on Ash Wednesday, it is meant to prepare us for the culmination of Christ's earthly mission - his ultimate sacrifice for us on the Cross and finally his glorious Resurrection on Easter Sunday.

At St. James we will have a full schedule of Lenten and Easter services as outlined below.

Ash Wednesday, March 9th:

7:00 pm Service with Communion

Mid-Week Lenten Services (March only):

Wednesdays at 5:45 pm; soup and sandwiches and an abbreviated Service with Communion, to be done by 7:00 pm. A sign-up sheet will be outside Frey Hall for those wishing to bring soup, sandwiches, bread or dessert.

Palm Sunday, April 17th:

Regular weekend schedule

Maundy Thursday, April 21st:

7:00 pm Service with First Communion

Good Friday, April 22nd:

7:00 pm Service

Easter Saturday, April 23rd:

No vigil; the special 6:00 pm Service will contain some vigil elements.

Easter Sunday, April 24th:

6:30 am Sunrise service at Cemetery

8:45 am Worship with Communion 10:45 am Worship with Communion

First Communion Classes to be Held

Our tradition for admitting children who are about 10 years old to the sacrament of Holy Communion is to recognize them on Maundy Thursday, the celebration of Jesus' Last Supper before he goes to the cross. The date for Holy Thursday or Maundy Thursday will be April 22nd, and the service will be at 7:00 pm.



In order to do this, three hour-long classes will be held on Saturday mornings from 10:00 to 11:00 am, April 2nd, April 9th, and April 16th in the Pastor's study. If your child is eligible please speak to Pastor or call the church office.

Conversations about Membership

Do you feel God might be calling you to be a member of the St. James family? Pastor John will be holding informal discussions about membership in the Pastor's study on Sundays after the 8:45 am worship, starting March 13th. Your questions and interest are welcome, and your participation will not obligate you to join.

Members, feel free to pass this along to friends or acquaintances who might be interested.

The Will of God never takes you to where the Grace of God will not protect you.

To Our St. James Family Members

We, your church council, wanted to make you aware of our current economic status at the church. In the church bulletin you will see a snapshot of the end of January expenses versus January income.



The recent weather conditions have resulted in our utility costs increasing dramatically. For example, the gas heat for the month of January was \$2,522, compared to \$1,755 for January of 2010. Our snow removal budget for 2011 is \$1,000. As of February 16, we have spent \$1,645 in snow removal.

How can you help?

- Please consider increasing your weekly offering totals.
- Similar to helping to offset air conditioning costs in summer, we have placed envelopes in the pews to help with utility costs, specifically.
- Many large companies offer matching funds for charitable donations. Please check with your employer to see if they offer this opportunity. You can designate funds to be sent to the church for United Way or other charitable contributions.
- Are you a member of Thrivent? If so, you can designate your Thrivent Choice dollars to be sent to St. James.

Other opportunities include purchasing ShopRite gift cards from the church office, participating in our monthly pancake & omelet breakfast, and participating in our other fundraisers throughout the year.

If you would like more information on our current financial situation, please see any member of your church council. If this message finds you when you are away for the winter or maybe unable to attend church every week, please consider mailing your weekly offering and making a special effort to catch up each weekly amount if at all possible.

Peace and Blessings,
Your Church Council

Thank You from Council

Council members want to express their sincere thanks to Pastor John and Pam, for the delicious breakfast they hosted (assisted by their daughter and her friends) for council members and their families on February 19th. No one could remember anything like this having been done before, and it reminds us again what a treasure St. James has in Pastor and his wife.

Heifer Project (Links of Love)

Our Sunday School and Social Ministries Committee will be raising money for the Heifer Project. This charity purchases and gives farm animals to needy rural families in third world countries.

The Links of Love that we are using to raise these funds is a paper chain consisting of



links that may be bought for a \$1.00 donation each. The links will be available

on Sundays, March 20th and 27th, and April 3rd, 10th, and 17th. The completed chain will adorn our church for Easter.

Pamphlets with more information about the Heifer Project will be available in the Ed Frey memorial Hall.

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans has agreed to help us make this effort a success by matching \$1.00 for every \$2.00 donated.

An Appeal for Help

Volunteers are urgently needed to serve on counting teams for the weekend offerings. At present, some teams are counting two and sometimes three Sundays a month, and it is unfair to ask them to continue like this indefinitely.

It would involve only a few hours of your time after Sunday Worship once a month (or less if enough people sign up). Please contact Steve Stocker at 908-454-1265 if you can perform this important service for St. James.

Baptism

At the 8:45 am Worship on February 27th, we joyfully welcomed young Collin Hewitt Galusha to the faith through the sacrament of Baptism.



Collin is the son of Brian and Rebecca Galusha, and brother to Nathaniel and Ellie, of Stewartsville, NJ.

First Aid & CPR/AED Class

American Red Cross will be at St. James on Saturday, April 9th from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm for a first aid and CPR/AED certification class. Due to a grant from Thrivent, the cost is \$35.00 per person (first 10 students). We may be able to accommodate more than 10, but the cost will be higher. Call the church office if you are interested.

Prayer for the Healing of AIDS

March 6th-12th is the [National Week of Prayer for the Healing of AIDS](#). This week of prayer brings national attention to the AIDS epidemic and engages faith communities in AIDS prevention, education, service and advocacy.



The ELCA invites members to join in prayer during this week with purpose, compassion and hope for the [healing of AIDS](#).

Youth Group Activities

Junior High Youth Group (6th, 7th, 8th)

Sunday, March 6th: Meeting at the church (6:00 to 8:00 pm)

Combined Senior High Youth Group and Junior High Youth Group (6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th)

Sunday, March 20th: After church (11:30 am), lunch followed by a trip to **Planet Trog Laser Tag, Whitehall, Pa** (Bring money toward lunch and \$7.50 for laser tag)

Sunday, April 10th: Combined youth group Easter Party at the church (6:00 to 8:00 pm)

Saturday, April 16th: **Musconetong River Clean Up** (9:00 am to noon followed by lunch). Meet at church at 8:30 am

Sunday, May 1st: **Phillipsburg Crop Hunger Walk** CROP Hunger Walks help children and families worldwide - and right here in the U.S. - to have food for today, while building for a better tomorrow. (Lunch at church and then to Phillipsburg for the walk)

Sunday, May 15th: Combined youth group games (6:00 to 8:00 pm). Bring \$3.00 toward pizza.

If there are any questions call the church or Pastor/Ms. Pam at (908) 777-3068

Vacation Bible School 2011

Although it may seem a long way off, it is not too early to start thinking about this summer highlight. The theme will be "PandaMania" and it will be held August 15th through 19th, from 9:00 am till noon.

At PandaMania VBS, kids will explore a bamboo forest full of fun-loving pandas! And Psalm 139 comes to life as kids learn that they are God's most precious creation. In return, kids will learn to give thanks to God for all he does. Don't miss this opportunity - register now to be a part of this PandaMania VBS!



Deadline is August 10th, but this year, registration will be limited to fifty students. Please sign up early. On-line registration is at: <https://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/strawchurch2011>.

As always, volunteers are both needed and appreciated. The web site above also has a place for volunteer registration, or contact the church office.

Boy Scout Troop 56: *An Introduction*

Boy Scout Troop 56 is proud and honored to be affiliated with the St. James Lutheran Church. Our association began around 1950 and remains strong today. The troop currently has over forty active scouts and leaders and we are continuing to grow. The



troop's leadership has established a program to not only help teach the scouts the respect and values of the outdoors, by offering monthly camping trips and other outdoor activities like hiking and canoeing, but to also build a strong foundation of community service. Some of our past and upcoming community service projects include: Scouting for Food, which supports local food banks; painting classrooms in the church basement; assisting the NORWESCAP food pantry; donations to the Easton Children's Home; local park clean-ups; and helping out at the Phillipsburg soup kitchen.

Our outdoor activities, and involvement in our community, are built around the 'Scout Law' which is: "A Scout is trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient, cheerful, thrifty, brave, clean, and reverent".

We will keep you posted on our future activities in this newsletter. If you are interested in learning more about our troop, please visit the troop website at www.troop56bsa.org.

David Zurine
Scoutmaster Troop 56

Ongoing Fund Raisers

Pancake and omelet breakfasts are held on the first Saturday of every month, from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Cost is \$8.00 for adults and children 10 and over, \$5.00 under 10 years.

Old cell phones (working or not), used inkjet and laser cartridges can be dropped into the containers available outside the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Business donations welcome. We are working toward purchasing a DVD projector with money raised from these donations.

Hoagie Sale. Simply purchase tickets at St. James for \$6.00 each for a hoagie from Gino's sandwich shop in Phillipsburg. Take your ticket(s) to Gino's and order your custom-made sandwich. For each ticket the church earns \$2.00.

ShopRite Gift Cards are available at the office or after Worship. St. James receives \$5.00 for every \$100 in cards purchased, at no cost to you.

Recipes: We need your recipes. Enter them at www.typensave.com. Group log-in is *strawchurch* and the password is *recipe*. Recipe books will be available for purchase once we have collected 250 recipes.

Senior League News



The February 2nd Spaghetti supper was postponed due to storm conditions and held on March 2nd.

Meetings are at 6:00 pm on the first Wednesday of the month. Please notify Carol Meixsell at 908-454-6734 if you plan to attend.

ELCA Releases Proposed Social Statement on Genetics

The ELCA released *Genetics, Faith and Responsibility*, a proposed social statement on genetics, on Feb. 24.

It is one of the first such statements by an American church that develops a comprehensive ethical framework for addressing human power and issues such as medical, agricultural and cultural concerns.

The proposed statement and further information can be found on the ELCA web site at: <http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements-in-Process/Genetics.aspx>

Lutheran Social Ministries

Lutheran Social Ministries of New Jersey provides hospitality, healing and hope to those in New Jersey who hurt, who are in need or who have limited choices, regardless of religious affiliation or background. Through a diversified social ministry program addressing many critical human care



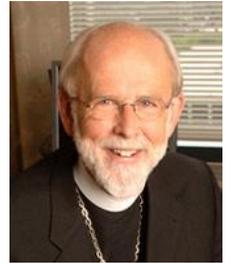
needs, LSM/NJ is caring for the people of New Jersey and providing for them - a place to call home.

Each year, LSM/NJ reaches out and assists more than 3,500 people in need across the state. We continue to develop new programs and build new facilities to care for those individuals and families that require our help.

To learn more, visit www.lsmnj.org or call 609-699-4139

Bishop Hanson Appointed to Presidential Council

President Barack Obama announced Feb. 4th his intention to appoint the Rev. Mark S. Hanson, presiding bishop of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), to the President's Advisory Council on Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships



The advisory council brings together religious and secular leaders, as well as scholars and experts in fields related to the work of faith-based and neighborhood organizations, to make recommendations to the government on how to improve partnerships, according to a White House news release.

In 2009 Bishop Hanson was appointed to a White House task force on interreligious dialogue and cooperation, through the Office of Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships.

Peace not Walls

This ELCA campaign helps us learn, pray, and act for peace in the Holy Land, promoting a peaceful solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.



We call for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state; a secure Israeli state at peace with its neighbors, and a shared Jerusalem with equal access and rights for Jews, Christians, and Muslims