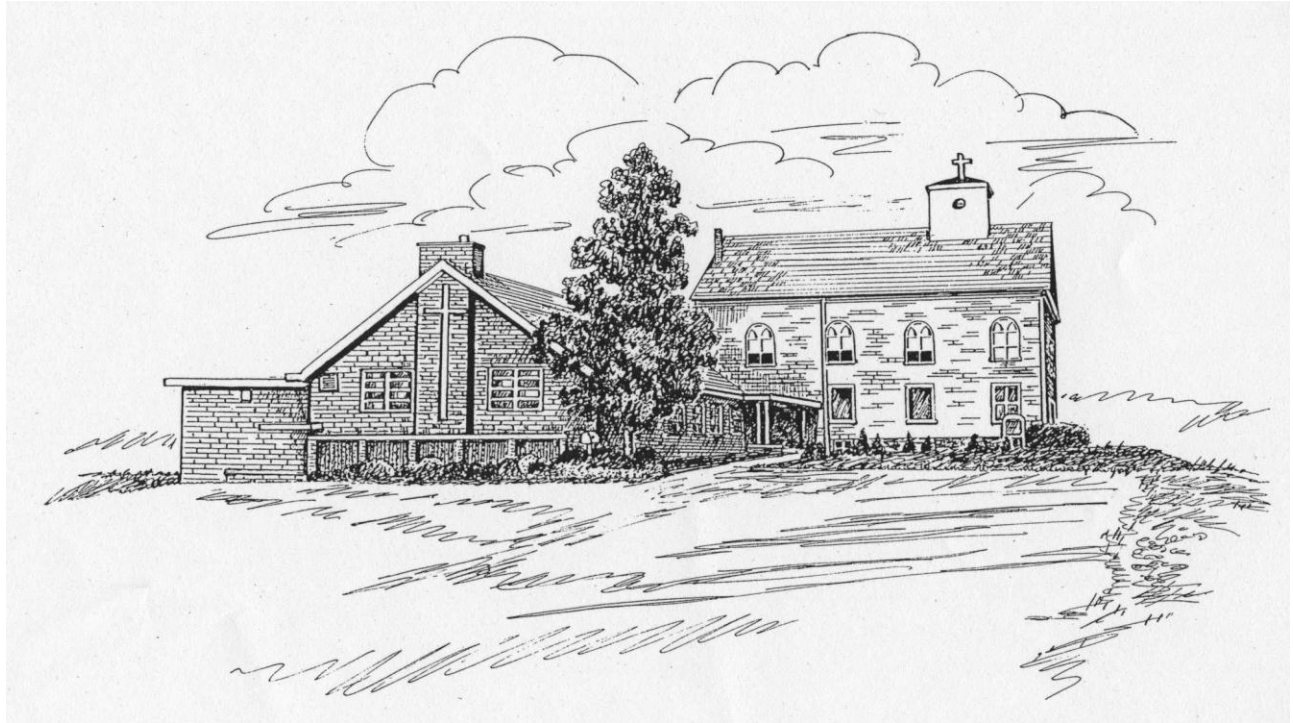


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

November 2011

Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

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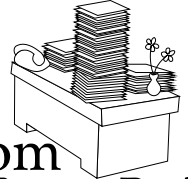
Web site: www.strawchurch.org

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

The Pastor's Letter

"Advent, like its cousin Lent, is a season for prayer and reformation of our hearts. Since it comes at winter time, fire is a fitting sign to help us celebrate Advent. If Christ is to come more fully into our lives this Christmas, if God is to become really incarnate for us, then fire will have to be present in our prayer. Our worship and devotion will have to stoke the kind of fire in our souls that can truly change our hearts. Ours is a great responsibility not to waste this Advent time." Edward Hays, A Pilgrim's Almanac, p. 187

So many of us focus on Christmas that as we do the busy activities that are part of the season we miss the church emphasis on preparation as the weeks of Advent unfold before Christmas. When Edward Hays uses the image of fire, we need to remember that you must carefully build or add to the fire so that it will continue to do the user any good.



From
the Pastors Desk

Advent is that "building" and that "fuel" that makes us burn brightly in praise of the Christ Child on Christmas Eve. How do we go about doing that?

Perhaps as good a guide as any is that early on in the history of the church Advent was considered a "smaller" less intense version of the penitential season of Lent. Therefore things like fasting, special times of prayer, as well as devotion are all appropriate for the season.

The other is to enter in with that understanding when we worship during Advent. To some of us that might sound extremely hard, since it is a sad fact that the joyous season of Christmas, "secular style", is never far from us in the marketplace or in the media.

Still, there is great value that as the focus on Advent points to Jesus' birth, Advent begins to prepare us by remembering that He will come again. There is value again in the cry of John the Baptist to "prepare" to remind us that He who is coming is not just some prophet, but the very king of kings himself. There is great value to be amazed to see how God uses a common 16 year old girl to be the bearer of God's son. There is great value to hear the "foretelling" words of the prophets to remind us that Christ's birth was not a current happening, but the culmination of God's promise from ages before.

Each then is another "log" which stokes our spiritual "fire" so that our praises resound and it blazes brightly so that all can see.

So may we this year not only "keep Christ in our Christmas", but use the season of Advent so that the "Christ that we keep" is evident in us and to those all around us as we walk through Advent.

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor John

Christmas Concert

The Warren County Community Singers will perform a "Winterfest of Music" at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 3rd at Grace Lutheran Church, 300 Roseberry St., Phillipsburg and at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 4th at the First Presbyterian Church, 40 East Church St., Washington, N.J. The Children's Chorus of Warren County will perform with them at both concerts.



Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School children will present us with their annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 18th at 6:00 pm in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Dessert will follow, and a sign-up sheet will be posted November 27th for those who will be bringing something.

Practices will start Sunday, November 13th at 11:30 am in the stage room.

Volunteers are needed to help with costumes and sets, or to help out in general. Please contact the church office or Pam Van Haneghan.

Thanksgiving Pot Luck

There will be a Thanksgiving pot luck lunch on Sunday, November 20th at 11:00 am (right after Sunday School) in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Please bring a covered dish or dessert to share.



Christmas Worship

"For this day is born to you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord....." *Luke 2:11*

We will be celebrating the birth of our Lord and Savior with candlelight Worship at 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm on Saturday, December 24th. There will be Communion at the 11:00 pm service only.

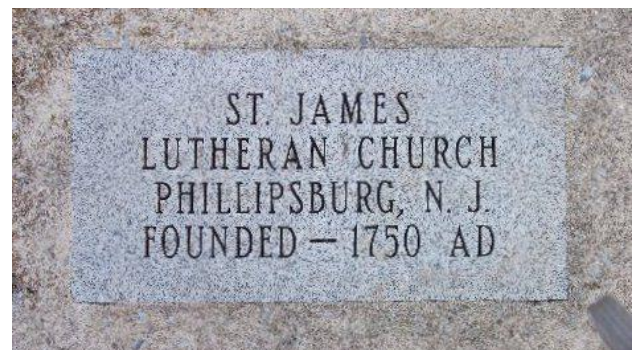


On Christmas Day (Sunday) we will have a Service of Readings and Carols at 10:30 am instead of the regular Sunday Worship.

Adult volunteers are needed to serve as ushers, readers, and for pew candle lighting (bearing in mind the height of the pew candles) at both Christmas Eve services. Please use the sign-up sheet outside Frey Hall. Anyone interested in helping to fold bulletins for Christmas Eve services, please let Beth know. This would be a great opportunity for scouts to earn service hours.

A Bit of History

This stone at Pastor Henry Melchior Muhlenberg's church in Trappe, PA, commemorates St. James as one of the churches he helped to organize.



An Invitation to Give Thanks



Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving

Sunday November 20, 2011

4:30 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Grace Lutheran Church
300 Roseberry Street
Phillipsburg, NJ

Join us for desserts after service.

Sponsored by the Phillipsburg Area Ministerial Alliance

Good Luck, Scott!

On November 6th, we had a reception after Worship to bid a fond farewell to our organist for the past several years, Scott Burzynski. He has taken a teaching position in northern New Jersey, and will no longer be able to fit Sundays at St. James into his schedule.

Although Scott's talents and friendly demeanor will surely be missed, we wish him the best of luck and happiness in his future endeavors.

Dave Miller will continue to be our pianist for Saturday services.

Welcome, Christine!

Council has approved the appointment of Christine Smith as our new organist. She comes to us with experience as an accompanist at several churches in areas where she formerly resided. Christine holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in Musical Arts and German Literature from Vanderbilt University.

Christine will begin as permanent organist on Sunday, November 13th, having already filled in for Scott on October 30th.

A "Fifth Sunday" Service

Any time a fifth Sunday occurs in a month, we will on that Sunday have a brief service of Holy Communion at 11:30 am, after Sunday School.

.....
If God is your Co-pilot - swap seats!

A Special Liturgy

This year, Reformation Sunday, October 30th, also marked the observance of the 300th anniversary of the birth of Henry Melchior Muhlenberg.

To mark the occasion, Pastor John treated us to what is known as "The Muhlenberg Liturgy" or "The Church Agenda (Kirchenagende) of 1748". This was the first official liturgy adopted by Lutherans in North America. Pastor Muhlenberg, who helped organize St. James, chaired the committee that prepared this liturgy, which was the only authorized service among Lutherans in America at the time of the Revolutionary War.

For this service, Pastor John attired himself in the style of that era rather than with the liturgical colored vestments of today.



It was both interesting and enlightening to be able to get some sense of how our predecessors celebrated the Eucharist in the original "straw church". Unfortunately, the weather kept many people from enjoying the experience.

Christmas Benevolences

The Social Ministry Committee has identified two benevolences for participation by the St. James community.

We have a list of 30 names of deserving developmentally challenged individuals at the Hunterdon Development Center. There will be tags for each on a tree in the entry area by the Frey Memorial Hall. Please take a tag and purchase the gift shown. Gifts should be brought in unwrapped, together with the tag, on Thanksgiving weekend, but no later than December 1st.



The Warren County Division of Youth Services has given us a list of 10 needy children and their families in the local area. If you can help, please contact Carol Meixsell at 908-454-6734 for a list of suitable gifts. Also desirable would be gift cards from stores such as ShopRite or Wal-Mart. These gifts should be brought in on or before Sunday, December 4th. As above, gifts must be unwrapped; however donations of wrapping paper would be appreciated.

Mark Your Calendars

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22nd. (Snow date is the following Sunday, January 29th.) Come to discuss and vote on the important issues facing our spiritual family. Further details will appear in a mailing to be sent in advance of the meeting.

Faith in Action

Addressing AIDS in Uganda. Rebuilding homes destroyed by hurricanes on the Gulf Coast or a tsunami in Indonesia. Supporting schools in the Holy Land. Supporting new congregations in Malawi. In today's world, there are countless important ways we as a church work together with our neighbors at home and around the world.

The ELCA, through its missionaries, companion churches, and partner agencies, works every day to proclaim the love of God and make the world a better place to live. While we are the Evangelical Lutheran Church *in America*, our hands reach out in partnerships across the globe.

Learn about some of our programs, and be sure to visit our [Stories of Faith in Action](#) to see real-life examples of how we share God's boundless love with the world.



When flood, fire, or storm wreaks havoc on a community, the ELCA is there to empower, provide relief, and educate for future preparedness. Learn more about current responses in [ELCA Disaster Response](#).



For decades, we have worked to support people who live with chronic hunger and poverty around the corner and around the world, though relief, development, education, and advocacy. Learn more in [ELCA World Hunger](#).

**HOLIDAY
VENDOR/CRAFT FAIR**



Vendor / Craft Fair

**Saturday, December 10th
9:00 am - 3:00 pm**

St. James Lutheran Church, Rt. 22, Phillipsburg New Jersey

Between Shoprite and Walmart

Excellent Location. Space is Limited.

Name: _____ Type of Merchandise _____

Confirmation # _____ Table Requested 1 (\$25.00) _____ 2 (\$45.00) _____

Contact Barbara Wrede at: (908)421-1199 or email at: barblewyston@mac.com

Please Mail Checks Made Payable to: St. James Lutheran Church 1213 U.S. Route 22, Phillipsburg NJ 08865

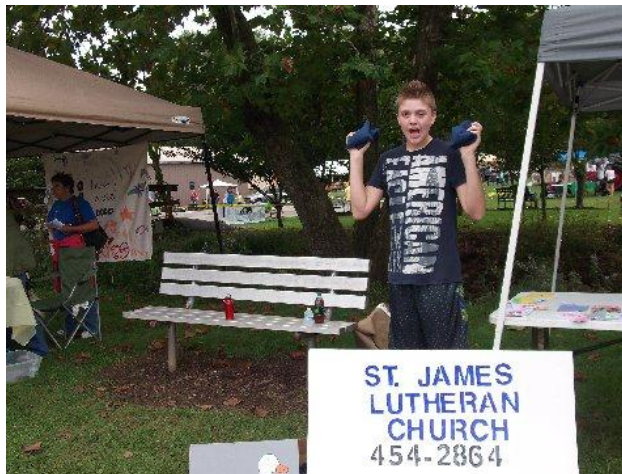
Do Not Send Payment Until You receive a Confirmation #. This will ensure your spot is reserved and duplicate vendors are prevented.

Youth Group News

The youth group participated in the Stewartsville community days. They did spin art, bean bag toss and passed out information about our church.

We had a fun day at Laser Tag in Whitehall, Pa, and hope to do it again in the spring.

We have started the fall activities with the Junior High group playing the four winds, rhythm and fruit basket upset. The Senior High group played a great game of Uno.



Activities for November and December are as follows:

Junior High (6, 7, 8) November 6 at 6:00 pm

Senior High (9, 10, 11, 12) November 20 at 6:00 pm

Combined Christmas party December 11 at 6:00 pm

Hope to see all of our youth!

Welcome to St. James

We are happy to welcome six new members to the St. James family:

Bill and Laura Concolino
Matt and Courtney Gordon
Michael and Laura McGarry



Financial Planning

Please remember to return the pledge cards that were recently mailed to you. They are a vital tool for our Finance Committee to plan realistic budgets for the future. These cards will remain absolutely confidential, seen only by the Financial Secretary, and shredded immediately after use. No personal information will be sent on or retained, only gross amounts totaled from all the cards.

Lutheran History in America

(From ELCA's timeline, 'Our History in Context'.)

John Campanius is referred to as the "saintly apostle of the Indians." Called in 1643 as pastor for the congregation at Fort Christina along the Delaware River (the first Swedish settlement in North America), he built the first Lutheran church building in America on Tinicum Island, south of Philadelphia, in 1646. Campanius believed his call also extended to the native Delaware people. He translated Luther's Small Catechism into the Delaware Lenni Lenape language, although it was not printed until 1696, long after he left the New World and some 14 years after his death.

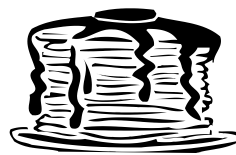
† In Memoriam †

Mary Louise Hawk passed to her eternal reward on September 15th. She was, along with her husband, Douglas, a lifelong member of St. James. Both were very active in the former Friendship Group, Mary Louise serving as Secretary. Mary Louise also taught kindergarten Sunday School classes. During her retirement, she served her community for a number of years as a Holland Township school bus driver.

Ruth E. Struthers went to be with the Lord on September 25th. She was an active former member who moved out of the immediate area some years ago.

We offer our prayers for and condolences to the families of these newest members of the Church Triumphant.

St. James Breakfasts



Don't forget to come out for the Omelet and Pancake Breakfasts held on the first Saturday of each month, from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon, in the Ed Frey Hall. Omelets can be had with various combinations of add-ins, and they are DELICIOUS! You'll be satisfying your hunger while helping support your church - an unbeatable combination. Cost is only \$8.00 for adults and children 10 and over, \$5.00 under 10 years, and includes omelet and/or pancakes; sausages or scrapple; as well as a juice and coffee bar.

Senior League – “Fellowship over Fifty”

Part of our October 5th meeting was devoted to Pastor Appreciation night, which was observed with an Italian style meal, followed by coffee and cake. As part of the occasion, a new puppet, Herman the Emu, was welcomed to the Animal Village. Having rested up after the long trip from his native Australia, Herman made his official debuts at Worship on October 22nd and 23rd.

Prior to those festivities, we had an informative talk by Sue Himmelreich of Warren Hospital on the subject of strokes and related issues. The material was presented in a clear and easily understood manner, and stressed the importance of recognizing the symptoms so that prompt and effective treatment can be obtained.



The November 2nd meeting was enlivened by the presence of Jim Sikra and his accordion. Jim gave an interesting short talk on the history and capabilities of the instrument then regaled us with a series of selections ranging from polkas to 1930s era oldies and early rock. The high point for many was a stirringly lively Hungarian czardas.

Scouting News

Troop 56 is proud to announce our newest Eagle Scout, Matthew Johnson. Matt earned this prestigious award at his Eagle Board of Review held on October 17th. All troop leaders and scouts are very proud of Matt for this great accomplishment. Matt's Eagle project included minor wall repairs, overall cleaning, and a lot of painting in the main band room at the Phillipsburg High School. This makes 27 Eagle Scouts since



the troop began, and we expect a few more Eagle Scouts by next summer.

The troop has had a great start to our fall camping season,

including a bicycle campout near Washington Crossing State Park and a weekend in historic Philadelphia taking in the sights. Our next adventures will have us backpacking on the Appalachian Trail in November and camping/hiking at Valley Forge in December. The troop is also looking forward to the 11/5 & 11/12 Scouting for Food drive activities. All food collected will be available for needy people right in our own local neighborhoods.

You can learn more about Troop 56 on our troop website at: www.troop56bsa.org.

Senior League Announcement

IMPORTANT: Due to scheduling issues, the December meeting will be at 6:00 pm Wednesday, December 21st, rather than the usual first Wednesday of the month. It will once again feature the music of Ed Saultz and his ensemble. Watch the weekly bulletin for more details.

Herman's New Surroundings



The Animal Village, the context in which Pastor John explains the Scripture message of the week to the youngest members of the St. James family, has become a unique and much loved aspect of weekly Worship at our church.

The Chuckle Corner

As found in actual church bulletins, announcements, and newsletters

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and the deterioration of some older ones.



Please ***join Boy Scout Troop 56 and Girl Scout Troop 95077*** as we help make Christmas a little brighter for United States Marines stationed overseas. Our Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops are collecting items to be sent to our “adopted” platoon of over 50 U.S. Marines.

Collection bins will be placed in local schools (including Greenwich Elementary, Stewartsville Middle, and Phillipsburg High) and at **St. James Lutheran Church, 1213 U.S. Highway 22, Phillipsburg.**

A few “crafty” elves are needed to help make stockings to fill for each Marine. A template and instructions are available by emailing me at beba123@verizon.net.

Below is a list of suggested items for donation.

- Protein bars
- Snack bars
- Packaged nuts
- Packaged cookies
- Hard candies, gum
- Beef jerky, canned meats
- Tuna in foil
- Hot chocolate mix
- Fruit snacks
- Gatorade mix
- Razor, non-aerosol shave cream
- Toothpaste/brush
- Lip balm
- Nail clippers
- Eye drops
- Hand-warmers
- White heavy boot socks
- Knit caps-muted colors
- Lightweight knit gloves
- Batteries, AAA, AA, 9volt
- Disposable camera
- Word game book
- DVD's & CD's, new or used
- Small gifts to exchange
- Frisbees
- Nerf balls
- Soccer balls
- Paperback book
- Current Magazines
- Playing cards
- Cards and notes of support
- Flattened sports balls & manual air pump

Please join us on Saturday, November 19th from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm as we fill the stockings and pack up our items for shipment. A bake sale will be held on that day to help pay for the cost of shipping our gifts. (Donations for the bake sale are greatly appreciated. Please package your items in single-serve sizes for sale during this event.) Cards and crafts will be available to add a personal touch to our gifts. There is also a giant U.S. Flag created by the St. James Lutheran Church Youth Group with an area for signatures and words of inspiration.

For more information, please contact Beth Van Blarcom at (908) 623-0865 or by email at beba123@verizon.net. With your help, we can make Christmas a little brighter for those Marines so far from their families and loved ones. We hope you will join us in saying “Thank You” and “Merry Christmas”.