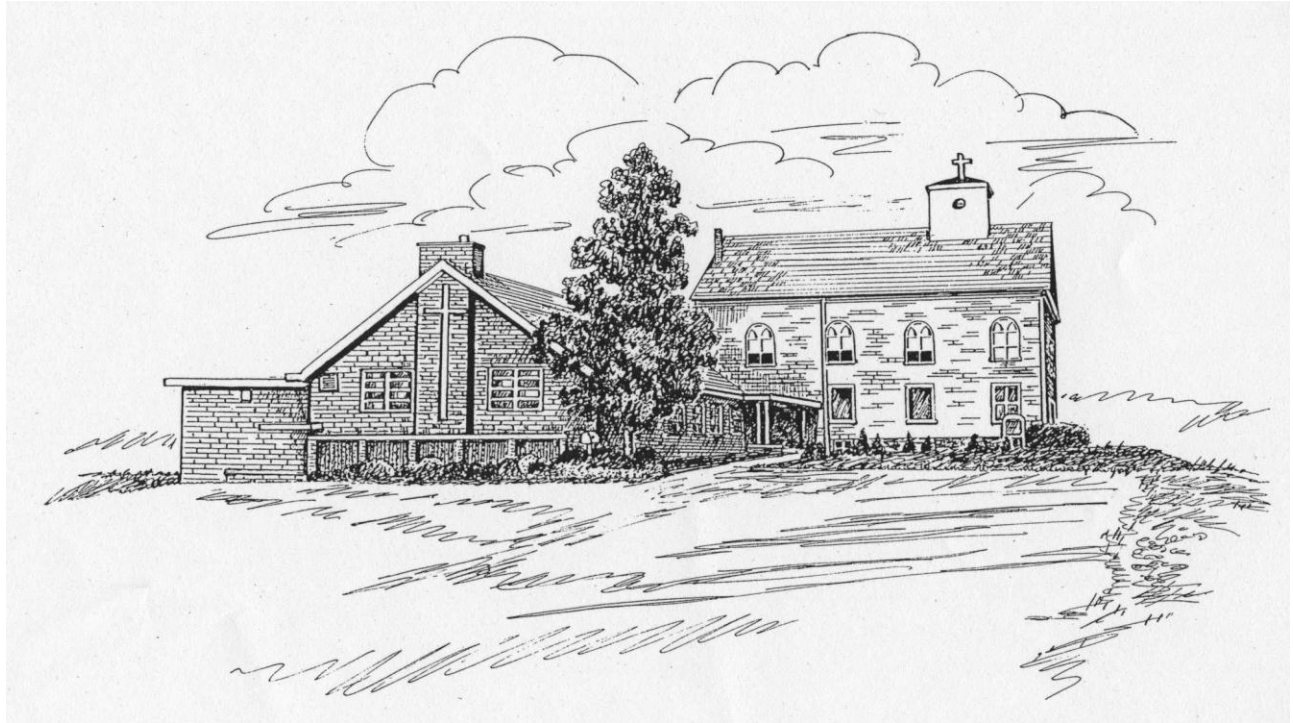


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

January 2012

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

The Pastor's Letter

As Jesus and his disciples were on their way, he came to a village where a woman named Martha opened her home to him. ³⁹ She had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet listening to what he said. But Martha was distracted by all the preparations that had to be made. She came to him and asked, "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to do the work by myself? Tell her to help me!" "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed—or indeed only one. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her." Luke 10:39-42 NIV

Dear Friends,

There is always a temptation in this story to see Martha as the "bad one" in this story, and Mary as the "good one". Yet I think it wasn't that Martha didn't want to listen, rather she felt obligated to make sure dinner came off without a hitch. Were there some important details that only she could decide? Probably. Did she need to respond to them all? Probably not, but Martha's conscience left nothing to chance. She was probably so imprisoned by a "micromanagement" mindset she couldn't take the time to sit still and be with Jesus. To do that would have been extremely hard for Martha. But if she had made that choice perhaps she too would have gotten the better part of her encounter with Jesus.



From
the Pastors Desk

Here in the 21st century maybe we can relate to Martha. With so many demands on our time, work, activities, or finding some "downtime" just to relax or "sleep in", taking the time for our spiritual nurture can get pushed to the bottom of the list.

So to be a "Mary" is not an easy choice. I know a lot of folks who are really "maxed out" by all they have to do. To be fair to those folks, all those activities have a good and valid use. Believe it or not I too can find myself crying "uncle !" when I have much on my list from a number of fronts.

Yet our lord says that Mary's choice is the better one. Even if we took a small "step" in Mary's direction, we would find a blessing from God for us.

Pr. John Van Haneghan

Pastor's Report to Congregation - 2011

As the old expression goes; "time flies when you're having fun". So it seems to me as I write this report for the second time in serving with you as your pastor. 2011 was really my first full year at here at St. James, so it gave me a good sense of the flow of the life of our church. God has blessed this congregation with so many dedicated people who either "right out in front" or "behind the scenes" help in so many ways. So while I'll probably acknowledge a few people in my report, please know that everyone's contribution is instrumental in making St. James a great community of faith in ministering in the name of our Lord.

In the area of worship, we seem to be gaining. I am very appreciative of all our worship assistants, ushers, and acolytes. The music ministries provided by Scott Burzinski, Christine Smith, and Dave Miller have been great. I have enjoyed working with them. Thanks to the Altar Guild for their "behind the scenes" work in keeping us in step with the seasons of the church year. I especially enjoyed the soup and sandwich Lenten Services. We had a nice attendance, and as always at St James, people stepped up to the plate to provide plenty of good food.

Our Sunday school continues to be a "flagship" ministry of our congregation, as well as vacation bible school since it seems to be one of the doors new folk in our congregation come through. We have some very dedicated people in all areas of our Christian education ministry who deserve thanks and gratitude for all their efforts.

In connection with Christian Education has been our youth ministry. That ministry includes our junior and senior high youth groups as well as youth choir very ably directed by Holly Chemidlin and accompanied by Dave Miller.

The youth groups, junior and senior high meet one Sunday a month, on different Sundays. There have been joint meetings for activities, as well as Christmas and Easter parties. I want to thank parents who have supported the youth ministry and especially my wife Pam in working with me on this. We have great junior and senior high youth in our church! May we continue to nurture their faith formation here at St. James.

Adult Education needs some thought on how to provide more opportunities for our folk who have such hectic time schedules. There is an evening bible study once a week and it has been following the gospel of Matthew.

Senior League continues to be an active ministry in the life of the church. The meetings topics and themes have been well done, as has been the food provided. Thanks to those who put that ministry together each month.

I have also taken an active role with our Boy Scout troop. As I have been able I have attended the troop committee meetings, and attended various activities to which I have been invited.

Our fund raising activities have been outstanding! Some folks have worked very hard at them,

and they deserve our thanks and gratitude for their efforts. We had a stewardship pledge drive this year for the first time in many years, and I am grateful to our Lord for the congregational response to it.

I have enjoyed working with the officers and members of the council over the past year. I am impressed with their commitment to the life of St. James.

One of the things I have been sharing on a regular basis with council has been things that I learned from my continuing education course at Luther Seminary this past summer, "Faith Formation 2020". There were some very helpful concepts and ideas from that course that will help us go forward together as a community of faith and mission.

We at St. James are going in a positive direction in ministry and mission. While we certainly have our challenges, I believe if we look to the Lord for direction, and do the best we can, God will take care of the rest.

Here is a summary of pastoral actions for 2011.

Baptisms: Collin Galusha 2/27/11
Danae LaPlaca 5/1/11
Mason Varga 5/15/11

1st Communion: Ashley Wrede
Wayne Van Blarcom

Confirmation: Megan Chemidlin
Sharon Hardenberg
DJ Wrede
Matthew LaCourte
Jason Holman

New Members Received: Bonnie Keller
Bill and Laura Concolino,
Matthew and Courtney Gordon,
Michael and Laura McGarry

Funerals : Nettie Sisonick 1/11/2011,
William Trauger 8/2/2011
Jane Buck 8/13/2011
Geraldine Taylor 8/29/2011,
Mary Louise Hawk 9/19/2011
Janet L. Mitchell 9/29/2011
Bertha Jean Hoadley 11/11/2011

Pr. John Van Haneghan

Lent and Holy Week

Before we know it, the solemn season of Lent will be with us again this year. It is, of course, the time we as Christians take to reflect on our shortcomings and prepare for



the remembrance of our Lord's sufferings on our behalf, even as we look toward his

glorious resurrection. The observances held at St. James will be as follows.

Ash Wednesday Worship:

February 22nd at 7:00 pm. No Adult Bible Study.

Starting February 29th, Wednesdays at 6:00 pm we will be having our mid-week soup and sandwich meals followed by a dramatic reading of Mark's gospel (this year's main gospel in Sunday worship) on DVD as told by Max McLean. If you attend every week you will actually be able to say you've heard the whole gospel.

We will then conclude with a very brief service of Holy Communion.

Please plan on joining us in another good opportunity for fellowship, time with God's word, then to be strengthened by receiving the Holy Sacrament of the body and blood of our Lord.

If you can help with bringing soup or sandwiches please see the sign up list in the church entry way near Frey Hall.

Pr. John

Adult Bible Study in the Pastor's office will be held after these Lenten services.

A "Fifth Sunday" Service

As announced in the previous issue of Wisps of Straw, 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.

That will occur this month, January 29th. Please consider taking part if for any reason you are unable to attend the regular services.

Of course, if January 29th becomes the "snow date" for the Congregational Meeting below, this service will not be held.

Congregational Meeting

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 22nd. (Snow date is the following Sunday, January 29th.)

There will be a brunch in Frey Hall at 10:00 am, after Worship. The meeting will begin immediately thereafter.

This is an important function at which critical budgetary issues (including our 2011 deficit of over \$36,000) will be discussed and decided. Also, an election to fill several upcoming Council vacancies will be held at this time. All members should make every effort to attend.

For your information, a copy of the proposed 2012 budget is included in this issue.

Donation Envelopes

If anyone who has not obtained envelopes for 2012 wants them, please contact either Pastor John or the church office.

St. James Lutheran Church Proposed 2012 BUDGET

TOTAL SPENT

		2011 <i>budget</i>	thru Dec 2011	2012 <i>proposed</i>
SALARIES	PASTOR	Salary	\$54,646.00	\$54,646.00
		Housing Allowance	\$18,000.00	\$18,000.00
		Pension/Health*	\$26,792.04	\$26,738.84
		\$99,438.04	\$99,595.76	\$99,384.84
		Janitor (2)	\$7,700.00	\$7,700.00
		Organist	\$12,000.00	\$11,000.00
		Secretary	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
		Treasurer	\$50.00	\$50.00
		Social Security/Med	\$1,300.00	\$1,300.00
		Supply Minister	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		Supply Organist		
		\$30,050.00	\$28,729.54	\$29,050.00
GENERAL		Electric	\$5,000.00	\$5,000.00
		Gifts	\$300.00	\$300.00
		Gas	\$8,000.00	\$8,000.00
		Oil (sexton)	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
		Insurance	\$6,500.00	\$6,500.00
		Office Petty Cash	\$300.00	\$100.00
		Office Supplies	\$2,000.00	\$2,000.00
	<i>New line item</i>			
		Simply Giving (online fees)	\$104.20	\$300.00
		Pastor Car Allow	\$4,000.00	\$4,000.00
		Postage	\$750.00	\$150.00
		Snow Removal	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		Sunday School Supplies	\$2,300.00	\$2,100.00
		Telephone	\$1,000.00	\$1,000.00
		Trash	\$900.00	\$750.00
		Water	\$800.00	\$800.00
		Worship/Music	\$2,500.00	\$2,000.00
		\$37,350.00	\$36,463.12	\$36,000.00
REPAIR & IMPROVEMENT		\$5,000.00	\$5,624.23	\$5,000.00
PROGRAMS		Convention	\$250.00	\$250.00
		Continuing Education	\$700.00	\$700.00
		Good Samaritan Fund	\$100.00	\$100.00
		Periodicals, Books, etc.	\$0.00	
		\$1,050.00	\$1,018.80	\$1,050.00
TOTAL CURRENT BENEVOLENCE GRAND TOTAL BUDGET		\$172,888.04	\$171,431.45	\$170,484.84
		\$13,500.00	\$6,617.08	\$13,500.00
		\$186,388.04	\$178,048.53	\$183,984.84

Average Per wk
Needed 3538.17

* Amount may vary slightly. Figures used for ELCA Board of Pensions calculator worksheet based on 2012 guidelines.

Youth Group News

In December we had a combined Christmas party for both the Junior and Senior High groups. We did a mind reading game using nine magazines. For our devotions we did a quiz based on the Christmas story, during which we learned some new facts and were surprised by what we really didn't know about Christmas.

Many of the youth helped out with the Christmas pageant by doing Scripture readings, taking on stage roles, or working backstage. Thanks to all who helped make the pageant a success.

Future meetings (all at 6:00 to 8:00 pm):

January 8th (6th, 7th, 8th grades)

January 22nd (9th, 10th, 11th, 12th grades)

Craft Fair Bake Sale

We would like to thank all who donated and purchased baked goods during the bake sale at the 2nd St. James Lutheran Church Craft & Vendor Fair in December. Our bake sale was very successful, as was the Craft Fair itself. Thanks also to all those who worked to set up the Fair and those who supported it by patronizing the vendors.

*"And then for work to do for thee,
Which shall so sweet a service be,
That angels might envy me."*

The Chuckle Corner

**As found in actual church bulletins,
announcements, and newsletters**

Potluck Supper next Sunday at 5:00 pm.
Prayer and medication to follow.

† In Memoriam †

Bertha Jean "Jean" Hoadley joined the Church Triumphant on November 5th, 2011. As a member of the "greatest generation", she served our country in the Marine Corps during World War II, assembling and maintaining small arms. At St. James, Jean was a Sunday School teacher for a number of years. She also served the wider community as a fire police officer with the Huntington Volunteer Fire Company in Pohatcong, and as a member of their Ladies Auxiliary. We offer our condolences to and prayers for her husband, Joseph, and her entire family.

Coupons for the Troops

Do you have any manufacturers' product coupons you do not plan to use - or coupons nearing expiration? Boy Scout Troop 56 is collecting manufacturers' coupons for military families, who can use even expired



coupons at their military base shopping facilities until six months past their printed expiration date.

BSA Troop 56 will ship these coupons to Troopons on April 5th, 2012 to help military families save money when purchasing those products.

Why: To support Military Troops

When: Now until March 21st

Who: Boy Scouts of America Troop 56

What: Any and all manufacturers' coupons that expire later than January 1st, 2012

A collection box is located inside Frey Hall for your donation. Thank you for supporting our Troops.

Faith in Action

The Church in the Far North



Bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free." (Luke 4:18)

The Lutheran witness with American Indians and Alaska Natives has more than 350 years of history. It is a history filled with hope and broken promises, solidarity and injustice, affirmation and paternalism, strategies and inaction, grand goals and lack of funding.

At present time, the American Indian and Alaskan Native ELCA membership is around 6,685. While general ELCA membership declined 1.7% between 1987 and 1994, American Indian and Alaska Native membership increased by 18.1% during that same period. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America has 21 congregations with 10% or more American Indian and Alaska Native members.

Lutheran History in America

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

The excursion vessel General Slocum caught fire in New York City's East River on Wednesday, June 15th, 1904, and sank near North Brother Island, killing close to 700 members of St. Mark Lutheran Church, Manhattan, including the pastor's wife and daughter. There were 1,331 persons aboard the vessel, approximately 800 of them women and more than 500 under the age of 20; over 1,000 of them died. This tragedy during their 17th annual outing to Locust Grove on Long Island Sound reduced the congregation's baptized membership from 750 to 191.

Investigation showed that almost all the fire-fighting equipment on board was useless due to poor upkeep, and the life preservers so deteriorated that they soaked up water and actually helped pull the wearers under.

Corn Maze

The St. James concession stand at the second annual Raub Farms Corn Maze was again a success. Our thanks go to the Raub family for this fund-raising opportunity, and to all the volunteers who pitched in to make it happen.

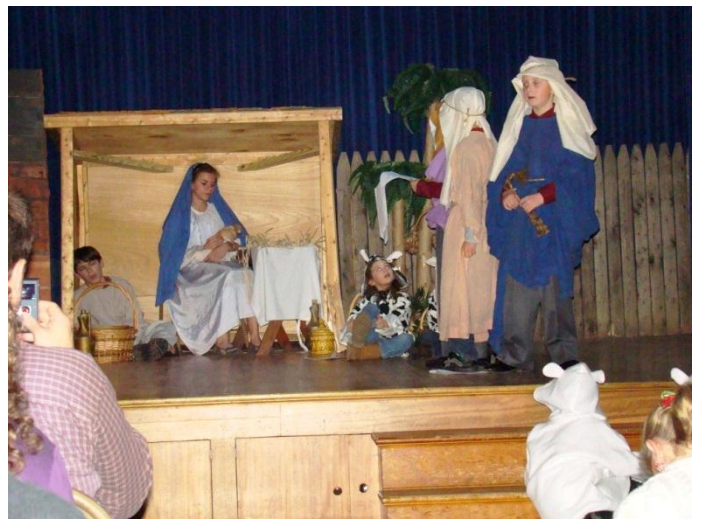


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***Prayer: Don't give God instructions --
just report for duty!***

Christmas Pageant 2011

We have become so accustomed to seeing lovely and inspiring Christmas Pageants being staged every year at St. James that we could be in danger of taking them for granted. That would be a shame, because it is a fact that the children and the Sunday School staff put a lot of hard work into providing the rest of us with these uplifting performances. This year was no exception, with the additional involvement of Youth Group members as readers, actors, and general help.

Congratulations and thanks to all for a job once again well done.



Senior League – “Fellowship over Fifty”

Our December meeting was graced, as it has been for the past several years, by Ed Saultz and his talented ensemble presenting a program of Christmas music, including some lesser known (to American audiences) ones of Irish origin. Irish bagpipes are not as commonly seen here as the Scottish variety, but they have a pleasantly unique sound all their own.



The next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 1st, at 6:00 pm. There will be a spaghetti and meatball supper, with entertainment by Sing for America. All donations collected that evening will be divided between the singing group and the church. Please contact Carol Meixsell at 908-454-6734 if you plan to attend.