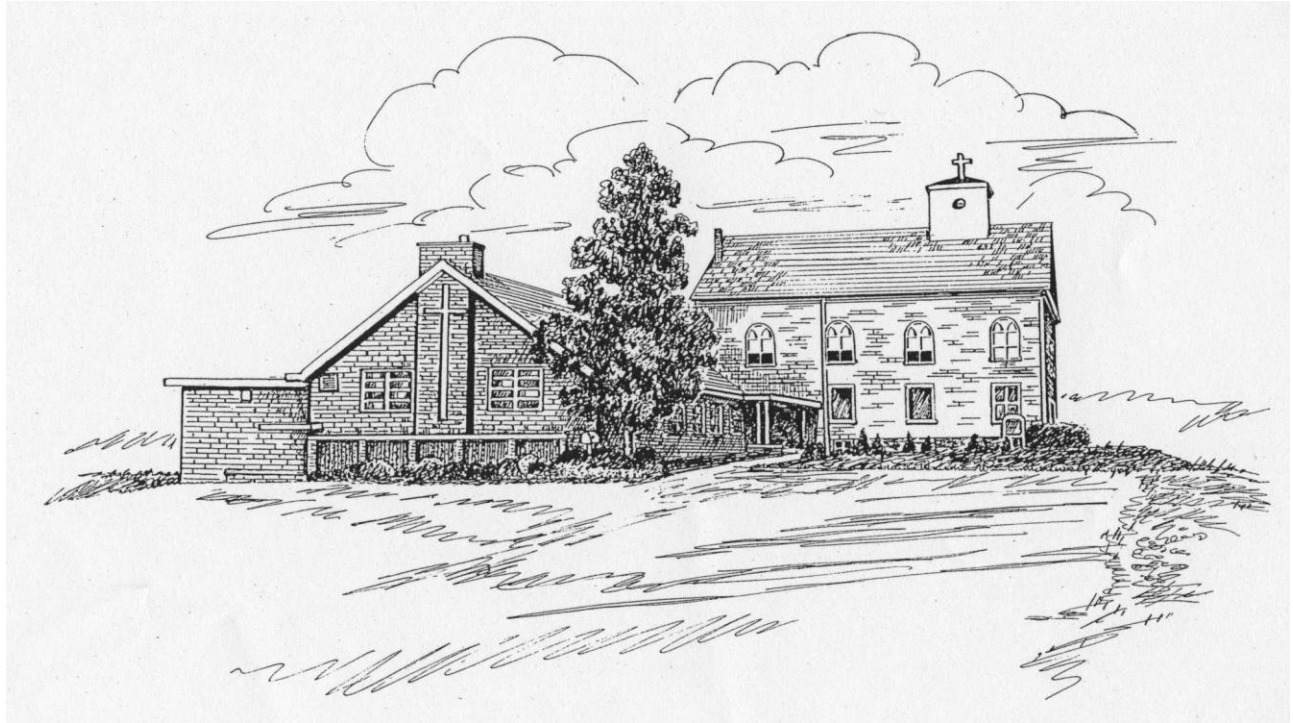


# *WISPS OF STRAW*



## *St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*May 2013*

*Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan*

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: [strawchurch@verizon.net](mailto:strawchurch@verizon.net)

Web site: [www.strawchurch.org](http://www.strawchurch.org)

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

## *The Pastor's Letter*

*"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever."* Hebrews 13.8 NRSV

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 10:30 am we will be going "back to the future" in the dedication of our Historical area and new cabinet. I know this is a busy time of the year for many people, but if you are at all able, try to attend. Having this area serves to me a two-fold purpose. First it makes sure that we do not forget the long deep history of our church that goes back to pre-Revolutionary War times, and acknowledges people and pastors that made ministry happen here at Straw Church.

Secondly, and just as important is how our story can really be "framed" by the text from Hebrews above. While the times have changed, technology has changed, communication has changed, and even society has changed since 1750, the need to proclaim the gospel has not. People gathered in 1750, many in poverty, because they wanted to bear witness to the good news of Jesus Christ. From what I know, they enlisted a lay person for many years just to make sure their children would learn the catechism. When the "father" of American Lutheranism, Henry Muhlenberg, arrived in 1760 to help folk here he called those here *"like scattered sheep without a shepherd... too poor to maintain a pastor."* But obviously they were so dedicated to the gospel they persevered, and eventually they had an ordained pastor in the person of Muhlenberg's son, Peter, whom they shared with Zion Lutheran Church in Oldwick.

They persevered in the proclamation of the gospel in having a place for worship. Their church started out with logs and straw, evolved to a more permanent structure built in 1790, and then with the building of our current sanctuary in 1833-35. Isaac Shipman, whose portrait now hangs in Frey Hall Historical Corner, was instrumental in getting our current sanctuary built.

They also persevered in making sure Christian Education was a priority for their children. In 1849 Isaac Shipman's daughter, Sophia (whose portrait hangs in the historical area as well), was at the forefront of developing a Sunday School program for the church. The certificate and vases attributed to the young people's "Ever- Ready Bible Class" from the 1920's again bears witness to what Sophia and others started. In 1960 the addition to our church was built especially to maintain an excellent Christian Education program in our church.

Friends, the history that is on display should be a witness to us today. Jesus Christ is the same today, the times may have changed, but the need for the good news of the gospel is just as important. This cloud of witnesses calls out to us, ***"How are YOU persevering today to ensure on this spot- that Jesus Christ, the "unchangeable" is being proclaimed today?"***

Your brother in Christ,

*Pr. John*

## *Recent Baptism*

On Sunday, February 10<sup>th</sup>, we joyfully witnessed the baptism of Meadow Rae LaPlaca. Meadow Rae is the daughter of Joseph and Erika LaPlaca, and joins her older brother Elijah and sister Dana Leigh in child membership at St. James.



## *Links of Love*

Through the generosity of the St. James family, Social Ministry will be sending a contribution to the ELCA Good Gifts program. This outreach provides farm animals and other necessities to poor families around the world.



Sunday School children will choose which gifts are to be funded by the \$154 they raised. \$286 came from the congregation and Thrivent Financial added \$100 in matching funds. Thanks to all who helped in this annual effort.

## *Straw Church Breakfast*

A reminder that the next scrumptious Saturday breakfasts will be on June 1<sup>st</sup> and July 6<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 to 11:00 am. Be sure to come out and support your church while also treating you and yours to the best in early morning eating.

## *Church Picnic*

Everyone had a great time at last year's St. James picnic, so why not do it again? This year's event will be held at 11:30 am on Sunday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. We will meet at the same location, Pohatcong Park on Rte. 519 south.

Senior League will provide the meats for grilling, as well as the rolls and paper products. There will be sign-up sheets at the church - please indicate the sort of covered dish you are bringing to add to the feast.

Games will also be provided for the children, who are also welcome to bring their own appropriate equipment.

## *Youth Group News*

We have had Youth Group meetings on Sunday nights with pizza, devotions and games.

On May 19<sup>th</sup>, at 1:00 pm, we will participate in the Crop Walk to raise money for the hungry.

We will be painting our youth room in the basement. Thank you to Liz Kolba for the couch to add to our room.

We hope to have a car wash and other fund raisers for our youth account, to go on a special trip and for a charity.

Don't miss the coverage of our recent Youth Sunday worship service on the next page.



## *Youth Sunday at St. James*

Members of our Youth Group conducted a large part of the worship service on Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup>. Cortney Esposito and Meghan Chemidlin did the sermon on Doubting Thomas and Kaity Chemidlin and Jason Holman hosted a trip to the animal village for the youngest attendees. Patrick Csiszlak played the hymns on the organ. Other young people served as ushers, readers, and Communion assistants. Special music for the Offertory was presented by the Youth Choir.



Our thanks and congratulations go to all of the 27 young people for this wonderful ministry. Thanks also go to Pam Van Haneghan for her work in putting it all together, and to Holly Chemidlin for her work with the choir.

# *First Holy Communion*

As is our tradition, we had the pleasure on Maundy Thursday, March 28<sup>th</sup>, of welcoming ten young people to the Lord's table.



The First Communicants, shown with Pastor John and their Sunday School teacher Cortney Esposito, are (l-r):

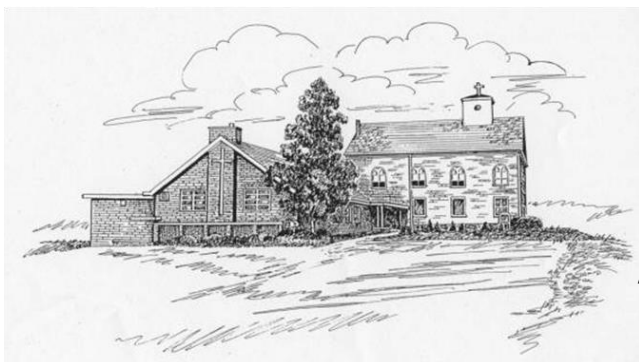
Nicole Madison Van Blarcom  
Crystal Lynn Eaton  
Anna Jean Carducci  
Samantha Emily Moser  
Bryce Travis Knoble  
Andrew William Hardenbergh  
Jacob Andrew Takacs  
David Martin Chemidlin  
George Robert Moser  
Matthew Aaron Johnson



Their families and the congregation enjoyed a reception in their honor immediately after worship.

In addition, Elizabeth and Heidi Hack received their First Communion on Palm Sunday at their grandma's church.





## *St. James Lutheran Church*

1213 U.S. Highway 22

Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865

**(908) 454-2864**

Email: [strawchurch@verizon.net](mailto:strawchurch@verizon.net)

Website: [www.strawchurch.org](http://www.strawchurch.org)

*The Rev. John H. Van Haneghan*  
*Pastor*

Dear Friends,

The Psalmist writes “*the boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; I have a goodly heritage.*” (*Psalm 16.6, NRSV*) St. James Lutheran Church, known as “Straw Church” perhaps more than any house of worship in the surrounding community, and more than many in this state, can deeply echo the Psalmist’s words to the Glory of God. The simple faith of the poor original settlers of the area in 1750 started a congregation that still actively proclaims the good news of Jesus Christ today.

With the arrival and donation of a great body of pictures, records, and other items that we did not have before, God has impressed on our hearts the need to bear witness to the faith of our ancestors for the inspiration of our members in proclaiming the gospel of Christ today, and share the witness of our forbears to the community, and surrounding areas. For our 263 year heritage is also a part of this area’s collective history which goes back farther than the founding of our nation.

So we invite you to join us on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2013 at 10:30 am to the dedication of our new historical cabinet with a display of many records, pictures and items that help tell the long rich history of our church from the earliest time to today.

Following the dedication you are invited to a light luncheon. So that we might have an idea of how many will be celebrating with us, please RSVP by the May 14<sup>th</sup> to the above phone number or e-mail address. If you cannot be with us we will be glad to have your letter of greeting and acknowledgement for our records.

We look forward to you joining us in celebrating our history on May 19<sup>th</sup>.

Sincerely,

John H. Van Haneghan  
Pastor, St. James Lutheran Church

## *Pastor John and Pam Attend Farewell Celebration for Bishop Riley*

On May 5<sup>th</sup>, at a banquet at Princeton Manor in Hamilton, New Jersey, Bishop Roy Riley and his wife Betsy were honored by the Synod and various other leaders in the ELCA. There were both serious and "not so serious" tributes from the ELCA Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson (video), the Region 7 Bishops represented by my former bishop, Bishop Marie Jerge from Upstate New York Synod, Newark Episcopal Diocese Bishop Beckwith, New Jersey Synod Staff, Ministry Partners in the Synod, humorous as well as serious remarks from Bishop Riley's son, and his wife Betsy. After Bishop Riley concluded with remarks and thanks, we ended the evening in worship with the lovely music of Holden Evening Prayer.

Even though I have only served on the bounds of this Synod for three years I have been grateful for the ministry of Bishop Riley and wonderful legacy of service he has given to us. It also highlighted again for me how monumental the election in June for Bishop will be.

*Pr. John*

---

*Don't let your worries get the best of you; remember, Moses started out as a basket case.*

## *Synod Assembly June 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> Hilton Hotel New Brunswick*

The time is fast approaching for the annual meeting of our New Jersey Synod of the ELCA. This is a very significant synod assembly because we will be electing a new bishop for the first time in 22 years with the retirement of our current bishop, Bishop Roy E. Riley Jr. I will be attending as will Ralph Avard who will be a voting member from our church. Please continue to uphold us and all who will be gathering in your prayers for the Holy Spirit's guidance on a very important choice of a shepherd for the flock of the New Jersey Synod.

*Pr. John*

## *Confirmation June 2<sup>nd</sup>*

On Sunday June 2<sup>nd</sup> we will be having our rite of Confirmation, known in our Lutheran Book of Worship as The Affirmation of Baptism, at our 8:45 am service. Please make every effort to attend that day. A reception in Frey Hall will be held afterward.

The Confirmands are:

Emily Carducci  
Torri Esposito  
Hayley Hardenbergh  
Jordan Holman  
Ryan La Courte  
Dean Peppe  
Ana Marciello



## Boy Scout Sunday

Boy Scout Sunday was celebrated at the 8:45 am Worship on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. In 1936 St. James Lutheran Church became the Chartered organization for Boy Scout Troop 56. In 2009, our church expanded its commitment to scouting by implementing the God and Country program.

These young men received their religious medals for completing the program. Each also received from his Cub Pack or Scout Troop a small patch featuring a silver knot on a purple background. This knot signifies his commitment to fulfilling his duty to God, and is one of the very few awards that may be worn from Cub Scouts through an entire scouting career and even into adult leadership.



Those completing the programs this year are:

God and Me Program  
Cub Scout Azuriah Massey

God and Family Program  
Webelos Scouts Joel Capaldi  
and Ryan Van Pell

God and Church Program  
Boy Scouts Nathan Romanishan  
and Hunter McGary

---

*God grades on the cross, not the curve.*

## Senior League Notes

A highlight of the April 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting was the presentation of a surprise cake for Pam's birthday. All that she does for our church is deeply appreciated.



On May 1<sup>st</sup> the attendees - a goodly number - dug with gusto into a pork and sauerkraut dinner. Whether this was in recognition of the church's German roots, or just a manifestation of the well-known Lutheran (German or not) appreciation of good food was left to the imagination!

At 6:00 pm on Wednesday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate the last meeting before summer break with our usual pizza and make-your-own sundae night.



# *Sunday School News*

Sunday School at St. James has had a Pajama Day, Easter Egg Hunt, wear crazy mix up outfits and silly mix-and-match socks days. For earth Day, Sunday School families made recycled creations. We had bird feeders, a mosquito trap, a dog, an angel and people in their families, and a greenhouse, all using soda bottles, cans, and McDonald chicken nugget holders among other recycled items.



We have learned about Jesus' death and resurrection, stories about Jesus and some Old Testament stories. We have done crossword puzzles, crafts and games to add to our lessons. Come and check in the Ed Frey Hall some of the pictures and written articles of what the children liked about Sunday School or what were of their favorite Bible stories/lessons they learned in Sunday School.

## **Coming attractions at St. James Lutheran Sunday School**

May 12<sup>th</sup> - Bring your mom to Sunday School for Mother's Day!

May 19<sup>th</sup> - Sunday School students and families are invited to our presentation in Ed Frey Hall at our History Cabinet dedication. Children will meet in Sunday School and then at 10:30 join the dedication. Sunday School children will be singing 3 songs for the presentation: "Father Abraham", "If I Were a Butterfly" and "John 3:16". Sunday School has a great history here at St. James and will have a great future. Please join us for the celebration.

May 26<sup>th</sup> - Wear **red**, **blue** and **white** to celebrate Memorial Day.

June 2<sup>nd</sup> - no Sunday School but Sunday School families are invited to attend the 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation worship service

June 9<sup>th</sup> - Last day of Sunday School for the summer. The Sunday School children will be getting their moving up certificates and singing a song. Third graders will be receiving their Bibles at the 8:45 am worship service, followed by a reception presentation in Ed Frey Hall. Then we will be attending the church picnic at 11:30 am at Pohatcong Park (Warren Glen). Sausage and hot dogs will be served, and there will be games for the children at the picnic.

**July 8<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup> - Vacation Bible school** 8:30 to 11:30 am. Games, snacks, Bible stories, music and a lot of fun while learning about God. Post on your calendar to remember these dates. There will be sign-up on the last day of Sunday School June 9<sup>th</sup>. We hope all our Sunday School children will be able to join us for the week. Teens are needed to help, and parents are welcome to help, too. Please contact Mrs. Vanessa Marciello, [vanessapt89@hotmail.com](mailto:vanessapt89@hotmail.com), for VBS information.

Pamela L. Van Haneghan

Sunday School Superintendent

## Building Our Church

This four by five inch 24 page pocket ledger was used to record commitments to donate for the construction of our current sanctuary. It most likely was used by Isaac Shipman who was chairman of the finance committee at the time. The ledger contains many pages of names and ran from 1833 to 1838. Total commitments were \$3907. Each of those dollars had the buying power of about \$25 today, but in terms of average wages was more like having earned \$250 dollars now. Looking at some of the sums pledged in that light reminds us again of the debt of gratitude we owe these people. Despite their limited means, they truly knew the value of a thriving congregation and place to worship. We would do well to learn from their example.

