

**St. John
Lutheran
Church**

April-May 2018

Bi-Monthly Publication

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**Programs &
Ministries**

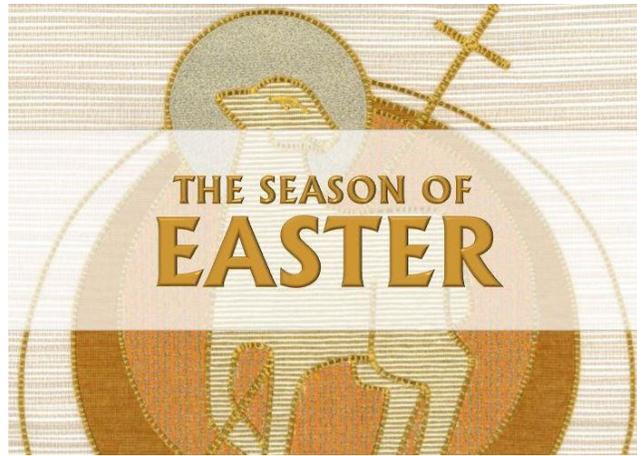
**Ways You Can
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The Revelations



The season of Easter begins on Easter Sunday, April 1.

Easter is more than just a day.

We celebrate Easter Sunday on April 1, but we continue to be in the season of Easter for 6 more Sundays. We sing and praise God, we gather around the table and the font—which is no longer covered but filled with water!—and we share fellowship just as Christians have done since the very first Easter morning.

Easter is also a homecoming. It is a time to gather with family and friends, and, for some, a time to return to God. It is a time to start anew, living in the promises given to us by our Savior Jesus Christ.

The message of Easter is filled with hope. The tomb is empty! Alleluia! He is Risen, we say, and we believe that we too will rise.

This Easter season, join us as we continue the celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord in April and May. If you are a visitor, welcome! If you have been away for a long time, you are welcome, too! We hope that you join us.

Thoughts from Pastor Sarah



February and March were unbelievably hard this year for many of us at St. John.

First, February had its flus, colds, infections and hospitalizations. Many of our members, including me and Pete, suffered with the “bugs” going around. We looked to March with joyful expectation. But when March arrived, we learned why the phrase—*In like a lion, out like a lamb*—was created and passed on... The snow and weather canceled a few of our special Wednesday evening services and soup suppers, and many members lost power and trees. Now, we look forward to Easter and the promise of Spring even if its going to be muddy and lots of clean up will have to occur.

I pray that you and your loved ones are better now—Toby has passed on and hopefully we will not have any more storms that shake our trees and take down power lines. I also pray that you all are healthy.

I received a lot of feedback on my article in the previous *Revelations*. I am glad—that means people are reading the newsletter. But while I received a lot of feedback on it, and all of it was positive, I have only received ONE person’s wishes regarding her funeral, burial, and memorial designation. **Only one.** So, while I created a good conversation for many of you, I don’t believe many people actually sat down and wrote their wishes regarding their funeral, burial and memorial designations. Yes, I heard from a few of you that your children know where to find your wishes—but I ask you, do they? And are your wishes complete with favorite hymns, scripture, desires for memorials and the like? You may think they know—but when grief enters in, people tend to forget a loved one’s wishes.

As I said in the last newsletter, this is extremely important and a gift to your loved ones. As I also said, we all should do this regardless our age and stage in life. And because I teach truth with story, I have one for you. At a previous church, a lovely woman passed away leaving behind grown up daughters with grandchildren of their own. When she died, her daughters thought, *no one will come. All her friends have died.* But, that was not the case. They didn’t have a church funeral because they didn’t think it through. And their mother never wrote it down what they should do. So, they planned a simple funeral home “gathering.” I argued against it, I did, and I was vetoed. But to her daughters’ amazement—the church came to the funeral home. We filled the chairs and the couches, we ate all of the food, we gathered, and I led a service. It was beautiful.

So why am I mentioning this again? Because its now Easter. Easter is all about celebrating that death has no sting! Death does not rule us! Just as the tomb was empty on Easter morn, we too will rise and join Jesus. When we die, it is the MOST important time to come together as a church, to remember and to commend our loved ones. Funerals are not after thoughts. Funerals are not the endings of our story. Funerals are actually the climax of our life’s journey. If you believe that Jesus is your Savior, and through him, we have Eternal Life—then you know, we have nothing to fear. We have everything to celebrate.

I promise this will be my last soap-box reflection on this topic. But I couldn’t let this day pass without reminding you that I meant what I had said.

May you be blessed with many good things this Easter Season. May you and your loved ones be blessed always!

Pastor Sarah

Holy Week and Easter Season Highlights

Thursday, March 29	Maundy Thursday—Holy Communion Worship at 7:30 p.m.
Friday, March 30	Good Friday Worship at 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, March 31	Vigil of Easter—Holy Communion Worship at 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, April 1	Easter Sunday—Holy Communion Worship at 7:30 and 10:30 a.m. Easter Breakfast Potluck served from 8:30 to 10 a.m.
Sunday, April 8	Services resume at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m. Sunday School for all ages meets at 9:15 a.m. <i>(this continues for the month of April and May unless noted below)</i>
Sunday, April 22	Arts at St. John's Concert: American Dreams at 4 p.m.
Sunday, April 29	Nursery School Sunday—No Sunday School this day
Sunday, May 20	Pentecost Sunday Confirmation Sunday at 10:30 a.m. service
Sunday, May 27	No Sunday School this day

Save this page for your home calendar!

Or, add the events to your Google Calendar from our website's Google calendar!

A Report from our Treasurer

2018 Pledges

On behalf of Pastor and the Stewardship Committee I would like to thank everyone who filled out and returned a pledge card last fall. Of equal importance, I would like to thank everyone who listened to, and took to heart Larry Erdman's words about reducing our dependence on the Endowment Fund to pay our current bills. Not everyone filled out a pledge card this year, but the overwhelming positive feedback that Pastor, Council and the Stewardship Committee has received certainly shows Larry's words have been embraced by this congregation.

So, what were the results of the Pledge campaign?

Weekly Current Envelopes - Sixty-three individuals and/or families returned a pledge card. That is the strongest participation by the congregation that anyone can remember. Those folks plan to contribute \$145,000 to the Current Fund this year to help pay our bills. That is about 77% of our 2018 budget that we expect to receive from weekly Envelopes. It also probably reflects, to a lesser degree, how well plate contributions and special contributions at Easter and Christmas will do.

Benevolent Contribution – Twenty-one of the same individuals and/or families also pledged \$11,500 to the Benevolent Fund to support all the good work the ELCA does at the Synod and national levels. That represents about 45% of the weekly benevolent giving budget target.

Mortgage Contribution – Fifteen individuals and/or families also let us know that they would contribute \$8,825 to help pay down our monthly mortgage payment. That is about 55% of what we hope to collect from weekly mortgage giving.

I will keep you informed quarterly on how we are actually doing, as we move through the year. My first report will be out in April in the weekly Bulletin and in the next Revelations.

Jack Ruse, Treasurer

Council Update

With the recent weather, Council has not met since January! But, we would like to remind our members that the **250th Anniversary of St. John Lutheran Church will be celebrated in 2019**. With such a special occasion, we are beginning a committee and various teams to work on this. If you would like to be on the committee or serve in other ways, please connect with Council President, Kathy Erdman, or with Pastor Sarah. Thank you!

Children and Youth News



Our Sunday School meets almost every Sunday at 9:15 a.m. As we near the end of the “school year,” we are thankful for the many teachers and leaders who staff our classrooms. Net year looks to be a BIG year with possibly needing new teachers to assist and teach. If you are willing, please contact our Sunday School Director, Katie Myers, at stjohnbluebell@gmail.com.



Pastor Sarah is planning on attending Bear Creek Camp this summer with campers from St. John Lutheran Church! Pastor Sarah is looking at July 15-21 as her best week to go. Can your elementary or middle school student attend, too? Visit their website for registration details! <http://bearcreekcamp.org/the-experience/> And be sure to let Pastor Sarah know if you are attending that week!

This is the “last call” for Pastor Sarah. Please speak with her before April 30 if you plan on your child attending camp.



Our Confirmation Students meet on Sundays at 9:15 a.m. We have a group of students that are walking through the stories of Jesus while also learning about the Apostles’ Creed and the Lord’s Prayer. Our students will complete their confirmation studies and we will celebrate their Affirmation of Baptism on Sunday, May 20 at 10:30 a.m. We are very excited to have our 4 students prepare for this special day!



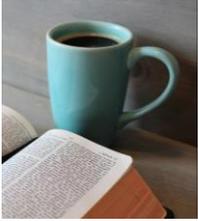
Our High School Youth meet on Sunday mornings at 9:15 in the Youth Room. Currently, they are preparing for their summer National Gathering trip to Houston, Texas. We have supported them with fundraisers all year—including Cookie Walk, Dine and Donate, and most recently Palms and Pancakes! Please keep our youth and their adult leaders in your prayers as they prepare for this once in a lifetime trip!



From our Nursey School Director, Carrie Engel. St. John’s Nursery School is busy getting ready for spring! Though the snow continues to fall, color and flowers are popping up all over the classrooms and hallway. Teachers have been collecting artwork from the children throughout the school year. On April 10, we will have our fourth annual ice cream social/art show for all of the students and their families. Student art work will be displayed

in the hall and in each room for all to see. We are hopeful that many church members will take a walk through the school hall and classrooms on Sunday April 8 to see a little of what our students have been up to all year. We will leave the doors open for you! We are looking forward to joining you on Sunday, April 29 for Nursery School Sunday! Thank you all for inviting us and for your continued support of St. John’s Nursery School!

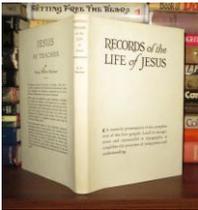
For the size of our congregation, we offer a lot of opportunities for our adults and children. If you are not connected to a learning opportunity at St. John, we strongly encourage you to attend one soon. Also, we have had a few attempts at a “pub theology” for older adults. It has not been successful. If you are interested and WILL ATTEND, please let Pastor Sarah know.



Pastor’s Morning Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m. We gather in the large classroom downstairs, and often have coffee and treats to share. We will begin a new series on Tuesday, April 10, on the book of James. This book is a treasure trove of practical theology—don’t be misled by one quote from Luther that James’ letter is “straw” and therefore should be burned. James is much deeper than that, and deserves our careful study. Join us!



St. John Book Club meets next in April on the 25th at 7:30 p.m. Our book is The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks by Rebecca Skloot. All are welcome to join us for a lively discussion on the book and to help pick out our next title for May. If you have questions, please contact the church office and we will give your name to our book leader, Linda Carpenter.



On Sundays at 9:15, adults gather for Adult Bible Study.

This group meets in the large classroom downstairs. Led by member Andrea Greyson, the group is using the book, Records of the Life of Jesus, to study the synoptic gospels. This study is unique and requires no prep work between Sundays. Come as you are and give it a try. Questions? Please contact the Church Office, or you can send an email to the church and we will forward it to Andrea.



Pastor Sarah invites all 21 through 50 year olds to join her for a night of dinner, drinks and discussion, otherwise called Pub Theology. We meet monthly. Our next gatherings are April 10 and May 8 at 7:30 p.m. at a local pub. Hire a babysitter, feed your pets!, and take the night off from Netflix... we want you to join us.

Connecting with Others



Join us for *Paint Along with Ann* will meet on Tuesday, May 22 from 7 to 9 p.m. The class will complete a spring scene watercolor painting that will be ready for framing. Class size is limited, so RSVP now to the Church Office. The cost of the class is \$25 payable the evening of the class. You are also welcome to bring a beverage of your choice! *Don't think you can do it? Come and see Pastor's painting from February in her office!!!*



Please connect with the Church Office.

Our popular yoga class continues on Thursdays at 2 p.m. Sessions are ongoing, drop-ins are welcome. Our next session begins on April 19. Our instructor, Kellie Pannepacker, will guide us through gentle moves, poses, and breath. All levels of skill are welcome; Kellie is quick to assist you. The cost for the 8 week session is \$40, or you may drop in for \$8 a session. No pre-registration is necessary. Please bring a mat or towel to use. Questions?



NEW! We will be offering a special class in May—perfect as a take home and give away! Join us as we make a Sculpted Flower Gift Box on May 3, from 7 to 9 p.m. The cost is \$26.00, due at the class. Our instructor, Mary Rose, is offering this class here at St. John at a discount from her normal prices. You may learn more about Mary Rose on her website: <http://www.thesentimentalgift.com/> Please RSVP to the Church Office by April 30.



Our Visual Arts Program continues! Ann Brennan, our instructor, will begin a new 10 week class in April. Her classes are open to all skill levels. Her new session will begin:
 Wednesday Evening starts April 18th and runs till June 20th
 Thursday Morning and Evening starts April 19th runs till June 21st
 Friday Morning starts April 20th runs till June 22nd.

To register, please contact Ann Brennan at annlb609@gmail.com



Yarn Crafters: Knit & Crochet is our monthly gathering of people who knit and crochet. We gather to share ideas, teach new skills, and share in fellowship with one another. We also do a variety of service projects for our community and beyond. Materials are available for beginners. **Our last meetings this Spring will be April 16 and May 18 at 7 p.m.** If you are interested in attending, please come! If you have questions about the group, please speak with Pastor Sarah.

Arts at St. John's Concert Series

The Arts at St. John's Season Finale



American Dreams
**St. John's Festival Choir
 and Chamber Orchestra**
Lawrence Baker, Director

April 22, 2018 ~ 4:00 p.m.

Samuel Barber's *Adagio for Strings* and
Knoxville: Summer of 1915 for Voice and Orchestra
Deborah Swider, Soprano

Dan Forrest's
REQUIEM for the LIVING
*for Boy Soprano, Soprano and Tenor
 Soli, Choir and Orchestra*
Princeton Boychoir
Fred Meads, Director
Victoria Esposito, Soprano
Robert Laird, Tenor



The afternoon will also include an art exhibit by students of local artist Ann Brennan who participate in the Visual Arts Program at St. John's.

Admission is free. A reception follows the concert.

St. John Lutheran Church
 1802 Skippack Pike
 Blue Bell, PA 19422

For additional information contact
 the church at 610-277-1086
www.stjohnbluebell.org

Serving God Together



Our **Christian Service Quilting Group** meets on Monday at 10 a.m. to make and construct quilts for local charities and also the LWR. If you can tie a knot, you can assist! If you have any questions, please contact Anita Hill or call the Church Office. Thank you!



We continue to collect non-perishable food for the students at the local Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia. The students have their own food bank at the seminary, and many of them use it due to the rising costs of seminary, housing, and materials. Our gifts are greatly appreciated. Also, we need someone to drive the food every month to the seminary. There is a clipboard to sign up hanging above the food boxes in the Great Room coat area. There are instructions and a map for drivers. Thank you for your support!



Our collection of toiletries is also on-going for the local foster care program, Being Beautiful Foundation. Our offerings help the foster home save money on providing healthy environments to girls in foster care. Our collection bin is in the coat closet in the Great Room.

Synod News

This May, our Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod (SEPA) Assembly will elect a new bishop to serve for 6 years. The bishop election is a process that is important for us, even here at St. John. We will send two voting members and Pastor Sarah to be a part of the process. There will be multiple ballots, but the first ballot is when individuals are nominated to be considered. It is a great honor to be nominated; let us all pray for discernment of those who are nominated and also for the voting members.

Pastor Sarah also serves the synod as the Chair of Candidacy Committee. At the assembly, she will give a report to the synod about the past year. Currently the synod has 18 candidates in the process. The committee members are assigned as contact teams for 2-3 candidates. Pastor Sarah was appointed to the committee and as chair by Bishop Burkat.



Despite Mother Nature trying to tell us otherwise, Easter and hopefully spring like weather will be upon us soon. This Easter season we are forgoing individual mailings to some postal zones and are posting an ad in the March 25 issue of the Ambler Gazette to welcome community members to our church services. If you receive this newspaper, please share with your neighbors,

friends and others.

There are many activities currently in planning for the upcoming months. On Thursday, May 3, Mary Rose Feldman of The Sentimental Gift will be offering a Sculpted Flower Gift Box class from 7 - 9 pm in the Fellowship Hall. Pictures of some options for this class are available in the church. The class is \$26, payable at the class, but sign ups are required. Please call the church office or sign up on Sundays following church services.

Our Paint-a-long with Ann Brennan on February 20 was attended by thirteen people, each leaving that night with a beautiful, frame able winter scene and feeling quite successful. Ann will be back by popular demand on Tuesday, May 22 to guide those interested in creating a spring painting. Registration is required. Please call the church office. The \$25 fee is to be paid the evening of the class. YES!, you can do this under Ann's guidance and direction.

Our third annual Antique and Classic Car Show will be held in September. We are grateful that Denny Brennan has brought this event to St. John as this event is a great opportunity for us to welcome community members onto our church campus as well as raising funds for much needed projects. As we get closer to the actual event we will be asking for your help in filling the many jobs needed to make the event successful. If there is anyone interested in taking a more involved role, please contact Kathy Erdman or Joan Linton. We look forward to another fun and successful day.

Keep checking your weekly calendars and church updates for additional events.

Joan Linton, Chair of Evangelism Committee

Thank You!

We give thanks to our members who bought and sold Gertrude Hawk Candy this year. Our coordinator, Betty Jeanguenin, would like to share that we made a wonderful profit of \$1,900.00 that will be used towards the Bell Tower Repairs. Thank you, everyone! And a special thank you to Betty and those who assisted her.

ELCA Presiding Bishop's Easter Message

It all started with such promise – the angel announcing to Mary that the child she would bear would be called Son of the Most High; the conviction of Mary that this child would be the embodiment of God's promised justice, that the hungry would be filled with good things and the rich sent away empty; angels announcing his birth; thousands being fed; the sick healed; the dead raised.

And then, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” It was over. The world hadn't changed. Might still made right. How ridiculously naïve to believe that any reversal of the old order could come about. Hope is for the gullible. Looking at this broken man hanging utterly helpless, naked and broken on a cross, the powers and principalities, earthly and spiritual, death and the devil must have said, “You fool.”

This, as St. Paul reminds us, is the wisdom of the world. And the world can present plenty of hard evidence that it is right: children killing children in horrific school shootings, 60 million displaced people – all of this supported by our rebellion against God, our idolatrous claim that we are in control and the world is ours. In the face of this and all of the suffering others cause and we cause others, we, too, might cry out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”

I believe that the beginning of Psalm 22 expresses the anguish of the psalmist and the anguish of our Lord, but there is more going on here. Citing the first words of a text was, in the tradition of the time, a way of identifying an entire passage. The psalm ends this way: “All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations shall worship before him. ... Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord, and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.” This is the wisdom of God. Jesus' crucifixion is the death of our death. His innocent suffering has reconciled all of creation to God. He has done it. We stake our lives on this.

This year, Easter falls on April 1. We shall have come through the Lenten desert to the Easter garden. We shall say, “Christ is risen. He is risen indeed. Alleluia!” And we shall confess this and live this in the face of worldly wisdom that is based on death. Life wins. Love wins. And if the world wants to call us April fools, we are glad to claim that title.

Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton

More about Bishop Eaton, her messages, and the work of our denomination can be found at www.elca.org.

Contact Us

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Website:
Stjohnbluebell.org

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Office Hours:
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
on T, W, & F

12:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. on TH

Nursery School Info:
610-272-7163

Website:
stjohnsns.com

School visits are
available by
appointment only.

Staff Listing

Rev. Sarah Stobie, Pastor	pastorsarahstobie@gmail.com
Lawrence Baker, Director of Music	lawrencebaker22@gmail.com
Susan Flanagan, Church Office Assistant	stjohn1802@gmail.com
Barry Stock, Facilities Coordinator	stock825@comcast.net
Carrie Engel, Nursery School Director	carrie@stjohnsns.com
Katie Myers, SS Director/Website	stjohnbluebell@gmail.com
Ann Brennan, Visual Arts Program Coordinator	annlb609@gmail.com
Marcie Godby, Bookkeeper	stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com



**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

