

**St. John
Lutheran
Church**

Winter 2019-2020

Look Inside...

Special Events

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Ministries**

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The Revelations



Stir up your power, Lord Christ and come.

St. John Advent & Christmas Events

Sundays in Advent

Each Sunday in Advent will feature hope-filled messages from the prophet Isaiah and lightening of the Advent wreath.

December 15th

Bring an ornament to decorate the Christmas tree in the Great Room, and then join us after services to go caroling for our homebound members.

December 18th – 6:30 pm

Children's Christmas Event

We invite all children & families of the congregation and nursery school for a very special event. Families can add their ornaments to the tree & enjoy birthday cake for Jesus.

Christmas Eve Services

5:00 pm and 9:30 pm

(Music will begin at 9:00 pm)

Christmas Day Service

10:30 am

Lessons & Carols on December 29th, 9:30 am

Epiphany Sunday on January 5th

8:15 am and 10:30 am

*Visit our website for details on services and events throughout
Advent and Christmas.*

Thoughts from Pastor Steve

Advent ... Waiting



Advent is upon us. The First Sunday in Advent is December 1. Advent is the season of waiting - waiting with hopeful expectation. This Church season invites us to step out of the days of Christmas-is-already-here back to those days when the coming of the Christ was a promise. Granted, it is a bit artificial, like many of the Christmas trees nowadays. We know that the promise of Christ's coming has been fulfilled; we know that the angels have already sung the first Christmas carol: "Christ the Savior is born!" Yet, it can be good for us to wait and to take time in our waiting to ponder the Promise, to ponder its fulfillment and to ponder what it means, what it has meant, what it could mean for our lives. So, we will gather on December Sundays and 'pretend' that Christmas has not yet come. We will take time to breathe in the words of the prophets witnessing to the Promise; we will sing the Advent hymns that echo their witness. We will wait for Christmas, together.

Since the first Sunday in May, St. John has been in a period of waiting. Waiting for the process that will lead to the calling of a new pastor. Waiting for the next steps. Waiting for the future. Not exactly knowing what is coming. Waiting.

My observation is that the waiting at St. John that began back in the spring was not Advent waiting. Advent waiting is hopeful, expectant waiting. This was not the case at first - there were too many other emotions and thoughts in the way of hopefulness. But that changed. I was here and, yet, I am not exactly sure when it became Advent waiting at St. John. Maybe it began with the first 250th Anniversary event - the special service with inspiring words from Bishop Pat Davenport, the full church, the fellowship meal - even the posing for the anniversary picture. Maybe it began as we came back week after week for Sunday worship this summer- Word and Sacrament, praise and prayer - together. Maybe the hope came when we completed a full-week VBS with lots of kids and teachers and fun. By fall, we were ready for 'normal' - our regular worship schedule, our regular schedule of meetings, our regular guests - Boy Scouts, yoga classes, art classes, nursery schoolers. In the fall, our hopefulness was affirmed with a great day for the Annual Car Show, with an enthusiastic turn-out for the Reenactment Day, with the full, full house for the Mozart *Requiem*, our 250th Anniversary Concert.

In plenty of time for Advent, St. John has entered into the hopeful expectation mode as the transition process unfolds, as we prepare to install and launch our Call Committee. You might say that St. John is not celebrating Christmas early, but that we have celebrated Advent - hopeful expectation - early!

One further observation about the hopefulness change at St. John is that it is connected to St. John's leadership. I am impressed with the staff - Larry, as the veteran, has brought much insight and knowledge to the behind the scenes support that can easily go unnoticed. We do notice the wonderful music he brings to worship

(and special occasions!). Marcie, our accountant, continues to be a stable force answering many questions, keeping us on financially sound basis. We have two new staff members - Sue and Vince - both began in January and are cycling through the worship-parish life of St. John for the first time. They are committed to doing things right and well and are humble in their learning curve. Carrie does a wonderful job with our Nursery School and is more than open to finding ways to connect her families with St. John. Church Council has stepped up - from the first extra meeting to digest the announcement of pastoral change to the meetings to help launch St. John in the transition process. Pastor Bell, an 'old' friend, has given a gentle, guiding hand to the Council, to the Transition Committee and to the congregation. She will soon be doing the same for the St. John Call Committee. Church Council is supported by the active committees of St. John that provide the gifts of planning and brainstorming, following-through and communicating. Our leadership is leading and inspiring all of us to make the 250th year at St. John another very, memorable year, even as we wait.

Yes, at St. John we are waiting. Advent is coming. Christmas is coming. A new pastor is coming. We are waiting. We are blessed to be able to wait with hopeful expectation - together.

Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers

Pastor Steve

Council Update

Greetings people of St. John,

I pray this letter finds each of you well. It has been quite a year so far and I continue to be encouraged by all the activities we continue to do both for St. John and our community. As a congregation we are utilizing our spiritual gifts like never before by banding together and working in accordance to God's plan.

We continue in a transitional phase pastorally, but have excellent people doing excellent things. A huge thank you to the transition team, call committee, Pastor Bell, and Pastor Steve for their dedication and diligent work.

As we embark upon this Christmas season we are reminded of God's grace and love for us. We celebrate the Christ child who was sent to take our place and remove the sin debt we could not pay for ourselves. May we emulate God's example by giving generously and fearlessly this season in whatever capacity you are led. We know that He will continue to provide as He has done for over 250 years. Be involved this season, join us for one of our many services or activities. All are welcome at St. John, and in the family of our Lord.

Your Brother in Christ,

Phil Vande Berg

Council President

Business Meeting



Annual Business Meeting, December 8th – 9:10 am

We will be voting on Church Council nominees and approving the 2020 Annual Budget. The Council continuing members and newly elected members will carry us into a year that will include St. John being in the Call Process. The budget to be approved reflects the hope and commitment to call a new pastor early in the new year. Please stay or come early and participate in this important meeting.

A Word on the Transition



Dear Friends,

In my role as an interim pastor, it is always refreshing to work with a congregation that continues through the transition time with energy and enthusiasm for the mission of the church. That is definitely the case here at St. John's. Transitions are a time in the life of a congregation to look to the future and the calling of the next pastor, but it is also a time to support current ministries and to encourage others to do so.

In the past few months, the Transition Team has had two discussion sessions with the congregation. Discussion was lively and honest. We have also met with the staff of the Nursery School, with the Tuesday morning Bible study group, and with the youth of St. John's. In the next few weeks we hope to have an opportunity to speak with the choirs and with our homebound members.

The Transition Team and I will be compiling a profile of St. John's based on the input from our members. That profile will be shared with potential pastoral candidates.

I am very grateful for the dedication of the Congregation Council and the four members of the Transition Team; Larry Erdman, Justin Kiefski, Samantha Posen, and Beth Wood. Please know that if you have questions or comments about our process, feel free to contact the Transition Team or me (marciagbell@comcast.net). We look forward to the next steps of the transition process when our Call Committee will begin the interviewing phase. Most important, I invite your continued prayers for St. John's and for your next pastoral leader.

With gratitude for the privilege of serving,

Pastor Marcia Bell

Interim Consultant

Children and Youth News



December 8: Annual Cookie Walk Fundraiser

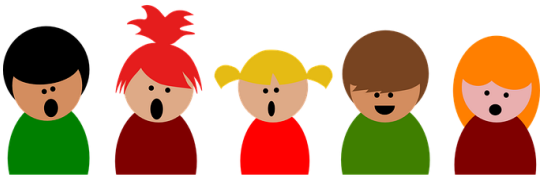
Between the first and second service on December 8 will be our annual Cookie Walk! For \$10, we give you a container, and you get to fill that container with as many cookies as you can fit! All the money raised will go towards the youth group to support our ministries!

The youth will be baking a ton of cookies in preparation, however we would love to get any cookie donations from our wonderful

congregation! If you would like to bake cookies to donate for our Cookie Walk, talk to Vince

Bruno! stjohn1802youth@gmail.com

December 15: Caroling for the Homebound



On December 15 after church, the children from Sunday School will be visiting our homebound members to do some caroling! The parents of the children are encouraged to attend as well! We hope that we can bring some Christmas cheer to those in our church family, so please pray for us!



Join us at 9:15 in Fellowship Hall for singing before moving on to classes for different age groups, Pre-school through 5th Grade.



St. John Youth Group is open to any teenager between 6th and 12th grades. Youth Group meets every Sunday from 6 to 8 pm. Each night play games (indoor & outdoor), listen & play music and have a discussion.

Adult News



Sunday Bible Study at 9:30 am.

Ever wanted to read 3 books at once but found it too confusing? Let us help! Sunday mornings we deep dive into Jesus's life as told in Matthew, Mark and Luke all at once. This discussion based format makes it easy for those of all levels to drop in and participate. We are just about to start the Transfiguration, and the discussion is out of this world. Hope to see you there!

Pastor Steve's Morning Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.

The class will begin studying the book of Isaiah in December and will continue into the start of 2020. We gather in the large classroom downstairs, and often have coffee and treats to share.

Connecting with Others



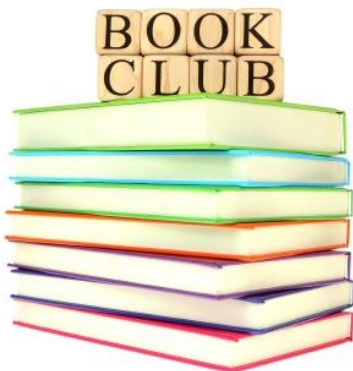
Christmas Flower Arranging Class

December 23rd – 7:00 pm

Fellowship Hall

Take an hour away from all the Christmas preparations to do something fun and creative! Join our favorite florist, BC Koch, to learn how to make a beautiful Christmas flower arrangement.

It will be a lovely addition to your dinner table or a great gift for your host/hostess' table. It's open to the public, as always, and the cost is \$20.00 per person. Please call the church office to RSVP. We'll hope you'll join us for some Christmas fun!!



St. John Book Club

Fiction, Non-Fiction, Autobiography, History, Humor, Mystery, Short Stories. We've read them all and discussed them at book club. The books are suggested and chosen by the group. Read the book or listen to the audiobook and then join us for discussion, friendship and refreshments.

Our next Book Club meeting will be Wednesday, January 29 at 7:30 pm. The book for January is Walking the Nile by Levison Wood. This is the true story of the writer/photographer/explorer as he followed the Nile for more than 4000 miles over nine months. It is a story of survival, African history and one man's epic journey. Please join us!



Our Visual Arts Program continues with a new Winter session!

Ann Brennan, our instructor, will offer a new session starting the week of January 6th that will run for 10 weeks. Cost is \$85.

The theme this session is “keeping it real” with a focus on drawing and painting from life. Specific lessons on composition, perspective, ellipses and development of a painting.

To register, please contact Ann Brennan at annlb609@gmail.com. This class does have a limit to participants, so registration is necessary. Visit our website for class day & times.



Christian Service Quilting Group meets on Mondays at 10 am in 1st floor Sunday school wing. New members are welcome to join us. If you can tie a knot, we have a job for you!

During services on November 10th, we blessed many beautiful quilts that were donated to both local and national groups. Fifteen quilts were taken to Mattie Dixon Cupboard in Ambler. The quilts will be used to bring warmth to those in need this winter?

Questions? Please ask Anita Hill any time after Sunday service.



Our popular yoga class continues on Thursdays at 2 p.m. Sessions are ongoing, drop-ins are welcome. Our instructor, Kellie Burnette LMT, CYT, AHC, 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? Please connect with the Church Office. For a full description of our yoga classes, please visit our website.

Serving God Together



2nd Annual MLK Day of Service

Monday, January 20, 2020

11:30 – 1:30

On January 20th, St John will be hosting our 2nd annual MLK day of service. Last year, over 200 people attended (more than half of which were not from our congregation), helped 11 charities, and impacted positively the lives of over 1000 people. All in a 2 hour event that includes a free lunch!

If you could not make it last year, please try to come this year. And if you did come last year, we hope to see you again.

This year we have big goals: there are 14 charities we will be doing projects for, we are looking for 300 participants, and to impact close to 2000 people. Some of the charities we will be working for this year include:

Mattie Dixon Community Cupboard • Local first responders • KenCrest transition homes for kids • Cards for Hospitalized Kids • Veterans Affairs Medical Center • Daily Bread Community Food Pantry • Cecil and Grace Bean Soup Kitchen • Mural Arts Program • Kensington Store Front • and others.

This is all accomplished in a 2 hour event (just a few hours out of your day). A free lunch is served prepared by the Scouts of our own Troop 98.

The event is open to all ages, children welcome and there are age specific projects for them (**please note, this is not a drop off event. All Children under 12 must come with an adult.)

There is no cost to attend.

Please visit the church website to register. We look forward to seeing everyone! If you have any questions, please contact us.

Thank you,
Kathy Erdman & Monika Bontempo
MLK Day Co-chairs



Dear Friends In Christ,

It is less than two months from our **2nd Annual MLK Day of Service** which will be held on Monday January 20th, 2020. Last year our members and community were very generous in supplying many of the needed items or funds for this event,

allowing us to touch the lives of over 800 individuals in need.

We are hopeful that we can gather the same support for our event this year.

How can you help?

- The **giving tree** will be located in the Great Room with **tags of needed items** to make this year's event successful. Please consider grabbing a tag or two and bringing your donation back to church **by December 29th, 2019**.
- We need volunteers to **help set-up** on Sunday, January 19th after services.
- We are also looking for **volunteers** to assist that day. Come and assist for the entire day or just an hour. All help is needed and appreciated. (You can register at StJohnBlueBell.org!)

Please be in touch with either Monika Bontempo (610-656-4084, mbontempo2015@gmail.com) or KathyErdman (610-304-4383, erdmankath@gmail.com).

Peace on earth, will come to stay when we live Christmas every day. -- Helen Steiner Rice

May you and your family be blessed with a wonderful holiday!



Advocacy News

In the fall, our Advocacy Team identified a variety of topics on which to focus our efforts for the coming year. Our goal is to bring to the attention of the congregation the social statements and Advocacy work of the ELCA. We have designated one issue to be addressed each month in our Sunday bulletins, with short informational articles from the ELCA and specific ways members can advocate for change, help others and be "God's Work, Our Hands" in the world. Each Sunday, there is also a prayer petition focused on the social issue.

In October, our focus was Climate Change and Environmental Issues. November emphasized Military Veterans, including ways to remember, reach out and help veterans, many of whom carry with them ongoing physical, social and emotional injuries.



Peace Wall by artists Peter Pagast and Jane Golden

Our emphasis for December, is Peacemaking. The mural, The Peace Wall, by is one of the murals in the Greys Ferry section of Philadelphia. When the Director of The Mural Arts Program of Philadelphia, Jane Golden, brought the idea of creating a community mural to this racially divided neighborhood, which was plagued by violence in 1997, community organizers were skeptical. Residents, black and white, worked with the artists on the composition of the mural and then began tackling other issues to clean up their neighborhood. The Peace Wall includes the Bible verse from Matthew 5:9, "Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." Director Golden says, "Community public art can knit people together in a way that other things can't. It has this ability to build a consensus and to challenge people who think collectively for the greater good."

Each month, we highlight a Mural Arts mural related to our emphasis. Thank you to Carol Weidler for suggesting these for us. In the spring, we will have the opportunity to join Carol for a tour of various murals in the city related to our Advocacy issues.

Celebrating 250 Years

Pictures from the American Revolution Remembrance Day - October 12, 2019.



Contact Us

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610-272-7163

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School visits are
available by
appointment only.

Staff Listing

| | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Rev. Stephen Godsall-Myers, Bridge Pastor | wittsgm@gmail.com |
| Rev. Marcia Bell, Interim Consultant | marciagbell@comcast.net |
| Lawrence Baker, Director of Music | lawrencebaker22@gmail.com |
| Barry Stock, Facilities Coordinator | stock825@comcast.net |
| Carrie Engel, Nursery School Director | carrie@stjohnsns.com |
| Katie Myers, Website | stjohnbluebell@gmail.com |
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| Marcie Godby, Bookkeeper | stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com |
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**Evangelical Lutheran
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.

