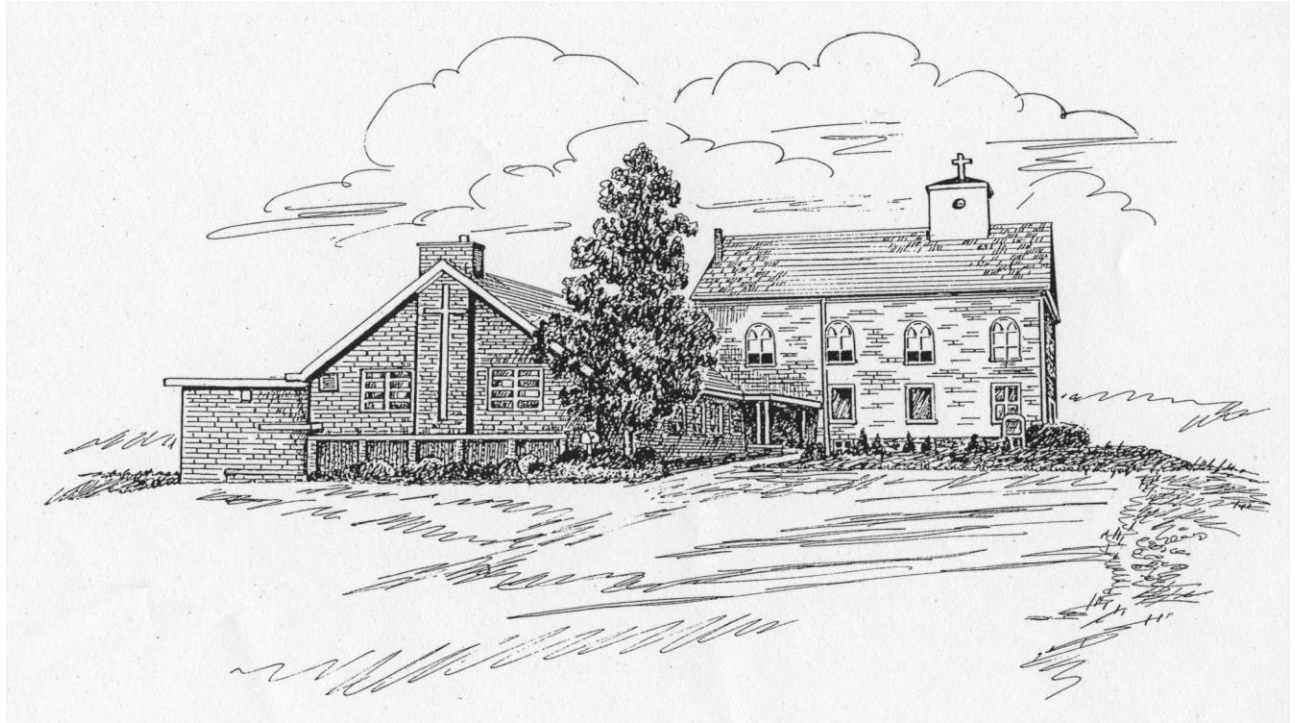


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St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

November 2010

Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: strawchurch@verizon.net

Web site: www.strawchurch.org

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

The Pastor's Letter

"Some businessmen are saying that this could be the greatest Christmas ever. I always thought that the first was." Art Fetig

One day not too long ago (I believe it was near Halloween) while I was in our local Shop Rite, I noticed that the Halloween candies and merchandise were completely marginalized or gone, while the Christmas items were now full-blown prominent for all to see. I shouldn't have been surprised, even when I was in retailing after I graduated from College in the late 70's, Christmas items and enticements to "buy early" came earlier and earlier each year. The ultimate for me this year was going into a local card store to see some of the "Christmas Ornaments for 2010" displayed in the summer. One cannot really blame retailers though, Christmas shopping accounts for a sizable chunk of their sales.

Then not only does the meaning of the first Christmas get obscured by the retailing industry, but it gets obscured by the festive trappings that have become associated with Christmas. Decorations, parties, and the like seemed to get pushed out front and center as what this very blessed time is about. I know of folk who will say they love Christmas, but that is because they love the festiveness of the season, not that they are particularly religious in any way.

So if you are a person of faith trying to focus on God's good news to us at Christmas, you can have quite a challenge.

The church has a way of us keeping focused on the real meaning of Christmas, and the unfolding of God's plans for us in the season prior to Christmas called Advent. The Wikipedia entry from the Internet explains its meaning well:

***Advent** (from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming") is a season observed in many Western Christian churches, a time of expectant waiting and preparation for the celebration of the Nativity of Jesus at Christmas.....Latin *adventus* is the translation of the Greek word parousia, commonly used in reference to the Second Coming. Christians believe that the season of Advent serves as a reminder both of the original waiting that was done by the Hebrews for the birth of their Messiah as well as the waiting of Christians for the Second Coming of Christ.*

In the early history of the Church this season was marked with spiritual disciplines that we would usually associate with Lent, such as fasting, or "giving" something up. At one point, Advent had the reputation of being a "little Lent"

Advent in worship takes us in a variety of directions to prepare for the celebration of Jesus's birth. First we are reminded through the Old Testament lessons that this is a loving God who keeps his good promises to save the people and bring a new day. Secondly the Epistle lessons focus on the implications of Christ's coming in our lives, recognition that the good news is for all people, and that we of all people should be ready for Christ's second return. The Gospel lessons prepare us by focusing on Christ's promise to return again, draw on the appreciation and deepening of our relationship to God by "repentance" in the story of John the Baptist, and finally bringing forth the powerful beauty of the humble birth of Jesus.

The person who said the "greatest Christmas ever" was the first one, not the one talked about by business folk, was right. Take the time for attendance at Advent worship or for something special you can do on a personal level. In this way you rediscover the "greatest Christmas" that ever was.

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. John

Advent Reminder



Advent begins on November 28th. We will need families to volunteer to light the Advent Wreath each Saturday and Sunday, starting with the 6:00 pm service on Saturday, November 27th. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board for those wishing to perform this service.

Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School children will present us with their annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 19th, 5:30 pm in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. A covered dish supper will follow, and a sign-up sheet will be posted November 28th for those who will be bringing something.

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

Thanksgiving Service

An ecumenical Thanksgiving service for the Phillipsburg area will be held at St. James at 4:30 pm on Sunday, November 21st. Come and join your neighbors from other churches in this uniquely American way to show our appreciation to God for all he has given us.

Christmas Eve 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 Friday, December 24th. Both services will be without communion.



At the 7:00 pm service, music will be provided by the Children's Choir, and Pastor John will have a children's sermon.

The 11:00 pm service will be made especially festive by a soloist as well as a group of brass instrumentalists.

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.

There will be no evening Worship on Saturday (Christmas Day). There will be an "upscale" coffee hour after Worship on Sunday, December 26th.

St. James is represented at the “Muehlenberg Workshop” Lutheran Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, on October 16th

On Saturday, October 16th, Marion Martin, my wife Pam, and I traveled to the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia for a workshop dealing with the legacy of Pastor Henry Melchior Muehlenberg. For those who may not know, Muehlenberg was a German Lutheran pastor who came here in the 1700's from Germany to fill the need for Lutheran clergy in Pennsylvania with his call to be at two churches in the Philadelphia area. Eventually Muehlenberg did a lot more for the Lutheran Church than that. He became instrumental in organizing churches, securing ordained clergy, establishing connectivity to the churches, and standardizing the worship in all the churches. One of the things for which churches looked to him was to get firmly established, and that is where his ministry intersects with ours. In fact it was his son Peter who became the first “ordained pastor” at St. James.

Next year is Henry Melchior Muehlenberg's 300th birthday, so this workshop was a preview of what Philadelphia, along with Muehlenberg College, will be doing to mark that event.

The workshop had a very informative presentation on the life of Muehlenberg, then a segment on the authenticity of a pulpit robe purported to belong to his son Peter, our first “ordained” pastor. They eventually got out the robe and I couldn't resist having my picture taken with it as the 21st pastor of St. James.

The day finished with a visit to the Archives at the seminary, where we saw actual

journals of Henry Muehlenberg. It was quite a day, and you will be hearing more about our participation in the 300th Anniversary celebration of the birth of Henry Muehlenberg.



Senior League – “Fellowship over Fifty”

The October meeting was held as Pastor Appreciation Night. The food, brought in covered dishes, was excellent as usual, and a beautifully decorated cake topped off the meal. Several tributes were read, expressing the gratitude we all feel for having our long wait rewarded by Pastor John and Pam being sent to us.

On November 3rd we enjoyed a pork roll sandwich meal followed by an informative presentation on estate conservation by Mel Kent of Thrivent Financial for Lutherans. This member-owned investment company has a long history of solid performance on behalf of its members, as well as of giving back to numerous worthy community organizations, including especially Lutheran churches such as St. James.



IMPORTANT: The next meeting will be on December 15th rather than December 1st. This will be our annual Christmas season celebration, and once again Ed Saultz will be entertaining us with some lovely Christmas favorites. **All members of St. James are invited to this event, not just seniors.** Come out and enjoy a pleasant evening of food, music, and good company. Please contact Janice Youpa (610-746-0237) or Shirley Johnson (908-454-5748) if you plan to attend.

† In Memoriam †

Naomi Walters, 94, of Oxford, NJ, formerly of Phillipsburg, went to be with the Lord on Friday, October 8th. A former member of other Lutheran churches in the area, she was the mother of Harvey Walters.

Lorna V. Tettermer, 91, of Easton, passed away Friday, October 15th. Her husband Frank L. Tettermer had passed away in March 2010 after 72 years of marriage.

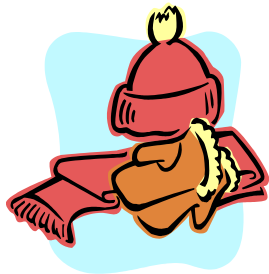
Frank I. McClain, Jr., went to his eternal reward on November 7th. He leaves behind his wife of 30 years, Nancy, as well as sons Jamie and Christopher and their families.

Our thoughts and prayers are with all the friends and families of these three new members of the Church Triumphant.

Hat and Glove Drive

Help keep a child warm this winter.

The Webelos II Den of Cub Scout Pack 61 in Stewartsville invites you to join us in helping to keep children warm this winter.



Please consider donating a new hat, scarf, a pair of gloves or mittens. We will be collecting these items now through Sunday, December 19th.

All donated items will be given to the Warren County Special Child Health Services.

The Spirit of Giving

Perhaps it is inspired by the unmatched generosity of God in his gift to us, his only Son, at Christmas, but this season always seems to bring out the spirit of giving in most people.

It is good to remember our friends and family with cards and gifts, and certainly an expression of Christian love to show in a material way concern for the less fortunate. It is also the time to recall that your church home cannot function without the financial support of all its members.

St. James has not weathered our long vacancy financially as well as it has spiritually. If you have, for whatever reasons, missed regular Worship attendance and offering during the past year, this would be an excellent time to make up that shortfall.

We have to remember that inflation over the past decade or two has been considerable, even though the current economic climate seems to have kept it somewhat in check. What was an adequate amount to support the operation of our church ten or more years ago doesn't reach very far today.

A number of dedicated people have been spearheading various fund raising efforts, with more being planned. However, individual offerings will still remain our financial cornerstone. Please prayerfully consider what you can do, within your means, to make your own level of giving properly reflect the benefits you obtain from being a part of the St. James family.

Baptisms

Emma Claire Butler was welcomed into child membership through the Sacrament of Baptism at the September 26th Worship. Emma is the daughter of James and Tara (Volker) Butler of Stewartsville, NJ.

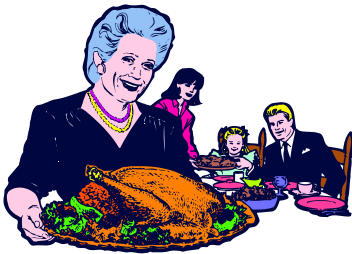


At the October 2nd Worship, Ashley Nicole Fanning of Phillipsburg became a new member of the St. James family through adult Baptism.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

"For I was hungry, you gave me something to eat..." *Matthew 26:35*

Please help NORWESCAP Food Bank feed the hungry. This year, the need is greater than ever. The Food Bank has need for the following items:



Flour Sugar
Instant Potatoes Stuffing Mix
Canned Gravy (no glass, please)

Please bring your donations to the church by Sunday, November 21st. We will have a table set up in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall for your donations. If you wish to donate a turkey, please contact the church office so we can let the Food Bank know it is coming.

Giving Tree

This is our annual Christmas gift program for the people at the Hunterdon County Developmental Center. Please pick up a card on the tree and return the unwrapped items to the church by December 5th. Also, please remember to attach the card to the gift so we know who it is for.



Offering Envelopes

Offering envelopes for 2011 are here. Please pick up your envelopes outside Frey Hall. If at any time you are making donations for multiple weeks, please combine them in one envelope.

Living Nativity

Arndts Lutheran Church, 1851 Arndt Road (corner of Bushkill Drive) in Forks Twp., will present their annual Living Nativity on December 11th, from 5:00 to 9:00 pm. Experience the true meaning of Christmas with this area tradition featuring real people and animals.



Mark Your Calendar

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 23rd. More information will follow.

Vendor Fair at St. James

On Saturday, November 27th, there will be a vendor fair in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm. There will be vendors from Longaberger, Lia Sophia, Silpada, Photographer Anthony Fodera, and Tastefully Simple, as well as local craft vendors offering hand-made, one-of-a-kind items, and much more. Come out and get a head start on stress-free holiday shopping. Each vendor will offer a door prize.

We are also engaged in several ongoing endeavors to help provide much-needed income for your church. Please keep the following programs in mind.

Pancake and sausage breakfasts are held on the first Saturday of every month, from 7:00 am to 12:00 noon in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Cost is \$8.00 for adults and children 10 and over, \$5.00 under 10 years.

Old cell phones (working or not), used inkjet and laser cartridges can be dropped into the containers available outside the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Business donations welcome. We are working toward purchasing a DVD projector with money raised from these donations.

Hoagie Sale. Simply purchase tickets at St. James for \$6.00 each for a hoagie from Gino's sandwich shop in Phillipsburg. Take your ticket(s) to Gino's and order your custom-made sandwich. For each ticket the church earns \$2.00.

Shop Rite Gift Cards are available at the office or after Worship. St. James receives \$5.00 for every \$100 in cards purchased, at no cost to you.

Prayer Garden

Our new prayer garden was formally dedicated following Worship on Sunday, October 17th. This lovely addition to St. James was part of a beautification effort done as his Eagle Scout service project by Devon Cantrel. The project also included the new plantings by the parking lot. For those who are not familiar with this Eagle Scout requirement, it is a community service project that every young man who aspires to the highest rank in scouting must complete. The candidate is responsible for designing the project, obtaining permission from the institution which it will benefit, and obtaining, through donations and/or fundraising, all materials necessary. He must also personally lead the work needed to complete the project.



Our thanks to Devon for this lovely addition to our church, and congratulations on achieving the Eagle Scout rank, which he will keep all his life.

*God doesn't call the qualified,
He qualifies the called.*