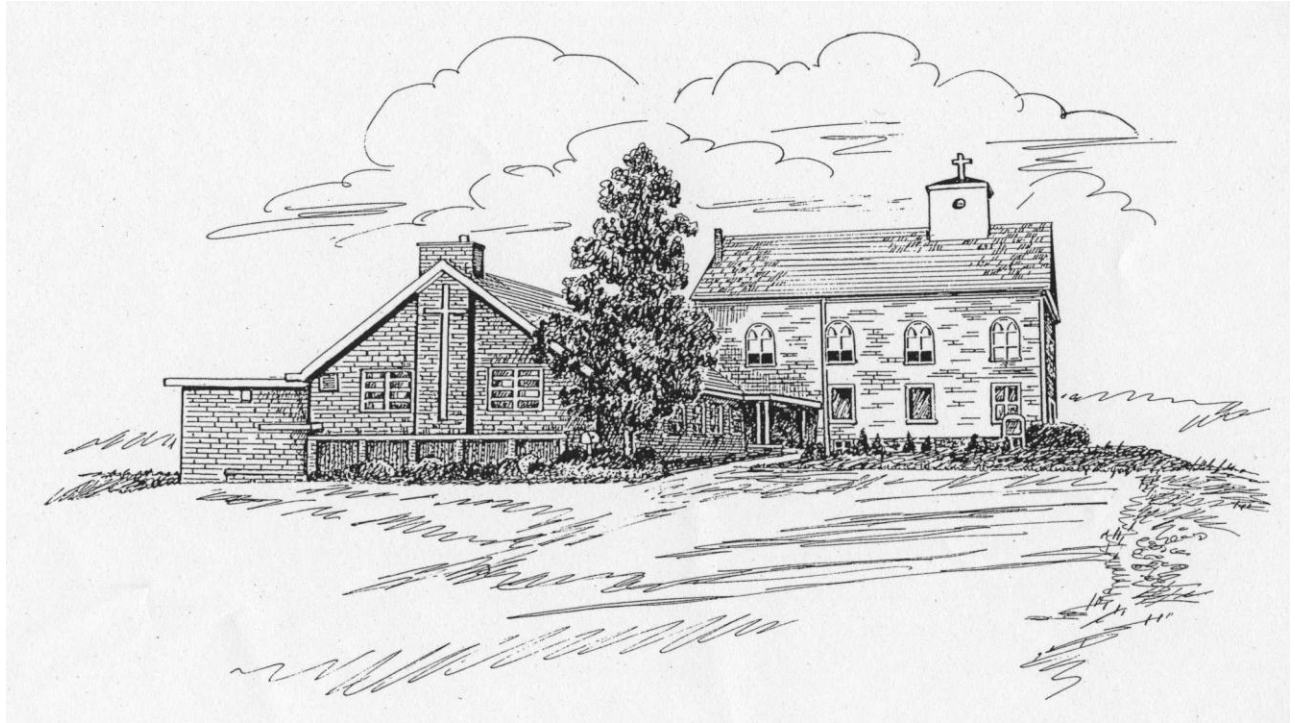


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

July 2011

Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan

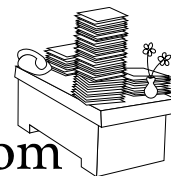
Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: strawchurch@verizon.net

Web site: www.strawchurch.org

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

The Pastor's Letter



From
the Pastors Desk

".....I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35c NIV

Dear Friends,

A few weeks ago, when we were visiting Pam's family in Indiana, we were there on a weekend, so we looked for a church to worship at. First we had to find one. That took a bit of doing, but we did find an ELCA church just down the road. Even though I am a pastor, when I worship someplace else outside my congregation I have a lot of anxiety.

You would think I'd never been in church before!

Yet I imagine that my anxiety is not too different from those who might be visiting our church for the first time. My first concern was; where do I go in? That seems obvious, but it really wasn't, and even though the church building was not that big, I wasn't sure.

When we got to the sanctuary there were ushers at the entrance, but they seemed more like a barrier than a help. One did take the time to greet us and ask our names. The whole service was projected at the front of the chancel, but it was still confusing. When worship was over, they had a fellowship time after worship, but nobody invited us.

After we left I mentioned to Pam that there was something I didn't like about that congregation, and when we came back that way we'd worship somewhere else.

So after being on the "other side" of worship, it made me think; how do we welcome the strangers in our midst? Do we take the time to greet them? If we're sitting near, do we make sure they can follow along in worship? We have a very nice fellowship hour in Ed Frey hall; do we invite visitors to spend some time with us? When visitors see ushers at the door, do they feel welcomed, or do they feel like they have just run into the defensive line of the Jets?

Visitors come to our church for a variety of reasons. Maybe it's because they're in town for the weekend. Maybe they are here because they're part of one of the regular families at our church. Maybe they are here because they are going through a life crisis. Maybe they are here because of a possible wedding or baptism. They may just be passing through to another place to visit family, but they saw our church on 22.

Whatever the reason we want them to feel glad they are with us, and that they are able to worship God with us. Hospitality is so important to our faith that Jesus proclaims that "I was a stranger and you invited me in" when talking about the final judgment.

All of us don't have to do everything, but all of us can do something to make sure whoever comes through our door is welcomed, and can worship with us, especially during the summer season.

While we are thankful for those who do this already, it is a good reminder of how important it is to "invite in the stranger" You never know who you might be welcoming, it could even be a Lutheran pastor from another area on vacation.....

Your brother in Christ,

Pr. John

The Muhlenberg Tercentenary

We are a Muhlenberg church! Henry Melchior Muhlenberg (1711-1787), the first "pastor-bishop" of the Lutheran church in this country had a direct hand in strengthening and helping our church in its early days in the 1750's and 60's. Muhlenberg came here from Germany as a "missionary" to German Lutherans in the new world. Eventually he took the lead in organizing and strengthening the colonial



THE LEGACY of
HENRY MELCHIOR
MUHLENBERG

Lutheran church, leaving his mark on churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Delaware, Maryland, North and South Carolina, Georgia, and Virginia!

Being a missionary to the New World in those days was no glamorous task. Life was rugged in the new world for a whole host of reasons. The other challenge was the plight of the German Lutherans themselves. They, for the most part, were very poor, getting their land as "indentured servants", working for a wealthy landowner rather than themselves until they could pay off the debt for the land. If you read the article in the hallway next to Frey Hall, and leading to the church office, it mentions an excerpt from Muhlenberg's journal (he kept extensive, descriptive journals about most of his activities) about his visit to the "straw church" in 1751! He visited them to help in their struggle to organize the church. Apparently he communed about 27 people that day, and was struck by their poverty!

No doubt he had a hand in our congregation later when his son Peter Muhlenberg became the first ordained pastor here (1770-72).

This year is the 300th anniversary of Muhlenberg's birth. The Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia is spearheading some of the programs and celebrations marking this very special event. I was asked to be the representative from the New Jersey Synod on the committee that is overseeing these programs and celebrations.

On September 6th (the actual day of Muhlenberg's birth) at the seminary there will be various workshops as well a keynote address by Martin Marty, historian, Lutheran, and well known speaker on the American religious scene. On October 15th there will be a day for congregations at the seminary. As a lasting legacy to Muhlenberg's work a student scholarship is being started at the seminary.

I am excited to be part of the committee, and we at St. James can be proud of our link to this "father" of the Lutheran church in this country. More importantly to me, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg loved the Lord, and telling the good news of the gospel. Perhaps that was the secret to all of his hard work, and efforts on behalf of the church.

I will be giving out more information about the 300th Anniversary celebrations, and hope some of you will be able to attend with me.

Pr. John

To learn more, visit: <http://ltsp.edu/muhlenberg-300-newsletter>.

Confirmation

On June 5th we joyously confirmed five of our young people in the faith, welcoming them to full membership at St. James. Our thanks go to those who gave their time and effort to prepare the candidates for this important step in their Christian lives.



Shown above with Pastor John are the Confirmands:

Jason P. Holman
Douglas J. Wrede
Sean M. LaCourte
Meghan L. Chemidlin
Shannon G. Hardenbergh



St. James Lutheran Church
1213 US Highway 22
Phillipsburg, New Jersey 08865

June 15, 2011

Members of St. James Lutheran Church

Ref: Church Finances

Dear Member:

*In the most recent Wisps of Straw Pastor noted that he had completed his first year at St. James and asked **how it was going**. Clearly, your Church Council is pleased. Our Pastor knows how to help each of us at St. James to meet our motto and **Serve Christ in Word and Deed**. We are so thankful for his leadership and faith.*

As we start our second year, your Council does ask that you join all of us in understanding what our financial commitment to our Church should be. Every day is a walk with Jesus. We Christians believe life is spent in the presence of our Lord. Therefore, we can talk about every day as a day that we walk with Jesus. Some days we feel Jesus' presence. Some days we feel quite a distance from Jesus. We boldly proclaim that, regardless of how we feel, Jesus is there. Jesus walks with us every day.

As we who are St. James Lutheran Church consider our financial stewardship at the beginning of the second year with Pastor John, you will be asked to think about your use of money and possessions as a part of your walk with Jesus. This is most appropriate, because when Jesus walked on this earth with his disciples, he often talked about money and possessions. This issue needs to be our focus now as we continue the service of Christ in word and deed during this next chapter in the long history of St. James.

We believe that everything we have is a trust from God, given to be used, cared for, and managed. What we do with our money is very much a part of our relationship with our Lord.

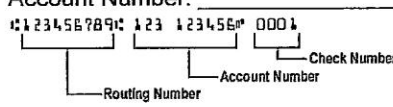
In order for us to be able to plan the continued effort to accomplish our mission, we will be asking each member to complete an "estimate of giving" card. With this information we can better forecast and manage the finances of the Church. There are also new tools to help you in your commitment to St. James. Attached is the electronic giving form for your review and consideration. We do plan to continue the use of the envelopes when requested. Last of all we ask your support in all our efforts to establish an additional income stream, from breakfasts and gift cards to other programs that allow you to show your support.

*We promise to keep you well advised concerning our efforts over the next couple of months, so you can know the importance of working with every other member to **Serve Christ in Word and Deed**.*

Church Council

AUTHORIZATION FORM

The **Simply Giving** Program
 endorsed by
 Thrivent Financial Bank

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY	ENVELOPE/DONOR #	DATE
St. James Lutheran Church		504732669
Effective date of authorization: _____ / _____ / _____		
Type of Authorization Form: <input type="checkbox"/> New Authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation amount <input type="checkbox"/> Change donation date <input type="checkbox"/> Change banking information <input type="checkbox"/> Discontinue electronic donation		
Last Name		First Name
Address		
City		State Zip
Email Address		
First donation date: _____ / _____ / _____	Frequency of donation: <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-Monthly (1 st and 15 th)	Funds and amounts: <input type="checkbox"/> Current expenses \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Benevolence \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities (heat, air conditioning etc.) \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Vacation Bible School \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Seasonal (Lent, Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas) \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Memorial funds: In Memory of _____ \$ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) _____ \$ _____
CHECKING / SAVINGS	Please debit my donation from my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Savings Account (contact your financial institution for Routing #) <input type="checkbox"/> Checking Account (attach a voided check below)	Routing Number: _____ Valid Routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3 Account Number: _____ 
	I authorize the above church to process debit entries to my account. I understand that this authority will remain in effect until I provide reasonable notification to terminate the authorization. Authorized Signature: _____ Date: _____	
CREDIT CARD	Please charge my payments to my (check one): <input type="checkbox"/> Visa <input type="checkbox"/> MasterCard <input type="checkbox"/> American Express <input type="checkbox"/> Discover Card	
	Credit Card Number:	Expiration Date:
	Name on Card:	
	Billing Address (if different from above):	
	I authorize the above school to charge my credit card in accordance with the information above. Signature (as it appears on the credit card): _____ Date: _____	

Please attach voided check over credit card section if using checking account.

Senior League Notes

The final meeting before the summer break was held on June 8th, and featured the lovely voices of our Junior Choir under the direction of Holly Chemidlin. For this occasion, all members of St. James were invited. We had a good turnout to savor both the music and the various covered dishes that made up our meal.

Our thanks go to Holly and the children for making our evening so enjoyable.



The first meeting of the new season will be on Wednesday, September 7th, at 6:00 pm. Please contact Carol Meixsell at 908-454-6734 if you plan to attend.

Food Donations Needed

Summer continues to be a time of stress for local food banks, with many poorer children not getting the nutritious meals they otherwise do at school. Please bring non-perishable and non-breakable food items to the barrels in front of Frey Hall, so that NORWESCAP can continue to supply this needed service to our less fortunate neighbors.

Wedding Bells

Michelle Braunworth and Paul Woerner were united in Matrimony at St. James, on Sunday, May 29th. The bride is the daughter of Nancy Carhart. Our sincere wishes go to the couple for a long and happy marriage.



Vacation Bible School



It's almost time for our 2011 Vacation Bible School, PandaMania, August 15th-19th from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Children as young as 4 will explore God's love for us through Psalm 139. Our friend, Chadder Chipmunk, will help open each day as we work together to solve the Mystery of the Missing Pandas. Chadder first joined our VBS journeys last year in our High Seas Expedition. Other new friends joining us this year are: Fez, a bird with amazing colors, reminds us that God made us; Amanda, a raccoon with pointy ears, reminds us that God listens to you; Boomer, a panda, reminds us that God watches over us in darkness and light; Pogo, a mischievous snow leopard, reminds us that God loves us, no matter what; and Lulu, a golden monkey with a beautiful blue face, reminds us that God gives good gifts.

Our mixed aged crews will rotate through various stations including Bible Stories, Sing & Play, Wild Bible Adventures, Bamboo Blast Games, Treetop Treats and Crazy Crafts. Each station and crew is run by St. James volunteers. Our VBS adventure will conclude with a covered dish lunch for all our participants and their families. The entire family is invited to join us on Friday, August 19th at 12 noon as we celebrate God's love for us all with the children sharing their experiences in song and displaying their crafts and mission project. For more information, please contact the church office at 908-454-2864 or by email at strawchurch@verizon.net. Advance registrations help us to have enough supplies to make this a great experience for all our children. A donation of \$15.00 per child (no more than \$40.00 per family) is requested to help defray the costs of VBS. (Arrangements to waive the registration fee can be arranged should it be difficult for any family to pay the registration fee.) Please register online at <https://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/strawchurch2011> or contact the church office for a registration form.

Teen and adult volunteers are needed. Please sign up at <https://www.groupvbspro.com/vbs/ez/strawchurch2011> to volunteer. Can't commit to a full week? Perhaps you can help organize craft supplies, handle on-site registrations Monday morning, be the contact for food donations for our closing celebration, or help set up and create sets and decorations. There's so much to do, but with your help we can make this a huge success.

A Year Passes Quickly

Pastor John and Pam hosted extended Fellowship Hours after Worship on both June 20th and 21st, to mark his first anniversary as our pastor.

While we certainly thank them for the refreshments, our real gratitude is for their ministry, truly a "pearl of great price". St. James has been much enriched by their work among us.

Recognition Well Deserved

St. James hosted a Boy Scouts Court of Honor on Sunday, April 3rd, marking the conferral of Eagle Scout rank on Devon Cantrel of Troop 29. As many of you know, Devon earned this distinction partly by designing and constructing the Prayer Garden that now graces the area near our Frey Hall entrance.

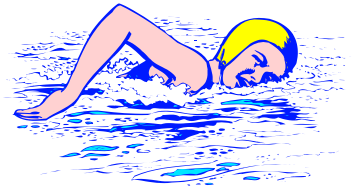


Congratulations to Devon, and our thanks once again for his efforts.

.....
Forbidden fruits create many jams.

Youth Group News

The 6th to 12th grade combined youth groups will be having a picnic and swim party at



the home of Barbara Wynston. The tentative date is Sunday, August 14th, at noon. Call Ms. Pam at 908-777-3068 for confirmation of the date and time.

The Grace Lutheran Youth Group will be joining us for this event.

Chancel Flowers

Are you aware that the flowers which beautify our Chancel every weekend can provide an opportunity for you to honor the memory of your loved ones or mark a special event in your family's life? At the same time, you will be helping your church.

The bulletin board in the Frey Hall hallway (leading to the church office) has sign-up sheets for you to select a weekend for that purpose. Helen's Florist will bill you directly.

The Chuckle Corner

As found in actual church bulletins, announcements, and newsletters

Miss Charlene Mason sang, "I Will Not Pass This Way Again", giving obvious pleasure to the congregation.

The cost for attending the Fasting & Prayer Conference includes meals.

Boy Scouts & Cub Scouts: What We've Been Up To!

It is hard to believe that it is the middle of June already and schools are out for the summer. This also means that we are taking a mini break before we formally pick back up again in September. We still have Summer Camp in July as well as our troop picnic and our Sea Base High Adventure outing in August. These are sure to be excellent events.

This year has certainly been a growing year for the troop. As you can see from the list below, we certainly had many outdoor adventures and were able to help our surrounding communities in many ways.

I want to personally thank all the leaders, committee members, and parents for making our program a solid one. It certainly takes a group effort to make a safe, educational, and fun program for the scouts.

David Zurine, Scoutmaster Troop 56

Activities: (just some of them)

Warren County Fairgrounds Camporee
Wilderness Survival Campout
Space Exploration Campout
Scouting for Food
January Cabin Campout
Valley Forge Pilgrimage & Encampment
Woodsman Weekend
Pack 61 & 56 Pinewood Derby Assistance
Pack 61 & 56 Blue & Gold Crossover Assistance
5 New scouts
Ryan's Eagle Court of Honor
Jeff's Eagle Court of Honor
Red & White Dinner
Earth Day Church Clean-up
Easton Children's Home Clothing Collection
Phillipsburg Soup Kitchen Assistance
Park Cleanup
Scout Sunday
Beaver Day: Trexler & Minsi
NJ State Police Camporee
New Flag Ceremony (Belvidere, photo right)
Pohatcong School Veteran's Day Assistance
Merit Badge Programs:
 Wilderness Survival, Space Exploration, Computers, Citizenship in the Community, Pioneering
Sea Base fundraisers: Car Wash & Clothing Drive
Delaware Water Gap Hike
Bowling Event
Spaghetti Dinner Fundraiser
Many Rank Advancements & Merit Badges Completed

