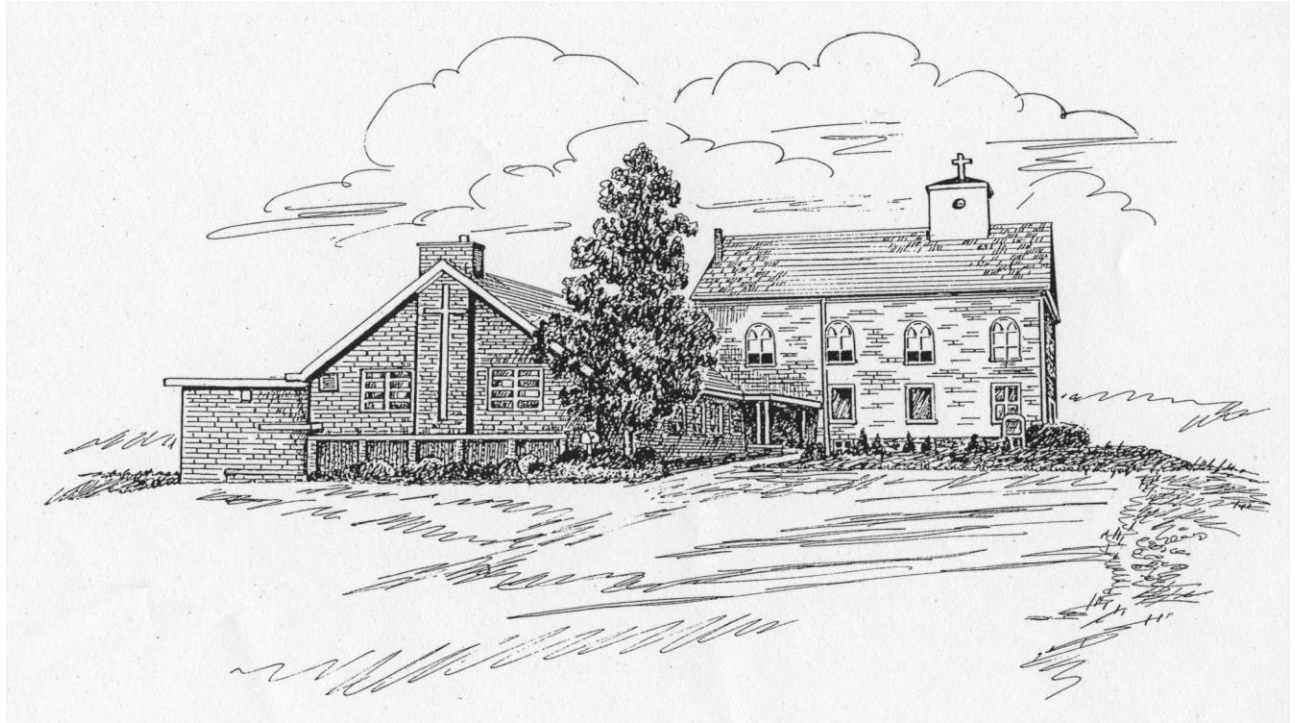


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

November 2012

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

The Pastor's Letter

And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us." 2 Corinthians 8:5 NIV

Dear Friends

Paul, in talking to the Corinthian church, in urging them to be generous in the offering that was being taken to support the impoverished church in Jerusalem, uses the example of their Macedonian brothers and sisters who gave generously to the cause. It seems that Macedonian churches approached the task by recommitting themselves to the Lord, then going about the task which was successfully completed.



That idea of recommitment to the Lord stuck in my mind as we focus on an intentional stewardship of time, talents, and treasure in the life of our church. For foundational to our existence for over 260 years here at St. James, is each of our commitments to the Lord, then how God then guides us in all areas of our life to support the ministry here in this part of God's vineyard. In fact I would say our response in effectively engaging in God's work in here depends on our commitment to the Lord, and being open to how the Holy Spirit would direct each one of us to respond in the areas of time, talent and treasures.

When we came together in ministry over two and a half years ago, it seemed that this was God's direction for you and me. Quite honestly it has had its challenges. We are not in the same position financially that we were in times past. Fund raising activities have become an important part to fund our ministry. Some of the same talented people who constantly step up to the plate to serve have done their part and then some.

In going forward there are two paths we could take. The one path is to let things go on the way they are, and eventually exhaust resources and people. The other is that of individual recommitment to the Lord, then by the leading of the Holy Spirit find what that means for us in the areas of time, talents and treasure.

This November you will receive a commitment card. In filling out the card, please know that it can be changed if personal circumstances change, but use it as an opportunity to recommit to the Lord, and then ask God what your part should be. I have often felt that the Holy Spirit speaks to each of us to guide us to each of our parts in the body of Christ. If we would each take that opportunity then our witness would be the same as the Macedonians. For Paul observes, "they exceeded our expectations."

Your Brother in Christ,

Pastor John

Thanksgiving Pot Luck

There will be a Thanksgiving pot luck lunch on Sunday, November 18th with a hymn sing starting at 5:30 pm in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Please bring a covered dish or dessert to share.



Advent Reminder

Advent begins on December 2nd. We will need families to volunteer to light the Advent Wreath each Saturday and Sunday, starting with the 6:00 pm service on Saturday, December 1st. If you wish to mark the season in this special way, call the church office to sign up.

Christmas Pageant

The Sunday School children will present us with their annual Christmas Pageant on Sunday, December 16th at 6:00 pm in the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. Dessert will follow, and a sign-up sheet will be posted November 25th for those who will be bringing something.

Practices will start Sunday, November 18th at 11:00 am in the stage room.



Volunteers are needed to help with costumes and sets, or to help out in general. Please contact Pam Van Haneghan (908-777-3068).

Christmas 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 Monday, December 24th. There will be Communion at the 11:00 pm service only, with music augmented by a brass quartet.



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 call the church office.

Christmas Concert

The Warren County Community Singers will perform a "Winterfest of Music" at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 1st at Grace Lutheran Church, 300 Roseberry St., Phillipsburg and at 3:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 2nd at the First Presbyterian Church, 40 East Church St., Washington, N.J. Admission is free, but a good-will offering will be taken to help support the group's programs.

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Please drop off non-perishable food items to brighten Thanksgiving for our less fortunate neighbors by the weekend of November 18th.

Western District Corner

On October 7th, the Western District of the New Jersey Synod met at Crossroads Camp and Retreat Center to worship, celebrate mission on the bounds of our district, and begin prayer, thought, and discussion as we look to the process of electing a new bishop in our synod for the first time in about twenty years! Pastor Murdoch MacPherson ("Mac" as he is called), through his long tenure as a pastor in our synod, led us in a "historical discussion" of previous leaders (Strawchurch's beloved Pastor Ahlers as one of them), and a good overview of the process. We were well represented at the meeting by Marion Martin, Amy Martin, and Pam Van Haneghan. The meeting concluded with a very nice dinner at Crossroads.

In the spring the district will meet to hold an election for a member of the synod council. Please consider being a voting member in the spring. The meeting is informative, you get to meet brothers and sisters of other congregations nearby, and you have a way of having a direct vote on a representative on synod council. It will also be good to attend for it will provide more information on the synod assembly in June when a new bishop is elected.

On a side note, since I was appointed Dean by Bishop Riley it has been a great way to learn about my new synod after serving in Upstate New York Synod for many years. I also can tell you that many of our other brothers and sisters in the Lutheran Vineyard share some of the same challenges and joys as we do!

Pastor John

Recent Baptisms

The September 2nd Sunday worship gave us the joyful opportunity to welcome Emma Violette Russoniello, daughter of Tina and Frank Russoniello, to membership in St. James and the entire Christian community through the Sacrament of Baptism. We ask for God's blessings on Emma, her parents and family, as well as her sponsors Richard Uber and Patti Nicastro.



On October 28th, Reformation Sunday, we were pleased to be part of the beginning of the Christian pilgrimage of Elliot James Lewis in Holy Baptism, accompanied by his parents Glenn and Joanna Lewis, along with his big brother, and sponsors Kate Andrews and Jill Detwiller. May God bless him in his journey, and his parents, brother, and sponsors as well as they guide him in his growth in the Christian faith.

Christmas Benevolence

The Social Ministry Committee has announced that our Christian mission this Christmas will be for needy children and young people. In cooperation with "Whispers from Angels", we will be collecting new cold-weather hats, gloves and scarfs from now through the weekend of November 26th. Items may be left on a table near the Frey Hall entrance.



Please contact Carol Meixsell, Janice Youpa, Shirley Johnson or Liz Kolba for any additional information.

The Advent Wreath Candles



Four candles were burning brightly on the Advent wreath. The room was quiet, so quiet that one could hear the candles begin to speak.

The first candle sighed and said, "My name is Peace. My light shines, but people do not value peace, they do not want me." Peace's flame began to dim and soon went out completely.

Another candle flickered and spoke, "Faith is my name, but I feel superfluous. Mankind wants nothing more to do with God. It is useless for me to continue burning." A breeze wafted through the room, and the second candle went dark.

Softly and sorrowfully the third candle intoned, "I am called Love. I no longer have the strength to burn, people push me aside. They think only of themselves and not of others as they should." With one last flicker Love's flame was also extinguished.

A child came into the room, saw the candles and said, "You should all be lit, not dark." The child began to cry. Then the fourth candle found its voice, "Have no fear! As long as I am burning, we can relight the other candles. I am Hope."

The child found a sliver of wood and relit the other candles from the flame of Hope. Soon the room was once again bright with the light of Peace, Faith and Love, thanks to the enduring flame of Hope.

"Last Sunday" Service

On the last Sunday of every month we will have a brief service of Holy Communion at 11:30 am, after Sunday School. This is an expansion of the worship opportunity that was previously available only on months that had a fifth Sunday.

Please consider taking part if for any reason you are unable to attend the regular services.

Attention Thrivent Members

Thrivent makes Choice Dollars available for charitable purposes every quarter and it costs you nothing to designate them to go to your church. Contact your Thrivent representative for details.

If you are already a member designating your Dollars to go to St. James, be advised that Thrivent has eliminated the recurring feature. Again, be sure to contact your rep.

United Way Donors

Did you know you can designate United Way dollars to be directed to St. James Church? During open enrollment, just select our account 3425925 for funds to be directed in your name.

Sexton House Renovation

Please contact Alan Hardenbergh to help out with work at the house. There is much to be done, and all help will be appreciated. Call 908-859-6281 or send an email to shardenbergh@comcast.net.

Mark Your Calendars

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 20th. (Snow date is the following Sunday, January 27th.) All members should come to discuss and vote on the important issues facing our spiritual family. New Council members will be elected at that time. Further details will appear in a mailing to be sent in advance of the meeting.

Sunday School News

October 21st was bring-a-friend Sunday and we had three visitors. Two of them have joined our Sunday School; welcome, Jessica and Jayden



At the 8:45 am worship on October 28th the Sunday School children sang, "He Got the Whole World in His Hand" and shared some Bible Scriptures. Cortney Esposito then spoke on what Sunday School meant to her.

For the first two weeks in November we will be collecting nonperishable food for NORWESCAP and new hats, gloves and scarves for our local children and young people.

Senior League Announcement

IMPORTANT: Due to scheduling issues, the December meeting will be at 6:00 pm Wednesday, December 19th, rather than the usual first Wednesday of the month. It will once again feature the music of Ed Saultz and his ensemble. Watch the weekly bulletin for more details.

The first meeting of 2013, on Wednesday, January 2nd will be an "Everybody's Birthday Party", an opportunity to wish everyone there a happy birthday regardless of the actual month! Of course, cake and ice cream is on the menu.

† In Memoriam †

We pray for and offer condolences to the family of Evelyn May Weisel, who entered the Church Triumphant on September 2nd.

Financial Planning

Please remember to return the commitment cards that were recently distributed at the church. They are a vital tool for our Finance Committee to plan realistic budgets for the future. These cards will remain absolutely confidential, seen only by the Financial Secretary, and shredded immediately after use. No personal information will be sent on or retained, only gross amounts totaled from all the cards.

A Thank You

Thanks to all who helped make the Corn Maze Concession Stand a success, raising approximately \$1100.00 for our church.

Youth Group News

The youth group enjoyed running a booth at the Stewartsville community day again this year on September 22nd. This has been an important outreach, and our youth are to be commended for it. They also had a great time on September 30th at the Raub Farms corn maze - sort of a reward for their work the weekend before!

Following a late-October Halloween party, the group participated in the Phillipsburg-Easton Halloween parade, postponed to November 4th thanks to a visit from Sandy. They designed and made their own banner for the occasion.



Upcoming activities are as follows:
November 11th - Thanksgiving party
December 9th - Christmas party
December 16th - Christmas Pageant
Hope to see all of our youth!

Protect Your Health

Find out your risk of stroke by participating in the Life Line Screening at St. James on Monday, December 17th. Through non-invasive ultrasound, carotid arteries can be evaluated for fatty plaque builduop, the leading cause of stroke. By signing up for this health event you will receive a \$10.00 discount off any package of \$139 or more. In addition, your church will receive a \$10.00 donation for every member who signs up and attends.

The Stroke, Vascular, & Heart Rhythm package contains four screenings: carotid artery, abdominal aortic aneurysm, peripheral arterial disease, and atrial fibrillation. To schedule your appointment and receive this special offer, call 1-800-324-9458 or sign up on the flyers at the church. Join the fight against vascular disease!

St. James Lutheran Church 3rd Annual Holiday Vendor / Craft Fair



December 8th, 2012

Rt. 22 Phillipsburg NJ. Between Stop & Shop and Shoprite

9:00 am – 3:00 pm (Set up 7:00 am)

Table Selection: 1 table (\$40.00) or 2 tables (\$75.00)

Contact Barbara Wrede at: (908)421-1199 or email at: barbiewrede@me.com

Please Mail Checks Made Payable to:

St. James Lutheran Church 1213 U.S. Route 22, Phillipsburg NJ 08865

Do Not Send Payment Until You receive a Confirmation #.

This will ensure your spot is reserved and duplicate vendors are prevented.

A Bake Sale will be held in conjunction with the Vendor/Craft Fair.