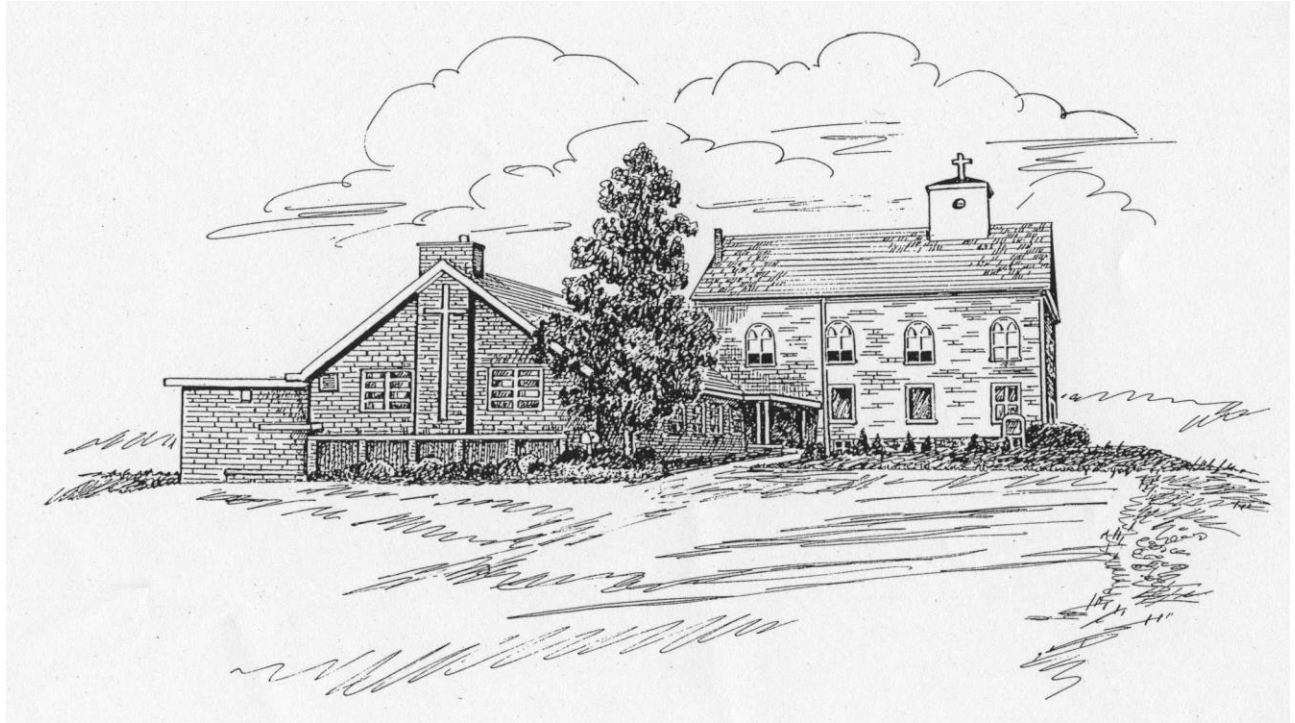


# *WISPS OF STRAW*



*St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*March 2013*

*Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan*

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: [strawchurch@verizon.net](mailto:strawchurch@verizon.net)

Web site: [www.strawchurch.org](http://www.strawchurch.org)

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

# *The Pastor's Letter*

*Dr. George Sweeting tells of an incident in the early 1920s when Communist leader Nikolai Bukharin was sent from Moscow to Kiev to address an anti-God rally. For an hour he abused and ridiculed the Christian faith until it seemed the whole structure of belief was in ruins. Then questions were invited.*

*An Orthodox Church priest rose and asked to speak. He turned, faced the people, and gave the Easter greeting, "He is risen!" Instantly the assembly rose to its feet and the reply came back loud and clear, "He is risen indeed!" (Today in the Word, September 1989, p. 8)*

While we are still in Lent, and Easter is near perhaps it is good to remember why we take this journey to the cross - because it always leads us to the power and victory of Jesus' resurrection. For over two thousand years believers have defiantly proclaimed Jesus rising from the dead despite anything and everything that has been put forth to destroy that belief. Dr. Sweeting's powerful illustration above makes it abundantly clear.

The challenge for us in the year 2013 is as follows: can we still be a people rooted in the resurrection of Jesus Christ? This is no easy question to answer, because if you follow it through in the reality of life or the church, or world, we may assent to it in our heads, but we don't follow through in the actions of our lives.

I know I have been just as guilty of that as anyone. There have been times I felt God has promised me something special, and just because it didn't happen on my time table or the process became difficult I wanted to "bail out" or, like the children of Israel in the desert, complain. It was at times like that I will always be grateful for those who put up with me and pushed me forward to trust God despite what I thought I was seeing or thinking.

Through my work especially in the "wider" church these last five years I have to say I hear a lot of "panic" amongst church members in various churches who are in "panic mode" because they are worried that their church might run out of money and close. I might add too, in their distress these folks long for the "good old days" when many more people attended church.

While of all of this is completely understandable, we forget that the power of the church was not formed by an easy path to success, it formed with the wood of the cross and that defiant proclamation of the Resurrected Christ. In fact you might say the church grew even though many were willing to and did die for their faith.

God has a path for you and me. God has claimed us in our baptism, and somewhere along the line in life we affirmed that Jesus Christ was our savior and Lord in Confirmation, or that affirmation became even more real and vital through a later experience in our lives. That does not mean our journey or the journey of the church will be easy, or things will always go the way WE think they should.

So it comes down to this question, are we people of the resurrection or not? With two thousand years of the testimony of history behind us let us live as people of the resurrection. When you think about it, we wouldn't be here today if others before us didn't believe it.

May this Easter we not only celebrate it as the victory of our faith, but as the power to meet the challenges of our lives and of the church.

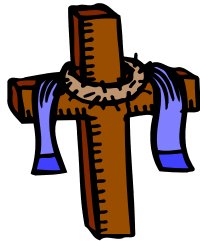
Your brother in Christ,

*Pr. John*

## Holy Week and Easter

We are approaching the time to worshipfully commemorate our Lord's suffering and death for our sins, and then to rejoice in the celebration of his glorious resurrection. Here at St. James we will have a full schedule of services for this most holy time of the Christian year.

March 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm  
Maundy Thursday Service  
First Communion



March 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm  
Good Friday Service  
(please bring a flashlight)

March 30<sup>th</sup> 6:00 pm  
Worship Service in preparation for Easter

March 31<sup>st</sup>, Easter Sunday  
7:00 am Sunrise Service at  
St. James Cemetery,  
followed by a light  
continental breakfast in  
Ed Frey Memorial Hall.  
8:45 and 10:45 am Communion Services



## A Belated Thank You

Dear Friends,

Though some time has passed, I realized I did not take the opportunity in the last Wisps to thank you all for your generous gift to me at Christmas. Thank you so much, Pam and I are really grateful to you all.

*Pr. John and Pam*

## Confirmation June 2<sup>nd</sup>

The tradition of our confirmands having their confirmation on the first Sunday of June continues this year. We have seven in this class:

Hayley Hardenbergh  
Torri Esposito  
Emily Carducci  
Ana Marciello  
Jordan Holman  
Ryan LaCourte  
Dean Peppe



Please pray for these candidates as they complete their program of study, and plan on welcoming them when they are confirmed on June 2<sup>nd</sup>.

*Pr. John*

## Interested in Membership?

There are several folk who have indicated they are interested in joining St. James. Starting the second Sunday after Easter, I will be glad to be available in my office after worship, or any other time if you wish to inquire about becoming a member at St. James.

*Pr. John*



## *New Jersey Synod Assembly June 6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> Election of a New Bishop*

When our current bishop, Bishop Roy Riley was elected about 21 years ago, the ELCA was only a few years old. Computer technology was just starting to gain public appeal. Cell phones were very large and rare! Many major industries that employed many people were still in business, the threat of foreign terrorism was not at the forefront, because it seemed like it was something that happened in other countries, not ours. "Hot Button" social issues that eventually would divide the church were beginning to pick up steam. Church attendance though waning from the high levels of the fifties was still somewhat strong. All of that has changed and more!

Now Bishop Riley is going to retire, and for the first time in 21 years we will be electing a different bishop! In the Greek language there are two words for time, "chronos" which means "regular" time, and "karios" which means a "special" time. This is CLEARLY a "karios" time in the life of our synod.

The synod has appointed a transition team, and I have already moderated a meeting of the Western District as dean where the whole question of electing a new bishop was a major topic of discussion. We at St. James will have a stake in the election by our sending two voting members to the assembly to elect a new bishop. I have already heard from several of you expressing interest. We are eligible to send two voting members, one male and one female. However if we do not have two opposite gender voting members, we can still send two voting members of the same gender. The registration deadline for the assembly is about April 20<sup>th</sup>.

The assembly will be held at the Hilton Hotel in New Brunswick. Because of our budget limitations, registration will be paid, but lodging will not for our two lay voting members.

Both as a rostered voting member and district dean I will be staying at the hotel for the whole meeting.

For those who have expressed an interest please let me know if you definitely want to go. For all of us at St. James I cannot stress enough that we should be in prayer for the Holy Spirit's guidance in this significant election of a new bishop in the New Jersey Synod.

*Pr. John*



NEW JERSEY SYNOD  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
*God's work. Our hands.*

## † In Memoriam †

Donald F. Knoble, 80, of Lopatcong Township passed on to eternal bliss in the Lord on Friday, February 1<sup>st</sup>. Don was an uncle of Bob Babcock.

Jean B. Sabo, 87, of Alpha entered the Church Triumphant on Sunday, February 24<sup>th</sup>. She was the mother of Esther Kutzman.

Elaine Reiner, 71, of Belvidere, NJ joined the company of Saints on Monday, March 4<sup>th</sup>. Elaine was a regular attendee at the Saturday evening worship.

Joseph C. Hoadley, Jr., 88, of Phillipsburg, went to be with his Lord and Savior on Friday, March 8<sup>th</sup>. As a member of the dwindling ranks of the "greatest generation", he served in the Marine Corps during World War II. At St. James, Joe helped out with VBS on numerous occasions.



We offer condolences to their families and friends, who will be in our prayers.

## *Thank You, Pastor and Pam*

The members of the 2012 Council want to thank Pastor John and Pam for the great breakfast that they prepared for them on February 16<sup>th</sup>. It was just one more reminder of how blessed we at St. James are to have Pastor and Pam with us.

## *Sunday School News*

As our Lenten project, we filled Global Barnyard coin boxes to raise money for ELCA World Hunger.

Activities for future Sundays:

March 24<sup>th</sup> - Easter egg hunt

March 31<sup>st</sup> - No Sunday School; Children will be singing "Celebrate" at the 10:45 am Easter Worship service

April 7<sup>th</sup> - Youth Sunday at the 8:45 am Worship Service

April 14<sup>th</sup> - Silly Mix & match Sock Day

April 21<sup>st</sup> Earth Day project (each family bring in something they made with recycled material)

April 28<sup>th</sup> - Wear your most crazy mixed up outfit to Sunday School

May 1<sup>st</sup> - Wear Your Favorite Hat Day

May 12<sup>th</sup> - Bring your family to Sunday School

May 19<sup>th</sup> Family project (favorite Bible Story?)

May 26<sup>th</sup> - Wear red, white and blue to honor our service men and women

June 2<sup>nd</sup> - 8<sup>th</sup> grade confirmation - no Sunday School (Sunday School families invited to confirmation service and coffee hour)

June 9<sup>th</sup> - Sunday School presentation at the 8:45 am worship service and last day of Sunday School

July 8<sup>th</sup> to July 12<sup>th</sup> - **Vacation Bible School.**  
Post to your calendars

We welcome Avery and Evan Schafer to our Sunday School!!!

## *First Communion Class*

The class met on two Saturdays, March 9<sup>th</sup> and March 16<sup>th</sup> for a total of four hours to learn about communion. The students will be receiving their 1st Communion at the Maundy Thursday evening worship service. Following worship there will be a reception in Frey Hall for the 1st Communicants, who are listed below:

Anna Jean Carducci  
David Martin  
Chemidlin  
Crystal Lynn Eaton  
Andrew William Hardenbergh  
Matthew Aaron Johnson  
Bryce Travis Knoble  
George Robert Moser  
Samantha Emily Moser  
Jacob Andrew Takacs  
Nicole Madison Van Blarcom



We also congratulate Elizabeth and Heidi Hack who will receive their 1st Communion on Palm Sunday at their grandma's church.

## *Senior League Notes*

Our next two Wednesday meetings will be on April 3<sup>rd</sup> and May 1<sup>st</sup>, at the usual 6:00 pm time. Watch the Sunday bulletins for any additional information.

On June 5<sup>th</sup> we will celebrate the last meeting before the summer break with our usual pizza and make-your-own sundae night.

## *Straw Church Breakfast Sets a Record*

The March 2<sup>nd</sup> breakfast saw a record-high attendance of 136 well-fed and satisfied diners. An additional attraction was an appearance by the Easter Bunny, carrying a basket of little goodies for the youngest breakfasters. Thanks to all the hard workers, including our youth, who make this a really successful fund-raising effort.



If you haven't yet had the opportunity to taste the superb St. James cuisine, there will be a chance at the next breakfast, April 6<sup>th</sup>, as well as on every first Saturday of the month from 7:00 to 11:00 am. Come out and do your taste buds (and whoever does the cooking at home) a favor while also supporting your church.

## *Youth Group News*

We have had several meetings on Sunday evenings playing games, eating pizza and having devotions. One of our new favorite games is "Murder" played in the dark and we have to guess who the murderer is.

We have been active in helping out with the fundraiser breakfast each month. The Easter Bunny came to our March breakfast and was helped by one of our youth.



Please come and join us on Youth Sunday, April 7<sup>th</sup> when our youth will be leading the worship service.

Other future activities:

March 17<sup>th</sup> - help with nursing home service

April 13<sup>th</sup> - Musconetcong Spring Cleanup (Adult help needed)

May 19 - Crop Walk

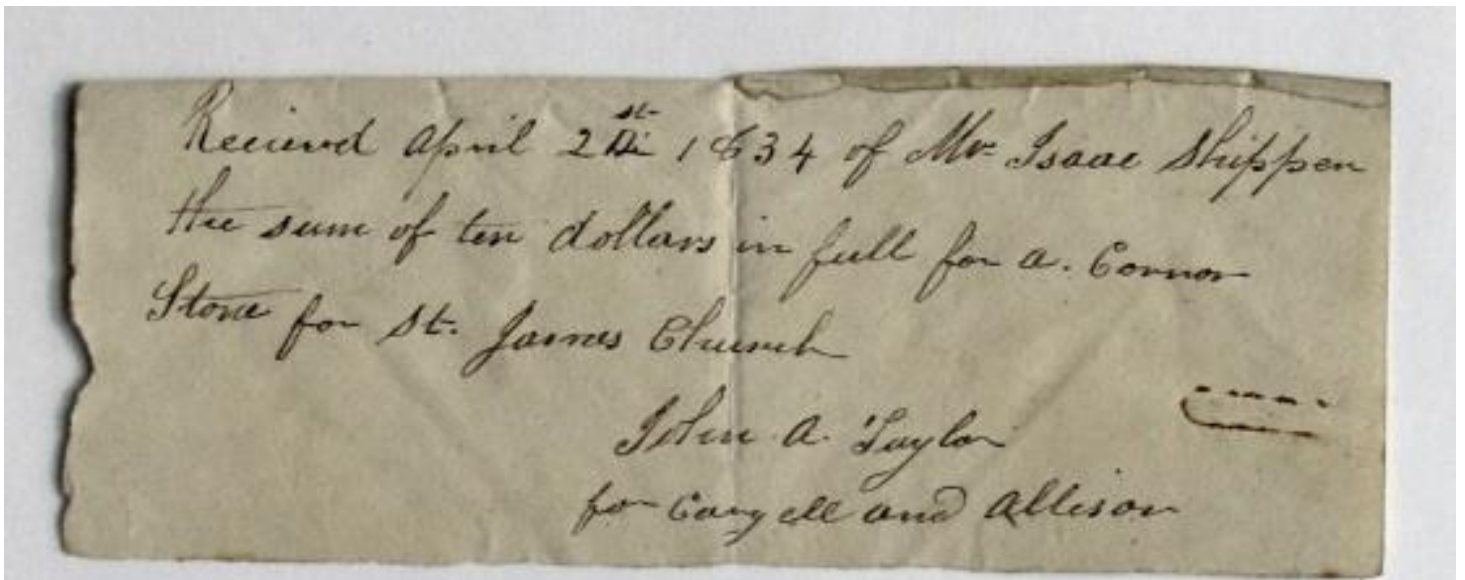
A Laser Tag Day and more group meetings are also planned. This spring we will be painting our youth room, and are asking if anyone has a couch to donate for the room.

We welcome all youth in 6<sup>th</sup> thru 12<sup>th</sup> grades to join the group. Adult volunteers are needed to help run youth group meetings and activities with Pastor John and Pam. If you are interested please contact Pam at [evangelvh316@aol.com](mailto:evangelvh316@aol.com)

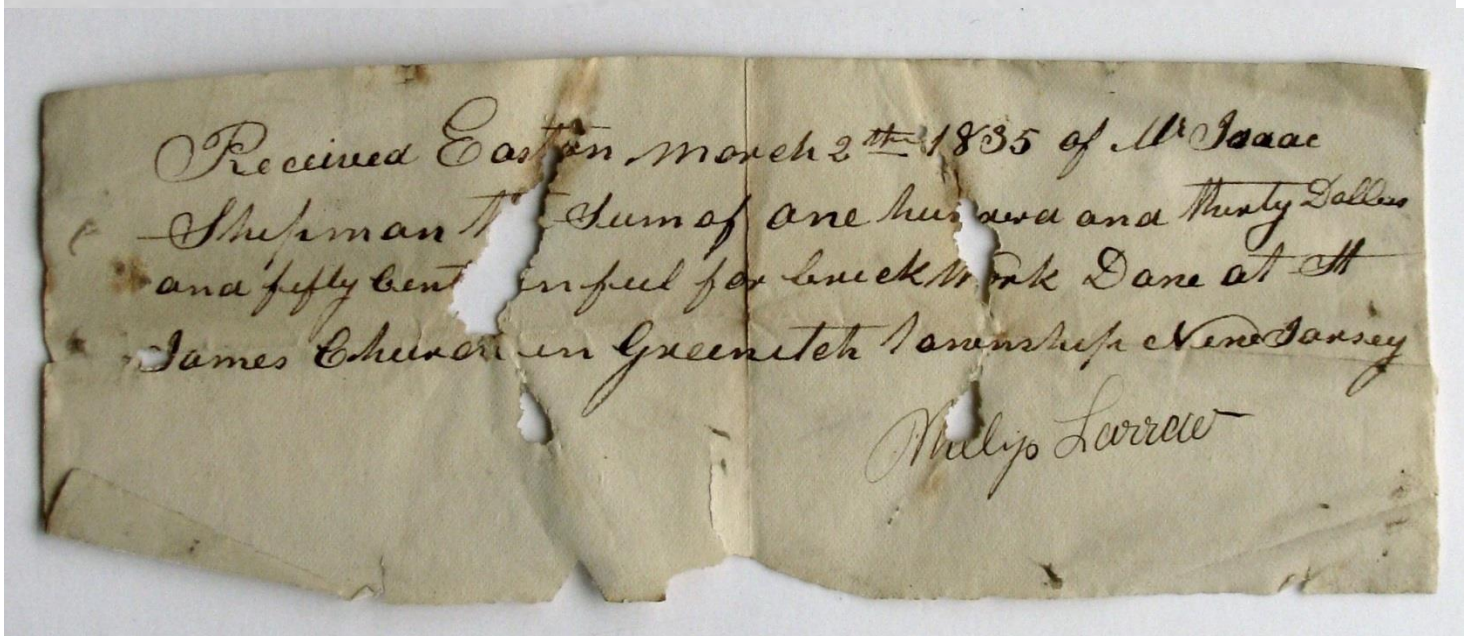
## Of Historic Interest

We at St. James have a unique and valuable history, not only in the length of time the congregation has existed, but also in the architectural gem we have for a sanctuary and the amount of area and national history that lies in our cemetery. Recognizing this, Council has formed a Historic Committee to document and preserve the records of our past. As items of interest are uncovered, we will from time to time share them in these pages. In the near future, a large glass-fronted cabinet housing some of our treasures will be installed in Frey Hall.

Below are two receipts from the actual construction of our sanctuary building in 1834 - 35. The first one shows that the building cornerstone cost \$10.00, a tidy sum in those days!



Received April 2<sup>nd</sup> 1834 of Mr Isaac Shippen  
the sum of ten dollars in full for a Corner  
Stone for St. James Church  
John A. Taylor  
for Gargell and Allison



Received Eastern March 2<sup>nd</sup> 1835 of Mr Isaac  
Shipman the sum of one hundred and twenty Dollars  
and fifty cent in full for buck work done at St  
James Church in Greenwich Township New Jersey  
Melip Lorrain



## *Fundraiser at Ruby Tuesday*

If you visit Ruby Tuesday (On Rte. 22, across from the church) on the dates below, St. James will receive back 20% of your check amount. You are required to bring one of the fliers that are available at the church for the church to receive the money, but anyone (not just members) can use them. No additional coupons or discounts can be used with this program. Please come out and support your church - if you eat out once a week or once a month, make it one of these days, and make it Ruby Tuesday. Hand out fliers to anyone you know who may want to go.

Dates for this program are Sunday April 21<sup>st</sup>, Wednesday April 24<sup>th</sup>, and Thursday April 25<sup>th</sup>. Reservations are suggested.

## *Girl Scout Update*

Senior Girl Scout Troop 95109 did four hours of service performing a fall clean up on the church property. They raked the entire yard - front, back and sides - including areas along the highway, and bagged all the leaves. They also cleaned out the basement window wells. These girls are finishing out their Senior level placement and will be bridging to Ambassadors before September.

This spring the troop will be conducting hikes at Merrill Creek on April 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>, and May 4<sup>th</sup>.



The hikes will teach Orienteering, Geocaching, and/or Letterboxing, or folks are welcome to join us just for nature walks. Hikes are open to all families, youth groups, religious education classes, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. Scouts can earn badges and/or portions of merit badges. We hope you will join us. I will send out flyers about the hikes shortly.

Cadette Girl Scout Troop 94332 did some service as well, in February. Outside, they gathered and bagged up leaves that had blown in since fall. They swept and mopped the stage and Fellowship Hall, washed all interior and exterior windows, and cleaned the moldings in the stairway on the kitchen side of the hall. They also cleaned off tape/adhesive from the side door and washed the windows there.

The troop is currently working on their Silver Award and as such, we are designing and installing a Serenity Garden at the Domestic Abuse & Sexual Assault Crisis Center in Washington, NJ. Anybody interested in helping with the installation, should contact me at 908-763-8802. The installation is scheduled to occur the first week in April, and certificates for service hours will be awarded.

Angela Arabia-Meyer, Troop Leader 95109 and Troop Co-Leader 94332

# STORIES OF FAITH IN ACTION



## Beyond our church doors

When an attempted robbery ended in a police shootout in Superior, Wis., faith leaders in the area decided to organize a prayer vigil inviting residents of the city to come and pray.

"We've drawn a line in the sand when it comes to community violence," says Patrick Ziems, pastor of Zion Lutheran Church, an ELCA congregation in Superior.

In 2012, Zion took a second look at the way it engages with its community, thanks to a program called Beyond Our Doors – an initiative of the ELCA Northwest Synod of Wisconsin that was sparked by decisions made on recommendations of the ELCA's Living into the Future Together task force at the 2011 ELCA Churchwide Assembly. A primary goal is to make

support for the work of congregations one of the highest priorities of this church and to request congregations, in collaboration with synods, to begin, develop, review or redefine their unique mission plans by the end of 2012.

Patrick says he used the program as an opportunity to reflect upon the relationships he had already established in his community, and he realized that it would serve Superior best for Zion to continue partnering with other congregations and organizations to make a difference in their community.

To read the full story visit [www.livinglutheran.com/zion](http://www.livinglutheran.com/zion).



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

For more Stories of Faith in Action, visit [www.livinglutheran.com](http://www.livinglutheran.com).