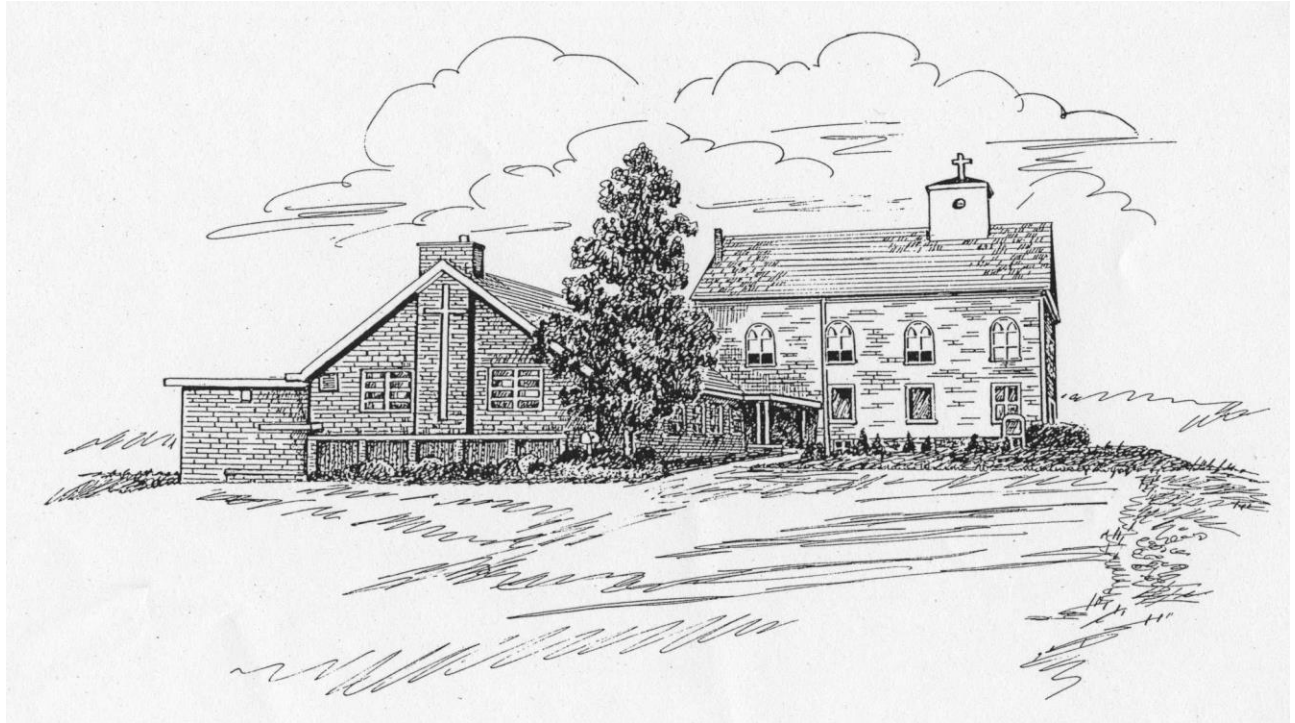


# *WISPS OF STRAW*



## *St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*January - February 2014*

*Pastor: Rev. John H. Van Haneghan*

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

# *Pastor's Annual Report*

I am very grateful to the Lord for our work together here at Straw Church in 2013. We have had many good things happen here along with the continuing challenges we face. In making my opening statement, however, I must acknowledge all the good would not have happened without many folks (some quietly behind the scenes) working very hard in various ways to make sure the ministry and witness of our church thrives.

Perhaps the one most meaningful event of this year was the dedication of the Historical Wall and Cabinet in Fry Hall in May of last year. Dave and Charlotte Morris along with Luann Beatty worked very hard to put together a wonderful display of pictures, artifacts as well as documents to make known our story to all who happen to be in Fry Hall. The cabinet dedicated in memory of Madeline Raub and Harold Gruver really adds very handsomely to the display. We had a wonderful turnout for the dedication in May. Youth Sunday this year was again very inspirational. Our Christian Education programs; Sunday School, Youth Group, and VBS continue to do a good work and brought some new friends to our church. Senior League also provides a good program, good food, and good fellowship to all who attend.

Our Social Ministry team continues to find good projects for the congregation to participate in outreach, and even when the "start up seems" to be slow; it always seems to pick up towards the end with a wonderful donation to the cause that we are supporting. While I think one of our big needs is more "fellowship" time together, any fellowship event we have had is always well received especially our picnic and our "Thanksgiving Covered Dish and Hymn Sing".

Worship Attendance is at about the same level as last year with both Saturday and Sunday Services fulfilling a need for different times and styles for worship.

Financially we can give thanks to God that no dedicated funds were used to help pay expenses. That being said, however, it would not have happened without the hard work of some very dedicated individuals in our church. You know who you are. Thank you! In the long haul however we must strive over time to move from relying on fund raising to a "stewardship" based congregation where we would all be able to give of our time talents and treasure as God directs each one of us. Again thank you to those who already have listened to God's call and have done above and beyond what is expected.

In 2014 I would like to see a new pictorial directory of church since we haven't had one for years to help build fellowship. I would also like to see us taking advantage of opportunities to promote the witness of our church especially when special events take place at our church. I will also be looking at our confirmation program and making changes starting this fall.

I continue to serve as Western District Dean and Western Cluster Counselor for the Synod, and participate in the local clergy association. To that end, we held a wonderful Phillipsburg High Baccalaureate Service in June.

I look forward to see what good things God has in store for us in 2014. Thank you to Karen Coleman, who has done a great job as church secretary, Dave Miller our church musician, and especially to my wife Pam who has not only been a supportive help-mate and friend, but has done much good on her own with our Christian Education ministry at Straw Church.

If there is need to contact me please know that I am usually in my office between 9-9:30 Monday- Thursday to about 1 or 2pm. You may also reach me at home 908-777-3068 since I also work from there. Please know too that you can set up an appointment with me if the regular times I'm available isn't convenient. Just as a reminder I take Fridays off.

Your Brother in Christ,

Pr. John Van Haneghan

## *Lenten Schedule*

Although Christmas is barely out of the rear-view mirror, and Easter in 2014 occurs fairly late, still, the most solemn season of the Church year is now only about six weeks away.



This year Ash Wednesday is on March 5<sup>th</sup>. We will have our traditional Ash Wednesday Service, with a distribution of Ashes for those who desire it. We will then have our traditional mid-week Lenten Program on Wednesday evenings as we have in the past. Please plan to attend these St. James traditions as you are able. Check the weekend bulletins for any updates. A complete schedule of Holy Week and Easter observances will be in the next Wisps issue.

## *Fund Raising*

The December Craft Fair and Bake Sale brought in over \$1200 for our church. Thanks to all who helped make it a success.

Two new events to benefit St. James are being planned for the next few months, both from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm in Frey Hall:

Vendor Bridal Show - Saturday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Spring Vendor Craft Fair and Bake Sale -  
Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup>

We will need volunteers to help with set up, operation, and clean up each time. Signup sheets will be in the Frey Hall lobby before each occasion. Contact Kathy Raub at 610-253-1419 or [jkraubfarms@verizon.net](mailto:jkraubfarms@verizon.net) for more information.

## *Congregational Meeting*

The 2014 Annual Congregational meeting was held on January 19<sup>th</sup>. Thanks to all the cooks who supplied us with the food that gave the meeting its usual good start.

New Council members elected were:

Charlotte Morris  
Sharon Risko  
Brian Fleming  
George Scherer

Officers for the coming year are:

President - Polly Newbold  
Vice President - Jeff Raub  
Secretary - Sharon Risko  
Treasurer - Jan Rossetti  
Financial Secretary - Jason Raub  
Asst. Financial Secty. - Suzanne LaCourte

Please contact any Council member with whatever questions or concerns you have about your church.

## *For Thrivent Members*

The deadline for directing your remaining 2013 Choice Dollars to benefit St. James is March 31<sup>st</sup>. Please check your accounts to see what you have available. Directing the Choice Dollars is quick and easy, and costs you nothing. If you need any information about the procedure, contact your Thrivent Representative or the Congregational Advocate (George Scherer, 908-387-0139 or email [regalcsqs@verizon.net](mailto:regalcsqs@verizon.net)).

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**The task ahead of us is never as great as  
the Power behind us.**

## Sunday School Notes

Sunday School for Preschool (age 3-4) to Grade 6 meets each Sunday from 10:00 to 11:00 am.

Theme Days for the next few weeks are:

January 26<sup>th</sup>: Wear silly crazy mix  
match sock day

February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Wear something from a  
favorite sports team  
(Super Bowl or Olympics)

February 9<sup>th</sup>: We will be decorating  
hearts for our church family

February 16<sup>th</sup>: Crazy hair day

February 28<sup>th</sup>: Wear your clothes  
backwards, inside out day



Pajamas Day

## Youth Group Happenings

All students in Grades 6 to 12 are welcome to join our Youth Group.

Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 to 8:00 pm will be our Friendship meeting. Bring \$3.00 toward pizza.

Photos below are of Youth Group members wrapping gifts at the Vendor Craft Fair.



## *St. James 2013 Sunday School Christmas Pageant*

On Sunday evening, December 15<sup>th</sup>, the Sunday School children and teachers gave us their annual presentation of the Christmas story. Their dedication and creative talent seem to make this familiar narrative new each year.

An additional pleasure is being able to watch as the youngsters mature through different roles from year to year, eventually themselves becoming mentors for the newcomers. We are truly blessed to have this group of children, young adults, and adult leaders among us.



**“STRAW CHURCH: PRIDE IN OUR PAST, STRENGTH IN OUR PRESENT,  
LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE”**

## *Senior League Notes - "Fellowship over Fifty"*

On Wednesday evening, December 18<sup>th</sup>, we once again welcomed the incomparable Ed Saultz and his associates to be the central feature of the meeting. Listening to their unique instrumental and vocal treatments of both familiar and lesser known Christmas music, as well as joining them in a sing-along, is always a high point of the season.



We began the new year of monthly meetings on January 8<sup>th</sup>, with Pastor John and Pam treating us to an illustration of their trip to Alaska. They visited their daughter, Mary, at her new home in Fairbanks, and it was really enjoyable to see aspects of the 50<sup>th</sup> State not part of the usual commercial tours.



Some visitors seeing what's on the menu in Mary's front yard

The next meeting, at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, February 5<sup>th</sup> will be a simple social get-together with an appropriate winter comfort food menu - spaghetti and meatballs. Please contact Carol Meixsell at 908-454-6734 if you plan to attend.

## *Boy Scout Community Service Projects*

This year, the scouts of Troop 56 and their leaders put a lot of effort into making both Thanksgiving and Christmas a bit more enjoyable for the homebound. In the process they learned valuable lessons about the joy and satisfaction of "giving back" to the community, especially those that have done so much to make it the place it is today. A few photos of the results of their work are shown below.



Scouts Wayne Van Blarcom and Hudson Frank delivered flowers to Frank Parr and Betty Babcock at the Phillipsburg Center care facility to celebrate Thanksgiving



Scouts Josh Crowley, Steven Petruzzi, and Sr. Patrol Leader Sam Young brought a Christmas Spray to Nettie Bray



Scouts Tyler Simon and Matt Greenen presented Ellen Stull with a Thanksgiving basket

## *Boy Scout Historical Area Dedication – Frey Hall*

The scouts and leaders of Boy Scout Troop 56 invite you to join us on Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 am for the dedication of the Boy Scout Troop 56 historical area in Frey Hall, followed by a covered dish brunch. (Please bring a covered dish to share.)

Please contact Wayne Van Blarcom, Chaplain's Aide, for more information. Wayne can be reached at 908-387-8141 or by email at [beba123@verizon.net](mailto:beba123@verizon.net).

We look forward to sharing the success of Troop 56 with the congregation of St. James Lutheran Church.

## *Boy Scout Troop 56 - Year in Review*

2013 was another productive year for our troop. We continued our commitment to community service, the outdoors and fun activities while learning new skills.

Ben McCormick, James Maris and Andrew Cannavo all obtained the rank of Eagle in 2013, Scouting's Highest Rank. We also continued the advancements of the rest of our scouts where 86 Merit Badges were earned year and 20 Scouts advanced at least one rank. In May we welcomed nine new boys into our troop as we continue to grow.

We have spent 36 nights camping and participated in many other events. Six scouts from our Troop visited the National Boy Scout Jamboree at the newly completed Mt. Bechtel Scout Reserve in West Virginia. A few other highlights from the year include our joint trip to Gettysburg with Troop 61, Winter Tents, Spring Pirate Themed Weekend, Winter Wilderness Survival and backpacking. During November we hosted our scout families at Bread Lock Park for a Troop Thanksgiving feast. We returned to Goose Pond Scout Reservation for another amazing summer camp, the highlight of the campout was coming 3<sup>rd</sup> in the camp wide competition. Our new scout patrol earned the Green Bar Patrol Award, the first patrol to do receive this in more than seven years. Next year we will be attending Ten Mile River Scout Reservation for summer camp.

As a troop we continue to give back to the community with over 763 hours of community service. This included a coat drive, serving meals to the homeless, helping with vacation bible school, a road side cleanup and collected over 1100 pieces of food during Scouting for Food. We continued our tradition of delivering holiday baskets at Thanksgiving and Christmas to 10 home bound St. James Lutheran parishioners.

Overall, Troop 56 has had a very successful 2013 and we look forward to the opportunities and adventures in 2014. We are grateful to St. James Lutheran Church and Rev. Van Haneghan for their continued sponsorship of our troop.

*Connor McCormick* - Troop Historian