

# The Messenger



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

## FROM YOUR PASTOR...

"Grace and peace be yours in abundance.

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you, <sup>5</sup> who through faith are shielded by God's power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time." 1 Peter 1:2d-5.

M is for May.

M is for Mercy.  
M is for Mothers.  
M is Many other things.  
M is for more opportunities.  
M is for Movies.

### M is for May.

In May, we move from the season of Easter into the season of Pentecost on May 20, 2018. In between, we celebrate Mother's Day, on May 13<sup>th</sup>. All three of these events are also opportunities to take time and observe God's mercy bestowed upon us. On May 13<sup>th</sup> we will observe Mother's Day with a special prayer during the service. Our youth will also serve the body of St. John's with assisting with much of the service.

### M is for Mothers.

As you know God's mercy was shown to a young woman named Mary in Luke Chapter One, "She found favor with God. The angel Gabriel visited her and told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon you, and the power of the Holy Spirit will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God." God's mercy and favor were shown to Mary as she became the Mother of the Son of God. So, this month as we move from the season of Easter to Pentecost we take a few moments to also celebrate Mother's Day and to give thanks for all women who have served as mother's, daughters, and sisters. As well as those who have stepped into the role of mother, teacher, caretaker and so many other things that we are blessed to have women to be and do throughout the history of the church.

### M is for many things.

In God's mercy, he gives us many other things, not the least of which is the gift of salvation from his only begotten son, Jesus, our Lord and Savior. In His mercy, we also receive His Holy Meal, the very body and blood of Christ for the forgiveness of our sins won for us on the cross. God gives to us every good and perfect that is needed for this life and the next. There are many things for which we may be thankful. God's mercy is new every morning. In Lamentations 3: 22-23 "Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail (mercies). They are new every morning.

### M is for more opportunities.

We are given more opportunities to be children of God and his witnesses to those who have not yet come to faith. We are also given opportunities to encourage one another in the Christian Faith. One of those opportunities is to study God's Word. So, on the second and fourth Wednesday's of the month, we will have another Bible study from 2-3P to open God's Word and to learn from Him. Our first meeting will be May 9<sup>th</sup> followed by May 23<sup>rd</sup>. The youth of St. John's also seeking opportunities to do service projects to assist with spring chores in the yard and around the house. Contact either Jolene or me to schedule a time for us to come and assist with whatever chores you may desire help with. Our Contemporary services will be offered May 5<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 pm.

### M is for movies.

In May we will begin family movie night. May begins our summer movie festival in which we will watch three movies all pertaining to the Christian life. So, come join us and invite your family and friends to come join us Movie night. Our first movie will be War room. It is a Christian movie about the power of prayer and the effects it has on the Christian faith and battle against the enemy. We will schedule that for May 25<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm and will open it to the community as well.

(Please see **Pastor**, Page 2)

## PASTOR

(From Page 1)

Please bring your bibles to worship and Adult Bible Study along with a notebook and pen so that you can take notes and make notes in your Bibles. The youth will continue their study of adult instruction using the Lutheranism 101 materials.

In Christ's service to you his beloved Children,

Pastor Joe

## NEWS FLASH FROM THE SELC DISTRICT CONVENTION

While a number of activities are going on at the convention and I will report on them in the next newsletter, a new SELC District President was elected on the first ballot, Rev. Waldemar (Wally) Vinovskis from Concordia, Macungie.

Karen Ann Kowalczyk  
St. John's Lay Delegate  
to the SELC District Convention  
Cleveland, Ohio

## THRIVENT

Thank you to all the Thrivent members who designated St. John congregation to receive their Choice Dollars. Our congregation received \$1,652 for 2017. Let's see if we can get additional funds higher from last year's total.

Remember, the name is St. John, Hazleton when either using the computer or calling the 1-800-THRIVENT.

Any questions, ask Karen Ann Kowalczyk or Nancy Trovitch.

## YOUTH NEWS

The Youth Group is still accepting tricky tray donations in the form of baskets, gift cards, or lottery tickets for our auction on June 9. If you can't make one and still want to help, we are in need of volunteers for that day as well as baked goods. We will need all baskets by Sunday, June 3. Baked goods can be brought the day of. If you have any questions, please let me know.

We are also planning a craft and vendor show on October 13. If you are a crafter or vendor and are interested, please see me and I will get you an application. Church members will get a discount on their spot. If you know anyone who might be interested, have them contact me at 570-636-8182 or [drashers@ptd.net](mailto:drashers@ptd.net).

Thank you all for your continued support in helping get our youth to Minnesota.

God Bless,

Carrie Drasher

## ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN

Praise God, the Puerto Rico container # 1760 from the Maryland Branch was received. The container left Maryland on March 16th and arrived in Puerto Rico on April 14th. The over 100 boxes that were in the church basement went on that container. They are in the process of giving the items to those in need. Please keep these people who have to rebuild their lives in your prayers.

There are still needs for future containers. If there is a Thrivent member who would like to do School Supplies, please contact me 570-459-0501.

Serving the Lord with Gladness,  
Karen Ann Kowalczyk  
Orphan Grain Train Maryland

## MITES—May 2018



May's highlighted mission grant is for Hearts for the Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting – Christian Families United for Progress and is for \$100,000.

Hurricane Katrina changed everything. After the worst residential natural disaster in United States history, New Orleans is still devastated But there is hope. Six inner city Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod (LCMS) churches, part of the Black Clergy Cucus, have banded together to rebuild their communities and their lives.

So many people left as a result of the flooding. Those that came back were faced with the monumental task of starting over. Part of the problem is just that – one in five didn't come back. Neighborhoods have been lost. Six pastors of churches that experienced incredible flooding are reaching out to their friends and neighbors with the help of the NOLA 4H grant. This grant will help fund the mercy ministries as the pastors serve Christ by serving their neighbors. They will be offering hot meals, food pantries, food bag distribution, homeless sheltering, homeless emergency care, health care, and counseling for hurting hearts. The grant will pay for the food, emergency care, scripture items, and toiletries as the pastors minister to their friends and neighbors.

The pastors have found many hurting people in their congregations and communities, struggling with anxiety and depression and poor health. They are reaching out to them and with the aid of this grant will be able to expand their outreach. The NOLA 4H churches will partner with several organizations and schools to help clean up, to repair, to train lay health advocates, and to provide students to help staff to

help staff the food pantries and soup kitchens. NOLA plans to spread God's love and care to the Hungry, Homeless, and Hurting of New Orleans with this grant and we can help them with our prayers and our mites. To find out more about this grant and others and to view videos of them, go [www.lwml.org](http://www.lwml.org) and click on Mission Grants under MISSIONS.

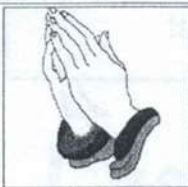
It is less than a month and the LWML SELC District will be celebrating our 16<sup>th</sup> Biannual Convention. The dates are May 18-20<sup>th</sup> and events will be held at Zion Lutheran Church. Speakers include: Debbie Larson, LWML Vice President of Organizational Resources; Phil Zielke, CEO of Phil's Friends, Tim Hetzner President and CEO of Lutheran Church Charities and 102 Comfort K-9s and their handlers; Pastor Hesham Shehab of Salam Christian Fellowship and works with the Middle East individuals in the Chicago area; our inspirational speaker Sharla Fritz who has written and presented Bible study programs and written many books including 'Soul Spa' and will be using hymns for her presentations, and Emilie Stoller, our Young Woman Representative will talk of her Albuquerque Convention and mission trip.

St. John's will be represented by Karen Ann Kowalczyk (and Paul) as Lydia delegate and myself as District President (and Don). Let one of us know if you are interested in coming.

Serving the Lord With Gladness,

Sharon Roegge

## PRAYERS FOR MEMBERS AND FRIENDS



We pray Jesus' hand would rest on **Peter Panco, Anna Belko, Bob Gould, Jack Ross, MaryAnne and Frank Gilham, Alma Yale, Anne Goranitis, Gertie and Bob Mandak, Bob Onder, Pauline Onder, Sharon Roegge**, and all in need of His physical, emotional and spiritual care. If you have a prayer chain request, please call Gertie Ann Mandak, (570) 497-9361.

If Pastoral Care is required, please call Pastor Joe (570-459-6423) and the necessary arrangements will be made.

St. John's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church

621 N Vine St  
Hazleton PA 18201  
Rev Joseph L Leech, pastor  
Phone: 570-459-6423  
Email: stjohshazleton@gmail.com  
Website: stjohshazleton.org



Our Mission and Vision Statement:

"We are to be growing people in our faith and helping others to come to faith and grow in it."

PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Paul Kowalczyk

Finally we have gotten past the snowy weather and with Spring we have begun to warm up and the flowers are blooming. We have a chance to sweep away all the dirt and debris that accumulated during winter. At St. Johns' we continue to move forward and work on several activities.

We have begun to clean up old files, paperwork and other documents that we have been storing for a number of years. Approximately 12 boxes dating back 15+ years ago have been reviewed and were destroyed. Another 18 boxes have to be reviewed before further action is taken. We are reviewing all documents that are over 7 years old. Certain documents, like deeds, articles of incorporation, council/congregation minutes and official acts like baptism, confirmation, marriages and funerals have to be kept indefinitely.

We just completed a mission project to provide digitally based bibles for the troops. The funds we collected for this project were matched by the parent organization thereby amplifying the number of soldiers who will have an opportunity to hear the word of our Lord and Savior while they are serving our country.

Pastor, Gayle, Don, Sharon, Karen Ann and I attended the SELC District Convention near Cleveland, Ohio. This convention is one of many District conventions to be held in 2018. They serve as the preparation format for the 2019 LCMS convention to be held in St. Louis. Details of the convention will be provided in a future newsletter.

Leadership training, Stewardship and Evangelism are agenda items to be pursued by Council during the year. One of the focal points is succession planning to ensure that there are trained individuals to serve on Council in the future.

From a Stewardship perspective we have received direction from our Lord and Savior how we are to respond to what He has given us and use this teaching in supporting our ministry at St. John's. The following scripture verse provides us with guidance on our level of giving.

*2 Corinthians 9:7: 'Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.'*

Enjoy what the Lord has given us and let us rejoice in it!

COMMUNITY  
LUNCHEON



The next luncheon will be held on Saturday, May 26 from 11am to 12 noon, beginning at 11am.

Sponsors are the Thrivent Action Teams. Thank you to all volunteers!

Happy Mother's Day !