



# The Messenger

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

## FROM YOUR PASTOR...

This year for our Advent services we will be focusing on the meaning of the candles of the Advent wreath each week. Our Christmas Eve program will be an interactive worship experience entitled "The Word on the Street." It places you the worshipper live in Bethlehem and the surrounding area as the events are unfolding. So, invite your friends and extended family to come join us this Advent season.

You may also notice that the decorating committee has been hard at work all year long. We have both new and updated secular ornaments that match the color(s) of the Advent season as well as new sacred ornaments. Those are Chrismons.

What is a Chrismon?

Surprisingly, this is a common question. Here is the story of how and why they came to be.....It was 1957, location, Danville, Virginia, Ascension Lutheran Church. Mrs. Francis Spencer was a member of this congregation. As another Christmas season was fast approaching, she felt strongly that they could do better than the secular ornaments previously used to adorn the nave Christmas Tree.

The guidelines had to be thought through, i.e. only white and gold could be used, they must be handmade and could never become a commodity in their finished form! Gathering together some willing "church ladies" they began designing the first of many non-secular ornaments taking their inspiration directly from Bible verses. They used what materials were available at the time such as ivory from old piano keys, sequins, lace, Styrofoam, etc.



Needing a name for these new ornaments Francis coined the word *Chrismon* combining monogram and Christ.

Eventually, Francis found a partner in Harold and Barbara Rufty to glean much better materials with which to create even more beautiful *Chrismons*, hence *Rufty's Chrismon Shop* was born! Over the years this ministry has grown to global proportions! *Chrismon's have arrived at Ascension Lutheran Church from all over the world. A visit in December for their narrated tour would be a wonderful inspirational treat.*

Here at St. John's this ministry has flourished and for

that, we want to recognize and give our heartfelt thanks to Gayle, Lucille, Bob, Gertie Ann, and Nancy. Be sure to take a moment to enjoy the fruits of their labors and if the opportunity presents itself to let them know you appreciate the love for Christ shown in this way.

A special note: On our Chrismon tree there is a *Chrismon especially dedicated in loving memory of Sharon Roegge. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first time a loved one has been honored in this manner. We think it is a lovely idea.*

We also thank our youth for decorating the tree and the sanctuary along with our younger children who assisted as well and will be singing in our Christmas Eve worship service. So, as you prepare for the celebration of our Dear Savior's Birth, come and learn about the Candle of Hope or Prophets Candle, the Candle of Peace or the Bethlehem Candle, the Candle of Joy or Shepherd's Candle, and the Candle of Love or the Angel's Candle. On Christmas day we will talk about the Christ Candle based on the first Chapter of the Gospel of John.

To help you prepare for the coming of our Lord, reflect on these words from the prophet Jeremiah 33:14-16, and ponder what they mean.

<sup>14</sup> "The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will fulfill the good promise I made to the people of Israel and Judah.

<sup>15</sup> "In those days and at that time I will make a righteous Branch sprout from David's line;

he will do what is just and right in the land.

<sup>16</sup> In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will live in safety.

This is the name by which it will be called:  
The LORD Our Righteous Savior.'

### OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Off

Tuesday-8:30-5:00

Wednesday-8:30-5:00

Thursday-8:30-5:00

Friday-By Appointment

Saturday-9:00-3:00

Sunday-8:00-12:00

Pastor will be available for emergencies  
as needed.

## THRIVENT



If you like to shop, I have a shopping experience that doesn't need your money, just some time. Any Thrivent member that hasn't done their Thrivent Action team for 2018, contact me and I will give you the details of the items needed for those effected by Hurricane Michael in the FL Panhandle.

—Karen Ann Kowalczyk  
570-459-0501

## YOUTH NEWS

This year for our youth has been a very successful one!

God has blessed us with a supportive, wonderful church family. We are able to send Stephen and Tyler, along with Pastor and Jolene, to Minnesota to the 2019 Youth Gathering.

We could not have done it without the support of our family, church members, and friends.

Our fundraising efforts will continue because we have three years before more of God's little lambs can attend the next gathering, plus Jolene would like to do other activities with them.

Our upcoming ideas include the mall event in March and a hoagie sale. We are looking for new ideas to support our kids.

Thank you all for your support, donations and love; we may be small but we are mighty and can do anything through God's grace.

—Carrie Drasher

## ANGEL TREE

We obtained 26 names of children up to about 15 years old from Catholic Social Services. Gifts requested include clothing, toys, lotion, etc. Sunday, December 9, is the final day for the Angel Tree. All gifts are to be unwrapped and placed in gift bags under the table at the top of the stairs. Thank you to Sylvia and Sherry Wargo for setting up the tree.



## INVITATION

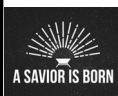
You are cordially invited to attend the  
Birthday Celebration of our Lord and Savior Jesus  
To be held at St. John's Lutheran Church



The celebration begins with Advent  
services on December 5, 12 and 19 at  
7:00PM.



The celebration continues with the  
Christmas Eve service at 7:00PM.



The celebration concludes with the  
Christmas Day service at 10:00AM.

Please RSVP at St. John's Lutheran Church by  
December 25 at 10:00AM.

## POINSETTIAS



Last day to order a poinsettia plant is  
Sunday, December 16. The cost is  
\$5.00. Forms are available for you to  
add the necessary information for the  
church bulletin. Lucille Adamoyurka is our flower  
coordinator.

## DISASTER UPDATE—Karen Ann Kowalczyk

Dear Friends of St. John's

A big "THANK YOU" to all those who contributed to the recent Orphan Grain Train Panama City, FL project.

A 28 foot Penske truck was loaded in Hazleton for its trip to Panama City, FL. It made several stops before it arrived in Panama City. All this was done by OGT volunteers. The truck started out in CT., making three stops in PA, and one at the OGT warehouse in MD before leaving for Panama City, FL.

Hurricane Michael and the tornado that hit the Mexico Beach area of the Panhandle of Florida did a job on that city. Trinity Lutheran Church in Panama City is serving as a distribution center for over 6,000 people a week with food and other needed items. Some are still staying in shelters and don't know if they will ever be able to return to their homes because of the damage.

Please watch the Sunday bulletin for items that are needed and the next truck going to Panama City. Volunteers will be needed, so if you are so inclined, you can contact me for additional info. They are in the process of setting up

accommodations where volunteers will be welcomed to help with the rebuilding that will take years to complete.

Please pray for those who have lost homes and everything that took years to build. We have to remember, "God is our Refuge and strength a very present help in trouble."

God's Blessings as we celebrate the Savior's birth,

Karen Ann Kowalczyk,  
Orphan Grain Train  
Disaster Relief Coordinator  
570-459-0501

### LYDIA/CARING & SHARING

The Lydia Society will meet on Wednesday, December 5 at 3:00pm.

Caring & Sharing will meet on the 5th at 4:00pm and on the 12th at 3:00pm. No Caring & Sharing on the 19th or 26th.

## 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, Meralea Oberto, Bill and Lorraine (Onder) Ray, Megan Crume's mother, Patty** 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.

### CUSTODIAN NEEDED

At the August Council meeting, a decision was made to hire a new Custodian. This position will pay \$9.00 per hour with the number of hours per month to be determined. Some of the duties are: vacuuming the fellowship hall, steps, quiet room and sanctuary; dusting windows and under pews; washing kitchen floor; cleaning bathrooms. Other duties will be assigned on an as needed basis.

If you are interested in applying for this position, please contact Head Trustee Kevin Kowalczyk or Council President Paul Kowalczyk by Sunday, September 9, 2018.

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

\*We are looking for volunteers to be on **Altar Guild**.

There are several options available:

1. One month at a time, three times a year—you would set up the altar before church and remove communion ware after service.
2. You can **EITHER** set up the altar before church **OR** remove the communion ware after church.
3. You can be on a substitution list where you would fill in on an as-need basis if one of the regular Altar Guild members cannot be here on a day they are scheduled.

\*We are looking for volunteers to be **Counters**.

This commitment is one Sunday after Church every fourth or fifth Sunday. Again, if you would only want to be on the substitution list where you would fill in on an as-need basis if one of the regular Counters cannot be here on a day they are scheduled.

\*If you would like to become a member of **Council**, please see Vice President Daniel Starry or any member of Council. We have several positions open for 2019.

Remember—Many hands make light work!!! If we all do our part, no one person will be overwhelmed.

The old apple tree stood in the orchard with the other trees, and all summer long it had stretched out its branches wide to catch the rain and the sun to make its apples grow round and ripe. Now it was fall, and on the old apple tree were three great apples as yellow as gold and larger than any other apples in the whole orchard. The apple tree stretched and reached as far as it could, until the branch on which the three gold apples grew hung over the orchard wall. There were the three great apples, waiting for some one to pick them, and as the wind blew through the leaves of the apple tree it seemed to sing:

"Here in the orchard are apples three,  
Who uses one well shall a treasure see."

And one morning Gerald came down the lane that passed by the orchard wall. He looked longingly at the three gold apples, wishing, wishing that he might have one. Just then the wind sang its song again in the leaves of the apple tree and, plump, down to the ground, right at Gerald's feet, fell one of the three gold apples.

He picked it up and turned it round and round in his hands. How sweet it smelled, and how mellow and juicy it was! Gerald could think of nothing so good to do with such a beautiful ripe apple as to eat it. He put it to his mouth and took a great bite of it, then another bite, and another. Soon there was nothing left of the apple but the core, which Gerald threw away. He smacked his lips and went on his way, but the wind in the apple trees sang, sorrowfully, after him:

"Here in the orchard are apples two,  
But gone is the treasure that fell for you."

And after a while Hilda came down the lane that passed by the orchard wall. She looked up at the two beautiful gold apples that hung on the branch of the old apple tree, and she listened to the wind as it sang in the branches to her:

"Here in the orchard are apples two,  
A treasure they hold for a child like you."

Then the wind blew harder and, plump, an apple fell in the lane right in front of Hilda.

She picked it up joyfully. She had never seen so large and so golden an apple. She held it carefully in her clasped hands and thought what a pity it would be to eat it, because then it would be gone.

"I will keep this gold apple always," Hilda said, and she wrapped it up in the clean handkerchief that was in her pocket. Then Hilda went home, and there she laid away in a drawer the gold apple that the old apple tree had given her, closing the drawer tightly. The apple lay inside, in the dark, and all wrapped up, for many days, until it spoiled. And when Hilda next went down the lane and past the orchard, the wind in the apple tree sang to her:

"Only one apple where once there were two,  
Gone is the treasure I gave to you."

Last of all, Rudolph went down the lane one fine fall morning when the sun was shining warm and the wind was out. There, hanging over the orchard wall, he saw just one great gold apple that seemed to him the most beautiful apple that he had ever seen. As he stood looking up at it, the wind in the apple tree sang to him, and it said:

"Round and gold on the apple tree,  
A wonderful treasure, hanging, see!"

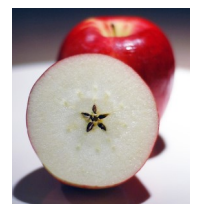
Then the wind blew harder, and down fell the last gold apple of the three into Rudolph's waiting hands.

He held it a long time and looked at it as Gerald and Hilda had, thinking how good it would be to eat, and how pretty it would be to look at if he were to save it. Then he decided not to do either of these things. He took his jack-knife out of his pocket and cut the gold apple in half, straight across, and exactly in the middle between the blossom and the stem.

Oh, the surprise that waited for Rudolph inside the apple! There was a star, and in each point of the star lay a small black seed. Rudolph carefully took out all the seeds and climbed over the orchard wall, holding them in his hand. The earth in the orchard was still soft, for the frost had not yet come. Rudolph made holes in the earth and in each hole he dropped an apple seed. Then he covered up the seeds and climbed back over the wall to eat his apple, and then go on his way.

But as Rudolph walked down the lane, the orchard wind followed him, singing to him from every tree and bush,

"A planted seed is a treasure won.  
The work of the apple is now well done."



St. John's Evangelical  
Lutheran Church

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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."

SNOW REMOVAL

Winter is upon us! If it is snowing or snow is in the forecast, the church might cancel Sunday services. If you are not contacted, please call the church phone number and there will be a message on the answering service that will tell you that the service has been cancelled. The snow ban is on the even side of the streets; this is the other side of St. John's property. As you know, the parking gets a little crazy. Thoren Eng. on 7th and Vine St. lets us use their parking lot. Also there is parking at St. Joe's Church lot on 6th and Church St.

If you can help with the snow removal around the church, please let Kevin know.

— Kevin Kowalczyk 570-459-0501

COMMUNITY LUNCHEONS

A Community Luncheon will **not** be held during December but will resume in January. We are looking for Thrivent members to apply for an Action Grant to sponsor the luncheons. See Nancy if you want to help out.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Paul Kowalczyk

I hope everyone had a very Happy Thanksgiving celebration with family and friends. We now look forward to Advent with the magic of Christmas and the celebration of our Lord and Savior's birth. Soon we will be starting a new year and as St Johns' begins the 98th year of our ministry we have a new Church Council and Operating Budget. In 2019 Daniel Starry will become the Congregation President. To the best of my memory Daniel is the youngest President in St. Johns' history. Going forward he will need not only the support of Council but of all the members of the congregation as he leads St Johns' for the next two years. Don Roegge will be the Vice President and Barry Gangwer will join the Elder board. All the other members of Council retained their positions.

The 2019 Operating Budget of nearly \$147,000 is the largest budget we have had and is an increase of 17% over the 2018 Budget. The single largest increase is an estimated \$15,000 approved to replace/repair the Sixth street sidewalk. The \$147,000 budget represents a weekly average cost of \$2800. Our average weekly contribution level is \$1500 and represents an average weekly attendance of 40 members. My thought is that we have 120 people on our membership roll and we have a weekly average of 40 members who contribute \$1500. If we had a weekly attendance of 80 people and we assumed everything was the same we could expect an average weekly giving of \$3000. This potential of giving would allow us to not only cover our expenses but also expand our ministry and mission efforts. Think about this and invite our non attending members and friends to attend church services during this holiday season. Who knows what good things could result from a simple invitation? Jesus is the reason for the season!!

This is my last President Report for the newsletter as I exit Church Council at the end of the year. I want to say Thank You to the members of Church Council for their support and help over the last four years. St. Johns' is blessed with a wonderful group of dedicated people who are always concerned about the health of our church's ministry. May God Bless all of you as you move forward in 2019.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to One and All.

Paul Kowalczyk