



The Messenger

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

FROM YOUR PASTOR...

In March we wrap up Lent and turn our attention to Holy Week. For the next three weeks, we will continue to work our way through Isaiah's fourth Suffering Servant Song from the 53rd chapter. We will be discussing "Stray Sheep" we have all wandered away from our Lord. The following week will be discussing "Knowing When to Keep Quiet" this is about Jesus silence during his mock trials. On the last week, "Is there No Justice," which will be about the injustice Christ suffered for us. For our Sunday morning Bible studies for the next three weeks we will continue to examine this Lenten theme more closely and how it directly applies to us. As we look forward to Easter on April 1. Our society refers to this as April Fool's Day. A day full of pranks in an effort to make others look like fools or at least foolish. But what does God's word have to say about the foolishness of the world?

A brief devotional from 1 Corinthians 1:18-25

Christ Crucified Is God's Power and Wisdom

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ¹⁹ For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."^[a]

²⁰ Where is the wise person? Where is the teacher of the law? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? ²¹ For since in the wisdom of God, the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. ²² Jews demand signs and Greeks look for wisdom,²³ but we preach

Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, ²⁴ but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. ²⁵ For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength.

While the world may mock those of us who have received the gift of faith and salvation, it is the truth that we will have the last laugh so to speak at those who mock Christ and our faith in Him. Ultimately God has given us Christ's wisdom which is far beyond the wisdom of man and this world as the Apostle Paul clearly states. While the world has it's day and mocks those who believe in Christ, we are to pray for those who have not yet received the gift of faith that the scales of blindness and doubt would be removed so that they too would become children of God.

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

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.

ORPHAN GRAIN TRAIN PUERTO RICO 1760

March 16th, the Maryland branch of Orphan Grain Train will be loading container #1760 bound for Puerto Rico. The last couple of containers have been received and the recipient is ready to receive another container of health kits, garden tools, summer clothes, and many other items. Three branches of OGT are contributing to the contents of the container.

If any of the members of St. John's would like to contribute some baby wipes or baby diapers those are some of the needs for this container.

Should any of the Thrivent member want to do an Action Team, there are several containers that are being staged one of which is South Sudan. We desperately need school supplies. An Action team could be done to purchase these supplies and pack them for shipment in the near future. A date has not been set for the Sudan container.

Please pray for safety of all those involved with this Puerto Rico container. There will be volunteers loading in New England, Rich Klepps, will be driving a 26 foot truck, picking up in Delaware, then driving to Maryland where the container will be loaded. Once the container leaves Maryland we need prayers for safe travel so that it reaches the recipients in Puerto Rico. We need to remember these people as well in our prayers, they have been through a lot.

OGT is a recognized LCMS Service organization. We are the "hands and feet of Jesus" helping our brothers and sister at home and abroad.

Any questions, please contact me.

Blessings as we work together to "Serve the Lord with Gladness."

Karen Ann Kowalczyk
Maryland Orphan Grain Train
Disaster Coordinator

A hoagie sale will be held by the Lydia Society on March 15. Deadline for orders is March 11. Order forms are available in the Fellowship Hall.

LAUREL MALL COMMUNITY CARNIVAL

The youth are currently working on fundraising ideas to help them raise the necessary money to attend the 2019 Youth Gathering in Minnesota. The youth will be participating in the Laurel Mall Community Carnival which will be held on Saturday, March 10. They will be selling homemade halupki and haluski, as well as drinks and some baked goods.

We will also be holding a drawing for gift cards. If any church member would like to make a gift card donation or even a monetary donation towards the purchase of gift cards, please contact Stephanie Dice or Jolene Evancho. **Donations should be in by Sunday, March 4.**

Please stop by to support our youth!! The date for our March youth meeting has not been set yet, but we plan to meet at least once a month to build the trust and friendships within the group.

TRICKY TRAY AUCTION

June 9 is the date for the Tricky Tray Auction fundraiser planned by our youth. We will be asking for gift certificate or theme basket donors, baked goods or food donations as well. More info on this will be in upcoming newsletters. Keep this date open.

THRIVENT CHOICE DOLLARS

Thank you to all who have designated Thrivent Choice Dollars to St. John's. The congregation has received over \$1,600 for 2017.

The March 31st deadline is rapidly approaching. If you haven't designated your 2017 Thrivent Choice Dollars, please do so before March 31st. The Home Office is closed on Good Friday, March 30th and Saturday, March 31st. Call 1-800-THRIVENT and ask the customer rep for Choice Dollars and they will be happy to help you. **Our congregation is listed as St. John Lutheran Church (no 's), Hazleton.**

MITES—MARCH 2018—Sharon Roegge



Mission Grant #6 is for Lutheran Children's Books for Families Worldwide. Lutheran Heritage Foundation (LHF) have received requests from many

Lutheran Churches, missionaries, and new Christian families from around the world to have story books translated into their own languages that teach about Jesus. LHF has found that there are not enough books written in their own language for children in Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, and Mongolia. New Christians are eager to pass along their faith to their children. LHF has been making brightly illustrated books such as 'A Child's Garden of Bible Stories and Bible Stories in Pictures. LHF has a 25-year history of devotedly fulfilling its mission in translating, publishing and distributing Lutheran books. The \$100,000 will provide Lutheran churches, missionaries, and families around the globe with 20,000 translated books about God's gifts and salvation for generations to come. This is the same group who sent us the Hispanic Bibles. For more information go to www.lwml.org and click on Mission Grants under MISSIONS.

Our LWML SELC District Convention to be held in Norridge, IL, May 18-20, 2018, will have many great speakers. One of those is CEO Tim Hetzner, President of Lutheran Church Charities. Among other projects, LCC is the one who picks out, trains, and sends out the many Comfort Dogs in times of emergencies. We also hope to have a couple of the Comfort Dogs and handlers there that we can visit with at lunch time. There are 130 LCC K-9 dogs with 2 training centers in Illinois and Nebraska. There are dogs serving in 20 states with just 5 in the

Northeast. (3 in Connecticut, 1 in Boston, and 1 in New Jersey. LCC also does Disaster Response and Crisis Response.

Another speaker is Phil Zielke, CEO of Phil's friends, who is a 2 time cancer survivor. After going through cancer treatments twice, he choose to start Phil's Friend with some of the things that were most helpful to him in his cancer treatments. Their mission is to provide Christ-centered support and hope to those affected by cancer. One of the ways they carry this out is by sending out free care packages to give hope to the patients. Our mission project for the weekend will be coloring cards of hope for the patients. See me for more information about the convention. I'll let you know about more of the speakers in next month's Messenger.

Also we now have more information about the next National Convention. The 38th Biennial Lutheran Women's Missionary will be held June 20-23, 2019, in Mobile, AL. The theme is 'In Praise to the Lord' taken from 1st Chronicles 16:23-24a. Their goal is that we will be led by God's power, we praise and proclaim the Lord among all the nations. More details to follow.

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, Lorraine and 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.

ELDER'S INCORPORATING INFORMATION INTO ST. JOHN'S DOCUMENTS

This is the fourth and final section of the information provided as a result of work completed by the Elders at St. John's in response to the information and directives provided by our Synod. This section is entitled "What we Believe with regard to Sexuality, the Sanctity of Human Life, and Marriage". If you have any questions about the information included here, please contact one of the Elders Dave Trovitch, Chuck Zschunke, or Don Roegge.

We Believe Re: Sexuality and the Sanctity of Human Life

Sexuality

We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Gen. 1:26-27). Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.

We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen. 2:18-25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.

We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God (Matt. 15:18-20; 1 Cor. 6:9-10).

We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of St. John's, as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the St. John's members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by St. John's in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality (Matt. 5:16; Phil. 2:14-16; 1 Thess. 5:22).

We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ (Acts 3:19-21; Rom. 10:9-10; 1 Cor. 6:9-11).

We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of [the organization]

Sanctity of Human Life

We believe that all human life is sacred and created by God in His image. Human life is of inestimable worth in all its dimensions, including pre-born babies, the aged, the physically or mentally challenged, and every other stage or condition from conception through natural death. We are therefore called to defend, protect, and value all human life (Ps. 139).

We Believe Re: Marriage

St. John's marriage policy is and always has been consistent with the Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod's beliefs on marriage. We believe that marriage is a sacred union of one man and one woman (Gen. 2:24-25), as God created them and that God gave marriage as a picture of the relationship between Christ and His bride the Church (Eph. 5:32). *The official position of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, as set forth in 1998 Res. 3-21 ("To Affirm the Sanctity of Marriage and to Reject Same-Sex Unions"), is that homosexual unions come under categorical prohibition in the Old and New Testaments (Lev. 18:22, 24; 20:13; 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 1 Tim. 1:9-10) as contrary to the Creator's design (Rom. 1:26-27). These positions and beliefs can be found on the LCMS website, along with other statements, papers and reports on the subject of homosexuality and same-sex civil unions and "marriage." Our pastor will not officiate over any marriages inconsistent with these beliefs, and our church property may not be used for any marriage ceremony, reception or other activity that would be inconsistent with our beliefs and this policy.*

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BONANZA
All Day! Lunch or Dinner
September 15, 16, and 17, 2015
Help support Aubrielle Marsicano

It has been a year since Aubi was diagnosed with meningitis. Since then she has had both her legs amputated at the knees and her finger tips. She is 14 months old.

Let us make this a successful fundraiser for this little trooper. A coupon is attached, but more can be obtained from Karen Ann Kowalczyk or Nancy Trovitch. You don't have to cook and Thrivent Financial will supplement the funds raised. Donations will be accepted if you cannot attend and want to help. Thank you.

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St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church

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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.

EASTER LILIES

Order your Easter lily in memory or in honor of a loved one by filling out one of the pink forms on the table at the top of the church stairs. The cost is \$5.00. Deadline to order is March 18. See Lucille Adamoyurka, flower coordinator, if you would like to purchase flowers on a designated Sunday. A flower chart is located in the Fellowship Hall.



COMMUNITY LUNCHEON

The next luncheon will be held on Saturday, March 24, beginning at 11am. We need volunteers to roast a turkey for this meal. See Nancy Trovitch if you can help in this way.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER—Paul Kowalczyk

As we approach spring in March we are reminded that we are in Lent. With Ash Wednesday on February 14 we have begun our journey toward Easter. Along our way we have our mid week services and soup suppers. During Holy Week we begin with Palm Sunday on March 25th. Maundy Thursday celebrates the Last Supper and the traditional stripping of the altar. The solemn Good Friday service shows us the sacrifice of our Lord and Savior with His crucifixion on the cross as atonement for our sins. He has saved us from eternal punishment. During Lent please take the time to attend our worship services in preparation for Easter joy on April 1st.

Our youth group has several fund raising activities planned this year as they make preparations to attend the 2019 LCMS Youth Gathering. Look at the Youth article in this newsletter and the weekly service bulletins for more information on the dates, times and locations of the various events. Your support is important in helping our youth reach their goal of attending the Gathering. May our Lord bless their efforts before, during and after the Gathering.

Saturday, February 24, we had another successful Community Luncheon. This very successful Outreach program is in its 4th year of serving both the spiritual and physical needs of our neighbors. We have a dedicated core of volunteers led by Nancy and Sylvia making, serving and cleaning up the meals. They can always use additional help so please consider volunteering.

Speaking of serving the needs of the community with Christian love and caring, Catholic Social Services has been serving the Hazleton area for over 75 years with food, clothing, housing and adult and children services. I help at the local CSS office and I am familiar with the services they offer to the community. They are always in need of volunteers to help in the food bank and during the holiday food distributions at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Their contact number is 570-455-1521. Over the years St. Johns' has had a close working relationship with CSS especially at Christmas with the angel tree and Thrivent Action Teams.

Please keep in mind and pray for the success of several upcoming events. At the end of April the SELC District Convention will meet in Cleveland. Along with Pastor, our lay delegate Karen Ann Kowalczyk and alternate lay delegate Don Roegge will be attending and voting on matters important to the District and the Synod Convention in 2019. The LWML SELC District Conference will be held in May at Northbrook, Illinois. Delegates to the convention will be voting on District mission projects, holding bible studies and hosting guest speakers.

With all the violence we have seen happen recently let us pray that peace and Christian love will prevail. Prayer can overcome adversity in these uncertain times. May our Lord and Savior bless us each and every day.