

Pastor Carl's Castings

LENT and care-full ness

Ash Wednesday, on February 17th, begins the 40 days of Lent, a time of repentance and renewal for Christians. We pay special attention (as God does to us more so all the time) to our God and our shared relationship with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. You are invited to make it a special time yourself, with us.

Lent, meaning 'Spring', truly can be a time of blessing where God can begin to bring us into so much more life. To help us do that, the Church has encouraged giving attention to some lifelong habits or special practices including almsgiving (God wants to bless our sharing with others who need), prayer, Scripture reading, meditation, or, if helpful, a focusing or new habit forming way of denial—not having something, especially when others can then benefit from its abundance (so, chocolate—probably doesn't matter much, Carl).

Additionally, we have midweek Lenten services and fellowship with other Lutherans that can grow the Church as well as be special events and blessings. Every Wednesday (except Ash Wednesday and the Wednesday in Holy Week), we meet at one of four nearby Lutheran churches at 6 pm for a light supper followed by brief worship, then a NOOMA video (brief, thoughtful, by Rob Bell) and end with discussion. People come and leave anytime depending on other events and their time. Choirs still meet at 7 pm, for example.

On Sundays, worship has a Lenten focus each week, and for older teens and adults we are beginning a book-led conversation about God's pull (calling) to live life even more fully, with benefits to ourselves and others multiplied. The book, Soul Revolution, by John Burke, is available to you if you email or call the church office, or simply come to join our 9:15-10:15am book discussion group in the Fellowship Hall each week. There is little time needed to do the book's exercise called the "60-60 Experiment". Many participants set a watch to chime hourly

for 60 days to see how aware of God's activity they are becoming. It takes only seconds to do as often as one is able, or a maximum of every waking hour.

Lots of ways to enter and be awakened to new life with God this spiritual Spring of Lent--come, join us. Don't forget, invite someone with you who may not know they, also, are welcome, in fact, invited.

God bless us, everyone...Dickens's *Tiny Tim*, and me, PC.

Want to HELP?

Have a heart for helping disadvantaged others? How about invalid and poor, elderly and sick folks needing house repairs they cannot afford? If you want to give in support of the students going to near Savannah, Georgia, for their KU alternative Spring Break Mission Trip with our Lutheran Centre, please speak to Pr. Carl or send a check made to St. John's with a memo note for KU Mission Trip. Send it to church or put it in the offering. We hope that given the recession, these funds will not reduce your giving to any other ministries of the church. Thank you for your prayers for the March 6-13, '10 trip.

A PASTORAL NOTE

Please call the church office or Pastor Wenzel if you would like to schedule a home visit or receive communion at home. If you need to contact him in the event of an emergency, Pastor Wenzel's cell phone number is 610-223-6555, (please note: he will not be able to answer the cell phone when visiting in the hospital).

President's Message

I don't know if you have taken the time to visit St. John's new web site but if you haven't please do so. I think you will be pleasantly surprised. I went to our new web site and all I can say is very nice! Clean, organized, and informative. Now all we have to do is get the word out. I didn't see a hit counter but hopefully we can get one added. This way we can determine how many people are actually visiting the web site. Please thank John and Perma Dreibelbis the next time you see them. Their generous donation made it possible.

The other night we were discussing the tragedy in Haiti. There seems to be many philosophies' as to why these types of incidents occur. I stated that I believe these types of events occur and God wants to see how we respond. Do we say, "Oh what a shame" and go on about our daily business or do we step up to the plate and make a difference. I just got through reading an article in the latest edition of TIME magazine by former President Bill Clinton. In the article he stated that there are over, are you ready for this, "10,000 nongovernmental organizations working in Haiti" 10,000 organizations! I didn't know there were 10,000 organizations. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all 10,000 organizations could sit down at the same table and organize a single relief effort? Mr. Clinton alluded to this in his article. A duplication of effort is the last thing Haiti needs. The Congregational Council, in our November meeting, authorized a \$2000.00 donation to the Lutheran Disaster Relief fund. So in a way, we as members of the church have already done some good. I think it is going to take even more though. This month, take time to donate generously to the charity of your choice. If you would like to donate through the ELCA, you can go directly to their web site. If you don't have Internet access you can call in a donation at 1-800-638-3522. Let the people of Haiti know that we do care.

At the last finance committee meeting we were trying to determine what project we should recommend to Council. What should we do next to make St. Johns even better? It was determined we needed more input. If you have any ideas on what direction or project you think we should tackle next, please let one of your council members know. The three big projects mentioned were completing the installation of the rest of the windows, air conditioning, and repaving the parking lot. I believe in infrastructure. My vote would be to finish the installation of the windows. That way when we finally do get air conditioning we won't be cooling the outside! I believe this issue is too big to leave to the finance committee, the property committee, or the council. We need your input. You can always contact me via Email at msqualio@msn.com. Please let us know what you think we should do next. I feel the best ideas are going to come from you, the members.

One more item I would like to discuss. We would like to do a new 2010 Church Directory. We would like to set up a date in the spring for the photo shoot. We will give everyone advanced notice of the date selected. If for some reason you would not be able to attend the Photo shoot, we will try to make sure an alternate method will be available to get your picture into the directory.

On February 7th we will be having our annual Congregational Meeting. This is our wrap-up meeting for the 2009 calendar year. Please try to attend.

In closing, I would just like to say I hope you are all well and in good health and don't forget to take time and thank God for all your blessings.

Sincerely,

Mark S. Qualio
St. John's Congregational
Council President

Applying Bible Principles

A wise person once observed, “Half of any task is having the right tool, and the other half is knowing what to do with it.” Although we don’t often consider it as such, money is a tool which God uses in our lives as a means of spiritual growth.

You see, money is not an end in and of itself. It is a means to an end. And in God’s hands, one of its primary “ends” is to instruct us and to help us grow spiritually. God especially wants us to avoid our natural tendency which is a bent toward selfishness, greed, and hoarding. That’s why the Lord Jesus said, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions” (Luke 12:15).

Well, if an individual’s life does not consist in having a lot of possessions, in what does it consist? Jesus provided an insightful answer to that question in Matthew 6:20-21, where He said, “. . . store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

Now, according to Jesus’ teaching in the Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25), there is nothing wrong with saving. There is nothing wrong with investing or earning interest on investments. There is nothing wrong with being a wise steward by planning for the future. In fact, Jesus taught that those who do so are to be commended. But our primary emphasis as God’s children is to make our investments in the “Bank of Heaven.” When we do that, our investments are secure. They are not affected by inflation, by theft, by wear and tear, or anything of the kind.

There is only one way to make deposits in this special “bank”: By giving to the Lord’s work. Although the money is used here, it is credited to your eternal account. Each time you give your tithes and offerings at St. John’s Lutheran Church, you are giving to the Lord by investing for eternity. You are storing up “treasures in heaven” that will glorify God forever.



Volunteers Needed for Stewardship!

We need more volunteers for a variety of stewardship activities planned each year. Opportunities for service include presenting temple talks, as a committee member planning and completing activities throughout the year or helping with specific projects such as the fall stewardship campaign. Please contact me if you would like to learn more about our stewardship program and our opportunities for service and growth.

Larry Schappell
610-683-3550
larry@schappell.com

CARD MINISTRY REQUEST!

Please help the Witness Team with donations of **new birthday cards** and **get well cards**, as well as postage stamps if possible. These donations will help our shut-ins as well as connect all of St. John's children in letting them know that they are loved and cared for by this ministry.

For more information please call Linda Schappell at 610-683-7776 and look for the box marked "Card Ministry" in the back of the church.



Daycare Highlights

After a very busy holiday season here at St. John's we are anxious to see what 2010 brings.

January was a much calmer month for us. The children, parents, and staff slowly got back into their routines.

Our Preschool children practiced letters M, N, O and #5. We experimented with snow, had a visit from the Book A Saurus, learned the difference between silver and gold, and even had a morning devoted to hot chocolate!

PJ Day was our favorite. We wore our PJ's and had breakfast in the Fellowship Hall. Pastor Wenzel joined us in his PJ's and read us a "bedtime story".

We ended the month with a Disney Day and a week about animals in winter.

St. John's Daycare wants to thank everyone for their holiday wishes. Also, thank you for helping us make a difference. We were able to collect four big boxes of food for Friend, Inc. This was an excellent lesson on "helping others" for our children.

The children, parents and staff wish you all a wonderful 2010!

Daycare Staff
610-683-5402



Mrs. Deeter's 3 Year Old Class

Our first winter month of January is already gone and now we are ready to start February. This month our special color will be pink and our shape will be the heart. Our Spanish word of the month will be “amor” for love.

The children will be learning new songs and finger plays about Valentines and making crafts to decorate our classroom and hallways. We will be experimenting to find out what colors make pink and celebrating National Children's Dental Month to learn how important it is to visit the dentist and take care of our teeth.

We will be making special Valentine boxes to send cards and treats to our friends and having a party. And, as every month, with the help of our moms we will be visiting the Kutztown Library for story time.

February will be a very fun month at Preschool.

Kathryn Deeter



Preschool News

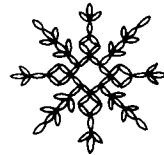
Mrs. Leibensperger's 4 Year Old Class

It's hard to believe that we are just about in February. It feels like we just started school. January was a very busy month in Preschool!

Our color this month was white, our letters were M, N, O and our number was 5. Some of our special days and themes were "Mitten Day", "Library Day", what is ice and snow?, arctic animals, hibernation, and shapes.

We learned many new songs and finger plays. The favorite song was called "Make a Snowball". They throw tissue paper "Snowballs" as they sing the song. It certainly looks like winter in the halls and classroom, decorated with their winter artwork. We were hoping all the "snow" pictures would bring some real snow, but it didn't happen!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Leibensperger





**Next Meeting February 11, 2010
"Valentine Gift Bags"**

**7 PM Fellowship prior to 7:30 PM
Meeting in the Fellowship Hall**

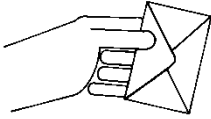
On Feb. 11th the Women of the ELCA will be filling Valentine Gift Bags for our shut-in members. St. John's Women of the ELCA has done this for many years. Last year we filled 26 bags. Each bag contains 12 or 14 different food items plus a craft and a personalized valentine. The big smiles and gracious thank yous make this a very worthwhile project.

But we do need help from the congregation. We are asking the congregation for monetary donations to purchase the small food items we put in the bag. Donations can be given to Judy Hilberg, Cass Bieber or the Church office. Thank you in advance.

*-- St. John's
Women of the ELCA*

A BIG THANK YOU

for the Congregation's support in the blanket project. Thanks to their generous donations the Senior Youth earned \$330 for Church World Service and the Blankets+ Project.



Thank You Notes

Dear St. John's,

Thank you for the beautiful poinsettia delivered by Hilda Mertz. Also, thank you to Pastor Landis for his visit and communion. All were greatly appreciated.

Thank you,
Catherine Kramer

Dear St. John's,

Please thank the ladies of the church for their continued visiting. My mother is almost 92 years old, and although many memories have dimmed, she lights up when I read her the bulletins.

Thank you,
Brenda Winkler

Dear St. John's Members,

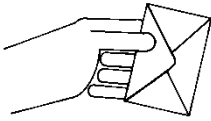
My heartfelt thanks to the members of St. John's for their cards, prayers and the beautiful flowers I received. I appreciated Pastor Wenzel's thoughtful concern and phone calls and a most welcome visit by Joe Piscitelli in the hospital. All of these gestures meant so much to me and I sincerely thank you.

Melvin Hartman

Dear St. John's,

Thank you so much for the beautiful poinsettia plant delivered to me by Hilda Mertz. I do appreciate it very much and enjoy the beauty of the plant.

God Bless You!
Fern Fulton



Thank You Notes

Dear St. John's,

I was so happy with Pastor Wenzel's visit when I was hospitalized and needed him. Pastor Landis is always welcome when he comes to give me communion. I thank the girls, Anna Herman, Doris Siekmann, Hilda Mertz, Shirley Herring, and Mary Krumanocker for their visits. The time passes quickly and is fun, which we all need. I wish I could be with you at church. I miss the beautiful services, but I do attend Kissinger Lutheran Church next door.

Sincerely,
Lillian Baldwin

Dear Congregation of St. John's,

Your generous giving is much appreciated by the KUBOK Neighborhood Watch! Thanks to your support and the support of other community members KUBOK is able to uphold their mission to maintain a safe and friendly community and we are very grateful.

Amanda Keith
KUBOK Neighborhood Watch

HOSPITALIZED

Here are the appropriate codes assigned to us by the respective hospitals in Allentown and Reading. Lehigh Valley Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital – 282; Reading Hospital – 512; St. Joseph's Hospital – LU 60. You can use these codes if you are undergoing elective surgery or you can call the chaplain's office at each hospital and ask them to list you under our congregation's code for that institution.

From “Recipes from the Flock” St. John’s cookbook

???

Rescheduled
February 28, 2010
Following 10:30 AM Service

Witness Team Proposal
From Christ to Building Partnership

**Focus All Committee
Events**

of St. John's

FACE

of St. John's

Purpose: From each to ALL

- Yearly planning and development for congregational needs.
- Encourage all groups to plan in 3-4 month blocks.
- Better communicate plans so all may contribute.
- Sharing the focus and dates of special events, celebrations & yearly calendar.
- Long term planning and goals.
- Be open to new ideas.

Jesus Loves you snow much

Cong meeting

Churches rock

Get smart

Souper Bowl

Haiti ELCA

Haiti Thrivent



Faith and Life Institute

Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia

**Fourth Annual
REST, REFRESHMENT, AND RENEWAL for
WOMEN**

Saturday, February 6, 2010, 9 am - 3:30 pm

On this 2010 **Women's Day of Rest, Refreshment, and Renewal**, we offer you a place to explore the meaning of creation and creativity in your life as a child of God. Use your day to join in our gatherings, take some holy time to find a quiet place to rest, pray using our campus labyrinth, or find a quiet corner to meditate, nap, or read. Bring along your own project you are creating, or join our artist-in-residence in creating a painting reflecting our theme. Make this day a gift to yourself and invite friends to come and take a spiritual day to be renewed in mind, body and spirit. This day is open to women in congregations of all denominations and faiths, as well as friends and neighbors in your local communities.

Learn more and register online: Ltsp.edu/restrefresh

OUR NEW WEBSITE IS NOW ONLINE!!!

<http://www.stjohnslutherankutztown.org>

St. John's Lutheran Kutztown Website Update

We have had many positive responses to the look and accessibility of our new website! **St. John's Daycare has already received an enrollment from a parent who accessed the Daycare information on our website!**

WE ARE EXCITED ABOUT OUR NEW WEBSITE and hope the congregation will be happy with its functionality and appearance. St. John's website is an outreach tool to people looking to explore the internet and discover what churches are available in the Berks County area.

A gallery for pictures which we can change regularly to showcase events from church functions, Bible Readings, and a link to Google for directions to St. John's are just a few of the new additions.

We are very excited about this new step in St. John's outreach and look forward to adding more photos of our events to the website. You may email digital photos to Stjohns@hometownnu.com.

So go online and take a look!

<http://www.stjohnslutherankutztown.org>

Congratulations To St. John's Youth!

Please congratulate our youth for their achievements!

Jesse Miller and **Adam Rabenold** made Sr. County Chorus and District Chorus.

Adam Rabenold made Sr. Chorus Accompanist.

Katelyn Remp made Sr. County Band.

Allie Steigerwalt has been named to the Dean's list at Shippensburg University for the fall 2009 semester with a grade point average of 3.644. She is the Shippensburg University Marching Band majorette captain.



The 11 homes built by the joint efforts of our churches and Thrivent Financial for Lutherans with Reading/Berks Habitat for Humanity are now bringing enough money annually to build one home. This happens because the residents in our homes pay back the principal on their mortgage. So you can say that without raising a finger we are continually building with Habitat. But we can't just stop there.

ELCA World Hunger

Enclosed in The Spire this month are envelopes for ELCA World Hunger Relief. Please give generously to those in need. Blessed is he who is kind to the needy. (Proverbs 14:21b) for whoever is kind to the needy honors God (Proverbs 14:31b).

Thank you, Peace and Blessings,

The Service Team

Meet Zeshan



February Sponsorships

The following people are scheduled to sponsor bulletins, candles and flowers during February:

BULLETINS

- 2-7 Tim and Diane Fenstermacher
- 2-14 Marie Moyer
- 2-21 Johns and Perma Dreibelbis
- 2-28 Open

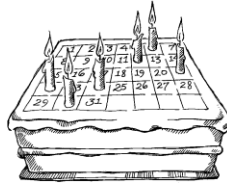
CANDLES

- 2-7 Wendy Fenstermacher
- 2-14 Marie Moyer
- 2-21 Johns and Perma Dreibelbis
- 2-28 Open

FLOWERS

- 2-7 Shirley Williams
- 2-14 Paula Kutz
- 2-21 Elmer High
- 2-28 Shirley Herring

Please complete the sponsorship form and submit it along with your payment to the office at least one week before the date of your sponsorship. To ensure proper credit on your giving statement, please submit a form to the office.



February Birthdays

February 1	Jonathan Schappell	February 17	Shirley Herring
February 3	Doreen Boyer	February 18	Joyce Leibensperger
February 4	Kimberly Schroeder	February 19	Fern Fulton
February 5	Craig Savage		Wendy Fenstermacher
February 6	Matthew Qualio	February 21	Colby Reitenauer
February 10	Carol Burian	February 22	Sharon Davis
February 13	Jean Leimbach		Melissa Miller
	Lorraine Dries	February 23	Paul Leimbach
February 14	Harry Miller	February 24	Clair Stump
	Brook Snyder	February 26	Patricia Rentschler
February 15	Diane Fenstermacher	February 27	Jenna Spohn
	Michael Burian	February 28	Suzanne DeTurk
February 16	Elizabeth Mest		
	Kiersty Boyer		

If you notice that your birthday or the birthday of someone you know is not listed among those in The Spire, which means that the birthday information is not entered in the church's computer. Please contact the church office and let us know of anyone missing from the birthday list. We want everyone to be included.