

Pastor Carl's Castings

A New Year—a great time!

As we look back over 2009 and then look forward into 2010, we cannot help but be hope filled and breathless while God continues to position us well for ministry in these coming days and years.

Please celebrate this past year together: by reading our annual reports, talking with one another of 'the news of the day or week', or coming over to see what is happening. For others of us, 'connecting' is about to become so much easier and more direct and meaningful as our NEW website launches and we move to an email based communicating weekly soon, I hope.

As a new sign is being worked on, we are ourselves *SIGNS* of what is new in and through us, by God's grace. How many ways has God spoken to you, shaped you in faith and action, been shaping circumstances for good in good or hard times? These are signs of our times, and need to be shared as we begin a New Year in new hope, joy, and peace.

60-60...Awesome!

One way we might best celebrate God's life with each and all of us is by trying the 60-60 experiment. What?! Come January 10th to find out at 9:15 am-10:15 am. I hope you will gather in the Fellowship Hall with me to start out together on a Great Adventure (we don't even have to drive to NJ to enjoy it)! We will begin reading through a book filled with true stories about how God changes lives amazingly, joyfully. Then, as we talk or think through our own responses, we can expect no less than the same for ourselves! It's so easy, and can be so amazing an experiment...and experience.

GOOD NEWS: you do NOT have to be well read in the Bible or a good reader to participate. What we need from you is a phone call or email that you would like to try this out yourself, since we may need to order a book for each household. The book by John Burke is called Soul Revolution: how imperfect people become all God intended.

Me, too?!

Yes! Anyone who would like 1) to see some terrific youth better understand how the Apostle's Creed helps us live in *this* world and 2) would like what other adults have found to be a nice refresher or boost to their former confirmation studies, helping us parent or just live more fully, if not joyfully, then you are invited to the Fellowship Hall on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8 pm on January 10th, 17th, and/or 31st.

Newly engaged?

Please call or email the church office as soon as possible IF you want to plan your wedding. This is a time when newly engaged persons will call, so be among the first to reserve your date. We will begin a group for couples preparing for marriage around mid-January. Not a member of St. John's? Talk to me soon.

Holy Baptism

Call me ASAP to schedule a meeting to prepare for the sacrament of Holy Baptism. We offer baptism later in the month at Sunday services except during Lent, which goes from Wednesday, February 17th-April 3rd, 2010.

Want to join the TEAM?

We are happy to welcome you and instruct about membership and ministry done in our Lord's awesome name by the baptized ministers of our congregation. Email or call the church office to be invited to the next member preparation session.

KUBOK—what?

Kutztown **U**niversity and the **B**orough of **K**utztown cooperatively care for our neighbors and our neighborhood as roving ambassadors of good will. Want to learn how some of our members find it to be *their* ministry? Come worship on January 17th and meet Amanda to learn more.

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

When history is written, most of the details are left out. If you look at a synopsis of the major events of the last ten years or even the last 2010 years, it seems they are all related to politics, terrorism, & war. The popular media seems to be only interested in the sensational and perverse. Why does crime get more attention than the thousand acts of kindness and mercy? The media no matter what form seems to want to keep us in a state of fear. Well if you follow that sort of thing it may seem the world is headed for destruction, but I believe the world is exactly the opposite of all of this. Very few pray for war, most of us pray for peace. The Islamic world has joined its Christian and Jewish brothers and sisters in denouncing those who would kill in the name of God. These recent events give me faith that one day the world will finally be at peace.

Communication has always been the answer to most of mankind's problems. Soon St. John's new website will be complete and we will be embarking on a new chapter in our history. This could be the communication channel that will forever change St. John's. They say a web site may as well not exist if you can't get people to it. The challenge for St. Johns is to make <http://www.stjohnslutherankutztown.org> one of the most recognizable URLs (website address) in Berks County. Communication is important at all levels. If we get a new member due to the website, the next thing we need to do is to recognize new members and visitors and make them feel welcome. If we fail to recognize a new face we have lost the opportunity to get a new member. Again, Communication is the Answer. In our last council meeting someone commented that they noticed a visitor during the Hanging of the Greens Service. How many of us said Hello and welcome. I didn't, and yet I saw them. We all really need to be more welcoming to those we recognize as visitors. Every visitor is a possible new member.

At the Fleetwood Christmas parade a couple of weeks ago one of the newer non-denominational churches was handing out ice scrapers with the churches name. There are many marketing techniques we can use to promote St. Johns. The council will be having a meeting soon to determine concrete actionable steps that can be used to revitalize the Church. Everyone is welcome to come and make suggestions. Another item that came up at council is that we need more volunteers. We Need Volunteers. Many of the committees are lean and are looking for more participants. Please volunteer to be a member of a committee and make St. John's even better.

Please pray for all of those people who need a miracle in their life. I hope the next ten years will be the best ten years of your life and remember to feed the hungry. Every day when you get up thank God for another day to serve him. Peace be with you.

Sincerely,

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

Annual Reports Due in Early January

If you are a team, committee or organization leader, then please be sure to prepare and submit a report to our bookkeeper, Jen Malik, on or before January 15th. All reports will be included in the Annual Report booklet for 2009. If you have any questions, contact Jen at 610-683-3140 weekday mornings.

Applying Bible Principles

If you read annual reports from publicly held companies or banks, you will frequently see the word “fiduciary.” Fiduciary is used as an adjective to describe something which is held in trust. It is also used as a noun to describe the one who is a trustee who must account for that which is held in trust.

For example, a bank president has a fiduciary responsibility to stockholders in the bank and to depositors who place their money in the bank. A company treasurer has a fiduciary responsibility to the owners of the company. A payroll clerk has a fiduciary responsibility to pay people what they have earned.

You may never have considered yourself a fiduciary, and you may never have acted officially in a fiduciary capacity, but in reality, you are a fiduciary. All of us are. That applies both to Christians and to those who are not part of God’s family through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. We who are Christians will stand before the Judgment Seat of Christ. There, we will not be judged for salvation, since the penalty and judgment for sin was settled once and for all on the cross of Calvary when the Lord Jesus paid the price for our sin. Instead, when we stand before Christ, we will give an account of how we have used what God has entrusted to us.

Just as a bank president must account to stockholders and depositors on how their funds are used, we must account to Christ for how we have used what God has entrusted to us. Since everything we have rightfully belongs to Him, we will need to report on how we have managed His assets!

As you consider how you have used what God has entrusted to your care and keeping during the past few months, what kind of job have you done? And more importantly, as a “fiduciary” of what God has placed in your hands, will you stand before Him with joy, eager to report on your giving and management of His assets?



Dear Church Council & Donald Williams:

I want to thank all of you for having the faith in selecting me to replace Donald Williams as the new St. John's Financial Secretary.

I want to thank Donald for his endless patience training me on how to take over his role. I will provide you 100% commitment and dedication in hopefully matching Donald's high standard of professionalism and attention to details. I think this is a watershed moment for St. John's and expect with the fertile groundwork that Pastor Carl has prepared there is an incredible bright future with seeing St. John's ministries ripen into a new transformed church that will energize the community and provide memorable outreach from every member, new and old. I want to sincerely thank President Mark Qualio for serving as a lighthouse in leadership and persistently calling upon me to "step up to the plate" and volunteer.

I want to thank my wife Diane and children Victoria and Caroline with being supportive in this new role and understanding for having to spend a small amount of time away from home in order to make sure this new responsibility gets the 100% of commitment and dedication that I will be giving.

Best Regards,

Tim Fenstermacher



Daycare Highlights

Everyone at St. John's Daycare wishes all of you a safe and happy 2010.

Daycare Staff
610-683-5402

Mrs. Deeter's 3 Year Old Class

What a great month of December the three year old Preschool had. After making lots of Christmas crafts, fingerplays and a visit from Santa we are ready to start our winter month of January.

This month our special color will be white and our Spanish word of the month will be "frio" for cold. Our plans are to talk about snowflakes, learn new songs and fingerplays about snow and make lots of winter crafts. We will also be growing snowflakes in our classroom! Hopefully, if we get a really good snow, we will make ice cream out of snow to eat.

We will, of course, have a hot chocolate day and get to play with chocolate play dough.

All of these fun days plus a trip to the Kutztown Library will make January a fun snowy month.

Kathryn Deeter



Preschool News

Mrs. Leibensperger's 4 Year Old Class

It's hard to believe that December is over and a New Year will begin. We wish the 3 H's for everyone – Health, Happiness, and Hope. In Preschool I wish the best of health to all my children, education that brings knowledge, and happiness and hope that the children will all be successful as they move through the grades.

In the month of December we had the number 4, letters J, K and L, and our own special day was Candy Cane Day. We all wore red and white, ate candy canes, made pipe cleaner candy canes, and beaded candy canes. Did you know that when you take two candy canes and put the hook ends together you make a heart ♥! We made lots of delicious Christmas cookies. Future bakers!

We learned many new songs and fingerplays and our hall and room is filled with beautiful artwork!

Our highlight of the month was a visit from Santa Claus at our Christmas party. He brought a package for all the boys and girls! They all remembered their thank you's!

We all hope you had a wonderful Christmas and a Happy New Year! Talk to you more in 2010!

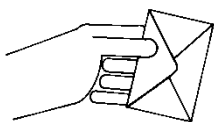
Sincerely,
Mrs. Leibensperger



“Monday’s Ministries”

Speaker: The Rev. Carl Wenzel

In Fellowship Hall - Thursday, Jan., 14,
7 PM Fellowship prior to 7:30 PM meeting



Thank You Notes

Dear St. John’s,

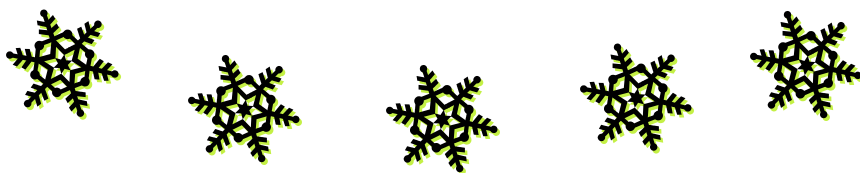
Thank you for your prayers, cards, calls and get well wishes after my surgery, complications and extended stay at L.V. Rehab and the Lutheran Home. Special thanks to Pastor Carl and Joe Piscitelli for all their prayers, concern and visits. All was greatly appreciated.

Thank you to Anna Herman for delivering the Church Bulletin and Advent Devotions and Altar Flowers.

Thanks so much,
Carl J. Wessner

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.



JESUS LOVES YOU “SNOW” MUCH

So let's celebrate! The Junior Youth Committee is planning a celebration of the Winter season on Sunday, February 7, 2010 from 2:00pm to 4:00pm in the Fellowship Hall for toddler to sixth grade children. If your child or grandchildren enjoy crafts, playing games, hearing winter-time stories, decorating cookies and sipping hot chocolate, please save the date and join us for some fun. In the event we have snow, the snow date is Sunday, February 14, 2010.

Look for future announcements in the Bulletin, on the Sunday school bulletin board, and in your child's Sunday school papers. See you there!

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

Witness Team Proposal
From Christ to Building Partnership
Focus **A**ll **C**ommittee **E**vents
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.

Proposal date:

Tues., Jan 12, 2010 @ 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

“Creation for Love’s Sake”

Psalm 19:2 “The heavens proclaim the Glory of GOD.”

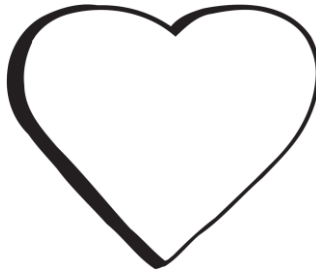
Romans 1:20 “ever since GOD created the world HIS visible qualities have been clearly seen; Both HIS eternal power and HIS divine nature. They are perceived in the things GOD made.”

The more we learn from science about the vast outer space and the sub-atomic particles we are made from, the more we should see GOD’s splendor.

Early man saw the sun, moon, and stars and acknowledged the wonders of GOD the Creator. Modern science has revealed so much more of God’s splendor, and yet we choose NOT TO SEE God’s hand. Rather, we decide to worship the “THINGS” that were made. IDOLS! Money-Power-TV-Sports-Clothes-Jewelry-Ipods-the Internet, etc.

Our own weakness denies GOD so we can continue to justify our selfish and arrogant behavior. We do not LOVE, but rather purchase more “STUFF”

Life is no longer a gift given to us by GOD, but rather a “Choice” we make. Money and comfort are chosen rather than care of the sick, the old, and the unborn. We all want our share of the wealth without considering the poor, the needy, and the hungry of the world.



Don't be fooled!

“Fools mock at sin.” Proverbs 14:9

“Deceiver, God will not be mocked.” Galatians 6:7

Some day we all will stand before God. What will your answer be to HIS question? “Did you love as I have loved you?”

Our Messiah, Emmanuel is born. We have received God’s pure love in Jesus the Christ. The season for giving is not over, but rather has just begun.

Love as Jesus Christ Loved!

Love your neighbor, your child, your brother, even those who would destroy you.

Love is nothing until it is given away. God created it for all of us.

Choose your favorite charity and give the best you have.

Witness Team
Linda Schappell



January Sponsorships

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

BULLETINS

1-3 Open
1-10 Open
1-17 Open
1-24 Open
1-31 Open

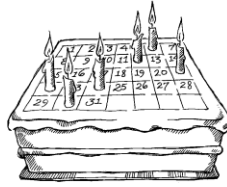
CANDLES

1-3 JoAnn Ross
1-10 Open
1-17 Open
1-24 Open
1-31 Open

FLOWERS

1-3 Verna Spohn
1-10 Open
1-17 Shirley Williams
1-24 Wendy Fenstermacher
1-31 Amy Lindenmuth

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.



January Birthdays

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|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| January 1 | Beulah Adams | | Kati Vanek |
| January 2 | Audrey Miller | January 21 | Mary Heffner |
| January 3 | Mary Arnold | | Malcolm Eidle |
| January 4 | Allen Krause | | Jean Miller |
| | Diane Mertz | January 22 | Eric Hartman |
| | Donovan Hertzog | | Ian Shade |
| January 5 | Karissa Zimmerman | January 23 | Marcia Rohrbach |
| January 6 | Dorothy Leshner | January 24 | Jennifer Wolf |
| January 7 | Brennan Miller | | Sarah Smith |
| January 8 | Tammy Haring | January 25 | Katie Danner |
| | Joshua Hartman | | Linda Schwartz |
| January 9 | Bonnie Yurvati | January 26 | Heather Kulp |
| January 11 | Marvin Savage | | Melvin Reitz |
| January 12 | Myrtle Dietrich | | Doris Schappell |
| | Amy Lindenmuth | January 27 | Katelyn Remp |
| January 14 | Verna Spohn | January 28 | Peyton Kauffman |
| | Jordan Zahm | | Danielle Kauffman |
| January 16 | Amber Burian | January 29 | Eleanor Leimbach |
| January 17 | Lester Kerchner | | Lee Trout |
| | Ruth Reitz | | Joshua Hamm |
| | Brandon Bleiler | | George Weida |
| January 18 | Ryan Riegel | January 30 | June Fenstermacher |
| January 19 | Timothy Haring | | Kim Herber |
| | Timothy Seyler | | Susan Hillman |
| | Chadwick Mittl | | Michele Moyer |
| January 20 | Sarah Cronrath | January 31 | Ryleigh Burkey |
| | Zebulan Oswald | | |

If you notice that your birthday or the birthday of someone you know is not listed among those in The Spire, that 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.