

Pastor Carl's Castings

The world's bent this Lent

The daily trials we and the world face economically and otherwise have many concerned even more than ever with finding some sense of control in just *some* things, in hopes of finding solid ground instead of shifting sands to stand on.

Lent is about finding *that* ground. Hebrews 4:14-16 says that Jesus IS that high ground of solid rock, and that we can pray for God's help to continue to believe and live ON that rock our faith clings to. "for we do not have a high priest (Jesus) who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who in every respect has been tested as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore approach the throne of grace with boldness, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need".

Whether at worship, Bible study, in your own Sunday School learning, serving in some ministry, or as you prepare to be God's baptized minister daily with devotions (pick up our LAMPA devotional at church) and prayer, fasting or a special Lenten fast or service to neighbors, we have so many ways for God to gift us with resources to believe and hold fast to our rock of faith, Jesus Christ. Come, and see.

Lent is also about the ways we can minister when we are standing on Christ's strength. As we at St. John's recover our strength and find new sources for ministry, ministry to others in our Lord's name will be as easy as going with Christ for a walk. We can expect to find ministry happening as we follow him. Will you want to walk with friends April 11th on the *Friend, Inc.*, Walk in

Kutztown? So many will benefit from every penny raised, much less how people's needs come to mind when they see us walking.

And we will find blessings like none other. Just listen, ask around. Biblical promises are coming true in amazing stories all around and among us. Come, let us share the *good news* God is bringing both TO and through us.

May Lent 2010 truly be a spring time here for St. John's, Kutztown, and our Lord's Church throughout the world. We invite you, and others you invite, to find how the Lenten journey together unlocks even greater, almost unimaginable JOY this Easter.

Shalom, in Christ,
Pastor Carl

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.

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 would like to thank all of you for your confidence and support in reelecting me to Church Council and to the Council for reelecting me to fill the Office of President for the next year. I promise I will try to serve you to the best of my ability.

The other night at council we were discussing what we thought was our biggest issue as a church. It appears the biggest issue is not financial but the lack of volunteerism in our congregation. I have discussed this in the past but I have to let you know we are in desperate need for some individuals to step forward and do just a little more than show up for church every Sunday morning. I asked the question, How do we make people volunteer and everyone laughed. I guess I should have said how do we get people to volunteer? So.. What is it going to take to get all of you to volunteer your services and make this church a dynamic, thriving, fun place to be. I have this vision of what a church is supposed to be. A place where people want to come and have fun. A place where it is fun to be. The place you would rather be than any other place. A place where people are united in a common goal of serving the greater good. How do we get back to that place of excitement? That feeling has to come from within. No one can give it to you. We all need to feel we are wanted and needed. Well Guess what. You are wanted and needed. We need help in almost every area. Sunday School this fall will be the real test as to where we are going. I am hoping the outdoor sign will be in place by then and we can really promote the fall program to bring the community back into the church.

One of the other items we discussed in Council was the general lack of understanding of how things are paid for. Someone asked the question, How can we afford this when we are running a deficit. I have come to understand that the running of the church has to be paid for by what is placed in the offering plate each week. We can't just take money that we were given for a specific item and move it over to the general budget. The example was given that Capital Campaign funds were designated for specific items. We can't just say oh well, let's move it into

the general budget account. The bottom line is, like I stated at the congregational meeting, if each of the active members gives an extra \$365 to the church this year, \$1 per day, we can balance our budget. If you are currently a non-active member and you are reading this message remember, this is your church also. Please think about making a tax deductible donation to St. John's this year.

There will be an all committee meeting on the 28th of February to go over what's happening in all of the committees. This would be the perfect time for you to come and see where you can be of service. Please try to attend and see what you can do for St. John's.

May God's Love and Peace be with you during this Lenten season.

Sincerely,

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



Lenten Angel Basket
For Opportunity House

A basket will be placed in the coat area during Lent. Some items needed are: Toiletries, razors, children's shampoo, adult and children's toothbrushes, diapers (all sizes), paper towels and bath tissue.

— *Service Team*

Applying Bible Principles

Someone once said, “Experience is a good teacher, but she gives the test first and then the lesson.” That’s certainly true, and based on many of life’s experiences, we frequently fail the test before we can benefit from the lesson.

The formula “ e equals mc^2 ” is familiar to many college students but understood by very few people. Most of us know it had something to do with Einstein and was the formula that led to the release of enormous power and to the nuclear age. Similarly, in funding the local church, “ e ” might stand for *every*, “ m ” for *member*, “ c ” for *commitment*, and the “ 2 ” for the *effort multiplied by itself*. The fruit of that kind of effort is much more powerful than what Einstein discovered, even as Jesus described it in Matthew 21:22 — “Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive.”

Right now, as we consider the opportunity to support the ministries here at St. John’s Lutheran Church, God is putting us to the test. As Gordon Moyes stated, “Responsible giving or stewardship is not man’s way of raising money, but God’s way of raising people. . . . The church’s budget is not a list of its expenses, but a record of its vision. It is not a list of bills to be met, but a program of ministry to be achieved.”

As each of us prayerfully considers what God would have us give, and as we obey what God asks of us, we can trust Him to provide the resources. That’s a test — a test of where we are spiritually much more than where we are financially. It’s a test of us as individuals and of us as a church. The question is whether or not we really believe that God has the power and ability to bless our obedience “far more than all we can ask or imagine” (Eph. 3:20). How are you doing concerning God’s tests regarding money in your life? If God’s provision in your life in the days ahead depends on *how* you obey His leading *now* concerning your giving, what will the future be like for you?

It just might, you know. . . .



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

February 2010 was short but very sweet! In February we even got our boys to wear the color pink!

Corina, from Dr. Messersmith's office came to show us how to keep our teeth healthy and we had a day to learn how to keep our hearts healthy and happy.

We celebrated Valentine's Day by making and sharing valentines with our friends and collecting coins for the Luekemia and Lymphoma Societies. We will proudly tell you how much money we collected in the next Spire.

It is very important to us that our children know how to help others. Our school-aged children were busy on "snow-days" with many art and organized activities.

The fellowship Hall has been very busy. Our Day Care parents love the hoagie sales and are always asking when the next one is. We want to thank everyone who makes the delicious hoagies!

We will again be searching for the famous St. John's Leprechan, if you see or hear anything please let us know!



Daycare Staff
610-683-5402



Mrs. Deeter's 3 Year Old Class

Our winter month of February is coming to an end and we are ready to welcome our new spring month of March.

Our special color will be green and our shape will be a diamond.

This month we will be learning about Spring, Windy Weather, Kites and our holiday St. Patrick's Day.

The children will be learning new things by using center stations and circle time. We will be practicing new finger plays and songs.

We will honor Dr. Seuss's birthday by reading many of his books and having green eggs and ham for a snack.

We will spend the end of the month getting ready for our early Easter holiday.

All of these special days, plus a trip to the Kutztown Library, will make this a fun-filled month.

Kathryn Deeter

Preschool News

Mrs. Leibensperger's 4 Year Old Class

As I am writing this article the sounds of snowflakes and shovels are outside the window. The children all got what they wanted, (maybe grown ups too!) A BIG SNOW STORM!! We unfortunately missed two days of school because of the storm. Sunny, warm days ahead!!

Our color for February was pink (Rosado). The letters were P and Q and our number was 6. (Six little ducks that I once knew, etc., we all can remember that song!!). Our special topics were Ground Hog Day, Getting Ready for Valentine's Day, Famous Presidents, Our Valentine's Party, Library Day, A trip to the Post Office, Tip-Top Teeth and Healthy Heart Day.

We learned many new songs and finger plays this month. Our hall was totally decorated for Valentine's Day.

Let's see, what's next – it must be St. Patrick's Day!

If you know of anyone who is interested in sending their child to Preschool for the 2010-2011 school year for either the 3 year old class, or the four year old class, please let me know and I will get you a registration form. My phone number is 610-683-3050 if you have any questions about Preschool. If you are interested please come to our Preschool Open House on Wed., April 21st from 6:30-8:00 PM. Feel free to come, look around and see what our children in both groups do. Watch for bulletin announcements.

Our next fundraiser will be a candy sale. YUM!!!

Sincerely,
Mrs. Leibensperger

P.S. Don't forget, Daylight Savings Time Begins Sunday, March 14th.



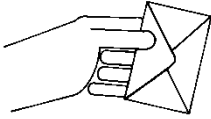
Next Meeting March 11, 2010
"Daycare at St. John's" – Sue DeTurk

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

The Women of St. John's wish to thank all the members who donated money to purchase items for our Valentine gift bags. We filled 23 bags for our shut-ins. Each bag contained at least 14 food items and a small craft. We would also like to thank the member of the congregation who helped us deliver the bags. All expenses were covered by donations.

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

From "Recipes from the Flock" St. John's cookbook



Thank You Notes

Dear St. John's,

Thank you to Anna Herman for delivering the flowers and having a very nice visit. Also thanks for all the cards and phone calls I received. Thank you to Pastor Wenzel for his visit and phone call, and to Joe Piscitelli for his visit which was truly enjoyed.

I appreciate all the love and support I received from everyone.

God Bless,

Merrily DeTurk

Thanks, for Being With Me,

While laying in a gurney waiting my turn in the operating room a woman approached me and asked my name. "I'm Ruth," she said. A friend from your congregation asked me to keep a special eye on you. You'll be asleep when I get in there but I wanted you to know that I'll be with you."

Her words provided the comfort of an angel. But it wasn't until the fog of anesthesia and medication wore off that I realized that God was with me and that He had been SENT to be with me. Not just through Ruth, but with every thought, prayer, card and visit that I received.

Thanks to every one of you for being with me, and for sending God to be with me also.

God Bless You,

Tim

Dear Ladies,

I would like to thank you for the Valentine Goodie Bag delivered to me by Linda Schwartz. It was greatly appreciated.

Thank You,

Catherine Kramer

Memorial Contributions Received



In Memory of Doris Eck

Donald and Lucille Bieber
Jeff and Susan Collier
John and Perma Dreibelbis
Walter Eck
June Fenstermacher
Margaret Fenstermacher
Marlin and Mary Alice Fox
Timothy and Diane Haring
James and Louise Hutchings
Kenneth and Ruth Kern
Paul Levan
Paul and Eleanor Leimbach
Rudolph and Jean Leimbach
John and Judy Mehlretter
Larue Mertz
Christopher Reilly
John Schmoyer and family
Randall and Linda Schwartz
Doris Siekmann and family
Garren and Kelly Spohn
Robert and Julia Wilson

THANK YOU TO EAGLE SCOUTS!

It is with deep appreciation that we acknowledge the fine job you have done in improving appearances at St. John's. We are happy that you have chosen St. John's as your project in which to earn your Eagle Scout award.

Thank you for your generosity of time and your interest in the future of St. John's Lutheran Church.

HELP Support Friend, Inc. Pantry and Services!!

The Kutztown Ministerial Association is sponsoring a "Walk for Friend, Inc." on Sunday, April 11, 2010 from 2-3:30 PM. Let us share God's Resurrection glory by supporting our fellow men, women, and children in overcoming hunger and poverty. Register and gather financial sponsors to show your support for this worthy local outreach agency.

See your congregational Team Captain and pick up your registration and sponsor sheet as well as your receipts to give to each sponsor for their tax records. Hurry let's line Main Street with walkers living out their faith to "*Walk Off Poverty*".

PROPERTY COMMITTEE REPAIR AND WISH LIST

The Property Committee has compiled a repair and wish list. Anyone wishing to use memorial fund money should contact Larry Davis, property committee chairperson, or the church office.

- Chair lift on stairs at office entrance.
- Replace remaining 4 windows in Fellowship Hall.
- Put grates over outside window ledges in Fellowship Hall.
- Paint stairwells and hallways. Finish painting window sills that have been replaced.
- Dig up and re-pave parking lot.
- Put vents in closet doors - Archives – Audio - Finance
- Fluorescent lights in upstairs and downstairs hallways.
- Redo bathroom on main level and make them handicap accessible.
- Identify outside doors.
- Cover windows on north wall with aluminum.
- Remove screens above choir pews with something decorative.
- Paint sanctuary.
- Paint overflow area
- Attractive furniture for overflow area.
- Redo stage floor and closet doors on stage.
- Strip and wax all floors on all three levels of the building.
- Replace Alberta spruce at Main Entrance.
- Some floor tiles in B-1 classroom are broken and should be replaced. Carpet recommended for room and hallway.
- Improve sound system.
- Repair east side stained glass windows.
- Drainage on stone parking lot.
- Redo ladies restroom in Fellowship Hall.
- Replace drapes in Fellowship Hall.
- Closed circuit television.
- Repair and paint windows and paint walls in light well.
- New chairs for Council room-minimum of sixteen.



Spring Fling Dinner

**To honor members 70 and over
Date: April 11th 2010
after the late service**

All Church members are welcome, those 70 and over, and 50 yr. confirmands will have their meal without cost, all others will be charged a nominal fee.

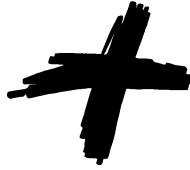
The menu for the event is as follows:

Homemade chicken pot pie, pepper cabbage, apple sauce, homemade bread, with apple butter. Dessert will be an array of assorted cupcakes, coffee, tea and punch

We will have some very enjoyable entertainment

The cost to those not 70 and over will be \$10.00 for adults, and children under 12 will be \$5.00

Please come out and help honor our senior members, you will have an enjoyable meal and the company of your St. John's Family.



Mid-Week Lenten

Every Wednesday evening at 6:15 PM at Zion Moselem Lutheran Church on the corner of Moselem Rd. and Crystal Cave Rd. Kutztown. Meal, video and discussion, worship, also with Trinity and Zion Moselem Lutheran Churches.



Holy Week & Easter Schedule

Palm Sunday, 3/28

8 & 10:30 AM, Holy Communion

Maundy Thursday, 4/1

7:30 PM, Holy Communion

Good Friday, 4/2

7:30 PM

Easter, 4/4

8 & 10:30 AM, Holy Communion

Tax Information Regarding Haiti Donations

President Obama signed into law a bill that makes a special exception to the general rule for monetary donations to help Haiti recover from the January 12 earthquake.

Individuals who make a monetary donation to a qualified charitable organization **after January 11, 2010, and before March 1, 2010**, may claim the contribution as a deduction on their **2009 or 2010 federal income tax returns**. Taxpayers may not deduct contributions on both their 2009 and 2010 returns.

For tax years beginning after 2009, the limitation on itemized deductions for higher income individuals is repealed. For the 2009 tax year, the limitation is reduced by two-thirds. Consequently, some individuals may find it more beneficial to claim their contributions to Haiti earthquake relief when they file their 2010 returns in 2011 than claiming the contribution as a deduction on their 2009 returns.

Youth: Get Ready for the 2012 ELCA Gathering!

The Youth Gathering of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America will return to **New Orleans** in 2012. Returning to a host city consecutively is unprecedented in the history of ELCA Youth Gatherings. The gathering will take place **July 18-22, 2012**.

In the summer of 2009 about 37,000 Lutheran teenagers, adult leaders and others gathered in New Orleans not only to paint and make home repairs but to learn about and experience the faith of people who live there. Residents of New Orleans and others along the U.S. Gulf Coast continue to recover more than four years after Hurricane Katrina.

Information about the ELCA Youth Gathering is at <http://www.ELCA.org/youthgathering> on the ELCA website.

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>



March Sponsorships

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

BULLETINS

- 3-7 Karen Hartman
- 3-14 Open
- 3-21 Ronald Delp
- 3-28 Open

CANDLES

- 3-7 Carol Diehl
- 3-14 Susan Teti
- 3-21 Amy Koenig
- 3-28 Valerie Miller

FLOWERS

- 3-7 Carol Diehl
- 3-14 Amy Koenig
- 3-21 Faye Leiby
- 3-28 Marianne Yoder

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.

St. John's March Birthdays

- | | | | |
|----|--------------------|----|-------------------|
| 1 | Matthew Lindenmuth | 17 | Brent Koller |
| 2 | Michael Korello | | Carol Sechler |
| 3 | Brian Fox | 18 | Emily Miller |
| | Kenneth Herman | | Myrtle Reber |
| | Douglas Mertz | 20 | Beulah Miller |
| 4 | Alyson Coburn | | Janelle Spohn |
| | Warren Wessner | 21 | Nicholas Barrell |
| 5 | Esther Bieber | 23 | Kimberly Warshel |
| | Ryan Herb | | Darlene Seyler |
| 6 | Donald Bieber | 24 | Linda Delp |
| 7 | Kyle Crespo | | Michael Hess |
| 8 | J. Theodore Ott | | Pearl Schaeffer |
| | Lisa Savage | | Erin Smith |
| 10 | Mary Beck | 25 | Catherine Kramer |
| | Kristin Hartman | | Katie Miller |
| | Nicholas Hill | 26 | Timothy Biltcliff |
| 11 | LeOra Hanson | | Carl Wenzel |
| | Katelyn Lindenmuth | | Eryn Ziegler |
| 13 | Kimberly Davis | 28 | Steven Moyer |
| 14 | Ronald Struble | 30 | Clifford Hilberg |
| 15 | George Mills | | Karla Rosenbusch |
| 16 | Sarah Koenig | 31 | Elizabeth Mertz |
| | Nicholas Mills | | |
| | Kenneth Yoder | | |
| | Tim Fenstermacher | | |
- Added for February:
Feb. 15 Ruth Kern

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.