

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

SUMNEYTOWN

LENT ISSUE 2019

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"I don't know." Over the 19 years that I have served the Lutheran church as an ordained minister, that phrase is one that I used to dread uttering. Admitting when I didn't know something used to make me feel truly incompetent as a leader in a faith community. I mean, isn't that why churches pay pastors? Because we're supposed to know things that other people in the church don't have experience with or knowledge of. Growing up, I always thought my pastor had all the answers to life and faith and Scripture. I can't remember a single time I ever heard him utter the phrase "I don't know."

However, the longer I've served in the church, and especially in the last decade, I seem to be getting more comfortable with that phrase. "I don't know." Because the truth is, there is much about the life of the church and the place that the church holds in

culture and society and families that I don't know – and sometimes, what I do know doesn't make sense.

But I still find times when I use those words – I don't know – and as they come out of my mouth, behind them are all kinds of fear and doubt and anxiety. One of those times happened a few Saturdays ago when the church council and other committee leaders were gathered at St. John's for a

continuing conversation about our organizational structure. We were wrestling with the question of whether the structure we have now will serve us in living into the goals outlined in our three year strategic plan. I listened to our facilitator and many others who were brave in sharing new ideas. I heard people speak with concern about ministries that may no longer be as effective as they once were. The longer we talked, the more unsettled I felt, because I didn't see a path forward. I knew that our conversation would need to be brought to a close and I was fearful we would not have resolution or even a path forward that might lead to resolution.

And then someone turned to me and said, "I'd like to know what you think, Pastor Becky. What do you think the next steps are?" Put on the spot, in front of the entire group, I admitted – "I don't know." Because at that time, I truly didn't know what the next steps

were. I was unclear, a little confused, somewhat overwhelmed and feeling a bit in over my head. I was honest

in my response – the conversation continued – next steps were identified and we walked out of the meeting.

And I spent the rest of the day – probably at least 5 hours – concerned that I had just admitted in front of the leadership of this church that I, as the pastor, didn't know what to do next. I half-expected to show up on Sunday

morning and find a note on my door that said, "Thanks for your leadership these last six years – but clearly we need a pastor who knows how to lead us into the unknown."

Yes, it's a bit dramatic – but the fear and the anxiety I felt in admitting I didn't know was real to me and I was concerned – for myself and for this faith community that has put so much trust in me to guide and lead.

Not too long after this conversation, I stumbled across the February edition of the Living Lutheran magazine that the ELCA publishes – and I was so comforted by the words of our presiding bishop, Elizabeth Eaton, at the end of the magazine.

"It's clear to me that we are living in a time of transition, especially for the Western church. I don't know how long this transition will last nor do I have a clear vision of what the church is

*"What is God up to?"
Where is God at
work in our faith
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Where does it feel like
God is missing – and
what might that tell us?"*

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becoming. The good news is that you and I don't have to have a clear vision because God does."

God knows what the vision is for the future of the Christian church as a whole, the ELCA in general and St. John's Lutheran Church in Sumneytown in specific. God knows what the next steps are, even when I don't.

But in order for me, and all who serve in leadership in this faith community, to know where God is leading and guiding us, we have to be open to asking the question "What is God up to?" Where is God at work in our faith community? Where is God actively moving and shaking things up? Where does it feel like God is missing – and what might that tell us? That "I don't know" experience a few Saturdays ago drove me to my knees and I have found myself more open to God's movement and Spirit at work in our leadership, in our council and I have welcomed that movement. Because it has helped me to see what the next steps are.

It also helped me to realize that I, as the pastor, won't always have all the answers. Believe me, I knew that, but on that Saturday, it felt like I needed to have the answers. What I needed more than answers was trust – trust that God has put the right people into leadership at this time and for this particular purpose. Trust that those leaders have the gifts and skills to work with me in navigating change that will open this faith community up to seeing what God is up to and sharing that with the wider community. Trust that the future of St. John's Lutheran Church in Sumneytown does not rest on my shoulders alone, but that it is a shared burden we as the body of Christ are carrying together and should be working on together.

I look forward to continuing to grow in my trust of our leadership here at St. John's. I look forward to seeing God's movement in the work we do, helping to shape and guide us all so we can help our faith community and others be Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love. And I honestly look forward to more "I don't know" moments – because in those moments, if I am paying attention, I will see how God is helping me grow in faith and trust.

I am grateful to be walking with this journey with all of you!

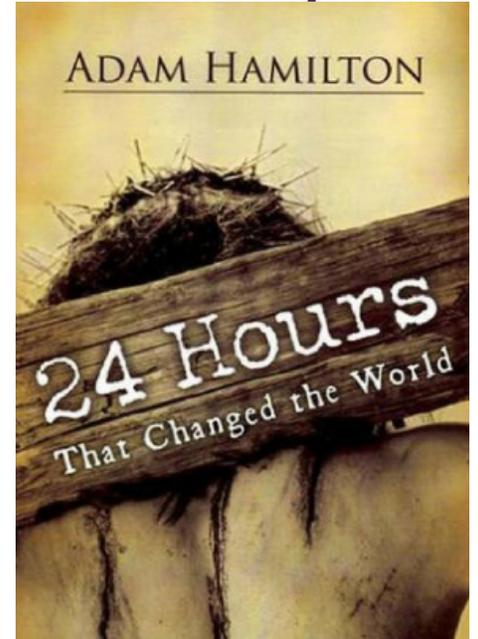
Peace,

Pastor Becky

FOOD FOR THE LENTEN JOURNEY

This Lent, gather with your brothers and sisters in Christ around tables for food, worship and conversation. **Food for the Lenten Journey** will begin promptly at 5:30 PM and conclude by 7 PM – a simple meal of soup, bread and water will be served – worship will be shared and conversation will be enjoyed. We will be using the resource *24 Hours That Changed the World* by Adam Hamilton. As we walk with Jesus in the last hours leading to the cross, we trust that his journey will change our journey in this season of Lent.

Food for the Lenten Journey will meet on Tuesday evenings, beginning March 12 and ending on April 9, in the Fellowship Hall.



MID-WEEK LENTEN WORSHIP

"On the Way": Journeying through Lent

During each Lenten season, we embark on a spiritual journey with Jesus to the cross. The metaphor of journeying and pilgrimage occur frequently in scripture, so during this year's shared mid-week Lenten services, we will be exploring that metaphor of journey and what it means to be "on the way" with Jesus in terms of where we are journeying from, who we are journeying with, where we are journeying to, and what we are journeying for. Won't you come along on the way with us?

Mid-week Lenten worship services are held on Wednesday evenings. Worship begins at 7 PM and is followed by a time of food and fellowship. The schedule of locations is listed below:

- March 13 – St. John's Lutheran Church, Sumneytown
- March 20 – St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Red Hill
- March 27 – Pennsburg United Church of Christ, Pennsburg
- April 3 – St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Pennsburg
- April 10 – New Goshenhoppen United Church of Christ, East Greenville

ADULT FAITH FORMATION

This Lenten season, the Adult Sunday school class will be using the resource Making Sense of the Cross by David Lose. This DVD based curriculum will invite participations to listen in on a conversation between two people having an open and candid discussion about the cross. One assumes the role of teacher or coach, someone who has had the time and opportunity to study the faith in some depth. The other is curious, knows a little bit about the faith, and brings a lot of questions: So what's with the cross? What does the cross say about God? What's the big deal? Did Jesus have to die?

Bring your questions and join us for conversation on Sunday mornings at 9:30 AM in the Parent Lounge starting Sunday, March 10. (Due to IGNITE worship on March 24, there will be no Adult Sunday School that morning.)



HOLY WEEK AT ST. JOHN'S

Maundy Thursday - Worship at 6:30 PM

Dinner will be served prior to worship, starting at 5 PM. This service includes the celebration of first communion for some of our young people, foot washing, a reenactment of the 12 disciples and the Last Supper along with the stripping of the altar. Join us for a moving service that ends in silence, preparing us for the stark reality of what is to come.

Good Friday - Worship at 7:30 PM

It starts in the Upper Room but it ends on the cross. The youth of St. John's will lead us in our journey to Good Friday. Light to darkness, thunder to silence, life to death – this worship experiences reminds us the cost that Jesus' paid for our sins – taking us to the cross of his death – as we wait with baited breath for what we know comes next.

Easter EGGstravaganza - 10 AM

Join us as we welcome the community to celebrate the joys of Easter – we start with story time, then the best Easter egg hunt EVER, followed by crafts, games, snacks, pictures with the Easter Bunny. It's a great morning for the young and the young at heart. It all begins in the sanctuary – rain or shine – join us!

Easter Sunday - Worship at 7:30 and 10:30 AM

Easter Breakfast served from 8:30-10 AM

Christ is arisen, alleluia, Rejoice and praise him, alleluia!

Easter Sunday – spring flowers fill the church – trumpets and brass – new life is ours. Join us as we proclaim the great truth of our faith as we worship – Christ has died, Christ has risen, Christ will come again! Our worship at 10:30 AM will feature the Suite Brass ensemble.

ASH WEDNESDAY WORSHIP

*“Remember you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.”*

We begin our journey into the Lenten season by gathering together at Ash Wednesday, March 6 for worship. Services will be held at 12 noon and at 6:30 PM. The evening service will be preceded by a simple dinner that will be available starting at 5 PM until 6:15 PM. Come as you are, whenever you can, and join us for dinner. A freewill offering will be accepted for dinner.



REDNER'S MARKET SAVE-A-TAPE PARTICIPANTS

We deeply appreciate all who participate in Redner's Save-A-Tape program – for each receipt we receive from Save-A-Tape participants, St. John's receives 1% back. HOWEVER, in order for your receipt to count, the ENTIRE receipt must be submitted. Please do not cut off any portion of the receipt before submitting it to the church. Thank you very much!

SPONSORSHIP FOR BOUTONNIERES

It is helpful if the donations for sponsorship are paid on or as close to the week of your sponsorship. If you sponsor more than one item and want to write a check, please do not include boutonniere money. Boutonniere money goes to a separate account: the Ushers Association.

You can leave your \$2.00 boutonniere sponsorship money in the church office any time for Mary Jane Dzurenda, treasurer for the Ushers Association. Thank you.

YPO

UPDATE

We are off to a “super” start in 2019. We would like to thank everyone for their support with our first 2 fund raisers: The Pancake Breakfast and Super Bowl Pool!! They were a huge success!! And we couldn’t do it without our St. John’s members, friends and family!!

Congrats to the Carlin, Quinn, and Truskowski families - our big winners of the Super Bowl Pool.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Sunday March 17th: Roller Skating at Ringing Rocks 6:00-8:30 pm
- Friday April 5th-7th: Tuscany Retreat at Tuscarora Center. This is the new venue replacing Harvey Cedars.
- Sunday April 14th: Practice for Good Friday Service
- Friday April 19th: Good Friday Service
- Saturday April 20th: Easter EGGstravangza at 10:00 am. We will need volunteers for various tasks.
- Sunday May 12th: Mother’s Day Flea Market and Flower Sale
- August 11-13th: Summer Service Project- more to come.

We invite ALL youth grades 6-12 to come join the FUN!! Parents are welcome to attend our monthly meetings which are on the first Monday of each month at 7:00 pm. We could always use more help and fresh ideas!

WELCA UPDATE



On January 8th, half of the members of this usually diligent group were able to assemble for our monthly meeting.

The opening devotion

Footprints in the Snow was read by Mary Jane Dzurenda.

Our organization’s yearly financial report shows that this group donated \$2,400 to St. John’s General Fund in 2018. Our homebound and facility resident members received a total of \$425 in Easter and Christmas gift items.

We also gave \$100 each in annual gifts to the Artman Home, Lutheran Home at Topton, Lutheran Community at Telford and Good Shepherd Rehabilitation Network.

Our Missionary Fund, World Hunger and Thankofferings totaled \$567.62 that was sent to the ELCA. Our raffle at the Christmas bazaar added another \$308 to the Fuel Fund at Open Link.

So this small, but caring, group of ladies is still going strong!

A few homemade candy treats that were packaged for the bazaar are being given to our youth group.

The raffle ticket winners from the bazaar were Anne Kykie, Dale Miller and Amy Wink.

The next “Gather” bible study will be held at St. Mark’s on March 5.

We are presently thinking of items to include in our gift bags to homebound and facility members for our annual Easter gifts.

Our February meeting was canceled because of “old man winter”. We will meet again on Tuesday, March 12 at 10 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane L. Appold

ADVENT TREE UPDATE

Thank you for your generosity! Throughout the season of Advent, members of St. John’s were invited to purchase gifts for residents at Pennsburg Manor and purchase items from ELCA Good Gifts. On December 17, Pastor Becky delivered 40 gifts to be given to residents at Pennsburg Manor and they were overjoyed with the response! A few weeks after Christmas, the final order was placed through ELCA Good Gifts – here is what your generosity contributed:

2 Chicks (\$10 each) = \$20

4 School Supplies for a child (\$10 each) =\$40

2 Bibles for the Global Church (\$12 each) =\$24

8 Honeybees (\$20 each) =\$160

1 Feed a Refugee Family (\$25) =\$25

3 Vaccinations for a Child (\$30 each) =\$90

6 Piglets (\$30 each) =\$180

4 School Fees/Uniform for a Girl (\$40 each) =\$160

7 Goats (\$50 each) =\$350

GRAND TOTAL =\$1049

COUNCIL CORNER - FEBRUARY 2019

I am excited to update the congregation on some of the projects that Council is undertaking in 2019.

- A new **digital sign** has been ordered for the front of the church – and by the time you receive this newsletter, it should be installed!
- The **kitchen** will be updated to comply with commercial standards so we are better able to serve our congregation and the community.
- A new **hydraulic-operated elevator** will be installed in the existing elevator footprint. This new elevator will not get stuck!
- A new playground is in the works for the spring/summer! We will be purchasing a new, **commercial-grade playground**, replacing the swings, and bringing the whole area up to code for the kids in our congregation as well as the community.
- The **bathrooms** on the main two floors will be updated and the bathroom attached to the Fellowship Hall will become a family bathroom that is ADA compliant.

Other projects that Council is looking into are:

- Installing a **coffee bar** to replace the table that is set up by the back entrance to enhance the look of the entrance way as guests enter our church.
- Updating the air conditioning units in the Fellowship Hall with a more efficient system.
- Updating the **lights** in the sanctuary with LED bulb replacement as well as the light ballasts in the Fellowship Hall which have been going on and off intermittently.
- Painting of **doors** in the exterior rear and front ramp entry.
- And finally, development of a **security and emergency awareness plan** so we are equipped to work as a team anytime we gather in this building.

These improvements move us beyond the projects planned as part of our capital campaign and are investments we need to make. With that being said, I must ask everyone to please consider increasing your giving if you are able so we can support our ministry, fund our improvements and invest in a bright future for St. John's.

If you would like to assist in any of these projects, please reach out to a council member. Specific requests for help will be announced when the times of need arise. Thank you all for your support as we continue to be Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love!

-Colleen Carlin, *Council President*

DAY CAMP

This summer, St. John's will be offering a new full-day option in lieu of our typical evening VBS format.

JULY 8-12, 2019
Fun, Friendship, and Fellowship!
ST. JOHN'S DAY CAMP
Bring a packed lunch. Snacks will be provided! Sports, Crafts & Lots More!
K-5th Grade!
Day Camp: 9am-4pm
\$50.00/wk.
Before Camp Care: 7am-9am **\$25.00/wk.**
After Camp Care: 4pm-5:45pm **\$25.00/wk.**
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH:
3104 MAIN ST. GREEN LANE, PA 18034
Scholarships available
For more information and registration
Contact us at (215) 234-4888
QR code for online registration

Easter Worship

+

Sunday, April 21

We will worship at 7:30

and 10:30 *AM*

with Easter Breakfast

served at 8:30 *AM*

Thank You's

Dear Pastor Becky,

I just wanted to thank those from St. John's who gave their time to prepare and serve a delicious meal to the residents here at Upper Perk Manor. They were doing what it said on their tee shirts - "Live Generously."

It was especially touching to have so many young people helping. May all be blessed in their giving as much as we were in receiving.

Gratefully, Shirley Kulanko

Dear Judy and WELCA,

Thank you so much for the daily stand-up calendar for the New Year. I have it on the table next to my sofa (where I spend a lot of time!!)

Take care. Bless you all. Thinking of you.

Love, Myrt

Thanks so much for the beautiful flowers & prayers. My wrist has healed well, Fred's knee replacement is doing very well. We appreciate everything.
Sincerely, Fred, Judy & Erik Ockenlaender

Thank you so much for all the goodies, gifts and friendship. All you do for shut-ins, etc. Much love to Mary Jane Dzurenda for being "Santa".

Gladys Smith (& her care giver and friend, Carol Smith)

Members of St. John's, WELCA,

Thank you so much for coming caroling. Erik really enjoys the visit and Santa. It was a really nice group this year. The candle wreath from YPO was really pretty. Erik likes the snack bag from WELCA. He takes the goodies in his lunch. He loves the Oreos from Janet & Bruce. We appreciate the poinsettia they delivered from church.

Many thanks for everything.

Judy, Fred & Erik Ockenlaender

Thank you for your donation to the Boyertown Salvation Army. Throughout the year, many thousands of our friends and neighbors throughout Berks and Montgomery Counties come to the Salvation Army for help and support. It is because of the generosity of caring people like you that we can offer assistance when needed. Thanks again and God bless you.

Sincerely, Lts. Joseph and Rebecca Smith,
Commanding Officers

Dear WELCA,

The Lutheran Community at Telford gratefully acknowledges the receipt of your gift. Your gift helps us provide additional services and programs for our healthcare residents.

With appreciation, Alyssa J. Guers

Director of Development and Public Relations

To my friends at St. John's,

The poinsettia plant is beautiful. Thank you for the Christmas cards and the "thinking of you" cards.

Thanks for thinking of me.

Arlene Culp

WELCA,

Thank you for your much needed and greatly appreciated gift. Good Shepherd is truly blessed to have you on our team! Your partnership is critical in helping to make sure that individuals needing rehabilitation or help have a place to go.

Sincerely, Gary Schmidt, MA

Chair, Board of Trustees and Interim President & CEO

Member Events

HOSPITAL INFORMATION

Recently returned home from the hospital:

Dale Miller

If you know of anyone who is ill, please let the church office know as soon as possible. The Federal HIPPA Regulations put certain restrictions on what is now considered private information. Please remember that most hospitals will not release room number information to the church secretary unless, the patient has given permission.

BAPTISMS

January 13: Garrett Ryan Barndt, son of Ryan and Chelsey (Yoder) Barndt.

February 24: Brian Timothy Texter Jr., son of Brian and Catherine (Boccella) Texter.

DEATHS

Our Christian sympathies are extended to the family of Gladys Smith who died on February 8th. A graveside service was held in the Old Goshenhoppen Cemetery on Wednesday, February 13th.



Our Photo Journal

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

3104 Main Street

Green Lane, PA 18054

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Mailed: February 28, 2019

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Easter &GGstravaganza

Saturday, April 20

The fun begins at 10 AM – story time in the sanctuary, followed by the best Easter Egg hunt in the area, crafts, games, pictures with the Easter Bunny and snacks!

Bring the kids and the grandkids
and come on out for a great time!