

April
2019

NEWS FOR ALL

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00am

Sunday School
9:15am—10:00am
(during the school year)

Holy Communion
1st & 4th Sunday

PASTOR

Gail Sowell
Office Hours: 9am-1pm
Tuesday-Friday
(And by appointment)

SECRETARY'S HOURS

Monday-Friday
9:00-1:00

ADDRESS

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Items for print MUST be submitted by the 20th of the preceding month.

Pastor's Ponderings

The gospel text for the last Sunday of March is the story known as the *Prodigal Son*. (*Prodigal* means *extravagant, uncontrolled*.) Over the last 50 years theologians (those who talk about God) have also called it *the parable of the forgiving father*, or *the parable of the ungrateful son*. This is probably one of the best-known stories in scripture. If I asked you to tell me the story you might relate it this way:

A younger son asked for his part of his father's estate and ran off to a foreign country, where he squandered his money in loose living. When his money ran out, he ended up feeding pigs (unclean, unclean!); he was starving while they ate well. So he decided to go home and apologize to his father, and ask to be taken on as a hired hand.

His father saw him coming and ran to meet him; he gave him a ring and sandals and a robe and killed the fatted calf for a banquet—and he never listened to his son's apologies.

The older brother was out in the field, working (as his younger brother should have been!). He heard the ruckus and asked a servant what was going on. When he learned his brother was being welcomed back royally, he went into a real snit. His father approached him to ask his participation, and he refused—did his father really expect him, who had worked hard all these years and never got any reward—did his father expect him to celebrate this wastrel's return?

That's the gist of the story. The younger son had made his bed, let him lie in it. If he couldn't live on what he had received from the estate, then he didn't deserve *anything* now!

What do *you* think was the point Jesus was trying to make? Theologian Mark Allan Powell surveyed seminary students in three countries, asking one question and receiving three different answers. The question was, "Why does the younger son end up without food, feeding the pigs?"

"He sinfully squandered his inheritance" (American)

"He did not value his family or community" (Russian)

"No one gave him anything to eat" (Tanzanian)

Who's right? Do you think the father loved both his sons equally? Do you begrudge the welcome the younger son received from his father? Who represents God in the story? Do you know any "prodigal sons/daughters"? How are they treated by their parents? Can you think of one single word that summarizes this parable? I invite you to re-read the parable in Luke 15:11-32. – Oh, and how does this tie in with Easter?
—*Pastor Gail*

St. John Family News!



It was our Joy to have **Abigail Drabek** join us in receiving communion for the first time on March 3rd. May you continue to faithfully join with your family in Christ around his table. 71 family members, sponsors and friends were present to celebrate the day in spite of it having been rescheduled due to a snow cancellation the previous week!



LENT has begun. Soup Suppers and midweek services have been alternating between St. John and St. Stephen. Many thanks to ALL who have hosted, donated supplies, cooked, served, cleaned up and supported with your attendance. We even broke 50 in attendance at a recent midweek service!



Below are some photos of the first Soup Supper on Ash Wednesday, March 6, which was hosted by the Sunday School. Many thanks to the St. John Women who hosted on March 20th, and to the Council who will host the FINAL supper at St. John on April 3. MUCH APPRECIATION to St. Stephen who has graciously hosted on the alternating weeks as well!

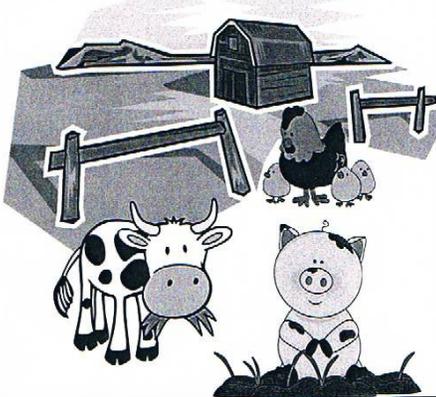


It's not too late !

There's still time to join us for a Soup Supper and some friendly fellowship followed by a reflective time of Worship. Supper is at 5:30pm, Worship is at 6:30pm. Join us!

April 3 at St. John
April 10 at St. Stephen

What's the Buzz ?



Global Hunger Challenge 2019

From Ash Wednesday through Easter we have taken up the invitation of the Northwest Synod of Wisconsin to participate in a global hunger challenge to alleviate food insecurity throughout the world.

1 in 7 people throughout the world suffer from hunger, and do not have access to clean, safe drinking water. As followers of Christ, we have been called to show compassion to our neighbors and to provide shelter, food, and clothing whenever possible.

Our conference (Chequamegon) has been assigned FISH FARMS as our specific ELCA God's Global Barnyard animal. We will have a friendly competition to see which of the seven conferences will have the most congregations who participate in this challenge.

During the Annual Synod Assembly, the winning conference, as well as the total synod amount raised for World Hunger will be announced.

SYNOD ASSEMBLY 2019

SYNOD ASSEMBLY will be held on Saturday, May 4 at Trinity Lutheran Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The theme is "May the Faith Be With You". We need 2 voting members to attend representing St. John (1 male, and 1 female). Registration is due before **April 26**. Would YOU consider going as a representative? Talk to Pastor Gail if interested.

Camp Luther Park *Where FAITH is nurtured by HOLY PLAY!*



Registrations for Camp Luther Park need to be to Niaomi Treankler by **April 28!** Don't miss out on this opportunity!

Coming SOON !

Join us for worship during Holy Week

Palm Sunday Pancake Brunch, Immediately following Worship on April 14th , serving until 11:30am. A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board for items needed. Thank you for your support! A free-will offering will be received.

Maundy Thursday, April 18th— St. John & St. Stephen will join together for worship at **St. Stephen at 6pm**. There is NO Wednesday worship or Soup Supper that week.

Good Friday, April 19—St. Stephen at 1pm
St. John at 6pm.

Easter Sunday, April 21—St. Stephen Sunrise Worship at 6am followed by Easter breakfast at 7am.
Easter worship at their usual time of 10:30 am.

St. John will have Easter Communion worship at 9am.



If you would like to bring spring flowers to adorn our Easter Worship, your plants will need to be at church by **Sat. April 20, at 9am**. If you'd like to place them in honor/memory of someone, please fill in the information here, and put the slip in Rose's mailbox by **Palm Sunday, April 14**. Thank you!

Type of plant: _____

In memory/ honor of: _____

Relationship? _____

Given by: _____

The Church Mice are On Spring Break ,

WARMEST Greetings!

See you NEXT month . . .



Reflections from Rose

I was playing FRISBEE with my dog (Thunder) this morning. It was such a beautiful morning! I just kept throwing & throwing that disc as I basked in the warm, bright sunshine. Finally upon retrieving the Frisbee, he walked right past me and took it to the garage! He was

DONE! Thunder will be turning 11 years old this year. I was so caught up in the beauty of the morning that I lost track of how many times I was asking this senior, obsessive/compulsive retriever to bring his favorite toy back to me! Usually I limit the number of times I will throw it for him, because he will continue to retrieve until his tongue his hanging down to the ground and he becomes physically ill. He let me know he'd had enough before reaching that limit this time. That's a good thing, because even though I praised him after each successful run, I was S-P-A-C-E-D OUT!

Frisbee with Thunder is how I start most every day AFTER I spend time basking in the love of God.

It is such an awesome privilege to sit at His feet, read His word, and just appreciate who He is, while bringing to Him myself and the moments that are to come in the new day before us.

Our God is so totally beautiful. There is no darkness, deceit, or evil in Him. He always desires and works for good, even in really bad circumstances. His love for us is SCANDALOUS. Evil is no match for Him. He relentlessly pursues us. He is ALL-mighty and has already won the victory through His Son, Jesus Christ. Even though there's still conflict going on in our present place of journeying, we know how HIsTory ends. Praise God, **we are Easter people!**

Basking in God's glory is the best way to start my day. It gives me perspective and solid hope that the day before me will be used for good in some way. That hope is based on God's ability and unchanging character. What a great way to renew my mind at the beginning of each new day.

*"Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you.
Show me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul."* (Psalm 143: 8)

Blessed Easter everyone!

Rose



Happy Spring ,

St. John Women of the ELCA



Our next Bible Study is on Tuesday, April 9, at 1pm at St. John. Bring a friend!
The next General Meeting is Sunday, May 5 after the service. Please come join us. We need your input!

WOMEN'S STEWARDSHIP PROJECT—for April, May, and June is Baby Layette kits. Items needed are:

*Light-weight cotton T-shirts (NO Onsies)
Long or short-sleeved gowns OR sleepers without feet*

*Receiving blankets, medium-weight cotton or flannel OR crocheted/ knitted with light-weight yarn
(between 36" and 52" square)*

*Cloth diapers, FLAT-fold preferred
Jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt with a hood (or include a baby cap)
Socks*

*Hand towel (dark color recommended)
Bath-size bars of gentle soap (8-9-oz. size, in original wrapping)
Diaper pins or large safety pins*

Items must be *like new* if not new. Yard sale season will be starting soon.
A bassinet will be placed in the Narthex for your donations. Thank you!

Quilters

The Quilters of St. John are on break until September. However, if you have fingers itching to stay busy, St. Stephen quilters are still meeting the 1st & 3rd Thursdays through May, from 1pm-4:30pm.

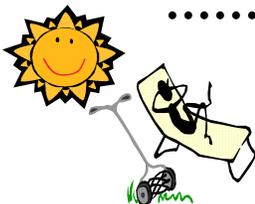
On the Horizon . . .



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Bids for **MOWING** the Cemetery are being sought. Are YOU interested?
Do you know someone who is?

May 12th (*Mothers Day*) is the LAST day of Sunday School!

May 27th is Memorial Day. The VFW Honor Guard will be at St. John Cemetery around 9:15am.



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Thanks for keeping these dates in mind as you plan your summer, we need YOU!

Brat Fries in Stratford at ProVision on Friday, May 31 and Friday, June 7th.

Worship in the Park, at Oak Street Park on *Thursday, June 13th* at the beginning of *Edgar Carnival Days*.

Breakfast in the Park, at Oak Street Park in Edgar on *Saturday, June 15th*.

And of course you'll want to make sure to get the **STEAM SHOW** on your calendar for *August 23-25!*



Time to RALLY around the PACK! There is a PACKER RAFFLE coming! An opportunity to win great prizes, strengthen our community, and the ministry of St. John. Keep your eyes and ears open for more details SOON!

A Prayer for All of Us

God of love, may we approach one another
with the intent to love, first and last,
and submit all our intentions to love.

May our intent be to heal, not to win,
to bless, not to curse, to join, not to divide.
Help us do your will, not ours.

May we listen humbly,
speak honestly
and discern obediently.

Save us from justice without mercy,
righteousness without humility,
victory without love.

May we examine our own righteousness
more vigorously than others'.
May we demonstrate your goodness, not our own.

May we honestly examine our norms and expectations,
our judgments of those who are different,
our exclusion of those who threaten our superiority.

May we be mindful of every person's wounded need
to be loved, to be included, to be honored,
every person's desperation to be good enough.

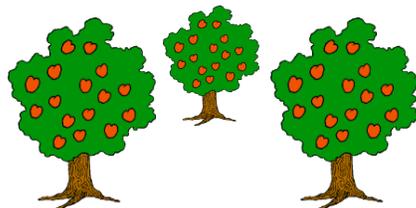
May we remember your justice is love,
your command is mercy,
your judgment is grace.

God of love, give us wisdom that is love,
fill us with courage that is love,
empower us for victory that is love alone.

By your spirit help us to do no harm,
to do all the good we can,
and to stay in love with you.

We pray in the love and the company of Jesus,
who served in love, who died for love,
and who rises in us with victorious love. Amen.

Steve Garnaas-Holmes
Unfolding Light
www.unfoldinglight.net



Good Trees Produce Good Fruit !



Above is pictured Pastor Gail and the kids
during a children's sermon
(one of Pastor Gail's FAVORITE times!)

Many thanks to Niaomi Treankler for submitting all the photographs for this newsletter. It really makes it fun to put together and to READ!

Bishop Laurie's Easter Message:

May I have your attention please!

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION for an important announcement!

MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION FOR AN IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT, NOW?!!

What do we have to do to get the world's attention? We've got good news,

great news, the best news, but we can't seem to get the attention of those who need to hear it the most.

For a few years in my former parish I sent out postcards and Facebook posts hoping to catch the attention of those who weren't members of my church and invite them to EASTER WORSHIP.

I used cute designs from OUTREACH.COM. My favorite was a photo of a fuzzy blue stuffed toy bunny with the caption: **Is the true meaning of Easter a little fuzzy?** On the other side of the card was an invitation to worship at *Trinity*, the church I served. This year they have a photo of an adorable baby wearing floppy fuzzy bunny ears and the caption reads: **Have you heard the real story of Easter?** They also have a post card with the photo of a green field filled with colorful Easter eggs ready for the Easter Egg hunt. The caption reads: **Hunting for more this EASTER?** These clever cutesy cards are designed to get the attention of the world and invite non-members to come to their worship services. It is not a terrible idea to send a postcard in the mail or post on social media inviting people to visit your church, but is it working? Does sending a card capture the world's attention?

What does it take to get the attention of the world? What does it take to get the attention of the family that lives in the yellow house across the street from your church building?

Some seems to be so distracted, busy, engaged in daily living, or just getting by. Others seem anesthetized by mind numbing virtual reality activities on their computer, phone or TV screens. A few find time to worship at the gym, yoga class, running, or biking. Sometimes I just want to yell, HEY! LISTEN UP, I've got good news. But I know they won't be able to hear me over the din of daily life.

So what do we do? We know that guilt, shaming, and judging doesn't work. Should we just...Give up. Shut up. Close up? Nope. I'm too much of an optimist for that. I think there is one thing we as a church can do that might get the world's attention. We can sneak up and love them up.

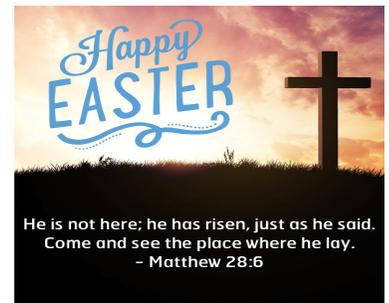
I don't mean sneak up like stalking, that's illegal. What I mean is act like you love your neighbor in little ways so that eventually without you really knowing it, you DO love your neighbor and you can be in a relationship in such a way that you can invite them to know and love Jesus, the real Jesus, the Jesus of Easter.

Maybe the first step is caring enough about the folks that don't know the story about Jesus life death and resurrection to send them a silly post card. Maybe a baby step is caring enough about the children who won't hear the East-er story in Sunday school and inviting them to come to your church for an Easter egg hunt and before it begins tell them about Jesus in some simple way. Maybe you could care enough to get to know the name of the church neighbor in the yellow house and who knows where it will go from there. Care enough to get to know your neighbor, the Muslim family from Somalia that lives next to the grocery store. Care enough to get to know your immigrant neighbor, the Latino family that lives across the street from the school.

Maybe the only way to get someone's attention is to love them. That's how God got my attention.

God sneaks up on us, loves unconditionally, loves the world so much that he gave his only Son, and on the third day he rose from the dead, so that we might have life. That's the real meaning of Easter. That's the good news the world is dying to hear. They just don't know it yet. Maybe YOU can love someone enough to tell them about it.

It's Easter. Let's go love-in Jesus' name!



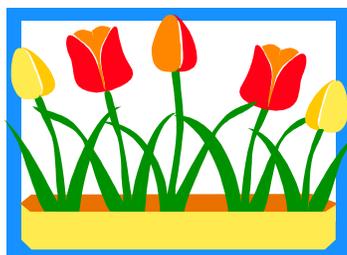
Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson

GOOD NEWS

St. John Lutheran Church ELCA
W1000 Hwy N
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We're on the Web
www.stjohnelcaedgar.org

April 2019



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Bishop Laurie Skow-Anderson
(This is GOOD!)

Deadline for May 2019 News



April 22nd

ST. JOHN/ST. STEPHEN LUTHERAN PARISH ELCA, EDGAR, WI
Joint Mission Statement: *"Saints united to be the body of Christ in
the world, freed by grace to live faithfully, witness boldly,
and serve joyfully."*