

GOOD NEWS FROM ST JOHN

January
2017

NEWS FOR ALL

Pastor's Ponderings

This is a reflection (By Barry Black, copyright 2015, permission granted), entitled "I Am the New Year":

I will help you say goodbye to the previous year filled with "yesterdays" and comprised of disappointments and surprises; losses and gains; failures and successes, defeats and victories; a year which may be remembered by recalling: fleeting moments; delightful memories and good times; the sobering reality of missed opportunity; the insight gained from daily living; the unexpected surprise of reconnecting with old friends. The joy of sins forgiven, golden words fitly spoken (Proverbs 25:11), and the fruit of obedience and pleasing the Lord.

Yes, the old year is a time in which we can recall with gratitude: blessings, protection, and rewards from the providential hand of God; grace that was sufficient for our every need; mercy received when justice would have just as easily been fitting for us. And realizing that even bad things that happened could have been worse. . . much worse.

May your past productively transition to the future as you experience: the warm daylight of lessons hard-learned, and the fading sunset of the pain that was long endured while living through them; the priceless value found in genuine friends, and the sober understanding of the shackles of superficial people who merely use us. The glorious journey of: the unmatched wealth in reading and studying the Bible, the unparalleled stability of Christian fellowship, and the unrivaled enjoyment of serving the Lord; and the wise departure from : the comfortable enticement of procrastination, the deceptive decoy of excuses, the childish pleasure of pettiness, and the dull applause of mediocrity. *(continued...)*

SUNDAY WORSHIP

9:00 am

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

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

Mission Statement: *Getting to know Jesus and making Him known through our Worship and Serving.*

Pastor's Ponderings

I Am the New Year! I am: the challenge of new goals; the desire for spiritual growth; the continual burden for lost souls; the anticipation of answered prayer; and the eager expectation of Christ's soon return for his Bride, the Church. I am the New Year, and I may be lived only one moment at a time. I am replete with the unknown and rife with: opportunities to trust; unexpected moments of blessing and delight; satisfaction for spiritual truth and hunger; motivations to give of your time and effort to people and projects; and the joy and privilege of serving the Lord in new and exciting ways. YES, I AM THE NEW YEAR!

St. John Family News



Four women from St. John were blessed as they enjoyed the warm hospitality of the ladies of St. Stephen at a Christmas Luncheon and Bible study on December 13th. The food was delicious, the fellowship was sweet, and we enjoyed singing some Christmas Carols and Hymns together too.

It was enjoyable to hear the thoughts of others as we studied God's Word together, considering Advent as a time of darkness and possibility and "What wants to be born in you?" *Many thanks to the dear ladies of St. Stephen for their kind invitation!*

OPERATION CHRISTMAS resulted in 43 gifts being delivered to the boys and girls (ages 10-18) at Homme Youth & Family programs in Wittenberg. Many thanks to all who donated. Much appreciation to Shirley Rosien who packaged up the gifts and delivered them to Sherry Gayken (*from St. Stephen*) who then transported them to Wittenberg along with what St. Stephen had collected. Whew! Team work, what joy!



The ADVENT GOOD GIFTS tree that was sponsored by our Sunday School Department raised \$823.00 for the ELCA's world mission ministry that helps those in need to help themselves. Many thanks to all who supported that outreach. *Thanks to our Sunday School staff and students that lead the way!*

59 QUILTS

Were delivered to St. Mark's in Wausau to be distributed through The Orphan Grain Train this Christmas. Thanks to the efforts of the dear, committed QUILTERS of St. John!



Family News Continued . . .



The Annual COOKIE WALK was a sweet success! Many thanks to all who brought Christmas treats to donate. \$205.00 was received as well as much savory delight. *This secretary knows about the savory delight, because she was gifted with a wonderful sampling of the goodies...Thanks!*



Christmas Around the World was the Christmas program presented by the Sunday School this year. It was an original work, written by Lavone Runge and Co-directed by our Sunday School staff. The musical director was Lana Strasser. We got a sampling of Christmas songs & traditions from Mexico, Australia, Germany, France, and Lebanon. We enjoyed instrumental soloists and a live nativity scene with a REAL baby! *Thanks to all who worked to make it happen!*

Many thanks to Dan Rosien for the wonderful photo captures of this production. MANY more are beautifully displayed on the Sunday School bulletin board in the office wing (*thanks Lavone!*) Come and see! *144 were in attendance for the program.*



In Gratitude . . .



*It is with heart-felt appreciation that we give special thanks to **Kim Imhoff** for her dedicated musical leadership and support for many years here at St. John.*

Kim has expressed to us that it's time for her to "retire" from this volunteer position in which she has so faithfully served as a pianist. She does this to accommodate the increasing busy-ness of her family which now includes grandchildren!

*Many thanks Kim, for the gracious donation of your time and talent here to help us honor our Lord in Worship.
Blessings in your retirement!*

Splashes of Joy!

We rejoice with Steve & Cathy Mueller on the birth of their new grandson, **Vincent Steve Mueller**. He was born to their son Kirk and his wife Jackie on 12-17-16. He's also happily welcomed by his big sister, Stella. *Congratulations and God's blessing to all!*



Adventures of the Church Mice . . .



O my, what a wonder-ful, wonder-filled Christmas season it was! Whole congregations singing like the heavenly angels, all the old songs, and even some new ones we hadn't heard before. (Well, to be honest, I—Miri—had heard some of them, but there were a lot Tully and Twink hadn't heard.) By the way, this was Twink's anniversary of being adopted by Tully and St. John 2 years ago! Her real name is "Merry Twinkle," but no one calls her that, unless she doesn't hide well enough and is spied by a member of St. John, and then they either say "EEEEK!" or say "Hi, Merry Twinkle.") I'm glad the people at St. Stephen aren't afraid of me! Some of the kids are disappointed if they don't see me on Sundays! I guess you could say I'm the most popular mouse at St. Stephen! (Oops, did Jesus say something like "the humble shall be exalted and the exalted shall be humbled"? I guess there isn't much that's humbler than a church mouse.) HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL!

Coming SOON ◻ ◻ ◻

The Installation of Officers for the 2017 service year will be on Sunday, January 15th during the service. A listing of the officers serving this term can be found on **page 5**. Lets support them with our presence on the 15th, and with our prayers the whole year through. *Many thanks to those who have given themselves to serve!*

The ANNUAL Meeting of the congregation will be following the service on Sunday, January 22. **Annual reports** must be to the secretary by Sunday, January 15th. **That's NEXT Sunday!** *Thanks for your thoughtful diligence.*



First Communion Sunday is right around the corner on February 5th! We have three 5th grade students that are looking forward to receiving the Eucharist with us for the first time. They are Ashley Hollatz, Corey Schilling, and Blake Bargender.

Ash Wednesday is March 1st this year.



Remember to bring your **aluminum cans** to the shed for recycling. No pie tins or glass bottles or other mixed recyclables, please. Aluminum cans ONLY. *Thanks!*

OFFICERS OF ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH ELCAJanuary 2017

		<u>Serves THROUGH</u>	
President (3yr.)	Steve Robers	2019	715-352-3251
Vice President (3 yr.)	Linda Kovalik	2019	715-680-1260
Council Secretary (3 yr.)	Marianne Mueller	2018	715-352-2704
Treasurer (3 yr.)	Bev Umnus	2019	715-352-2839
Deacons (3 yr.)	Ann Bonsall	2019	715-352-2080
	Cindy Manecke	2018	715-352-2408
	Mitch Mueller	2017	715-352-2170
Trustees (3 yr.)	Cal Tackes	2019	715-687-4528
	Jerry Mueller	2018	715-352-2283
	Ron Runge	2017	715-352-2805
Financial Secretary (3 yr.) (appointed)	Morgan Mueller	2018	715-352-2170
Finance Committee (2 yr.)	Sharon Schumacker	2018	715-574-3793
	Enola Willhite	2018	715-352-2788
	Mark Bargender	2018	715-581-3085
	Marion Werner	2017	715-687-4370
	Mary Jo Werner	2017	715-352-2134
	Cheryl Leffel	2017	715-551-8808
Auditing Committee (yearly)	Naomi Sebold		715-223-4625
	Troy Wiesman		1-715-897-4589
	Leon Werner		715-352-2134
Endowment Fund	Lana Strasser		715-551-2233
Memorial & Improvement Funds Treasurer (appointed)	Cindy Manecke	2016	715-352-2408
Cemetery Board (3 yr.)	Gerald Borchardt	2019	715-352-2938
	Ron Runge	2018	715-352-2805
	Leon Werner	2017	715-352-2134
Parish Education Committee (yearly)	Michelle Hollatz		1-715-384-2281
	Cindy Manecke		715-352-2408
	Jenny Olmsted		715-370-0738
	Bonnie Bargender		715-581-0269
Luther League (appointed)	Shannon & Niaomi Treankler		715-443-3178
Worship Committee (appointed)	Bev Umnus		715-352-2839
	Louann Miles		715-352-3080
	Judy Totzke		715-352-2894
	Pastor Gail Sowell		715-352-2492

Women of the ELCA

Next Bible Study—Tuesday, February 7, at 1pm.
Next General meeting—Wed. Feb. 22, at 6:30pm. *Changed because of Ash Wednesday.*

Every woman that is a member of St. John is a member of the women's group. All are WELCOME and encouraged to participate in our activities. Each woman of St. John is assigned to a funeral group and is relied upon to help serve in the time of need.

The NEW Women's Yearbook is out! Many thanks to Shirley Rosien who stepped up to complete the printing in the wake of many health challenges being faced by Bev Umnus at the time. *It's good to be able to report that things are improving for Bev!*

Women of the ELCA Purpose

As a community of women, created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the society, and the world.

The **PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION** of St. John's Women of the ELCA (*following the Nov. 2 meeting*) are posted on the Women's Bulletin Board across from the Secretary's office. We'll be voting on them at the next General Meeting on **February 22, 2017.**

The **Women's Stewardship Project** for January, February, and March is **Personal Care (Health) Kits.** The items needed for these kits are listed below, a collection tote is in the Narthex to receive your generous donations. *Thanks!*

Bath-size **towels** (approx. 52" x 72") dark color recommended.
Bath-size bars (4-5 oz.) of **soap**, any brand, in original wrapping.
Adult-size **tooth brush** in original packaging
(sturdy) **Combs**
Metal **nail clippers**



Personal Care Kits



Valentine Boxes will be packed and sent out soon! If you know of any College Students (*living at home or away*) with ties to St. John, please inform us of their present address. You can call the church office, or speak with **Bev Umnus** or **Marion Werner.** We'd like to send them a box of goodies from St. John to encourage them and let them know we're thinking of them. In the meantime, you could start collecting non-perishable snack items to donate for the Valentine boxes. *Thank you for your help!*



Kindness is like snow...it beautifies everything it covers

G.B.

Reflections from Rose



Well, we made it! Here we are looking at the first few pages of a brand new chapter. A poem came across my desk that made me chuckle, so I thought I'd share it with you . . .

'Twas the month after Christmas, and all through the house
Nothing would fit me, not even a blouse.

The cookies I'd nibbled, the eggnog I'd taste
At the holiday parties had gone to my waist.

When I got on the scales there arose such a number!
When I walked to the store (less a walk than a lumber).
I'd remember the marvelous meals I'd prepared;
The gravies and sauces and beef nicely rared,
The wine and the rum balls, the bread and the cheese
And the way I'd never said, 'No thank you, please.'

As I dressed myself in my husband's old shirt
And prepared once again to do battle with dirt—
I said to myself, as I only can
'You can't spend a winter disguised as a man!'

So—away with the last of the sour cream dip,
Get rid of the fruit cake, every cracker and chip
Every last bit of food that I like must be banished
'Till all the additional ounces have vanished.

I won't have a cookie—not even a lick.
I'll only chew on a long celery stick.
I won't have hot biscuits, or corn bread, or pie,
I'll munch on a carrot and quietly cry.

I'm hungry, I'm lonesome, and life is a bore,
But isn't that what January is for?
Unable to giggle, no longer a riot.
Happy New Year to all and to all a good diet!



This poem was something Pastor Gail shared with me, I think she gleaned it off the internet. **It cracks me up!** She does come up with some good finds.

I guess it's so funny because it reflects a certain amount of truth. Although, I don't think I find myself in such a bleak state of being after its all said and done...

January certainly isn't a bore! We've got Annual Reports, Installation of Officers, the Annual Meeting and the YOKING of St. John & St. Stephen coming!

The beginning of a new year leads me to think about Isaiah 43: 18-19 where God says *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland...to give drink to my people, my chosen, the people I formed for myself that they may proclaim my praise.* (vv. 20b, 21)

The Scripture that's on the sign at St. John really resonates with me this year; *"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you."* Isaiah 60: 1. Even if I'm not feeling particularly "shine"-y as this new year begins, the LORD who is the LIGHT can still shine through me (us). In fact, He says that HIS strength is made perfect in weakness (mine). Verse 2 says *"See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you."* **Amen, bring it on Lord, for YOUR glory!**

GOOD NEWS

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We're on the Web
www.stjohnelcaedgar.org

January 2017



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Please remember to check your bulletin for updates. If you would like to have us e-mail the Newsletter to you, please let us know.



**Deadline for February 2017 News
January 22**