

May
2024

St. John Lutheran Church



Mission Statement

St. John is a living witness to the love of God as shown in Jesus Christ.

*We gather faithfully in His name to **worship** and praise Him; and we go forth in peace to **share** the Good News and to **serve** the world around us.*

St. John Lutheran Church Web site: www.stjohnchurchmars.org

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Office hours MWF 8-1

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Have you ever noticed how many special words the church uses for different things? I was recently talking with one of our youth about the difference between the pulpit, the lectern, and the ambo. But really, they are all a piece of furniture in the worship space used for proclaiming the Word through scripture, through preaching, through storytelling, through praying.... And it all often happens in the chancel. That would be the raised area at the front of the sanctuary.... And the sanctuary would be the room where we worship. When we had our Holy Communion class (which our confirmation class learned can also be called the Lord's Supper or the Eucharist), we talked about the paten and the veil and the chalice and the pall. A lot of these words may be familiar to people who are long term members of a Lutheran church, but sometimes a new one pops up! In this month's calendar, there might be on such word: homiletics.

In May I will be attending the Festival of Homiletics. This festival is an opportunity for preachers from all over the country to gather and learn from experts in the field of homiletics. And simply put, homiletics is the art of preaching (homiletics being related to the word homily, which is a church word for the scripturally-based commentary that follows the scripture readings of the day). From the website for the festival: "Together, we will relearn ways to care for the craft of preaching and discover new habits to support the preaching life. We will listen to uplifting sermons and experience inspiring worship, but we will also have time for reflection and renewal and remembering – to recall once again the why for what we do." I am looking forward to this opportunity to connect with other preachers and to learn as much as I can in these four days to continue to grow and develop as a preacher.

This year the festival is in Pittsburgh, so I will still be available for phone calls and emergencies. The festival will not impact Bible study, but otherwise I will not be in Mars as often as I typically am. I will have my phone on me and access to email, so feel free to reach out as needed. I can schedule times to be in Mars as needed.

Peace,
Pastor Katie

Online Sunday Worship

Join Zoom for service: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther
Available on our YouTubeChannel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmKsYKssxvQ>
and in the church Facebook group: [St John Lutheran Church Mars PA](https://www.facebook.com/StJohnLutheranChurchMarsPA) later in the day.

Please Note

There have been reports of someone pretending to be Pastor Katie. They start by asking for a favor. If you respond to the initial text message, they typically ask for electronic gift cards. This is NOT Pastor Katie. It is a scam. Pastor Katie will not ask for gift cards via text message. If you ever receive a message from Pastor Katie using a phone number or email that looks unfamiliar, please contact the office or one of the contact methods listed in this newsletter.

Worship Notes

Youth Worship Leaders

We love having our young worshippers helping with worship leadership! If you are unable to be present for your scheduled service, please try to find someone to cover and tell the office of the change.

	Acolyte	Offering	Offering	Young Reader
5-May	Emma N	Luca K	Eva K	
12-May	Abby C	Ava N	Emma N	
19-May	Anna K	Jules K	Abby C	Abby C
26-May	Nathan K	Ava N	Ella N	
2-June	Ava N	Anna K	Nathan K	

Adult Worship Leaders

	Greeters	Usher	Assistant Minister	Bread Baker	Counters
5-May	VOLUNTEER	Missy K	Jonathan C	Denise H	Keith C Denise H
12-May	VOLUNTEER	Missy K	Jonathan C	Denise H	Keith C Denise H
19-May	VOLUNTEER	Missy K	Jonathan C	Denise H	Keith C Denise H
26-May	VOLUNTEER	Missy K	Jonathan C	Denise H	Keith C Denise H
2-June	Cardinal Family	Cardinal Family	Valerie C	Denise H	John T VOLUNTEER

Rogation Sunday – May 5

The creation that God declared good is entrusted to the care of humankind. Rogation is an English form of the Latin *rogatio*, which comes from the verb *rogare*, which means "to ask." **The primary purpose of the Rogation Days is to ask God to bless the land, the gift of labor, and the needs of all people** and to honor God for the gift of creation. On Sunday, May 5 we will be celebrating Rogation Sunday. **You are invited to bring in something that helps you to care for creation: a spade, a trowel, a seedling, a bag of seed or feed, a toy tractor, a pair of gloves, etc.** We will offer a prayer for the gardens and fields and farmers in our community.

Worship News (continued)

Pentecost Sunday – May 19

Pentecost marks the culmination of our Easter celebration as the **50th day of Easter**. We read the story of when **language barriers were broken down** and the Holy Spirit came down by way of tongues of fire after the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. **This story marks the beginning of the book of Acts, a book that is then all about the very beginning days of the Christian church and its mission in and to the world.** Pentecost is therefore often called the “**birthday of the church.**” We will celebrate Pentecost with red throughout the church and streamers to celebrate the joy of this birthday celebration.



Monthly Worship at Penn Mar – May 20th

Pastor Katie offers a **simple monthly communion service for residents at Penn Mar Apartments**. In May, we will gather on the third Monday (May 20), but typically this worship service is the **last Monday of each month at 1:45 pm**. If you know someone living in the building who would like to participate in this worship opportunity, please let them know or have them contact Pastor Katie.

Holy Trinity Sunday – May 26

Trinity Sunday, the first Sunday following Pentecost (which is a day, not a season), has been kept since the tenth century as a special celebration of the mystery of the triune God, as in a similar way the Baptism of Our Lord follows the Christmas season with its trinitarian focus. When we say God is the triune God, we are saying something about who God is beyond, before, and after the universe: that there is community within God.

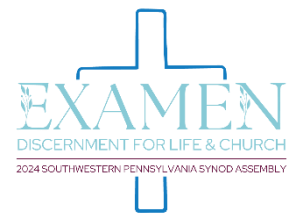
Synod Notes

Synod Assembly – June 14-15

It can be hard to hear God’s whisper guiding us to faithful decisions and holy outcomes amid the noise of the world. St. Ignatius of Loyola gifted us with **EXAMEN**, a method of reflection that invites God’s presence in our daily lives and discernment. In the coming year, between this Assembly and the next, our synod will experience many changes and our leaders will be entrusted to follow God’s will in making decisions... not the least of which will be the 2025 election of a new Bishop. **This Assembly will teach the method of Examen so that we may build new skills, engage in sacred practice, and set out for the year ahead with confidence and clarity.**

Together, we will learn how to transform discernment from a merely theoretical concept to a lived reality that can profoundly shape our shared future. St. John is allocated two lay voting positions at the synod assembly. **If you are interested, contact Pastor Katie.**

Synod Assembly is Fri. June 14, 9:30am – Sat., June 15, 12:30pm in person at PennWest California.



Synod Communications

Did you know that the synod has a weekly email with announcements about things happening in the synod? You can sign up to receive these emails at <https://www.swpasynod.org/wayfarer>. On that site you can also sign up to receive the quarterly magazine “Wayfarer.”

Serving Others

Mission Emphasis

Our **second quarter mission emphasis is Quality EMS**. This vital service relies on donations to be able to provide quality care to our neighbors in their moments of crisis. **Support their work by making a designated offering to the “Mission Emphasis.”** 100% of the mission emphasis donations will be collected and sent directly to Quality EMS.

St. John Food Pantry

A tidy pantry where guests can feel comfortable taking anything is an important part of this ministry. Whenever you have a few moments, keep the pantry hospitable by **checking expiration dates and reshelving things to keep everything tidy**. Items that are most appreciated by the guests who use the pantry are the items that cannot be purchased using benefits (**paper products, cleaning supplies, personal hygiene supplies, etc.**). Thank you for your continued generosity in providing care to our neighbors in need.

Community Garden

The days are getting longer, the nights are getting warmer, and **we are getting closer to the community garden growing produce again!** We are starting a group of people who will commit to helping plant, tend, and harvest. No previous knowledge required; on-the-job training will be available. We will start by preparing the garden during the outdoor workday on April 13th. We plan on planting in mid to late May. **If you'd like to be a part of our garden group, let Pastor Katie know!**



Stay Tuned!

Congregational Meeting – May 19

As we near the middle of the year, we will have a **congregational meeting after worship on May 19**. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for more details.

Annual Church Picnic

Mark your calendars! Our **annual church picnic will be on July 28th**. We will have worship, picnic food, and games! Stay tuned for details.



Children and Youth

Last Day of Sunday School – May 19

Our **last day of Sunday School will be May 19th**. We will plant flowers to brighten the outside of our church for the summer months.

Youth Car Wash Fundraiser – June 29

Our youth will be doing a **car wash fundraiser** to help pay for the costs of activities for the coming year. To help get ready for the car wash, **we need lots of rags**, so start saving up those rags! You can also support this fundraiser by coming and **having your car washed on June 29 at Agway, 10a-2p** (and start hoping for a sunny day!).

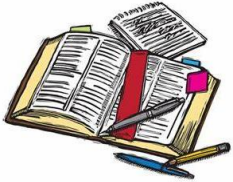


Faith Formation

Confirmation Classes – Third Saturdays (9:30-11:30am)

During our meeting in April the students explored the Lutheran approach to Holy Communion/the Lord's Supper/Eucharist and what we mean by justification by faith. We will meet for the final time for the school year in May. Then we are excited to confirm two of our students!

Adult Bible Study



During May, we will continue our exploration of the world of the early church as we see it in the book of Acts on Wednesdays at 7:00 pm and Sundays at 6:30 pm. **This series will end on May 15 and 19.** You do not need to have come to a previous session to join us in May! **Contact the office to receive weekly emails with Bible study materials.** Stay tuned for summer plans! If you have something you'd like to explore, let Pastor Katie know!

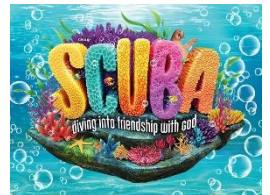
Summer Mission Trips

Mars United Presbyterian (MUP) is coordinating two mission trips this summer and has invited us to also participate. **Youth are invited to a week-long mission trip to Savannah, GA June 23-29. An adult-only trip will go to Richwood, WV July 21-26.** Fundraising will be done to support both trips. Our goal is to raise \$500 per person. For both trips, work projects are organized to support the needs and vision of the community and are designed to connect team members to the local community. **The only requirement is a desire to serve! No particular skills are required.**

For more information, contact Pastor Brian of MUP (pastor@mars-up.org).

Vacation Bible School

This year, we're diving into the deep waters of our relationship with God with SCUBA! Mark your calendars for Vacation Bible School 2024, July 14-18, 2024! **If you would like to volunteer to help, please contact Tanya Nagel** (contact information can be obtained by calling the church office). This year we are adding a pre-school program to specifically tailor the week to our young friends!



Messy Church – Third Fridays (5:30-7:30pm)



Messy Church is an intentionally intergenerational place for people to meet and experience fun and messy ways to engage in faith and worship, including crafts and activities, celebration, and a shared meal no matter their connection to church.

As this ministry grows, we are in need of table hosts, people to sit at each table to facilitate the activity and guide conversation about the theme of the day using the questions and talking points on signs at each table. **If the chaos is not your thing, we can also use people to help prepare dinner and people to come in at 7:30 to help the clean up process.**

In April we explored the **surprise of Easter** through empty tomb models, catapults, seed planting and more! **Each month we see a new family being reached through this ministry!** Sometimes these families come from other churches and are looking for something in addition to their current church connections. Others are people who are looking to find a community where they can have fun and help their children meet Jesus in an interactive and relaxed environment.

Who will you invite in May?

Stewardship Corner

As the weather warms up, a lot of people are **diving into the ritual of spring cleaning**. Sometimes this means going through the closet and the dresser drawers, cleaning out old clothes that no longer fit you physically or stylistically. Sometimes it's cleaning out the toys or the kitchen. Sometimes it's tackling those mysterious corners of the basement or garage. Spring cleaning can often unearth things we no longer want in our homes. **Rather than immediately throwing it away, ask yourself, "is this something that someone else may need or want?" Then find a place to donate items.** This gives them a second life, provides for the needs of others, all while tackling your spring cleaning! If you're not sure where you can donate items, ask the church, **we often have connections and resources to help find new homes for different items.**

A Steward's Prayer:

O Lord, we pray that as we be, People of God chosen by thee, That you give us strength and guidance every day, For our role as stewards to portray. That our voice and works may proclaim, The ministry of Christ is our aim. That our actions will speak louder than what we say, Where the security in our life is God's way. That we generously respond to what you first gave, Your Son, a Savior, our lives to save. And when we have decisions to make, To thee, O Lord, our prayers we take. (Keith A. Mundy, 1998)

Lutherlyn

Camp Blast – May 11

Campfire, crafts, gaga ball, archery, pony rides, zipline, bouldering room, hikes, nature activities, hay rides, games, sports, archaeology, disc golf, jump pillow, tours, great food, worship, and MORE!

The best part.... EVERYTHING IS FREE!

There will be special summer camp discounts for NEW campers & for registered campers who bring friends who are NEW to Lutherlyn! Join us for a GREAT day at camp! No registration is needed. Just show up with all your friends, family, neighbors, and anyone else looking for a fun, free day.

Saturday, May 11, 11 am – 4:30 pm, rain or shine.

Lutherlyn Summer Staff Search

Why work at camp? Because it is more than just a job... **it is a lifetime of skills, friendships, and making a difference in the life of campers.** If you, or a young adult you know, are looking for summer employment, we encourage you to consider Lutherlyn. More information is available on their website.

Lutherlyn Summer Camp Registration

Lutherlyn Summer Camp Registration is OPEN! Many of the camps fill quickly, so plan to register early! If your child would like to attend Lutherlyn, but finances are standing in your way, please contact Pastor

Katie to learn about the "camperships" Lutherlyn offers. **Finances should never stop a kid from being able to experience the life-changing adventures in faith at Lutherlyn,** a place where each child is accepted, challenged, and sent out into the world to spread the love of Christ.

Confirmation Camp – June 23-28

Each year, Lutherlyn hosts the pastors of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod of the ELCA for confirmation camp. This is a week to gather with youth from across the synod as we explore a topic relevant to the students' confirmational learning. **This year we are exploring the Holy Spirit... what is it, what does it look like, and what does it have to do with us?** Contact Pastor Katie for details.

April Pictures



During Holy Week, we gathered for worship, remembering the events that happened in Jerusalem leading up to Jesus' death. On Holy Saturday, we kept vigil, telling stories of our faith in preparation for celebrating the joy of Easter.



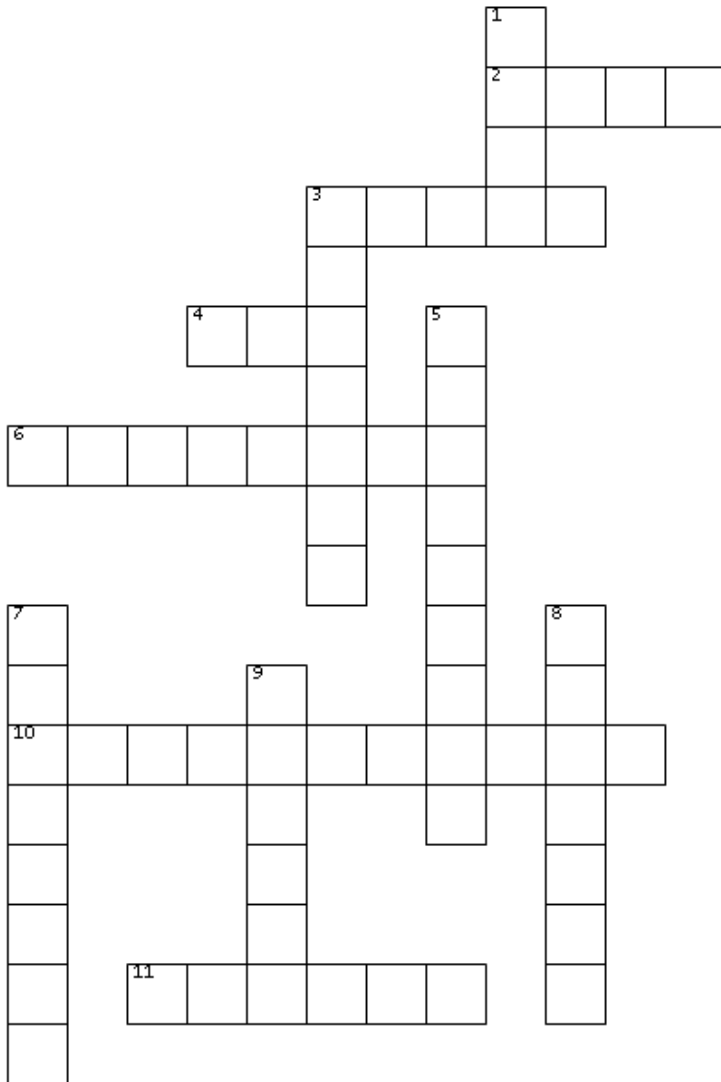
(Left) In April we had our monthly celebration of birthdays, but we added a cake to celebrate and welcome our new members! Happy Birthday to Martha, Karen, Anna, and Karen, and welcome to Sam, Dawn, Don, Mary, Cora, and Barry!

(Right) Game Night was a blast and enjoyed by all who came!



Messy Church got a little messy with dirt as participants planted seeds in Easter hope of new life!

Use the information in this newsletter to help you complete the crossword puzzle!



ACROSS

2. These will get washed by our youth as a fundraiser to support their activities in the coming year.

3. Things get a little _____ at this intergenerational, interactive worship service held the third Friday of every month!

4. This beloved summer program has a new preschool track this year and will be a combined effort of St John, Mars United Presbyterian, and Valenica Presbyterian!

6. from the Latin word for "to ask," we will celebrate this Sunday by praying for gardens and fields and those who tend them in our community.

10. There are so many ways we care for what has been entrusted to us. Even spring cleaning can help us in how we practice this element of our faith lives.

11. New people are finding this place for paper goods and non-perishable food items!

DOWN

1. This book of the Bible shares the beginning of the church after the ascension of Jesus. In Bible study this month we are exploring the world of the people in this book.

3. These special trips are an opportunity to serve people in different communities. No specific skills are needed, only the desire to serve!

5. On this day we celebrate the "birthday of the church" as language barriers were broken down and the gospel was proclaimed to all peoples.

7. Each year the Synod gathers in _____ to reflect on the previous year and plan for the next.

8. We will celebrate the expansiveness of God using this doctrine on May 26

9. The weather is getting warmer! People are excited for fresh produce from this space on our property!

May 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1 Bible Study 7:00 pm	2	3	4
5 Rogation Sunday Worship 9:00 am Sunday School 10:15 am Trustee's Meeting 10:15 Youth Group/Kids Club Year End Party 1-2:30 Bible Study 6:30 pm	6	7 Elder's Meeting 7 pm Deacon's Meeting 7 pm	8 Bible Study 7:00 pm	9 VBS Meeting @ MUP - 7:00 pm	10	11 Camp Blast 11 am - 4 pm @ Luthertlyn
12 Worship 9:00 am Sunday School 10:15 am Bible Study 6:30 pm	13 Pastor @ Festival of Homiletics	14	15 Bible Study 7:00 pm	16	17 Messy Church 5:30 pm	18 Confirmation Class 9:30 am
19 Pentecost Worship 9:00 am Congregational Meeting 10:15 am Sunday School 10:15 am (last Sunday School session) Bible Study 6:30 pm	20 Communion at Penn Mar 1:45 pm	21 Council Meeting 7 pm	22	23	24	25
26 Worship 9:00 am Birthday / Anniversary Coffee hour 10:15 am	27	28	29	30	31	



5/08 Erin Weaver
5/08 Amy Werner
5/11 Ruth Ann Tully
5/14 Valerie Cardinal
5/18 John Tully
5/20 Olivia Claus
5/23 Steve Schnelle
5/24 Jeff Martin
5/24 Ella Niklewicz
5/31 Carolyn Jarrett

May Newsletter

ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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