



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

"All God's Children Joyfully Celebrating God's Transforming Grace"

Established 1852

915 Federal Av. Saginaw, MI 48607

989.754.0489

SPIRIT NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2017

Issue 114

Vol. 1

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

First of all, I would like to thank the congregation for the generous Christmas gift. It is very much appreciated, especially at this time. And I wish you all God's richest blessings in this season of Christmas, Epiphany, and in the days to come.

By the time you read this, if you haven't heard already, I am on leave from after worship Christmas Day through the end of January. I am most grateful for the pastoral leadership of Pr. Kathleen Basner and Pr. Anne, the interim at Our Saviour, who will serve you during this time.

When I went to see the Bishop on November 8th, close to my second anniversary as Pastor of St. John, I shared with him merely the three weeks prior, issues that have nothing to do with the normal activities of the ministry. Upon hearing what was shared, he put me on leave until November 20th and said that he would meet with the Church Council to explain the longer leave.

When a congregation is facing major decisions regarding its future, there can be heightened anxiety, stress, and disagreement. But it can also be a beautiful time of growth in faith, patience, and cooperation. I have had the privilege to observe the growth in faith, patience, and cooperation in a number of our folks, for which I am most grateful. The Pastor often becomes the target for those that are disgruntled. And the temperaments the leadership and I have dealt with, some since my arrival, are destructive to the Body of Christ, both collectively and individually.

This month away is a time for me to discern whether I feel God calling me to remain at St. John or not. It is a very difficult decision for me. There are some truly wonderful, dedicated-to-Christ people here, with whom I enjoy serving. In addition, the folks we work with from Our Saviour and Resurrection are great examples of Christian sisters and brothers.

The Lutheran ministry has been by life's calling since I was 24 years old, and before if you consider the 12-year-old confirmand telling the class she wanted to be a pastor, before women even could consider such a calling.

Prior to coming here, I never even contemplated retirement, nor had I attended a preretirement seminar put on by the pension arm of the ELCA, which we are told to go to within 15 years of retirement.

Sixteen years ago, after suffering a heart virus (dilated cardiomyopathy, congestive heart failure), being a patient of the Cleveland Clinic, and on medical disability for nearly a year, by the grace of God with the prayers of many, against all odds, I recovered. When I was told to avoid stress, I joked saying, ". . . and I'm a Lutheran pastor."

Frankly, I have never experienced in three congregations and as an assistant to the Bishop working with conflicted congregations, what I have witnessed here.

I am very grateful for these 16 years. And while my prayer back then included being able to preach again and see my children graduate from high school, today I rejoice that my daughter will be married on January 15th, receive her Master's this spring, and has a consulting position to begin thereafter; and my son is reentering college with a definite goal in mind.

Some of the leave is to allow me to attend my daughter's wedding, rested and a bit less stressed. But always the decision hangs over my head and in my heart. You and St. John remain in my prayers.

St. John has some very capable leaders and they are aware of what needs to change in order to help the congregation move forward in a gracious and Christ-pleasing manner.

Pr. David Sprang, from the Bishop's office, will lead worship (10:00 a.m.) and facilitate a planning session with the leadership of Our Saviour on January 15th. May our best angels be present in all of us!

On January 1st (New Year's Day 10:00 a.m.) St. John will worship at Our Saviour. And on the 8th, 22nd, and 29th, Pr. Kathleen will lead worship at St. John at 9:30 a.m. Thank you, Pr. Kathleen! May God bless your proclamation of God's Word.

Musicians are secured through February and there is interest shown in the position on an ongoing basis.

I am happy about all those signs of hope and focus on the future. Please keep St. John and my ministry in your prayers. God knows what the future holds and God will be with us in it.

Appreciatively,

Pr. Connie Sassanella



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

915 Federal Avenue, Saginaw, MI 48607

Pr. Connie Sassanella

SUNDAY WORSHIP 9:30 a.m.

PASTOR'S OFFICE HOURS

Monday – Thursday, 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

PASTOR'S TELEPHONE

Preferred (c) 330-692-6194 (h) 989-401-2283

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS

Monday-Friday: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

CHURCH'S TELEPHONE

Office: 989-754-0489 Fax: 989-754-4029

E-MAIL

Office: sjc915@sbcglobal.net

Pastor: csassanella@yahoo.com

WEBSITE

StJohnLutheranELCASaginaw.weebly.com

FACEBOOK

St John Lutheran ELCA Saginaw

NEWSLETTER

Deadline: 20th day of the previous month



Please Remember Care Facility Members:

Please Remember At Home Members:

They would love a card or visit from you!

Church Updates



Donations:

Roger & Pauline Winterstein (Summer Day Camp)

Art Meyer (Thrivent Choice Dollars)

Eugene H. Miller (Music) – in appreciation of Beth Hale's service as Minister of Music at St. John

Memorials:

In memory of **Evelyn Schulz:**

Larry & Lorelei Roenicke (Summer Day Camp)

Robert, Madeline, & Brandy Blohm (Breakfast for Hungry)

Eugene H. Miller (Sound Board)

All for General Fund:

Robert & Alice Morgan

Carl & Betty Quackenbush

Wayne & Marcy Andersen

Ray & Sue Kaminski

Marguerite Schuetter

Joe & Pam Durbin

Joe & Debbie Klinebriel

Max Foster

Robert & Karolyn Chicky

Becky Pytlik

Ken & Shirley Bell & Family

Bruce & Lori Albosta

Luella Markel

Richard & Mryna Dierich

Ross, Linda, & Karen Beers

Beata DonSang

Ed & Cindy Swinton

Art & Sandy Meyer

Glen & Mary Mader

Charles & Ginger Reed

Anne Hamilton

Lance & Melissa Castle

Rebecca Meeker

Cathy Schulz

Chris & Patricia Picard

Beverly Susalski

Bob & Karen Currie

Bud & Gretchen Bailey

Penny Cook & Family

Robert Smith

In memory of **Arlene Roenicke:**

Gary Rupp (Summer Day Camp), Eugene H. Miller (Music)

Kurt & Pam Aven (Camp Lu-Wix-E)

All for General Fund:

Danny & Darlene Rupp

Linda LaFlair

Charles & Ginger Reed

Robert & Alice Morgan

Ray & Sue Kaminski

Luella Markel

Ken & Jackie Willman

Carl & Betty Quackenbush

Robert & Catherine Janson

Ryan Iles & Iles Schropp Group

In memory of: **Arthur & Kathryn Menapace, Jenny Diendorfer, Steven Weiland, & Brian Smith** by David & Nancy Menapace (Altar Guild, Choir, Camp Lu-Wix-E)

In memory of: **All members of St. John who passed away in 2016** (Heating), **Ralph J. & Amanda E. Miller** (Camp Lu-Wix-E), **Kay Basner** (Music), **Art Menapace** (Roof) by Eugene H. Miller

Recently Hospitalized or Rehab: Warren Martin

Our Dearly Departed: We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of: **Arlene Roenicke**, who died on December 7, 2016. Also, to the family and friends of **Evelyn Schulz**, who died on December 8, 2016. We extend our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of **Laura Ezell**, who died on December 12, 2016. She was the director of the Narcotics Anonymous Meetings here at St. John. May God bless all who mourn.

St. John Lutheran Numbers

Date	Attend.	Deposit
12/4/16	46	\$23,446.00
12/11/16	56	\$4,138.00
12/18/16	47	\$1,612.50
12/24/16	73	\$4,458.00
&12/25/16	37	(combined)

Memorials/Gifts Received

January 1 – December 25, 2016

Altar Flowers	\$	510.50
Altar Guild	\$	210.00
Breakfast for the Hungry	\$	3,511.00
Camp Lu-Wix-E Gifts	\$	1,145.00
Church Maintenance (Roof)	\$	50.00
Congregational Life	\$	486.00
Evangelism	\$	150.00
General Fund	\$	5,057.30
Heating Fund	\$	1,000.00
Music & Worship	\$	445.00
Sound Board	\$	100.00
Stamps	\$	0
Summer Day Camp Gifts	\$	416.00
Summer Day Camp Grants	\$	28,500.00
TOTAL	\$	41,580.80

Year-to-Date Offering Income: (2016)	\$72,670.82
Year-to-Date Rental Income: (2016)	\$8,888.00
Year-to-Date from Trust Income: (2016)	\$120,000.00

Breakfast for the Hungry Giveaways



We at St. John have worked hard to provide help for those who are in need. The Evangelism Board has, with your help, been able to provide more than just meals. At our Breakfast for the Hungry, we have given away many needed items. Our biggest and probably most needed Giveaway has been for winter items.

We are asking for donations of new or gently used hats, gloves, socks, blankets, sweaters, or any other wearable winter items. Bring them to the church office or contact Marcy Andersen or Ginger Reed. Thank you for your generous contributions to help keep others warm!

Birthdays

January 1 Scott Robinson, Matthew Specht
 January 3 Brandy Blohm
 January 5 Charles Reed
 January 11 Eveline Gatzsche, Stan Marino
 January 14 Cindy Talbot
 January 15 Kelsey Crane
 January 17 Sandra Johnson
 January 19 Jacquelyn Albosta
 January 25 Betty Perry
 January 27 Nicholas Hoffman
 January 30 Ellen Schulz



Anniversaries

January 25 Bruce & Lori Albosta

Epiphany Prayer & Study Opportunity

Wednesdays 1:00 p.m. & 7:00 p.m.

Jan. 11th – Feb. 15th, 2017



Beginning on January 11th and running through February 15th, you are invited to gather for study and prayer during the season of Epiphany. We will be focusing on the lectionary texts for the upcoming Sundays, and how they speak to us as the people of God who gather as St. John Lutheran Congregation. This study will be combined with a time of prayer, concentrating on seeking God's direction for St. John in the near-and not so near-future. This opportunity will be offered on Wednesdays at 1:00 p.m. and also at 7:00 p.m. at St. John. During January this will be led by Pr. Kathleen Basner, and in February leadership will be shared between Pr. Connie and Pr. Kathleen.



Free Community Dinners

Our **Free Community Dinners** are on the second Thursday of each month, with dinner served from 5:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m. Our next dinner is on January 12th. There is a signup sheet on the bulletin board outside the church office for workers to setup, cook, and cleanup. Contributions to fund the Free Community Dinners here at St. John can be made with checks payable to: Messiah Lutheran Church, "St. John Evening Dinners" and we can forward your check to them. If you have any questions about the dinners, please contact Dewey Burke at dewburke@hotmail.com or at 989-971-4316.

Joint Worship Service January 15th



Mark your calendars for a combined worship service at St. John on **Sunday, January 15th at 10:00 a.m.** when Pr. David Sprang is scheduled to preach. Our Saviour plans to join us.

A Prayer for the New Year to Start Off Right

by Kelli Mahoney



Lord, thank you so much
for all that you have done for me,
my friends, and my family.
Your hand on our lives is so much more
than we could ask for, and your
blessings are so greatly appreciated.
I know, Lord, that you have seen
our challenges, wept at our weaknesses,
and rejoiced in our successes.

As you know, we are now
coming up on a new year.
You know I have made resolutions to change
the areas of my life that need it,
and I ask for your strength
to make those changes.
I ask for your continued blessings and
guidance to make me more like you,
to walk better in your path, this year.

I also ask, Lord, for your continued
blessings on those around me.
I ask that this year be one of peace and joy
for my family and friends.

I ask that you continue to be a
presence in all of our lives.
I ask that you give each of us a
heart for you and a desire to serve
to make the world a better place.
I also ask for peace and blessings
on those far from home,
for those who suffer, and
for those who need you
a little more each day.



Thank you, Lord, for all you do in my life and for all your continued blessings and love. In your name, Amen.

Musician Update



Supply musicians for our worship services have been arranged for all of January and February, as we search for someone to fill the position long term. If you have any names of people you think may be interested in the position, or interested in filling in, please pass their contact information on to Pr. Kathleen Basner, or to Barb in the church office. Your patience and understanding is appreciated as we continue to search.

HAPPY NEW YEAR! 2017

Dear St. John Family

"I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for all of your love and support over the last six years as I have served as your Minister of Music. I have loved making music with you, and you have shown both me and Russell great kindness over the years. You welcomed us with open arms and made us feel at home. We have been through a lot together, and I want you all to know that you have made a great difference in our lives. Thank you so much for sending me off with a lovely coffee hour, a beautiful cake, and many encouraging words. I hope to see some of you at the Alternative Service on Sunday evenings, as I still plan to volunteer with the Praise Band. I will also be working at SVSU as the leader of the Ecumenical Student Group, and look forward to making connections with the college students there. I will miss seeing you every Sunday, but I look forward to seeing what God has in store for me next! Thanks again, for everything."

Beth Hale