



# 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

Issue 114



## Spirit Newsletter - March 2017



Vol. 3

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ:

As most of you are aware, we at St. John are feeling deep sadness at Pastor Connie Sassanella's decision to not return to us after her leave. Together with you I feel the pain and loss. I am eternally grateful for her work at St. John, for her support as a colleague, and for her generous friendship. We as a community in Christ have some very serious challenges and decisions to face in the coming months which require us to trust God and die to ourselves so that we can be raised to the new life in Christ God desires us to live.

I am humbled by the trust that St. John leaders, and Bishop Satterlee, have placed in me by asking me to fill a full-time Pastoral supply role for the next several months. You need to be aware that we are blessed at St. John with some extremely brave and dedicated leaders, who are diligently seeking God's direction as we all attempt to faithfully follow Christ into the future that God is calling us into. We are also blessed with faithful seekers and students of God's Word, who have been gathering for the Bible Studies and prayer on Wednesdays over the past month. There has been some excellent sharing as we listen to God's Word, and gather our hope and courage in this time of discernment. As a part of that study we have been utilizing a prayer that came out of the Catholic Church, and has been widely circulated for quite some time. I have not been able to find exactly who composed this prayer or if it is under copyright, so if in printing here I am violating copyright and not crediting the author, I sincerely apologize and will quickly add that information should it be given to me. I am printing the prayer here to encourage every member to continue to use this prayer as we continue our discernment and decisions about our future as the Body of Christ who gather as St. John Lutheran Church.

Almighty God, my parish is composed  
of people like me.

I help make it what it is.

It will be friendly, if I am.

Its pews will be filled,

If I help fill them.

My parish will do great work,

If I work.

It will be prayerful,

If I pray.

It will make generous gifts to many causes,

If I am a generous giver.

It will bring other people into its

Worship and fellowship,

If I invite and bring them.

It will be a parish of loyalty and love,

Of fearlessness and faith,

And a parish with a noble spirit,

If I, who make it what it is,

Am filled with these things.

Therefore; with Your help, O God,

I shall dedicate myself to the task

Of being all things that I want

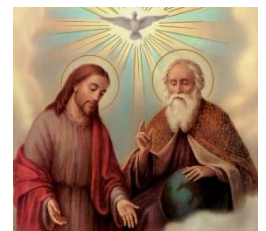
My parish to be.

Amen.

May God bless us and bless the work we are called to do in Jesus' name. Amen.

Your fellow servant in Christ,

*Pastor Kathleen Basner*



# St. John Lutheran Numbers

Date	Attend.	Deposit
1/29/17	43	\$1,153.55
2/5/17	40	\$4,015.00
2/12/17	51	\$3,941.00
2/19/17	45	\$30,118.50

## Memorials/Gifts Received

January 1 – February 19, 2017

Altar Flowers	\$	42.50
Breakfast for the Hungry	\$	
Camp Lu-Wix-E Gifts	\$	50.00
Congregational Life	\$	110.55
Evangelism	\$	
General Fund	\$	1,370.00
Heating Fund	\$	
Music & Worship	\$	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>1,573.05</b>

Year-to-Date Offering Income:	\$10,134.00
Year-to-Date Rental Income:	\$5,683.00
Year-to-Date from Trust Income:	\$40,000.00
Year-to-Date Seminary Student	\$8,000.00

## Please Remember Care Facility Members:

## Please Remember At Home Members:

*They would love a card or visit from you!*



## Birthdays

March 1 Carl Quackenbush  
 March 2 James Patman  
 March 6 Ruth Sharper  
 March 7 Gregory Busch  
 March 8 Randolph Wendland  
 March 10 James Peters  
 March 11 Dalessa Sylvester  
 March 17 Janet Goodman, Richard Taylor  
 March 20 Duane Alverson  
 March 26 David Meyer  
 March 27 Bruce Albosta



## Church Updates

**Donations:** Roger & Pauline Winterstein (Summer Day Camp)

Thrivent Choice Dollars: Luella Markel, Art & Sandy Meyer, Charles & Ginger Reed

**Recently Hospitalized:** Robert Chicky, Barbara & Roger Kramer

**Memorials:** In memory of **Noreen Howell**, from Larry & Lorelei Roenicke (Summer Day Camp)

All for General Fund:

Charles & Ginger Reed

Kurt & Pam Aven

Arnold Schoen

Wayne & Marcy Andersen

Stitt Family

Cyd Pasterz

Diane Swincick

Robert & Sally Loesel

Mr. & Mrs. Dennis Smigiel

St. John Lutheran Church, Deshler, OH

In memory of **Harold Asmus**, all for General Fund:

Robert & Alice Morgan, Gladys Slack, Doris Dale, Rev. J.W. & Donna Jones

Dr. Arno & Jan Schury (Trust Fund)

In memory of **John Funnell**, from SSG Salaried Alumni Club (General Fund)

**Our Dearly Departed:** We extend our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of: **Harold Asmus**, who died on January 26, 2017. Also, we extend our Christian love and sympathy to the family and friends of **Duane Scott**, who died on January 27, 2017. He was a good friend of Marty Wiegand.

*God bless all who mourn.*

## Lent & Holy Week 2017

**Ash Wednesday:** March 1<sup>st</sup> at St. John, 7:00 p.m.  
(St. John only, no meal)

**Wednesdays:** March 8, 15, 22, 29, & April 5  
(at Resurrection Lutheran Church, 2110 Brockway Street)  
Soup/Simple Supper, 6:00 p.m.  
Informal Evening Prayer Worship, 7:00 p.m.

**Palm Sunday:** April 9<sup>th</sup> at St. John, 9:30 a.m.

**Maundy Thursday:** April 13<sup>th</sup> at St. John, 7:00 p.m.  
(St. John only, no meal)

**Good Friday:** April 14<sup>th</sup> at St. John, 7:00 p.m.  
(St. John only, no meal)

**Easter:** April 16<sup>th</sup> at St. John, 9:30 a.m.



## Help Reunite a Family

Esther's Daughters is a mission project of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church in Bloomfield Hills, MI. The goal of the mission project is to bring two young girls from Papua New Guinea to the United States and assist their adoptive family in establishing permanent housing. The girls (age 12 and 15) are the orphaned nieces of one of Beautiful Savior's members. They are currently in the care of their aging grandmother, who is in declining health. Should something happen to their grandmother, these girls are left with few opportunities, and at best, would be placed in arranged marriages (away from their current village) or, at worst, face the risk of human trafficking. Funds raised will be used by Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church for legal fees, travel costs, and other financial needs associated with an international adoption.

If you can help, you may donate online at: <https://www.crowdrise.com/esthersdaughters>. You can also donate by sending a check to: Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church, 5631 N. Adams Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48304, and in the memo line write "Esther's Daughters Mission." (These girls are the nieces of Michelle Basner-Ketepa's husband, David. Michelle is the daughter of Pr. Kathleen and Mike Basner, and grew up at St. John. Michelle is on the staff at Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church. Thank you for considering to help!)



## Communion to Homebound Members

Are you interested in taking Communion to homebound members? If so, or if you have done so in the past, note this date: **March 5, 2017**. On Sunday, March 5<sup>th</sup> there will be an instructional meeting to reorganize the Eucharistic Ministry Program at St. John after worship at **11:00 a.m.** Even if you were part of this program in the past, please come so all will have the same information and we can make sure we know how things will be communicated. If you have any questions, please see Pr. Kathleen. There will be a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the church office door.

## 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 **March 9<sup>th</sup>**. 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](mailto:dewburke@hotmail.com) or at 989-971-4316.

## Saginaw Metro Ministries Food Pantry Appreciation Dinner Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.



It's getting close to that time of year again where we thank each and every one of you for helping. This year the Appreciation Dinner will be Friday, May 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at St. John Lutheran Church. Please plan on attending if you in anyway helped, donated, prayed for, or done anything whatsoever to make the Food Pantry able to serve the hungry in 2016. If you have any questions, please contact Dewey Burke at 989-921-0494 or at: [dewburke@hotmail.com](mailto:dewburke@hotmail.com).

## Thank You



Pr. Kathleen & Church Members:

Thank you for your kindness and prayers during this difficult time. Pr. Kathleen – your words were eloquent and you nailed my dad's personality. No doubt he has already pitched the "perfect game." Our best to all.

Kris & Karen Martin  
(Warren Martin's family)

## Food Bank of Eastern Michigan March Against Hunger March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 30, 2017

Saginaw Metro Ministries (SMM) is kicking off their yearly Fund Drive on March 1<sup>st</sup> for the SMM Food Pantry. All funds collected between March 1<sup>st</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup> will be matched by 10% at the Food Bank of Eastern Michigan.

Please fill out the enclosed deposit slip, along with your check, and send to:

Saginaw Metro Ministries  
Matching Funds Program  
PO Box 6472  
Saginaw, MI 48608



Write on the memo line of your check: P-981

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Luplow at: [karenjoyluplow@yahoo.com](mailto:karenjoyluplow@yahoo.com). Thanks for your generous contributions to feed the hungry!



Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

A month ago, I wanted to write you but the Bishop felt it was his place to announce my departure to you. And I honored that.

I am grateful to hear that after needed changes in leadership have taken place, you are moving forward under the capable leadership of Pastor Kathleen and your wonderfully dedicated Executive Committee and Church Council. They are beautiful examples of God's love! And I was privileged to work with them.

Deep down I came to see that I did not have what was needed to lead St. John and it became too painful to return.

Thank you for entrusting your hearts to me and allowing me to serve our Lord with you over the past couple of years. I have learned a lot from your strong faith in Jesus Christ and your commitment to the larger community. I pray for you daily and know God has you and St. John, as the prophet Isaiah has said, ". . . engraved in the palm of God's hand."

Since returning from my daughter's wedding, I have been attending the Presbyterian Church in Harbor Beach. They have warmly welcomed me. From the first Sunday, a little group has invited me to join them for lunch, following coffee hour. This week after six people invited me, I began to attend an Ecumenical Bible Study held at the church. It was led by a Roman Catholic woman.

The nearest ELCA Church is close to an hour away and since we have a relationship with the Presbyterians, I decided to visit there. After 39 ½ years leading worship and Bible Studies, it is wonderful just to sit and be fed.

On January 29<sup>th</sup> I returned to Port Huron, one hour south of Harbor Beach, to attend the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary kick off dinner for my home church, St. Paul Lutheran, which is in the Southeast Michigan Synod. Since in order to remain a pastor, albeit a retired pastor in the ELCA, one must be a member of an ELCA congregation. I have requested that my membership be transferred back to St. Paul, full circle after all these years as a way to say "thank you" and to honor my parents' memory.

In time I hope to do occasional pulpit supply, but for now I am grateful to learn and be fed spiritually.

Again, in the words of St. Paul to the church in Philippi, and to all of you . . . "I am confident of this, that the one who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

May you have a blessed Lenten journey and joyous celebration of our Lord's Resurrection!

In Christ's love and peace, with gratitude,

*Pastor Connie Sassanella*



- **What is Ash Wednesday?**

Also known as *dies cinerum*, Ash Wednesday is the first day of Lent, a penitential season observed by many Christians. While the exact date of Ash Wednesday varies from year to year, it is always in either the month of February or March, depending on where Easter falls in the liturgical year. On Ash Wednesday, worshippers attend services at which they receive ashes on their foreheads. The pastor marks the forehead of each worshipper, often saying, "Remember that you are dust and to dust you shall return."

- **Where do the ashes come from?**

The ashes consist of burned palms from the previous year's Palm Sunday service. The ashes are blessed by a priest or pastor.

- **Why do people receive ashes?**

Ashes are viewed throughout Christian history as a symbol of humility and sacrifice for those who wear them. In earlier times, Christians who committed serious sins did public penance. As part of this, they were sprinkled with ashes and required to wear sackcloths. In later years, penitents were also turned away from their place of worship for the entire season of Lent until Holy (Maundy) Thursday, by which time they had atoned for their sins. Eventually all Christians came to receive ashes in acts of devotion as well.

- **Why do people fast on Ash Wednesday?**

While Ash Wednesday is not a holy day of obligation, it is the start of one of the most important seasons in the Christian liturgical year. Since fasting is an integral part of the Lenten season, it is strongly encouraged, and even required, of most Christian worshippers on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Catholics and members of some other denominations also abstain from meat on all Fridays during Lent.

- **How long does Lent last?**

Lent is the period from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday, and lasts six and a half weeks. The final week of Lent is called Holy Week; during this period, observant Christians reflect specifically on the last days of Jesus Christ's life. During Lent, Christians purify themselves by praying, fasting, repenting of their sins, and making changes and sacrifices in their lives. *from: beliefnet.com*

## An Old Irish Blessing

May the road rise up to meet you.  
May the wind be always at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face,  
And rains fall soft upon your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the palm of his hand.

