

April 2023 Newsletter

"On Wings Like Eagles"

...but those who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,
They shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.
Isaiah 40:31





St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
PO Box 2, 772 St. Johns Road
Saint Johns, PA 18247

Church Office Phone Number: 570.788.2685

Email: stjohns@epix.net Facebook: SJELC.StJohnsPA Website: www.sjlutheran.org

Pastor Designate: Reverend Michele Kaufman

Organist: Arlene Poltrock Church Secretary: Rose Fox Phone: 570-788-2685

Office Hours: M-W 9 am to 1 pm; F - 9 am to 12 pm

Our Purpose

(Our sense of what God is calling us to be and do in the mission of the Church)

God's purpose for our congregation is to be a Christ-centered community, glorifying God and sharing the gospel and blessings with our neighbors.

Sunday Mornings

Youth Sunday School 8:45 am
Coffee Hour following Worship first Sunday of the month

Catechism Classes

Catechism Classes for youth in grades 6, 7, and 8th grades is available. Parents and P. Kaufman agree to a schedule that is compatible for all.

All are invited to join us for our worship/fellowship opportunities.

Contact Information

Pastor Michele Kaufman – Pastor Designate Phone Number: 570-881-2371

If you have a pastoral need such as a request for a hospital visit, pastoral care need, or spiritual counseling, please contact P. Kaufman.

For other requests such as a baptism, funeral, or wedding, please contact the church office @ 570.788.2685. If necessary, please leave a message including your full name, phone number, the reason for your call, and the best time to contact you.

2023 Church Council Officers/Members

Melody Hinderer – President Janet Brady

Donna Cassarella – Vice President Jim Cassarella

Carolyn Kuehn – Secretary Jan Jacobus

Jane Krouse – Assistant Secretary Patty Phile

Jennifer Cipriani – Treasurer

Sherry Grenzberg – Assistant Treasurer

Church Ministries – See Calendar for Scheduled Meetings/Events

Finance Team – TBA, Chairperson

Lay Eucharistic Ministry Team: Melody Hinderer, Judy Mundie

Learning Ministry Team: Kim Deliman, Chairperson

Lutheran Church Women (LCW): Mary Ellen Sims, President Prayer Circle Ministry: Kim Deliman, Chairperson

Prayer Shawl Ministry: Peggy Hawk

Property Team: Jim Cassarella, Chairperson

S.E.R.V.E. Ministry: Donna Cassarella, Melody Hinderer, Co-Chairpersons

Worship and Music Ministry Team: Arlene Poltrock, Chairperson

We offer many opportunities for ministry. If interested, please contact the church office, a council member, or the chairperson(s) listed above.

Our Guiding Principles #1

We proclaim Jesus as our Lord and Savior.



PRAYER FOR THE CHURCH

Almighty God,

My parish family 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.

It will do great work, if I work.

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 family of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith, and a parish with a noble spirit, if I, who make it what it is, and filled with these same qualities.

Therefore, with the help of God-

I will dedicate myself to the task of being all the things that I want my parish family to be.

Bless my journey Lord God, that I might build the Church through Jesus Christ our Lord.

AMEN

From Pastor Michele Kaufman

You can tell when the climax of a story is near. Time slows down so we can take it all in and feel the full effect. This mimics our own lives When we are in the midst of a numbing moment, our bodies seem to slow. Our senses are heightened as we attempt to integrate what is happening.

THE THREE DAYS,

Or Triduum slows down time as we move through the climax of the story of faith, Jesus' betrayal, death and resurrection. Worship throughout the rest of the year skims the surface in some ways, whisking us through the story of Jesus' life. But these days we linger. There is so much centered here. We have to take our time to be able to receive it.

Worship over these three days will cover it all

-creation and redemption, death and life, fire and water, desolation and celebration. These days enact the great Christian drama, and the worship services are, in many ways, dramas that embody the story, the tensions, and the teachings of the very core of our faith.

Maundy Thursday, April 6, 2023 – 7:00 p.m.

On Maundy Thursday, we reach back to the beginning of Lent to recall the confession we made on Ash Wednesday. The service does not follow the normal order- because we are both continuing and beginning an extraordinary worship experience. We are touched by words of forgiveness. It is only with a clear knowledge of being forgiven that we can engage the rest of the story.

Forgiven, we learn of God's new commandment. Foot washing, so intimate that it's embarrassing in our culture, is the image Jesus chose to demonstrate the servant nature of our calling. We watch and we eat a last supper with Jesus. We hear him offer all of himself to us, even his body and blood.

With the taste of wine still fresh in our mouths, the altar is stripped bare. It will be the consequence of Jesus' love for us. Judas slips out to meet his conspirators. As the sanctuary is stripped bare, as the words of the psalm drift through the air, we are reminded of what this love will cost Jesus. We leave the sanctuary lingering-silence is observed. It is a holy time.

GOOD FRIDAY, April 7, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

"Tenebrae" or Service of the Shadows, is one of the oldest traditional services of the Christian Church. Scripture readings and hymns focus our attention on our Lord's crucifixion, death and final victory. Our visual center is the cross. There is nothing else to distract us. The pace is slow, as those final hours must have been for him. We move, relentlessly to the end. We are reminded that Jesus' death was, paradoxically, the moment of his triumph. Through his death he defeated death. We confess that this death is God's glory, but it is also silent between now and tomorrow. Deadly silent.... Our hope and promise will sustain us.

EASTER DAY - The Resurrection of Our Lord

The morning light beckons us. We know where we have come from before we peek into the tomb with the women and Peter. When we hear the angel say, "He is not here, but has risen," we know again that life is always God's way with us. Death is defeated. He who was dead lives. The promise has been fulfilled. Flowers, which begin again the cycle of life, surround us. The aroma of bread and wine remind us that the holy meal is a celebration this day, for in it we confess that life is stronger than death under God's reign and we have seen it with our own eyes. Christ is risen! Alleluia!

Though the faithful claim to love Jesus, we fail to make the effort to journey with Christ. We wave our palms, but avoid the nails, wanting to lay claim to the spoils of his victory. We all need to travel Holy Week in the presence of our Savior. I invite you to experience the trials and tribulation, the pain and suffering to comprehend the inexplicable joys of Christ's victory.

It is that season of the Church's year
when we as Christians dwell on the Mystery of the Crucifixion.
And what the Crucifixion tells us is this:
God Himself died upon a cross,
to pour out His love for us,
to forgive us our sins,
to share His life with us now, and eternally.

Too many people move from Palm Sunday's jubilation to Easter's victory and never take the excruciating walk through the Upper Room, the Garden of Gethsemane, the Trials, and Mount Calvary. But you must go through it all really to know the joy of the open tomb!

Look at the cross. Empty and unoccupied, it is simply an object of brass or the timbers of a tree; but, when the crucified and suffering body of Jesus Christ is placed on the historic cross of Calvary, it becomes a sword - a sword in the hand of God that can conquer everything in heaven and on earth. It can even destroy the very gates of hell. Alleluia! Rejoice! Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!

Highlights from the Church Council Meeting March 9th, 2023

Attendance: Janet Brady, Melody Hinderer, Jan Jacobus, Carolyn Kuehn, Patty Phile, Jane Krouse, Sherry Grenzberg, Donna Cassarella, Jim Cassarella, P. Michele Kaufman, Guest: Kim Washko

Church Council minutes from Feb 9, 2022, approved.

Treasurer's Report for Feb 2023 approved. Audit of our church funds scheduled for March 24th at 6:00 pm. Melody Hinderer asked Jennifer Cipriani to include our budget numbers in the bulletin so members are aware of our finances.

\$ 143 received for the Kindness Tree which will go towards VBS.

\$ 196 was received for the "Souper Bowl" which will go to the "Souper Bowl" ELCA ministry.

Pastor's Report/Mileage: Feb 2023 approved. 24.5 Hours made lots of visits, First Holy Communion classes have begun.

Kim Washko presented a proposal to changing our website to "Engage" to reduce costs.

Team Reports

Worship Team: Arlene Poltrock - Chairperson

- Pastor Michelle contacted Peter Gerger concerning the iPad.
- Arlene Poltrock will be out for 2 months. Arlene will continue to choose hymns.
- Pastor Michelle's mother, Brenda, will be asked to supply as our organist.
- Pastor Supply Schedule: April 2nd, 16th, and 30th P. Mel Mundie

April 6th (Maundy Thursday), 23rd – P. Chip Fairchild
April 9th – No Pastors are available, but we will continue to search
for options

May 7th, 14th – P. Mel Mundie May 21st, 28th – P. Chip Fairchild

SERVE Team: Donna Cassarella and Melody Hinderer – Co-Chairpersons

- Member directory draft was given to council for review. Waiting for a few more responses.
- Future plans: create a children's library and an adult library, also video rentals.
- Amazon Smile has discontinued this program to concentrate on programs where their employees work.
- Providence Place: Thrivent Card was given by Kim Washko to purchase protein meats for meals. Jan Jacobus volunteered to help deliver meals to Providence Place. Next month's meal is on April 15th.
- Sunday, June 11th, luncheon for first responders held after church.
- Hobo Party to be held in the fall.
- Next Craft, Vendor, and Yard Sale planned for Saturday, Sept 9th.

Learning Ministry Team: Kim Deliman - Chairperson

Meeting March 14th @ 6:30 at the church

Property Team: Jim Cassarella - Chairperson

- Mountain Top Paving plan to pave handicapped area in the spring of 2023.
- Sausage Supper Saturday, April 22nd, 2023.
- 148 bulbs were replaced with LED lights in Luther Hall and kitchen.
- Light bulbs also replaced in the choir room.

Continuation of Highlights of Church Council Meeting...

- New signage for handicap areas, office, stairs, restrooms and elevator to be put up.
- Need backup battery for the defibrillator.
- O2 tank needs to be refilled.
- New parking suggestion: if you are able to walk and feel safe to cross the road, we are asking you to park in our parking lot to leave parking spaces in the front of our church for our older members and those who do like to walk across the road. Also, there will be six handicap parking spaces available in the front of the church on the left-hand side if you are facing the church.
- The Boy Scouts have placed a curio cabinet in Luther Hall, along with a new TV.

LCW: Mary Ellen Sims – Chairperson No report.

Lay Eucharist: Melody Hinderer made calls. Everyone is doing well and wish to say hello to everyone.

Finance Team: Chairperson needed.

Carillon Team: Fred Jaxheimer has offered to help us set up the carillon after Easter.

Anniversary Celebration – 2024. Need to form a team in 2023.

Call Committee: Melody Hinderer – Chairperson No report.

Old Business:

- Parochial report completed online; our church membership is 196.
- Lockbox will be closed as soon as it is feasible for the bank.
- No updates on the pavilion (Scouts).
- Baptism: Luke Alexander Thomas April 23rd
- Melody Hinderer responded to Workcamps Home Repair. Workcamps asked to use our facility to accommodate 400 people for meals and meetings. Melody informed Workcamps that we could not accommodate 400 people and referred them to contact the Hazleton Chamber of Commerce for suggestions for accommodations.

New Business:

- Review job descriptions (on hold)
- Melody Hinderer is now an administrator for Facebook.
- Council approved to put a link on FB concerning resources for seniors.
- Next Valley Interfaith Community Meal is Friday, April 28th at 5:30. Planning session will be Thursday, March 23rd at 6:30 at Conyngham United Methodist Church. The last community meal served 80 people.
- Thank You notes were received from Head Start and the Valley Food Pantry.
- Bear Creek Camp see article in the newsletter.
- The Hazleton Lehighton Mission Council met on Thursday, February 23rd.

Melody Hinderer volunteered to be the chairperson for the council.

See the newsletter article for the meeting highlights.

Next Mission District Meeting will be Wednesday, April 19th at 7 pm at Trinity, Lehighton.

The next council meeting is April 13th, 2023 @ 7 pm, meeting adjourned at 8:31 pm, and closed meeting by praying the Lord's Prayer.



April 2 - Palm Sunday @ 10 am

April 6 - Maundy Thursday and First Holy Communion @ 7 pm

April 7 – Tenebrae Service @ 7 pm

April 9 - Easter Sunday @ 10 am

Supply Pastor Schedule

April 2 - Rev. Melvin Mundie

April 6 - (Maundy Thursday and

1st Holy Communion) - Rev. Chip Fairchild

April 9 (Easter Sunday) - Rev. Melvin Mundie

April 16th – Rev. Melvin Mundie

April 23rd – Rev. Chip Fairchild

April 30th – Rev. Melvin Mundie

Altar Flowers

In Memory of William Boyer, Sr.

Easter Flowers

In Loving Memory of James Phile by Patty Phile

In Loving Memory of Priscilla I. Mundie

In Loving Memory of James J. Mundie, Sr.

April Bulletin Sponsor - for all the weeks in April by an anonymous donor

April Birthday, Baptism, and Anniversary Celebrations

We publish these celebrations with permission and information given by our members. If your celebration is missing from our list, please call the church secretary with the information and your information will be updated. Thank you!



1 – Priscilla A. Mundie

4 - Nicholas Barbush

5 – Stephen Hinderer

6 - Sandy Zamba

16 – Liam Eveland

17 – Jan Dindoffer, Sr.

24 - Patty Phile

29 - Bonnie Hoda



1 – Debra Fulton

5 – Priscilla A. Mundie

12 – Mason Floyd

17 - Colyn Smith

18 - April Floyd- Gleim

18 - Betty Kushner

26 - Connie Barbush



6 – Janet & John Brady

Bulletin Sponsors

Church members have the opportunity to sponsor our weekly church bulletins for 2023. The cost for one week is \$10.00. Available Dates Chart and forms are available in the St. Stephen's room. Please fill out the form along with your check payable to St. John's Lutheran Church and return it to Rose Fox, our church secretary. All weeks in May are available.

Monthly Coffee Hour



On April 2nd, after church, the April birthdays will be celebrated with a coffee hour. Each first Sunday of the month Coffee Hour will be observed. There is a sign-up sheet in the St. Stephen's room for members/church teams to sponsor. A sponsor is needed for the month of May.

Worship Service Volunteers Needed

Since the Covid restrictions have been lifted, we are reverting back to our "normal" worship services which include coming forward for communion and offering collection. There is a sign-up sheet in the St. Stephen's room for volunteers to fill the following responsibilities for our Sunday worship services:

Head Usher/Building Attendant, Assistant Minister/Wine Pourer, Altar Guild (fold bulletins, etc.), Altar Guild (set up the altar for communion, etc.), Greeters, Crucifer (if needed), Acolyte, Communion Bread Provider, Bring Wine and Bread forward, Communion Ushers, Collection Ushers.

If you have any questions about any of the responsibilities above, please see a council member. We need volunteers in all areas, thank you.

Get Involved in Worship

Luther Hall

As a member of our congregation, Luther Hall is available to you if you need a place to hold a function such as a birthday party, baptism celebrations, first communion celebrations, confirmation celebrations, anniversary parties, and funeral dinners. For non-members, our hall is available for certain functions (funeral dinners not included) and there may be a fee depending on the usage of the hall (kitchen, etc.). All requests from members or non-members will have to be approved by the church council. If you are interested in reserving Luther Hall, please contact Jim Cassarella or Melody Hinderer.

Church Member Directory



Final details are taking place now before publishing the updated church member directory. Our church secretary, Rose Fox, has been contacting our members to get permission to have your information published. The information we are seeking is a current mailing address, current phone number, and email. We will not publish any information that you do not want to be published. As before, our directory will only be given to our members to use for sending cards for lifetime events such as birthdays, anniversaries, etc. If you received a call and a message was left, and are interested, please return the call with the information. Thank you for your cooperation.

Divine Providence

Our church provides a nourishing evening meal once a month for the Divine Providence Homeless Shelter in Hazleton. We are in need of someone that would work with Donna in organizing the volunteers to make the dinner. It's only once each month on the 3rd Saturday for their 7:00 pm meal. Thank you to those who continue to make this happen.



Please contact: Donna Cassarella @ 570-436-2168 (S.E.R.V.E. Team Outreach Initiative)



Valley Food Pantry

Thank you for supporting the Valley Food Pantry. For April there is a need for spaghetti sauce, tomato paste, cereal, coffee, tea bags, paper towels, and toilet tissue. Donations must be made by Sunday, March 26th. Please make sure the products are within the expiration date. Your generosity is appreciated.

Valley Interfaith Council

Please follow the Valley Interfaith Council on Facebook if you haven't yet. It is an ecumenical group of member congregations in the Conyngham/Sugarloaf/Drums area that promotes unity. Posts include events happening with each congregation to help grow faith community involvement along with providing support to the Valley Food Pantry. If you are already a follower of the Facebook page, invite your friends to follow too.



If P

Prayer Circle

If you have a prayer request for yourself, or someone else, or would like to join the Prayer Circle and receive the list of prayer concerns; Please contact Kim Deliman at 570-788-4459. Leave a message with your contact information, prayer request and if possible, the duration the prayer request will be needed. (Example: week(s),

month(s), indefinitely etc.) Let me know what is to be done for the requested name, whether it is to be included in the bulletin, placed on the prayer circle list, or if the person would like to be contacted by Pastor Michele Kaufman. You may also call the church office or, sign the Prayer Request list located on the table in the St. Stephen's Room. With your help, the members of the church can keep the Prayer Circle current and enable us to fulfill the needs of the church, community, and the world in which we live. * Please keep me informed when a name can be removed from the Prayer List.

* Psalm 33:22 Let your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you.

Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training

If you have the calling to be a Lay Eucharistic Minister, there are one-day training events available.

The cost is \$ 30.00 per person; training is from 9:30 am to 4:00 pm.

To complete the application, go to LibertyLutheran.org/LEVT or email the completed registration form to Julia Menzo at jmenzo@libertylutheran.org

Below are the following dates and training locations:

April 29th: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 4201 Stoudts Ferry Ridge Road, Reading, PA 19605

June 3rd: St Michael Lutheran Church 25 E Church Street, Sellersville, PA 18960

October 7th: Good Shepherd Lutheran Church 190 S Main Street, Wilkes-Barre, PA 18701

October 21st: Advent Lutheran Church 1602 Green Lane, West Chester, PA 19382

Church Parking Changes

The Property Team is recommending a change in church parking on Sunday mornings and other church gatherings. The following changes were discussed with the church council.

Effective immediately:

If you feel comfortable crossing the road, we are asking you to park in the parking lot in order to free the parking spaces in front of the church.



New signage will soon be displayed for our handicapped area in the front of the church.

If you are facing the church, there will be six handicapped parking spaces to the left of the front entrance. Please do not park in these spaces if you do not have a handicap sign displayed. To the right of the church entrance, parking will be available for others to park who are afraid to cross the road.

There is new signage to the entrance of the cemetery which will direct those who need wheelchair access to gain entry to the church.

Our purpose is to offer parking for those with special needs and also to help our visitors who are uncertain of where to park.

Thank you for your cooperation as we implement the new parking changes.

Youth Ministries/Sunday School

John 14:6 - "Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me."

Sunday School is looking forward to the coming months. There is so much to learn and celebrate in the month of April. On Palm Sunday the children will be part of the Palm procession at the beginning of worship service. Please plan on attending so they can help celebrate with the congregation. We have volunteers until May 21, 2023. Over the next few months, we encourage you to prayerfully consider sharing your time and talents with our youth for the fall. We are still in need of a Sunday School leader. Team up with someone if you aren't comfortable doing it alone. Any help would be greatly appreciated. It isn't necessary to figure out lesson plans. We have an easy curriculum available to use and explore together. Weekly, monthly, or a permanent volunteer would be a blessing. Will you answer that calling? Our SS group is small in numbers but not small in the need to continue growing through instruction and fun. We are open to any suggestions on how to make this happen. If you feel you can help us in this matter, please reach out to the Learning Ministry team. Kim Deliman (chairperson), Jennifer Cipriani, Donna Cassarella, Melody Hinderer, Patty Phile

Acts 4:33 -"With great power, the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection. of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all."

Sausage Supper

Drive-Thru "Take out" Only! Saturday, April 22nd

Pick-up times: 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Dinner - \$13.00

Menu: sausage, pancakes, baked potato, green beans, coleslaw, applesauce, dessert

For tickets:

570-582-7193 Jim 570-436-2168 Donna 570-788-3938 Betty & Don 570-788-2685 Church Office



BEAR CREEK CAMP







This summer our youth have several opportunities to offset the costs of attending summer camp at Bear Creek Camp.

Early registration is now available at the website: bearcreekcamp.org or you can register at a later date. Camps are available for children in grades 1-12. Please visit the website for available dates.

Opportunity # 1: Every year the LCW at St. John's will pay \$ 200.00 towards one summer camp fee per youth. If you register, please notify the church office, and have proof of registration.

<u>Opportunity # 2:</u> Camperships funds are available through Bear Creek Camp thanks to the generosity of donors. The full campership form is available on the website.

Opportunity #3: West Hazleton Trinity Lutheran Church is initiating a scholarship fund for any youth who wishes to attend Bear Creek Camp. This was made possible by a bequeath from Mary Steward. Each camp year up to \$1000 (minimum) will be awarded to youth from grades 1 – 12. A minimum of \$ 100 per child will be awarded. The amount per child depends on the number of participants. If 10 youth participate, then each child will receive \$100 each; if 5 youth participate, each youth will receive \$200 each; if 4 youth participate, then each youth will receive \$ 250 each, etc. Scholarships are awarded the first week in May. To participate, each youth must complete the camp registration per Bear Creek directions on the website. There is also a Mary Steward Scholarship Request Form. If you wish to have the form, please notify the church office. The scholarship request form and proof of registration must be received by April 28th. Addresses will be provided on where both forms can be emailed or mailed.

Spring Craft & Bake Sale



Our Spring Craft & Bake Sale was held on Saturday, March 18th and was a success! This is the first time we held it INDOORS!! There were 23 Crafters that rented 30 tables to show and sell their unique homemade items. Originally we planned to only use the downstairs Luther Hall but had such a good response that we filled the St. Stephen's room also. Our doors opened at 8:00 am to a

beautiful display of sunlight streaming through the stained glass windows welcoming all who came. There was plenty of food and baked goods for sale in Luther Hall along with a Tricky Tray Raffle that went off at 2:00 pm. This event was put on by our S.E.R.V.E. Team which benefited our Church and to send youth to the 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering being held in New Orleans. The Bake Sale was hosted by LCW (Lutheran Church Women). Come join one of our teams that help support our church and community.



The Freeland Community Choir presents



Faith United Church of Christ Hazle Township, PA Palm Sunday, April 2, 2023, 3:00 pm

St. John's Reformed UCC Freeland, PA Sunday April 16, 2023, 3:00pm



- ❖ April 2nd Passion/Palm Sunday; SS @ 8:45 am; Church @ 10 am; Coffee Hour
- ❖ April 3rd Scouts @ 6 pm
- ❖ April 4th LCW Meeting @ 1 pm
- ❖ April 5th Prayer Shawl Ministry @ 9:30 am
- ❖ April 6th Maundy Thursday/First Holy Communion @ 7 pm
- ❖ April 7th Good Friday Tenebrae Service @ 7 pm
- ❖ April 9th Easter Sunday; Church @ 10 am
- ❖ April 10th − Boy Scouts @ 6 pm
- ❖ April 13th Church Council Meeting @ 7 pm
- ❖ April 15th Divine Providence Meal; May Newsletter Deadline
- ❖ April 16th SS @ 8:45 am; Church @ 10 am
- ❖ April 17th − Scouts @ 6 pm
- ❖ April 19th Prayer Shawl Ministry @ 9:30 am
- ❖ April 22nd Sausage Supper Pick up from 1 pm to 5 pm
- ❖ April 23rd SS @ 8:45 am; Church @ 10 am
- ❖ April 24th − Scouts @ 6 pm
- ❖ April 27th S.E.R.V.E. Meeting @ 6:30 pm
- ❖ April 30th SS @ 8:45 am; Church @ 10 am



FALL CRAFT VENDOR/YARD SALE

September 9th from 9 am - 3 pm