



ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH
OF THE ERIE LUTHERAN PARISH

"You belong here."

The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

In Transition

A recurring section of the bi-monthly "Bishop's Notes" is a list of churches with the heading **"Congregations in Transition: Are congregations without MSPs open and have no pastoral coverage."** St. John's Erie is among the 22 churches listed for our NWPAs Synod of 72 total congregations. That designation for so many churches is sobering. It's also an opportunity to take a closer look at our situation.

The phrase "...no pastoral coverage" is true in the sense that we have no pastor fulfilling an official call from our congregation. Happily, we have pastoral leadership in our worship services from several supply pastors. Pastor Mineo has been gracious in offering much time to us in 2024. Other pastors from the Erie Conference have helped with funerals, and they are available for counseling. The phrase "...without MSPs open..." is our reality. The task of creating a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) is assigned to a Call Committee working in consultation with the Bishop. Seven churches in our Synod do have MSPs, and they await the availability of candidates for a call. More on St. John's and the MSP topic below.

Thirty-nine members attended our January 21st congregational meeting in spite of wintry weather. We voted to change our Constitution to define our meeting quorum as 40% of voting members, or 30 individuals, whichever is larger. Four current Council members were re-elected, with the addition of Mark Eller and Max Matthew Alwens. We accepted a budget to sustain our ministries and facilities in the coming year, with approval to replace the aging boilers in the gym. Dufford Terrace continues renovations of apartments as they open for new tenants.

In our congregational meeting, Roger Olsen and Carolyn Sturtevant presented the thoughts of Council on the topic of preparing an MSP. The swift completion of the MSP would not necessarily guarantee the speedy offer of a candidate for a call. Council suggested, with agreement of the members present at the meeting, that we would be wise to take time to consider our options through the work of a Transition Committee. More information will follow. Volunteers are welcome.

On Monday, January 22nd, Roger Olsen, Marj Quinn, and Carolyn Sturtevant attended an in-person meeting of the Erie Conference, in which 14 of our 18 conference Lutheran congregations were represented. We had three agenda items: 1. List each church's strengths, 2. Identify ways in which we can work together, and 3. How do we picture the next 5 to 10 years for our congregations? It was clear to everyone that all of our churches face challenges, and all are "in transition," even those with called pastors. We voiced our honest fears of fading away, and we recognized that we can be a better witness by taking intentional steps to combine our energies. We resolved to pursue such steps in our next meeting. For notes on the January 22nd meeting, ask Carolyn.

"In Transition" can mean "Renewal." We pray for the Lord to guide us.

#youbelonghere@StJohnsErie

† ST JOHN'S VISION STATEMENT †

Loved by God, alive in Christ Jesus, and guided by the Holy Spirit, St. John's unconditionally serves God's people and shares Christian love.

The “Epistles” of Bishop Lozano

St. Paul wasn't the only one writing letters to the churches he founded! Bishop Michael Lozano leads the NWPA Synod of the ELCA, having an office in Pleasantville. The Synod includes 72 churches in 15 counties, organized geographically into five different conferences. To communicate across the miles, Bishop Lozano emails his “Bishop’s Notes” every two weeks to representatives of every NWPA Lutheran congregation. The letters detail, among other things, Bishop Lozano’s schedule of meetings and days in the Synod office, happenings at Camp Lutherlyn, educational opportunities offered by the ULS (United Lutheran Seminary), and lists of churches in transition, of which St. John’s Erie is one.

Bishop Lozano ends each of his letters with a commentary that is closer to the style of the New Testament writers, listing concerns and offering encouragement. The Bishop’s Notes are available by request to any rostered leader, lay leader, or church member by sending an email to Bishop Lozano at: bplozano@outlook.com. For more information about our Synod, check out the website at: www.northwesternpasynodelca.org

Overflow Shelter

January 31st marks the first of fourteen nights when St. John’s will host the Overflow Shelter, also called “Our Neighbors’ Place.” Diane and Bob Bestvina have been engaged in planning for months with coordinators of other host sites, all under the leadership of EUMA, the Erie United Methodist Alliance. Comprehensive schedules show who will be on hand to cover the 42 different 4-hour shifts, and instructions describe the tasks involved in hosting. Diane is grateful for everyone volunteering their time at the Shelter and the individuals and groups providing evening sandwich/snack bags and 2 Saturday night evening hot meals for the shelter guests.

Two ways we can help even now:

1. Donate \$5 cash or check to St. John’s to cover the cost of gift cards to be purchased from Arby’s, McDonald’s, Wendy’s, or Dollar General (All are within walking distance of St. John’s). These places can be a source of food, warmth, and appropriate access to bathroom facilities to shelter guests during the day when the overflow shelter is not available to them. If sending a check, please write “Shelter” in the memo line.
2. Offer your name to Diane as an alternate to cover a shift if someone is unable to appear, or for other shelter-related tasks.

Congregational Notes

On January 7th, our congregation welcomed Janel Anderson and Molinda Kearns as new members. Janel appeared in her choir robe, as she often does as member of the Bell and Chancel Choirs, and as flute soloist. Molinda assisted Pastor Mineo by holding his tablet while he baptized Janel, and Molinda also serves as usher and on a counting team. We are glad to have them walking beside us in ministry.

Pastor Mineo led a Saturday, January 13 session to prepare three young people to receive communion. The First Communicants, Charlotte “Charli” Alwens, Lillian “Lilly” Alwens, and Ella Alwens, are daughters of Max Matthew and Briana Alwens. During the “First Communion Retreat”, they studied the Old Testament roots of Holy Communion, including the plagues, the Passover Meal, and freedom from Egyptian slavery. They learned how Jesus instituted the Lord’s Supper, the New Passover, so that as Christians, we always remember that he died FOR

US. They explored the meaning and purpose of this meal for our daily living. Max Alwens, Jr., grandfather of the First Communicants, also attended the retreat. Each new communicant received a Bible and a personal cup carved from olive wood.

St. John's extends condolences to Paul and Laura Horstman on the passing of Paul's mother, Cecile Irene Weiser Horstman on January 23. Paul and Laura have been worshipping regularly at St. John's, having been members of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church until its closing in October 2022.

In January, Council approved the transfer of membership of Michael, Julie, and Christopher Boam to St. Paul's Lutheran Church.

New Railing on 23rd Street Entrance!

The phrase "It's a slippery slope..." often describes a change leading to unintended consequences. On many icy days, the sidewalk from 23rd Street into the church has been a literal "slippery slope."

A sturdy handrail now lines one side of that sidewalk, offering another measure of safety in addition to snow removal and salt application. Thanks to the Building and Grounds committee for this new feature!

Lunch and Listen: Canine Companions

Abiding Hope Lutheran Church invites the community to their "Lunch and Listen" monthly speaker series on Wednesday, February 14th for a noon bring-your-own-brown-bag-lunch event. Sandy Globa will represent "Canine Companions," a national organization that enhances the lives of people with disabilities by providing highly trained service dogs at no charge to the recipient. Abiding Hope will offer good Lutheran coffee and cookies. Ms. Globa will speak from 12:30 to 1:30 pm.

"Souper Bowl" Kick-off Saturday, February 3!

Steelers, Browns, and Bills fans—feeling down and deflated? Sorry that your favorites aren't in the big game/commercial extravaganza on February 11th? Win points for our Project Dignity neighbors by bringing in shelf-safe food items or personal care items (shampoo, body wash, paper towels, dish detergent, etc.) to predict the winner of the Super Bowl. The "Chief" goal of our "Souper Bowl" is to find at least "Forty-nine" cans or products in the narthex. "Souper Bowl" hype kicks off Saturday the 3rd and runs out the clock on Sunday the 11th!

February Pulpit Supply Schedule

2/4/2024	Rev. Ralph Mineo
2/11/2024	Rev. Ralph Mineo
2/18/2024	Rev. Ralph Mineo
2/25/2024	Rev. Ralph Mineo

CHOIR MEMBERS NEEDED:

If you are a singer, ringer, or instrumentalist, there is a place for you in our worship. You can join a choir for a liturgical season or all year. Perhaps, you could join just for Lent and Easter. Whatever fits in your schedule. Choir rehearsals are on Sundays with the Chancel Choir at 9:00 AM and the Bell Choir at 11:15 AM. We look forward to seeing both faithful members and new faces in 2024!

SPECIAL MUSIC:

We are always looking for Special Music. If any individual or group would like to share their musical talents during the Sunday, 10:00 AM Service, please contact Kathy Swanson (kathy@stjohnserie.org) or Rachel in the Church Office (office@stjohnserie.org). We look forward to hearing from our talented parishioners.

ORGAN SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:

The American Guild of Organists is offering Organ Scholarships for anyone interested in learning to play the pipe organ. There is a growing need for organists in America right now. All expenses will be underwritten by the Erie Chapter of the American Guild of Organists. Successful applicants will receive a method book and ten lessons with a local organ teacher. The scholarships are available for all age groups. Brochures are available in the Church Narthex or contact Kathy Swanson.

LUTHERAN SUMMER MUSIC

Young people interested in developing their musical abilities are urged to consider attending the Lutheran Summer Music program at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN. Financial aid is available. Please see Kathy Swanson for further information.

Lutheran Summer Music 2024
 Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN
 Full Session: June 30–July 28
 Half Session: June 30–July 14
 Grades 8–12



Prayer Requests: Do you have someone or something to pray for? Use the “Prayer Request” link on our church website (<http://stjohnserie.org/prayer-request/>). Enter your request and we will publish it in the Parish Post as well as be able to petition it during the prayers in worship. Prayer Requests/Names will be removed on the 1st of each month unless otherwise requested. If you would like a name on the prayer list, please use the “Prayer Request” link on our church website, email or phone the church office.

Just a Reminder: If you would like anything put in the *Parish Post*, please have it submitted to the church office no later than the 20th of the month prior. The office email is: office@stjohnserie.org or call the office at (814) 456-7596.

Check In for Worship: As you attend worship with us virtually or in person, please remember to check in. Record your attendance through the app on our “Worship With Us” web page. Or you can check in via email, letting us know where you were, who you were with, and what worship you attended, by texting or emailing that information to attendance@stjohnserie.org.



Check in for WORSHIP >

Book Bingo

23 people came out to participate in the Children's Book Bingo night in January. A big thank you to the volunteers and Hooked on Books for helping to make this event possible!



Scout Sunday & Pretzel Sandwich Sale

On February 11th the Scouts will be participating in the worship service and selling pretzel sandwiches following worship. Sandwich varieties include: turkey, ham, or salami. These tasty treats are \$4 each or 3 for \$10. Proceeds benefit the Scouts.

From Pastor Mineo

For those who engage with Facebook, my user name is Ralph J. Mineo. The actual link is <https://www.facebook.com/ralph.j.mineo/>.



*Ash Wednesday Worship will be held
Wednesday, February 14th at 12PM and 7PM.
Online worship will be available for the 7PM service.*

Lenten Soup Suppers

Soup Suppers will be held each Wednesday through Lent.

Soup Supper in the gym from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Worship in the sanctuary 7:00 - 7:30 p.m.

The overall theme for this Lenten series is:
“WALKING WITH THE LORD”

Weekly Sermon Titles:

Ash Wednesday, February 14

“WALKING WITH THE LORD” Psalm 51

Wednesday, February 21

“PRAISE” Psalm 150

Wednesday, February 28

“LONGING” Psalm 130

Wednesday, March 6

“JOURNEY” Psalm 139

Wednesday, March 13

“THANKSGIVING” Psalm 23

Wednesday, March 20

“TRUST” Psalm 27





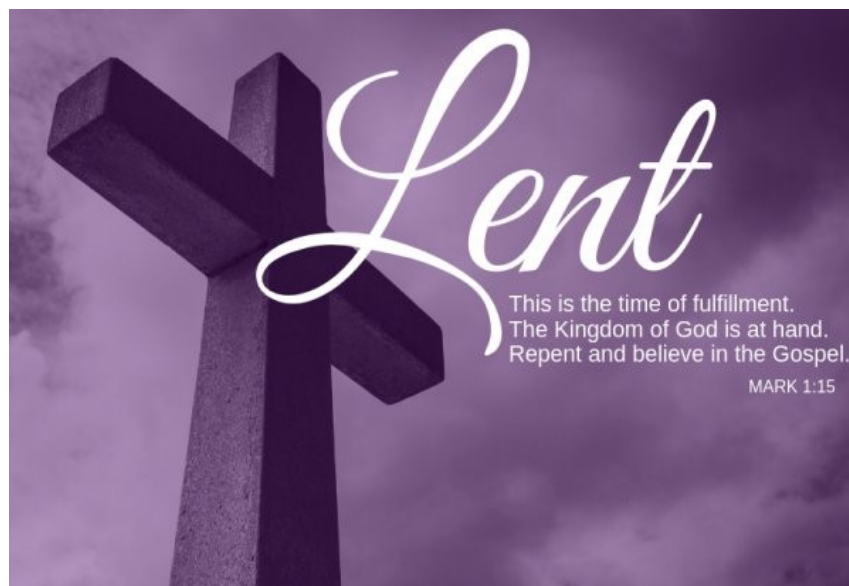
Youth Group will be held on the **FIRST SUNDAY** of each month. All children from 1st – 8th grade are welcome to attend. Lunch will be provided. Bring a friend and come enjoy some fun, games and fellowship with us!

When: Sunday, March 3

Time: 11:00 am (after the 10:00 church service)

Where: We will meet in the St. John's gym

Who: 1st – 8th grade (invite a friend!)



February 2024 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
				1	2	3 5PM WORSHIP
				Our Neighbor's Place Warming Shelter Nights		
4 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11AM YOUTH GROUP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	5	6	7	8 11:30AM WELCA	9	10 5PM WORSHIP
Our Neighbor's Place Warming Shelter Nights						
11 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP Scout Sunday 11:15AM BELL CHOIR 12PM Brew Crew	12	13 7PM Dufford Terrace Board	14 Ash Wednesday Services 12PM & 7PM 6PM SOUP SUPPER CONG. COUNCIL following 7PM worship	15	16	17 5PM WORSHIP
Our Neighbor's Place Warming Shelter Nights						
18 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	19	20	21 6PM SOUP SUPPER	22	23	24 5PM WORSHIP
25 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	26	27	28 6PM SOUP SUPPER	29		

St. John's Lutheran Church
 2216 Peach St., Erie PA 16502
 (814) 456-7596 www.StJohnsErie.org
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