



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

"You belong here."

The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

What's NEW at the Table?

What would a church be without tables? Convenient flat surfaces are essential as we arrive—we find worship service bulletins, tracts and publications, coffee and cookies on good days! We sell picnic tickets, recruit names on clipboards, fill out name tags, register our Project Dignity neighbors, and entertain kids with holiday-themed crafts. Functional tables, with ordinary uses.

During the Lenten season, we gather around tables with our soup bowls and bread. Wednesday evening worship leads into Maundy Thursday, when we remember the upper room table where Jesus' followers heard the surprising announcement of a NEW COVENANT! Did they gasp? At least look at each other with raised eyebrows? Gospel and Epistle accounts show that these followers had no idea what was coming, or how their lives would change as they spread news of their risen Lord. Who could have predicted how the world would respond to an invitation to come to the table of the Lord in centuries to come?

We live in NEW COVENANT times. When we take communion at the Lord's table, and when we sit at committee tables, we attempt to carry out the Lord's commission to us. The meeting table in our Assembly Room is an important place for our responses to God's word and grace.

In February, Council gathered around the Assembly Room table, welcoming newly elected members Mark Eller and Max Matthew Alwens (who was unable to attend that evening). Council elected officers and identified committee liaisons for the coming year.

Roger Olsen, President, Property Committee

Bob Bestvina, Vice President, Communications, Personnel

Carolyn Sturtevant, Secretary, Social Ministry

Tim Durst, Treasurer, Finance

Janet Heubel, Evangelism

Barb Kulisek, Worship and Music

Paul Rapela, Marj Quinn, Mark Eller, and Max Matthew Alwens serve on various committees.

Liaison positions for Christian Education and Stewardship are open.

In January's congregational meeting, we also decided to convene a new group, a **Transition Committee**, to consider options for pastoral leadership. Beth Nagy, Tim and Leslye Durst, Butch Karnes, and Carolyn Sturtevant will serve, and they hope to add a few more volunteers.

St. John's members, in cooperation with our excellent paid staff, carry out the ministries of the church through various committees. There's a place at the meeting table for you!

#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.

Congregational Notes

The congregation extends condolences to Connie Smith Leretsis on the passing of her mother, Ruth J. Eichler Smith Arkwright on February 16, 2024.

Scout Sunday

Scout Troop 9 joined us in worship on Scout Sunday, February 11th, also serving as ushers and lectors. Pastor Mineo welcomed them and shared a photo of himself as a young scout. Many in the congregation with their own connections to scouting felt a kinship with these young people and their leaders and families. We wish them well in their activities and welcome them to return to worship any time.

“Souper Bowl” Winners!

Thanks to all who made our “Souper Bowl” a success! Our stated goal was at least 49 non-perishable items in the boxes to support and/or predict the winning Super Bowl football team. You gave 35 items to the San Francisco Forty-Niners, 6 to the Kansas City Chiefs, and 31 to the Protest box representing Bills, Browns, Steelers, and any other favorites, for a total of 72 items! The real winners are our Project Dignity neighbors.

Project Dignity Takes a Break March 20

Wednesday, March 6th, Project Dignity will be open. Wednesday, March 20th, Project Dignity will be closed to allow the crew a well-deserved vacation break. Neighbors received notices in February, and the schedule will be posted again in March.

Since 2015, when Diane Bestvina accepted leadership of Project Dignity from Chuck Evans, Project Dignity has opened its doors to neighbors every first and third Wednesday of the month, with only one exception, closing for one Wednesday following the Basement Flood of 2021. Even during pandemic shut-downs, the crew served food and personal care items, wearing masks for safety. St. John’s continues to serve our long-established and new neighbors through this community outreach.

Camp Lutherlyn “Building for the Future”

Council has approved a gift of \$1000 to Camp Lutherlyn for its “Building for the Future” campaign. Last year, 2023, was the 75th anniversary of this training ground for the faith of children and people of all ages. A brief video (lutherlyn.com/future) shows campers enjoying a variety of activities, and it explains some of the improvements that the campaign funds will provide. New cabins are replacing the last of the concrete block cabins that sheltered this camper, many decades ago!

Camp Lutherlyn builds faith, as well as cabins. Scholarships for campers are available to members of St. John’s through the Bahm/Palmer Committee. St. John’s camperships cover the entire registration fee. Please inquire in the church office to learn more.

Grizzly Bears of Yellowstone National Park

Abiding Hope Lutheran Church invites everyone to their monthly “Listen and Learn” series on Wednesday, March 13 at 12:00 pm. The series brings talented people to share their pastimes, hobbies, career histories, etc. with the audience. Dr. Steven J. Ropski is the guest speaker in March, discussing hibernation, mating, food habits, and problems associated with bears in Yellowstone National Park. Bring a sandwich and enjoy the good Lutheran coffee and cookies. This free series meets at 2402 West Grandview Blvd.

www.abidinghopeerie.org

Brew Crew Meets Sunday, March 3

This group meets in the Parish Center kitchen after the service, the first Sunday of the month. This friendly group gathers with ideas and ingredients to concoct their own versions of a popular beverage with a long history. While advising moderation, Luther and his wife are reputed to have brewed their own beer, a common drink in households of their time. For more information, talk to Tim Durst.

ONP – Our Neighbors’ Place – the overflow homeless shelter 2024

I will be honest. At the shelter wrap up meeting in April of 2023, Bob and I were not going to be the coordinators for the shelter in the 2023-24 season. But sometime between that time and the August meeting to begin the planning process for the new season, God truly spoke to me. I listened. At that August 22nd meeting I even signed us up for two weeks instead of one. God can be very influential in our lives, sometimes when we least expect it.

I attended meetings that were held every two weeks from then on, giving Bob all the updates as they were agreed upon by the group. In December and January I made a lot of phone calls, sent many emails and texts to finalize plans for all those who would be providing 12 nights of 45 food bags (sandwich, snack, beverage), 2 Saturday nights of hot meals and those who would be onsite for 4-hour shifts from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. I felt it was most important to have a St. John’s member on every shift and am so happy to say that was accomplished! In addition, we had a St. John’s crew to set up the cots and take them down followed by a mass cleaning of the entire space. Our own Joe was present for that as well. I will post on the hall board the schedule and a few photos for all to see.

Order forms were filled out for supplies that EUMA (Erie United Methodist Alliance) provided. Supplies that we already had in storage, such as socks, boxer shorts, gloves, towels and toiletries needed to be gathered. Lists of what was needed to purchase were made (coffee, sugar, cocoa, creamer/milk, cookies) and the shopping followed. And those who know me, knew I would be creating signs, shower sign-up forms and well, list/guidelines for just about everything. 😊

“Late in the game” it came to my attention there were no places offering a free breakfast to the shelter guests on Sundays. I am so grateful to all of you who contributed to that appeal in order to offer \$5 gift cards to Arby’s, Wendy’s or McDonalds. St. Peter’s Lutheran of North East contributed the funds to cover all gift cards needed for one of those Sunday mornings. Any extra funds received were used towards expenses or a great gift to each shelter guest the last night – a 5 rides bus pass! Thank you! Thank you!

It also touched our hearts with joy that without even being asked, Pastor Ralph and Jo came and helped in various capacities a couple of nights. Something else that kept us strong throughout our time leading the shelter were the daily prayer texts offered to us by Pastor Ralph.

Something I hadn’t given any thought to ahead of time was the Superbowl fell on one of our shelter nights. (oops) So, we “went big” and we made it work. Bob set up everything technically needed to watch the game on the screen in the gym. I used snacks from food rescue (ham, salami and cheese) and well as purchasing crackers and Faygo pop from Sam’s and mac and cheese and penne from Valerio’s. Sam’s cupcakes and ice cream sandwiches were a well-received dessert! The night before the game we informed each of our guests we would open our doors to them at 6 p.m. instead of the usual 7:30. Actually only half (21) chose to be upstairs for the game and halftime show which dwindled to only 6 by game’s end, but we were happy to do it nevertheless. I will say a big hug of thanks goes to Leslye Durst and Fran Wilson as the 3 of us made endless trips up the stairs filling food and beverage orders for all. 😊

Bob and I were at the shelter every night from 6:30 until around midnight. We were at full capacity almost every night with 42 guests, up to 26 men and 16 women. I will be honest and say every night can present itself with a new “experience/challenge”. But I truly feel we handled everything that came our way as fairly and lovingly as we could. I will admit at the end of the 2 weeks, we were exhausted and it took days to feel our energy return. But in closing, I want to thank each of you who “played any part” during the 2 weeks of the shelter. We followed God’s Plan.

“And the King will answer them, truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.” Matthew 25:40

God’s Peace,

Diane Bestvina

EASTER GARDEN



As we prepare to celebrate the resurrection of Jesus, we remember loved ones and friends by decorating our Sanctuary with beautiful Lily and Primrose plants. You are invited to contribute in honor or in memory of individuals you know and love. Each child who attends Easter worship is invited to take home a Primrose plant from the cross at the front of the Sanctuary. After the Sunday Traditional service, adults are welcome to take the Lily plants they donated. Volunteers will donate the remaining Lilies to church members and friends who are homebound, hospitalized, or living in assisted care facilities so they too can enjoy a reminder of the Good News of Easter. Though dedications are unlimited, a limited number of Lilies and Primroses will be purchased. Any excess funds will be applied to our Altar Flower and Candle Fund. Please place this order form in an envelope marked "Easter Garden" with your check or cash and return it to the church office by noon on **Monday, March 18th**. Your order may also be placed in the offering plate during worship.

GIVEN BY _____ PHONE # _____

IN HONOR/IN MEMORY OF

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ _____ (suggested donation \$14 per plant)

Cash ____ or Check # _____

____ I would like to help with the ministry of delivering flowers



Donations Needed

Empty plastic Easter eggs, for the upcoming Breakfast with the Easter Bunny event, can be found in the church Narthex. Each bag contains 20 plastic eggs for you to fill. We kindly ask that you stuff the eggs with only pre-packed treats, due to allergy concerns.

Please return all eggs to the church office by Sunday, March 17. Thank you in advance for your help and donations! ☺

Questions? Contact Leslye Durst 814-323-2134



**Daylight Savings Time begins
March 10th.**

**Don't forget to set your clocks
ahead one hour!**

Breakfast with the Easter Bunny

The Youth and Family Committee is hosting Breakfast with the Easter Bunny on

Saturday, March 23rd from 9:00-11:00 am.

Come and enjoy breakfast and games in the Parish Center with your church and neighborhood friends and family. ☺

Questions? Contact Leslye Durst 814-323-2134



Youth Group will be held on the **FIRST SUNDAY** of each month. All children from PreK – 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: PreK – 8th grade (invite a friend!)

Questions? Contact Leslye Durst 814-323-2134



This is the daily devotion that Pastor Ralph presented in his Ash Wednesday sermon. You're encouraged to set aside some quiet time and pray this daily during Lent. The service and sermon are still available on our YouTube channel, and the audio version of the sermon is on Pastor Ralph's Facebook page.

Daily Prayer for Lent 2024

1. Silence the noise.
Silence.
2. Think about God.
Silence.
3. *Pray this prayer 3 times:*
Me: "Lord, have mercy."
Silence.
God: "I forgive you."
Silence.
4. Trace cross on forehead.

Lent 2024
St. John's Lutheran Church, Erie PA

Soup Supper in the Gym 6:00 - 7:00 PM
Worship in the Sanctuary 7:00 - 7:30 PM

Walking With the Lord

Ash Wednesday	February 14	WALKING WITH THE LORD	Psalm 51
Second Wednesday of Lent	February 21	CONFESSION	Psalm 32
Third Wednesday of Lent	February 28	TRUST	Psalm 27
Fourth Wednesday of Lent	March 6	HEALING	Psalm 91
Fifth Wednesday of Lent	March 13	REDEMPTION	Psalm 130
Sixth Wednesday of Lent	March 20	PRAISE	Psalm 41



Holy Week Services

Sunday, March 24 is Palm Sunday, the beginning of Holy Week, when we follow Christ's steps to the cross. We invite everyone to join in worship for these services and for our Easter celebration.

Palm Sunday Services	Saturday, March 23, 5:00 pm Sunday, March 24, 10:00 am
Maundy Thursday	Thursday, March 28, 7:00 pm
Good Friday	Friday, March 29, Noon and 7:00 pm
Easter Services	Saturday, March 30, 5:00 pm Sunday, March 31, 10:00 am

🎵 Music for Holy Week 🎵

During Holy Week there will be several musical offerings from the Music Department. We hope you can attend the various services.

Palm Sunday – St. John's Bell Choir
 Maundy Thursday – St. John's Chancel Choir
 Good Friday – St. John's Bell Choir
 Easter Sunday – Trumpets and St. John's Chancel Choir

Thank you,
 Kathy Swanson

March 2024 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
					1	2 5PM WORSHIP
3 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11AM YOUTH GROUP 11AM Brew Crew 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	4	5	6 6PM SOUP SUPPER	7	8	9 5PM WORSHIP
10 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	11	12	13 6PM SOUP SUPPER CONG. COUNCIL 7PM	14 11:30AM WELCA	15	16 5PM WORSHIP
17 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	18	19 7PM Dufford Terrace Board	20 6PM SOUP SUPPER	21	22	23 9AM Breakfast w/Easter Bunny 5PM WORSHIP
24 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	25	26	27 6PM SOUP SUPPER	28 6PM CHAN- CEL CHOIR 7PM MAUNDY THURS. SER- VICE	29 6PM BELL CHOIR 12PM & 7PM GOOD FRI. SERVICES	30 5PM WORSHIP
31 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP HAPPY EASTER!						

St. John's Lutheran Church

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