



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

"You belong here."

The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

Happy Re-New-al Year!

New Year's Eve is not my favorite holiday. It feels like a time of accounting for events of the past year. Not unlike anticipating attendance at a class reunion, I'm thinking about my health, my appearance, my financial security, my relationships, and my progress—if any—toward goals I may have set in the past year. When meeting classmates after gaps in time, there's a tendency to measure oneself against the lives of others. On New Year's Eve, it's more likely that I'd compare my December self with my previous January self. Am I happy with who am I now? Would I dare to make a resolution to improve something in the next twelve months? Would I trust myself to stick to a plan more than just a week or two? How would I feel if I fail to keep a New Year's resolution?

A child at the expERIENCE Children's Museum told a television interviewer that she would fight less with her siblings in the new year. A woman told the reporter that she'd cut down on screen time to spend more personal time with those around her. On the Today show, Al Roker admitted that he and his wife felt that last year's attempt to learn French didn't yield their desired results—they will try again with a different approach. Many people will resolve to drop an unhealthy habit, and still others will pull on their exercise gear to hit area fitness centers to tone up and to lose weight.

We've come through a season of pledges and promises from political candidates. One living president will leave the White House, and another will move in. Historians will assess their adherence to stated goals.

Former president Jimmy Carter is being remembered at the time of his recent death for the spirit that guided his actions. His niece, Kim Fuller, preserved this quote from a February 19, 2023, prayer service, "I have one life and one chance to make it count for something. I'm free to choose that something. That something—the something that I've chosen—is my faith. My faith demands that I do whatever I can, wherever I can, whenever I can, for as long as I can with whatever I have, to try to make a difference." Judging by his accomplishments, Jimmy Carter must have renewed that resolution every New Year of his long life. He was not afraid to make and to keep his promise.

Quite an example to follow! We know that God loves us as we are. We also know that there's always room for improvement. If I dare to make a resolution to improve my own life, and especially to help others, I'll keep in mind the words of Paul in his letter to the Philippians, "I can do all things in him who strengthens me." *Phil. 4:13*

Carolyn Sturtevant, January 1, 2025

#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 Meeting, Sunday, January 19

Please mark your calendars to attend the annual business meeting of our congregation on Sunday, January 19, 2025, following the 10 am worship service. At this meeting, we require a quorum of members to approve a budget and to elect people to Council and certain committees. In January 2024, we voted that a quorum is 40% of church membership, or 30 members, whichever is greater. This year's NWPA Synod Assembly in June will see the selection of Bishop to begin a new term of office, so it is important to identify and register our two voting members to Synod Assembly well in advance. Council welcomes everyone to consider serving our congregation in a variety of positions and committees. Don't be afraid to ask for more information of Council President Roger Olsen or any Council member.

We All Won!

Everyone at the Dufford Terrace dinner and bingo night on December 17th was a winner. We enjoyed fine fellowship, delicious Sabella's food, and the friendly competition of 10 BINGO games. Veteran caller, Butch Karnes, performed his duties with one arm tied behind his back—or more accurately, in a sling following recent shoulder surgery. BINGO trivia: Butch called 60 numbers in the final game before a winner was able to fill all 24 squares and shout "BINGO!" Thanks to all who arranged this annual event bringing Dufford Terrace and St. John's together.

Congregational notes

Audrey Hettrick, a long-time faithful member of St. John's, passed away December 3, 2024. Although she lived with family in southern Pennsylvania during recent years, we remember with gratitude her gifts of leadership and energy in many aspects of St. John's ministries.

Ken Marshall, friend of Kathy Swanson, died on December 28, 2024. Although not a member of St. John's, Ken's deep friendship with Kathy has supported her musical ministry among us. Ken's obituary reveals his accomplishments unknown to us as we have prayed for him during times of ill health. We now pray for comfort for Ken's loved ones as they grieve his loss.

Scout's Rummage Sale Postponed

Scouts are known for the motto "Be Prepared," but nothing could have prepared any of us to deal with the snow that blanketed Erie after Thanksgiving! Being unable to arrange the rummage sale for December 7th, the troop expects to reschedule this event on a future date. Stay tuned for more information.

Epiphany Service January 6--Erie Lutheran Conference

Faith Lutheran Church, 5414 East Lake Road, Harborcreek, again will host an Epiphany Service of Holy Communion and Burning of the Greens, Monday, January 6, 7:00 p.m. Jesus is the light of the world! The magi come to adore the Christ child! Worship will conclude outdoors with the burning of the Faith church Christmas greens. Faith church invites members of all eighteen churches of the Erie Lutheran Conference to join them for this celebration that marks the end of the Christmas season and the beginning of Epiphany.

Recreation Room Repair Update

When the main water source pipes failed in May, 2021, areas of the church basement serving active ministries and projects took priority over the Recreation Room and its two bathrooms, which suffered the greatest damage. Engaging contractors for Rec Room repairs has been challenging. Thanks to Butch and Knute Karnes, additional demo in the bathrooms cleared the way to seal the ancient stone foundation walls with foam. Council has been considering bids to restore one bathroom and to close the other for storage. Your contributions to the monthly "Recreation Room Repair" envelope will supplement funds from insurance to reclaim this space for use by our Youth.

Poinsettias

Thanks to all who donated to the Poinsettia Garden to brighten our sanctuary! Following the 10 am service on Sunday, January 5, anyone who contributed to this fund is welcome to take home a poinsettia. At this time, we will also carefully store away the Christmas decorations.

Serve Alert!

Your opportunity to help those experiencing homelessness has arrived. Bob and I will be St. John's coordinators again this year. We also took a single night of coordinating December 30th and want to give a big thanks to Sue and Becky Carlson, Brian Bestvina, Phyllis R zodkiewicz and her friend Michelle M. for assisting us in the positions needed that evening. A huge thanks as well to Phyllis R zodkiewicz and her friend, Susan S., for preparing 60 delicious food bags. Our dates are January 29th thru Feb. 4th and February 19th thru February 25th. I will be reaching out to sign up volunteers for an evening (or 2) from 6:30 to 11:00 and also to churches/small groups to provide an evening of "food bags". Monetary donations can also be made that will be used to buy coffee, cocoa, creamer, socks, gloves, men's and women's underwear and sweat pants once the need is determined. Please clearly mark your envelope Shelter.

Serving with Spirit,
Diane B.

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! ☺

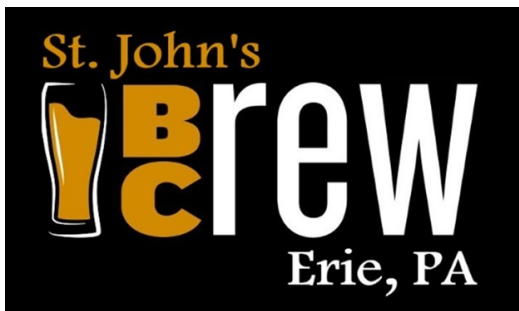
When: Sunday, January 5th & February 2nd

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



1st Sunday of the month following the 10AM service.

Brew a Beer, Bottle a Beer,
Drink a Beer.

No experience necessary!

Contact Tim Durst with questions.

Dear People of St. John's,

Thanks to everyone who blessed us with cards, gifts, kind words, and prayers during the Christmas season! We appreciate every gift, including the gifts from Mutual Ministry on behalf of the congregation. We are truly blessed to have walked through Advent with you and celebrated Christmas with such joy and meaning. Thank you!

~Pastor Ralph & Jo

MARK YOUR CALENDARS! "Youth Sunday" is March 2, 2025. The entire worship service will be led by the youth: music, Scripture readings, prayers, sermon, etc. under the leadership of Pastor Ralph and Leslye Durst. We will plan the service during Youth Group (first Sunday of the month following worship). We'll practice music at Youth Group on Sunday, January 5th following worship.

“What It Means To Be A Lutheran”



**A Sunday in late March 2025
2:00 to 7:00 PM**

**Congregational Potluck
5:00 PM**

**Pastor Ralph will lead this session
for anyone interested in
becoming a member of St. John's
and for anyone interested in a refresher.**

**For those interested,
please contact Pastor Ralph.**

A firm date will be set soon.

All those in 5th Grade and above are invited to a “Communion Retreat With Pastor Ralph” on Saturday, February 15th 10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.

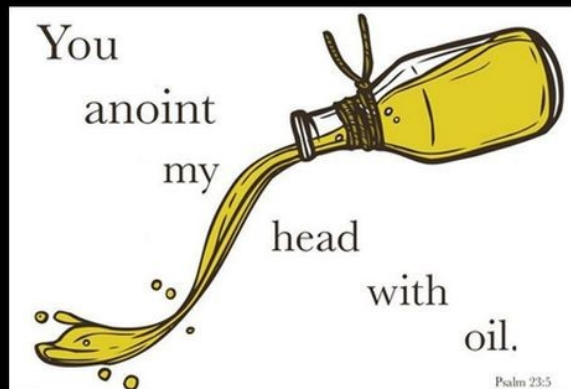
There's a sign-up sheet on the church office window. Participants will join in “Affirmation of Holy Communion” during worship on Sunday, February 16th. The "Communion Retreat," for those in 5th grade and above, includes who have not made their "First Communion." Also, for those who have already taken Communion,



ion, but have not had a class in the biblical and spiritual meaning of Holy Communion. you are ENCOURAGED to attend. Even adults who would like to join us are welcome. Please feel free to talk with Pastor Ralph with any questions you have. There is a sign-up sheet on the church office window. Lunch will be pizza and breadsticks!

“Healing Service”

*Worshippers are invited
for anointing with oil
and prayer for healing
at the end of worship:
Saturday, January 25
Sunday, January 26*



Music Notes

Choir Rehearsals – Choir rehearsals will resume on Sunday, January 5th. The Chancel Choir rehearses at 9:00 AM and the Bell Choir at 11:15 AM. New members are welcome. Start the New Year with a resolution to sing and ring for the Lord.



January 2025

17-19 - Winter Retreat: for 4th-12th graders (campers will be divided by age groups and stay in cabin with cabin leaders from the summer staff). GAGA ball in the snow, Bible study, the bouldering room, songs, worship, friends, indoor and outdoor games, lots of your summer camp favorites, and fun in the wonderful winter weather! (Registration Required)



21-26 - Quilting/Crafting Retreat: Come and join us for a fun-filled weekend (or add on a few days and arrive as early as Tuesday) of quilting/crafting/reading/relaxing/creating. It's a great time of fun and fellowship that's very popular with quilters, scrapbookers, and other crafters. (Registration Required)

February 2025

1 - REGISTRATION OPENS FOR SUMMER CAMP: Registration for summer camp opens at 6am on February 1. Because February 1 is a Saturday, phones and emails will be answered in the office from 8-10am on Saturday, February 1.

1 - Geology Saturday Safari: Saturday Safaris are a great way to spend a Saturday! They are designed for families and small groups. Dress to be outside. (Registration Required)

21-23 - Grown-Up Winter Retreat: A fun weekend at camp just for grown-ups. Campfire, tree tapping and maple sugaring, Agape Feast/Worship, games and conversation by a fire, crafts, and lots of camp fun just for adults. Must be 21 or older. (Registration required)

March 2025

1 - Maple Sugaring Saturday Safari: This Saturday Safari features winter tree identification, tapping a maple tree, collecting sap, and observing the evaporation process. (Registration Required)

18-23 - Quilting/Crafting Retreat: Come and join us for a fun-filled weekend of quilting/crafting/reading/relaxing/creating. It's a great time of fun and fellowship that's very popular with quilters, scrapbookers, and other crafters. (Registration Required)

22 - Intro to Blacksmithing Class: Learn the art of Blacksmithing in the Woodland Forge at Lutherlyn. All materials are supplied and classes are taught by master blacksmith, Flavius Brinsfield. (Registration Required)

28-30 - Nature Nerds Retreat: This adult only retreat will enjoy a relaxing and educational weekend together geeking out over all of the awesome things in Nature at Lutherlyn! (Registration Required)

January 2025 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 5PM WORSHIP
5 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11AM BREW CREW 11AM YOUTH GROUP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	6	7	8 6PM CONG. COUNCIL	9 11:30AM WELCA	10	11 5PM WORSHIP
12 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	13	14	15	16	17	18 5PM WORSHIP
19 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	20	21 7PM Dufford Terrace Board	22	23	24	25 5PM WORSHIP
26 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR	27	28	29	30	31	

St. John's Lutheran Church

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