



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

*"You belong here."*

# The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

## "Moon Trees"

Amid my usual diet of fictional audio books, I listened recently to a non-fiction selection, [The Tree Collectors: Tales of Arboreal Obsession](#), by Amy Stewart, published by Random House in 2024. As I listened to the many stories of people who visit, plant, and focus their lives on the love of trees, the phrase "Moon Trees" caught my attention.

In 1996, a third grade teacher and her students were just as "stumped" when they saw a tree with a plaque declaring it to be a "Moon Tree." The metal marker explained that the tree was grown from a seed that traveled into space in Apollo 14 in 1971. Teacher Joan Goble wrote to NASA for more information. NASA officials had to research this forgotten event to get the story. Astronaut Stuart Roosa, formerly a smoke-jumper working to save trees from fires, had been asked by a US Forest Service official to carry a small vial of 500 seeds of five different species into space. Roosa remained in the command ship as his colleagues walked on the moon, so the trees from these seeds actually should be called "Space Trees," but "Moon Trees" sounds so much better!

When the seeds returned to earth, they were sent to Forest Service stations to germinate them. Of the 500 seeds, 420 developed into seedlings. Most were given to state forestry groups to be planted for the US bicentennial celebration in 1976. Decades later, they look like their earth-bound counterparts, except for the plaques identifying them as celebrity trees.

Back to the "Tree Collectors" in the book—they like to visit the Moon Trees. *Wikipedia's* online article about "Moon Trees" gives locations of about 100 space-age trees that we could visit!. The Tree Collectors also are fascinated by trees grown from seeds produced by the original Moon Trees. NASA sent a second batch of tree seeds aloft in Artemis I in 2022. How are the second generation Moon Trees faring? Who knows how many earthly trees carry this outer space heritage?

Scriptures speak the language of seeds and trees. Genesis 1:29 says that on the sixth day, God said, "Behold, I have given you every plant yielding seed which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food." Seeds and trees for every physical function on earth, and seed-and-tree imagery used for our instruction and inspiration.

A seed from a heavenly source, sending roots deep into the soil, searching for water, emerging from the earth, branching as it grows, and launching generations of new growth through its fruit and seeds. It's a tree of life, and a story of faith that we have received from those who came before, spreading far and wide, and reaching toward the light from above.

*Carolyn Sturtevant*

**#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**

St. John's offers condolences to family and friends of those who passed away in January: Brian Edinger, son of member Joyce Herspeger, passed away suddenly on January 13, Reverend Jerry Gray, whose recent surgery was a cause for prayers, passed away at home on January 27. Pastor Gray led us in worship many Sundays as a supply pastor, and he held a weekday Bible study.

### **Church Council Elections**

At the annual Congregational Meeting, St. John's elected members to several positions: Church Council, (3 year terms): Janel Anderson, Bob Bestvina, Sandra Burton, Mark Eller, Molinda Kearns. They will join current Council members whose terms continue for one or two more years: Max Alwens, Janet Heubel, Roger Olsen, Marj Quinn, Paul Rapela, and Carolyn Sturtevant. At the February 2th Council meeting, the group will choose officers for President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, and will identify committee liaisons.

We owe our sincere thanks to outgoing Council members, Barb Kulisek, who headed the Worship and Music Committee, and Tim Durst, who served as Treasurer, keeping our finances and budget in order as head of the Finance Committee. We hope that both Barb and Tim will continue their good work on these committees.

### **Treasurer Position Open**

The role of Treasurer is vital to the financial health of St. John's. It can be filled by a member of Council, but Council membership is not a requirement. According to St. John's bylaws, the term of Treasurer is limited to a set number of consecutive years. For that reason, Tim Durst's term as Treasurer ended after 2024.

The Treasurer works in concert with the Office Administrator, the Finance Committee, and other Committees to record St. John's income and to cover expenses, all according to the budget. The Finance Committee meets the first or second Monday of each month. The Treasurer presents documents on the checking account, the investments, and the status of the budget at Council meetings on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday evening of each month. Online spreadsheet skills are a must.

Tim Durst stands ready to mentor and advise the next Treasurer, and he will answer questions for those who would like more information. Please share your financial talents with the congregation!

### **Dufford Terrace Board Elections**

The congregation elected these members to the Dufford Terrace Board: Roger Olsen, Marj Quinn, Jared Scott, and Jim Scott. Thanks to all members of the Board who oversee the management of this senior apartment ministry, named in honor of the late Pastor Clair O. Dufford.

### **Bahm/Palmer Committee**

Max Alwens and Marj Quinn were elected to the committee that manages funds from the Bahm and Palmer estates. According to the committee's report in the special Congregational Meeting edition of the Parish Post, this committee reminds members that funds are available for children of the congregation who need help with medical expenses, tuition, and scholarships to Camp Lutherlyn. The church office has applications.

### **NWPA Synod Delegates**

St. John's will send Erin Harper and Butch Karnes as voting delegates to Northwest Pennsylvania Synod Assembly at Thiel College in June. This year, the Synod Assembly will vote to fill the six-year term of Bishop. Delegates will participate in an online pre-voting session on June 11, and will attend in-person meetings June 13-14.

### **Service for Rev. Jerry Gray**

Family and friends will gather at St. John's on Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup> to honor the memory of Reverend Jerry Gray. Visitation will be in the Parish Center from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Pastor Mineo will lead the service beginning at 1:30 pm. A meal will follow the service. Arrangements are in the care of Burton Quinn Scott Funeral Home.

### **Eagles or Chiefs?**

What is a Super Bowl without snacks? This year, you may predict/vote for the team most likely to win the Super Bowl by bringing a snack to boxes in our lobby. Suggested snacks could be packages of cookies, chips, pretzels, or other similar favorites. We will be sharing these shelf-safe packages with our Project Dignity neighbors in March. Your beloved team not in this year's Super Bowl? Bring a snack to the "Protest Box!"

### **Scouts Selling Sandwiches on Super Bowl Sunday!**

The Scouts will be in the lobby with Pretzel Sandwiches on Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>. The choices are ham, salami, or turkey. Purchase one sandwich for \$3 or 3 sandwiches for \$8. Cash is probably the best currency. Proceeds will support the troop's activities.

### **Our Neighbors' Place Keeping Many Warm**

St. John's volunteers began hosting the first week of the winter warming shelter from Wednesday evening, January 29 until Tuesday, February 4. Returning guests/neighbors received their accustomed bed assignments and newcomers were accommodated in this shelter or referred to a different location. The new facility serves about 50 people each night. Everyone was given brown bag meal, a cupcake, pizza, and hot drinks through the evening. Volunteers managed the schedule for those who wished to have showers. Additional staff offered haircuts and foot care. Erie County Executive Brenton Davis visited the Shelter and spoke with St. John's Coordinator, Diane Bestvina. St. John's will host a second shelter week from Wednesday, February 19 to Tuesday, February 25. The faithful commitment of volunteers makes this ministry a success. Thank you to all who have donated funds and time.



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

**When:** Sunday, February 2nd & March 2nd

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

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

**Who:** PreK – 8<sup>th</sup> 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.

**“What It Means To Be A Lutheran”**



**Interested in membership at St. John's?**

**There's a sign-up sheet on the church office window.**

***Pastor Ralph will contact those who have signed up to set a date.***

**Current members are always invited to join us for a refresher.**

**“Holy Communion Retreat”**

**For all those in 5th Grade and above.**



**NEW DATE TO BE ANNOUNCED**

**Sign-up sheet on the church office window.**

St. John's Lutheran Church, Erie PA  
**Lent 2025**  
 "Walking With the Lord Again"

Ash Wednesday Worship: March 5  
 NOON and 7:00 PM

Beginning Wednesday, March 12:  
 Soup Supper in the Gym 6:00 - 7:00 PM  
 Worship in the Sanctuary 7:00 - 7:30 PM

Ash Wednesday	March 5	WALKING WITH THE LORD AGAIN	Psalm 51
Second Wednesday of Lent	March 12	LISTEN	Psalm 95
Third Wednesday of Lent	March 19	PRAY	Psalm 25
Fourth Wednesday of Lent	March 26	GROW	Psalm 1
Fifth Wednesday of Lent	April 2	PROCLAIM	Psalm 89
Sixth Wednesday of Lent	April 9	GIVE THANKS	Psalm 26

**Youth will lead our worship service  
 Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m.**



**REHEARSAL:**  
**February 2<sup>nd</sup> following worship.**  
**All youth from PreK to 8<sup>th</sup> Grade are invited.**  
**Bring your friends.**



## Music Notes



**Thank You** – St. John’s Music program would like to thank all the musicians that helped make our services more meaningful this past year. We deeply appreciate all the vocalists, instrumentalists, instrumental ensembles and choirs that added to our worship in 2024.

**Choir members needed** – Why not make a New Year’s resolution to be a part of St. John’s music program this year? 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 - whatever fits in your schedule. If you want to do one selection for special music that would be great. Lent begins March 5 with Ash Wednesday. If you would like to join choir for the Lenten/Easter season, we would love to have you fellowship with us. Chancel Choir rehearses on Sundays at 9:00 AM and the Bell Choir rehearses on Sundays at 11:15 AM. We look forward to seeing new faces in St. John’s music program in 2025!



*Dear Friends at St. John’s,  
I would like to thank everyone at Church for the prayers and support you gave me during the illness and passing of my friend, Ken Marshall. I know he was comforted, as was I, for the prayers you offered on his behalf during these past several months. Please know that every prayer was deeply appreciated. Pastor Mineo’s visitations were a real blessing and the flowers the Church sent were beautiful. Thank you very much for your thoughtfulness and concern.*

*Yours in Christ,  
Kathy Swanson*



## Green Corner NWPA Synod Green Team

### CREATION CARE ACTIVITIES FOR CHILDREN

One of the best creation-care actions that adults can perform is stimulating children to care for creation. The following activities can stimulate interest and be educational. Three are taken from **ELCA's 2024 "Our Kairos Moment – A Study Guide on Earth's Climate Crisis"**. The Study Guide is a tremendous learning resource for adults and children.

[https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths\\_Climate\\_Crisis\\_Study\\_Guide\\_FINAL.pdf](https://download.elca.org/ELCA%20Resource%20Repository/Earths_Climate_Crisis_Study_Guide_FINAL.pdf)  
 "The Earth as an Apple" is from "A Rocha Canada". <https://arocha.ca>

**GREENHOUSE EFFECT EXPERIMENT:** You will need a sunny day and warm location. Place two outdoor thermometers outside to come up to temperature. Then, place one thermometer inside a clear glass or plastic jar and cover it with a lid or plastic wrap. For one hour, measure the differences in temperature between the thermometers. The difference helps explain the greenhouse effect of gases trapping heat inside our atmosphere.

Learn more at <https://kidminds.org/how-to-explain-the-greenhouse-effect-to-kids-with-printables/>

**EARTH TOAST:** Higher temperatures can have wide-ranging impacts on land, water, soil and human health. Visit <https://tinyurl.com/2b87m62z> to learn how to make "Earth Toast" with children. This activity from Left Brain, Craft Brain is a fun, creative way to start a conversation about the effects of heat.

**THE EARTH AS AN APPLE:** Imagine the earth as an apple. Cut the apple into quarters. One quarter is land and the rest is water. Cut the land quarter in half again to produce two one-eighth pieces of the apple. One of those eighth pieces is land covered with mountains, desert or ice. The other eighth is flat livable land. Cut the livable land into four pieces. Three of those are either wet, hot, rocky, infertile or covered with roads and buildings for cities. The other piece (one thirty-second) *when peeled* represents the topsoil of the earth that is suitable for growing the food that we eat. Source: [https://arocha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cp\\_kids-in-creation-curriculum.pdf](https://arocha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cp_kids-in-creation-curriculum.pdf)

**PAPER EGG CARTON GARDEN STARTER:** This can be a great activity to do with children. Gather a paper egg carton, some soil and seeds from a local store. Fill the carton with soil and plant one seed in each cup. Place the tray on a water-resistant tray in a sunny location and water the seeds a bit each day. As your seeds start to sprout, talk together about all the resources that are needed for plants to grow: organic matter in soil, water and sunlight. After the seeds have grown and gotten two sets of leaves the egg carton can be separated into 12 sections and planted in your home garden, raised beds or pots. Try starting flower seeds or vegetable seeds. Enjoy! How does God's creation work together to create new life? Adapted from Our Kairos Moment "Planting in an Ice Cube Tray".


The Green Team's purpose is to "raise awareness of and advocate for the care of creation." Our mission is to support and encourage creation care ministries, raise awareness, model creation care advocacy consistent with ELCA teachings in our faith communities and public life.

[nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com](mailto:nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com)

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[February 2025](#)

## February 2025 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
						<b>1</b> 5PM WORSHIP
<b>2</b> 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11AM BREW CREW 11AM YOUTH GROUP/Youth Sunday Rehearsal 11:15AM BELL CHOIR						<b>8</b> 5PM WORSHIP
<b>9</b> 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR Scout Sunday & Sandwich Sale			<b>12</b> 6PM CONG. COUNCIL	<b>13</b> 11:30AM WELCA	<b>14</b>  Happy Valentine's Day!	<b>15</b> 5PM WORSHIP
<b>16</b> 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR		<b>18</b> 7PM Dufford Terrace Board				<b>22</b> 5PM WORSHIP
<b>23</b> 9AM CHANCEL CHOIR 10 AM WORSHIP 11:15AM BELL CHOIR						

**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
 2216 Peach St., Erie PA 16502  
 (814) 456-7596 [www.StJohnsErie.org](http://www.StJohnsErie.org)  
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