



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

"You belong here."

The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

Habitat for Humanity Erie—Following the Jimmy Carter Legacy

Rev. Dr. Roché Vermaak, Ph, D., the Executive Director of the Greater Erie Area Habitat for Humanity, introduced himself to the January 2025 meeting of the Erie Lutheran Conference (ELC). He is an ordained Presbyterian minister who has served the homeless for many years, including one earlier posting with Family Promise. Dr. Vermaak came to America (from South Africa) in 2001, and he moved to Erie in 2022 to where his wife works, taking on the role as executive director of Habitat Erie in 2024. Habitat for Humanity is a faith-based program, but neither applicants nor volunteers need to be Christians.

In 36 years, Habitat Erie built 77 new homes and renovated 12 homes. It now costs \$126k to build a new 3-bedroom home, even using volunteer labor, because land, materials, and professional contractor services have risen significantly. However, Habitat sells the home to the new owner for \$97-100k, charging no interest over 25 years. Mortgages for 32 homes have been paid off, and 45 mortgages are active. Some owners have experienced hardship through COVID and/or job loss, and are in delinquency, with a \$25 monthly penalty fee. Vermaak is having hard conversations with those owners to help them catch up on their delinquencies. The mortgage payment of \$330 on a \$100k house is significantly less expensive than current Erie rents, so a Habitat home is a bargain. If a mortgage cannot be rescued, Habitat will renovate the home for a new occupant.

Land for a Habitat home is a major expense. Habitat can find free or lots for \$250-500 in the City of Erie, but their mission is to build in the entire county. Millcreek lots are \$15k, but the additional costs of \$15-20k for a drainage pond raise the expenses to beyond what a family can afford. Habitat homes have neither driveways nor garages, also very costly. Building material costs will rise due to fires in California and possible tariffs from Canadian wood imports, and Habitat Erie needs to pre-order materials to keep construction schedules running smoothly.

(Continued on page 2)

#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.

Home number 78 in Lawrence Park is to be completed in March. Erie Insurance and Eriez Magnetics are helping to build 3 new homes in 2025, to finish in October. Habitat for Humanity hopes that the Lutheran churches will join in building the Erie Insurance houses on Saturdays through July, and that they will participate on weekdays and Saturdays on the Eriez Magnetics build from August-October and a “Faith Build” beginning in October 2025.

How can we help? Habitat for Humanity needs:

- Appropriate land sites
- Volunteers – sign-up and waiver forms <https://form.jotform.com/242903971179061>
Workdays are Tuesday-Saturday, in shifts 8-12 and 12:30-4:15, even in winter, warmed by heaters! Contact liz@habitatierie.org
- An Assistant Site Manager to coordinate the work of volunteers, 12-16 hours/week, paid or unpaid for April - October vermaak@habitatierie.org
- Generous responses to their Capital Campaign to raise \$3m to build 18 houses and pay off their building.
- Volunteers to cover hours at the ReStore on 4922 Pittsburgh Avenue, Erie, PA. Assist staff as they collect and sort items on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday. Checkout of sales on Friday and Saturday from 9-12 and 12-4. restore@habitatierie.org 814 464-8946

Goal for Lenten Offerings--A New Church Roof—In Tanzania!

In 2024, Bishop Michael Lozano, Pastor Tom Glasoe, and, Beth Grafton, Synod Council Vice President, visited a sister synod in Tanzania’s Karagwe Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Tanzania. With ten new congregations being established in recent times, Bishop Lozano has suggested that churches of the NWPA Synod pledge their Lenten offerings to buy metal roofing for the new buildings. An average building may need 500 metal panels at \$10 apiece. Following Bishop Lozano’s recommendation, Council voted to set a St. John’s goal of buying enough sheets to put a roof on one church! **During Lent, beginning Wednesday, March 5, and ending on Easter, money placed in Lenten envelopes and in plate offerings will go toward this goal.**

Congregational notes

St. John’s offers condolences to family and friends of Marilyn J. Pieper Eller, who passed away Tuesday, February 11, 2025. She was active in the Young at Heart group, and she served as a Eucharistic Minister.

Treacherous footing on ice calls for extra caution. Pastor Bill Cox of Prince of Peace received a serious head injury when he fell outside LECOM at Village Square, where he is a Chaplain. Carolyn Sturtevant will wear a sling in the choir loft while recuperating from a broken elbow. Prayers are sought for all who are bruised by injuries and illness in our long winter.

Election of new Executive Officers for 2025:

President	Roger Olsen
Vice President	Bob Bestvina
Treasurer	Marj Quinn
Secretary	Carolyn Sturtevant

Council identified these initial **Committee Assignments** at our February meeting. A few members were not available, but will join a committee later.

Bob Bestvina	Personnel, Finance, Communications
Mark Eller	Evangelism
Janet Heubel	Worship and Music, Evangelism
Max Alwens	Property, Youth and Family
Paul Rapela	Property, Bahm/Palmer
Marj Quinn	Finance, Social Ministry, Bahm/Palmer
Carolyn Sturtevant	Social Ministry
Molinda Kearns	Personnel
Janel Anderson	
Sandi Burton	
Roger Olsen	Property

Council decision on undesignated memorials 7% and 3%

Following discussion at the congregational meeting, the Finance Committee examined the idea of treating Undesignated Memorials in the same manner as Bequests coming from estates of deceased individuals. Currently, when new bequests come from the estate of a deceased person, 7 percent goes into the Tithe fund to help those outside our church, and 3 percent to Congregational Support for members. Requests for help from these two funds will be brought for Council's consideration.

Eucharistic Minister Training

Pastor Jean Kuebler of Faith Lutheran Church, and Dean of the Erie Lutheran Conference, will offer a brief training session/refresher course for lay eucharistic ministers (home communion visitors) on Sunday, March 23, 12-noon to 1:15 at St. John's, Erie. She invites anyone in St. John's and in the ELC churches to attend. A few from St. John's will be participating. Please let our office and Pastor Jean know of your interest.

Rev. Jean N. Kuebler
 Faith Lutheran Church
 5414 E. Lake Rd.
 Erie, PA 16511
 814-899-9653 (off)
 717-440-3515 (cell)
 faithlepastor@gmail.com

Shared Ministry Task Force Retreat, Saturday, March 29, 9-3

This task force of the ELC has been meeting regularly for several months to become better acquainted with each other and with the strengths and challenges common to congregations in this portion of the NWPA Synod of the ELCA. Carolyn Sturtevant and Tim Durst have represented St. John's at these discussions. The group plans a retreat on Saturday, March 29 from 9-3 at Prince of Peace Lutheran. They encourage others to attend this retreat. The goal is to recommend actions that strengthen the bonds between congregations. Please contact Carolyn or Tim to indicate your interest.

Super Bowl Snacks

How's that saying go? There always has to be a winner and a loser? Well, that was not going to be true for Project Dignity on Super Bowl Sunday 2025. The Philadelphia Eagles won over the Kansas City Chiefs 40 to 22, but all those who contributed snacks made sure Project Dignity was a winner, too. The Chiefs took in 6 snacks, the Eagles 34 and well, 2 came in for teams that didn't make it there. In addition to those snacks, with \$16 donated by several who were perhaps undecided, I was able to buy another 8 snacks. So, our goal was met! With 50 snacks every household of Project Dignity will get something.

Thank you! Thank you!

Diane

Our Neighbors' Place Shelter

I offer here a verse many of us have heard but it seems fitting to say again now from Matthew 25:23. "Well done, good and faithful servant: you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." I will not deny there was a lot of planning and time spent in preparing for the two weeks of the Overflow Homeless Shelter in its new location at 450 E. 16th St., also known as ONP, Our Neighbors' Place. As "they" say though, it was a labor of love. And truly from our hearts we want to thank each and every one of you that gave of your time to be there, to prepare food for the hungry that came there, for the monetary donations that helped with supplies and for those offering prayers to guide us. "There is nothing to regret with a job well done." (Joe Garcia) There were memories made and stories to share well into the future. We welcome your conversations or questions any time about the shelter. Your coordinators,

Diane and Bob Bestvina

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! ☺

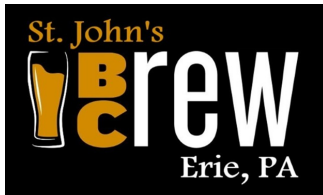
When: Sunday, March 2nd & April 6th

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.

“Holy Communion Retreat”



for everyone **5th Grade and above**, even if you are already receiving Communion.

There’s a sign-up sheet on the church office window. *Pastor Ralph will contact those who have signed up to set a date.*



Daylight Savings Time Begins Sunday, March 9th, 2025 Don’t forget to set your clocks ahead 1 hour.

“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.



**Our youth will lead worship
Sunday, March 2nd
at 10:00 a.m.**

Join us. Bring your family and friends.

The musical talents of our youth will give glory to God.
The youth will lead the congregation in song and liturgy.

On March 2nd, we celebrate the “Transfiguration of Our Lord.”
On this Sunday before Lent begins, it’s traditionally the
last Sunday we sing “Alleluia” until Easter Sunday.
We’ll be singing lots of “Alleluias!”

Sermon Title: “Jesus Is Our Superhero”

**LENT
2025**

**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

Music Notes

“We Sing, We Serve” “We Ring, We Serve”

St. John’s choirs need **YOU**. If you would like to sing or ring just for the Lenten/Easter season we would love to have you join us. If you are a singer, ringer, or instrumentalist, there is a place for you in our worship. If you want to do one selection for special music that would be great. Lent starts with Ash Wednesday on March 5. The Chancel Choir rehearses at 9:00 AM and the Bell Choir at 11:15 AM on Sunday mornings.



Lutheran Summer Music – The Lutheran Church offers a Music educational program for young people in grades 8-12 every summer. This year it is from June 22- July 20th at Valparaiso University in Valparaiso, IN. You can attend a 2 week session or a 4 week session. There are areas of study for voice, organ, piano, woodwinds, brass, strings, percussion, guitar, and many others. Financial aid is available. The deadline to apply is May 1. If you have any questions, please contact Kathy Swanson.

Thank You

A special thank you to Carolyn Sturtevant who helped write this issue of the Parish Post, submitting articles even with a broken arm after a fall on the ice. Please keep Carolyn in your prayers of healing.



March 2025 St. John's Lutheran Church Calendar

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

St. John's Lutheran Church

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