



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

*"You belong here."*

# The Parish Post

Monthly Newsletter

## **"We've Come This Far by Faith, Leaning on the Lord..."**

Pastor Mineo asked to meet with Council in May, and he sang this song in opening devotions. He made this one-time visit to discuss his role as "Supply Plus," preferring the term "Worship Pastor." Having been asked by some about continuing at St. John's, he wished to share pros and cons of our relationship as congregation and part-time pastor. Briefly, Pastor Mineo feels called to his role of leading worship, and he enjoys working with St. John's. He's not in a hurry to step away from our sanctuary. We are grateful for such a faithful shepherd whom we will follow as long as the Spirit leads.

On the other hand, Pastor Mineo believes that St. John's misses out on certain aspects of pastoral leadership, teaching, and counseling that go beyond the role of a Worship Pastor who is called also to retirement. Pastor Mineo finds it difficult to say no to our needs, and we must be sensitive to his role as Worship Pastor, while appreciating his generosity, gifts, and time.

As Council and congregation, we can consider how to manage in our current situation while imagining other approaches. Where possible, we take on tasks to allow our pastor to concentrate on preaching, a pattern becoming more common in many churches.

Council has discussed proceeding with a Ministry Site Profile (MSP) as an internal assessment of St. John's congregational life, and as a formal step toward finding more permanent pastoral leadership when conditions are right or when need arises. We would form a group to begin the process in consultation with our Dean and Bishop. We understand that registering an MSP with our Synod is a first step. Time and the Holy Spirit would reveal our next steps.

*(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.

*(continued from page 1)*

In the NWPA Synod, 11 churches have been listed for a long time as “Congregations with an active MSP” (none in the Erie Lutheran Conference). St. Mark’s Waterford and St. John’s Erie are among the 18 churches categorized as “Congregational Vacancies,” those with no MSP. There’s a third label, “Congregations in Transition,” where we would fit during an MSP process. A few congregants have been identified to start the conversation, and St. John’s Council welcomes other volunteers to express their interest. We honor the Lord’s faithfulness to St. John’s by preparing for our future.

*Carolyn Sturtevant*

### **Congregational notes**

We offer congratulations to anyone completing education goals or making commitments to begin new programs in coming months. If you wish to celebrate any milestones, please notify the office.

With thanks for recent medical tests and procedures among our congregation, we also send prayers for those who continue to meet with their medical teams for ongoing needs.

### **Tending the Garden**

Thanks to the teams who spread 4.5 cubic yards of mulch around the grounds, we’ll have lovely beds to plant the geraniums that decorate our sanctuary on Pentecost. You can wear your red Sunday best to worship and change to your red gloves and bandanas to help plant flowers after the 10 am service. Non-partisan hats only, please.

### **ELC Pre-Synod Assembly Report**

In preparation for the annual gathering of clergy and lay representatives of the NWPA Synod ELCA on June 13 and 14, members of the Erie Lutheran Conferences (ELC) met on May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Bethesda Lutheran Services hosted a light meal at their Leadership Center at 347 W. 18<sup>th</sup> Street. Two main agenda items were the election of the ELC Dean for the next two-year term, and instructions for Synod Assembly reps who will vote for a Bishop for a six-year term. Pastor Jean Kuebler was elected for a second term as ELC Dean.

Erin Harper and Butch Karnes will be St. John’s voting representatives to Synod in June at Thiel College. Paper ballots for elections and official business items are a thing of the past, and online voting keeps reps and tech volunteers on their toes! Two online voting tests will ensure accurate procedures, and the June 11<sup>th</sup> online voting will identify the initial group of candidates. The slate of candidates will become smaller in voting sessions at Synod. Rostered ministers of word and sacrament from anywhere in the ELCA are eligible as candidates for Bishop of or Synod.



### **Holy Communion Retreat**

Four of our youth, **Nolan Durst, Brennen Durst, Chris Light, and Kady Denbow**, attended the "Holy Communion Retreat" on Saturday, May 17 from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Pastor Ralph taught the Old Testament roots of Holy Communion, from the call of Abraham, to the plagues in Egypt, the Passover Meal, freedom from Egyptian slavery, the events of Holy Week when Jesus instituted the Lord's Supper, and more. We discussed sin, forgiveness, grace, and how this meal strengthens us for daily living. Lunch was pizza, and Pastor Ralph performed a few magic tricks.

At worship on Sunday, May 18, the youth led the congregation in the rite of "Affirmation of Communion" which included the statement: "I believe that [Jesus Christ] is really and truly present in, with, and under the bread and wine." As a gift from the congregation, each youth received a unique Communion Cup, handcrafted in the Holy Land, made of real wood from an olive tree.

Pastor Ralph is keeping a list of 5th graders and above to invite to the next "Holy Communion Retreat." Please get names to him.

### **NRSVue translation**

For many years, the Bible translation we hear at worship has been the NRSV (New Revised Standard Version). Our pew Bibles are this translation. Beginning this July we will hear from the NRSVue translation. The "ue" stands for "Updated Edition," which was released on Christmas Day 2021. The online resource we use to prepare our worship services, "Sundays and Seasons," is removing availability of the NRSV on the site, as are most online sites.

The Updated Edition includes about 20,000 changes, improvements in translation. Over half are considered MAJOR changes. The NRSVue is the most widely used translation in the ELCA. From the publisher: "Motivated by love and respect for Scripture, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA hopes that you will find [the NRSVue] suitable to inspire, inform, and guide daily living. The goal of the NRSVue is to offer a readable and accurate version of the Holy Bible to the global English-speaking community for public worship and personal study, for scholarship and study in classrooms, and for informing faith and action in response to God."

The translation is available at no cost at <https://www.biblegateway.com/>

The direct link is: <https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-Updated-Edition-NRSVue-Bible>



### Reminder:

Wear **RED** for Pentecost June 8th.  
Stick around after Sunday Worship to  
help plant the geraniums from the  
Pentecost Garden.

### **“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.**



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.

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, September 7th

**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



**Watch for summer get togethers!**

## Green Corner NWPA Synod Green Team

### RECYCLING WITH A PURPOSE



Is your community or organization interested in removing plastic waste from the environment AND receiving a beautiful park bench for your efforts? Here is an opportunity that has been successful in several counties in our Synod.

“[Trex®](#) is proud to sponsor local recycling programs in communities throughout the country. For example, for K-12 schools, civic organizations, houses of worship and university organizations etc. If your team can collect more than 1,000 pounds of soft film plastics and packaging in a 12-month span, we will award a Trex® furniture bench to your organization.” ([www.trex.com](http://www.trex.com)) Trex is a company that manufactures composite decking and furniture. This recycling program encourages groups to collect plastic such as: pallet wrap, case overlap (i.e., water bottles), produce bags, bubble wrap, and lots more. The items must be clean, dry and free of food residue. At Trex, Sustainability is not just a buzzword—it’s a founding principle of our company and part of our DNA. For more than three decades, we have continued to derive value from discarded materials, diverting waste from landfills and waterways. Our composite decking is made from 95% recycled materials, so recycling plays a considerable role in our day-to-day operations.” Bryan Fairbanks, President and CEO of Trex® Company.

Participation is SO easy...sign up at <https://nexttrex.com/view/recyclingchallenge>. You will receive helpful ideas, print-outs and other suggestions to make this project an easy one. Better yet, there are local groceries/stores (Tops, Wegman’s, Giant Eagle, Kohl’s and more) that provide collection points for your plastic, and provide weighing information. Once your organization is enrolled, you will need to collect 1,000 pounds of plastic within a 12-month period to be eligible for a park bench. Some of the organizations have cooperation agreements with dollar stores, etc., which allows the plastic to accumulate quickly.

If you know of other recycling opportunities, please share them with the Green Team so that we can share it as we care for our creation.

*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.*

*Like and follow us on Facebook: [Northwestern PA Synod Green Team – Evangelical Lutheran Church in America](#).*

Contact us at: [nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com](mailto:nwpasynodgreenteam@gmail.com)

June 2025



## *Music Notes*

*“We Sing, We Serve! We Ring! We Serve!”*

**THANK YOU:** The music program of St. John’s would like to thank all the musicians who helped make our services so meaningful this year. The congregation appreciates your talents and the time you spent in praising God through the gift of music. We will be starting choirs again in the Fall and hope you consider joining us. There are openings in both the Chancel and Bell Choirs. Join for a season or for all year. Everyone is welcome!

**SPECIAL MUSIC:** As summer approaches, 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 (swanson1910@gmail.com) or Rachel in the Church Office (office@stjohnserie.org). We look forward to hearing from our talented parishioners.

**HYMN REQUESTS:** During the summer, we like to ask if anyone has a favorite hymn they would like to request for the 10:00 AM Service. Please contact Kathy Swanson (swanson1910@gmail.com) or contact Rachel in the church office (office@stjohnserie.org) with the particular hymn. We ask that the hymn be in the red ELW hymnal.

**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. Brochures are available in the Church Narthex or contact Kathy Swanson.

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# THANK YOU!

The Scouts would like to thank the congregation for all of their donations and support with their recent rummage sale.

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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed.	Thursday	Fri.	Saturday
<b>1</b> <b>10AM WORSHIP</b> <b>Scout Pretzel</b> <b>Sandwich Sale</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> <b>5PM WORSHIP</b>
<b>8</b> <b>10AM WORSHIP</b> <b>Pentecost Sunday</b>  <b>Plant geraniums</b> <b>after worship</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> <b>6PM</b> <b>CONG.</b> <b>COUNCIL</b>	<b>12</b> <b>11:30AM</b> <b>WELCA</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <b>5PM WORSHIP</b>
<b>15</b> <b>10AM WORSHIP</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b> <b>7PM Dufford</b> <b>Terrace</b> <b>Board</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>5PM WORSHIP</b>
<b>22</b> <b>10 AM WORSHIP</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>5PM WORSHIP</b>
<b>29</b> <b>10 AM WORSHIP</b>	<b>30</b>					

### St. John's Lutheran Church

2216 Peach St., Erie PA 16502

(814) 456-7596 [www.StJohnsErie.org](http://www.StJohnsErie.org)

"You Belong Here!"