

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
OCEAN CITY, NEW JERSEY

SEA SCROLLS



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THE NEXT CHAPTER

While writing the "Pastor's Annual Report" the past several years I have been thinking about the future and what the next chapter in my life, my ministry and for my family would look like. Changes inevitably come for everyone! We just do not know when and how. But with changes that have taken place here at St. John over the past 2 years, and in discussion with the Bishop of the New Jersey Synod and her staff, together we came to the conclusion that it is time for new life for the St. John family, and new life for the Bruesehoff family.

For those of you who attended the recent Annual Congregation Meeting, it was not supposed to happen that way! The plan was different! But when unexpected people had much to say, and others had nothing to say, after a moment of silent prayer and a moment of family deliberation, it was the right time and the right place.

It is time to retire from the ministry of St. John Lutheran Church, Ocean City, New Jersey. My final Sunday will be May 26th and retirement officially begins on June 1.

And how does the NEXT CHAPTER read? First, I have every intention of leading worship and preaching as often as possible. The Bishop has assured me, that can be every Sunday. I will be at the call of the New Jersey Synod and I will faithfully answer that call.

Second, I also know that I have a guaranteed position at every New Jersey Synod Youth Event: Junior High Retreats, Senior High Retreats, and ELCA National Gatherings. And after 23 years of ministry at St. John and 42 total years of ministry, I plan on continuing to do the most active kind of

evangelism I know, and that is to never turn down a wedding or a funeral. Let the Gospel be preached! Let the Gospel be heard!

And finally I do intend to spend more time with my family: my wife, my children, my grandchildren and, of course, Jager (my dog).

My prayer is that faith, hope, trust and love will be the foundation of this Church. May your life together START with the prayer, praise and thanksgiving of WORSHIP. If you put something into worship, you will get something out! If not... what do you expect?

Put worship first! Pray like your life depends on it! Give praise to God every day! And give thanks for every blessing! And may the grace of God, the love of Jesus and the power of the Spirit, give strength to your faith and hope to your life.

Go in peace! Love and serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

SOLA DEO GLORIA!

Pastor Mark

MINISTRY DISPLAYS AT ST JOHN

There is much that St John supports in doing God's work with our hands. From social gatherings such as the Dinner Group, Book Club and Men's Prayer Breakfast to hands-on ministries like Habitat for Humanity, the Ocean City Ecumenical Food Cupboard and Clothes Closet, WELCA, and Stitches and Scripture, there are many ways to share your talents in our mission and ministry.

Consider joining the choir, being a lay/communion assistant, reader, or crucifer in the services during the coming months. Learn something new in Lent by becoming a member of the Altar Guild or help set a welcoming table by providing refreshments for Fellowship Hour between services on Sunday.

Keep outreach ministries such as Eagles Wings, Rejoicing Spirits, Christian Education, Lutheran Youth Group and Vacation Bible School in your prayers and support them with your donations as requests are made.

Find a place in St John to serve and grow.

PRAYER AND PRAISE

FOR APRIL

TABLE PRAYER FOR LENT

INVITATION

Behold, now is the acceptable time, now is the day of salvation.
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are You, O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through Your goodness You have blessed us with the gifts of this table. Turn our hearts toward You, and toward all those in need. May our Lenten journey bring us to the rebirth of Easter, through Christ our Lord. Amen

TABLE PRAYER FOR HOLY WEEK

INVITATION

We adore You, O Christ, and we bless You.
By Your holy cross You have redeemed the world.
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.



PRAYER

Let us pray. Blessed are You, O Lord our God. With this food strengthen us on our journey from death to life. We glory in the cross of Christ. Raise us, with Him, to the joy of the resurrection, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

TABLE PRAYER FOR EASTER

INVITATION

Alleluia! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. Alleluia!
This is the day that the Lord has made. Let us rejoice and be glad in it.

PRAYER

Blessed are You, O Lord our God. Through the resurrection of Christ. You have brought us to the promised land. We praise You for the gifts of this table and for the feast of Easter joy. Breathe Your Spirit into us and all creation, and renew the whole earth with Your lord. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.



HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Monday, April 18	7:00 PM	Service of Confession and Communion
Tuesday, April 16	6:00 PM	Passover Seder
Wednesday, April 17	7:00 PM	Service of Confession and Communion
Thursday, April 18	11:00 AM	Service of Communion
	7:00 PM	Service of Communion and Stripping of the Altar
Friday, April 19	Noon	<i>The Way of the Cross</i> The Stations of the Cross, on the Ocean City Boardwalk - meeting and starting at 14 th Street, walking to 6 th Street (watch the Sunday bulletin and website for details)
	7:00 PM	Tenebrae, Service of Darkness
Saturday, April 20	7:00 PM	Easter Vigil
Sunday, April 21	8:00 AM	Service of Communion
	10:30 AM	Service of Communion

Hallelujah

WORSHIP AND ALTAR GUILD

As we begin the Lenten Season, we have many opportunities to worship. The theme for this Lenten season is "The Stones Would Shout – Hear God's Word and Keep It". **In addition to our two services each Sunday (8am & 10:30am), we will have a Vesper service each Wednesday night during Lent at 7pm.** If you have never attended the Vesper Service, please make an effort to join us. These are very special and meaningful services. Everyone is invited and encouraged to join us at 6pm for a Souper Supper before the Lenten service each week. This is wonderful fellowship opportunity for all. We look forward to seeing everyone there. If your interested in bringing soup, salad or dessert, please sign up at the church office.

As we move toward Holy Week, there will be many opportunities for us to gather for prayer, confession and communion. Please pay attention to the weekly bulletin for dates and times. One very special annual event is our **Seder Dinner**. It is a unique evening, of history, prayer, communion and of course as good Lutherans.....food. In order to continue this amazing evening, we ask the congregation to sign up to bring something towards this dinner. The sign-up sheet is on the church office window.

Our church is our people gathering to worship and praise God. Gods work and our hands. We have many ways to serve. One area that is in need of volunteers is the **Altar Guild**. It does not take a lot of time and we have plenty of support and training.

Another ministry is our **music program**. Martin Luther famously said, "Next to the Word of God, music deserves the highest praise" (Luther's Works, Vol.53). If you are interested in joining the choir, please come out to our **rehearsals on Wednesday night following the Lenten Service.**

We ask that you prayerfully consider what you can do to help in our mission to praise and serve God.

ST JOHN DINNER CLUB

The St John Dinner club continues to visit a different restaurant on the third Thursday of each month at 4:00 pm. All are welcome. To RSVP or for questions please call Jeanette Szigethy, 609-476-4276. We hope you will join us.

WOMEN OF THE ELCA

Barb Piston reported that some of us attended the **World Day of Prayer** on Friday, March 1st at the Cape May Lutheran Church which was lead by their women's group. It was a wonderful experience for the other 80 who attended. This event was started by the Methodist women in the mid 1800's and is celebrated throughout the world. Looking to the future for us to possibly host in Ocean City.

The Atlantic-Cape May Counties **Moms Demand Action to End Gun Violence** meets at the Ocean City Library on a regular basis the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. Please come check it out.

Carol Piechoski is going to contact Hope Pregnancy for our **Mother's Day collection of baby items needed starting Sunday, April 14th (Palm Sunday) through Mother's Day, Sunday May 12th.** Collection will be in the downstairs lobby. This was previously approved by Council.

Spring Rummage Sale is May 16th, 17th & 18th. We decided to change the times a little bit and try Friday night instead of Friday morning. This will give us a better opportunity to sell our homemade, delicious, fabulous chili! plus hopefully increase our Friday sales. The sale will be **Thursday and Friday from 4-7 pm and \$3 Bag Day, Saturday, 8 am-noon.** We had originally gotten approval from Council to benefit CASA, however given the church's financial situation, Sue Baker suggested that we may want to raise the funds just for mission and ministry of St. John. Jan Mruz will bring this to Council for their approval. The \$750 raised in the fall to benefit the Dan Ross Memorial Fund in the earmarked account has been used to pay our operating expenses. After speaking to Barb Ross she graciously understood and thanked us for all our years of support. Dan's Memorial Fund is winding down over the next couple of years and she has asked that we no longer contribute. It has been an honor for St. John to have participated all these years. We will ask Council's approval to use the Book Funds from this spring sale for the Vacation Bible School Program this year.

The **Red Cross Blood Drive** which had been scheduled for Sunday, May 19th, has been **cancelled.**

With the OHC Dinner on hold indefinitely, it was suggested we try a **Christmas in July Bazaar.** We would do the same setup, but try a sale in July. No food, just the sale. We have quite a few items and hope that this might be quite successful with the summer crowd. Date has to be determined (keeping in mind NIV) and approval from Council.

Brought to the table from Barb Piston and Deb Buettler of Social Ministry, was a suggestion to **support a drive for the Rescue Mission** with a noisy offering collection and a food collection for just the Rescue Mission. They are also selling a healthy heart Soup Cookbook prepared by several of the area chefs and is available on-line at www.acrescuemission.org/souper-chefs-cookbook for \$27.70 + shipping. We thought this might also be a nice Mother's Day gift suggestion in support of the Rescue Mission. Offering and food collection was approved by Council and will take place in June.

WELCA was asked to provide the food for our **100th Anniversary celebration**.

The **Food Cupboard** is collecting **microwavable rice and mac & cheese** for the month of April.

If anyone is interested in chairing WELCA, please let Jan Mruz know. Our **next meeting is Monday, April 8th @ 4pm**.

EVANGELISM/STEWARDSHIP

There is enthusiasm stemming from the several meetings with Pastor Scott Schantzenbach and Pastor Marisela Freiberg from the NJ Synod. This committee will serve as the committee for a **renewed stewardship plan** culminating on Sunday May 19.

Two projects were suggested for immediate implementation: ministry display boards highlighting the many ministries active at St. John and revitalization of the Sea Scrolls newsletter. Other activities are under consideration based on information in *A Twelve Month Plan for Stewardship* resource book.

A **Redevelopment Committee** will be formed as outlined by Pastor Freiberg in her meeting with Council. We will need a committee comprised of two Council members and about four members of our congregation. These members will be appointed. The aim is to pair us with one or two other congregations also going through redevelopment. Pastor Freiberg will make the first contact with a "partner" church.

Glen Stewart reported progress on the **100th anniversary project**. A power point presentation featuring St. John's anniversary will be prepared for the Synod Assembly. We are having a celebration here in September.

CONTACT US

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

*A Congregation of The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
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Sunday Spoken Service of Communion at 8 a.m. & Sung Service of Communion 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School and Luther 500 Adult Study at 9 a.m.

Wednesday Lunch and Bible Study at noon

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