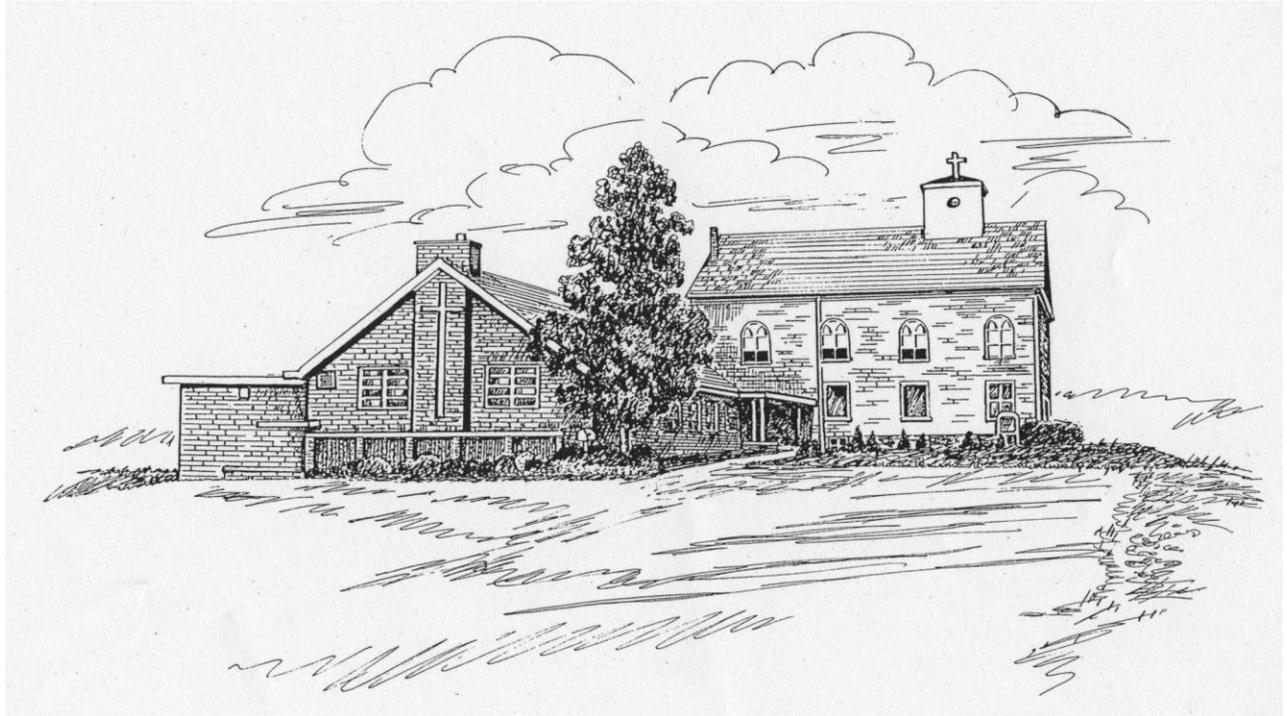


# *WISPS OF STRAW*



## *St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*November 2017*

*Pastor: The Rev. Bernard Kelly*

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: [strawchurch@gmail.com](mailto:strawchurch@gmail.com)

Web site: [www.strawchurch.org](http://www.strawchurch.org)

*“Serving Christ in Word and Deed”  
more than 265 Years*

## *From the Pastor's Desk*

We are beneficiaries

I write this article after All Saints' Day. This means, of course, that it is also after Reformation Day. This year, the Lutheran Church celebrated its 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Because of this important milestone, I have been reflecting a great deal on how we are beneficiaries of the faith of some very dedicated people. Martin Luther was willing to risk it all including his life, to ensure that the preaching, teaching and proclamation of the church of Jesus Christ communicated the grace of God. Imagine what our lives would be like if we were still trying earn God's favor. Imagine what it would be like if our consciences could never be sure that we were forgiven. Imagine what it would be like if our worship services, our prayers and our songs were all in Latin. Imagine what our lives would be like if we were still trying to buy enough indulgences to get ourselves and our loved ones out of purgatory. Not a pretty picture. I for one am extremely grateful that the cornerstone of my life is that I am justified by grace through faith.



And then I thought about all the saints; all the people that have died in the faith. I thought about all the people that communicated the faith, shared the faith, and sacrificed to advance the faith. I thought about the disciples who were so changed by the resurrection that they became apostles, planting the faith throughout the Roman Empire, and beyond. I thought about the early martyrs who chose to suffer torture and even to die rather than recant their faith in Jesus. I thought about the early church fathers who began developing theological frameworks which precluded dangerous heretical teaching. I thought about missionaries who transplanted the faith to new lands: Spain, Egypt and northern Africa, Ireland, North and South America. I thought about those who labored in the "new world" to establish congregations which would nourish the faith of the settlers. I thought about the Lutherans who founded, sacrificed for and sustained congregations like: the one at Fort Christina (Wilmington, DE) in 1638; St. John, Center Square, PA (the home church for Karen and me) 1769; and of course, St. James, Phillipsburg (1750). I thought how very blessed we all are.

But then I thought about our indebtedness to our forebears and reflected on how we might best honor them. How best to honor Martin Luther? How best to honor Peter, James, and John? How best to honor Paul, the martyrs, the ancient church fathers, Henry Melchior Muhlenberg? How best to honor our parents, grandparents and others who specifically nurtured our own faith? I think the best way is to redouble our efforts to bring the Gospel of Jesus Christ to our community. The best way to honor the saints of the past is to provide for the saints of the future.

I am reminded of the encouraging words from the book of Hebrews:

*"Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight and the sin that clings so closely, and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us"*

*Pastor Kelly*

## *Countdown to Christmas Eve*

While the world counts the number of days until Christmas, we need to subtract one day and begin planning for Christmas Eve. The worship attendance on Christmas Eve is often the highest of any time in the year. There is much that needs to be in place to make sure that the worship service goes smoothly. First of all, please take note: **there will be a change in the service times for Christmas Eve.** We will have two services, each with holy communion.

The first will begin at **7:45 pm** and the second will begin at **11:00 pm**. There will be candlelight at each service as well. We will have two stations for communion at the 7:45 pm service to make sure the service does not go too long.

In order to make sure that everything goes smoothly and that visitors are made to feel welcome we need some extra volunteers. Please see the chart below and consider serving on this special occasion. Because of the different timing of each volunteer position, you could sign up for more than one. *Please be sure to sign up in the lobby outside Ed Frey Hall* or call the church office and let Carol know how you will serve.

<u>Service &amp; Number Needed</u> <u>(7:45 / 11:00)</u>	<u>Job</u>	<u>Time</u> <u>(7:45 / 11:00)</u>
Candle Lighter 4 / 2	Light the pew candles prior to worship  Extinguish pew candles	Arrive at church by 7:15 / 10:30  After worship
Greeters 4 / 2	Greet worshippers in the lobby, the narthex, or at the head of the stairs outside Pastor's office	Arrive at church by 7:15 / 10:30
Ushers 4 / 2	Send worshippers up for Communion, and to direct at the head of each aisle  Light worshippers candles and turn on Christmas tree lights  Straighten up the church	During Holy Communion.  During Office of Light  After worship
Communion Assistants 6 / 2	Three each to distribute wine and grape juice.	During Holy Communion.
Lector 1 / 1	To read the lessons.	Early in the service
Altar Guild 2 / 2	To set up Holy Communion  Clean up after Communion	Arrive at church by 7:15 / 10:30  After worship

We also need someone to cut and transport our Christmas Tree from Perfect Christmas Tree Farm on Memorial Parkway in Phillipsburg, *BEFORE Dec, 17<sup>th</sup>*.

## + *Getting Through the Holidays Grief Workshop* +

Holiday seasons are often among the most emotionally difficult of times for people who have experienced the death of a loved one. Holidays are intended to be a time of great joy, family togetherness, gift giving and thankfulness. Yet, if someone in your life has recently died, holidays can evoke extreme sadness, loneliness and emptiness. Even if the death occurred years ago, sometime the wave of loss and the anticipation of the holidays and how to get through them can be overwhelming. Come to a compassionate place where you can share with others who are hurting, remember your loved one and learn some methods for coping with your grief.

**Date** Monday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, 2017  
**Time** 7:00 PM - 8:30 PM  
**Place** Grace Lutheran Church  
300 Roseberry Street  
Phillipsburg, NJ  
**Facilitator** Karen Kelly, Lutheran Deacon  
Hospice Chaplain and RN

**Registration:** This workshop is free of charge, however, for our planning purposes **please do call or email** either Deacon Kelly or the church **to register**. There will be handouts and refreshments.

Deacon Karen Kelly:  
215-872-0949  
or email: [kbak58@comcast.net](mailto:kbak58@comcast.net)

Grace Lutheran Church  
(908) 859-0884  
or email: [gracelc2003@verizon.net](mailto:gracelc2003@verizon.net)

### *Sophia Sharps Window*

The Warren County Freeholders have agreed to full funding of our request. That, together with what the generosity of St. James members has already raised, will allow us to move forward. The Historic Committee has met with the restorer, and he will be giving us a start date and time frame. We indicated a desire to have it finished and reinstalled by Sophia's birthday, May 13<sup>th</sup>. As more information becomes available, it will be put in forthcoming issues of Wisps.

### *Sweet Hour of Prayer*

A band of mighty "prayer warriors" meets every Wednesday evening from 7-8 pm in the sanctuary. We have a time of sharing, and then a time of praying. This is a transformative experience! Everyone is welcome! Come for the whole hour, or just to ask us to pray for you.

*"Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and **supplication** with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God."* –Philippians 4:6

## Social Ministry Update

The gloves, hats, and scarfs collection was very successful. They were given to Norwescap for distribution among local area children.

The "Thanksgiving Share" project is going well. A list of items needed is posted in Frey Hall lobby. Once the baskets are complete, any leftover money from the donation can will be used to purchase Shop-Rite gift cards. These cards will be presented to the two local families along with the Thanksgiving Baskets to complete their dinners. Donations will be accepted until November 19<sup>th</sup>. Two church members will then deliver them to two local families.

Social Ministry will be selling red and green links for a dollar a link. The project will be called "The Christmas Chain" and support food for the poor. It still has not been decided which organization will receive this money. The committee has two or three in mind.

Once again Social Ministry will be supporting two local families with Christmas Gifts. Suggestions of sizes and gift ideas will be posted in Frey Hall. Project will begin after Thanksgiving.

A total of fourteen lap blankets have been distributed to Brakeley and Lopatcong Care Centers. They informed us the residents love them and would like us to continue bringing them.

Donations for "hygiene kits" are still being accepted. These will be distributed at the "Project Homeless Connect" fair to be held in January 2018, sponsored by Warren County.

We continue to collect food for Norwescap and are still working on the sleeping mats.

Some committee members want to continue our support of a cottage at Hunterdon Developmental Center. A small Christmas Tree with gift ideas will be displayed in Frey Hall.

Social Ministry Chair, Sharon Risko

## Holiday Craft Vendor Fair

Our annual Craft Vendor Fair is coming soon! This fun holiday fundraiser will be held at the church on **Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, from 9 am to 3 pm**. We need help with the food concession, so if you would be willing to help prepare, sell or clean-up please let Pr. Kelly or Jan know. (You can always let the church office know as well!)



Even if you are unable to help, please stop in and do some holiday shopping from the 20+ crafters & vendors.

## Warren County Community Singers

The annual Winterfest of Music Concerts will be performed at Grace Lutheran Church, 300 Roseberry St., Phillipsburg at 7:30 pm on Saturday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> and at Washington First Presbyterian Church, 40 E. Church St., Washington, NJ at 3:00 pm on Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>.



## Stone Soup Symphony



The annual Holiday Concert will be given at 3:00 pm on Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at the Hackettstown First Presbyterian Church, 291 Main Street, Hackettstown, NJ

## Chuckle Corner

*Actual announcements from church bulletins*

The ladies of the church have cast off clothing of every kind and they may be seen in the church basement on Friday.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.



### ***What's going on at the old schoolhouse at the cemetery?***

My name is Wayne Van Blarcom. I am 17 years old and the Senior Patrol Leader of our Boy Scout Troop here at St. James Lutheran Church. I have been a member of this congregation since 2002.

As my Eagle Scout Project, I am working with the St. James Lutheran Cemetery Committee to revitalize the old schoolhouse. As of now, we have completed the spackle work and will be beginning to sand & clean the woodwork. Our next step is to paint the walls and construct a table that will be used to display the cemetery map. I and my fellow Scouts from our troop will also be working to make the entrance safer by constructing new stairs to replace the existing steps. I have worked with the local government to obtain necessary permits and all work will be inspected.

My fellow Boy Scouts have done 2 recent projects at the cemetery. In 2015, Eagle Scout Samuel Young mapped all the veterans' graves in the cemetery so that loved ones can more easily find them and to reflect the incredible history of our community. Last year, Eagle Scout Jeremiah Williamson from our troop constructed new signage and landscaping for the cemetery entrance.

If you'd like more information, have a skill you can share with the project, or would like to make a donation, please contact me by email at [glaeder123@gmail.com](mailto:glaeder123@gmail.com) or by phone at 908-763-8918 (after 5 pm please to allow for school).

Yours in Scouting,

*Wayne Van Blarcom*

Senior Patrol Leader  
Troop 56  
Member Order of the Arrow

## ***Upcoming Events: Mark Your Calendars***

Saturday, **November 18<sup>th</sup>**, 7:00 pm ADULT BINGO - a fun time of fellowship and refreshments! Plus wonderful prizes for BINGO! (Ed Frey Hall)

Saturday, **December 2<sup>nd</sup>**, Straw Church Country Breakfast, 7-11 am.

Sunday, **December 3<sup>rd</sup>**, we will receive new members. If you are interested in joining the church, please notify Pr. Kelly.

Monday, **December 4<sup>th</sup>**, "Getting Through The Holidays: A Workshop on Grief", 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm. See related article or talk to Deacon Karen Kelly

Saturday, **December 9<sup>th</sup>**, Holiday Craft Vendor Fair, 9am-3pm

Sunday, **December 17<sup>th</sup>**, following church: Christmas decorating party! Refreshments and fellowship as well as Christmas music and decorating.

Thursday, **December 21<sup>st</sup>**, 7:00 pm - Longest Night Service: a time of worship, prayer, reflection and support for those for whom the holidays are difficult.

## ***Events at Grace***

Saturday, **December 2<sup>nd</sup>**, 7:30 pm Warren County Community Singers Winterfest of Music Concert

Saturday, **December 9<sup>th</sup>**, 2:00 pm, Caroling at the Phillipsburg Care Center

Saturday, **December 9<sup>th</sup>**, 7:00 pm Christmas wine and cheese social

Worship Leaders Schedule November - December

Day/Date	Special	Communion Setup/Cleanup	Greeters	Lector	Liturgist	Ushers
<b>Nov.</b> Sat. 11	Veterans'	Marion Martin		Mark Aloise	Cindy Aloise	
Sun. 12	Veterans' Weekend	Marlie Raspe	Lois Steible Carol Steible	Karen Kelly	Polly Sue Newbold	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sat. 18		Kelly Perna		Rick Brunsell	Lexi Rosetti	
Sun. 19		Marlie Raspe	Janet Bray	Bob Babcock	Jamie McLain	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sat. 25	Thanksgiving Weekend	Sue Miller		Sue Miller	Holly Chemidlin	
Sun. 26	Thanksgiving Weekend	Marlie Raspe	George & Chris Scherer	Karoline Avard	Steve Stocker	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
<b>Dec.</b> Sat. 2		Marion Martin		Holly Chemidlin	Sue Miller	
Sun. 3		Marlie Raspe	Carol Steible Lois Steible	Polly Sue Newbold	Ralph Avard	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sat. 9		Kelly Perna		Mark Aloise	Cindy Aloise	
Sun. 10		Marlie Raspe	Dave & Charlotte Morris	Bob Babcock	Steve Stocker	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sat. 16		Sue Miller		Rick Brusell	Kelly Perna	
Sun. 17	Decorate Church	Marlie Raspe	Janet Bray	Karen Kelly	Jamie McLain	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sat. 23		Marian Martin		Cindy aloise	Lexi Rosetti	
Sun. 24	ADVENT IV	Marlie Raspe		Jamie McLain	Ralph Avard	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble
Sun. 24	Christmas Eve 7:45	To be determined	By sign-up ----->			
Sun24	11:00pm	To be determined	By sign-up ----->			
Sat 30		Sue Miller		Holly Chemidlin	Tori Esposito	
Sun 31		Marlie Raspe	Carol Steible Lois Steible	Karoline Avard	Karen Kelly	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble

## *Bouquet of Memories*



The basket from our All Saints service brought great joy to the residents and staff of the Lopatcong Care Center

## *More Memories of the Yard Sale*

