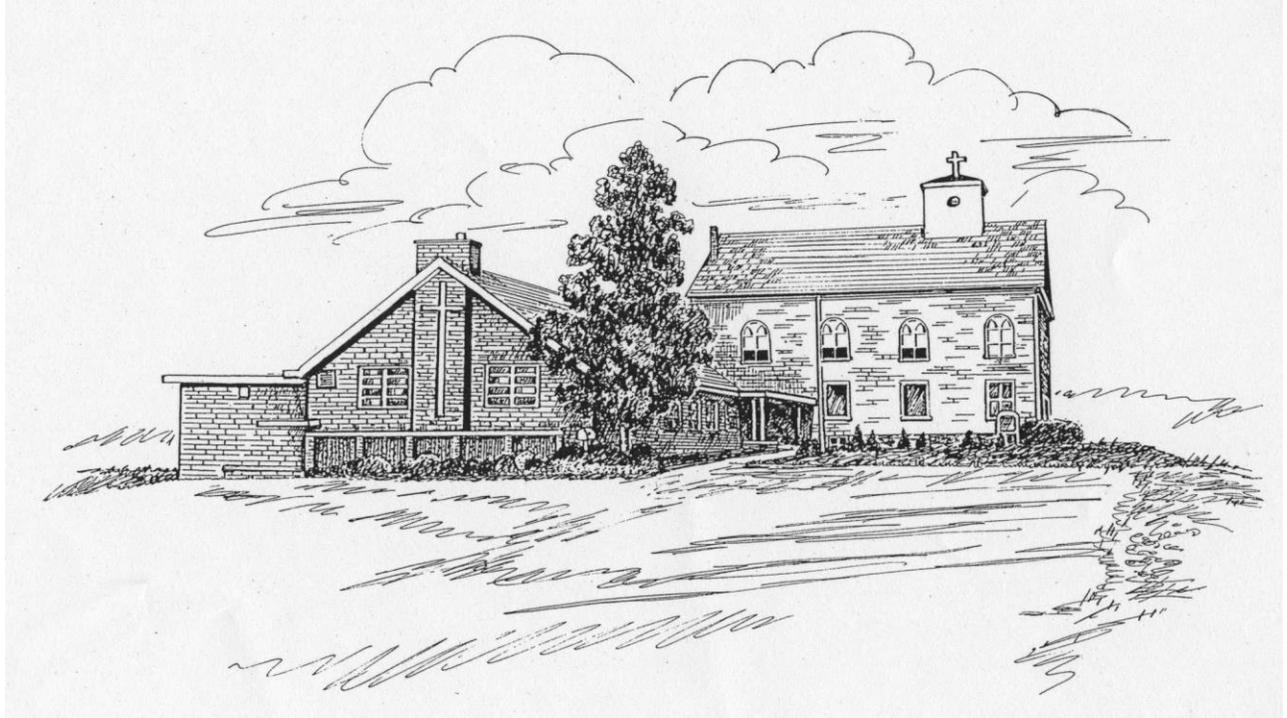


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

Easter / April 2018

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

From the Pastor's Desk

Waiting to Breathe

When I was in the candidacy for ordination process, I attended several Southeast Pennsylvania Candidacy Committee retreats. In one of the sessions of the one retreat, each candidate was asked to extemporaneously come up with an image or metaphor for resurrection. I shared a story from my high school days. The main thrust of the story was that I and a bunch of friends were swimming one time and my best friend (at that time) thought it would be fun to dive below the surface of the water, grab my ankles and pull me down. Never being a strong swimmer, this sent me into a panic. As I struggled to get away from him, I could feel the pressure building in my chest. I had visions of finally having to exhale only to inhale water and drown. Finally, my friend let me go. As fast as I could, I swam to the surface. As soon as my head broke the surface of the water, my exhale exploded out and I drew in as much oxygen and fresh air as I could. It was that feeling of knowing I was going to live, that surge of fresh clean air into my lungs, and the warm sunlight driving away my terror of drowning that brought this to mind as an image for resurrection.

Over the last few weeks, God has provided me with another image: the little shoots that will become tulips, and hyacinths and crocuses in our yard. They started in mid-February. Little, pale green stems pushing up through the leaves that had blown into the flower bed. Over time, the stems have thickened and some of the crocus have even bloomed. You can see the very beginning of a flower cluster bud if you look down into the hyacinth. I look at those little stems several times a day as I come in or out of the parsonage. Little stems pushing past the decaying leaves that surround them. Little stems being strengthened by the late winter snow fall we have had. Little stems of new life in the midst of cold and death and decay.

And as I thought about those little stems, I thought about a favorite Easter hymn: *Now the Green Blade Rises* (LBW #148, ELW #379). The lyricist, John M. C. Crum (1872-1958) uses the image of the new green blade as a metaphor for resurrection. I particularly resonate with the first and last verses:

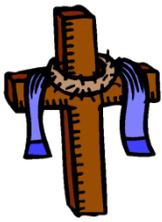
*Now the green blade rises from the buried grain,
Wheat that in the dark earth many days has lain;
Love lives again, that with the dead has been;
Love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

*When our hearts are wintry, grieving or in pain,
Your touch can call us back to life again;
Fields of our hearts that dead and bare have been,
Love is come again, like wheat arising green.*

For some reason, these lines really touched me. This has been a difficult winter in many ways, and my heart was "wintry, grieving [and in] pain." And while I don't feel the old panic of being held under water, I do long for the fresh air and new life that comes with Easter. I need to hear the Easter proclamation: "He is risen! He is risen, indeed!" I need to be reminded that no matter what losses I experience (rest in peace, Betsy; Mom possibly not going back to my childhood home); no matter what disappointments I encounter (our political, religious and social leaders succumbing to rancor, divisiveness and polemic); no matter what hurts I receive (or inflict); no matter what fears nag at my soul or doubts that hobble my spirit, Jesus comes and conquers all that would separate me from God, from others or from myself. No matter how many days my heart has been in the dark earth, His touch will bring me back to life again.

And how about you? Do you have losses, griefs, sorrows, fears, pain, disappointments, rejections, or betrayals you would like to be rid of? Is the field of your heart dead and bare? Then hear THE Good News which is Easter: "*Love is come again, like wheat arising green!*" Come have your own experience of resurrection. Come together with your brothers and sisters and hear this Good News, taste and see that the Lord is good, and sing your praises. And when you do, you will feel that wonderful rush of breathing again!

Karen and I wish you all a very blessed and joyous Easter!



Holy Week & Easter Services



With the Shared Ministry Agreement in full effect, we have a full yet different schedule for Holy Week. We each have before us the opportunity to experience some of the Holy Week services in a different place, with different brothers and sisters in Christ. How wonderful that we can gather in a different place than we might be accustomed and let the freshness of the locale mix in an exciting way with the familiarity of those with whom we will worship.

+ Sunday, March 25th, we will celebrate Christ's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem as we wave our palms, sing and shout Hosanna on Palm Sunday. But we will also be reminded of our participation in the rejection of Jesus by reading the Passion Narrative according to Mark. Each congregation will worship at the normal time.

+ We will come together as one community **Maundy Thursday (Mar. 29th) at Grace, at 7:00 pm.** There are three important elements of this service: holy communion, the washing of feet, and the stripping of the altar. Worshippers may participate in all three. Those who desire to have their feet washed are encouraged to wear easily removable footwear. There will be directive assistance for those who want to participate in the stripping of the altar. Again, this reminds us, "I crucified thee."

+ **Good Friday, (March 30th) at St. James at 7:00 pm,** we will come together and feel the gut-wrenching sadness, grief and despair over Jesus' flogging, crucifixion, and death as we nail our own sins to the cross. Experience the silent darkness as the Christ candle is removed from the sanctuary, and we spend a moment "in the tomb."

Saturday night, March 31st at St. James, at 8:00 pm, we will celebrate an Easter Vigil, **beginning outside (weather permitting).** In this powerful service we recall God's plan of salvation stretching over a very long span of time. Beginning in the beginning with Genesis, we will span thousands of years of God's saving activity. The vigil is about waiting, reflecting and experiencing the dawning realization of the empty tomb as we enter the dark sanctuary which is illuminated by the Christ candle as it, too enters the sanctuary and we are greeted by the beauty, life and fragrance of the spring flowers. Hear how God's promises have been brought to fruition as we hear the words of Scripture. Declare and rejoice in Christ's resurrection with the sound of ringing bells. Anyone who would like to attend, but would prefer not to drive at that time should contact the church office and we will joyfully provide transportation. Worshippers should bring a small hand bell to ring at the Easter proclamation.

+ The experience of the empty tomb and risen Christ continues as we meet at **6:30 am on Easter morning for a brief, sunrise service in the St. James Cemetery.** Witness the return of the light of Christ as the sun peeks over the horizon to greet us.

+ The joyous celebration continues in each respective church building. St. James will host a festival Easter service at **8:30 am (NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME)** and Grace will host a festival Easter Service at **10:30 am (NOTE THE CHANGE IN TIME).**

Be sure to make plans to attend as many (even all, if you want!) of these services as possible. The surest way to taste the sweetness of Easter is to taste the bitterness and gall of Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and to be reminded that this is part of God's plan of salvation in the Easter Vigil.

**HEY,
YOUTH**



The Youth Gathering is right around the corner! LESS THAN 100 DAYS AWAY! And there is so much to do. The Youth Meeting scheduled for **Sunday, April 8th, 6-8 pm** will be dedicated to coming up with a covenant for the trip. This is vitally important, and we want all participants (youth and adult) to attend. We will also use this time to get to know each other. Since we will be spending upwards of 150 hours as a community of travelers together, covenants and familiarity are *really, really important*. We will also do some more planning and decision-making about what we will do on the trip.

For this meeting we would like each of the youth to bring a recent photo of themselves. (School photos work great!) On the back of the photo should be the student's name, height, weight, eye color and hair color.

Also, we have our last two big fundraisers coming up. A reminder: **everyone is expected to participate in the fundraisers**. One fundraiser will be a **Spaghetti Dinner at St. James**. More information about this will be available soon. We will really need to get out there and get the community to come to the spaghetti dinner. There will be a lot to do for this fundraiser, from selling tickets, to preparing the meal, to waiting on tables to clean up. There absolutely is something for everybody. You could invite your friends to help as this is going to be a fun time.

The other fundraiser will be the **Yard Sale at Grace, May 5th, 8 am-2 pm**. Again, there is lots to do for this fundraiser: help set-up, work the bake table, work the yard sale, help clean up. Ditto on inviting your friends to help.

The Youth Group Meeting for May will be announced.

Vacation Bible School

BREAKING NEWS! Even though it has been snowing outside (continually, so it seems) it is not too soon to start thinking about Vacation Bible School. Our joint VBS with Grace over the last two years has been a resounding success and so we will continue it. **However, this year our joint VBS will be held at Grace.** For those who have volunteered for VBS in the past, PLEASE continue in this vital ministry. For those who have been considering serving in VBS in any capacity, now is the time to say, "Yes! Here I am, send me, Lord." If you would like to serve or have any questions, please contact Deacon Karen Kelly.



Deacon's Discourse

Now that the rush of Christmas, the craziness of January, and the catching up of February have passed, Pastor and I thought it would be good to establish stated office hours and invite all of you to: stop in, pop in or drop in during these times if you would like to just chat, or if you have a quick question. Please remember, that if you want to be guaranteed a time to meet with either of us, the best way is to make an appointment. Sometimes emergencies arise, or there are meetings we need to attend which would take us out of the office during our stated office time. We would hate to have you come in during a time of need, only to find out that we were attending a community meeting elsewhere. However, if you make an appointment, you can be assured that time will be entirely devoted to you. Also, please remember that both Pastor and I take Fridays off and are usually in Princeton taking care of our granddaughter, Maddie. Below are our stated office hours for each congregation:

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Deacon Kelly	Grace: 9-11 am	Grace: 9-11 am	St. James: 9-11 am	
Pastor Kelly		St. James: 10 am-2 pm		St. James: 9 -11 am Grace: 12-2 pm & 7-9 pm

This schedule will take effect Tuesday, March 6th. Of course, in an emergency, please feel free to call us. My cell phone number is: 215-872-0949, and Pr. Kelly's is 609-741-9234. We hope this helps us connect with each of you, and you with us.

Yard Sale at Grace

There will be a Yard Sale and Church Rummage Sale at the Grace Lutheran Church parking lot on Saturday, May 5th, from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. You may rent a parking space for \$10, sell your stuff and keep the proceeds (or donate the money). Or, you may just donate items to be sold to the Church Rummage Sale Table.

All rental proceeds for spaces and all Church Rummage Sale proceeds will go to benefit the youth of Grace and St. James for their trip to the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering in Houston.

Spread the word to friends and neighbors.

Questions? Call Judy Garrison (908-213-1608) or Jean Steinberg (908-859-0709).

We are always looking for volunteers!!! Come join the fun.

First Holy Communion

First Holy Communion is scheduled for Sunday, May 13th, (Mother's Day).

If your child is in 5th grade or above and you would like them to receive Holy Communion, it is important that you contact the church office and give the name and grade of your child, and your contact information.



There will be two classes, at least one parent and the students are expected to attend **BOTH** classes. The first class will be held **Sunday, April 29th, from 3:30-5:00 pm** and the second on **Sunday, May 6th, 3:30-5:00 pm**. **Together**, we will learn about God's great gift of grace and rejoice in His love! In the second class, we will bake bread which will be used in worship on May 13th. These classes will be held in conjunction with our brothers and sisters at Grace, and will be in the parsonage: 481 Barrymore Street, Phillipsburg.

Sexton's House Improvement Project

We are very excited and anxious to start this project. All planning and preparation seems to be going very well and we are convinced God is with us on this endeavor.

Home Depot has donated \$100 for start-up safety items such as gloves, safety glasses, dust masks ear plugs etc. We are working with several stores for cost reductions.

The plan is to start work ASAP. We will begin with **Demolition Day** when we will strip down the bathroom and kitchen to bare studs. It will be a **Safety First** day of slowly and deliberately removing everything possible from both rooms. The walls are old plaster and lath which will be a very nasty mess. Wear old cloths (no sandals). We will need many empty 5 gallon buckets, if you can bring some. Gloves, safety glasses, dust masks and ear plugs will be provided or bring your own if you can.

Demolition Day will begin Saturday March 24th, 2018 at 9:00 am. Thereafter normal work days will be every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. These are the times you may drop in and help for an hour or two or all day if you like. The pace of the project will depend on the number of volunteer hours worked. Schedule changes will be announced in advance.

Volunteers Needed

General laborers / Helpers, Tub removal, Plumbing, Electrical, Drywall installation, Drywall taping & spackling, Insulation, Standing & Base trim, Floors, Painting, etc.

Let Dave or Charlotte know how you would like to help or just stop by on a work day and we will put you to work on the spot, or put you on our list for the future. **If you have questions or concerns of any kind** call Dave (908-763-3777) or Charlotte (908-319-7056), or email us at dhmcs22@yahoo.com



Food Offering Basket



Feeding the Community

St. James has a long tradition of collecting food for the NORWESCAP food pantry. Over the years, we have collected an untold amount of food and helped countless individuals and families who would otherwise go hungry. This is holy work because we recognize the truth of our own Offering Prayer: "Blessed are you, O Lord our God, maker of all things. Through your goodness you have blessed us with these gifts. With them we offer ourselves to your service and dedicate our lives to the care and redemption of all that you have made, for the sake of him who offered himself for us, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

So, going forward, instead of placing food in a barrel, hidden at the top of a staircase, we will place our food offerings in a basket which will be placed in the lobby of Ed Frey Hall. **Each week** this basket will be brought forth by an usher as part of the offering, and we will present it to God as we do our financial gifts. Janet Bray, who works for NORWESCAP, has generously agreed to take the collected food to the pantry each week. In this way, those in need will get the food we donate in a more timely manner, NORWESCAP will be saved the expense of sending out their van to pick up our gift, the collection and giving of that food will be more obvious, and most importantly we will all be reminded that this food, as well as the food we each have in our own pantries is a gift from God's gracious hand. It is a win-win-win. God is so good.



BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA

BOY SCOUT TROOP 56
TOGETHER WITH
ST. JAMES LUTHERAN CHURCH

ANNUAL **SPAGHETTI DINNER**

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT BOY SCOUT TROOP 56

Saturday April 21, 2018
4:30 – 8:00 PM
St. James Lutheran Church
Route 22 Phillipsburg, NJ



All Dinners Include

Choice of Pasta
Beverages
Salad and Bread
Homemade Meatballs
Homemade Desserts

**Eat in or
Take-out**

Adults \$9.00 Kids \$5.00 Under 5 FREE

**Thanks for Supporting Your
Local Boy Scouts**

Tickets are available from Wayne Van Blarcom or Andrew Hardenbergh. For any other questions contact Beth Van Blarcom at (908) 200-2592 or bethvanblarcom@outlook.com

Worship Leaders Schedule March & April

MARCH

Day/Date	Special	Communion Setup/Cleanup	Greeters	Lector	Liturgist	Ushers	Counters
Sat. 24		Kelly Perna		Mark Aloise	Sue Miller		
Sun. 25	PALM SUNDAY	Marly Raspe	Charlotte Morris Dave Morris	ALL READERS PLEASE BE AVAILABLE	Jamie McLain	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Janet Bray Lois Steible
Sat. 31	Easter Vigil			ALL READERS PLEASE BE AVAILABLE			

APRIL

Day/Date	Special	Communion Setup/Cleanup	Greeters	Lector	Liturgist	Ushers	Counters
Sun. 1 6:30	Easter in cemetery	N/A	Dave & Charlotte Morris	Pr. Kelly	Karen Kelly		
Sun. 1 8:30 am NOTE TIME	Easter	Marly Raspe (S)	Dave & Charlotte Morris	Marly Raspe	Karen Kelly Jamie McLain Mark Aloise	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Bob Babcock Steve Stocker
Sat. 7		Sue Miller		Karen Kelly	Lexi Rosetti		
Sun. 8		Marly Raspe (S)	Janet Bray	Bob Babcock	Polly Newbold	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Shirley Johnson Janice Youpa
Sat. 14		Kelly Perna		Cindy Aloise	Sue Miller		
Sun. 15		Marly Raspe (S)	Carol Steible Lois Steible	Ralph Avard	Polly Sue Newbold	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Charlotte & Dave Morris
Sat. 21		Holly Chemidlin		Rick Brunsell	Kelly Perna		
Sun. 22		Marly Raspe (S)	George & Chris Scherer	Polly Sue Newbold	Jamie McLain	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Janet Bray Lois Steible
Sat. 28		Marion Martin*		Lexi Rosetti	Holly Chemidlin		
Sun. 29		Marly Raspe (S)	Dave & Charlotte Morris	Jamie McLain	Polly Sue Newbold	Harvey Walters Ron Knoble	Charlotte & Dave Morris

In the event that you are unable to serve on your assigned date, please remember to find a replacement and notify the office of the change.