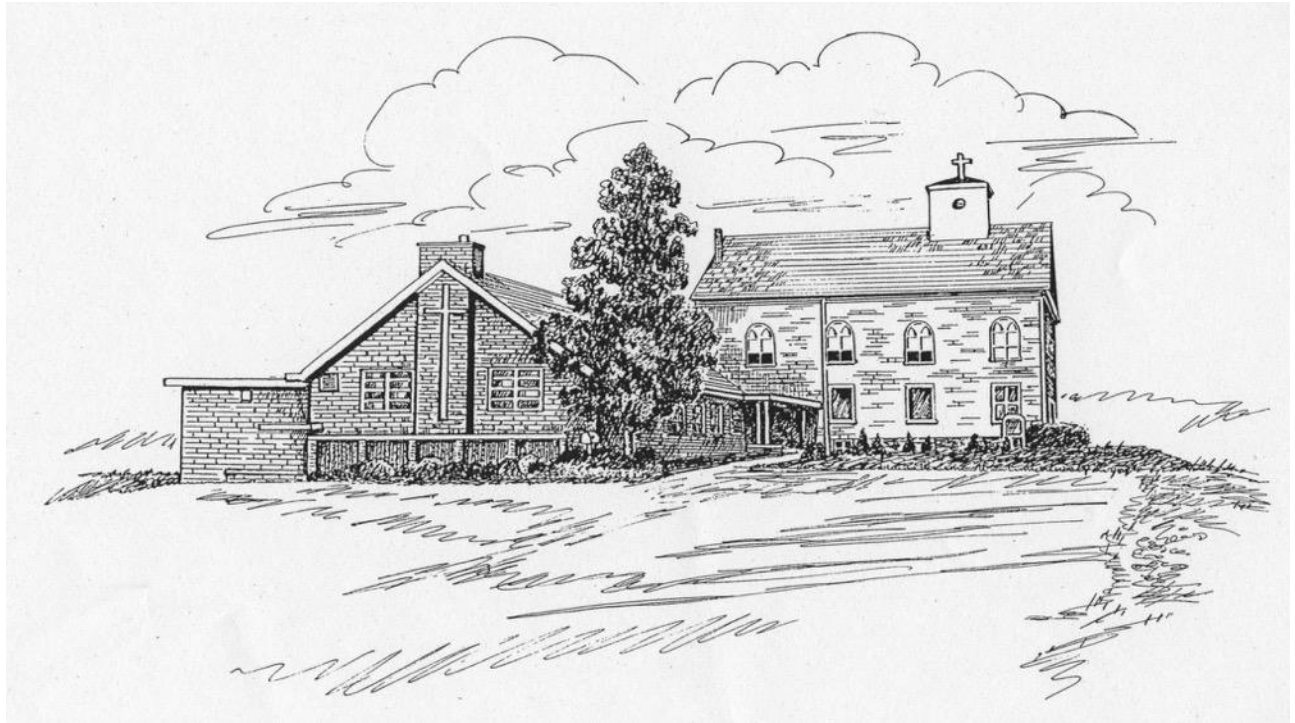


WISPS OF STRAW



St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

December 2019

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

E-mail: strawchurch@gmail.com

Web site: www.strawchurch.com

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

From the Council President

Friends of St. James:

Thanksgiving is over and by the time you read this the season of Advent will be here. I've come to learn that Advent used to be known as "little Lent," as it was a time of fasting before Christmas. Today though, we've forgotten the fasting. We indulge from Thanksgiving to New Year, and *then* fast to lose some weight!

Advent means 'the arrival of a notable person, thing or event,' and during Advent we await the coming of Christ. Some of us are not patient people, although the Christian faith teaches us to wait in faith. Through the scripture readings we will hear Jesus telling his disciples to "stay awake" and "be ready" – so during this time remain alert and wait patiently for the arrival of the Messiah that has changed all our lives for the better.

This fall at St. James has been a little quiet for events, although behind the scenes we have been actively improving the church and working on upcoming events. In the last Wisps we launched the **Congregation Challenge** for the month of October; encouraging members to earmark giving to Lutheran Disaster Response and in turn St. James would send matching funds. I want to thank everyone who participated in this new fundraiser as with matching funds the total giving was over \$3,000 to the cause! In addition, it was great to see the turnout to the **Feast with Friends** in October at ChickFilA which also raised money towards the total. Look for more Feast with Friends events in the new year.

Within the church, a notable change was rotating the organ at the front of the sanctuary. It may be a minor change to those in the pews, although our organists appreciate having a better view of what's going on while they are playing. In addition, Council is also working through a site profile to kickoff the call process and working towards budgeting for 2020 – more to be mailed to members by early January.

Looking ahead, December will be a busy month! Read more about our upcoming events including the **Country Breakfast, Live Nativity, Vendor Fair, Christmas Caroling and Christmas Eve Services** in the pages to follow. Learn how to get involved or attend each as all promote the fellowship and spiritual growth that we look for within our family at St. James.

Myself and the entire church council wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Dan Gulick

St. James Church Council President

Upcoming Events



Get Into the Christmas Spirit!

Live Nativity at St. James

Sunday, December 8, 2019
4:00 – 6:00PM

Join us for a reading of the Christmas story (4:30PM and 5:30PM) around the manger with live animals.



Food, drinks and St. Nick will be part of this new experience in our area! Open to all!

Straw Church Country Breakfast

First Saturday of every Month

We'll see you on
December 7, 2019
January 4, 2020
7AM – 11AM

Pancakes | Omelets | French Toast
Hash Browns | Pork Roll | Sausage and more!

St. James' Invites You To Our Annual Holiday Vendor Fair

Saturday, December 14
9:00AM – 3:00PM

25+ Vendors, Great Food,
Door Prizes every Hour



Annual Christmas Cookie Fundraiser 2019



We are collecting cookies to make trays to be sold at our Annual Vendor Fair on December 14. We are asking you to make 5 to 7 dozen of your favorite special cookie (or what you can). Last year we had 40 trays and this year would like to make it even bigger!

Bring your cookies Saturday night December 7th or Sunday morning December 8th and place them on the island in the kitchen. Pickup can also be arranged.

Contact Dan Gulick or Sharon Risko with questions.

How to Find Us?

Our Website:

www.strawchurch.com

For Snow Closing Information:

www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter

or WFMZ 69 TV

Social Ministry Notes

Social ministry was successful in collecting donations for two Thanksgiving baskets that were donated to local families, along with a ShopRite gift card.

In addition, thank you to those that donated scarves, hats, and gloves. Those donations were delivered to Norwescap in November.



Christmas Caroling

Sunday, December 15
11:00AM to 1:00PM

Meet at the Church

No Experience Necessary!

*Help us brighten up the day
at the local senior center.*

*please
join us*

*Afterwards join us to decorate the
Christmas tree in the sanctuary!*

For any pastoral needs for members of our congregation, you can contact:

**St. James' Vice-Pastor
Pastor Karol Van Wulfen**

Requests for
Visitations, Funerals, Baptisms,
Counseling, etc.

(908) 689-1976
stlukeswashington@verizon.net

Christmas Pointsettias

Adopt one for \$5

*The beautiful pointsettias that
decorate the church this
holidays we invite you to
adopt after the Christmas
Eve service.*



Christmas Eve Services

December 24

7:00 PM

11:00 PM

Join us for
CHRISTMAS!

O Come Let us Adore Him

Sexton's House Project

Final Report: This project was the result of a decision made at the congregational meeting on January 2018 in an attempt to save the Sextons House. There was a death threat estimate of over \$30,000 to demolish the house and no plausible plan to save it.

Dave and Charlotte estimated they could “totally gut and rebuild the kitchen and bathroom and make the house “habitable” for under \$10,000 in material with volunteer labor. The project was to proceed only as material expenses were covered by money coming in through the congregation’s dedicated fundraising efforts only.

I am pleased to announce that the goals of the project have been met and the house is “habitable”. The last payment for material was made in September and we are still laboring with what has already been paid for. As with any house it is never “done”. There are windows in bad shape, basement and outside things to do and some woodwork clean-up that could be done.

There were also some surprise challenges that put us over the \$10,000 limit. Our thanks to the BBQ Chicken fundraiser group who offered some of their profit to bridge the gap.

It was our pleasure to work and witness the awesome efforts and results that unfolded week after week with this project. We are blessed. Charlotte and I will continue to work on labor intensive items to make the house better than habitable... live-able. Volunteers are, as always, welcome.

Total Raised: \$10,076.53 + \$291.01 from BBQ chicken fundraiser = **\$10,367.54**

Total Spent: **\$10,338.02**

Total Remaining: **\$32.52**

Volunteer Hours Worked: **2,192**

Number of Volunteers: **23**

Untrackable material donations by supporters and volunteers **\$1,000 - \$1,500.** (estimated)

Donations outside scope of project. Refrigerator, Stove, Microwave, Dining Room Table & 8 chairs

Thank you, all who supported this successful effort, Dave and Charlotte Morris

<u>Volunteers</u>	<u>Contributed Materials</u>
Charlotte Morris	Charlotte Morris
Dave Morris	Dave Morris
Nate (Boy Scout)	Lois Steible
Michael (Scout Master)	Craig Steible
Lois Steible	Ron Knoble
Ken Kutzman	Barb Gulick
A. J. Kolba	Alan Hardenbergh
Matthew (Boy Scout)	Jim Young
Craig Steible	Stan Jankowski
Ken Stadler	Tod Coleman
Mark Peppe	Brian Fleming
Mark Peppe Jr.	Diane Bolger
Ron Knoble	Rebecca Kuhar
Greg Clymer	Don Still
Carol Steible	
Alan Hardenbergh	
Bob Agans	
Steve Stocker	
Jim Young	
Sam Young	
Barry Fleming	
Stan Jankowski	
John O'Brien	

We could not track all who contributed monetary donations. God knows who you are.



Worship Leaders Schedule - December & January

	<u>Lector</u>	<u>Liturgist</u>	<u>Ushers</u>	<u>Counters</u>
DECEMBER				
Sun. 12/1	Dan Gulick	Dan Gulick	H. Walters / R. Knoble	S. Stocker / B. Babcock
Sat. 12/7				
Sun. 12/8	Ralph Avard	Ralph Avard	H. Walters / R. Knoble	D. Gulick / R. Avard
Sat. 12/14				
Sun. 12/15	Jaime McLain	Jaime McLain	H. Walters / R. Knoble	S. Agans / C. Morris
Sat. 12/21				
Sun. 12/22	Dan Gulick	Dan Gulick	H. Walters / R. Knoble	C. Steible / L. Steible
Sat. 12/28				
Sun. 12/29	Polly Newbold	Polly Newbold	H. Walters / R. Knoble	S. Stocker / B. Babcock
 JANUARY				
Sat. 1/4				
Sun. 1/5	Ralph Avard	Ralph Avard	H. Walters / R. Knoble	S. Stocker / B. Babcock
Sat. 1/11				
Sun. 1/12	Polly Newbold	Polly Newbold	H. Walters / R. Knoble	D. Gulick / R. Avard
Sat. 1/18				
Sun. 1/19	Jaime McLain	Jaime McLain	H. Walters / R. Knoble	S. Agans / C. Morris
Sat. 1/25				
Sun. 1/26	Dan Gulick	Dan Gulick	H. Walters / R. Knoble	C. Steible / L. Steible

Saturday role data not collected in advance of publication

*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*