



The Messenger

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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From Pastor Telloni . . .

Friends in Christ:

Every January I begin my newsletter message thanking the members of St. John for their loving expressions and gifts during the Christmas season, but this year I am overwhelmed with gratitude and humility over the continual outpouring of love from you during what was an eventful and challenging and arduous time in my personal life. For almost half of 2022 I was forced to deal with a cancerous right vocal cord through tests, surgery, radiation and chemotherapy treatments, weight and energy loss, balance issues, and other “stop and start” episodes during recovery (which is still in progress). The prayers, cards, and words of encouragement helped me to sustain the path to renewed health, for which I praise God. Your support and love leave me with no words but certainly with immense joy! I am happy to say that all is clear and improvement is going in the right direction, although challenges remain, one of which is regaining a good energy level, and another, of course, recovering my normal speaking voice, which is slowly improving. Above all, I praise our gracious God for His promises to help and heal His beloved children in all situations, certainly in my case, for it is Jesus Himself who has carried the cross that I have had to bear, and I am eager to serve Him willingly as time moves forward and as my health and vitality allow it. I am grateful to the Lord in everything and pray I may be faithful to my calling in the days to come.

Speaking of “forwardness,” my hope for the new year of 2023 is that our beloved parish remain spiritually sound and stable as the Gospel continues to be proclaimed in all its purity and the Sacraments administered according to Christ’s institution. The goodness, beauty, and truth of our Lutheran liturgy will be at the center of all our preparations for the Divine Services scheduled every Sunday and whenever God’s people are compelled to gather in worship. Our true fellowship is essential for maintaining the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace and faith, as God has prescribed for His beloved Church, and we rely on the sincere commitment of our membership to be faithful in worship and prayer and attendance at the Lord’s Table towards the hopeful continuance of this parish for years to come.



Sadly, worship attendance is low these days, compared to our official membership roster. We have a growing number of permanent shutins at home or in assisted or skilled care facilities. A small but strong band of members is active in leadership and service in various areas of parish life.

Admittedly, our average age is high. This fact in all likelihood limits St. John’s probability for membership growth in the future. Yet we carry on under the Holy Spirit’s grace and guidance day by day and serve one another and others in the community with Jesus’ love.

At the same time I strongly encourage all of our brothers and sisters in Christ to embrace the mission vision developed by our Vision Team and leadership and accepted by the voters in October, “Restoring Broken People to Life in Christ.” Adopt it, memorize it, pray about it, and ask yourself what you can do to help us – pastors, leaders, workers – to carry out a Christ-centered mission of helping all of us “broken people” in our family of faith and those broken folks “out there” who need to know Jesus as their Savior so that we and they may follow Him faithfully and joyously into that new life He won for us by His death and resurrection.

Pastor Carpenter was called to develop an “outreach” ministry in the community and to reach out to a younger generation who have no experience in growing up in a church setting. As a “church planter,” he will increasingly be found outside of our church walls to meet people, build up relationships, and offer a pastoral care ministry that will proclaim the Gospel that creates faith in Christ and leads to a life of discipleship. Different kinds of methods will be employed for this purpose, and we ask for your prayers and support as he continues to encounter folks “out there.”

Lastly, may you be enriched and comforted in the new year of 2023, under the grace and guidance of our glorious and merciful God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!

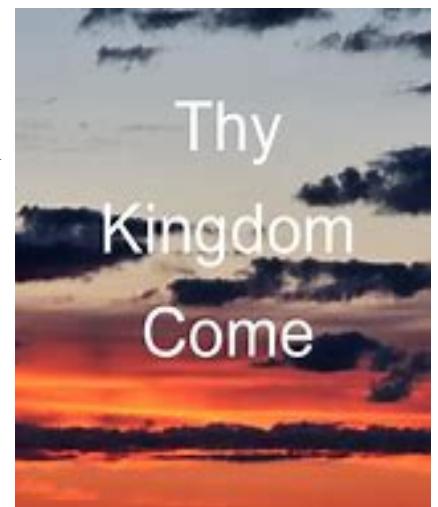


From Pastor Carpenter . . .

Our next focus is the Second and Third Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, "*Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done.*"

As we learned in Luther's Small Catechism, God's kingdom comes to earth without our help, but we pray it would come to us. But how does this happen? How does the kingdom of God come to us now, today?

God's kingdom comes to us today through God's holy Word: either in the sanctuary, on the radio, on our computers, or reading in our homes. God's kingdom of life, forgiveness, and salvation comes to us through the reading and hearing of His Word. For in His Word, we read and hear, "*I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.*" We read and hear Jesus saying to all of us, "*I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.*" And also we find, in God's Word, Jesus proclaiming the gospel of salvation, "*Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*"



And we who have the kingdom of God are to take it to others. For if Jesus came and brought the kingdom of God to all those around Him, what should be said of us? So, we pray that the kingdom of God comes to those who are not in it. This happens through the power of the Holy Spirit which is in us. We see all the Apostles and those after bringing the kingdom of God to the broken. In the book of Acts, Peter, full of the Holy Spirit, brings the kingdom of God to his hearers by saying, "*there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.*" Peter also says to us in his first letter, "*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace...*"

Continue to pray for God's kingdom to come as you read and hear His holy Word. The only way the broken can be restored is that God's kingdom would come to them. Pray that, through us, God's kingdom would come to those for whom Christ died.



The petition for God's will to be done is extremely dangerous. The devil will not be happy with you. If you think about it, the devil will rave and rage "*with all his power and might*" when you petition for God's will to be done. He hates it when God's name is kept holy among His people and others. And he also hates that the kingdom of God has invaded this world and has taken over with forgiveness, life, and salvation, through the suffering death, and resurrection of Christ.

Luther says because of these attacks from the devil, the world, and our sinful nature, it is needful to "*ask without ceasing: 'Dear Father, your will be done and not the will of the devil or of our enemies, nor of those who would persecute and suppress your holy Word or prevent your kingdom from coming.'*"

We must stand firm and steadfast in God. Luther encourages us to pray that God's will be done so that he would protect us from all attacks. This includes attacks from our sinful nature. For our sinful nature does not want God's will to be done. So, therefore, we pray that God would protect us from our sinful selves along with all other foes of the cross, his Word, and his forgiveness.

P.S. On behalf of my wife Shannon and our children, Alexander, Elliana, and Arielle ... and the baby to come (!), I want to thank all those who remembered us this Christmas with their gifts and cards! God bless you all, and may He grant you a blessed and safe New Year!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Carpenter".

EPIPHANY DAY SERVICE

A special Epiphany Day Divine Service will be held on **Friday, January 6th, at 7:00 p.m.** Epiphany, which is sometimes called "the Gentile Christmas," observes the visit of the Wise Men to the baby Jesus in Bethlehem, worshiping Him and offering their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. The Epiphany season also begins on this day, and this year there will be four Epiphany Sundays leading to Lent. The emphasis in Epiphany is the divinity of Jesus as Son of God and His mission as Savior of all people, Jews and Gentiles, and the worldwide mission of the Church in bringing the Gospel to all people.



Pastor Carpenter will deliver the sermon, and Pastor Telloni will serve as Officiant. The Sacrament of the Altar will be celebrated. The Adult Choir under Choirmaster Dr. Lewis P. Porter will sing a seasonal anthem.

We encourage your attendance on this major festival day and the second worship service in the new year of 2023!

OUR SYMPATHY



Is expressed to the Halco family as they grieve over the death of former member, Andrew Halco, who passed away on December 13, 2022, at the age of 99. May our gracious God comfort them with His abiding presence and the hope of everlasting life in Jesus Christ the Resurrection and the Life.

WHY DO WE GIVE?

Why do we give? What is our motivation to give? Is it simply because God commands us to do it? There must be more to giving than simply fulfilling the obligations to help support the operational costs of the church. When donating money to a mission organization, is our goal merely to help support the overhead costs of operations? We either need to give more or support a

charity with little overhead to ensure that our dollar reaches those who need it. Hopefully, our giving will benefit the people of whom we are trying to reach. As Christians, we're not just trying to fulfill a work of the law. As we walk in the footsteps of Jesus, we want to help others. By working hard, we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord: *When we give of the first fruits of our income, we are bearing the fruits of the Spirit given to us by our Heavenly Father, and we also are emulating what He has done through His Son Jesus Christ.* Like

our Father, we desire to be generous with our Time, Talents and Treasures with Integrity of the moral principles of righteousness, honesty and sincerity. We are born again - born from above, born of water and the Spirit - to a new life in Christ as God's children. We are sons of God in Christ through Baptism. Since we are sons, we are heirs who share in the glory of the Son of God. The inheritance is ours because of the Father's grace, mercy, and generosity in sending His Son Jesus Christ to save us for all eternity. God has not only given each of us Spiritual gifts, but also temporal and earthly gifts, as well. It is because we have received these gifts that we desire to give to others, as well, and lovingly emulate His generosity in our own lives. God's generosity knows no bounds. He has given us everything that we need for the care of both body and soul. So, we should strive to do the same towards others. (*Luke 6:38*) "Give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." (*Acts 20:35b*) "It is more blessed to give than receive" (*1 Corinthians 16:2*) "On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper." **Submitted by Board of Stewardship - from the LCMS Stewardship Ministry Newsletter article from October 2021**

The Word of Jesus Grows -- Understanding the Book of Acts

The Monday Morning Bible Class will resume, beginning on **Monday, January 9, 2023, at 10:00 a.m.** This is an important class for members in light of St. John's future mission and because the Book of Acts is a wonderful guide about how the Christian Church is to be organized and ready for the mission of spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ in the community and beyond. At the first session Pastor Telloni will review Acts 1-8 and from then on will concentrate on St. Paul and the spread of Christianity beyond Jerusalem and Judea.



The **Book of Acts** tells the story of Jesus' apostles and lay people who were empowered by the Holy Spirit to spread the good news of salvation to people in Asia, Africa, and Europe. And they did so without temple buildings, mass media, technological marvels, and the government. How could that happen? Come and see! All are invited to see the Church with new eyes and the legacy of joyfully witnessing the truth of Jesus!

THE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



will resume their meetings on Thursday, January 5th, at 11:00 am at Varieties Restaurant. If you would like to join them or have questions, see Russ Ryder, President.

ST. JOHN QUILTERS

meet on the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Questions? See Jeanette Tennant, Janet Dyer, Janet Gruber or Arlene Guynn.



THE MARTHA SOCIETY



will hold their monthly meeting on Monday, January 9th, at 1:00 p.m. Hostess is Mickey Krnach and Mary Shunk will share a devotion. All ladies are invited! Questions, see Mickey Krnach.

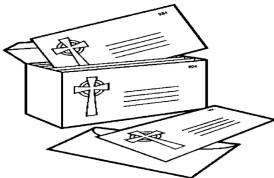
2023 CHURCH CALENDARS

are available for pick-up on the table in the narthex and the Project Central table in the Gathering Place. They are given to us courtesy of the **Paquelet Funeral Home and Crematory of Massillon**, to whom we are grateful for this annual kindness!



2023 OFFERING ENVELOPES

are available for pick-up on the Project Central table in the Gathering Place. If you do not have a box of envelopes and



would like one, please contact the Church Office or speak to Barb Leffler, Financial Recording Secretary, or Luther Russert, Chairman of the Board of Stewardship.

A REQUEST FROM THE COUNTERS

1) To ensure the accurate recording of your offering, it is important that you write your offering amount on the front of the envelope; 2) The bank has changed our deposit procedure so that we are no longer able to deposit coins. If at all possible, please do not put coins in your offering envelope; and 3) Effective immediately, any loose coins contributed in the offering plates will be deposited into the LWML Mite Boxes. Thank you for your help!

- Connie Ribaudo & Luther Russert, Board of Stewardship



THE MOBILE SNACK COMMITTEE

served 19 snacks on Wednesday, December 28th. Thank you to Bonnie Myers for providing Strawberry Cupcakes. Our drivers were: Gloria & Rob Pavelzik, Gene Stocker, Dennis Lillich, Rose Sedjo, Janet Dyer, Dennis Brown and Deb Stocker. If you would like to donate baked goods or help with deliveries, please see Debbie Stocker or Rosemary Sedjo. They will deliver again on Wednesday, January 25th.



THANKS ARE EXPRESSED TO

all who helped decorate the sanctuary and hallways for the Advent & Christmas seasons; to Rob Pavelzik for installing new sinks and faucets in the men's and women's restroom, and repairing the urinal in the men's restroom; and to Rob and Ron Gemma for their efforts inside and outside in maintaining our

property so well. To Jeanne Urbas, Pat Orner, and Rose Sedjo for organizing the Thanksgiving food and Jeanne for organizing the Christmas food items in Room 104; to all those, including the Cub Pack and Scout Troop who donated food for Thanksgiving Caring and Sharing; to the Elders and Mary Shunk for bagging the food for the Thanksgiving and Christmas food projects.

Note: Christmas decorations will be taken down after the service on **Sunday, January 15th**. Altar Guild members and anyone else who would like to help are encouraged to come.



ALTAR GUILD NEWS

The next meeting and training session for the Altar Guild will be held on

Tuesday, January 24th, at 11:00 a.m. Discussion will center around planning for Lent and Easter, along with other issues of interest. All

Altar Guild teams, and anyone else who would like to perform this sacred work in the chancel, are invited to attend.



ALTAR FLOWERS



Beginning January 1st, Altar Flowers will be \$50.00 for 2 bouquets (\$25.00 per bouquet) according to our florist, Cummings Florist of Massillon. A new 2023 sign-up sheet will be posted on the front bulletin board.