

TIME CHANGE!
November 5th
 One Extra Hour of Sleep!

November

*Pulpit Exchange on
 November 19th:
 Pastor Diane at St. John's
 Pastor Matt at St. Thomas*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
			All Saints' Day	6PM Table Talk @ Daily Grind		
5 8:30, 11AM Worship with Holy Communion 9:45AM Sunday School Feed My Sheep CCAP 3PM Joint Confirmation at St. James Uvilla	6	7 10AM Glad Abouts in the Lounge	8 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30-8PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	9	10 10AM-7PM Craft, Soup & Sandwich Sale in Luther Hall Martin Luther's Birthday	11 10AM-7PM Craft, Soup & Sandwich Sale in Luther Hall FLYTE Lockin 7pm
12 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM Sunday School	13 7PM Church Council in the Lounge	14 10AM Glad Abouts in the Lounge	15 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30-8PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	16 11:30AM Mustard Seed Thanksgiving Dinner	17	18 6PM Family Movie Night
19 8:30, 11AM Pulpit Exchange with Pastor Diane 9:45AM Sunday School 12:15PM Women in the Fast Lane 12:30 - 4:30PM Confirmation	20 5-8PM Mustard Seed Spirit Night @ Chick-Fil-A	21 10AM Glad Abouts in the Lounge 1PM St. John's Pastor at Conference Meeting in Wardensville, WV	22 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30-8PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	Office Closed!		23
				Happy Thanksgiving Day!	24	25 11AM-1PM Friends Feeding Friends
26 8:30, 11AM Worship 9:45AM Sunday School	27 7PM Mustard Seed Board meets	28 10AM Glad Abouts in the Lounge	29 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30-8PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	30 10AM Glad Abouts in the Lounge		

NEWSLETTER

St. John's Lutheran Church
101 W. Martin Street

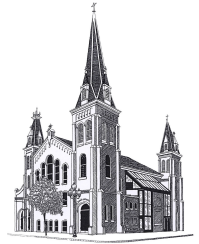
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

Telephone: 304-263-9291 FAX 304-263-4559

E-Mail: churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Website: www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Pastor: The Rev. Matthew A. Day



NOVEMBER 2017

Our Thanksgiving Offering

The year of 2017 has been a record year for disasters, a record year for at least for as far back as most of us can remember. In light of that fact and knowing how many people and places were effected, Council has decided to send the St. John's funds collected in Thanksgiving for our blessings to The Lutheran Disaster Response Fund.

"Lutheran Disaster Response collaborates with other disaster response organizations and religious entities in the United States and around the world. This enables the greatest stewardship of resources and maximum impact of response. We are a welcome partner because we respect the perspectives and strengths of others.

We recognize that every disaster is local. Because of this, we believe every response needs to be rooted in the community; we work to accompany that community from immediate relief through long-term

AT A GLANCE:

Official Notice

A Yearly Congregational Meeting has been scheduled for November 5

to discuss the 2018 budget. Please be in attendance. The meeting will take place after the 10am service.

recovery. In our international work we partner closely with companion churches and other Lutheran and ecumenical relief agencies to make sure local needs are being addressed and met. In the United States, we work through our extensive affiliate network and other partners to address these same concerns.

Your gifts are used entirely (100 percent) for direct response. Together, we can help provide immediate and long-lasting support for those whose homes have been devastated or who have been otherwise affected by hurricanes."



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

THIS CHANGES EVERYTHING.

2018 ELCA
YOUTH
GATHERING

JUNE 27-JULY 1 + HOUSTON, TX

GATHERING@ELCA.ORG + 888-411-3522 + ELCA.ORG/GATHERING

FOR BY **GRACE** YOU HAVE BEEN SAVED THROUGH FAITH, AND THIS IS NOT YOUR OWN DOING; IT IS THE GIFT OF GOD. - EPHESIANS 2:8

[@ELCAGATHERING](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAGATHERING) [f](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAGATHERING) [FB.COM/YOUTHGATHERING](https://www.facebook.com/ELCAGATHERING) [@ELCAGATHERING](https://www.instagram.com/ELCAGATHERING)

#ELCAYG2018

PRE-GATHERING EVENTS + JUNE 24-27

myle

MULTICULTURAL YOUTH LEADERSHIP EVENT OF THE ELCA

the +Able

AN ELCA GATHERING OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES

Every student who is in the 8th grade or above is eligible to attend the Youth Gathering in 2018.

The Conference churches are working together to fundraise and travel down to Houston. We need to know now if you are interested in going. The Cost is around \$1500 but with fundraising and other support, we hope to make the cost free.

Please speak to Pastor Matt if you are interest. This is a once in a lifetime event so don't miss it!

2017 ST. JOHN'S COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

October 9, 2017

Meeting called to order by: President Mindi Esswein

Members present: Mindi Esswein, Pastor Matt, Jane Kelley, Bess Day, Connie Provard, Rick Losh, Darrell Propst, Austin Propst, Bev Murphy, Shane Wagoner, Mike Noll, Diane Shewbridge, and Cindy Moats

Members absent: Jerry Crites

Devotions: Rick Losh

Minutes: September 2017 council minutes accepted (M Day/Losh)

Financial Report: January to October 2017 report accepted (Losh/Shewbridge)

Pastor's Report: A summary report for the month of September was provided to the council by Pastor Matt. He shared plans for the Reformation Day service and is currently planning the services for Christmas.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Library relocation: Discussed relocating the library from Luther Hall to the back wall of the Chapel in the basement of the church building, to make it more easily accessible. Accepted (Murphy/Moats)
2. The 2018 budget proposal was presented to the council. It was reviewed by the members present and a discussion followed. Motion was made to accept the budget as presented and forward it to the congregation for final approval (Noll/Kelly). Accepted

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

3 year goals: Work on this was tabled until the next meeting

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Christian Education: Committee members are implementing some new ideas to improve attendance at Sunday School, and they'll have a service project for the students on the first Sunday of each month, utilizing "Fill the Bucket" as a theme. Trunk or Treat will be held on Sunday, October 29.

WELCA: Oct. 21 is the Apple Harvest Parade and WELCA is asking for donations of canned sodas, bottled water, and individually wrapped treats for sale during the parade. Nov. 10 and 11 is the Soup and

Sandwich sale, along with the Craft sale, and volunteers are needed as well as donations of quart jars.

Worship & Music: No report.

FLYTE: No report.

Social Ministry: There are seats still available for the bus trip to Sight and Sound Theatre in December. The next movie day is Oct. 14 and the movie will be Monsters Inc.

Evangelism: None.

Property/Tech: Work is supposed to start on the steeple on October 10th. The installation of the new air conditioning units is scheduled to start the next Monday, October 16th.

Mutual Ministry: No report.

Stewardship: The book club will meet again on Jan, 7th at the home of Linda Riley. This committee is still collecting the covenants and is extending the deadline in order to get more responses. The blood drive is scheduled for Dec. 15th.

With no further business, the congregational council closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted, Cindy Moats

An update on the AC units in Luther Hall

Our credit application was approved for 1/3 down to purchase materials and the balance due over 12 months at 0%.

Units are being installed and will hopefully be finished soon.

Thank you for those who have contributed \$260 toward this project.

WANT TO KEEP UP BETTER WITH ACTIVITIES AND WORSHIP AT ST. JOHN'S?



Search for **St. John's Lutheran Church, Martinsburg** on Facebook and like our page.

Visit Our Website

www.stjohnsmartinsburg.org

Sermons posted weekly, information about faith practices, and more information about events happening at the St John's.



Send an email to announcements@stjohnsmartinsburg.org to sign up for weekly emails and announcements.

1 YEAR GOALS

For St. John's

In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

BY JULY 31, 2018, WE WILL:

- Help people feel more safe and welcome at our congregation by improving the lighting around the church campus (including the parking lot), having parking lot ushers to welcome people to the congregation for both day and night activities, and creating a shepherding program to help new members and visitors learn about our ministry.
- Hold a least one Social Gathering per month including but not limited to Pub Theology, Men's Group or an Ice Cream Social.
- Involve FLYTE kids more in worship at least once a month.
- Develop a Marketing/Evangelism Plan for the congregation.

Please pray over these goals and ask for the Holy Spirit to guide you in helping us accomplish our goals over the next year.

Confirmation Schedule

2017-2018

Date	Subject - Year 1	Reinforcement Activity	Subject - Year 2	Reinforcement Activity
November 5 @ 3-6pm	Conference Wide Confirmation Event at St. James Uvilla, WV 4320 Shepherdstown Pike, Shenandoah Junction, WV 25442 Let us know if you can't make it.			
November 19 @ 12:30	Commandments 1-5		The Torah	Film - Evan Almighty
December 10 @ 12:30	Commandments 6-10	West Wing Episode - Take this Sabbath Day	The Nativity Story	Film - Nativity Story
January 21 @ 12:30	Apostles' Creed		Exodus	Film - Prince of Egypt
February 18 @ 12:30	Lord's Prayer	Field Trip - Grotto in Emmitsburg, MD	The Gospel	Field Trip - Grotto in Emmitsburg, MD
March 16-18	Confirmation Retreat - Topic: The Easter Story			
April 29 @ 12:30	Baptism/ Communion		Parables	
May 6 @ 12:30	Office of the Keys		Paul	
Confirmation Sunday - May 20 at 10am				



Community Lutheran Partners

www.clp-online.org (or)
PO Box 3054, Wheeling WV 26003

Please donate today and support our ministries in the WV-W MD Synod





**Driven by God's Word
Empowered through the sacraments
We are Sent to serve in the heart of Appalachia**



WELCOME TO WELCA

Upcoming Dates:

- November 7-9 Prepare for Soup/Sandwich Sale – let Priscilla, Connie, or Betty Lou know if you can help
- November 10 & 11 Vendor/Craft/Soup/Sandwich Sale in Luther Hall
- August 9-11, 2018 – SWO Convention at Bishop Hodges Pastoral Center, Huttonsville, WV
- July 2020 – 11th Triennial Gathering of WELCA, Phoenix, AZ

1. September needle craft night was cancelled. New date listed above.
2. Available in this newsletter is the vendor form for the Craft/Vendor Sale November 10 and 11.
3. Soup/Sandwich Sale pre-order form in this newsletter
4. WELCA will need help with food preparation of soup and sandwiches as well as help on the days of the Craft/Vendor Sale. Please check your calendars to see if you are available. THANKS!!
5. Additionally, if anyone would like to donate Wal-Mart gift cards to help WELCA purchase ingredients needed for the soup/sandwiches, we would greatly appreciate it. THANKS!!!!!!!!!!!!

The Book Club will be focusing on books by author, Charles Martin, for their next discussion. This will also be their annual covered dish Christmas Luncheon at the home of Linda Riley at 1PM on January 7th. Join us for good food, good books and a good time with friends!

Don't forget,too, the Christmas books are on the red cart in the lounge. There's a great selection.

SCRIP SPOT

The Holidays are coming!!! Don't forget gift cards - they are easy and inexpensive to mail! Gift cards can also be used to purchase those extra groceries needed for baking and holiday meals - Wal-Mart, Target, Martins, and Sam's Club.

**St. John's Lutheran Church
101 W. Martin St.
Martinsburg, WV 25401
Fall Craft & Vendor Fair
November 10 & 11 [Fri & Sat]
10:00 - 7:00**

Contact name _____ Phone _____

Business name _____ Email _____

Mailing address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Number of spots requested _____ Website _____

Items selling _____

Contact St. John's for more information at [304] 263-9291
or email ChurchOffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org

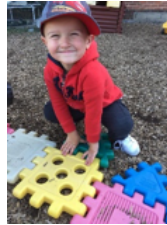
Make checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church with craft fair in the memo line

Spot size is 10 x 10. Tables available for use on request or bring your own table. Cost for members \$25.00, non members \$30.00. Non-refundable after Oct.10, 2017. Set up on Thursday, November 9 from 6-9 pm or Friday starting at 8:00 am. Tables must be set up by 10:00 am on Friday and stay until 7:00 pm on Saturday. You will be notified after receipt of payment.

Agreement

All work must be family-oriented. Spaces are approximately 10 x10 and are assigned on a first come first assigned basis. Must have enough merchandise and stay set up for entire fair. I hereby and forever discharge St. John's Lutheran Church and all persons from all responsibility, personal liability, loss and or damage in connection with this fair.

sign _____ date _____



The Mustard Seed had a lot of fun in October! We enjoyed making Fall food projects, carving pumpkin's, playing outside and our Annual Fall Parade through town. The local businesses are wonderful at supporting our center. Please take the time and walk Mainstreet downtown. There are lots of great people and shops!

We have many special events coming up in November and December. We will set up a table at the WELCA vendor event with information about the center. We are looking forward to seeing the other vendors who will be joining us.

Our Annual Thanksgiving Feast for the Mustard Seed children and families will be on Thursday, November 16th starting at 11:30am. Kitchen help is always appreciated. Please See BettyLou if you are available.

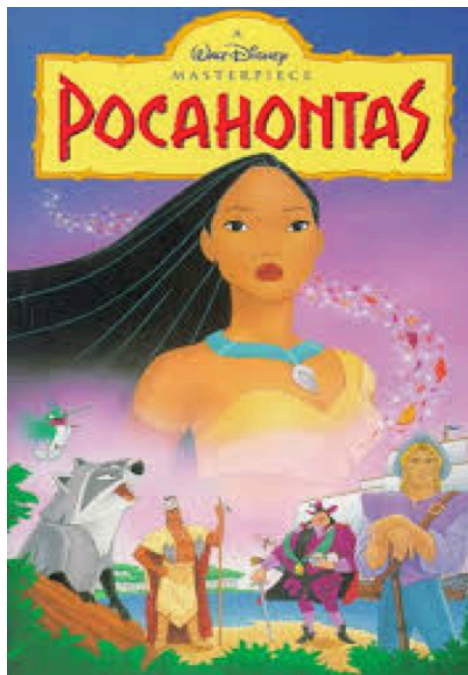
Join us for a Spirit Night at Chick-Fil-A on Monday, November 20th. Take a break from cooking and enjoy a dinner out before having to cook your huge Thanksgiving feast.

On December 1st you are invited to join us at Hoss's for *Dinner with Santa*. Sign-up sheets with more information will come out mid-November.

December 13th-18th we are having a Christmas Door Decorating Contest. Please take a walk through the center and check out the classroom doors. We will have Classroom gift boxes on the stage to cast your coin votes. All donations will go towards our annual *Happy Birthday Jesus* Party on December 20th. Thank you always for your support and we hope you have a wonderful Holiday season!

**Join St. John's Lutheran Church For
Family Movie Night
November 18th at 6:00pm**

Located in Luther Hall



Free Movie

Free Popcorn

Free Drink

Sponsored by the Social Ministry

FLYTE

LOCK IN

Saturday, Nov 11 - Nov 12
7pm

Bring a game, movie, sleeping bag, pillow, a tooth brush and a snack to share.

Bring a friend too!

The Lock In is open to
Elementary, Middle and High
School Students.

Breakfast will be provided on Sunday Morning!

St. John's Lutheran Church
Statement of Income & Expenses
January-September 2017

Total

Income	
Current Offering	103,602
Benevolence	25,196
Improvement Fund	2,829
Special Offering & Income	4,412
Memorials & Other Donations	250

Total Income **\$ 136,289**

Expenses	
Worship and Music	20,728
Administration	41,892
Evangelism	2,241
Stewardship	19
Youth	726
Social Ministry	138
Christian Education	2,422
Ministry	54,377
Property	52,113
Benevolence	27,840

Total Expenses **202,496**

Excess of expenses over income **(66,207)**

Other Income	7,772
Other Expenses	4,751

Total excess of expenses over income **\$ (63,186)**

Capital Improvement

Income	
Sound System Update	1,115

Expense	
A/C Luther Hall	10,157
Steeple Repair	6,000

SJLC Mustard Seed
Statement of Income & Expenses
January-September 2017

Total

Income	
Income	\$ 258,666

Expenses	
Wage Expense	208,882
Other Expenses	53,953
Total Expenses	262,836

Excess of income over expenses **(4,170)**

Carryforward loss from inception **(68,563)**

Cumulative expenses over fees **\$ (72,733)**

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church Endowment Funds
Q3 2017 Summary Report

	12/31/2016	9/30/2017	Annualized Return
Bank of Charles Town	110,298	61,654	15%
Thrivent	435,356	476,270	13%
ELCA Mission II	53,148	53,736	1%
ELCA Mission III	57,677	58,499	2%
Totals	\$ 656,478	\$ 650,159	

THE
**GREAT
CHURCH OUTING**

SIGHT AND SOUND IN LANCASTER, PA



DECEMBER 16

Cost:

\$157 for Adults

\$112 for Children 12 and under

**INCLUDES BUS TICKET, ADMISSION, AND
LUNCH**

MILESTONES IN NOVEMBER

BIRTHDAYS

- 4 Cheryl Burke
Barbara Maxwell
- 5 Deanna Noll
- 6 Roberta Dana
Gwen Ferenchick
- 7 Joshua Hancock
- 8 Amanda Boswell
- 10 John Link
- 11 ***Veteran's Day***
Ann Cloud
Rosalee Ettinger
- 14 Craig Harpel
Bernice Windholz
- 16 Sarah Calabrese
Lewis Harden, II
- 19 Margret Bock
- 20 Brian Kelley
- 23 ***Thanksgiving Day***
Steve Crites
- 25 Benjamin Byers, III
- 27 Carl Newman
- 28 Zachary Alvarez
- 29 Jenna Taylor
- 30 Katelyn Kline



ANNIVERSARIES

- 2 Meagan and Kevin Remsberg
- 4 Rebecca and Kirk Kline
- 5 Deanna and Gregory Noll
- 7 Kristi and David Remsberg
- 9 Debra and Teddy Roberts
- 28 Susan and Martin Bales

Don't see your important dates? We'd like to update our lists. Please send them to the office:

304-263-9291

churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org

A Few Ways for Families to Celebrate Thanksgiving

Maybe you have started your list already: turkey, stuffing, potatoes, green bean casserole, pumpkin pie. The family dinner is taking shape. Don't forget to add another important item to your list: tradition. Even if your kids are getting older, now is a great time to start some new family traditions that will make your Thanksgiving celebration more memorable and meaningful.

- 1 Tablecloth Tradition:** Buy a large tablecloth that you can use every year. Purchase some fabric pens and have your family members write specific things for which they are thankful. (Be sure to include the date!) As you do this for several years, you will be creating a host of memories to look back on each year. Remembering God's blessings from the past can help us be more hopeful for the future.
 - 2 Family Timeline:** The first idea will take several years to complete, but you can start remembering right now by making a list or timeline of the events in your family's life. Include those times when you have seen God working and when your faith has grown.
 - 3 Thank You Notes:** We often write notes to friends and neighbors who give us presents or do things for us, but how often do we make a written acknowledgment of the everyday things that happen in our own families. "Mom, thank you for making such a great dinner! I love it when you make strawberry salad." "Dad, thanks for fixing my tire last week. Riding my bike is so fun!" "Danny, thanks for helping me rake leaves on Saturday. I enjoyed our time together."
 - 4 Remember the "Invisibles":** Sometimes we also take for granted all the people who do things for us on a regular basis. As you are in the note-writing mode, consider writing thank you notes to everyday people like the paperboy, the garbage men, the lunch ladies at school, the cab driver, and the waitress.
 - 5 Guess Who Game:** In the days leading up to Thanksgiving have each member of the family complete this sentence several times: "**I am thankful for _____.**" Put each sentence on a small slip of paper and mix them up in a large bowl. On Thanksgiving Day, pull out the slips one at a time and try to guess who authored each slip.
 - 6 Invite:** Thanksgiving is traditionally a very family-centered holiday, but what about those who don't have family close by? Consider expanding your table by inviting some people who might not have anywhere to go like a college student, a shut-in, a single mother and her children, a widower, or a new family in your church.
 - 7 Write Prayers:** To help your family stay focused on giving thanks to God, have each member of the family write a prayer to share throughout the day. You can give each person a different theme or idea to start with or let them create their own prayers. With each prayer time, you might include a short Bible reading.
- What's your family's favorite holiday tradition?*

NOVEMBER 2017

	Reader/Worship Assistant	Usher	Acolyte	Crucifer
8:30 am Worship				
Nov. 5 10AM	<u>One Service</u> Michael Noll	Jerry Olsen and Don Smith	Kendall Snyder	Katie Kline
Nov. 12	Rosalie Bentz	Ray Bentz and Daniel Propst	Buddy Newman	Payton Janney
Nov. 19	Buddy Newman	Michael Janney and Alex Torbert	Judy Hinnerichs	Nathaniel Edwards
Nov. 26	Judy Hinnerichs	Andrew Banks and Douglas Widmeyer	Sharon Brumback	Joseph Wonsetler

	Reader/Worship Assistant	Usher	Acolyte	Crucifer
11 am Worship				
Nov. 12	Katie Kline	Arnold Bock and Jane Kelley	John Esswein	Hunter Thatcher
Nov. 19	Anne Moore	Sally Jenkins and Ray Bentz	Charlotte Hutzler	Austin Propst
Nov. 26	Arnold Bock	Jerry Olsen and Linda Payne	Landon Hutzler	Sally Jenkins

Altar Guild in November – Sharon Brumback and Vicky Torbert

Theology & Bible

TABLE TALK

Food & Drinks

JOIN US

1st Thursday of the
Month

November 2

6pm at The Daily Grind

Ever want to explore theology in a way that is not intimidating or hard to understand? And do you enjoy, eating out with friends who want to know more about their faith? Then you need to join us for Table Talk.

Our conversation over the next few months will be focused on the what exactly the Bible and our theology defines the "church" to be. Bring yourself and your questions and maybe we will go in a different direction. Table Talk is all about exploring our faith together.

Committee Meeting Night

In an effort to be better stewards of our time and talents, we are going to try to have the committees that need to meet, gather on the same night.

The Committee Meeting Night will be on the first Tuesday of each month at 6pm.

COMMITTEES MEETING THIS MONTH

Christian Education

Child Care is Available!

Feed My Sheep

First Sunday of the month



When Jesus feed over 5000 people, his command to the disciples was, "You give them something to eat."



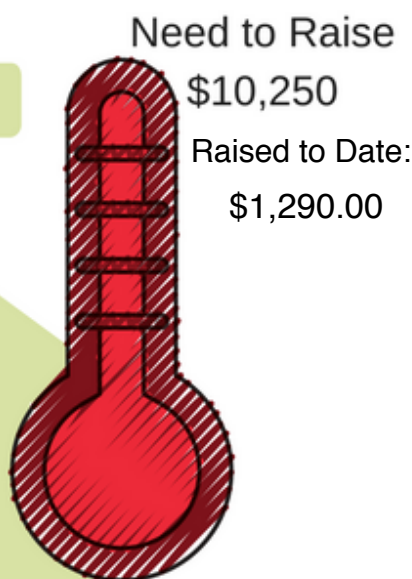
Bring in your non-perishable food items on the first Sunday of the month and place them in the bin below. The food donated will be dispersed throughout our community through our own food pantry here at church as well as through CCAP, Berkeley County Backpack Program, Shenandoah Women Shelter, The Rescue Mission, Bethany's House, Immanuel's House, Faith Collation for the Homeless, and The Martinsburg Children's Shelter.

"If you love me, feed my sheep."
John 21:15-19

A decorative graphic of a green leafy branch, positioned behind the text.

We need your help...

One June 25th, the congregation approved the replacement of our current sound system with the funding coming from donations earmarked for the project.



WOULD YOU CONSIDER MAKING A SPECIAL DONATION IN MEMORY OR IN HONOR OF SOMEONE?

A big part of being a welcoming congregation is making sure everyone can hear the message of the gospel.

Thank you for your generosity!

Pastor's Report

September 2017

VISITATION

September Visits: 20

CONFERENCE AND SYNOD

Conference Meeting

WORSHIP

7 Sunday Worship Services

Pulpit Exchange

CHURCH COMMITTEES

All Committee Meeting Night - Christian Education, Property,

Social Ministry

Stewardship

Council

Finance/Trustee

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

Family Movie Night

CCAP Board Meeting

Friends Feeding Friends

EDUCATION

3 Bible Study

Confirmation

3 Sunday School Classes

MUSTARD SEED

3 Chapel Services with Mustard Seed

Board Meeting

WEDDINGS

FUNERALS

CONTINUING EDUCATION

LARCUM Conference in Charleston, WV

CHOIR

3 Choir

MILEAGE

Pastor Day's Mileage for the month of September was 645 miles.



My brothers and sisters in Christ,
*For all the saints, who from
their labors rest...*

The month of November begins with the celebration of All Saints Sunday. A festival in the church where we remember our beloved brothers and

sisters who now enjoy the full feast of resurrection. Lutherans traditionally do not have good language to talk about the saints. We often say that we do not pray to saints, we pray to God alone, but yet we confess in our creed that we believe in the communion of saints. Suffusive to say, saint language.

So let's talk about some saintly language. First off, All Saints Sunday is a time when we remember those who have deeply impacted our faith but who are no longer with us. When St. Paul writes about death in his letters, he tells us that death is like sleeping. When I was in seminary, we asked Dr. Carlson to explain this. He said, "Remember when you were younger and you went to Hershey Park for the day? You would play all day long and be exhausted by the time you get to the car. On the way home, you would fall asleep and be so tired that you would not even remember your dad carrying you in to your bed. However, when you wake up the next morning, you find yourself in your own bed, though you do not remember the trip inside. And once you put your slippers on, you come down stairs to find that your dad made you pancakes. That is what Paul means."

All Saints Day can be a very hard time for many in our congregation. Remembering the death of a loved one can still bring up hard emotions but that is why we believe in the communion of saints. When we speak of the saints, we are not only referring to those who have died but those still present, in our community of faith. This is why on November 5th, we will not only remember those who are no longer with us, but we will welcome those "new saints" who want to join our congregation as members in the body of Christ.

So, are you thinking of joining our congregation? There is still time to do so. Just let me know. For many people in my generation, membership is a real foreign concept. We don't like joining groups that we do not know anything about. I often think that the church

should change our language from membership to discipleship. Membership in the church means you promise to make a commitment to pray for the congregation; to participate in the worship life of the congregation; to grow in your faith; and support the church through your time, talents and treasures. Joining a congregation is bigger than just membership. Anyone can be a member of an organization, we want you to embody the church in all that you say and do. Maybe that is a bit more overwhelming than many want to hear, but imagine if we all thought of ourselves less as members of St. John's and more of disciples of Jesus who are strengthened spiritually at St. John's.

As we have been talking over the past few months, the gospel of Matthew has high expectations for disciples. I think we should have high expectations of one another as well, but instead of doing what the world does when we make a mistake, we offer forgiveness. I think about all those blessed saints in my life who pushed me to be a better person, son, Christian, and eventually pastor. I think of those professors who made my life miserable, but in challenging me, made me a better person. I think of my scout master who was tough on me but in being tough, made me a stronger person. I think of my speech pathologist who never gave up on me; who worked week after week with me to help me in speaking more clearly. If it wasn't for her, I would not be a pastor. I think of my grandparents who made sure I went to church, knew about Jesus, and made sure I knew the love of my family. But I know these people were not perfect, but honestly, it doesn't matter.

If we learn to hold each other to high expectations as well as forgive when mistakes are made, we will get stronger. Gossiping doesn't make us stronger. Judging others does not make us stronger. As Jesus reminded us a few weeks ago in the gospel, we are not just hypocrites but we are forgiven hypocrites. Whenever I read about the saints, we hear so many stories of the great things they have done, as well as the mistakes they have made, but yet they are still saints because the church found a way to forgive them. We are a great church when we do the same to each other.

In Christ.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "The Rev. Matthew A. Dreyer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "In Christ."

St. John's Lutheran Church
101 W. Martin Street
Martinsburg, West Virginia 25401

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Non-Profit Organization

U.S. POSTAGE

PAID

Martinsburg,
WV

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