

Worship Assistants
 Dec 1 Michael Noll
 Dec 8 Ed Shewbridge
 Dec 15 Anne Moore
 Dec 22 Drew Catrow
 Dec 29 Andrew Banks

December

Church Office Closed!

December 24-26 and
 December 31-January 2!

USHERS
 Dec 1 Bill Torbert/Blaine Wilson
 Dec 8 Linda Payne/Jerry Olsen
 Dec 15 Ben/Jean DeAlexandro
 Dec 22 Pat/Bev Murphy
 Dec 29 Sally Jenkins/Jane Kelley

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Advent 1 - Worship with Holy Communion Graham Cracker Houses after Worship 4pm Advent Craft Night at St. Thomas	2 Sunday on Monday 5:45PM Dinner 6:15 Class 7:15 Evening Prayer	3	4 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel 8:15PM Advent Compline	5 Conference Christmas Caroling 5:30pm at St. Thomas	6 6-9PM Mustard Seed's Pizza & PJ's w/Santa	7
8 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Advent 2 Worship	9 7PM Church Council in the Lounge	10	11 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30-8PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel 8:15PM Candlelight Vigil	12	13	14 9AM - Noon Martinsburg Lion's Club Breakfast with Santa in Luther Hall
15 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Advent 3 Worship with Holy Communion Pulpit Exchange Sunday	16 Sunday on Monday 5:45PM Dinner 6:15 Class 7:15 Evening Prayer	17 Pastor Matt Away in Lancaster for Family Event	18 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 3PM Mustard Seed "Happy Birthday Jesus" Party 6:30 Choir Rehearsal & WELCA Needlecraft Night 8:15pm Advent Compline	19	20	21 6pm Family Movie Night
22 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Advent 4 Worship with No Fuss Christmas Pageant	23	24 6PM Family Christmas Eve Service 10:30PM Prelude Candlelight 11PM Christmas Eve Service	25 10AM Christmas Day Service with Holy Communion Church Office Closed	26	27	28 11AM-1PM Friends Feeding Friends
29 10AM Christmas 1 - Lessons and Carols	30	31 New Year's Eve Church Office Closed	Acolyte / Crucifer Dec 1 Braydon Hill Payton Hill Dec 8 Megan Kelso Jordyn Kelso Dec 15 Ian Fleming Lakyn Edwards Dec 22 Christian Gottlieb Justin Gottlieb- Dec 24 6PM Megan Kelso Jordyn Kelso 10:30PM Austin Propst John Esswein Dec 29 Mac Robinson Rebekah Root			
Pastor Matt on Vacation						



Do you want to keep Christ in
Christmas?

Feed the hungry, clothe the naked,
forgive the guilty,
welcome the unwanted,
care for the ill, love your enemies
and do unto others as
you would have done unto you.

Every day, put a non-perishable food item in a box. Make it a part of your family dinner and talk about food insecurity and hunger-related-illness with your family. Here are some statistics about food insecurity:

- Some 795 million people in the world do not have enough food to lead a healthy active life. That's about one in nine people on earth.
- The vast majority of the world's hungry people live in developing countries, where 12.9 percent of the population is undernourished.
- Poor nutrition causes nearly half (45%) of deaths in children under five - 3.1 million children each year.
- One out of six children -- roughly 100 million -- in developing countries are underweight.
- One in four of the world's children are stunted. In developing countries the proportion can rise to one in three.
- If women farmers had the same access to resources as men, the number of hungry in the world could be reduced by up to 150 million.
- 66 million primary school-age children attend classes hungry across the developing world, with 23 million in Africa alone.

In our area alone, Berkeley Backpack Program serves children in 18 (20 total) of the 32 schools in Berkeley County. That means it is likely that you or your child goes to school or has friends with someone who is dealing with food insecurity.

The Eastern Panhandle is the fastest growing area in WV.

No child in our community should go hungry.

**This is a community problem and therefore,
needs community action and support.**

Bring your boxes on Christmas Eve with you to worship.

If you can help transport the boxes after Christmas, let Pastor Matt know.

Nobody in our community should ever go hungry. Thank you for doing your part this month and every month in ending food insecurity.



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Reverse Advent Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Mac and Cheese Cups 	2 Chef Boyardee 	3 Tuna Packets 	4 Canned Soup (make sure you grab the pop-tops) 	5 Bottle of Water 	6 Peanut Butter 	7 Jelly (no glass) 
8 Fruit Bars 	9 Cereal Bars 	10 Fruit Cups 	11 Small Boxes of Cereal 	12 Popcorn 	13 Granola Bars 	14 Cup of Noodle Soup 
15 Chef Boyardee 	16 Canned Soup (make sure you grab the pop-tops) 	17 Small Boxes of Cereal 	18 Mac and Cheese Cups 	19 Tuna and Crackers Snack Pack 	20 Your Favorite Fruit Snack 	21 Your Favorite Drink
22 Your Favorite Cookie 	23 A gift card to a grocery store 	24 Your choice! Merry Christmas. Make sure you bring your box with you to church tonight!	Every time you put an item in this box, say this prayer together: Come, Lord Jesus. Be our guest. Let these gifts, in this box, be blessed. Bless all children of the world. May no one go hungry or unloved. Amen.			

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**Please Remember to
Pick Up Your Offering
Envelopes in from
Church Narthex**

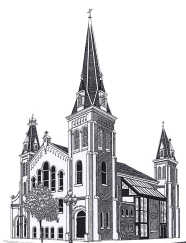
January

ANNUAL REPORTS
from committee chairs, treasurers and
organization presidents are due
January 15!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Ushers January 5 Douglas Widmeyer/Andrew Banks January 12 Arnold Bock/Bill Torbert January 19 Ray Bentz/Blaine Wilson January 26 Brenda Morrison/Kandi Ruth w/Rhett			1	2	3	4
			Church Office Closed!!			
Pastor Matt on Vacation						
5 9am Coffee & Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Epiphany of our Lord Worship with Holy Communion Feed My Sheep Undecorating the Church after worship ... Also The Book Club @ Linda Riley's	6 Sunday on Monday 5:45PM Dinner 6:15 Class 7:15 Evening Prayer	7	8 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	9	10	11 Red Cross Blood Drive in Luther Hall
12 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Baptism of our Lord Worship	13 7PM Church Council in the Lounge. The election of church officers will take place during this meeting.	14	15 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel Annual Reports Due!	16	17	18 6pm Family Movie Night
					Confirmation Retreat	
19 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Worship with Holy Communion Confirmation Retreat	20 Sunday on Monday 5:45PM Dinner 6:15 Class 7:15 Evening Prayer	21	22 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	23	24	25 11AM-1PM Friends Feeding Friends
26 9am Coffee and Conversation & Choir Rehearsal 10am Worship 4pm The Light Conquors A special evening prayer with the Lutheran church- es of the Panhandle	27	28	29 1PM Bible Study in the Lounge 6:30PM Choir Rehearsal in the Chapel	30	31	Worship Assistants Jan 5 Diane Shewbridge Jan 12 Sue Wall Jan 19 Blaine Wilson Jan 26 Alison Poland

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



December 2019 - January 2020



Advent & Christmas Worship Schedules

Advent

December 1 - St. Nicholas Sunday

December 22 - No Fuss Christmas Pagant

Christmas

Family Worship on Christmas Eve - 6pm

Choir Prelude on Christmas Eve - 10:30pm

Candle Light Worship on Christmas Eve - 11pm

Christmas Day - 10am

December 29 - Lessons and Carols at 10am

**Advent
prepares us
for Christ's
return.**

**Christmas
reminds us
that God
never left.**

Christmas Eve Worship

.....
All earth is hopeful, the savior comes as
Last!

Family Worship

6pm

Candlelight
Worship

11pm



Choir Prelude

10:30pm on Christmas Eve

This year, the choir is singing a special
cantata titled
"A Candlelight Christmas"
Come early and hear the beautiful music.



JOINT
**CHRISTMAS
DAY WORSHIP**

IN FELLOWSHIP WITH TRINITY EPISCOPAL,
ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN & FIRST PRESBYTERIAN

December 25
10:00 am

At St. John's Lutheran
101 W. Martin St.
Martinsburg, WV

A yellow background with a white silhouette of a nativity scene. The scene shows Mary kneeling, the infant Jesus in a manger, and Joseph standing with a staff. A four-pointed star is in the upper left corner. Text is centered and right-aligned.

WORSHIP THEME FOR ADVENT: THE BOOK OF ISAIAH

December 1 - Trading in our tanks for combines

December 8 - The Asp.

December 15- A Way Beyond our Dreams
(Pulpit Exchange)

December 22 - All we want are signs...

WILL YOU HELP SERVE AS AN USHER,
GREETER, READER, OR WORSHIP
ASSISTANT THIS CHRISTMAS?

*Sign up on our
website or on
Sunday Mornings.*

Thank you for helping make all our guest and visitors feel welcome this Christmas.

**Visit stjohnsmartinsburg.org
and click on the link on the
front page titled
"Christmas Eve Worship Help"**



SERMONS DURING CHRISTMAS

Family Christmas Eve - I just can't wait
to be king!

Candlelight Christmas Eve- A not so
silent night...

Christmas Day- Pastor Rufus from
First Presbyterian

December 29 - Lessons and Carols



SERMONS IN JANUARY



January 5 - Jesus loves the weird ones

January 12 - Who is Jesus- Part 36

January 19- Rediscovering Agnus Dei

January 26 - Who is Jesus- Part 37

2019 COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES

November 11, 2019

Meeting called to order by: Rick Losh, President

Members present: Pastor Matt, Rick Losh, Drew Catrow, Jane Kelley, Linda Payne, Diane Shewbridge, Shane Wagoner, Blaine Wilson, Bess Day (Treasurer)

Members Absent: Jerry Crites, Anne Moore, Mike Noll, Darrell Propst, Trey Voorhees

Devotions: led by Jane Kelley

Minutes: October meeting minutes approved as submitted. **(M/S/P:**

Pastor Matt; Drew Catrow)

Financial Report: Adjustments were made to October budget to reflect end-of-quarter figures not available at the time of the October meeting. We continue to operate at a deficit. While the Endowment has been showing good returns and the Mustard Seed is fully enrolled with a waiting list, these income sources cannot be counted on. The proposed 2020 budget, which is significantly lower for the first time in the last 9 years, was presented to council and will be presented to the congregation. The budget committee has worked diligently to cut back on spending where possible but looking ahead some serious prayers, plans and actions will be needed. **Motion for council to accept the proposed 2020 budget to present to the congregation (M/S/P: Drew Catrow; Diane Shewbridge)**

Pastor's Report: Trunk or Treat went very well. A few more cars would be appreciated next year. Advent Compline services will take place on Wednesdays in December at 8:15pm. December 18th is the 1-year anniversary of the shooting at Lupita's Grocery Store on Queen Street across from St. Johns. Pastor would like to remember this by holding an abbreviated Compline service outside of the store if possible. Her family would be notified and encouraged to attend.

Upcoming Events:

- November 17 – Annual Congregational Meeting for council nominations, budget, other church business
- November 22-23 – Confirmation Lock-in at St. James
- November 24 – Christ the King Sunday & decorating the Sanctuary for Christmas
- December 1 – Graham Cracker House decorating after church
- December 1 – Advent Craft night at St. Thomas at 4pm

- December 5 – Conference Christmas Caroling 5:30pm at St. Thomas
- December 14 – Lions Club Pancake Breakfast from 9-12pm. Help would be appreciated!
- December 15 – Pulpit Exchange
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Family Worship at 6pm
- December 24 – Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship at 11pm with the musical prelude at 10:30pm
- December 25 – Christmas Day Combined Service at Trinity Episcopal Church

Old Business: Poinsettia orders will be accepted “in honor of” or “in Memory of” as in the past. The option will be available to purchase “In Lieu of” poinsettias as well. Orders will be due Sunday, November 24th. In lieu of donations will go to Campus Ministry. The Nominating Committee presented 8 candidates for council election and 3 trustees for election. We will need to vote in 5 council members and 1 trustee to fill terms ending this December. Nominations will be taken from the floor at the time of the elections which will take place on November 17th at the congregational meeting following the church service. Newly elected members will be invited and encouraged to attend the December Council Meeting. The fencing project still needs to be reviewed and the proposal presented to the Historic Preservation Committee as required by the City in the near future.

New Business:

A request was made by a franchised youth soccer program (Soccer Shots) to use Luther Hall for their program. The program runs from January through March for 2-year old through 8-year old youth who would attend weekly sessions on Saturdays or evenings. After some discussion the motion to grant permission was not approved. **(M/S/not passed: Pastor Matt; Drew Catrow)**

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Christian Education: The Sunday on Monday Christian Education program will continue on Monday evenings.

Social Ministry: Friends Feeding Friends on October 26th served about 68 meals. November Friends meal will be on Saturday, November 23rd. Donations of new men’s and women’s underwear is needed. Socks are in good supply right now. Decks of playing cards are still needed for the Prison gift bags project which will be prepared in November for distribution in December.

Evangelism: No report.

Worship and Music: Advent rehearsals are underway. On Sunday,

January 26th at 4pm, joint Conference choirs will present a concert at St. John's. Rehearsals will be at St. John's on Sundays at 1pm with a potluck lunch at noon.

LYFE: No report.

Property/Tech: Plaster repairs in the church are underway by Doug Horner.

Mutual Ministry: No report but will meet on November 25th at 5:30pm at the Holiday Inn for dinner.

Stewardship: Covenant surveys have been compiled and distributed to build committees and schedules for the various activities. The Red Cross Blood Drive is still scheduled for Saturday, January 11th in Luther Hall.

The next Mustard Seed Board Meeting will be December 3, 2019.

With no other business, the meeting adjourned with the Lord's Prayer. (M/S/P: Linda Payne; Drew Catrow)

Respectfully Submitted,

Diane Shewbridge



ELCA Good Gifts

These little gifts make the perfect stocking stuffer or the perfect gift for the person who already has everything!

ELCA Good Gifts gives people in developing countries the tools necessary for school supplies, vaccines and farm animals.

Here is how it works: Pick an ornament off the tree and either visit elca.org/goodgifts or drop a check/cash in the offering plate with all the details on your ornament. 100% of the proceeds to the good gifts program goes directly to the people who need them.

Don't see a gift you like? No worries! Check out the catalog for all the available good gifts!

God's Global Barnyard

An animal can make a world of a difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell at the market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.



Cow

A cow's milk, meat, fertilizer and calves can quickly strengthen a family's financial security.

\$500



Chicks

Chicks begin laying eggs at just a few months old, offering nutritious, protein rich meals for families who are hungry.

\$10



Goat

Fresh milk from a goat is very nutritious and can be used to make products like yogurt and cheese to sell at the market.

\$50



Honeybees

Bees pollinate plants and boost crop growth – helping the wider community. Soaps and candles can be made from their wax and sold at the local market.

\$20



Pig

Within months after birth, piglets grow to weigh over 200 pounds – bringing a big payoff at the market.

\$30



Fish Farm

A fish farm and training in good business economics can provide a lifetime of meals for a community.

\$250



Oxen and plow

A pair of oxen will help create record-breaking harvests, provide natural fertilizer for the fields and give families the gift of time.

\$1,000

Give through your congregation, by visiting ELCA.org/goodgifts or by sending a check to ELCA Good Gifts, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009. Please indicate your gift in the memo line of your check.

ELCA.org/goodgifts

Special Offerings in November and December

At the Council meeting in November, the Council designated the Thanksgiving Envelope to the Good Samaritan Clinic, the “In Lieu of Poinsettia” offering to the Lutheran Campus Ministry at WVU, and the Special Christmas Envelope to Berkeley Backpack Program.

The Good Samaritan Clinic has been operating since 2005. The Good Samaritan Free Clinic serves patients who have an ongoing medical problem. Specific services include: medical consultations and treatment, medication management, referrals to specialists, women's health and pediatrics services.

LCM at WVU is a word and sacrament ministry to the students and faculty at WVU. They hold weekly worship in the chapel as well as other events through out the week. Their chaplain is Pastor Tony Setley.

The Berkeley County Backpack Program's goal is to make sure no child goes hungry on the weekend by sending food that children can cook on their own home in a backpack. In our area alone, Berkeley Backpack Program serves children in 18 (20 total) of the 32 schools in Berkeley County. That means it is likely that you or your child goes to school or has friends with someone who is dealing with food insecurity.

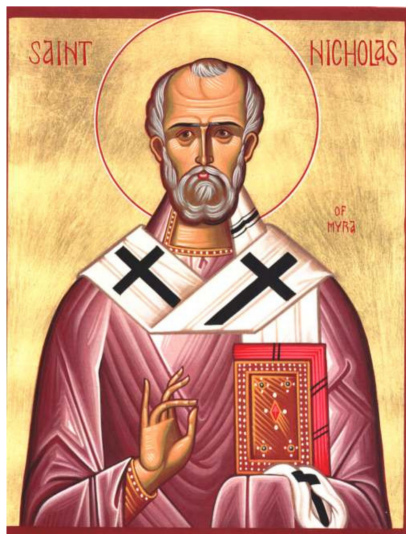
Thank you for your generosity.

We have so many socks that we are good for the next couple of months. However, we need something that nobody likes to talk about...



St. Nicholas Day

Sunday, December 1



You are invited to join us this day as we learn a little bit more about the man known as St. Nicolas.

Join us for a Special Children's Message and a visit from the man himself!

WORSHIP AT 10AM

STAY AFTER FOR GRAHAM

CRACKER HOUSE DECORATING



Calling all Crafty People!

(and the not so crafty ones too...)



Graham Cracker Houses Decorating

December 1 in the chapel following Worship

WELCA invites you to decorate graham cracker houses in Luther Hall on Sunday, December 1. We will have lunch together and then, decorate the houses, and complete a couple other Christmas crafts. It will be a hot dog lunch, you may bring whatever side you wish, 1 can of icing and 1 bag of candy per child. If you can't make it after church, join us at St. Thomas at 4pm.

See below...



Advent Craft Night

December 1 at St. Thomas

4pm

The conference is planning to have a fun craft around the theme of Advent. We will be making candles, decorating more graham cracker houses, drawing, painting, etc. We are asking for a 5 dollar donation to cover supplies. Everyone is welcome to come and learn a little bit more about Advent and be with our fellow Lutheran church family.





... ADVENT ...
COMPLINE

PREPARING · WATCHING · HOPING

Join Pastor Christine and Pastor Matt and escape the chaos of the season through a time of prayer and contemplation leading up to the birth of our King.

Every Wednesday Night leading up to Christmas at 8:15 pm in the Chapel at St. John's.

December 4

December 11

On this last night, we will remember the shooting at Lupita's grocery which happened one year ago as well as all those affected by violence this past year.

December 18



Candle Light Vigil

To remember and pray for all victims of violence

Dec 11 at 8:15pm

Potomac East Conference

5th Annual Christmas Caroling

December 5

Meet at 5:30 p.m. at
St. Thomas in Charlestown

We will have a quick dinner at
St. Thomas and then we head out
to some local nursing homes to
bring some Christmas Joy. EPTA is
graciously letting us use one of
their trolley busses to transport us
this year.



BREAKFAST WITH SANTA AND THE MARTINSBURG LIONS CLUB



SATURDAY, DECEMBER 14TH

9AM-12PM

LUTHERAN PARISH HALL

101 W. MARTIN STREET

KIDS 12YRS AND UNDER FREE

ADULTS WELCOME

(DONATIONS APPRECIATED)

**Saturday,
December 21**

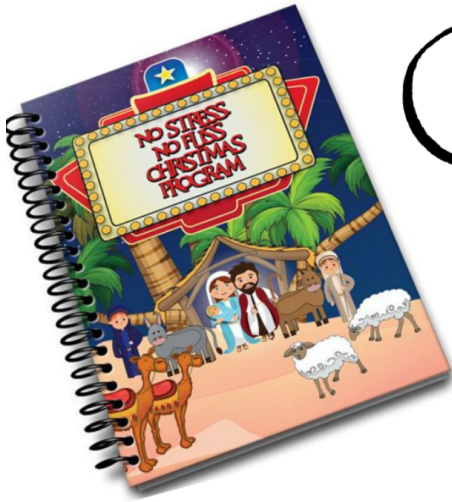
Family Movie Night

This month
we are
watching
The
Muppet's
Christmas
Carol



We will provide the movie, popcorn
and drinks.
All you need to bring is your family!

Movie starts at 6pm!



Christmas Pageant

DECEMBER 22
AT 10AM

No Stress. No Fuss. Seriously!

We know Christmas is busy and adding one more thing to your schedule will not help you.

So we are going to do a no stress or fuss pageant this year.

All you have to do is show up on December 22 around 9am, get fitted for a costume of your choice, and find a simple part. If you just want to dress up, we can make that happen. Do you want to read a part? We got a few parts that even the adults can read. Don't worry about practicing. The reading parts are simple and perfect for kids 2nd grade and up. If we do not have enough kids, we will draft adults from the congregation.

Really, don't worry! Hearing the story told from the perspective of our youngest voices is special and holy regardless of any thing that might happen!

We have been asked by
Immanuel's House to donate
playing cards to the Eastern
Regional Jail



**We need 132 packs of cards by
the middle of December.**

The best place to purchase them is at the Dollar Tree. They sell a two pack for \$1. The next time you are at the Dollar Tree, pick up a pack and bring them to St. John's.

**The Social Ministry Committee will make sure
they get to Immanuel's House .**

The science behind why choir-singing is good for you

By Sarah Claydon



Whether amateurs or professional, young or old, people all across Canada are coming together to sing — and science suggests it's doing them even more good than you might first suspect.

There are 28,000 choirs that gather in schools, churches, and community spaces throughout the country. Research done for advocacy group Choral Canada suggests 3.5 million Canadians currently lend their vocal cords to a choir.

"All those moments of singing together with other people created in me a feeling of peace, a feeling of unity, a feeling of belonging, and connection that otherwise in the world is challenging," Hussein Janmohamed, a PhD in choral music, told the CBC's Kathryn Marlow of his choir experiences.

Daniel Levitin, psychology professor at McGill University and author of *This is Your Brain on Music*, says group singing isn't just good for the soul — it's good for the body.

By analyzing the changes in people's brain activity when they sing together, he's come to the conclusion that feelings of belonging and mood elevation are biologically ingrained to surface with communal singing.

Evolutionary history

Levitin says group singing has been an essential human trait for tens of thousands of years.

It was traditionally a community building exercise that everyone participated in.

"Still today you can go to hunter-gatherer societies, pre-industrial tribes, and everybody sings, everybody dances," he told Marlow.

That communal approach changed in most of Western society, however. Levitin traces it to the first concert halls in Europe from about 500 years ago.

"The audience was meant to sit there with their hands politely folded in their laps and their mouths shut" while onstage performers sang, Levitin told Marlow.

Singing was now something that specialists did, while others watched. It became an exclusionary act, rather than a communal one.

It effectively silenced those who didn't think they had a special talent.

"You hear people say all the time, 'Oh, I can't sing' or 'I'm not good enough to sing,' and I really think that's a shame. It goes against our evolutionary history."

Group singing makes you feel closer to others

Levitin points to a wealth of neurological research that suggests our brains release oxytocin when we sing with others.

"That's a chemical that's involved in social bonding and it's believed to give rise to the feelings of togetherness and friendship that comes from singing together," he said.

Group singing, in other words, scientifically strengthens a community.

Levitin also says the act of listening when singing in groups causes participants' brain responses to synchronize with one another.

"If your brain waves themselves are synchronized, that would sure be a way to make you feel closer to others wouldn't it?"

Choir-singing as an anti-depressant ?

Singing in choirs doesn't just connect us with others, it also has the powerful capacity to elevate our mood.

"I can go into a rehearsal feeling gross, or having like a really bad mental health day, and I will leave there feeling uplifted, and elated, and grounded, and comforted," singer Alexis Hillyard of Kokopelli Choir Association told Marlow.

"It's pretty fantastic."

As Levitin explains, the healing potential of singing is due in part to deep breathing. As an aerobic activity, singing increases the amount of oxygenated blood rushing to the brain.

"We feel good after breathing, and breathing deeply, and controlling our breaths in the way that we do when we're singing," he said.

Research suggests choir singing changes our neurochemistry as well. When singing to music you enjoy with other people, the brain sees an uptick in two powerful neurotransmitters called serotonin and dopamine.

Dopamine activates the brain's pleasure centre, while serotonin is commonly deployed to ward off depression.

"Serotonin is kind of famous because there's a whole class of drugs that by some estimates 20 per cent of Canadians are taking — we call them SSRIs or anti-depressants — and the second 'S' in that word is serotonin," said Levitin.

And Levitin stresses that we can't forget about the power of engaging in a musical experience when considering a choir's ability to make us feel good — regardless of whether it's tied to neurotransmitters or something more ineffable.

"You've been singing for a couple hours, you've been listening to music for a couple hours — that's known to improve mood," he said.

'Don't be judgy'

But how do us normal folks suspend our fear of singing beyond the shower and welcome the potential of group singing in our lives?

In his clinical opinion, Levitin argues we shouldn't be "so judgy" about whether or not we're pleasant to listen to.

"Who cares if you're Ella Fitzgerald, or not? Leonard Cohen certainly didn't care. And you know thankfully he didn't. He gave his songs to us in spite of having a rather unusual voice," he said.

"To not [feel] judged about it is important. It can free us up to participate."

Levitin himself has taken the plunge, performing in front of massive audiences, even alongside some of the greats.

Last May he performed at the Kennedy Center with Renée Fleming.

"We sang Leonard Cohen's *Hallelujah* and we had the whole audience singing in," he recalled.

"Twelve hundred people and Renée Fleming to sing with. That was great ... that was powerful."

Taken from <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/blogs/the-science-behind-why-choir-singing-is-good-for-you-1.4594292?fbclid=IwAR2-T9hoioCf73jXTWWbu9hcGJcRb3fo4jmXCgmNDBC9CZBbGp7v3>



St. John's Lutheran Church will be hosting a blood drive on January 11 from 9-2:30 pm here at our church in Luther Hall. Please considering donating. Its a wonderful way to help other people with just a little bit of your time and treasure. If you would like to donate, please give Bev Murphy a call at 304-263-0586 or come the day of the drive.

CONFIRMATION WITH POTOMAC EAST CONFERENCE – YEAR 2 (2019-2020)

Date	6th and 7th Grade	Teacher	8th Grade	Reinforcement Activity	Teacher
October @ St. John's	Why Church? Presenter: Pastor Karen Panel Discussion led by Pastor Christine				
November @ St. John's	God With Us	Pastor Matt and Pastor Karen	Commandments 1-4	10 Commandments Movie	Bess and Pastor Diane
November	Middle/High School Confirmation Lock In at St. James Uvilla				
December @ St. John's	Miracles	Pastor Christine and Pastor Diane	Commandments 5-10	West Wing Episode - Take this Sabbath Day: Discussion on the Death Penalty	Pastor Matt and Bess
January	Confirmation Retreat - Topic: Sacraments				
February @ St. Thomas	God's Kingdom	Pastor Diane and Bess	Apostles' Creed		Pastor Matt and Pastor Christine
March @ St. Thomas	Death to life	Pastor Karen and Bess	Lord's Prayer		Pastor Christine and Pastor Diane
April @ St. Thomas	The Church	Pastor Karen	Confession and Forgiveness/Office of the Keys		Bess and Pastor Christine
May	Field Trip to Gettysburg (Friday to Saturday)				
Confirmation Sunday - Pentecost (or at your congregation's preference)					



First Communion

Classes to be held on January 6th and 20th during Sunday on Monday. Everyone in Sunday School will participate in the class. This way, everyone gets a refresher class on Holy Communion. Adults will also get a refresher on the topic as well. We leave the decision up to the parents as to when they feel that their child is ready to receive the sacrament.

First Communion Sunday will be held

**Committee Heads: Please Turn in
all Year-End Reports by January 15
so that the booklet of reports can be
prepared and collated.**

What should you include in the report? Tell us about your year and what went well and where you want to improve in the coming year.

Who should write a report? Anyone can write and submit a report to the congregation. The booklet of reports are meant to inform everyone of the work God is doing in our congregation. If you are asking, "should I write a report?" the answer is probably yes.

How long should the report be? No more than a page and do not be afraid to include pictures!

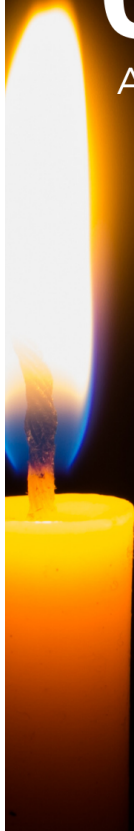
CALLING ALL SINGERS!

On Sunday, January 26, the Lutheran Churches in the Panhandle are hosting a service of Evening Prayer and are looking to form a joint choir to help lead the congregation in song and perform a few anthems.

Rehearsals will be Every Sunday in January from 1-3pm. A potluck lunch will be provided each week starting at noon. In order to make sure we have enough music ordered, let us know you are interested by emailing heathergrandon@gmail.com or talk with your pastor!

THE LIGHT CONQUERS

A special service using Evening Prayer
hosted by the Lutheran Churches of
the Eastern Panhandle



Sunday | January 26, 2020 | 4PM

St. John's Lutheran Church

101 W. Martin St. | Martinsburg, WV 25404

**A Special Offering will be received to benefit the
ministry work of the
West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod**

SUNDAY ON MONDAY

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AT ST. JOHN'S

After a year of Sunday on Monday, the Christian Education Committee has made plans to continue Sunday on Monday for another year. What is the premise of S.O.M.? Instead of Sunday morning education, we will have "Sunday School" on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of each month starting September 16. Hence the name, Sundays on Mondays. S.O.M.'s main focus is to tell the story and equip parents to be able to talk about the story at home. Christian Education works best when the story is brought home and is told not only by the pastor and teachers, but by the parents. Since Christian Education is an expectation of all Christians, S.O.M. is open to Adults as well.

The Evening Schedule:

5:45pm - Pot Luck Dinner in Luther Hall

6:15 pm - Class

7:15 pm - 20 minute Evening Prayer to wrap up the night. The entire community is welcomed to come even if you cannot make it to the class!

Classes offered:

Nursery (to the age of Kindergarten)	Middle School and High School (youth group night)
1st-5th grade	Adult Class

Curriculum

Nursery through 5th Grade will use the Spark Bible. Typically, we will have an Old Testament Lesson the first week and a New Testament Lesson the third week.

December 2nd- Christmas, St Nicholas and John the Baptist

December 16th- Mary's of the Bible

January 6th- First Communion

January 20th- First Communion

February 3- Baby Moses

February 17- Burning Bush

March 2- The Red Sea

March 16 - David and Goliath

April 6 - Ten Commandments

April 20 - Lord's Prayer

May 4 - Trivia Night

May 18 - The Lord is My Shepherd



IGNITE YOUR FAITH

YOUTH NIGHT

LYFE is for Middle School and High School age kids who wish to come for dinner, Bible Study, and prayer. This will be a space to have safe conversations and to have fun.

**LYFE WILL HAPPEN MOST
MONDAY NIGHTS
FROM 5:45 TO 7:30
IN LUTHER HALL AT
ST. JOHN'S**

**ALL MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL AGE
KIDS ARE WELCOME TO JOIN IN!**

An opportunity for the youth to grow in spirit through worship, prayer, good food, fun games, and amazing company!

Church T-Shirt

FUNDRAISER

\$15 FOR REGULAR SIZES

\$20 FOR 2XL AND UP

**Proceeds
Benefit the
2021 Youth
Gathering**

We are hoping to place our second order
after we have 30 T-Shirts sold.



Theology and Bible
TABLE TALK
Food and Drink

**NOTICE THE
CHANGE OF
DATE**

**JANUARY 9
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.

Over the next few months, we are going to be exploring Luther's Small Catechism. Luther instructed pastors to teach the Catechism to the entire congregation once a year. Many have called Luther's Catechism a jewel of the church. Come and experience its richness!

*Saturday,
January 18*



Family Movie Night

We will provide the movie, popcorn
and drinks.

All you need to bring is your family!

Movie starts at 6pm!

OFFICIAL ACTS

Funerals

Mike Rector

-Born: May 11th, 1934

Died: November 7th, 2019

3 YEAR GOALS

For St. John's

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

BY NOVEMBER 30, 2020, WE WILL:

- Increase Sunday worship attendance by 20% so that more people will be able to experience the great reward of being in a relationship with Jesus.
- Have 50% of the congregation's confirmed-membership fill out a Covenant so that we can seek out those ministry areas the Holy Spirit is leading us to do.
- Strengthen our physical involvement in community activities through participating in community organizations and schools.

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

Milestones in January

Birthdays

- 1 Cindy Denton
- 2 Sharon Cole
Barbara Plotner
Betty Spickler
- 3 Todd Boslau
Bergan Cole
Christina Haarman
- 4 Mike Brewbaker
Karen Oliver
- 5 Peyton Janney
Vicki Rigot
Nathaniel Edwards
Linda Payne
- 8 John William Esswein
- 10 Kathy Hancock
- 11 Wilda Morrow
Jim Riley
Alex Torbert
- 13 Denise Martin
Andrew Banks
Denise Widmeyer
- 19 Darrell Propst
- 22 Mary Nicole Rigot
- 25 David Remsburg
- 27 Gary Roth
- 28 Hope Rodgers Crites
Jennifer Betancourt
Mary Lou Williamson



- 29 Nicholas Davis
Alden Rondeau
- 31 Rebecca Kline

*We'd like to include your family in our Milestones each month this year. If you are not listed, please call (263-9291) or email the office at churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org with your dates.

Milestones in DECEMBER

Birthdays

- 2 Joshua Robinson
- 3 Roxanne Spoon
- 5 Janice Hall
Ericka Link
- 6 Nancy Gregory
- 8 Mildred Park
Allen Williamson
- 9 Daniel Propst
- 11 Lori Taylor
- 12 Peter Leitzke
- 13 Traci Hall
Sue Wall
- 14 Carroll Neal
Vicky Torbert
- 15 Barbara Fulkrod
- 16 Lisa Burnell
- 24 Sam Eyler
- 25 *Merry Christmas!***
- 27 Edward M. Shewbridge
- 28 Chad Robinson
Lauren Taylor
- 31 Roger Wall



Anniversaries

- 15 Sharon and Buzz Cole
- 17 Becky and Phil Eyler

Don't see your important dates?
We'd like to update our lists. Please
send them to the office:
304-263-9291 or e-mail:
churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org



December News

We had a wonderful Thanksgiving Lunch here at The Mustard Seed. **Thank you** so much to the teachers and St. John's volunteers for the food and work that made it such a success!

On Friday, December 6th from 6-8pm we will be having Pizza & PJs with Santa! Tickets are \$5 per person and include a pizza dinner, photo op with Santa, Christmas ornament craft, and Reindeer games! The *Scholastic Book Fair* will also be set up during this event.

We will be celebrating Baby Jesus' Birthday on Wednesday, December 18th at 3:30pm. The classrooms will each perform holiday songs and we will enjoy a birthday snack after!

We are still taking donations towards our privacy fence around the playground. We need about 10 more panels of fence (\$110 each). If anybody is interested in donating, please contact the church office. Thank you so much to everybody that has already donated!

We hope everyone has a Blessed Christmas Season!
Miss Christy and The Mustard Seed Staff



A Hospitality Team

"Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit..."

1 Corinthians 12:4

Several folks at Hope Church had expressed a need to develop a "Hospitality Team"—a group of people who would assist in making people feel welcome at Hope—so a small group of select individuals met to share ideas. Dot (Women's Group) suggested buying additional high chairs because more families with small children were coming to church.

Dave (Property) shared that his group was going to put up new signs on the church grounds and in the building to provide directions for newcomers.

Mary (Evangelism) asked for the names of individuals or families who would make follow-up calls to first-time visitors.

Tom (Technology) asked for improvements to the church's Web site as more than 50% of the new members learned about Hope via the Internet.

Jean (Worship) announced that there was going to be a Hospitality training session for ushers and greeters.

Pat, who was not yet a member, shared observations from the perspective of a newcomer.

Questions to Ponder

- 1. If your congregation were to assemble a "Hospitality Team" who would be invited to participate?*
- 2. How does your congregation invite those with "varieties of gifts" to become involved in hospitality issues?*
- 3. What suggestions and/or ideas do you have to make your congregation a more hospitable place?*



Writer: Robert Dealey

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E-Tips, Division for Congregational Ministries - Evangelism.

Website: www.elca.org/evangelism

Pastor's Report

October 2019

VISITATION

October Visits: 42

CONFERENCE AND SYNOD

Potomac East Conference Meeting

WORSHIP

4 Sunday Worship Services

2 Evening Prayer

CHURCH COMMITTEES

Council

Eucharistic Minister Training

Trustee/Finance Committee

Work Day

CHURCH AND COMMUNITY FUNCTIONS

Family Movie Night

Apple Harvest Festival

EDUCATION

Table Talk

Sunday on Monday

Confirmation Meeting

2 God and Me Class

MUSTARD SEED

3 Chapel Services with Mustard Seed

Parent Committee

Mustard Seed Board Meeting

Halloween Parade

FUNERALS

Iver Chris Olsen

CONTINUING EDUCATION

Synod Con-Ed in Logan, WV

Luther Colloquy

CHOIR

3 Choir Rehearsals

MILEAGE

Pastor Day's Mileage for the month of October was 744 miles.



My brothers and sisters in Christ,

I have spent most of November getting ready for Advent and Christmas. These things include not just liturgies but all the volunteer signups, Facebook events, website updates, and all the flyers that we will be distributed throughout the month of December.

This means, I have been stuck in front of a computer playing graphic artist and I am no graphic artist. In fact, I am very much the opposite. Sometimes I don't know when to stop writing and my flyers are so hard to read that the flyers are useless.

One such flyer was Reverse Advent Calendar. I was on a Facebook group and people were asking for ideas around the idea. I shared what I have used in the past. One dear friend shared her idea of creating a calendar. I liked it. I really liked it. It also helps that she is a trained artist. So, I sat down and made the Reverse Advent Calendar that you will find in the newsletter. It took hours to create. Finding all those little images, making sure the content is correct, finding the facts...

Why are there children in our community worrying about food? The Eastern Panhandle is one of the fastest growing areas in WV. Why are there kids in our community going hungry? Berkeley Backpack program is a fantastic organization that makes sure kids in our community do not go hungry as well as make sure the children have their dignity in tact. We should not need organizations like them, but we (the church) are not able to fix the policies that create hunger problems. The church will do the holy work of feeding people until we no longer are called upon to do so, but we also need to hold our elected officials (from the Federal level to the local level) accountable because they are the ones who ultimately have the power to make the necessary policy changes.

As I was making our Reverse Advent Calendar, I found myself getting very emotional that this is a problem in our world today. I want every family in our congregation to prayerfully consider participating in our food program this Advent. Do it yourself if you don't have kids. If you do have kids, involve your kids in this holy work. Talk to them about hungry related issues. I threw a bunch of facts on the one side of the calendar for you to use. Check out <https://www.elca.org/Resources/ELCA-World-Hunger> for more information as to how we can alleviate hunger problems in our community and world. Imagine if every family in our congregation brought in a box of food on Christmas Eve... That would

be pretty cool to witness God taking a few small items and feeding kids all over the county.

So, we have a lot going on in the month of December. Advent is a good time in the church because it not only helps us get ready for Christmas, it helps us understand what it means to have God with us. Throughout Advent, I am going to be doing a Worship Theme around the readings of Isaiah and will have some different activities that will hopefully make the sermon time a little bit more interactive. No, I won't be making you say amen or respond to questions...we are still Lutheran. I do, however, plan on using some different mediums. I don't want to ruin the surprise, so that is all I am going share. You got to come and see.

Some other activities include:

- St. Nicholas of Myra Sunday on December 1. St Nicholas is a pretty neat saint and will be celebrating his feast day a little bit early so that you can be ready to talk about this blessed saint with your family. Bring the kids and grandkids!
- Graham Cracker House decorating also on December 1 in Luther Hall. We will have some lunch and put your creative juices to work.
- Advent Craft Night on December 1 at 4pm down at St. Thomas. We will have some dinner to share as well as crafts that you can make to help you get into the Advent/Christmas mood. You don't need to be kid or have kids. I know a lot of adults who like to craft. We just ask for a \$5 dollar donation to cover some of the supplies.
- Conference Christmas Caroling on December 5th at 5:30pm. We are going to meet down at St. Thomas for dinner and then hope of a Trolley from EPTA and travel to two nursing homes in the area.
- Compline on Wednesdays in Advent at 8:15. Each Wednesday, we will gather in the chapel for a prayer and signing. Compline is the last of the prayer offices. It is based in psalms and it has an amazing ability to help you slow down from the hustle and bustle of December. On December 11, we are going to have compline outside on the steps of the church and pray for all people who have been affected by violence this past year. It was one year ago on December 12 that Guadalupe Bustillos was shot in the face in her store. I think it is important to remember this violent act as well as pray for all those in our community who face this kind of violence on a daily basis. We might not be able to end the

violence, but we can certainly pray for those affect and let them know that their hope.

- No Fuss Christmas Pageant to December 22 at 10 am. It worked so well last year that we are going to do it again. Anyone (and I mean anyone) can participate in the Christmas pageant this year. If we don't have enough kids, we might draft some people from the congregation. You can get all fancy and dress up or be like me and just wear a sign. There are no rehearsals necessary, just come the day of pageant at 9am so that we can assign parts! We will have more information for parents and families at the Graham Cracker House making on December 1.

And then come and worship with us on Christmas Eve:

- Family Service at 6 pm. Yeah, its a little loud, but I just can't imagine that it was all that silent on the first Christmas.
- Candlelight Service at 11pm. A truly holy way to start your Christmas season. Last year, Walker Esswein and Thomas both stayed up the whole service. I was impressed! I actually have a photo taken by Pat Murphy of Thomas and my wife from that liturgy. It is a treasured photograph that I keep it in my hymnal. I often look at it while singing during worship to remember them and that night. Our Choir is putting together a wonderful prelude using a Christmas Cantata title "A Candlelight Christmas." In years past, we have had over 200 people come through our doors to worship on this night. This requires a lot of additional help in the way of ushers, greeters, and worship assistant. We will have a way to sign up to help at these two services online or in-person.
- Christmas Day is at 10am at St. John's. This is my favorite of all the Christmastide liturgies. If you have never been able to attend, I highly suggest making the effort. Bring the kids in their PJs. If you have kids, you know they are going to be up at 5am anyways, so open up the gifts and then come over for church. What is special about this liturgy is that we will have Trinity Episcopal or First Presbyterian joining us this morning for the second year. What better way to celebrate the birth of Jesus, than to do it among friends and neighbors.

A blessed Advent and Christmas to you all. We will be taking a month off for the newsletter so look for us in February 2020!

In Christ,



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

Return Service Requested