

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: Matthew A. Day



ST. JOHNS LUTHERAN
MARTINSBURG, WV

May 2020



"He who was nailed to the cross is ruler and Lord of all people. All things created on earth sing to the glory of God: Daily the loveliness grows, adorne with the glory of blossom; heaven its gates now unbars, fliging its increase of light."

*From the Hymn "Hail Thee,
Festival Day!"*

**Easter is not a day we
celebrate once a year,
but is a way of living.**

Join us as we celebrate that Christ is
Risen today, tomorrow, and always!

**ALLELUIA, CHRIST
IS RISEN!**

Our church might be empty, but so was the tomb. We have been deployed and will continue to gather online and over the phone until it is safe to be back TOGETHER.

See inside for more details for how you can stay connected during this time of exile and physical distancing.

WORSHIP WHILE IN EXILE



Chapel Time with Pastor Matt on Wednesday at 10am on Mustard Seed Facebook Page

**Prayer Every
Wednesday Night**

**Evening Prayer
at 7pm**

You can also join Pastor Matt in the kitchen with his Cooking with Pastor Matt Segments about once or twice a week.

**Sunday Worship at 10am
MORNING**

Access worship by visiting the following:

www.facebook.com/stjohnsmartinsburg/live

or www.facebook.com/stthomaswv/

or call

Toll: (205) 825-9303 (No Access Code Needed)

Toll Free: (844) 854-2222 Access code: 461001#

or <https://join.freeconferencecall.com/pastor345>

**If you are experiencing issues
dialing into the worship using your cell phone,
text the phrase,**

CALL ME to (205) 825-9303.

Calling from a landline works best!

DAILY PRAYER LED BY THE POTOMAC CONFERENCE CONGREGATIONS

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Monday Night

Visit Trinity Lutheran Church In
Arden's Facebook page

Compline

at 8:15pm

Tuesday Morning

Visit Sheperdstown Lutheran
Parish's Facebook page

Matins

10am

Wednesday Evening

Visit either St. John's or
St. Thomas Facebook pages

Vespers

7pm

Thursday Night

Visit Trinity Lutheran Church In
Arden's Facebook page

Compline

at 8:15pm

Facebook information:

Trinity Lutheran: facebook.com/ArdenLutheranWV/
Sheperdstown Parish:

facebook.com/shepherdstownlutheranparish/

St. Thomas Lutheran : facebook.com/stthomaswv/

St. John's Lutheran: facebook.com/stjohnsmartinsburg/

Theology and Bible

TABLE TALK

Food and Drink

JOIN US

1st Thursday of the
Month

MAY 7

6pm at your Kitchen Table

We are going to continue to explore Luther's Small Catechism as we have for the past few months. 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!

To watch Table Talk visit

www.facebook.com/stjohnsmartinsburg/live/ .

If you want to participate in the discussion,
Dial(205) 825-9303 or use video chat by visiting
<https://join.freeconferencecall.com/pastor345>

MAY 2020

**WORSHIP THEME FOR MAY:
THE BOOK OF ACTS: DOING MINISTRY IN A
PRE-CHRISTIAN WORLD AND HOW THAT INFORMS US
OUR MINISTRY TODAY IN A POST-CHRISTIAN WORLD.**

May 3- A Giant Yard Sale

May 10- The office of Deacon

May 17- Knowing the "Unknown God"

May 24- "You almost had him...you gotta
be quicker than that..."

May 31 - We won't retain your sins

A FEW CEMETERY MOWERS NEEDED

The season has started and will go into the Fall for the up-keep of the Old Lutheran - Reformed Cemetery located across from Brown Funeral Home.

We are in great need of "trimmers", but you will need to bring your own equipment - trimmers, pruners, rakes, etc.

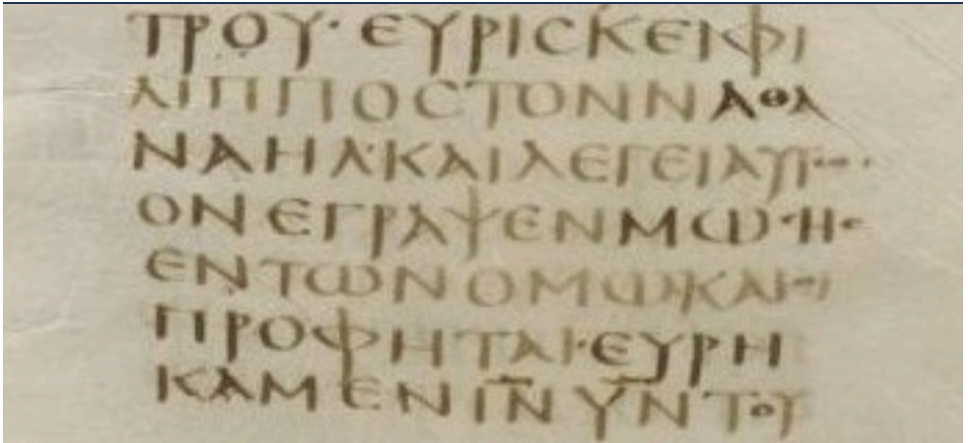
Once we get the winter left-overs cleared away, maintenance is much easier and less often.

We welcome any amount of time and help you can spare.

For more information contact Pat Murphy (304-263-0586).

EVANGELISM DURING COVID 19

By The Rt. Rev. Matthew Riegel
Bishop of the WV - WMD Synod



It's four in the morning, and I have been up since 2:30 AM, unable to get back to sleep because the dream I had won't let me go. I'm not going into the details of the dream, but here is the upshot:

I am asking that we double our church attendance.

Well, right now, our church attendance is, as we currently would fill out our parochial reports, zero. Let's not double that. I'm talking about our attendance prior to the COVID-19 restrictions. Let us double that number.

I know that one of the fears running through the hearts of church leadership (and not a few of the rank and file) is a post-COVID crash in church attendance. The thought is: once people get out of the habit of church attendance, they are likely not to come back. More than a few are simply worried that people will find that they didn't miss church all that much, that people will realize just how irrelevant it is to their life. For my own part, I've thought about the possibility of a great winnowing, that those, whose faith is so nominal that they really only ever possessed superficial and worldly reasons for church attendance, would blow away, leaving behind those, who, in contrast, possess deep spiritual reasons for active church life, reasons rooted in the desire for

the Word, the Sacrament, the fellowship of believers and inseparable from obedience to the Divine command to avail ourselves of these things and gather in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving. I'll admit that I haven't been overly concerned about this but not because I have thought that it wouldn't happen. I have fully expected a down turn in worship attendance connected with this, but, thinking that a winnowing wouldn't be such a bad thing, my thoughts have turned more to questions of how to navigate that institutionally. This fear of a post-COVID crash in church attendance has, however, been no small factor in the attempts of some to provide digitally delivered worship, the thinking being: keep the flock engaged lest they figure out that there are other things that they can be doing on Sunday morning. I can, at least, say that in my phone calls with the pastors of this synod, that has not been the prime motivator. Rather, I have heard consistently, concern to deliver to their respective flocks the things of God for the sake of the flock and not for the sake of future parochial reports.

In these wee hours of this morning, I realize that we are missing an opportunity. Stick with me a moment. In my first call, a parishioner came up to me during coffee hour and said, "Pastor, you preach really good sermons. More people should hear them." I replied, "So, who are you inviting to come and listen?" Yeah, I didn't get a response, but that's always been a big part of our problems around evangelism. Back in the '90s, I was told that the typical Lutheran invites someone to attend church with them once every 13 to 17 years. One the other hand, another study said that 90% of all new Lutheran church members reported that the thing that got them in the door of their new Lutheran congregation was an invite from a parishioner. These are not new bits of info; you've probably heard them before. Yet, we have not been able to transition into laity-point invitational evangelism. We have become more welcoming, I believe, but, as I heard Pr. Egtvedt say to his folks, "We need to stop being a 'welcoming church' and become an 'inviting church.'" See, you can only welcome those who walk onto your property. If you are not inviting them, the only way they are going to get onto your property is by accidentally stumbling upon it---and, given the locations of some of our congregations, that would most definitely have to be by accident. The reasons given for not inviting are legion, ranging from "Everybody I know already has a

church" to "I am a naturally shy person" to "I wouldn't know what to say" to "I don't want to be annoying" to "I follow St. Francis' maxim about sharing the Gospel with action and not words" (something St. Francis never said) to etc., etc., etc.. Can we see that the current situation and the ways in which our pastors have attempted to adapt to it might provide an opportunity for lay-point evangelism?

At this time, the proclamation of the faith, the teaching of the faith, and the resourcing of devotional material beyond the walls of our church buildings is taking place in nearly every congregation in the synod. The joke among clergy has been, "I never thought that I would become a televangelist," (and the complaint has been, "Seminary didn't teach me about all this tech stuff"). That means, for the first time, nearly every lay person in this synod has the ability to share concrete examples of what his/her pastor and congregation does with respect to the Word and the Faith. What am I talking about?

- Your pastor posts a sermon on YouTube, send the link (URL address) to someone.
- Your pastor will be preaching live stream on Facebook or YouTube, invite someone to tune in.
- Your pastor is doing a zoom Bible study, invite someone to join in.
- Your congregation sends you a devotional resource (a worship book with prayers, lessons, reflection, etc.), after you are done with it, pop it in the mail to someone.

Now, if you are getting into the swing of it,

- Include in your email, Facebook share, or physical mail a little note about why this is important to you,
- Or, if it is something mailed like a devotional book, just highlight or circle the thing that hit you the most,
- Or, if you hear something out of your pastor's mouth to which you want to say, "Amen," call up someone and tell them about it.

Now, to whom do we send these messages?

- Someone who has no church (or has fallen out of church life) --- this could be a time of connection; it would be a shame to let it slip by.
- Someone who might be a member of your own congregation but has been less than regular (or maybe absent for years) --- this could be a time of reconnection; it would be a shame to let it slip by.
- Someone who has drifted away because they went away (i.e., moved out our valley to some distant city and has never found a new church home, e.g., a son/daughter, grandson/granddaughter, brother/sister, niece/nephew) --- this could be a time to encourage them to make a new connection; it would be a shame to let it slip away.

In all this, do not miss the open door. Make the hard invite when the opportunity presents itself. What do I mean?

- If the recipient responds, "I really liked your pastor's sermon," say, "When this is over, come join me because it is better in person."
- If the recipient responds, "That Bible study was really interesting," say, "When this is over, come join me because it is better in person."
- If the recipient responds, "I found that devotional just what I needed," say, "When this is over, come join me because there are few things better than kneeling together, shoulder to shoulder, with the saints in prayer."

You might be thinking, "Riegel has lost it. What he is asking is insane." Just yesterday, I called the General Presbyter of the WV Presbytery. When he picked up, he asked how I was doing. I told him, "Since I'm calling my Presbyterian counterpart, I've poured myself a Lagavulin. So, I am doing just fine. Will you join me in a wee dram?" After some laughter and some serious business, we promised each other that we would share in a bottle when these restrictions get lifted.

Over the last few weeks, how many times have I had a conversation which ended in a promise of a shared meal or a shared drink (or, in one case, a game of *Here I Stand: Wars of the Reformation, 1517-1555*)? I'll tell you what insanity is: Insanity is prizing a dinner at the local restaurant over the Body of Christ. Insanity is prizing a drink at the local bar over the Blood of Christ. Insanity is prizing a game of cards or even *Here I Stand: Wars of the Reformation* over the clasped hands of Christian fellowship, the raising of our voices together in Christian hymnody, and the common bowing of our heads in Christian prayer. Insanity is prizing of all the talk of the world over the proclamation of the Word and the teaching of the Faith. Now, I have nothing against all these things, but, my friends, there is something akilter when we would gladly offer what the world can give and yet be so shy in offering what only God can give.

If I have any insanity, it is in praying for only a double. Lord, give me the whole bottle.

Well, my friends, there you have it. There's the commission, a not so great part (in that I'm not asking all that much) of the great commission. I leave it in your hands which are no less capable than the twenty-four that Jesus chose, trusting that your hearts are just as warm as theirs toward not only your God but also your neighbor.

Now, I am going to shower and take on the day.

✠Riegel

Photo: Codex Sinaiticus, Gospel of John, Chapter 1: "Philip finds Nathaniel, and says to him: We have found him of whom wrote Moses in the law, and the prophets, Jesus, [who is of Nazareth, the son of Joseph]."

The West Virginia-Western Maryland Synod (8H) is one of the 65 synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA). The synod consists of all ELCA congregations in West Virginia and Garrett County, Maryland. In addition, there are two churches from Washington County, Maryland, one church from Allegany County, Maryland, and one church from Frederick County, Virginia. The synod is headed by a bishop, currently Matthew L. Riegel.



OFFICIAL ACTS

Deaths of Members

Barbara L. Beard

Born: April 1st, 1940

Died: April 2nd 2020

John Haarman

Born: October 4th, 1953

Died: April 11th, 2020

Karen Kelley

Died: April 16th, 2020

Oliver Wendell "Pete" Long

Born: February 20, 1936

Died: April 21, 2020

HOPEFULLY SOME ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ABOUT SUMMER CAMP THIS SUMMER...

What are Summer Camps doing this Summer?

As of right now, they are waiting to see what the CDC says in order to hold camp safely. Camp Luther is looking into holding camp at a different time, but nothing has been finalized.

Should we still register for camp?

Yes. Both Camp Luther and Camp Caroline Furnance do plan to offer full-refunds to parents and families who register their children. Caroline Furnance is working on creating a virtual camp if we are not able to gather.

Summer CAMP 2020

2020 Camp Theme

“From Generation to Generation

June 21 - 27, 2020

Located at Camp Caesar
in Cowen, West Virginia



**register online by visiting
camplutherwv.com/**



register online by visiting www.carolinefurnace.org/

Scholarships available to both camps



Stewardship

a way of life

Each month, we will focus on a different ministry and show different ways that you can support their work. This month we will focus on:

THE GROVE CENTER

The Grove Center helps individuals with intellectual disabilities and/or physical handicaps by providing supports needed in both home and workplace.

This endeavor began more than 4 decades ago as The Eastern Panhandle Training Center for the Mentally and Physically Handicapped. The location is on Cumbo Road next to James Rumsey Technical Institute. Today it is named after one of the most influential people of that day – Norris Blaine Grove, MD, who was the chair of the original Board of Directors.

Initially, the individuals served had finished school as appropriate for each, and now, they had no place to go. This place provided jobs. The three school counties in the area provided transportation of these individuals to/from home to workplace. Jobs were sub-contract jobs provided through local companies. EPTC workers did a sub-assembly saving the assembly line some additional steps. They did large scale mailings for ACOG and school districts. With the economy and recession, these businesses left the area, were closed, or could no longer provide these jobs.

EPTC began group homes in this area providing not only someplace to live, but activities for recreation and living supports. Since its inception, The Grove Center continues to provide employment, job supports, independent living supports, and day placements. East Ridge Mental Health is the agency overseeing The Grove Center and its associated group homes.

Funding is always difficult for social service agencies. Contributions directly to The Grove Center help provide recreational activities for the individuals including parties and outings, which are not covered in monies received through the federal and state governments.

To The Congregation St. John's Lutheran Church

As we struggle daily during this time of crisis, we must come to you now prayerfully requesting your help. We depend on our weekly giving to maintain our ministry in Martinsburg. Since we are not gathering as a congregation, now through the end of April, we are hoping you either mail your giving envelope each week, or scan the QR code on the next page

Even though we are not meeting Sunday mornings, the work of Christ goes on. One such important outreach is to feed the hungry, and we do that with Friends Feeding Friends. This has been an important community outreach for a number of years and with the Covid-19 pandemic, we will be rethinking how we continue this critically important ministry.

We pray that the Covid-19 virus will be contained soon, and we can all get back to our regular worship services.

Yours in Christ,

Your Congregational Council

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.



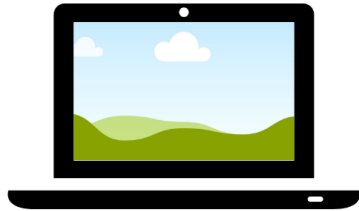
Send an email to announcements@stjohnsmartinsburg.org to sign up for weekly emails and announcements.

**Even though the church
might not be able to
gather, our mission to
preach the gospel and do
God's work does not stop.**

**Your offering makes this
work possible.**



By Mail



Online

Your offering envelopes do not require a stamp. Simply drop it in the mailbox and it will make it back to us. Or consider setting up online giving. If you are not able to give at this time because of no income, we understand. Take care of yourself and your family. If you can give, please do so.



**Scan the QR Code
or visit our website at
stjohnsmartinsburg.org
and click Online Giving
And Thank You!**



Theme Verse:
I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of

JESUS CHRIST

Philippians 1:6 (CSB)

Motto
Jesus! Our Strong Foundation!

VBS Planning Has Begun.

Be Sure to Contact Shane or Jess Wagoner if you are interested in helping

This year's theme of Concrete & Cranes will include:

High Steel Worship Rally

Bulldozer Crafts

Blueprint Bible Study

Wrecking Ball Rec

Jackhammer Music

Food Truck Snacks

Excavator Missions

As you consider whether you have time (or energy) to assist with VBS this summer, consider this:

* 95% of parents said that participating in VBS was one of their child's most meaningful church experiences, according to a survey by LifeWay Research.

* The unique nature of VBS gives everyone an opportunity to be involved and impact children on a short term basis for long term results! (And it's FUN!)

MILESTONES IN MAY

Birthdays

- I Ian Fleming
- 2 Emily Jenkins
- 3 Kristi Remsberg
- 4 Kevin Newman
- 5 Elizabeth Park
- 8 Bernice Baker
Amy Kelley
- 11 Ken Stroech
- 12 Bryar Moss
- 14 Allison Losh Flynn
Eric Losh
- 17 Lisa B. Clarke
Pastor Matt Day
Marjorie Murphy
- 18 Landon Hutzler
Aidan Murphy
- 20 Edward Eckberg
- 21 Brad Moss
Jerry Olsen
- 23 Bryce Gatrell
Bill Widmeyer
- 24 Jan Hancock
- 26 Susan Bales
- 30 Daniel Clarke

Anniversaries

- 6 Allison & Mike Janney
- 22 Becky & Kevin Newman
- 24 Jan & Dan Hancock
- 28 Tiffany & Kyle Leighton
- 29 Amanda & Jamie Ferenchick
Danielle & Justin Ruble

**We would love to include
all of our church families
special dates:**

Just give us a call:

304-263-9291

Drop us an e-mail:

churchoffice@stjohnsmartinsburg.org
or put them in the offering plate.





My brothers and sisters,

As we started begun the Maundy Thursday liturgy, I looked out and realized that during my lifetime, the sanctuaries of our churches would be empty for the first time in 1700 years. I had always feared that during my lifetime, Holy

Week services have nobody in attendance. Yet, when I look at the numbers and analytics, we had most people participate in our Holy Week services in a very long time. The Sunday after Easter, which is typically a very low-attended Sunday, we had 79 people log on and participate. Some of those who were watching included three or four people. This whole experience could have really caused many to lose faith, yet I feel that from this whole ordeal, people are experiencing church on a whole new level.

For years, Holy Week has usually fallen during Spring Break. Many of our families took that time off from school to travel and are not able to attend any of the Holy Week services. This year, many people, for the first time, experienced Holy Week. I have been attending Holy Week services for a very long time. As I child, I usually assisted my dad as he lead worship. I would light the candles, read a lesson, help in stripping the altar just to name a few things. I also remember very fondly making biscuits after the Good Friday with Mrs. Audrey, Mrs. Fran, Mr. Bill and my family for Easter Sunday. This year, Holy Week will live on my memory not as the worse experience of my life, but as a time when people were able to encounter something few ever experience.

Holy Week is meant to tell the story in the context of worship. That means, we are not recreating our Lord's death, but we are helping people experience the story. We ride the line of Holy Week being a play and a worship service all week long. From meeting our Lord in the upper room, walking with him to the cross, to meeting him at the tomb, Holy Week is meant to help learn the story. In the year 312, Constantine converted the Roman empire to Christianity. Before 312, to become a Christian involved a great deal of study and preparation. Usually during the time we would call Lent, new converts would meet with church elders and learn the faith. After about forty days, the new converts would be baptized on Easter at the Easter Vigil mass. After 312, the church no longer had the ability to do one-on-one mentorship and needed to find a way to educate and instruct all these new converts. Holy Week was established to teach in mass the large multitudes of new converts as well as be a refresher course for the other Christians.

However, over the years, participation in Holy Week services has dwindled for a number of reasons. Yet this year, for the first time in a very

long time, people got to experience something that I have become to regard as the most important time in the church. For we hear in these services exactly how God saved the world. And even if you missed it, you can go back and watch them again. Holy Week services have been much a mystery to many who have not gone to them as a child. The church has not done a good job of showing people why these services are important. This year, our services were streamed and archived. Imagine how many more people got to experience something that is strange, weird, and sacred!

2000 years ago, Satan tried his best to stop Easter from happening. 2000 years ago, Satan failed and our Lord conquered the grave. Now, this year Satan was at it again. Satan was hoping that we would just cancel Easter. Well, we didn't. Instead, we worshipped very much like the church did that first Easter. We worshiped in our homes with both fear and hope in our hearts. This was probably the most authentic Easter we have experienced in a very long time. Satan failed again! We still proclaimed the good news that our Lord is risen!

So, where do we stand for corporate worship? At this point, we are still following the guidance of the CDC and other governmental agencies. We are listening to them for guidance and will continue to listen to their recommendation. At this point, I do not think that we will be able to gather for corporate worship for some time. However, we will continue to offer both online worship and the phone until we are ALL able to gather once again. We will let you know where we stand as soon as we receive further guidance.

Alleluia! Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed. Alleluia!

In Christ,



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Return Service Requested