

A Word from the Pastor for New Beginnings:

It is hard to believe that the calendar year is coming to a close. But even if we are mourning that, we also begin the new church year with Advent. Our secular and sacred lives are a bit mixed at this point, ending one thing and beginning something new.

This year, we will be in Year C of the lectionary, so the focus is on Luke's gospel. Luke is every historian's favorite gospel. Luke fills his gospel with details dear to the historian's heart and he does this because Luke wrote mainly for the Gentiles, those who would not be familiar with the long history of the Jews. Luke's wheres and whens fill in the gaps and place us, his readers, in a particular place and time. For Luke, Jesus is no myth or legend; he was born at a particular time in a particular place, not "long ago in a galaxy far, far away..."

So what does it all mean? We celebrate the birth of Jesus each year, but to what end?

"Max Lucado tells the story of a man who had been a closet slob most of his life. He just couldn't comprehend the logic of neatness. Why make up a bed if you're going to sleep in it again tonight? Why put the lid on the toothpaste tube if you're going to take it off again in the morning? The man admitted to being compulsive about being messy.

Continued on page 2.

A Word from the Pastor for New Beginnings, con't:

Then he got married. His wife was patient. She said she didn't mind his habits ... if he didn't mind sleeping on the couch. Since he did mind, he began to change. He said he enrolled in a 12-step program for slob. A physical therapist helped him rediscover the muscles used for hanging up shirts and placing toilet paper on the holder. His nose was reintroduced to the smell of Pine Sol. By the time his in-laws arrived for a visit, he was a new man.

But then came the moment of truth. His wife went out of town for a week. At first he reverted to the old man. He figured he could be a slob for six days and clean on the seventh. But something strange happened. He could no longer relax with dirty dishes in the sink or towels flung around the bathroom or clothes on the floor or sheets piled up like a mountain on the bed.

What happened? Simple. He had been exposed to a higher standard of living. That's what Jesus does."

Yes, that is what Jesus does, and so as we begin this new year once again, let's jump in and raise our standards, so that we may become the people God wants us to be.

A blessed Advent, Merry Christmas, and Happy New Year!

Pastor V.

Ladies Aid

The Mystery Pound Sale was a huge success and lots of fun. Thanks to Sylvia and the generosity of our members, we raised \$60 dollars for the West Seneca Food Pantry. We also decided on our yearly contributions to the community. Donations will go to Meals on Wheels, West Seneca Community Cupboard (food pantry), Harvest House and our St. John's Mortgage Reduction Fund.

We look forward to our annual Christmas gathering at Ilio DiPaolos with our church friends who can join us. There will not be another meeting until springtime so our holiday and New Year wishes are sent to all for a blessed and healthy year ahead.

Submitted by Connie Arnold

Monthly Community Dinner

December 28th, 2018
Christmas Party with Pizza and
Chicken Wing Soup

January 25th, 2019
Beef Goulash Soup

Dinner is served 4pm—6:30pm or until we run out,
whichever comes first.

We will offer drinks and dessert with the meal.

The meal is provided for ANYONE in need of food, fellowship or fun... As always, the food, the seat and the smiles are FREE but good will offerings are always accepted.

PowerPoint Schedule

	Preparer	9 am Presenter	10: 45 am Presenter
December 2	Nick Barnhard	Lee Delaney	Matthew & Autumn Brown
December 9	Nancy Kessler	Lee Delaney	Trevor Godus
December 16	Nick Barnhard	Lee Delaney	Linda Altman
December 23	Nancy Kessler	Lee Delaney	Jean Stankowski
December 30	Dawn Tymorek	Lee Delaney	Keith Lang
January 6	Nick Barnhard	Lee Delaney	Matthew & Autumn Brown
January 13	Nancy Kessler	Lee Delaney	Trevor Godus
January 20	Nick Barnhard	Lee Delaney	Linda Altman
January 27	Nancy Kessler	Lee Delaney	Jean Stankowski

Altar Guild

O come, Emmanuel, Jesus, our Lord. As this Advent season approaches, keep us ever mindful that Jesus is the Reason for the Season. May the love of our Lord shine in our heart and those of others.

Again this year as tradition continues, the Altar Guild will be selling Poinsettias to adorn our altar and church. Please look for order slip in the December 2, 9, & 16th bulletins or this Crossbeam. The cost will be \$6.00 per plant.

Caring for the Altar in December are Connie and Charlie Arnold.

Best wishes for a Blessed Merry Christmas!

Submitted by Nancy Weber

Remember to add your name to the birthday list if you have not done so and would like to. There is cake to be shared the first Sunday of the month during fellowship time between services. All are invited to come each Sunday for fellowship and a shared treat.

Volunteers are needed to bring in a "goodie" each week. It can be bought or made. Fruit, Cheese and Crackers, Brownies, Doughnuts- whatever you might like to donate would be welcomed and enjoyed. The sign up sheet is on the counter by the coffee. Just ask Diane Molnar if you have any questions about this ministry.

Community Nights!

St. John's is proud to present our new monthly Community Nights. These nights will be filled with family friendly events that seek to foster a deeper sense of community within St. John's. All of the events are after our monthly Community Dinners unless otherwise noted. So come on out eat some good food and then stay for a fun time!

Below is a list of the upcoming Community Nights along with their tentative dates. As we get closer to each event more information will become available.

Dec 28th - MOVIE NIGHT
Jan 25th - TRIVIA NIGHT
Feb 22nd - SKATING
Mar 29th - MOVIE NIGHT
Apr 26th - BOARD GAME NIGHT
May 31st - MUSEUM NIGHT
Jun 28th - OUTDOOR MOVIE NIGHT
Jul (TBA) - BISON'S GAME

Submitted by: Megan Marrano
(marrano92@gmail.com)

WHAT IS A THRIVENT ACTION TEAM?

Thrivent Action Teams are groups of volunteers who donate time and effort to help a charitable cause of their choice. As a **Thrivent** Financial benefit or associate member, **Thrivent** Financial will arm you with \$250 of seed money for your project.

If you want to learn more you can contact your Thrivent representative (Brian Mackey) or talk to Mark Koepfel or Nancy Kessler.

The funds can be used to help pay for a Community dinner, a Youth event, an Outreach program and more.

You can learn more by checking out the web site below.

https://www.thrivent.com/making-a-difference/files/CA_Conversation_Guide.pdf

Food Barrel for WS Food Pantry

We have been asked to try something a little different starting this month. The West Seneca food pantry has asked us to donate Soup, Soup and more Soup. It can be canned, ramen noodles, cup o noodles, etc. We are also looking for paper products.



Women of the ELCA

One of our best meetings of the year is our Thankoffering Service and this year was no exception. We thank Evelyn Hicks for joining us to lead the service and doing her usual lovely job. Also, the music was very nice again this year and we thank Sandy Haase for playing the piano to help our voices along. (Like Evelyn said, the Lord gave us these voices, he can listen to them!)

We also chose our Good Gifts donation which is sent to the ELCA world hunger. We will donate to purchasing bees, water filters, farming tools, hens and a rooster. All of these items and the rest of the offerings that can be chosen will help to enhance a family's life somewhere in the world that the ELCA serves. Items range from ten dollars to hundreds and serve many purposes for those in need around the world and in America. If you are interested in contributing or just looking at the catalog, some of our members have one so just ask and we will be glad to share it with you. The smallest of gifts can bring lasting help. We won't be meeting again until March so the ladies send out their holiday wishes to all as well as this last Thought for the month for this year on page 9.

Submitted by Connie Arnold

WHAT DO YOU WANT FOR CHRISTMAS? (written by a couple who has too much)

So many of you have asked us (since Yuletide's drawing near)

"What do you want for Christmas? What can we give this year?"

If we say, "We want nothing!" you buy it anyway,
So here's our list of what we'd like: believe now what we say:

Pajamas for a little child, food to feed the poor.
Blankets for a shelter, and we ask a little but more-
Perform good deeds and let us know, or volunteer your time.

These last are worth a fortune, and they needn't cost a dime.

We have too many things now, vases, candles, CD's and clocks,

We have our fill of garments, ties, underwear, and socks.

Candy is too fattening, crossword books we've more than 20.

We don't need trays or plates or cups, and knickknacks we have plenty.

We've no walls to hang more pictures;

We have books we've not yet read;

So please take what you'd spend on us and help the poor instead!

Just send a Christmas card to tell us what you've done
We'll open them on Christmas Eve, and read them one by one.

It won't cost as much for postage as a package sent would do,

You'll need no wrapping paper, ribbons, ink or glue.

And we'll thank God you listened to what we had to say,
So we could be the instruments to help someone this way.

HAPPY DECEMBER BIRTHDAY TO:

12/2 Diane Sloma
12/9 Sandy Haase
12/11 Karen Rothenberger
12/11 Maxine Steiner
12/12 Rick Wolf
12/13 Bob Kulak
12/18 Joey Tosetto
12/20 Tracy Lumb
12/20 Suzanne Schindler
12/21 Daniel Abendenschein
12/21 Heather Gulas-Karazewski
12/24 Lee Delaney
12/24 Brian Fredericks
12/24 Taylor Wolf
12/25 Jason Perillo
12/27 Kallie Kozanecki
12/28 Michael Lollier



HAPPY DECEMBER ANNIVERSARY TO:

12/16/1972 Bill and Sandy Marzahn
12/29 Paul and Georgiana Napier

HAPPY JANUARY BIRTHDAY TO:

1/1 Jonathan Wolf
1/3 Nick Barnhardt
1/4 Georgiana Napier
1/7 Evelyn Hicks
1/8 Trevor Hintzman
1/9 Gracelyn Germano
1/10 Christopher H. Gulas-Karaszawski
1/10 Jean Sankowski
1/14 Scott Luderman
1/20 Graham Vosseler
1/22 Sam Corless
1/22 Debbie Dunphy
1/24 Russ Then

Assisting Minister Schedule

	9 am	10:45 am
Dec 2	Pat Lipka	Caroline Rackl
Dec 9	Sandy Gordon	Evelyn Hicks
Dec 16	Jim Steiner	Nancy Kessler
Dec 23	Sue Springer	Karen Rothenberger
Dec 24	5 pm Pat Lipka	10 pm Adam Wolff
Dec 30	Sandy Gordon	Caroline Rackl
Jan 6	Jim Steiner	Evelyn Hicks
Jan 13	Sue Springer	Nancy Kessler
Jan 20	Pat Lipka	Karen Rothenberger
Jan 27	Sandy Gordon	Adam Wolff

ST. JOHN'S DINING OUT CLUB

We will NOT be dining out in December but:
All are welcome to join us:

WHEN: JANUARY 31 - Thursday - 6:00 p.m.
WHERE: TONY'S PIZZA & PASTA
ENTREES: \$13.00 & up entrees, appetizers, soups, salads, salad bar, burgers, wraps, wings.

DIRECTIONS: 2770 Union Rd. Cheektowaga north of William St. next to the closed Friendly's Restaurant

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE DUE TO THE SIZE OF OUR GROUP. PLEASE SIGN UP ON THE SHEET ON THE COUNTER IN THE FOYER AND NAME WHO YOU ARE RIDING WITH.

RESTAURANT REVIEW:

Byrncliff: - 21 of us dined in a separate room. Menu is small, portions smaller than most restaurants, but good. Turkey dinner was very popular. Five of us had birthdays in the last two weeks so Connie's Cupcakes were our dessert. Thank you Connie & Sandy.

We choose our next restaurant from a sheet that is passed around at each dinner. The restaurant with the most Xs is where we go next. Sometimes a favorite is included on the list and we go there again. This is a chance to visit a restaurant you wouldn't normally go to and get to know your fellow members at St. John's. Your family and friends are always welcome. Please call Carolly Huth at 826-0506 should you have questions or suggestions.

Submitted by Carolly Huth

Hands and Hearts Ministry

The members of the Hands and Hearts Knitting Ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church would like to extend an invitation to everyone to join our small but dedicated group. We knit and crochet Prayer Shawls for those in need of healing warmth and christening caps to welcome newly baptized infant members. Throughout the year we also make items of outerwear for donation to groups in the community that pass them along to their clients.

We welcome everyone from those wishing to learn the craft to the expert. The first Wednesday of every month at 7:00 PM in the Fellowship Room is our new meeting time. We have a small stock of tools to get new members started and look forward to welcoming you with a quiet evening of companionable conversation and needlework.

If interested please contact Linda Wetzler (716)512-8106. Thank you.

This year's Chili Dinner was for the benefit of Second Chance Animal Sheltering Network. We successfully raised \$2,422.59 for them. In addition, 10% of the money was donated to the St. John's Building Fund (\$302.82) and 10% was kept for the Community Dinner (\$302.83). Thank you everyone for participating and attending the event.

Mark Koepfel, Community Dinner Event Coordinator

Crossbeam Deadline

Articles for the **February** issue of the Crossbeam are due by **January 13th**. Please e-mail your articles to Sue Koeppel (sekoeppe@gmail.com) or leave them in the Crossbeam mailbox outside of the church office. Electronic articles are preferred, if at all possible.

LOST & FOUND

If you find items around our complex, please place them in the lower cabinet in the Foyer, next to the Guest Book stand. Please do not leave them lying where you found them.

If you lose something please look in that cabinet first.

Items of value are kept in the church office.

If you bring in goodies for our many receptions during the year, please take your dishes home. Those left in the kitchen will be placed on the pew next to the Classified Ads bulletin board in the Parish Hall.

We do thank everyone who brings in goodies but we just don't have room to store the dishes left behind. Please call Carolly Huth if you can't find what you are looking for at 826-0506.

Coffee Hour

We have the following members to thank for setting up the coffee from September - May for your fellowship time between services. They are Diane Molnar, Maxine and Jim Steiner, Peggy Cramer, Ruth and Norm Merckel, Dick and Edie Fischer and Charlie and Connie Arnold.

The following members are thanked for cleaning up: Mark and Sue Koepfel, Janet Hender, Linda Wetzler, Bethann Hintzman, and Danese Dick.

We are so thankful to these folks and would love to have more members volunteer since it is only 10-15 minutes of your time either before the early service to set up or around 10:20 to clean up before the second service. As of now, each team is on every 5- 6 weeks, but if we get more volunteers, the spread would be greater. Please see or contact Connie 674-2409 or kaketop@aol.com if you would like more information or to volunteer.

Also, Diane Molnar is in charge of making sure her sign up sheet for refreshments is filled each week during fellowship time. Pastries, fruit, donuts, cookies, cheese and crackers are just some ideas of what can be brought in so don't be intimidated thinking you cannot contribute. We Lutherans love whatever is there to share and thankful for your contribution to the fellowship time.

The sign up sheet is on the kitchen counter, you cannot miss it! Just ask Diane if you have any questions, 675-2481.

Art Supplies Needed...

A young person in West Seneca, Rachel, has started a group called LaRussa's Legacy of Love. This group sends hand made cards with inspirational messages to nursing home residents, shut ins, people who are ill and those in need of a pick-me-up. Rachel is currently making 200 cards a month and she can use the following:

Construction paper

Stickers (smiley faces, hearts, etc.)

Colored envelopes

If you have supplies you would like to donate please place them in the box in the foyer labeled Legacy of Love. I will deliver them on St' John's behalf.

Thank you, Rick Lipka

WANTED: coupons from The Buffalo News Sunday paper. These coupons are mailed to Fort Bragg where our military personnel and their families can use them at their PX up to six months after the expiration date. Just drop them in the box on the counter in the Narthex and Sandy Stango will take it from there. Another way to support our troops and their families. Thanks, Sandy Stango

Sunday Church School

Many Blessings at Christmas and in the New Year!

Please make note on your calendar:

- Sunday December 16th: Christmas Program rehearsal in the Parish Hall, during the SCS hour
 - Saturday, December 22nd: Christmas Program Rehearsal 10am - 11am in the Sanctuary
 - Sunday December 23rd: Christmas Program during the 9am worship service
 - Sunday, December 30th: No Classes/Happy New Year!
- Sunday, January 6th: Sunday Church School resumes at 9am

Teacher/Aides: Sunday, December 2nd: We will have a brief meeting from 10:15 to 10:40 in the triple room on the first floor.

Submitted by Kathy Moody



This is the QR code for the St John's website. If you're not familiar, a QR code will take a mobile device directly to our web site, just by taking a picture of it.

Have you noticed our fresh faced website? Check us out at www.saintjohnsws.org . The Vision for Mission committee implemented changes recently. We appreciate any feedback you may have - email Kathy Moody at wnyjedimom@gmail.com with your thoughts and suggestions!

Vision for Mission has the task of preparing our church for the next generation! 2019 will see this committee focusing on communication vehicles we currently use and what if any, changes we'd like to see in the future. Think about how you find things out at St. Johns: word of mouth, committee meetings/group meetings, our monthly Crossbeam newsletter, our weekly bulletins, our website, email communications, and social media venues, like Facebook and Instagram. Were you aware of all these avenues of communication? Are there any other ways you find things out? Would you like to see something different? Have you been to another church and gathered some information you'd like to share? Put those thinking caps on and watch for bulletin inserts in December/January for requests for feedback! If you have something to share right now while you're thinking about it, email Kathy Moody at wnyjedimom@gmail.com .

The book, puzzle and bake sale was very successful on Saturday, November 3rd. It raised over \$617 for the Mortgage Reduction Fund for the Cornerstone loan. Thank you for all the helpers who volunteered to set up, sell, bake and complete the final clean-up on Monday morning. The left over books will be donated to all the local libraries and the records and tapes to a local shop and all the children's books will be saved for the Preschool Toy Sale in the spring. With our thanks, Renee Then & Sandy Haase, Co-Chairman

You are invited to the NLHS Guild's Annual Christmas Celebration Luncheon & Fundraiser.
Thursday, December 13, 2018—11:30 am
St. John Lutheran Church
6540 Main St., Williamsville
A presentation on Italian Christmas traditions will be given by Kristen Glieco
BRING COOKIES! BASKET RAFFLE! DOOR PRIZES!
Enjoy fun, fellowship and a great program!
General admission is \$5 per person. Bring your friends!
RSVP by Thursday, December 6 to Sally Gollmann 836-1528

"We just wanted you all to know how especially grateful Mary Lou from the food pantry was for your exceptional donations this past month when Charlie took them over. She showed us how empty the shelves had been, but thanks to the collection from the West Seneca Kiwanis Club and then ours, the shelves were once again filling up, for now. She sends her thankful wishes to all."
Connie Arnold

Annual Valentine Dinner St John's Fellowship Group Italian Village Restaurant

Plans are being made for the annual Valentine Dinner at the Italian Village Restaurant - Sunday Feb. 11, 2019. Information regarding dinner choices and prices will be provided in early January 2019

Vision for Mission, December 2018

Our Understanding and Dismantling Racism series (using a book by Joseph Barndt), facilitated by Pastor Roger was a learning experience like no other! Approximately 23-27 persons were in attendance every week. Our book was an education and a tough read for several of us. Our sessions included book study, history lessons, Bible study and a diverse group of guest speakers. Phew! We learned a lot! We got to know each other better too. We now know as individuals we can take steps to dismantle racism in our daily lives. We are now aware of little things that can cause hurt to others. We know small steps by individuals can lead to great changes in our society. Many thanks to Pastor Roger for leading us, our guest speakers, Rev. Lee Miller, Rev. Geoffrey Hord and Rev. Rachelle Sat'chell Robinson for sharing with us and many thanks to the individuals that came to learn more about the world we live in and what we face as a Christian community!



Poinsettia Order Form
\$6.00 per plant

Number ordered _____

PLEASE PRINT

In loving memory of:

In honor of:

Given By:

Please return to the church office by December 16th

Checks made payable to St. John's Altar Guild

St. John's Lutheran Youth Organization Fall Schedule

December 2018

Friday 7th—Escape Room Event

Evening

Cost TBD

Saturday 15th—Cookie Bake-a-thon

Meet at St. John's at 3 pm

Baking Christmas cookies!

Saturday 15th—Christmas Party (Grades 9-12
only)

Meet at Zion Lutheran Church @ 7 pm until 11
pm

9535 Clarence Center Rd, Clarence Center

January 2019

LCLC Senior High Retreat

Friday 4th through Sunday 6th

Register at lclccenter.org

Lutheran Chorale's Christmas Concert

"Rejoice in the Birth"

December 9, 2018

4:00 PM

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, West
Seneca

Tickets \$12.00

See Karen Rothenberger
(Also available at the door)

Pastor Valerie's Bible Study for December and January:

December 6: Luke 21:24-36 and Feast of St.
Nicholas

December 13: Luke 3: 1-6 and Feast of St.
Lucia

December 20: Luke 3: 7-18

January 10: Isaiah 43: 1-7, Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

January 17: Isaiah 62: 1-5, John 2: 1-11

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