

THE MESSENGER

St. John's Lutheran Church

Volume 2018, Issue 3

April 2018

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Special points of interest:

- Don't miss the opportunity to meet and greet the pastoral candidate and his family on April 28 and 29th with a vote after each worship service.
- Mark your calendars for the church picnic, and monthly fellowship events
- St. John's Preschool to have summer camp



Call Sermon Weekend

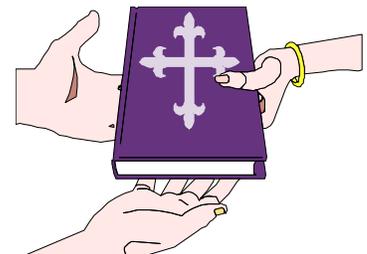
Please join us the weekend of April 28th and 29th as we welcome Pr. Daniel Eisenberg to lead and preach at our worship services.

There will be a fellowship time on Saturday, 4/28 at 3:00 p.m. to meet and greet Pr. Daniel and his wife, Emily and daughter, Eve.

There will be worship services at 5:00 p.m. on 4/28. We will also have worship at 8:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. on Sunday, 4/29. A meeting to vote will follow each service.

Please plan to attend the fellowship with refreshments and one of the services that weekend.

We are all part of the church and we need all members to be part of the future of St. John's.



LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS!

By the time you receive this newsletter, Easter celebration would have been already over and the turkey or the chicken or the ham dinner with all the trimmings would be a memory by now bringing with it the same old life back to us once again. Yes, the Easter Christians have disappeared from our worship service leaving only the faithful, who come regularly to our worship services, support the church financially, and take active part in all of the church's ministries. That raises an important question - why is it so hard to keep up with our faith commitment? Is it because we have a tough time believing in Easter and the promise of eternal life?

I suppose people have lived with skepticism since the time of Jesus' resurrection. Even though the New Testament lists 13 appearances of the resurrected Jesus to the Apostles, and to Paul, skepticism among people still exists today. Some have never heard of Jesus. Some know the name Jesus, but only as a curse word. Some refuse to believe that a man who lived and died and rose from death more than 2000 years ago can still have an impact on their lives today. I am sorry to say this that during the season of Easter, many of us will still be seeking the living among the dead and Easter's astonishing good news will most probably be over shadowed by the bad news that surround us each day. You want to know why? Because of our skepticism the bad news seems more powerful than any message of hope!

And the reality that surrounds us is such that everywhere we turn around there is suffering, death, violence, hatred or disaster happening in this world. Looking at our own stories - they are not any different either. On any given day, someone in our family or some one close to us may be facing foreclosures, job loss, health worries, and more. Our one-day celebration of Easter seems like small consolation in a world surrounded by disaster, distress and worries, leave alone the Sundays after Easter. So, then can Easter be just a pleasant day of celebration for people of faith, a day off from bad news before we go back to the real world? Is the resurrection story as unrelated to reality as those chocolate bunnies, or those decorated eggs? I suppose for many, Easter celebration is to enjoy nice music at the church, a lovely dinner with friends and family, in some traditions a new dress or a hat ~ and then back to reality on Monday! You know - on Easter Monday, some of you may have woken up with a migraine headache, or taking your children to this or that sports or going back to work grumbling after the long weekend. Some of you will go back to all those doctor's appointments or to those medical tests to find out what the latest round of chemo has accomplished or what other treatment the doctor offers for your pain & illness. And sadly, Easter celebration seems like a distant memory.

People of God, is that all there is to our life or do we discover that during all the days after Easter the stone has really been rolled away, and that God has granted us a new life, a second chance to live? Are we comfortable living in an anti-Easter world, or will we make Christ's resurrection the centerpiece of our existence? If we are the people who have hoped only for this life, then as St. Paul says, we are of all people most to be pitied. If we are still engaged in routines of our life, then we need to wake up and see that life has burst through, chasing away death. The empty tomb may be difficult for you to understand, but that is no reason not to believe in it, and in what it points to. It points to a God, who cares so much for us that He enters our life with us and shows us how to live it, and even when we fail to live life the way God wants us to live, He still loves us. He forgives us and gives us a second chance to live. The empty tomb promises us that life triumphs over death, that we do not perish like the grass of the field which one day is here and the next day is

Life in All Its Fullness (Cont.)

gone. Our life will continue even after death in a new and more glorious form, in the presence of our ever-loving God in his kingdom.

People of God, what brokenness do you have in your life today? What tombs are closing in on you? What darkness is threatening to overtake you? What fears bind you? What rock is rolled in your way that seems unmovable? What habits or relationships hinder you from being the person you really can be? The resurrection gives our life new meaning now - not just after our death because God who raised Jesus from the dead can empower us now to face our demons, our fears, and our dark sides - at our crosses and our tombs without any fear. We are free to make mistakes, free to be whoever we are, free to be vulnerable and free to give of ourselves to others. God has already released us from the bonds of death. The grave could not hold Jesus, and our graves will not hold us either.

Come and listen some more during this season of Easter! I am waiting for you!

Sincerely

Pastor Esther Rajashekar, Bridge Pastor

Celebration of Pastor Tricia's Ministry

Join us on Sunday, April 15th after the 11:00 a.m. worship service to help us celebrate the over 12 years of ministry at St. John's of Pastor Tricia Neale. She will be preaching at all 3 services that weekend. Pastor Tricia will be the full time director of Feast of Justice. She has served St. John's since her last year

of seminary through the present and has had many roles during her time here.

Remember to come for lunch and bring your favorite dish to share with all for this potluck meal in the Parish Hall. Mark your calendars and don't miss this special event and your opportu-

nity to thank Pastor Tricia and the Neale Family for their ministry to St. John's!



Come, help us celebrate the ministry of Pastor Tricia!

Church Picnic



Mark your calendars for the annual church picnic!

Save the Date

If you like hot dogs, hamburgers or a combination of the two, we have the event for you. The Church Picnic is back. **Saturday June 23 at 12 noon to 6 PM at Neshaminy State Park.** It will be in the same pavilion as last year. We will have complimentary wheel chair rides to

and from the parking lot for those who may need it.

We will provide hot dogs, hamburgers, veggie burgers, soft pretzels and water. We ask that you bring a side dish or dessert to share with the group and drinks for yourself.

Tickets will be \$3 for adults and children under 12 are still free. Tickets will be available from Dave Speece, Vicki Schempp, Sue Black Thomas and the church office starting the week before Memorial Day. We hope to see you there.

Trivia NIGHT?

Come join us for some fun!

Monthly Fellowship Nights

The final two fellowship nights of the season will be on April 28th and May 17th. On April 28th come join us for the best unsubstantiated trivia Dave Speece can find on the internet. You don't need any spe-

cial knowledge. This is a team collaborative event.

On May 17th game night is back. Feel free to join us for a selection of board and card games. We will have

light refreshments and beverages. Fellowship nights will take a break over the summer and return in September with a trivia night spectacular.



Join us for a fun night at the ballpark!

It's Spring and Baseball Time!

Once again we are planning a trip to the Trenton Thunder on Thursday, May 31 when they play the Reading Phillies with fireworks following the game. If we can get a group of 20 or more the tickets

will only cost \$8.00. We plan on carpooling from St. John's. If you are interested in going, please contact Sue Black Thomas in the church office by Wednesday, April 18th. Games against the

Reading Phillies & fireworks are one of the most popular events during the season. We need to know how many tickets to order. Don't miss this fun evening out!



A message from your Preschool Director...

Hello Everyone and Happy Spring! Hope everyone had a not so bad winter and is ready for the warmer weather! We are in full swing with enrollment for the 2018-2019 school year! If you or anyone you know may be interested in preschool, please have them contact Terry or myself at their earliest convenience @215-624-5505.

We are also now enrolling for our 2018 St. John's Summer Camp! There are 5 weeks available to choose from, as well as choosing 3 or 5 days per week. Summer Camp is open to all children ranging in ages 3-7 years old who are toilet trained. More information in the Messenger to follow.

Being a Keystone Stars school has many benefits. We have had a Technical Assistant assigned to our program to assist me with getting ready for Designation in April. She also was able to assist in updating our Stars 2 "binder" to the new state and stars standards and regulations. LOTS OF HARD WORK AND DEDICATION!!! We have continued to grow throughout the year offering different Professional Development and have even offered to open our doors to other Preschools/Daycares as we host Professional Development here.

I am happy to announce that since we are a Keystone Stars school we were able to apply for two different grants within the last month. Our grant requests were both accepted! The first grant is called The Education Retention award and it goes to highly qualified staff depending on their degrees as well as the amount of Early Childhood Education credits they have. Donna Conway and myself were both granted this award receiving over \$4,000 between the two of us. We were also awarded the Merritt Grant Award receiving over \$3,000, and LaRaine Oliveira was granted a staff bonus for her education credits and degree as well as being able to put 20 wooden 4 ½ foot cubbies in the three-day classroom. Both of these grants will also be available to us after July 1st and we most definitely will be applying for them again. I'd like to continue to update our classrooms furnishing the 5-day classroom with cubbies as well.

Last but not least I would like to take a minute and thank everyone who has made this school year run smoothly, Susan Black-Thomas, Dave Speece, Donna Wachtman; and my AMAZING Preschool Team, Pastor Ester, Mary Jones, Barbara Bassett, Jen Wilent, Kristin Gallagher, Holly Venango, Donna Conway, LaRaine Oliveira. Being able to work together as a team and keep great communication at all times between us has been a blessing. I can't thank Pastor Ester enough for forming such a great group of dedicated people who truly have the same passion and dedication as my staff here at St. John's Preschool.

Sincerely,

Gina Hughes

Preschool News

Our 5 Day Class

5 Day is springing into Spring with a lot of fun and learning as we get ready for our next big step, Kindergarten! We are reviewing and practicing all letters, their sounds, sight words, and printing our names and words. We will be reading Chicka, Chicka, Boom Boom and The Very Hungry Caterpillar.

We'll be getting a lot of exercise playing in our awesome playground, riding the bikes, and going on neighborhood walks.

We will continue being little scientists as we explore and learn about seeds/plants, insects, and animals. Learning about animals is a lot of fun, we're even taking our show on the road! Our field trip is scheduled for the Philadelphia Zoo. We're even turning our classroom into a zoo to share all we have learned about animals. The children will bring in their favorite stuffed animal from home and make their

own enclosures and signs.

We are going to celebrate Arbor and Earth Days by learning about and caring for God's Earth. April is full of fun and learning for our 5 Day Friends.

Mrs. Donna Conway

Mrs. Doreen

Our 3 Day Class

Welcome Spring!!! We have another busy month ahead of us. After being cooped up inside for the winter, we are excited to get out and explore the world coming to life all around us.

We continue learning with letters Xx, Yy, and Zz; reviewing our numbers in English and Spanish; and will continue to observe nature as we take nature walks, monitor seeds we planted, and celebrate Earth Day by seeing how to take care of where we live. For National Garden Month we will be painting birdhouses and making bubble paintings that become FLOWERS!!! Art

and science are so much fun!

Along with all the fun things we have planned to learn, we will also be having our next field trip coming up. 3 Day is headed to the Philadelphia Zoo!

As April dies down we will continue to work hard on all the skills needed for our next big step ... Heading off to Kindergarten!

Ms. LaRaineOliveira

Our 2 Day Class

Hello from 2 Day! We are celebrating the season of Spring and the joy of Easter. With the season of Spring we will be learning about how new things grow and taking nature walks to see how our neighborhood is changing with the season as well.

In April we will be finishing up on learning the letters of the alphabet and continuing to review them. We will have our final field trip to En Pointe Dance



as well. This is always a field trip we look forward to.

At the end of the month we will be preparing for the last month of school and getting ready for our move up ceremony by learning songs and practicing.

Ms. LaRaine Oliveira

Church Council News

Church Council met on March 14, 2018

- The meeting was opened with Devotions led by Vicki.
- Reports were received from Pr. Esther, Pr. Tricia and the President.
- The Treasurer's Report was shared and as of the end of February, the congregation was only at 88% of the income for weekly envelopes, however, we were short \$3,061.45 of our monthly budget. We, St. John's, gave \$2,000 towards our Synod partnership.
- Call Committee update - compensation package is being prepared and signed to submit to the Synod. (This needs to be approved by the Synod before we can have a Call sermon). Dates were given to the candidate for preaching.
- Team Liaison Assignments were given out:
 - Christian Education - Marie Hand
 - Communications - Jennifer Wilent
 - Congregational Care/Fellowship - Julia Henderson
 - Faith in Action - Bette Pittman
 - Feast of Justice - Marie Hand
 - Finance - Donald Jones
 - Invitation - George Miller
 - Music and Worship - Claire-Amy Roberts
 - Mutual Ministry - Doreen Kinzler
 - Preschool - Jennifer Wilent
 - Property - Maureen Jordan
 - Stewardship - Vicki Schempp
 - Youth & Family - Doreen Kinzler
- There are still vacancies on the Council, please see Doreen if you have any ideas for possible Council members
- The annual Conference meeting for the Northeast and West (NEW) will be held at Prince of Peace on March 24th at 10:00am.
- Team reports were shared and reviewed from the Preschool. By-laws for the Preschool were reviewed and edited.
- Sue is retiring in May; her last day is Friday, May 25th. We would like to celebrate with her as her journey here at St. John's ends.
- Feast of Justice asked to have sole use of the Parish Hall as of July 1st - St. John's and others can still use it as long as it is approved and FOJ is aware of it. This request also comes with an increase in building usage. Council approved request.
- The next Council meeting will be held on April 10, 2018, 7:00 p.m.
- The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

St. John's Preschool Summer Camp



St. John's Preschool would like to invite you to our summer camp program!

There will be outdoor activities, theme weeks, water play activities and possibly a field trip.

Camp is offered to children ages 3-7 years old.
It is open to all preschool families, siblings, family and friends.

Summer camp is available May 29TH through June 29^h.
Camp runs Monday through Friday from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm.

Please bring a lunch each day.

Options available are 3 days/week (M-W-F) or 5 days/week.
You may choose which weeks to attend. Choose as many as you wish.

Registration fee is \$20.
Cost is \$75/week for 3-day option and \$100/week for 5-day option.
There is a 10% discount for siblings and St. John's members.

All camp costs are due in full at time of registration.

We can't wait for summer!

St John's Preschool Summer Camp Registration

Child's name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Cell phone: _____ Emergency Contact:

_____ Phone: _____

Designated pick up people:

Choose from the following:

- 3 day (M-W-F) _____ Week 1 - May 29 to June 1
- \$75/week _____ Week 2 - June 4 to June 8
- _____ Week 3 - June 11 to June 15
- _____ Week 4 - June 18 to June 22
- _____ Week 5 - June 25 to June 29

- 5 day _____ Week 1 - May 29 to June 1 (cost is \$75 this week only
- \$100/week _____ since there is only 4 days)
- _____ Week 2 - June 4 to June 8
- _____ Week 3 - June 11 to June 15
- _____ Week 4 - June 18 to June 22
- _____ Week 5 - June 25 to June 29

Registration = \$20

Sub-total for camp weeks = _____

Grand total = _____

Full payment due with registration!



Mother's Day Flowers

Additional altar flowers are planned for Mother's Day on May 13th. If you would like to help with the cost, fill out the form below, place it in an envelope with your donation of cash or check and mark the envelope "Mother's Day Flowers." Place the envelope in the offering plate on the weekend or drop it off in the church office during the week. **Deadline is Sunday, May 6 , 2018.**



I/We would like to make a donation for Mother's Day Flowers.

To the Glory of God and

In Memory of:

In Honor of:

Given By:

Telephone Number or Email: _____

Total Amount Enclosed: _____

Thanks from Feast of Justice

Thanks you for your amazing generosity to support the work of FOJ. Since the beginning of 2017, you have provided us with \$2850, over 1700 lbs. of food collected weekly, and countless bags of clothing and holiday gifts. This is an incredible gift that helps us continue our mission to

empower transformation in N.E. Philadelphia. 2017 was a blessed year for FOJ. From providing almost 500,00 lbs of food through 12,250 household visits to our food cupboard, to over 20,000 items of clothing and household goods distributed in our

Bountiful program, to over 300 sets of holiday gifts given out to children at Christmas, to the opening of our computer center, and the expansion of our mental health counseling. Resources through local internships—we are thankful for the growth we have seen in our work in the community.

And there is more to come. We thank you for your commitment to this ministry and hope you will continue to partner with us in various ways.

Sincerely Yours,
Pastor Tricia

Church Council Members

Marie Hand	215-332-4466	marie.e.hand@phila.gov	2021	Feast of Justice
Julie Henderson	267-324-1685		2019	Congregational Care/Fellowship
Don Jones	215-745-0992	dejcpa76@aol.com	2020	Finance
Maureen Jordan	215-332-4962	reen.jordan10@comcast.net	2021	Secretary/ Property
Doreen Kinzler	215-288-6416	doreen.m.kinzler@phila.gov	2021	President/Mutual Ministry/Youth & Family
George Miller	267-262-3252	george.miller@dla.mil	2019	Invitation
Bette Pittman			2019	Faith In Action
Clair Amy Roberts	215-421-3961	psu95lions@aol.com	2020	Music & Worship
Vicki Schempp	215-333-0428		2021	Stewardship
Jennifer Wilent	215-391-2186	simsc1j@aol.com	2020	Vice President/Communications

TEAM LEADERS:

Judith Rose	215 -638-4739	RoseFam73@verizon.net		Mutual Ministry
Rev. Esther Rajashekar	215-233-1362	revrajashekar@gmail.com		
Rev. Patricia Neale	215-279-0269	pastor.tricia.neale@gmail.com		

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**OUR MISSION IS TO PLANT
THE SEEDS OF GOD'S LOVE
THROUGH CHRIST IN
WITNESS, OUTREACH AND
THE WORD**

Companion Church
Kana Lutheran Parish, Tanzania

St. John's Lutheran Church
Rev. Esther Rajashekar, Bridge Pastor
Rev. Patricia Neale, Pastor & Director of Feast of Justice
Lisa Thomas, Director of Music
Susan Black Thomas, Administrative Assistant
David Speece, Manager/Sexton
Gina Hughes Polychronakis, Preschool Director

Our Worship Schedule
5:00 p.m. Saturday Evenings
8:00 & 11:00 a.m. Sunday Mornings
Sunday School at 9:30 a.m.
Holy Communion is celebrated every week.