



# THE EVANGELIST

A monthly publication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church - Ridge Valley

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Ridge Valley, 910 Allentown Road, Sellersville, PA

Office Hours: Phone Calls Answered Daily; Visiting Hours Monday and Wednesday 9 am to Noon

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Issue 2

February 2012

## *A word from our Pastor*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Jesus,

We are in for a treat!! February is a gift to us as Christians as we experience more of God's desire for us and our lives. I say this as we begin the month with preparations of Valentine's Day. It is a day that we take time out to acknowledge our love for others. Although some people will brush it off as a Hallmark event, I invite you to use this time and let your family and friends know how much you care for them. In a world that is so busy, too often we do not express our feelings of appreciation. God through Jesus Christ offers love, compassion, and celebration of life. Have you told your siblings, children, and parents that you love them and are proud that they are in your life? Please take time out to write a personal note to each person that you count on.

However February offers more than just Valentine's Day; we have the gift of Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>. At this time are any of you asking, "Pastor how is Ash Wednesday a gift of celebration when we recognize that we are simply mortals and we will someday return to dust?" The answer is in God's wisdom. The good news of Jesus Christ teaches us that God saves the best for last. Although there were thousands of years when God demanded burnt and sin offerings, we now know that God's plan was that He himself through His Son would provide the way through His love.

A new way to consider the scripture of "Jesus Clears the Temple" found in **Mark 11:15-18**. <sup>15</sup> **On reaching Jerusalem, Jesus entered the temple courts and began driving out those who were buying and selling there. He overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves,** <sup>16</sup> **and would not allow anyone to carry merchandise through the temple courts.** <sup>17</sup> **And as he taught them, he said, "Is it not written: 'My house will be called a house of prayer for all nations? But you have made it 'a den of robbers.'"**

<sup>18</sup> **The chief priests and the teachers of the law heard this and began looking for a way to kill him, for they feared him, because the whole crowd was amazed at his teaching.**

Many times when we were taught about this scripture, we hear how the Pharisees were taking advantage of people when they came to purchase animals to be sacrificed and therefore Jesus over turns the tables. But the true message is much, much greater than that. As Jesus overturns the tables he "destroys" that section of the outer temple area, and we see a new way of worshipping. This was the last sacrifices opening the way for God's plan to be lived out. Jesus leads us in this change, this new opportunity as he prepares to be handed over to the cross. In Mark's Gospel, we receive a larger understanding of Jesus' loyalty and faithfulness. Jesus came so that we may be saved from death, evil, and the devil. Jesus isn't as much as a sacramental lamb as he is the way for us to have eternal life. God provides life through his One and Only Son's death. cont...



## *A word cont...*

This Ash Wednesday along with the weeks of Lent is our time to recognize and celebrate the gift of God who wants life for us. Ash Wednesday doesn't need to be bleak with the focus on death, instead we can choose to see how life is precious because of the reality of death. Let us embrace God's plan and be thankful. Let us explore this love that we are given and can give to others. In last month's newsletter, I shared my pain and heartache. In fact, I stated that "... moving on to do or be something different is hard and painful. This past year has been overwhelming and the only way I could get through it was to fully embrace all these changes with the help of God." We can keep our faith strong especially in the face of adversity. We can understand that God's plan is always about light, life, and love.

This season of Lent let us see anew ways that God's love abounds.

Prayerfully,

*Pastor Amy*

In December, the council participated in a half day retreat. I asked our church leaders to look at our mission statement and consider if it holds true today, if we know it by heart, and if it is our understanding of God's purpose for us. Although, we knew it was on the bulletin each week, none of us could share it verbatim. Therefore, we took some time, keeping the same mission statement, but making it easier to understand. I wanted to share with you the two statements.

Our Actual Statement:

*St. John's Mission Statement*

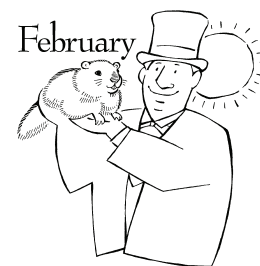
*We, the members of St. John's Ridge Valley, are called through our baptism to be ministers of the gospel. We believe it is our mission to tell the good news through worship, education, service, witness, and good stewardship of God's creation.*

Starting in February, we will be reciting this version:

***We, the baptized, are called to share the love and teachings of Jesus through our worship, witness, and actions.***

Please note that Pastor Amy has now has a new cell phone number **FOR EMERGENCY USE ONLY**. If you need to get in touch with Pastor Amy immediately, you can call 267-615-9407. Again, this is **ONLY FOR EMERGENCIES**. Otherwise, please call the office at 215-257-9643. Messages are checked several times each and every day and Darlene will be in contact with Pastor, if necessary.

Thank you!



***Sunday Scripture Schedule – February***

February 5<sup>th</sup> - Fifth Sunday After Epiphany

First Reading: Isa 40:21-31

Psalm: Psalm 147:1-11, 20c

Second Reading: I Cor 9:16-23

Gospel: Mark 1:29-39

February 12<sup>th</sup> - Sixth Sunday After Epiphany

First Reading: 2 Kings 5:1-14

Psalm: Psalm 30

Second Reading: I Cor 9:24-27

Gospel: Mark 1:40-45

February 19<sup>th</sup> - Transfiguration of our Lord

First Reading: 2 Kings 2:1-12

Psalm: Psalm 50:1-6

Second Reading: 2 Cor 4:3-6

Gospel: Mark 9:2-9

February 22<sup>nd</sup> - Ash Wednesday

First Reading: Joel 2:1-2, 12-17 or Isa 58:1-12

Psalm: Psalm 51:1-17

Second Reading: 2 Cor 5:20b-6:10

Gospel: Matt 6:1-6, 16-21

February 26<sup>th</sup> - First Sunday in Lent

First Reading: Gen 9:8-17

Psalm: Psalm 25:1-10

Second Reading: I Peter 3:18-22

Gospel: Mark 1:9-15

**Special Dates for February:**

February 2<sup>nd</sup> -

Groundhog Day



February 5<sup>th</sup> -

"Souper" Bowl Sunday  
& One Service Sunday



February 14<sup>th</sup> -

Valentine's Day



February 20<sup>th</sup> -

President's Day



February 22<sup>nd</sup> -

Ash Wednesday



**OUR PRAYERS**

**Our Members:**

**Paul B**, recovering at home

**Bob T**, Valley Manor Rehabilitation, Coopersburg

**Our Friends:**

**Ronald**, Grand View Hospital, Betty C's nephew

**Penny**, surgery for brain tumor at JFK Medical Center, Shirley N's niece

**Peggy**, fighting cancer, Barb K's sister

**Mary Jane**, liver cancer, Stacy A's mother

**Remember in Prayer:**

**The Family of Dave Sobolak**

**OUR HOMEBOUND MEMBERS**

**Betty H**

**Willis and Lorraine H**

**Robert K**

**Gladys L**

**Altar Flowers**

February 5<sup>th</sup> - Available

February 12<sup>th</sup> - Available

February 19<sup>th</sup> - In memory of George W. Kober, given by the Kober Family.

February 26<sup>th</sup> - Available

**Bulletin Sponsors**

February 5<sup>th</sup> - Available

February 12<sup>th</sup> - Available

February 19<sup>th</sup> - Available

February 26<sup>th</sup> - Available

**The new calendars for Flower and Bulletin Sponsors for 2012 have been placed in the Coffee Fellowship Area.**

**Please sign-up.**

**Eternal Light**

Given in loving memory of  
Christopher James Marx & Jenny Lynn Wilson  
by the Marx and Heller families.

**Candle Memorial**

The **Candle Memorial** for the month of **FEBRUARY** is in memory of  
Barbara Poster, given by the Arinsberg Family.

and

The **CANDLE MEMORIAL FOR FEBRUARY** is in memory of  
Doris Rapp, given by Richard Rapp.

**Marriages, births, deaths, baptisms**



We Welcome with Joy  
into our Church Family,  
by the sacrament of Holy Baptism,  
**Ryland and Kaydin Cramer**  
sons of Keith and Jennifer Cramer,  
baptized on January 8, 2012.

Please note that year-end tax statements were put in the coffee fellowship area on January 29<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't stopped by, please pick up your statement or if you are in need of having it mailed to your home, please contact the church office at 215-257-9643.

Any questions about your statement, please let Ruth Kehoe know.



# Upcoming Events

## SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Super Bowl Sunday is February 5<sup>th</sup> when St. John's Youth will be collecting for "Souper Bowl" Sunday.

Our youth are asking for donations and will be passing out pots and pans to support the hungry across the nation. Please be prepared to give.

**Please note this is also a one service Sunday.**



## Lay Eucharistic Visitor Training

Lay Eucharistic Visitors are members of the congregation for special training to take the communion meal from worship to homebound members of the congregation.

This outreach keeps members in touch with the life of the congregation by more than just their regular visits with the pastor.

This ministry will begin in February. Those interested, please call the office at 215-257-9643.

Pastor will provide the introduction as we begin our visits in February and a formal training will be provided on May 19<sup>th</sup> at St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Sellersville, by the Lutheran Congregation Services.



## Confirmation Classes:

### Week of February 5<sup>th</sup>:

Sunday the 5<sup>th</sup>: Immediately following late worship service. (Super bowl game starts at 6:30 pm).

Wednesday the 8<sup>th</sup>: 5:30 pm dinner; 6:00 pm class.

### Week of February 19<sup>th</sup>:

Sunday the 19<sup>th</sup>: Immediately following the late worship service.

Wednesday the 22<sup>nd</sup>: Ash Wednesday 7:00 pm service. Students please attend.





## Fun & Funraising Day

**Sunday, February 12, 2012**

(Downstairs in the Fellowship Hall during  
Sunday School at 9:45)

Come join us for some fun and fellowship while we help raise a little extra money for our Sunday School.

Bring your spare change and \$1 bills and maybe a friend or two!

- ☺ Snacks & Music
- ☺ Parachute
- ☺ Twister
- ☺ Scooter Dodgeball
- ☺ Guess how many M&M's

## First Holy Communion

Any students who desire to take their first communion on Maundy Thursday, April 5<sup>th</sup>, please contact Pastor Amy. The children need to be interested and seeking to learn more about our Holy Meal.

The final decision, if a child is a candidate for first communion will be decided by the child, parent, church representative, and pastor together. Since Holy Communion is a sacrament, it is freely given and therefore an age requirement is flexible.

We will meet on Wednesdays beginning February 29<sup>th</sup> through Lent at 4:30 pm.

*First Holy  
Communion*



## Lenten Folders

One of the disciplines of Lent is daily prayer and giving to God. As we have every year, we encourage you to use the Lenten folders. They remind us to pray and to give to God each day of Lent. This daily reminder helps us to understand that Lent is a journey that we take with our Lord. The folders remind us to be intentional about prayer and commitment to God.

This year they will again be available at both the Allentown and Ramp entrances to the church from February 22<sup>nd</sup> through Lent. If you would like us to mail the Lenten folders to you, please contact the office and leave a message.

Also remember when you turn them in to put your name and your envelope number on the folder.



## Ash Wednesday Services



**Ash Wednesday is the beginning of our Lenten journey.**

On Ash Wednesday we receive ashes on our forehead in the shape of a cross to remind us that we are dust and to dust we shall return. The ashes are traditionally made from leftover palm branches from Palm Sunday the year before (just as the wooden cross on Good Friday is traditionally made from the trunk of the Christmas tree). The bookend to Ash Wednesday is Maundy Thursday when we receive forgiveness and the cross is again inscribed on our forehead but this time in oil, as a sign of Christ's forgiveness.

Ash Wednesday service will be **February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM**. Our Ash Wednesday service includes the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion.

### Lenten Discipleship Opportunities:

An invitation from St. John's UCC, Ridge Valley.

Pastor Steve Myren has invited us to join them and Finland Mennonite Church on their Lenten journey. This is a journey of Spiritual Faith and Physical Exercise. We are challenged with the task of walking to Jerusalem about 5000 miles. Each of our three churches will form a team. Sign up will be in the coffee fellowship area. You will receive a packet with all the information.

The program starts on February 22<sup>nd</sup>, Ash Wednesday and ends at Easter. Each week you are given a new Bible verse to ponder upon as you walk. This walking can be on a treadmill, outside, in a mall, etc. In addition you can spend your daily time swimming laps in a pool, riding a stationary bike, working out on a rowing machine, or joining Pastor Amy with a half hour exercise tape. The "miles" are recorded, handed into our team leader, and added together for our total to submit to St. John's UCC.

### **Adult Sunday School Classes through Lent**

Time: 9:30 to 10:30 am  
Place: Fellowship Hall, downstairs  
Topics: Further decision on Sermon topic



Bring your crock-pot and your appetite  
and join us for St. John's 2<sup>nd</sup> annual

### **CHILI COOK-OFF!**



**SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 26<sup>th</sup>**  
(Following the 10:45 am service in Fellowship Hall)

Please contact Mark Bruder for details.



### Wednesday Evenings in Lent

Our mid-week Lenten study will take place on Wednesdays, **beginning February 29<sup>th</sup>**.

The schedule will be as follows:

6:00 pm – Soup Dinner

6:30 pm – Bible Study

7:30 pm – Choir

8:15 pm – Praise Band



## Fact or Fiction?

*Is Pastor Amy going to get rid of the organ?*

I am always amazed when someone tells me that they heard a rumor of something I said. This is one of those rumors. Rest assured. Have no fear - I have no desire and have never even thought about getting rid of the organ. I love the organ. Just because I am not in the choir doesn't mean that I don't have a great respect for the instrument. As far as my desire, St. John's will forever use our resources to keep our organ in tip, top shape.

What is a fact is that we struggle with on-going rumors. Therefore, I will be available the first Sunday of each month immediately after the early service (around 9:40 am) in the coffee fellowship area to answer any and all questions. I love to have conversation with you, please seek me out if you hear something that doesn't sound accurate.

Thank you, Pastor Amy



## Save the Date – looking ahead to March:

Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> - Annual Easter Breakfast (more information will be in next month's newsletter).



## Mid-week Soup Supper and Bible Study

(In the fellowship hall)

6:00 pm: Soup Dinner

6:30 to 7:30 pm: Bible Study

7:30 pm: Choir Practice

This year we will be working with the book called, *"Blood Brothers"* along with the Bible. *Blood Brothers* written by Elias Chacour, asks the question, "Is it possible to live at peace in the midst of conflict?" It is also recommended by James A. Baker III, former U.S. Secretary of State.

Here is a little summary regarding this book:

"The unforgettable story of a Palestinian Christian working for Peace in Israel."

As a child, Elias Chacour lived in a small Palestinian village in Galilee. The townspeople were proud of their ancient Christian heritage and lived at peace with their Jewish neighbors. But in 1948 and '49 their idyllic lifestyle was swept away as tens of thousands of Palestinians were killed and nearly one million were forced into refugee camps.

An exile in his native land, Elias began a years-long struggle with his love for the Jewish people and the world's misunderstanding of his own people, the Palestinians. How was he to respond? He found his answer in the simple, haunting words of the Man of Galilee: "Blessed are the peacemakers."

In *Blood Brothers*, Chacour blends his riveting life story with historical research to reveal a little known side of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the birth of modern Israel. He touches on controversial questions such as:

*What behind-the-scenes politics touched off the turmoil in the Middle East?*

*What does Bible prophecy really have to say?*

*Can bitter enemies ever be reconciled?*

St. John's Lutheran Church  
910 Allentown Road  
Sellersville, PA 18960

Place  
Label  
Here

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*Worship Schedule: 8:30 am - Traditional Worship; 9:45 am - Sunday School; 10:45 am - Informal Worship*

***St. Johns Staff:***

*The Rev. Amy Bender, Pastor*

*Mark Gottesfeld, Organist & Music Director*

*Darlene Repholz, Secretary*

*Joanne Heffendrager & Shirley Schirk, Sextons*

***St. John's Council Members:***

*Robin Arinsberg*

*Rick Croisette*

*Roy Hafler, Council Vice-President*

*Ruth Kehoe, Financial Secretary*

*Christine Kemp, Treasurer*

*Amanda Schirk*

*Fred Schirk*

*Dawn Schultz*

*Brenda Wall*

*John Woehr, III, Council Secretary*

*Marianne Yeakel, Council President*



**FEBRUARY**