

The Lantern

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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December 2013

Dear Family in Christ,

It is never difficult to write an article for our December Lantern. We can look back to the Thanksgiving holiday and remember how impoverished our lives will be without thankful hearts and a spirit of generosity guiding us through each day.

Looking ahead, we can already envision the Advent/Christmas events that thrill us each year—the precious time we set aside for weekly worship—the simple act of lighting the advent wreath, the Church School pageant—our Christmas eve candlelight service, our beautiful church decorated and ready again to help us welcome our Saviour. Our church building was dedicated on September 28, 1930 and the initial cost to build it was \$36,000. It is a great privilege to stand on the shoulders of those first saints of St. Johns as we gather for the 83rd Christmas celebration within these hallowed walls. Hallelujah!



I will not be sending out a separate Christmas letter this year, so on behalf of myself, Teresa and our entire Church Council, let me take this opportunity to wish all of you the greatest blessings this season of faith can provide—renewal, an opportunity to discern and/or affirm Gods purpose for your life, hope in the midst of despair, comfort in every time of sorrow or loss, confidence in Gods future, and a life filled with trust in Gods merciful love, unfailing grace and abundant joy.

The thing about missing any worship experience at St. Johns is that you have really MISSED something special! Most recently, we have been blessed by the debut of a new hymn of praise entitled **Alleluia, Shine with God** written by our own Teresa. Make the effort, take the time, be smart and be in church as often as possible. Blessings await and blessings abound. See you in church!

Pastor Walters

Lighting of the Advent Wreath Begins Sunday, December 1, 10:15am

Christmas Pageant/Family Christmas Service: Sunday Dec 22, 10:15am

Christmas Eve Candlelight/Communion Service: Dec 24, 10:30pm

Council President's Page

It's Christmas time already? Where has 2013 gone? 2014 around the corner? Wow! I think every year we all say the same thing. Where does the time go? Looking over the church year I must thank all of you for all your support. Our teams of helpers once again got the work done. Your generosity and financial contributions kept us financially stable and a couple of larger, anonymous gifts cannot go unmentioned. We also had an event packed year. The picnic, the auction, "our faith journey" summer program, consistently delicious coffee hours, our children's pageant coming up, church decorating, a very successful property year with extra green grass, another contract renewal with the day care, the script program, the "good neighbor " banking program, the pillow drive, the coat drive, new members joining our family and new additions to some existing families, saying good bye to some who have relocated from the area, the Sunday School program has a huge attendance and..... our tremendously talented choir singing for us every Sunday. We may not be many but boy are we strong.

As President I have tried to make this position more open, more receptive to suggestions and more informative. I made a promise to everyone that I would try my best to make these my goals. I think I have done a good job with all of these. You all make it very easy for me. I want to thank our council and Pastor for all they have done. The transition from our most experienced members to a newer, eager group has worked out oh, so well. But we will still have some work to do in 2014 as we try to keep ahead of expenses. Thank you to all for this past year, I am thrilled to have the honor of being the President of St John's Lutheran Church in Rutherford, NJ.

God Bless.

Merry Christmas.

Happy New Year.

Vince Mottola

President

Saturday morning, Nov. 16th.....we witnessed the strength and teamwork of our Boy Scout Troop # 166. This year we asked the Scouts to assist in the Annual Fall Clean up day. Their response was enormous. At exactly 9am, about 20 scouts and leaders arrived at the church.



In one hour they had raked, gathered, bagged, canned or mulched about 30 bags of leaves! They were happy to lend a hand. Over the years, the scouts have assisted in many projects around the church. This troop consistently has scouts achieving the rank of Eagle Scout, the highest level in scouting. We here at St. John's are proud to be long time sponsors of Troop 166 and thank their leaders and the scouts for many jobs well done.

Vince Mottola



Total Family Sunday School

Operation "Let's Give Thanks" Pillow Drive was a great success. St. John's donated over **50** pillows which were delivered to the needy. Giant **THANK YOUS** to all who donated and helped in this wonderful project.

TFSS invites you to join us all in celebrating advent these next four weeks during regular church service. Readings each week will be provided by varying ages of our Sunday School & families. We are all looking forward to sharing the message of advent with you all.

The Sunday School would also like to invite everyone to help decorate St. John's Angel Tree on Saturday, December 14th at 4PM. Pizza will be served. Remember to bring your ornaments to hang! Also please join us on December 22nd at 10:15 am for the annual Christmas Pageant during church service! The children have been practicing and can't wait to bring this story to life for everyone. Additional ornaments can be placed on the tree after this service.

Dates to remember: **December 14th Christmas Tree & Church Decorating**
December 22nd Children's Christmas Program

Hope to see you all there!!

Sermon from Christ the King Sunday, November 24th

Who is in charge of your life? Most of us would immediately say—"Well I am." I decide what I want to do each day. Really?

At some point in life, most of us think we are completely free to make all the decisions in our lives—until we have to learn to share our toys and not hit our siblings and that throwing food at the walls is not as funny as we thought it would be. Then we endure potty training and then decades of mandatory schooling and then we fall in love and get married, or have children and grandchildren or have a mortgage to pay. It soon becomes abundantly clear that our time, our decisions, our schedules are not our own.

If you have ever lived in a community guided by the rules of an association, you may be surprised at how much your life will be regulated. You may or may not be allowed to have a pet. You want a really tall privacy fence—forget it! You want bright security lights—not so fast. You want to put up a nice big garden shed—not allowed. Paint colors, roofing, windows—all are subject to the approval of others.

Holy scripture gives us a different reality. We are taught in the Bible that our lives are either ruled by the power of sin or the might of God's love. There is no third choice. There is no middle ground. We are not free until God sets us free from the power of sin. Every day we make a choice about which power will be in charge. For Lutherans, we call this renewing our baptism daily.

The good news about Christ the King Sunday is that Christ is willing, able and eager to help us make the right choices about who will be in charge in our lives. Jesus will guide you. That is pretty wonderful news, especially considering that Jesus loves you and that Jesus knows exactly what is best for you every minute of your life. How great is that? Hallelujah!!

One of the reasons we just spent so many weeks speaking about fulfilling God's purpose in our lives is because nothing else really makes any sense.

I finally broke down and bought a smart phone and one of these days I will even start using the GPS app. but whenever possible, I still prefer to figure out where I want to go and how to get there all by myself. Surrendering to a smarter, higher power is not easy for us, even if we get where we are going with the greatest ease and safety.

I went to a class for this phone and was amazed to see that with the messaging feature, I can actually just say what I want the message to be and it will appear on the screen, ready to be sent. I turned to the guy next to me and said—“unbelievable” and the immediately the phone wrote down “unbelievable.”

Whoa!!

But sometimes, the old way is still the best way. Ours never has been and never will be an electronic, digitalized faith. When all is said and done, it is still about hearing, touching, seeing for ourselves how much God loves us and responding to the love with faith, trust and obedience. Jesus was a real person. He was born among us, lived with us for 33 amazing years—teaching, healing, guiding, loving us and then he died for our sins on the cross. We need to remember that today and every day. He knew our sorrows. He was acquainted with grief. He knew hunger and thirst, anger and betrayal, fear and dread—and even death. He did not just send us long distance messages from a far away throne in heaven. He lived among us to show us that God understands our struggles, our weakness, our needs and God will supply all that we need.

So we have this beautiful writing from St. Paul to the Colossians where he prays that we may be made strong with all the strength that comes from the glorious power of Jesus Christ....Paul invites us to give thanks to God the Father who has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son in whom we have redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

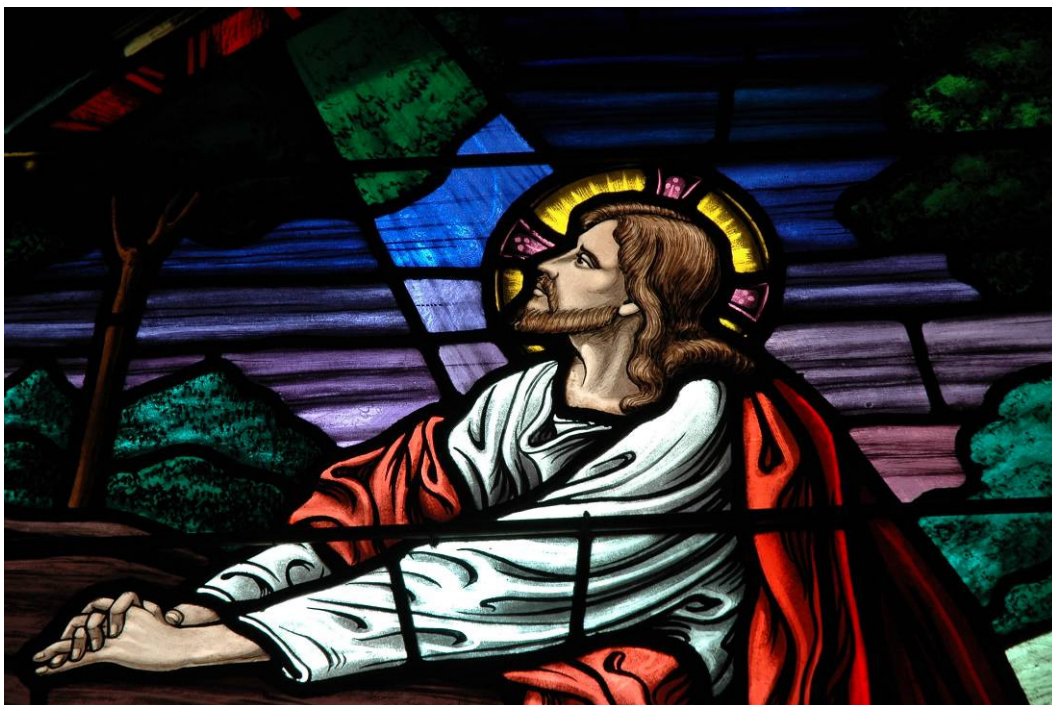
See how Paul describes our human condition where we are either slaves to sin or set free in Christ to live as saints in light? Who is in charge in your life today—are you ruled by sin or are you living as one of the saints in light?

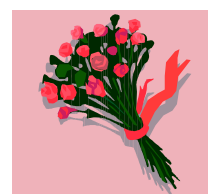
I have always felt that if somehow I could just make it clear to everyone I meet what God has done for us--- everyone would respond in the same way—eager to follow Jesus and live with grateful hearts and unyielding faith. This amazing opportunity for God almighty and God omnipotent, and the God of unending and unconditional love to rule in our hearts and lives seems like something no person in their right mind could refuse. I mean, shouldn't the most basic understanding of Psalm 46 be enough to compel every man, woman and child on this earth to bow down and worship God—and certainly to make time for the whole family to be in church on days like today? But even with our limited seating, pews are empty again today. What is going on?

Well, the battle for control of our lives rages on and when sin wins, those who should be listening are not hearing what God is saying. “I am the Lord your God...” is what we read in scripture and learn in confirmation class. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy should mean a great deal to us on Christ the King Sunday. But the thing about sin is that it leads us to a place of darkness—a place where we are lost and cannot find our way. The thing about sin is that it curses us with selective hearing so something other than God rules in our hearts and lives—be it ignorance or selfishness or unbelief or anger or some lesser pursuit than God’s high purpose for us.

I like to finish sermons like I am tying up a neat package or putting the finishing touches on a completed painting, but the message for today is not that simple. Life is not always so neat and tidy—it is often times just plain messy. The sermon that is your life and mine cannot be finished until we keep bearing witness with our last breath to the God who is our refuge and strength, the Father who has enabled us to share in the inheritance of the saints in light—the King of love who is my shepherd and yours, but whom others need to know and follow and trust.

Who is in charge in your life? IF you have decided that Christ is King for you that is a wonderful and glorious and marvelous thing. Now the hard work begins as you stand up and speak up and bear witness to the light for those who still walk in darkness. Hallelujah --
-Shine with God.----AMEN





Congratulations to Tim and Carol Gearity on the renewal of their wedding vows. A good looking couple in 1982.....a good looking couple in 2013!!!!

RECORD OF MARRIAGES							
NUMBER	DATE	PLACE	NAMES	RESIDENCES	AGE	MEMBER	WITNESSES
370	11/1/80	St. John's	Timothy G. Gearity	Rutherford 25g	27		Barbara Regal
		Rutherford	Carol Almer	Rutherford 25g	25	1	Marie Sebastian
371	11/28/80	St. John's	William R. Schmidt	South Arlington 25g	40		Kimberly Thompson
		Rutherford	Juan F. Meadon	South Arlington 25g	40		Robertine Runkles
372	8/1/81	St. John's	Harry M. Carl III	Woodford 25g	26		Jo Ann Hunt
		Rutherford	Marie C. Macaruso	Woodford 25g	27		Johnny Biel

Journey of Faith by Geri Basch

I was born in Jersey City and raised in North Bergen. I was from a very religious Catholic Family. At the age of 24, in 1985, I was married to my 1st husband in the Catholic Church. By the age of 28 I was divorced. All their rules discouraged me so much, it was hard for me to stay close To God & keep my faith. I would go some Sunday's and most of the time I would not attend.

In 1998 I met my current husband, who is Jewish. We have no problem w/religion because we do not have children. I was still struggling to get my faith back and find my way back to God, but it was not working. Mike introduced me to a lovely family, the Pelser Family, Bill, Linda, Julie, Richard & Little Amanda Leigh Pelser. Linda and I hit it off right away.

Amanda was a sick little girl. Then one day I rec'd a call that Amanda Had left us on Nov. 8th, 2003 to become an angel of God. Dec. 8th, 1 month after her death She would've been 5 years old. Both my husband and I were very saddened by this tragedy. We did what we could for the Pelser family.

I came to St. John's for the funeral of Amanda Leigh Pelser to give the Pelser Family My support. To my surprise, I was overwhelmed by the support the Pelser Family rec'd from their St. John's Church Family. That day was a very sad day but it was the beginning of my faith & the beginning of God back into my life. I knew this was the house of God I wanted to be a part of.

It was almost like Amanda was saying, Geri stay here it is a nice church. After everything Was over, I mentioned to Linda that I would like to join her at St. John's on Sunday's. She said to me absolutely. I would meet Linda in church every Sunday after Amanda passed away.

She introduced me to Pastor and he said how far are you from the church & I said I walked here I am only a few blocks away and his response was quote "That's a no brainer". Meaning sign up and become a member today!

Another time I was in church alone and Pastor said to me where is Linda and I said I don't know. He responded, you are brave! I knew he meant you are sitting here in a strange church by yourself, not knowing anyone? That was because I wanted my faith, I wanted God back in my life, it was so important to me.

I feel that I am here because of this brave little girl that went through so much and loved St. John's Lutheran Church. It took me 6 months to become a member due to my Catholic family and wondering how it would be accepted. I am sorry it took so long for me to join. But on May 16th, 2004, 9 yrs ago, I became A member of St. John's Lutheran Church and my certificate hangs proudly On my wall.

This is my Journey and I am proud to say, I am a "Lutheran"

My Journey of Faith....

I was raised in a Christian home My Mom being Presbyterian and my Dad was Lutheran. My Mom, a true mid-western women from Ohio, relocated to New Jersey after marrying my Dad during World War II. I am sure that was a culture shock for her. She adapted well here in Jersey and knew church was a strong part of her upbringing and personality. When it was time to raise her children, so she dove into the local Lutheran church. I believe it was her devotion to the Lord that instilled in us early on in our childhood, true faith! Memories of walking about a mile to church, Mom didn't drive, pulling me and my twin sisters in a wagon with older iblings in tow, there were 7 of us to get to church every Sunday. As life goes, so do the ups and downs. Sad to say, my Dad passed when I was just 9 years old, that in itself, rocked our family. But by the Grace of God we had the most loving, giving, unselfish human being that ever lived and we were lucky enough to call her Mom. She truly taught us that 'LOVE' was an action word! She had 7 kids to raise and guide, a struggle I am sure. But there was Sunday School every week, church, confirmation classes.... Including school and other activities, it was a normal part of our family. She laid a very strong foundation. We all have strayed slightly from our regular church attendance from time to time, especially in our teen age years.

Faith for me was real! As I faced being a young teenage mother and a married woman, I knew God would guide me, well, I say that now, then, I genuinely hoped he would! And Sure as the day is long, I have been blessed to see God watch over me, walk with me, cry with me, stand in the room with me, speak to me, shine on my loved ones and never let me down. So I could not pin point one occasion where I turned my life over to Christ , but each and every time I did during my life, my convictions of my love for the Lord and his for me, grew and inspired me . I have taught Sunday School to preschool and kindergarten ages for over 30 years, a true blessing. My sons didn't know anything different than waking up on a Sunday and going to church and serve. Today, as a more mature Christian I find my prayer and meditation guide and carry me into a tumultuous world with kinder eyes, ears and heart. And each morning before I begin, I say "Here I am Lord" and with his mercies being new every morning I can confidently walk in faith.

One of my favorite verses is; "Create in me a clean heart Oh God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation and uphold me with thy free spirit."

My name is **Mary Ann Mastro**, I have been married to Steve Mastro for 37 years this coming November. We have 2 sons, Stephen age 35 and Nicholas age 28 and a beautiful grandson. Most of you have seen him here with us, Michael age 11 and extended family we love and cherish. Searching for a place to land , Steve and I both feel we were guided here to St John's on that Easter morning in 2012 and now, how blessed we are, members here in St. John's for I year this past June 10th already. I would like to say truly how Grateful and Thankful I am that we are a part of this church family! A place where I can Grow, Learn, Worship, Praise, Serve, Teach and "Love God alongside each and every one of you!" Our cup runneth over, God is Good! And I will continue to begin each and every day with "Here I am Lord!"

This 'n That

Thank you to our own Joan Cockroft for this tip she posted on Facebook. We never heard of this before but will surely try it. It will need to be used soon.....

**Mix 1 teaspoon of Dawn dishwashing detergent with –
1 tablespoon of rubbing alcohol with –
½ gallon of hot/warm water**

Pour on sidewalk/steps and they will not freeze. No salt needed...

Thank you Joan!!!!



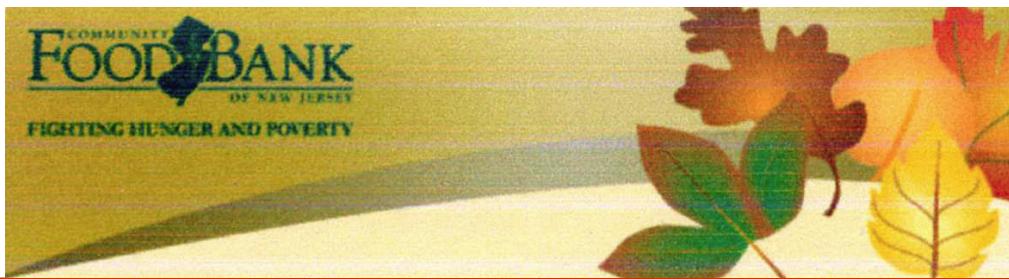
Did you know????

Mariano Rivera, the great Yankee reliever, on his glove, has written “Phil 4:13.” This is Philippians 4:13, of course: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.” He has the verse embroidered on his cleats. He will tell anyone who asks that he pitches for the glory of God, and he will credit everything that has happened to him to God as well.



Jersey Cares Annual Coat Drive

Please bring any coats you are no longer using to St. John's. These are preferably winter coats, both adult and children's. They should be in good condition. Good enough condition that you would give it to a friend or family member. Just coats, no scarves, gloves or mittens. Please place them in the old choir loft. Please bring by **December 22nd**. We thank Rod Leith for volunteering to bring the coats to Jersey cares and being our representative. These coats will mean a lot to someone this winter as the temperatures hover around freezing. Thank you and bless you to all whomever brings a coat.



The holiday season and the cold weather are once again upon us. ***Our prime mission is to maintain services to keep our visitors warm and free from hunger.*** We work hard to maintain each individual's dignity by offering choices for personal needs as well. Warm accessories for adults and children (gloves, hats scarves, socks)

- Umbrellas
- Wallets
- Gift wrap
- Children's coloring books
- Body lotions and powders
- Holiday treats (cookies, candies, fruits, juices, hot chocolate, etc.)
- Clothing cannot be accepted

As of this printing, there was no new list of specific needs, only what is transcribed above. So we are copying the list we had last year as this is the usual list around holiday time. We are sure there is a need for any of the items listed in this section. We are also sure that they will be happy to receive any items you wish to donate as long as it does not have an expired sales date.

Families in need of toys will be referred to other sources. We have discovered by limiting our collection we are much more successful in the achievement of our mission. Please contact me with any questions. Suggestions are always welcome. Thank you for your constant support and encouragement.

With love, warm regards, and deep appreciation,

Rutherford Food pantry

Request list:

- | | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| • Non –perishable Canned Hams | • Canned Vegetables, (mushrooms, asparagus, corn, beets, pickled red cabbage, olives) |
| • Canned Chicken | • Potato Latke Mix |
| • Canned Yams | • Juices, all varieties |
| • Instant Mashed Potatoes | • Salad Dressing, croutons |
| • Stuffing Mixes | • Apple Sauce |
| • Muffin Mixes | • Canned Fruit, (peaches, pears, pineapple, fruit cocktail) |
| • Honey | • Wrapping paper, cards |
| • Baking Powder, Baking Soda | • All toiletries for men and women |
| • Poultry Seasoning | • Chicken Stock |
| • Pasta, all shapes | • Canned Tomatoes, Pasta Sauce |

Food pantries and food banks struggled to meet demand this Thanksgiving, just weeks after food stamp cuts for millions of Americans took effect.

Update on the “ Let’s Give Thanks” - Pillow Drive



St. John’s Sunday School and Congregation are made up of very special people. A request went out for a pillow drive for a women’s and children’s shelter and a men’s crisis shelter and the response was incredible. **We collected over 50 pillows for this cause.** We personally, the Staff of TFSS, want to thank each and every one of you. A special Thanks as well, to our delivery angels – Steve Mastro, Meaghan Kirwan, Michael Mastro and also helper Will Schaefer, with their help Lorraine Kirwan and I had a much easier time of it. The appreciation we saw on the faces of those who work there, when we dropped off these pillows on Sunday, Nov. 24th, 2013 was amazing. They surely know what a difference a simple pillow will make in the lives of those who use their facility. God Bless you all and may you have angels on your pillows, along with those so terribly in need, by your generous giving.

Thank you, The TFSS Staff

This was submitted to the Lantern 5 years ago in a Music & Worship article by Ruth Rice. We feel this bears repeating again. We all have Christmas trees and this will remind us of the real reason for the season.

A
Holy
night~
sky's bright~
silver and gold,
family, friends, trees,
bells, candles, caroling,
cookies, hot cocoa, giving,
receiving, toys, gifts, laughter,
joy, wreaths and ribbons, home for
holidays, blessings from above, God's
gift of love, His Son Jesus, freely given to all
from above~in a manger stall, town of Bethlehem
wise men seek Him, shepherds travel with flocks guided
through the night with brightest star in sight~~Go tell it on
the mountain that Jesus Christ was born,
as angels sang, "come
adore Him, "Glory to
the newborn King"!
peace and goodwill
to all of mankind~

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.
- Isaiah 9:6

Haven't most of us gone to work on Friday's and said TGIF? Well, a couple of weeks ago Irene and I were leaving a store and saw this sign on a shelf. What a terrific sign!! We can now say TGIF everyday! No need to wait for Friday.

Marty



Did you ever try to take a picture of an angel?

You have to be pretty quick.

From last year's children's pageant.

Please come this year and see the angels for yourself..and take pictures!!

December 22nd

DECEMBER BIRTHDAY'S



1-Vincent Mottola

2-Josh Anderson

2-Jane Mecord

6-Stefanie DiMeola

6-Joan Kimball

13-Lisa Oliver

14-Joanne Oliver

15-Chuck Lescinsky

17-Stephanie Balogh

18-Thomas Prawetz

26-Pastor Walters

27-Richard Pelser

27-John Tupper

28-Diana Hart

30-Debbie Strom

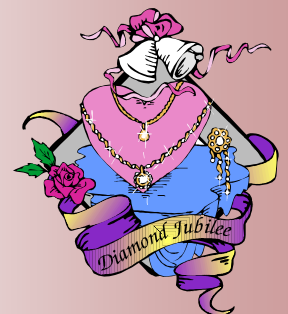
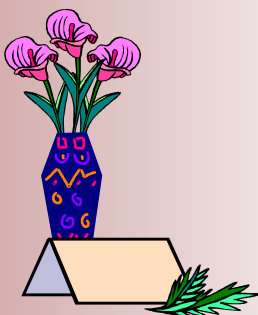
31-Elizabeth Martin



ANNIVERSARIES

11-Wayne and Lorraine Herrnkind

28-Gerrit and Diana Hart



PLEASE DON'T MISS ONE OF THE MOST, IF NOT THE MOST, BEAUTIFUL
SERVICE OF THE YEAR!!!!

The candlelight service on Christmas Eve!





Please do not forget the:

COOKIE EXCHANGE!!!!!!

December 15th after service

Please bring approximately a dozen of your favorite cookies along with copies of the recipe. This way everyone can share in the tasty delight and will also be able to go home with a new recipe of a new favorite.

Look, even our Council President can't resist



December Volunteer Assignments

Date	Lay Assistants	Coffee Hour	Ushers	Altar Guild	Tally	Acolytes
12/01	Paula Buckingham	Keri & Dave Collins	Joe Hohler	Geri Basch	Joe Hohler	TBD
12/08	Karen Ohland	Joe Hohler Gerda Judicke	Vince Mottola	Irene Kaup	Marty & Irene Kaup	TBD
12/15	TBD	Cookie Exchange	Ken Oliver Geri Basch	Lisa Oliver	Dottie Frank Lorraine Kirwan	TBD
12/22	TBD	TBD	Lisa Oliver Joy Christians	Lori Senator	Fran Heim Joan Eveleens	TBD
12/24 Christmas Eve	TBD	No Coffee Hour	TBD	All Altar Members	Marty & Irene Kaup	TBD
12/29	TBD	Carol & Tim Gearity	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

I slept and dreamt that life was joy.
 I awoke and saw that life was service.
 I acted and behold, service was joy."

-Rabindranath Tagore (Bengali poet)

Submitted to The Lantern by Candice Kaup-Scioscia

Important December Dates to Remember

Saturday December 14th— Decorating Christmas tree and church for Christmas. Pizza will be served. Starting around 4PM. Come and devote what ever amount of time you can.

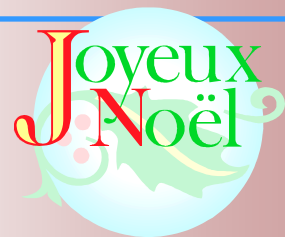
Sunday December 15th— Cookie Exchange after service during coffee hour!!!!!!! YUMMMM

Sunday December 22nd— Family service and the CHILDREN'S PAGEANT!!!! You don't want to miss this!

Tuesday December 24th— Christmas eve candlelight service 10:30 PM!



Merry Christmas



The "Lantern staff" would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas.

May you all have a very healthy, happy and blessed New Year! It has been our pleasure and honor to send you The Lantern this year.. We are looking forward to another wonderful year at St. John's .



Blessings to all!!!!

