

The Lantern

December 2015



St. John's Lutheran Church

145 Mortimer Avenue

Rutherford, NJ 07070

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Dear Family in Christ,

The December Lantern article is always easy to write—it is about Advent and Christmas!

Something has changed for us this year and together, we will see if the change is a good one. For as long as most of us can remember, St. Johns has been blessed to have a traditional Christmas Eve candlelight/communion service beginning at about 10:30pm and ending just as Christmas day arrives at midnight. I will never forget how special these services have been and what a blessing it has been to sing the carols by candlelight and wait together for that last minute or two until Christmas day arrives.



However, attendance patterns of recent years tell us that there may be a better time to schedule the Christmas eve service so those who cannot attend worship at such a late hour can participate. After weighing the alternatives, our church council has decided to schedule the Christmas Eve candlelight communion service for 7pm this year. The hope is that families with young children, older members who are unable to attend a very late service and others will find this to be a better time. One suggestion has been to alternate a 7pm service with a late service from year to year. So we shall see. What is important is that we are working together to find the best worship experience for as many of our family and friends and visitors as possible.

What has not changed this year is the celebration of a loving God who sent his only begotten Son to save us from our sins, to bring peace on earth and to insure that love will triumph. What has not changed is a search to fully understand and appreciate what the birth of Jesus means for our lives now and our eternal destiny.

What has also not changed is the lighting of the Advent wreath during Sunday worship, the Children's Christmas pageant held during worship the Sunday before Christmas Eve (Dec 20 this year), the Christmas cookie exchange, the amazing way Teresa plays the Christmas carols, and all the familiar traditions that bring us comfort and joy. So I encourage you to make every effort to attend as many worship events as possible and especially to make it a priority to be with your church family on Christmas Eve. There is no better place to be and no better church to attend than our humble, enterprising, faithful St. Johns. We will save you a seat and leave the lights on.....See you in church.

With Love,

Pastor Walters

Council Presidents Report

Can you believe 2015 is almost over!?! I am sitting here wondering at the speed in which these years are flying by. I just opened my email and saw that beautiful picture of Amelia Grace, grandchild of Marty and Irene, just hours old. Hours old and I am thinking what a wonderful family she has been born into with Candice and Tom as her parents and Nate as her big brother. Throw in to that her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins, andwait a minute..... what about us, her St. John's family. And here is where I go off in on one of my tangents.



Eighty-six years ago St. John's was a dream, an idea, a plan put into motion by a handful of people that none of us knew, and yet we are all indebted to. We would not be here in this beautiful church, surrounded by wonderful church friends, if it weren't for them. And, just like that first St. John's family, we all share one common goal. They all wanted this church, their church, now our church, to be around for their children's children. And it has been. Now it is our turn. We have contributed tremendously to that future already, but we must continue to do so. We must make sure that the love, care, and sense of community we all work so hard to maintain continues.

This has been our Year of Living Well. We have had our faith strengthened through our weekly attendance. We have had our spiritual needs met through meaningful sermons and incredible music. We have had our health looked at and been encouraged to make healthy choices for ourselves. We have been encouraged to look into our finances and give according to our means. We have been given opportunities to give outside of ourselves to those in need. We have had our past gathered and placed in an area we can all access so future generations can see our history and add to it. We are preparing for their future.

Christmas will soon be upon us. We will be having our usual magnificent candle-light service a lot earlier on Christmas Eve this year in hopes that many more of our family members, young and old, will be able to attend. I am hoping to see old friends, hear the noise of our children(our future), and feel the warmth of family, along with that powerful sense of peace and hope that comes to us so strongly on that night, the night our savior was born, as the lights go out and the candles rise up through the singing of Silent Night. And, I am thinking, that may be the moment that we will know that the dream of that handful of people, 86 years ago, continues and will continue through us. They began their dream with faith and a hope for the future, and we must not let them down.

Have a hope filled, faith filled, peace filled, love filled Christmas. Lisa

St John's Total Family Sunday School



For your contributions towards **Operation Christmas Child**

We wrapped up, thanks to the children and adults of TFSS,

31 boxes with postage plus a donation to cover some of their shipping fees

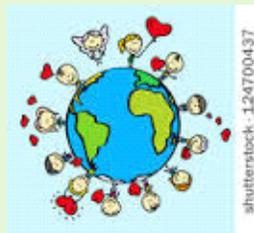
St John's and the TFSS should be very proud of their accomplishments in our goals for worldwide outreach!

(Blessings to Lisa and Joy for delivering them)



Christmas Blessings for all the children that will be touched from our St John's Operation Christmas Child Donations  and those from around the

world! 



December 20th ,2015;



TFSS Christmas Pageant....



*(**Weekly** attendance by the children is very important for practice and a run threw on each and every part)*

*Please mark your calendars for this wonderful **Christmas** treat delivered with love and excitement from the hearts of the children.*



Special notice to our TFSS families;



St John's

Christmas Eve Service



will be held at

7:00pm

December 24th, 2015

145 Mortimer Ave. Rutherford NJ

Come Let us adore him ~ together !



Property Report

Christmas time: A time for joy and for praise and to give gifts of thanks and appreciation. Well, in my position, who do I have to thank but none other than the people who take care of us.

The folks who help us take care of our church—our vendors and partners. I get asked more often than not, who do we use for plumbing, or painting or whatever. Most of who I use actually comes from all of you. Usually word of mouth or referenced by someone you know. Or in some case have been here longer than some have been members. They take care of our building and are generous with their time. I know that when they share their handiwork and professionalism with us, we have the best they can give us.

As we approach Christmas I thought it would be nice to spread a little cheer on these people. Give them a shout out and let them know we really appreciate them. It would be nice if you have the need for any of their services to give them a call and let them know your are from St. Johns. I am not asking you use them, but only keep them in mind if something arises.

Now my names for these guys are really not official but it is all I have for you.

In no particular order:

Reid Plumbing
DiMeola Masonary
Cusiti Electric
Pete the Snow Guy
Bob the Floor Guy
Dave the Painter
Larry the Locksmith
Teaneck Roofing
Lawn Doctor
Colaneri Brothers
Meadowlands Hardware



If you would like to contact any of these businesses, just let me know and I will pass along the info. It is just the right thing to do since they do so much for us.

Merry Christmas,
Vince the Property Guy



FINANCE

Below is an excerpt from a finance report and temple talk by Tim Gearity . Due to it's length, we had to shorten it a bit for the Lantern. If you would like a full copy please see Tim and he will be happy to provide and also discuss the points below.

For the past eleven months I have been the Finance Chairman for St. John's. For those of you who don't know me outside of church, I am a local accountant specializing in taxation and finance who has had an office on Park Avenue in Rutherford across the street from the Dairy Queen for the past twenty-three years.

A few weeks ago Pastor Walters sent a letter to each of us thanking us for celebrating his 30th anniversary in leading our parish. In that letter he recognized the contributions of the men and women who built our church 85 years ago. The names of many of those people are etched in the windows that we have talked about during some of our recent services. Pastor reminded us of our gratitude to them for giving us a place to worship these past several years. Can you imagine the difficulties we would have today in forming, let alone, building a church? Honestly, none of us would have the time. We're either too busy earning a living or raising our families. For many of us spirituality has been reduced to being a luxury item. You do it if you can, but if you can't, well you just can't.

Today it is estimated that less than 40% of families attend religious on a weekly basis.....

High amongst the challenges that we and future generations will have to face is: How important a role will spirituality have in our lives? Is it a luxury or is it a necessity? How about for your children and your grandchildren? I don't foresee life getting any easier for them or for future generations. They could easily choose that religious observance is a luxury that they do not have time for, especially with the demands of day-to-day living that will be placed on them. The choice that they will have to make may not even be available to them if there isn't a St. John's Lutheran Church here for them. Where will they go to re-energize their spiritual beliefs and enjoy the fellowship of their fellow Christians who share the same beliefs that they have? They might not go anywhere and, worse yet, they may lose whatever beliefs that have been instilled in them entirely.

Ten years ago, my wife and I came to St. John's after 25 years of half-hearted and sporadic attendance at services at other churches. I had religious training continuously from 4th grade through my last year in college and still my faith lagged. While I didn't admit to it, at that point in my life I had little, if any, sense of spirituality. It wasn't until we came to St. John's that we discovered true inspiration, joy and fellowship in a religious service. We couldn't be more thankful that we share fellowship with you. There is not a one of you whom we aren't happy to shake hands with and share the service and coffee hour with each Sunday.

The spiritual family of St. John's is a special one. While we may be few in number, keep in mind that quantity and quality have an inverse relationship with high quality being associated with less quantity. In our minds there is no finer service than what we experience at St. John's each week. We're proud to say that we feel we belong here. We believe you feel that way too. We want St. John's Lutheran Church to be here throughout our lifetimes and we want future generations to have the same benefits of sanctuary, fellowship and spirit in this increasingly challenging world.

As a small parish we do not have a large number of parishioners to draw contributions from. The traditional appeal is naturally to ask parishioners increase your church contributions. Please do so to the extent that you can. However, as pastor has stated in his recent letter, "one can only give what one is capable of, and, if your family budget is stretched beyond its limits, then do not put added stress on your finances". But, "if you are at a point in your life when you can become more generous, please know that now is the time". However great or small that added amount may be, it will really make a difference.

As a financial specialist I would like to add the following additional considerations to the list of possible contributions that could have a **major beneficial impact** on the future well-being of the church without seriously affecting your day-to-day finances:

- 1) All parishioners should strongly consider including St. John's Lutheran Church in their wills. If you truly appreciate the spiritual enrichment that St. John's has maintained in your life, as I do, there is no better gift you can give to your fellow church members than to help ensure that the proud traditions of St. John's Lutheran Church will be there for future generations, the youngest of whom are sitting in church with us today.

- 2) All parishioners that are maintaining bank accounts with Boiling Springs Savings Bank can help St. John's immensely, with very little effort, by declaring to the bank that you are a parishioner of St. John's and the bank, as a part of their community service that will not adversely affect your account or your rate of return, will contribute a small amount based on your account balance to St. John's.

- 3) There may not be many parishioners who may be in this position, but if you are, or if you are unsure if you are, you can make contributions today of stock or artwork that have appreciated significantly in value that could provide a substantial amount of money to St. John's while also providing you, the donor, with a major tax benefit. If you are unsure, share the circumstances with me and I will explain the specific benefits to you.

- 4) I asked Mark Kleindienst of Thrivent Lutheran, who will be attending the Sunday, December 6 service to provide financial planning tips and advice to our parishioners, for an idea to present to you today. The tip involves distributions from IRA's. Without getting into details that Mark can provide at the service, the Church will become the beneficiary of the balance of your IRA upon your death and your beneficiaries will receive tax-free life insurance benefits that will be funded by using the IRA distributions to pay for a life insurance policy on your life the proceeds of which will be distributed, tax-free, to your beneficiaries Please ask either Mark or myself if this strategy is a fit for you...

The pastor's stewardship letter reminds us that we are the current beneficiaries of the gift of St. John's. It was given to us 85 years ago through the hard work and dedication of our predecessors. Unfortunately, that will not be enough to see us through the next 85 years. It can be done but it will only get done with an honest and sincere effort from each and every one of us right now. Not tomorrow. Not next year. Right now!!! Now is the time for us to assume our responsibility to maintain this precious gift so that the present and future generations of our families will continue to experience the proud traditions of St. John's for many years to come. By our actions we would hope that the future generations of St. John's will not look back at this time period as being a time when the parish turned a blind eye or a deaf ear to the challenges it faces but instead will look back with pride to this being the parish's finest hour, when the members of the parish decided that failure was not going to be an option. .

In closing, I ask you to ask yourself: What would you say to God if he was sitting next to you and he wanted to know how much the future of St. John's Lutheran Church means to you? What makes you think that he's not sitting next to you right now? Your commitment will be your answer.

Sincerely,

Timothy G. Gearity
Finance Chairman

Vince Mottola in the news!!!!



The Hawthorne Boys and Girls Club held their 23rd Annual Every Kid Counts Dinner at Macaluso's in Hawthorne recently. Vince and Michael Mottola, along with club CEO John Bertollo, presented the John J. Mottola Volunteer of the Year award to Brian Harmer. The award was the highlight of the evening's event and the most prestigious award to be given out amongst the over 30 awards from that evening. John Mottola was a Board Member of the Boys and Girls Club in the early 80's and very instrumental in the planning, construction and running of the new facility which was being built back then to replace the old building at the corner of Goffle Road and Rea Ave. in Hawthorne. Shortly after the construction of the new club, John passed on. In order to commemorate his passing and continue his tradition and dedication, the club dedicated this yearly award to the volunteer of the year who goes above and beyond the call. A tradition which everyone is very proud of.



THANK YOU to Lisa, Joy, Rich, Lindsay, Stefanie, Madeline, Robert and Ken for volunteering to feed homeless!! Thank you everyone who donated food! Thank you Lisa and Ken for coordinating everything! Next homeless feeding is January 15th. Please see Lisa for further information and details.

December 19th

Starting at 10am

Come and join us to help decorate the tree and church. Bring an angel to put on the tree if you have not brought one previously.





Lots of good food



Out of state VIP visitor



The art of flipping a burger by Ken



Council Presidents

Everyone had a great time celebrating Pastor and Teresa's 30 anniversary with St. John's. Good food, good fellowship and lots of good fun. Thank you Pastor and Teresa for sticking with us for 30 years! We are looking forward to many more!

We truly are a wonderful and blessed church family!!



Here are the Sunday School children performing a rousing edition of "Hallelujah We Thank The Lord." They usually sing on the third Sunday of the month so starting next year please try to attend. You will love it and so will the kids. Right now they are practicing for the children's pageant on the 20th. See page 15.

Talking about kids, mark your calendars that on **December 13th** there will be a **cookie exchange** following the service!! And who doesn't feel like a kid when there are cookies around!!!! So come to the service and bring a batch of cookies with you and the recipe if you wish. Enjoy all the cookies and bring different ones home. If you are not able to bring cookies, then please join us in eating the cookies others brought. The more cookies the merrier!!!



On November 15th, Pastor Walters was presented with a portrait of himself by council president Lisa Oliver. The portrait has now been posted on the wall in the ushers room along with the other previous pastors at St. John's. The photo was taken by our own Samantha Mottola. Sam reserved a photo studio at her school, set up the backdrop and lighting and shot all the pics. As you can see, it is an excellent photo and no retouching was necessary. Very professional. Pastor will never age with this photo.

After photo session, Pastor took us out for lunch and there was good conversation and fun.

Yes, I was there but really did nothing to deserve the lunch.....but I accepted anyway. Shameless I am!

It took 30 years for us to take this photo, I guess we wanted to make sure Pastor was going to stay. Thank you Samantha for a job well done!!!!

Marty



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

16-Tim Gearity

17-Stephanie Balogh

18-Thomas Prawetz

26-Pastor Walters

27-Richard Pelser

28-Diana Hart

30-Debbie Strom

31-Elizabeth Martin



ANNIVERSARIES

11-Wayne and Lorraine Herrnkind

28-Gerrit and Diana Hart





December 20th

The Children's Christmas Pageant!!!

Please try not to miss it. It is one of the most heartwarming things you will ever see.

The more people in church the better the children will feel.

Come applaud and cheer!!

You'll be sorry if you miss it.





Please remember the Candlelight Service this year is at 7PM.

All ages will now be able to attend with the more convenient time.

We hope to see you all there at this wonderful and emotional service.



NOTICE

**The 89th Annual
Congregational Meeting**

Will be held on

January 24, 2016

Immediately following service