

The Vine

February 2009

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to lovingly proclaim the Gospel among all people in order to form and nurture loving communities which confess by word and deed that Jesus is Lord and Savior





Our Partnership February 2009

Holy Habits

“But seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.” Matthew 6:33

“Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock.” Matthew 7:24

“I am the Light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Dear Members and Friends of St. John’s Lutheran Church and School;

In his Lent devotional, Holy Habits for the Holy Season of Lent Dr. Rich Bimler writes; “Holy Habits are actions that help us to focus on the Cross and the Resurrection of Christ Jesus.” I like those two words – Holy Habits. While in the strictest sense, a Christian’s life is not a habit, but rather a response to God’s love for us motivated by the Holy Spirit, yet habits which help us live the Christian life are not a negative influence upon us.

On the one hand, we could say that the season of Lent is a “Holy Habit.” Each year on Ash Wednesday, (this year February 25th) the Christian Church begins the “Holy Habit” of Lent. The forty-day season of Lent has a long rich history, and includes many ways of observance and participation. It is understood throughout the Church, that Lent is a time to prepare our hearts, minds and souls for the sacred observances of Christ’s death on Good Friday and His resurrection on Easter morning.

Traditionally these three disciplines – “Holy Habits” are associated with Lent; fasting, abstinence, and almsgiving. Fasting – the refraining from eating certain food or cutting back on a meal each week, can afford the opportunity for increased time for the reading and study of God’s Word. Abstinence refers to the idea of giving up a bad habit or sinful pleasure from our daily lives. Almsgiving in our parish is that special Lenten offering that is directed towards the poor and needy, and is a way to remember how Christ gave up everything to save us.

Aside from these traditional Lenten disciplines, I would suggest to you that it would be good for us to pick some other “Holy Habits” during this year’s Lenten season. Our goal is always to grow and mature as Christians in our faith, and Lent provides us with a wonderful opportunity to do that.

May our first “Holy Habit” be the habit of weekly worship attendance and then during Lent weekly midweek worship attendance. Our midweek theme this year is; “Journey of Stones.” See the ad in this issue of the Vine for more information. Hint – you will be asked to pick up a small rock and take it with you into each midweek service. Our Ash Wednesday service will include the imposition of ashes and Holy Communion. Each service will begin at 7:00 p.m. and a Soup Supper beginning at 6:00 will precede each service.

Secondly, during the season of Lent is a wonderful time to hone the “Holy Habit” of prayer. Special devotional books will be available to guild you in your prayer life. The privilege of talking to God is too often neglected, and the result is powerless people trying to live life without God’s guidance and strength.

Thirdly, the “Holy Habit of sharing the love of Jesus with everyone we know and even those who we strike up a conversation with. Lent provides you with a wonderful backdrop to share with someone who doesn’t know Jesus, how He came to suffer and die for the sins of the world. During Lent many who have no affiliation with the Church throughout the rest of the year, begin to look for a church to attend on Easter morning. Pray that the Holy Spirit would help you to share the Good News of Jesus during this Lenten season.

May God continue to richly bless you during the remaining days to the Epiphany season, and grant you the ability to have “Holy Habits” during the season of Lent.

In Christ,

Rev. Dr. Richard Lohmeyer, Pastor



February 2009

The seasons on the Christian calendar continue to move along, sometimes faster than we realize or want. In the middle of Epiphany, Lent will soon be upon us, with the arrival of Ash Wednesday on February 25, 2009. While it is truly a time of great joy as we wait and prepare for the feast of Easter, some people don't seem to care for the discipline involved. We must cleanse our hearts with repentance. To repent we must change, where necessary, our hearts, our minds, our souls and our lifestyle. We should pray more, give up something, and increase our Stewardship responsibilities.

Christian Stewardship reminds us that we are endowed with certain gifts that are not our own. We have a trusteeship over them but not ownership. Although we are recipients of almost limitless gifts, our tendency is to often call them our own and claim them exclusively for ourselves.

However, good stewardship appeals to our noblest instincts to thank and to share. To give some portion back to God, to those in need, to give away some portion because so many have less than ourselves, is a way of expressing directly our thanks giving to God for these gifts.

Are you a good steward? In our prayers, especially during Lent, we should ask our Creator to help us come to a better understanding of what good stewardship really means.

May God grant it for Jesus' sake and in His most precious name.

The Stewardship Committee

From Our Church Fathers-

Taito A. Kantonen (1900-1993) Finnish born, American Luther Pastor who taught at Hamma Divinity School, was a [theologian](#). At the age of 3 he moved to the [United States](#), where he later attended [Harvard University](#) and received a degree in theology. He wrote many books including *Man in the Eyes of God*.

The word which Luther uses to describe this stewardship of all earthly reality is vocation (*vocation, Beruf*). The centrality of this concept in the Reformer's theology is one of the discoveries of the intensive Luther research of the present century...In the light of these studies we now see that vocation to Luther was not a detachable appendix to the fundamental doctrine of justification by grace nor a romantic notion of regarding the workshop as a church. It interprets and applies concretely to life all the basic themes of Luther's theology, God and man, the law and the gospel, faith and love, creation and redemption. The roots of the idea of vocation are in the doctrine of creation. God, the creator of life, gives every man his occupation, his place in the divine economy. His will confronts us in the concrete tasks of everyday life. This applies to all men, Christian and non-Christian alike. Whether they are believers or not, the father who provides for his children, the ruler who protects his subjects, and the cobbler who makes shoes for people to wear—all are serving God. Vocations refers to the earth, not heaven. It is not directed upward to God, but outward toward one's fellow man. It has nothing to do with salvation, justification, the winning of eternal life. These belong to the realm of the gospel where everything is the free gift of grace. Vocation belongs to the realm of the law, God's rule over his earthly kingdom. As such it has a coercive character utterly foreign to the gospel. By his law, operating in the orders of creation and occupations inherent in them, God compels even godless men to serve one another and thus restrains the powers of evil which would otherwise destroy his creation.

While vocation is thus coextensive with all of life and not an exclusively Christian concept, it is on the Christian man who is aware of his earthly occupation as a divine calling. In the light of the gospel he sees the love of God at work beneath the harsh coercion of the law. While his daily work appears to have nothing to do with God, he sees it as a mask disguising God's presence. He recognizes the world with all its activities as God's workshop, not something neutral, secular, or profane, to which the church must try to give spiritual content. He learns to avoid false division between the spiritual and the earthly, faith and works, love of God to and love of neighbor. "In faith we rise into the presence of God to appropriate as a gift, without works, the gospel, justification, free conscience, and heaven. But within faith there is always a double movement which means that we once return down to earth where the neighbor alone is the center of everything." God's call comes to us in our neighbor's need...The outward movement whereby the faith that has risen to God is transformed into works of love is to Luther a duplication of the miracle of the incarnation. As God came to us not in his naked majesty but clothed in the lowly garb of his Suffering Servant, so God continues to come to earth through his servants who fulfill their earthly obligations in obedient love.

Facts about February

According to the Georgian calendar, February is the second month of the year, and also the shortest month. February has 28 days until Julius Caesar gave it 29, and 30 days every four years. According to tradition, Augustus, the Roman emperor, took one day off to add one day to August, the month named after him. We now have February with 28 days, and 29 on leap years.

In the northern half of the world, February is a very cold month. There are usually sunny days that show Spring is not too far off. The Southern hemisphere usually enjoy midsummer weather during February.

The second day of February is often referred to as GROUND HOG'S DAY. The old stories told are that the ground hog comes out of it's burrow on February 2, to look for it's shadow. If there is sunshine and he sees his shadow, then he goes back to sleep and there will be more winter time. If he doesn't, then the spring time will begin. This is a superstition.

Annie's Ground Hog Day Page

VALENTINE'S DAY is celebrated on February 14 in most western countries. Children give valentines and have a party in school. Young and old exchange cards with loved ones. This custom is hundreds of years old, valetine greetings having been found that date back into the 1400's.

The third Monday in February is PRESIDENT'S DAY. Both Washington and Lincoln's birthdays were in February. It is considered a Federal holiday for celebration of Washington's birthday, but most states also honor all president's on this day.

The Roman Catholic Church celebrates February 2 as Candlemas Day. The candles used in the church during the rest of the year are blessed on February 2.

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The amethyst is the birthstone for February.

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The primrose is the flower for the month of February.

Principal's Corner

January is whirling by like a flurry of snowflakes. Our second Report Card will be February 3rd. We are looking forward to our Valentine Dance and

Valentine Craft Activities. **Let us not forget President's Week off from school -oh joy !!! The Staten Island Yankees will be pitching their presentation on February 27th. There is a whole schedule of Basketball games, so check it out and come and support the teams.

In January we experienced Open House, the gasoline raffle, the international dinner and Macho Game Night. We had lots of fun and tasted some really unique dishes.

We've had our share of snowstorm, so let's see what's in store for us this February.

St. John's Lutheran Ladies Guild

We will be meeting Thursday February 5th at 7:30 pm in the church basement. Our program will be Everybody's Birthday. Bring a wrapped gift and join the party! The guild mission project for February is collecting donations of new undies and socks for the Orphan Grain Train ministry. Please join us!

Joan Mohlenhoff
Secretary

Orphan Grain Train Undie and Sock Drive

St. John's Ladies Guild is sponsoring an Undie and Sock drive for the **Orphan Grain Train ministry**. The ministry was founded by a Lutheran Pastor in 1992. His vision to provide spiritual and humanitarian aid for desperately needy people, became known as **Orphan Grain Train**. It has grown into a worldwide outreach.

To date over 700 semi-loads of supplies have been sent to warehouses in North America, Eastern Europe, Africa, Mexico and Central and South America. Through partnership with churches, hospitals orphanages and other relief agencies, OGT assures that the goods are distributed to the most needy. All is freely given in Jesus' name. Volunteers and the generous material and monetary support of many people make all this possible.

Your help in supporting this ministry would be a great blessing. NEW undies and socks of all sizes are needed. Throughout FEBRUARY boxes will be placed at the church and at the school, to collect donations. Whatever you can do is so appreciated. Thank you for caring for His children.

Yours in Christ,
Joan Mohlenhoff
Guild Secretary
718-273-2644



Dearest Friends in Christ Jesus,

Happy New Year! At this time I would like to thank all those who came out and supported our “Lessons and Carols Service.” The choirs and myself appreciate all your support. I would also like to thank Pastor Lohmeyer, Walter Francis, Bruce Mohlenhoff and Danny Wuerdeman for their contribution with the readings for this service. I also would like thank all our choir members for all your hard work and dedication. A special thanks goes out to our percussion section, (I Hear The Prophet Callin’) of Janis Szokes (tambourine), Barbara Pfaff (triangle) and Anita Neitzel (our stomper). A special thank you to Susan Neitzel (adult choir) and Ciara Marro-Wilson (children’s choir) for lending their voices at the Christmas Eve service. Please be aware that our choirs are still searching for new members. If you can’t join the choir, then kindly support them by attending special programs such as Lessons and Carols. A lot of hard work, time and dedication goes into every song that is sung. Lastly let us not forget Sari, (working from home), and Bruce and Helen for putting together the bulletins.

I also would like to thank Ms. Alice with all her help towards the schools Christmas Pageant. Thank you for your directing of our actors and all the costume and props you attended to. I was very proud of each of the students who performed for this years pageant. From our violinist to our actors, and especially to our outstanding chorus who performed wonderfully and concluded the evening with a powerful rendition of “Call Him Jesus.” All of you did an outstanding job.

This year our Christmas Caroling was rescheduled from Dec 21, to Jan 4, 2009 due to the weather. We visited Eger, and Golden Gate Nursing homes and a shut in at her home. I was very pleased to see that 15 people turned out for this postponed event. Thank you all for your time and voices. It was a very enjoyable afternoon that ended back in the church basement with refreshments.

Being the choir director and organist of this church is truly an honor to me and a life long dream. God has blessed me in so many ways, and I’m humbled by the position he has lead me to.

In conclusion, I would like to wish my St. John’s family a healthy and blessed New Year. May we start this year in harmony as a congregation, remembering that we are all brothers and sisters in Christ. Sometimes we have our problems like brothers and sisters have, but let us open our hearts to the Spirit, and live our lives the way Christ lived His life for us. “Love One Another As I have Loved You,” as was spoken by our Lord.

In Christ

Tommy Sax





**ASH
WEDNESDAY**

February 25, 2009

Imposition of Ashes on Ash Wednesday

During the 7:00 PM Worship Service

Celebration of Holy Communion

Special music by the Choir



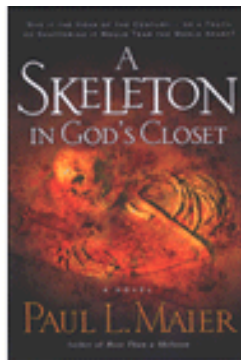
A Special Thank You!

A special "thank you" to everyone who remembered us at Christmas time with prayers, words of encouragement, cards and special gifts. Your thoughtfulness and kindness was greatly appreciated and served as a reminder of our God's gift of our Savior. May you be richly blessed for your generosity and grant you all a blessed New Year.

Judy and Pastor Lohmeyer

Special Sunday's in Lent Bible Study

It was a hit last year. "Lets do it again this year", said one member of the class. So we are going to do it again this year - we are going to study a book during the Sunday's in Lent at the Sunday morning Adult Bible Study. The book is "A Skeleton in God's Closet" by Dr. Paul Maier. Dr. Maier is the 3rd VP of the LCMS and professor of Ancient History at Western Michigan University and an award-winning author. The book is available from Christian Book Dist. for \$3.99 plus S&H. Just go to www.cbd.com to order the book. Do it soon, so you will have it in time for the first class on March 1st. If you have questions, please contact Pastor Lohmeyer at the Church Office.



**FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS AND
ANNIVERSARIES**

Our Theme for Midweek Lent is

Journey of Stones



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St. John's Ev. Lutheran Church
663 Manor Road
Staten Island, NY 10314

God Bless the Family of:

The February Vine 2009

The Newsletter of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran church & School

Divine Service:

Saturday: 5:00 PM at the Church

Sunday: 8:00 AM & 10:45 AM at the church

Family Education Hour: 9:15 AM at the church

ALL ARE WELCOME!

Church:

216 Jewett Avenue (Corner of Jewett & Post)

Staten Island, NY 10302 (no mail)

Email: stjohnslutheranchurchoffice@gmail.com

School & Church Office

663 Manor Road, Staten Island, NY 10314

February 2009

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00A Divine Worship 9:15A Bible Study & SS 10:45A Divine Worship	2	3 10A Mary/Martha 7:15P Bd. Of Christian Ed 8P Adult Choir	4 9A Chapel	5 9:30A Breakfast Bible Study 7:30P Ladies Guild	6	7 4:00P Children's Choir 5:00P Divine Worship
8 8:00A Divine Worship 9:15A Bible Study & SS 10:45A Divine Worship	9 VINE DEADLINE	10 10A Mary/Martha 8P Adult Choir	11 9A Chapel 3:15P Early Communion Class 7:30P Parent Meeting	12 9:30A Breakfast Bible Study Lincoln's Birthday	13 A Valentine's craft for Pre K-4 Upper grades get ready to dance the night away. More info to follow	14 4:00P Children's Choir 5:00P Divine Worship HAPPY VALTNIIE'S DAY
15 8:00A Divine Worship 9:15A Bible Study & SS 10:45A Divine Worship	16 President's Day	17 10A Mary/Martha 8P Adult Choir	18 9A Chapel	19 9:30A Breakfast Bible Study	20	21 4:00P Children's Choir 5:00P Divine Worship
22 8:00A Divine Worship 9:15A Bible Study & SS 10:45A Divine Worship Washington's Birthday	23	24 10A Mary/Martha 8P Adult Choir 4-7P SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER AT CHURCH	25 9A Chapel 3:15P Early Communion Class 6:00P Soup & Supper 7:00P Worship ASH WEDNESDAY	26 9:30A Breakfast Bible Study	27	28 4:00P Children's Choir 5:00P Divine Worship
	Love makes its possible to believe the impossible			