

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

The Vine

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



December Vine 2011

The Newsletter of St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church & School
(718) 761-1600

Reverend Randall S. Russell, Pastor

Cell (989) 545- 0029

Home (917) 397- 8774

Sunday Divine Services with Holy Communion:

10:30 AM @ Church

5p.m. school gym beginning November 27, 2011

Church located at:

216 Jewett Avenue (Corner of Jewett & Post)
Staten Island, NY 10302 **(no mail)**

Church Email: sjlchurchoffice@gmail.com

Church & School Website: www.stjohnslutheransi.org

School & Church Office

663 Manor Road **(Mail Accepted)**
Staten Island, NY 10314

Volume 2011

Issue #11

**Roster of Officers
St. John's Lutheran
Church & School
2011 Church Committees**

President
Vice President
Secretary
Board of Elders
Board of Christian Education
Board of Evangelism
Board of Properties
Board of Social Ministry

Frederick Bock
Gerald Valles
Janis Szoke
Thomas Sax
Robert Holls
Vacant
Les Szoke
Barbara Pfaff

Board of Elders

Thomas Sax
Dave Decker
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Board of Properties

Les Szoke
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Board of Christian Education

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Joan Mohlenhoff
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Board of Evangelism

Vacant
Leonor Abugel
Jenifer Moat
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Bonnie Selletti



PASTOR'S PAGE

Dear Family in Christ,

Peace be to you in the name of our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Undoubtedly, many of us have heard it said, "It is better to give than to receive." However, during the Christmas season nothing could be further from the truth! The simple reality is that on Christmas morning it is certainly better to receive than to give because on Christmas morning we receive Christ, our newborn King.

Therefore, during the month of December we look forward to receiving this gift as we celebrate our Lord's Advent. Each week we will make our way toward Christ's manger in order to give to Him our gifts of thanksgiving and praise. Yet such gifts simply cannot compare to the greatest gift our heavenly Father gave us that first Christmas morn. For long ago in the city of David our Savior wrapped in swaddling clothes, placed beneath a brightly lit star, and freely given for all God's children to enjoy.

Therefore the angels sing, "Glory to God in the highest, and peace, goodwill toward men!" [Luke 2:14] Yet the angels sing not only to express their joy, but also to deliver a wondrous message. The shepherds were told that in the small town of Bethlehem, the town that name literally means "house of bread", Jesus Christ, the Bread of Life, was freely given. And He was placed in a manger (that is a feeding trough) so that all His faithful sheep might soon be fed.

And isn't that what Christmas is really all about: God in Flesh for you? Isn't that the whole point behind the Christ-Mass? Isn't this the precise reason why the angels sing of God's peace given to men? For though "there be wars and rumors of wars, See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass." [Matthew 24:6] Regardless of whether there be wars in Afghanistan or rumors of wars in Iran, we still will have our peace.

Peace that is not the absence of war, but the presence of the eternal and merciful God. Peace that finds itself in a tiny manger where God in Flesh is placed for you or peace that finds itself on the altar where God in Flesh is given for you. It is that kind of peace which the world cannot give, but only the Lord has to offer. It is the peace of a clear conscience with God, the peace of the hope of the resurrection of the dead, a peace that proclaims the promise of life everlasting in Christ Jesus.

And so, amid all the hustle and bustle of this Christmas season, amid all those valiant searches for everything we long to buy and give, it is my prayer that we will remember the one thing truly needful. Let us remember the One whom we received that first Christmas morn and the One whom we continue to receive each and every time we commune. Let us remember Jesus, the true reason for the season, and let us rejoice. For unto us in the city of New York, in the borough that is Staten Island, the Savior is given, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto all; we shall find the babe wrapped in God's Word and lying on the altar ready to bestow every blessing upon all who are humble enough to receive.

In His service,
Pastor Russell +

Why?

Why make the sign of the cross?

Crossing oneself is a long standing tradition in the Church and may even date back to apostolic times. We know that it was already a common ceremony used daily in 200 A.D. An early church theologian by the name of Tertullian writes: “In all undertakings—when we enter a place or leave it; before we dress; before we bathe; when we take our meals; when we light the lamps in the evening; before we retire at night; when we sit down to read; before each task—we trace the sign of the cross on our foreheads.” St. Augustine (A.D. 431) also speaks of this custom many times in his sermons and letters.

It is one of the traditional ceremonies that was most certainly retained by Martin Luther. In fact, Luther encourages every Christian to make the sign of the Holy Cross as a part of his daily prayers. Under the heading “How the Head of the Family Should Teach His Household to Bless Themselves in the Morning and in the Evening” Luther writes in his *Small Catechism*: “In the morning when you rise (In the evening when you go to bed) you shall bless yourself with the sign of the holy cross and say: In the name of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.” Again in his Large Catechism he recommends that parents should instruct their children to cross themselves for the purpose of recalling their divine Protector in moments of danger, terror, and temptation. This ceremony is also still authorized in many present-day Lutheran service books including the *Lutheran Service Book*.

Crossing oneself is done by putting the fingers of the right hand to the forehead, to the breast, and to the right and left shoulders, with the words, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.” (Traditionally, Roman Catholics have made the sign of the cross from left to right. However, historically Lutherans have followed the older form, right to left.) By making the sign of the cross we profess our faith in the Triune God and in our redemption through Christ crucified.

The holy cross is the symbol of our salvation. Each of us were signed with it at our baptism. It remains the sign by which the church blesses people and things. By it we become part of the wonderful history of our faith and companions in the company of the saints. It is right that we should make the sign of the cross frequently and to glory in it, as St. Paul says: “But God forbid that I should glory save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Galatians 6:14)

During the Divine liturgy the sign of the cross is can be made: whenever the name of the Triune God is spoken or sung, whenever the sinner receives absolution, the announcement of the Holy Gospel; during the phrase “and the life ✠ of the world to come” in the Nicene Creed, during the phrase “Blessed is He that ✠ cometh in the name of the Lord” in the *Sanctus*, and during the phrase “and deliver us ✠ from evil” in the Lord’s Prayer. The sign of the holy cross may also be made during the *Pax Domini*, the dismissal after Holy Communion, the Aaronic Benediction, or any time a person wishes to remember his baptism.

The sign of the cross is a matter of Christian liberty and must be imposed upon no one, neither should any Christian be forbidden or frowned upon for using such a salutary symbol of his or her own devotion and prayer.¹

¹ Adapted from Paul H.D. Lang, *Ceremony and Celebration*, CPH, 1965.



A Message from the Elders

Dearest Friends in Christ Jesus,

Beginning on the first Sunday in Advent, (November 27) we will be offering a 5 p.m. Divine Worship Service with Holy Communion each week at our school located at 663 Manor Road. Our goal is to create a worship service for those who no longer can climb the church stairs, and for those who work or have other commitments on Sunday mornings. The worship service will be conducted in Spruth Hall (school gym). There is ample parking, and the gym is ground level and handicap accessible. We pray that we can engage the Gospel to more people by offering this as an alternate to worshiping at our church. Also, each week the elders will be contacting individuals who we haven't seen for at least two consecutive weeks at worship. The elders are asking everyone if they could assist them by taking note who has not been at worship so that we may contact them. May the Lord continue to bless us as we prepare for Advent and Christmas.

In Christ,
Thomas Sax
Elder Chair

Thank You!

Thank you to the members of the congregation and to Pastor Russell for all your prayers and well wishes during my rehab. May God continue to shower our parish with His Blessings.

Ann Gray

News from Social Ministry:



Dear Friends in Christ:

The Thanksgiving basket distribution was a great success thanks to the work of the committee, the congregation and school who donated time, money, and food. We were blessed with the gift of 15 Thanksgiving baskets from the Staten Island Rotary and with cash donations from Stop and Shop and ShopRite and with paper sacks donated by Trader Joe's . 22 families were served including adults, children, and shut-ins. We look forward to success with our Christmas distribution. It's not too late to donate money, food, or to "Pack a Sack". Donations of money can be made and placed in the "hunger" box or by check with the notation "for hunger". Donations of turkeys/hams can also be made. Contact Barbara Pfaff at [908-230-1159](tel:908-230-1159) or by e-mail at: babsswim@si.rr.com. Distribution will take place on December 17 and 18. Volunteers are still needed on December 16 for packing and sorting.

Barbara Pfaff
Social Ministry Chairperson

Deadline for the January Vine is December 21

MORE ON STEWARDSHIP

Last month we celebrated Thanksgiving, showing a wonderful generosity to people less fortunate than we are. The season of Advent is here now and we watch and wait for the birth of our Savior. It is somewhat different, in that it is a time of receiving as well as giving. It is here, that we sometimes run into trouble. Even good Stewards let their guard down sometimes and get caught up in the materialism of this crooked and perverse world.

That guy in the red suit and the long black tail works overtime around the Christmas holidays. One of Satan's most effective delusions is the idea that happiness consists in the things we possess. The Apostle John calls him what he is "a liar". Satan wants us to come and worship at his feet. All we have to do is buy, sell, get what we want or deserve and we will be happy. Materialism is a blight, with temptation being everywhere. Look at

television, newspaper ads, the internet, etc. When we add our friends and neighbors getting beautiful gifts, temptation and envy can run wild. Don't be fooled, folks. We know that stewardship is an act of worship. Christmas time is a wonderful time to show it. As written in past months, we know that stewardship is also an investment. St. Luke writes Jesus' words, "lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven. Scripture tells us further of the direct relationship between how we use our wealth and the quality of our spiritual lives. How we manage our wealth determines how much God can trust us with spiritual blessings.

As Stewards we have an awesome responsibility to everyone in our congregation, especially our young people. As the birth of our precious Savior nears, may we endeavor to minister to everyone's needs.

May God grant it.

The Stewardship Committee

Walter Francis



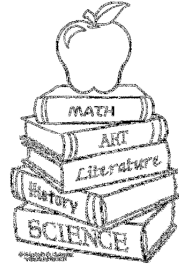
IN OUR PRAYERS



Please continue to pray for those who are ill or recovering;

*Henry Alvestad~Esther Charles~ Sue Norton~ Douglas Lanbau ~
Christina Assanti~Kathleen Neos~ Doris Mohlenhoff~
Ann Gray~Audrey Hansen~John Draper~ Ella Ferenczy~*

Principal's Corner



Dec 2 - Presentation by COSJCO at 9:30 AM In the Library.

Dec. 8 - Christmas Fair setup

Dec. 9 - Christmas Fair 9 to 3 PM

Dec. 10 - Breakfast with Santa 9 to 11 AM

Dec. 15 Christmas Concert - 7 PM

Christmas Vacation Dec. 23 to Jan 3, 2012

Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year to all !!!!!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the new chapel hymnals for our school. Please be advised we currently are \$600.00 short of what was needed. Any help would be appreciated in reaching our goal.



HO! HO! HO! BREAKFAST WITH SANTA!

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 10, 2011

WHEN: Saturday, December 10, 2011
WHERE: St. John's Lutheran School
TIME: 9:00am – 11:00am
WHAT: Breakfast with Santa and Toys-for-Tots
WHY: Celebrate the holidays and share with others
WHO: SANTA CLAUS WILL BE COMING TO TOWN!!!!

Our annual Breakfast with Santa is here once again! St. John's has partnered up with Toys-for-Tots and of course, Santa Claus, in hopes of having another successful event.

We will be charging \$10.00 per person (children 3 and under are free) for the breakfast which will include pancakes, sausage, bagels, muffins, juice, tea and coffee. **In addition, we are asking each family to please bring at least one unwrapped toy for the Toys-for-Tots program.**

If you would like to attend, please send in cash or check (made out to St. John's Lutheran) to
Attn: **Laura Zink – Event Chairperson**
Last day for collection is Monday, December 5th – NO EXCEPTIONS

We hope to see you there and make sure that you are being good for Santa!!!!

Yes we will be attending #_____ Children #_____ Adults

Amount enclosed \$_____ Family name_____

Yes - we will be attending and would also like to do the following to show our support:

Donate Food _____

Help the week before purchasing necessary goods _____

Help set-up on Friday, December 9th at 2:30pm _____

St. John's Lutheran School Christmas Holiday Fair 2011

Dear Parents,

Friday, December 9, 2011 is the annual SJL School Christmas Holiday Fair in the school gym. We are hard at work to ensure that the children have a pleasant shopping experience as they prepare their holiday gift giving. As in past years the fair will take place during the school day and each homeroom will attend the fair at their designated time. For parents who wish to attend the fair with their child's homeroom please inquire with the homeroom teacher as to what time that class will attend. The items for sale range from Christmas ornaments and small gifts to sports items and Christmas flowers. Individual items are priced between 25 cents and \$10. Gifts purchased can be gift wrapped for free on site at the fair. We will also have a bake sale selling donated baked goods to all children who might wish to purchase when shopping at the fair. Please note that students will be eating in their classrooms the day of the fair.

We are asking for parent and/or grandparent volunteers to agree to work at the fair as there are many tables of items for sale and each table will need an adult present to handle cash transactions. Additionally the gift wrapping table will need to be staffed with several volunteers, and cleanup required when the fair finishes at the end of the school day. This year we are doing the setup for the fair after school on Thursday the day before the fair. If you can agree to help us work the fair and/or donate baked goods, please indicate below on the form. Please return the bottom portion of this form to the school office by Monday, December 5, 2011. Donated baked goods can be brought in the morning of the fair and handed to the volunteer at the Breezeway.

Here's to a great holiday fair!

Laura Lorentzen and Sally Lorentzen SJL School Christmas Holiday Fair Coordinators

Contact info: Laura's cell 917-848-3909; e-mail at LLORENTZEN@hotmail.com; Sally 718-816-5127

Return volunteer form to school office by Mon Dec 5, 2011

CHRISTMAS FAIR VOLUNTEER

Name of Volunteer _____

Email _____ Phone _____

___ Yes, I will donate the following type of bakes goods: _____

___ I volunteer to help setup the Fair the day before, on Thurs Dec 8th directly after school dismissal

I volunteer to work the Fair (check as many as you wish):

___ 8:00am to 10:00am

___ I can work the whole fair

___ 10:00am to Noon

___ I am a class parent and will do what SJL needs of me day of Fair

___ Noon to 2:00pm

___ 2:00pm to 4:00pm (includes cleanup post fair)

My preference for type of work while working the fair is: ___ No preference, put me where needed

___ Gift Wrapping

___ Selling items (items are price marked)

___ Baked Goods/Food Sale

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

1	Donna Hermann
3	William Reich
7	Holly Olivieri
8	Walter Francis
8	Amy Russell
8	Chris Anderson
9	Patricia Long
9	Peter D'Adamo
10	Flo Karl
14	Fred Bock
15	Janis Reich
16	Ciara Marro-Wilson

DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

11

Ed & Pat Long

It's a
Girl!!!

Congratulations to Mrs. Palisay and her husband Bob who became Grandparents on Sunday, November 20, 2011. Their daughter Amee gave birth to a little girl Katherine Chenot Wendle, who weighed 7lb. 9oz. Mother and child are doing well.



- Each Sunday Adult Bible Study, and the Children's Sunday School at 9 am in the church basement
- Pastor's Bible Study Breakfast every Thursday at 9:30 in the church basement
NO BIBLE STUDY ON DECEMBER 29
- **Nov 27**, Divine Worship Service with Holy Communion at the school at 5 p.m. and each Sunday to follow except Christmas Day
- Midweek Advent Soup Supper 6-7 p.m. followed by a 7:30 p.m. Vespers Worship Service **Nov 30, Dec 7 and 14.**
- **Dec 1**, Ladies Guild Christmas Program 7:30 p.m.
- **Dec 4**, Ladies Guild Victorian Christmas Tea 1 - 3 p.m.
- **Dec 10**, Volunteers needed to decorate Church for Christmas at 10 a.m.
- **Dec 11** Lessons and Carols 10:30 Worship Service, 12 - 4 p.m. Christmas Caroling (Notify Tommy Sax by 12/9 if you are going caroling)
- **Dec 15** School Christmas Pageant and Concert at school at 7 p.m. Grades kindergarten through eighth.
- **Dec 24 Christmas Eve**, 4 p.m. and 11 p.m., both Divine Services will celebrate Holy Communion and conclude in candle light.
- Calling all shepherds, angels, kings, and of course the Holy Family. Individuals and families are invited to be part of our living nativity during the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. Please contact Pastor Russell if you would like to participate.
- **Sunday Dec 25 Divine Worship Service with Holy Communion at the church at 9:00 a.m. ONLY! THERE WILL BE NO OTHER SERVICE, INCLUDING THE SCHOOL ON CHRISTMAS DAY.**

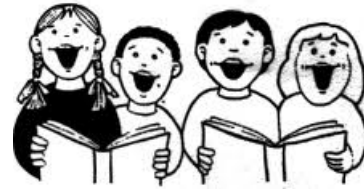
Deadline for the January Vine is December 21

Evangelical Pamphlets

The Evangelism Committee of St. John's offers for your interest, booklets published by the Lutheran Laymen's League, pertaining to everyday problems and concerns.

The following booklets are available at the display rack in the Narthex of the church. If there is a subject of concern not listed, please contact Rhoda Browne (718) 698-3356

- Alone, Alive, Fulfilled
- Alzheimer's
- Battles with the Bottle
- Coping with Cancer
- Dealing with Depression
- Finding Peace
- Forgiveness Is for Giving
- Has God Abandoned Me?
- How to Know What's Right... And Do It
- No Need to Fear
- Now You're Talking
- Overcoming A Painful Childhood
- Parenting with Purpose
- Prayer and Thoughts for Caregivers
- Setting Priorities
- Raising Your Children with Respect
- So You Prayed for A Miracle...
- Surviving A Loved One's Suicide
- Surviving Breast Cancer
- Take Heart in Your Grief
- Talking with God
- The Purpose of Living, The Purpose of Dying
- The Truth About Angels
- "THHPPTT!" *And Other Helpful Ways to Manage Anger*
- Too Much to Do, Too Little Time
- Unlocking the Prison of Guilt
- When in Doubt... Read the Book!
- Where's God in All of This?
- Why Should I go to Church?



CHOIR

Psalm 100:1-2

*Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness!
Come into His presence with singing!*

Dearest Friends in Christ Jesus,

As we are finishing our Thanksgiving leftovers, I want to give thanks to all the members of our adult and children's choir for their constant dedication and hard work throughout the year. I truly appreciate all the work that is put into each time one of our choirs sings. You will hear one of our choirs each Sunday in Advent through Christmas morning. Please mark down the 10:30 Divine Service on December 11. Our adult choir will be leading the congregation with its annual Service of Lessons and Carols. Also on December 11, from 12:00 noon until 4:00 p.m. our adult choir is inviting any parishioner who would like to join us as we go Christmas Caroling. We will meet in the church basement after the 10:30 service. We will then visit our shut-ins, perform at Eger Nursing Home in their Chapel, and conclude at Eger Harbor House assisting living facility. Please let me know by December 9, if you plan on joining us in caroling. It's very humbling to bring Christmas cheer to those who can not join us to worship. This year the children's choir will sing at the 4 p.m. service on Christmas Eve, and the adult choir will sing at the 11 p.m. service. Both services will celebrate Holy Communion and will conclude in candle light. The adult choir will sing on Christmas Day morning at 9 a.m. as we celebrate the birth of our Lord with Holy Communion. **Please note that Christmas day falls on a Sunday and there will only be a 9:00 a.m. service at the church. There will be no choir practice the week following Christmas.**

In Christ,
Thomas Sax

***Adult Choir Tuesday Nights 8 - 9 p.m.
Children's Choir Sunday Mornings Immediately Following the
10:30 a.m. Service***

ST. JOHN'S LADIES GUILD



Advent Soup Supper 6 – 7 pm

Wednesday, Nov. 30

Wednesday, Dec. 7

Wednesday, Dec. 14

Each week 4 soups, 4-6 quarts each are needed. Desserts are also needed. Hot and cold beverages will be supplied as well as homemade bread from Eleanor Hansen. Please be advised that if you wish to make something for the soup supper, you must sign up in the church narthex.

For further information, please contact
Rhoda Browne (718) 698 3356

Thursday, December 1, 2011, 7:30 P.M. in Church Basement.

Join us as we celebrate the Christ of Christmas

God has come to us...

Sunday December 4th from 1 P.M.- 3 P.M. is our

VICTORIAN CHRISTMAS TEA, a time of festive fun, food and fellowship. Hope to see you there.

Blessings in Jesus,

Brigitte Hermann, President

Ruth Roscheska, Secretary

Please fill in the following captions. We are in the process of updating our records. Please mail this form to the church office or place it in collection plate in church by Saturday, December 31, 2011

**Thank You!
The Church Office Staff**

Name of each person in your household including their birthdate and wedding anniversaries. (Begin with the head of each household) Also indicate children's name.

Mailing Address –

Home and cell number –

Email address –