

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

January Vine 2012

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



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

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

**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
Walter Francis
Bruce Mohlenhoff

Board of Properties

Les Szoke
Russ Browne
Michael Clandorf

Board of Christian Education

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Arne Abrahamsen
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Ruth Roscheska
Beverly Heming

Board of Social Ministry

Barbara Pfaff
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Christine Meehan
Joan Mohlenhoff
Nancy Nye

Board of Evangelism

Vacant
Leonor Abugel
Jenifer Moat
Ricardo Salazar
Bonnie Selletti



PASTOR'S PAGE

And the Child grew and became strong in the spirit...

Dear Family in Christ,

Peace be to you in the name of our Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In Luke 2:40 we read these words: "And the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and the grace of God was upon Him." Yet how exactly can Jesus grow and become even stronger in wisdom and spirit than before?

As God Jesus already knew all things, but as Man He needed to grow. He needed to learn. He needed to go to school and all the other things that every child needs to do. And so, as one of our Christmas hymns states: "For He is our childhood's pattern, day by day like us He grew; He was little, weak, and helpless, tears and smiles like us He knew." [*Once in Royal David's City*] In other words our Lord did not only come to earth to be our Savior; He also came to be our example!

Just as baby Jesus grew in the fear and knowledge of the Lord, we also must grow. For that is the reason we are here! We are here to live as children of God, but like all children we must grow in our understanding of God and His Word. As we get older we are supposed to learn more and more about Jesus. We are supposed to learn more and more about God's Word. We are supposed to grow more and more in the fruits of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Yet the only problem is that as adults, we often stop growing. We often stop maturing in our faith.

Sadly very few adults will ever make it past the manger. On Christmas Eve the church is packed, but afterward not quite as much. For many their knowledge of the Lord ends with Christmas and Easter. As adults we often fail to see the need to keep learning and this has sadly always been the case. There is some truth to that old saying, the more things change the more they stay the same. Therefore, in 1529 Martin Luther wrote in his Large Catechism: "With such training we may more easily instill the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer into the young so that they will receive them with joy and earnestness, practice them from their youth, and become accustomed to them. For it is clearly useless to try to educate old people."

Now you probably won't hear your pastor say this too often, but I hope that in this case Luther is wrong. I hope you can teach an old dog new tricks. I hope that every member of St. John's Lutheran Church can still grow in their knowledge of God and their love for one another. And I sincerely hope that I too might grow to become a better pastor, a better husband, and a better father than I was just one year ago. For if we can no longer grow in our knowledge of the Lord because we've heard it all before, and if we can no longer grow in our love for one another because we've just been too hurt in the past, and if we have absolutely no intention of reaching out to our neighbor and growing in our appreciation of God's Word and Sacraments, than why are we here?

Therefore, now that we have just celebrated our Savior's birth let us now celebrate His life! Let us follow His example: "For the Child grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon Him." May the grace of God be upon all of us as well and may this past Christmas season now give birth to another New Year filled with plenty of opportunities to grow in the love and mercy of Christ.

In His service,
Pastor Russell +

Why?

Why do Christians say Amen?

A reading from Deuteronomy 27: “Cursed is the man who carves an image or casts an idol—a thing detestable to the LORD—and sets it up in secret.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ ‘Cursed is the man who dishonors his father or his mother.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ ‘Cursed is the man who moves his neighbor’s boundary stone.’ Then all the people shall say, ‘Amen!’ Cursed is the man who leads the blind astray on the road.’ Then all the people shall say, Amen!’ ‘Cursed is the man who...etc.”

If you haven't got the point by now “Amen” is probably one of the oldest ways for God's people to confess that they agree with something. This is why the catechism tells us that the word “Amen” simply means “Yes, yes, it shall be so!” or “This is most certainly true!” Whenever we say “Amen” we are saying that we agree with something; we are saying that something is true. This is why whenever Jesus says “Truly, truly, I say to you...etc.” in the bible, it is sometimes translated as “Amen, amen, I say to you...etc.”

There really is no more clear and concise way for a Christian to confess what he truly believes before the world than to simply say “Amen!” In the Divine Service God gives His gifts and all we can do is thankfully say “Amen!” that is “Yes, yes, it shall be so. I believe that today the Lord has revealed His mercy unto me. This is most certainly true!” Once again, the emphasis here remains on God's act of giving and our act of receiving. This is why it is most appropriate for Christian people to be accustomed to saying “Amen” during certain points of the Divine Service.

These times for saying “Amen” are not spontaneous however, but should be spoken at specific appointed times for the sake of good order. Therefore, it is appropriate to say “Amen” upon receiving a blessing, whenever the Trinitarian name is invoked, or even at the altar when the Sacrament is both given and received. After all, the word “Amen!” simply means “Yes, yes it shall be so! This is most certainly true!”



A Message From The Congregational President

To the Members of St. John's,
A special **THANK YOU** to all who tithed and gave donations for the month of December! May you be blessed with a Healthy and Happy New Year.

Fred Bock
Congregational President

A Message from the Elders



*The LORD is my strength and my song; and he has become
My salvation. Psalm 118:14*

Dearest Friends in Christ Jesus,

I'm happy to announce that our 5 p.m. Sunday evening worship services at the school have officially started. Each of the first four weeks we have had someone new come in and worship. Please keep our efforts in your prayers. We continue to give thanks to God for Pastor Russell and his family, and I want to thank everyone for helping him and his family with their transition. Pastor Russell is a dedicated and compassionate shepherd who truly cares for his flock. Please keep pastor and his family in your daily prayers that God would continue to give him the strength, compassion and wisdom he needs to lead our parish. As we enter 2012, may we all grow in the love of God, and may we show that love to each other and to others. As the lyrics to the song go; "They will know we are Christians by our love." Also, **THANK YOU** to all our church office volunteers; Ruth, Janis, Margaret, Jean, Bruce, Helen, and Bonnie. All of you have done an amazing job these last few months. I personally appreciate all of your efforts and the many hours you volunteer. When we work together as a parish, as brothers and sisters in Christ, it shows there is nothing we can not accomplish through Christ Jesus. Therefore family in Christ, may you continue to experience the many blessing that we receive daily from our Lord and Savior as we approach 2012.

In Christ
Thomas Sax
Elder Chair



Dear Family in Christ,

Happy New Year and a blessed Epiphany to you all! As our family begins the New Year in a new home we are reminded of everything you, the members of St. John's, have done to make us feel so welcome here in New York. In just a few short months we have been made to feel a part of a community built on Christ's love. Thanks you for the kind cards, warm wishes, and thoughtful gifts this holiday season. We look forward to sharing this New Year and God willing many more with you all.

In Christ,

The Russells
Pastor, Amy, James, and Ella

News from Social Ministry

Dearest Members,

Thanks to all who donated food for the Christmas food basket distribution. 20 families received large boxes of food and either a ham, roaster, or turkey. We were also blessed with a generous food donation from the Italian American Club of Staten Island. Our thanks go out to them as well. We will continue to collect non-perishable food items for the New Directions food bank in Port Richmond. Items can be left in the church basement.

Wishing everyone a very blessed New Year.

*Barbara Pfaff
Social Ministry Chairperson*



Deadline for the January Vine is January 23

MORE ON STEWARDSHIP

The message of advent, culminating with the birth of our savior is past, but only on the calendar. It is our hope and our prayer that the celebration of the birth of Jesus will ring in our ears and sing in our hearts everyday of our lives.

The new year is upon us with epiphany, the manifestation of Christ, just around the corner. It is certainly a time for joy, but also for self-examination. Things like regular worship and communion, involvement in church activities, fulfilling financial obligations, and resolving to become a better steward comes to mind.

As has been mentioned many times in this column, stewardship is not merely about money and budgets. It is a way of life and how we manage it. It is about all the rich and wonderful resources great God almighty has given each of us for the sake of his kingdom.

A Lutheran pastor once said, "in our culture today, it is so easy to become consumers, rather than givers. Not only consumers of wealth but all of life's resources. Stewardship is all that I do after I say I believe."

With all the challenges before our church, we always seem to meet them. We were blessed with a vacancy pastor in pastor Miller. We have been further blessed with the calling of pastor Russell, a young man with a young family, with new ideas to shepherd us through the challenges that will come. He cannot do it alone. We need new people to step up and start to get involved in various parts of our ministry.

May it please God that we become better stewards, first in our homes and families, and then with our church and school. God doesn't miss a trick. He knows the hearts of all men, for nothing is hidden from him. May he grant us strength and health in the new year and that St. John's will rise to new stewardship heights.

in his name. amen
Walter Francis
Stewardship Committee



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

5	Beverly Heming
5	Brigitte Hermann
5	Susan Owen
8	Rita Maone
13	Brian Reich
13	Diane Reich
16	Thomas Vasquez
18	Kim Peters
26	Jeanette Anderson

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

27 Dorothy & Ferdinand Fiore

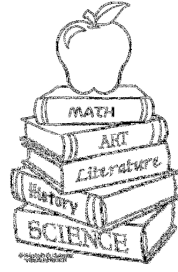
IN OUR PRAYERS



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

*Heinz Zeller ~ Eleanor Hansen ~ Henry Alvestad ~ Sue Norton
Ella Ferenczy ~ Christina Assanti ~ Ann Gray ~ John Draper~ Heinz Zeller~ Ed Pfaff~
Flo Karl ~ Don Crisson*

Principal's Corner



Heartfelt thanks to all for the warm greetings and thoughtful presents I have received this holiday season. Your kindness is greatly appreciated.

January brings an Open House for St. John's Lutheran School on Sat. Jan. 7 - noon to 2 pm.

We are trying to locate alumni for a social on Sunday, Jan. 22 - 1 to 3 pm. Come and look around our school and see some of the changes that have been made.

E-mail or contact the school office if you are an alumni or know of one we can contact.

2012 is a year of celebrations. St. John's Lutheran Church will celebrate 160 years of service and the school will celebrate 60 years..

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy New Year!

Mrs. Palisay

*Thank you to everyone who contributed to the new chapel hymnals for our school.
Please be advised we currently are \$400.00 short of what was needed. Any help
would be appreciated in reaching our goal.*

Tommy Sax





- 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
- Please contact pastor if you are interested in new membership classes
- Please contact pastor if you would like your child to make their first Holy Communion this year. Instruction will take place during Lent and First Communion will be made on Holy Thursday (April 5, 2012)

Deadline for the February Vine is January 23



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?

New email for church office – sjlchurchoffice@gmail.com



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,

A special thank you to the adult choir for their wonderful singing during Advent, Lessons and Carols and Christmas. The choir always adds a wonderful dimension to the Divine Service if they are singing the introit, a verse to a hymn or performing an anthem. I am also happy that slowly our choir is growing in number. Recently we were blessed with Amy Russell (pastor's wife) joining the ranks. Watch out sopranos, the altos are growing in number. Please remember it's never too late to join on a full or part time basis to one of our choirs. Soon we will be rehearsing for Lent and Easter if anyone would like to help us out.

Then there is our children's choir. Since we changed our worship to a later time, our children's choir has decreased in size but not quality. Currently we have **FOUR BOYS** who are very dedicated and are doing an amazing job. I am very proud of them for the time they spend rehearsing and for the effort they give each time they sing. They are also getting familiar with Divine Services, one, three and four. Students from second to eighth grade are always welcome to join us. Thank you to both choirs for your Christmas cards and generous gifts. It's truly a pleasure to work with both choirs. May you have a very Blessed and Healthy New Year!

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**