



THE EPISTLE

St John Evangelical Lutheran Church

March 2020

PASTOR'S MESSAGE

St. John Family,

For the past few years, I have been using a single word or theme to center my planning, writing and other events at St. John. Last year was Sabbath and I'm really excited to call their year, "The Greatest Stories Ever Told." While everything we do should be guided and supported by scripture, this year we will have extra focus on learning about the Bible and specifically learning or remembering the stories that we find it. We are story people and it is through stories that we make sense of our world. It makes sense that it is through stories that we learn about who God is.

To kick off this year, I wanted to think about a phrase we sometimes use or hear in the church, "Word of God." What do we mean by this phrase. Well, actually we Lutheran's believe that this phrase encompasses three things at the same time.

First and foremost, "Word of God" refers to the person of Jesus Christ. We hear in the opening lines of the Gospel of John, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God." And then later, in verse fourteen, "And the Word became flesh and lived among us." When we say "Word of God" we mean the historical person of Jesus, as well as Jesus Christ, risen and active in the world today.

Sometimes when we say "Word of God" we are referring to the Bible. This is not because we believe that every word of the Bible is dictated by God, rather it means that in the Bible we find Jesus Christ, God revealed in God's truest most accessible form. We got to the Bible to see, to meet, to learn about Jesus and thus to know God.

Finally, "Word of God" can be used to mean words about Jesus, or preaching. The sermon is considered to be a piece of the "Word" part of the service. Our pastors are ordained to a "Ministry of Word and Sacrament" which means they are called to preach about Jesus and to give baptism and communion. But each of us is called to speak words about Jesus, the true Word in our everyday life.

What do we mean when we say "Word of God." Yes, and . . . Sometimes all three!

I hope you can join me in the excitement of discovering the ways that the ancient stories about God's people help us see the way Jesus Christ is active in our own lives today!

Blessings,
Pastor Angel

The Greatest Stories Ever Told

In service to our year of digging deep into the stories of the Bible we are going to examine the 40 Greatest Hits of the Bible. These are some of the top, everyone should know, stories that have shaped God's people for thousands of years. In the newsletter there will be a story for each week. I invite you to get in the habit of sitting down and reading it in whatever Bible you prefer. You can read them on a particular day of the week or start each day with the same story and see what different things you notice. Maybe read them in different versions. I'll post my version on our Facebook page with some thoughts about the story each week. The stories should all be in most Children's Bibles so the kids can read along as well. We will mention them in the context of worship and also put them on a timeline, so we can see how the stories fit together.

1. March 1 Creation (Genesis 1:1—2:4a and 2:4b-25)

You may notice that there are two different creation stories for our readings this week. This sometimes brings up the question, which is true. Well, no human was actually there when all of this began and the recorders of these stories did not mean to give us a blow-by-blow of creation. Instead, both of these stories teach us a central truth: God is the creator of everything. God cares passionately about what has been made, declares that it is good and continues to be involved with all God has made. This was actually kind of a radical idea in a time when other creation stories from different cultures made creation an accident or gods were capricious and uninterested in the welfare of what they had made. Our ancestors in the faith were declaring what they knew to be true, that God deliberately created everything, even us humans and God continues to love it all! The first story is also where we get the idea of Sabbath, that God rested and God calls us to Holy rest.

2. March 8 The fall (Genesis 3)

This is another story that is not meant to be a factual account of events, but rather to teach us a very important kernel of truth. God created us to be creatures, at harmony with God and with the rest of creation. But there was a fall, a breaking away from this original purpose, a distance from God and who we were created to be. We hear through this story that that distance is the creation of people, not of God. God doesn't wish for us to be ashamed, to cover ourselves. Perhaps God didn't even wish for us to have the knowledge that demands hard choices, to know good and evil, like God does. But we reached for what should not have been ours and instead of trusting and leaning into God's forgiveness, we hid ourselves, ashamed, even as God still searched for us. Thus, the distance that still exhibits in this fallen world is on us, not on God.

3. March 15 Cain and Abel (Genesis 4:1-16)

Our text for this week has come to be the very definition of sibling rivalry. Again, it maybe says more about our human nature than about God. There very first of brothers were divided by their gifts and inclinations, one a farmer and one of herder of animals. They were already jealous of God's regard and in competition for favor. It got so bad that Cain killed Abel. Yet, God was merciful. Cain couldn't stick around, but he was given another place to live. This also served to explain where the tribes that did not become the people of God came from.

4. March 22 Noah (Genesis 6:5—9:28)

This is just a fantastic story. There is great wickedness, our hero is ridiculed, but in the end he is vindicated. God keeps his chosen one Noah and his family safe from the flood and also cares for the animals as an important part of creation. But the most important part is that God regrets the destruction, however much deserved, of the rest of the earth and through the gift of a rainbow makes a covenant with all humanity that God will never bring such a disaster upon the earth again. It's wonderful that we still can see a rainbow as a reminder of all of God's promises.



Community Lenten Services

All services will be at 7pm.
Our theme for community lenten services this year is Living Water. Each of the preaching texts for the year will focus on scriptures that speak of water. In conjunction with this theme our offering will go to ELCA Good Gifts: Clean Water Projects. 100% of donations go to buying water filters and latrines to prevent disease or wells and irrigation's systems for communities in arid areas.

March 1st St. John Lutheran
March 8th Lakeville United Methodist
March 15th Lake Fork United Methodist
March 22nd Big Prairie Community Church
March 29th Mohicanville Community Church
April 5th Fairview United Methodist

WELCA

St. John Unit, WELCA will meet on Wednesday, March 4 at 1:30 p.m. following the Community Luncheon. Joyce Rohrbaugh will have devotions. Karla Vogt will lead the Bible Study on the topic, We are called! "Called to Serve".

St. John Scholarship Fund

The St. John Scholarship was begun in memory of LuAnn McCullough. It provides funding for members of St. John attending any kind of secondary education or training. It is awarded for one year with the possibility of reapplying each year. The application can be found on the Wayne County Community Foundation website. The deadline for 2020 is March 31st.

Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday April 5th 10:30
Maundy Thursday April 9th 6:30
Good Friday April 10th 7pm
Easter Vigil April 11th 5 pm
Easter Sunday April 12th
NO Sunrise service
8:30 Easter breakfast
9:20 Sunday School
10:30 Worship



Junior Youth Group

On March 15th Junior youth group and families will have lunch at church then head to Acres of Fun for an afternoon of roller skating! Please let Pastor Angel know if you would like to provide food for the kiddos!

VBS Date

Mark your calendar for St. John VBS - July 20th-22nd, 2020 This year will study stories about making a Joyful Noise!

Game night

The Sunday School will sponsor a family game night on February 29th at 5pm. The SS officers will provide pizza and drinks. You can bring snacks to share if you wish. We can do a euchre tournament if we get enough to players. You can bring games to share as well. Questions, see John Puster.

Book Club

St. John book club will host a movie night this month instead of a book! We will meet at the church on March 1st at 4pm to watch *Philomena (PG13)* on the big screen. This movie was mentioned in our last book, but there is no need to have read the book to come join us for the movie. Feel free to bring a snack to share and a blanket to cuddle up.

Sofa Studies

Pastor Tina Heise and I have resumed Sofa Studies after a short break. This is Bible Study that takes place on Facebook. We have changed the timing a little bit and are broadcasting during the day, but you can watch the videos at anytime and ask questions in the comments. We have one more week of a series on Intertestamental History, (what happens to Israel between the Hebrew Testament and Jesus' time) with our guest, Pastor Lucas Merritt. During Lent we will do a series on worship practices during Lent. We would love your involvement! If you don't yet belong to the group you can search "Sofa Studies" and request to join!
- Pastor Angel

Radio Ministry



St. John on the Radio

You can tune in to WZLP FM95.7 in the Loudonville area or livestream on wzlpradio.com anywhere in the world.
St. John airs on Fridays at 2pm.

2020 Council Members

President - Barb Landis
Vice President - Kim Derr
Secretary- Joyce Rohrbaugh
Treasurer - Carol Endslo
Deacons- Doug Foxx, Erin Slates, Andy Mosher
Elders - Melissa Puster, Ann Obrecht
Trustees - Floyd Spreng, Bob Burgett, Lee Sigler
Youth Representative - Anna Puster

The council meets at 7pm on the fourth Tuesday of every month. If you have something to bring before council you are very welcome to come to any meeting. Let Barb know that you have a topic and he will put it on the agenda. All guests will be allowed to speak first and then may leave or stay for the rest of the business. If you have questions or concerns but cannot make it to a meeting, please see any of the council members or Pastor Angel.

**Please share your gifts with our community during worship!
You can sign up in the narthex or email Pastor Angel.**

Calendar Reminder

Please remember to let Pastor Angel know about any planned use of the church building. The google calendar that she manages can be accessed through the website at <http://stjohnmczena.com>. This is the official record of what is going on and the best way to ensure that we don't double-book the space!

Sabbath Keeping

This year at St. John we are focusing on the concept of Sabbath. God tells us to "remember the Sabbath and keep it holy." But what does it mean to keep Sabbath? This newsletter series will last through the year and help us think about one thing we can do to mark holy time. Maybe you can set a side a whole day to sabbath and you do one of these things all day! Maybe you put many of the different suggestions together to make your Sabbath or maybe you set aside a piece of each day to do one or another of them. Whatever it looks like, however often you can take it, time given to God for growth, rest and renewal is never wasted!

Time in Creation - April

Creativity - May

Spend Time with Friends and Family- June

Worship- July

Rest-August

Play-September

Study-October

Fast From Something

A fast is choosing to go without, whatever that is. This could be from certain kinds of food, from a hobby, from social media, from television or from a particular way of doing things. A fast is a way of setting time apart, spending it differently. When we are about to do something and then remember the fast, we are reminded of God and the way God shapes our life. Fasting also leaves time, time that can be spent in prayer or engaged in relationship with others.



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|-------|--|------------------------------|----------------|
| 1 | Noisy Offering | Book Club Movie Night | 4:00 PM |
| | Community Lenten Service at St. John | | 7pm |
| 4 | Community Luncheon | 12:00 Noon/WELCA Bible Study | |
| 6 | NEO ELCA Prayers for Pastor Angel Jackson | | |
| 8 | Daylight Savings Time Begins | | |
| | Community Lenten Service- Lakeville UMC | | |
| 15 | Junior Youth Group to Acres of Fun | | |
| | Community Lenten Service - Lake Fork UMC | | |
| 17 | St. Patrick's Day | | |
| 19 | Vernal Equinox Spring Begins | | |
| 19-21 | Ohio High School Boys Basketball Championship Tournament | | |
| 19-22 | Ohio Beef Expo | Ohio Expo Center | Columbus, Ohio |
| 21 | Shreve Migration Sensation | | |
| 22 | Community Lenten Service | Big Prairie Community Church | 7pm. |
| 22-28 | National Agriculture Week | | |
| 23 | NEO ELCA Prayers for St. John Lutheran Church in McZena | | |
| 24 | Mutual Ministries Committee | | 5:30 PM |
| | St. John's Council | | 7:00PM |
| | National Agriculture Day | | |
| 28 | Reece Mosher Birthday Party | | |
| 29 | Community Lenten Service - Mohicanville Community Church | | |

To Be Continued...

Pastor Angel has designated 2020 as the year we will focus on Bible stories. We all have our favorites: Noah and the Ark, David and Goliath, Daniel in the Lion's Den. But Bible stories aren't just found in between the covers of the greatest storybook ever written and they aren't just something that happened "once upon a time". It's not just our history, but His Story, that continues each day through all of us. When we share recollections of the past and we create new memories with our children; these are our contributions to the ultimate, never-ending tale. Every Sunday, I can feel the heritage of St. John providing our firm foundation, yet I also witness our future in the chatter of little voices, the warmth of sharing the peace, watching our children participate in worship and in every baptism.

A couple of weeks ago, as communion was ending, there was a full-out belly laugh from across the room. Pure joy - unabashed delight! And instantly, I was reminded that communion should be a time to celebrate and rejoice. While we certainly learn so much from stories of generations long ago, sometimes it takes our children to remind us to loosen up a bit and live in the moment. I love that our worship services include all ages and that past, current and future stories interweave each week! If you feel caught up in God's love, take a cue from our youngest congregant and laugh out loud! If the spirit moves you to shout out a hearty "Amen", then be like our elementary kids and do it! If the music prompts you to dance, follow the lead of our adults and sway and clap! We are chosen to participate in this amazing journey with God! A quote from Rachel Held Evans' book, *Inspired*, helps me remember this: "The stories we tell with our lives, then, aren't meaningless absurdities, tragic in their brevity, but rather subplots of a grander narrative, every moment charged with significance, as we contribute our own riffs, soliloquies, and plot twists to the larger epic..."

And so the story is always, "To Be Continued..."

Melissa Puster

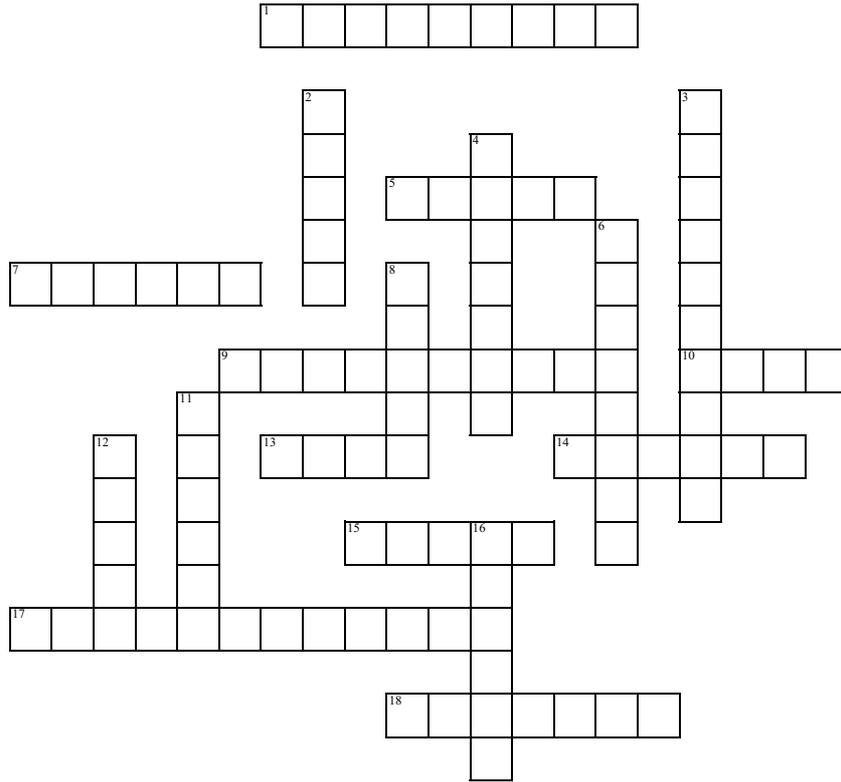
April			
1	Community Luncheon 12:00 Noon		WELCA Bible Study
2-5	Equine Affair, Ohio Expo Center, Columbus		
3/5	NCAA Women's Basketball Championship in New Orleans, Louisiana		
5	Palm Sunday Noisy offering		
	Community Lenten Service - Fairview UMC		
4/6	NCAA Men's Basketball Championship in Minneapolis, Minnesota		
9	Maundy Thursday		
10	Good Friday		
11	Easter Vigil		
12	Easter Sunday		
21	Mutual Ministries Committee 5:30 PM	St. John's Council	7:00 PM
22	Earth Day		
23-25	NFL Draft		
24	Arbor Day		
26	NEO ELCA Bishop Election Conference Meetings		2:00-3:30 PM

Easter Flowers
Please consider providing flowers for the alter for Easter morning. We will put a group order into Richardson's green house. Order forms will be available soon. Options will include Easter lilies, daffodils, and tulips in three colors. They will be \$8.50. Checks should be made payable to St. John. Flowers will be delivered directly to the church. See Fran Puster with questions.

March

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Jacklyn Endslow Noisy Offering Lenten Service - St. John	2 Matt Coleman	3 Taylor McDonnell	4 Heather Reutter Community Luncheon WELCA	5	6 Aaron & Andrea Bieniek	7
8 Jason Winkelman Lucille Reynolds Daylight Savings Lenten Service - Lakeville UMC	9	10 Robert Bender	11 Jared Sigler	12	13	14 Melody Heilman
15 Ross & Karen Humphrey Sabrina Wyatt Lenten Service - Lake Fork UMC	16 Georgia Rose Sigler Jason Snyder	17 Kevin & Shannon Endslow St. Patrick's Day	18	19	20 Marty Sigler SPRING!!!	21 Hannah & Natalie Endslow
22 Erin Slates Lenten Service - Big Prairie Community Church	23 Vaughn & Vicky	24 Mutual Ministries Committee St. John Council	25	26 Lennon Bieniek Reece Mosher	27	28
29 Lenten Service - Mohicanville Community Church	30	31				

LENTEN CROSSWORD



Across

- 1. ASH _____
- 5. The Christian holy book
- 7. Jesus entered Jerusalem on this animal
- 9. Day in Lent recalling Jesus' death (2 words)
- 10. Branches waved at Jesus upon his entry into Jerusalem
- 13. Was with Jesus at the cross
- 14. Jesus prayed for 40 days here
- 15. What Jesus died upon
- 17. We spend Lent preparing for Jesus death and _____
- 18. Giving to _____ is a good Lenten practice

Down

- 2. What Jesus shed for our sins
- 3. Holy Communion started after this
- 4. To go without
- 6. The final week of Lent (2 words)
- 8. Number of days in LENT
- 11. Season after Lent
- 12. Disciple who betrayed Jesus
- 16. PALM _____

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

46 Ashland County Rd. 2575

Lakeville (McZena), Ohio 44638

Great ministry happens at St. John. Our worship is energized with the gift of the Holy Spirit and much musical talent. Sunday school is enlivened by a sense of community where people, young and old, are encouraged to dig deeply into God's word. All of our gatherings are blessed with abundant and delicious food. Even more importantly, the people of St. John take very seriously God's call to serve each other and their neighbors. They generously give their time, talents and money to support their whole community. When people here at St. John talk about what they love most about their congregation the most common answer is "it's home." This comes from life-long members and those who have just recently started to worship with us!



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.