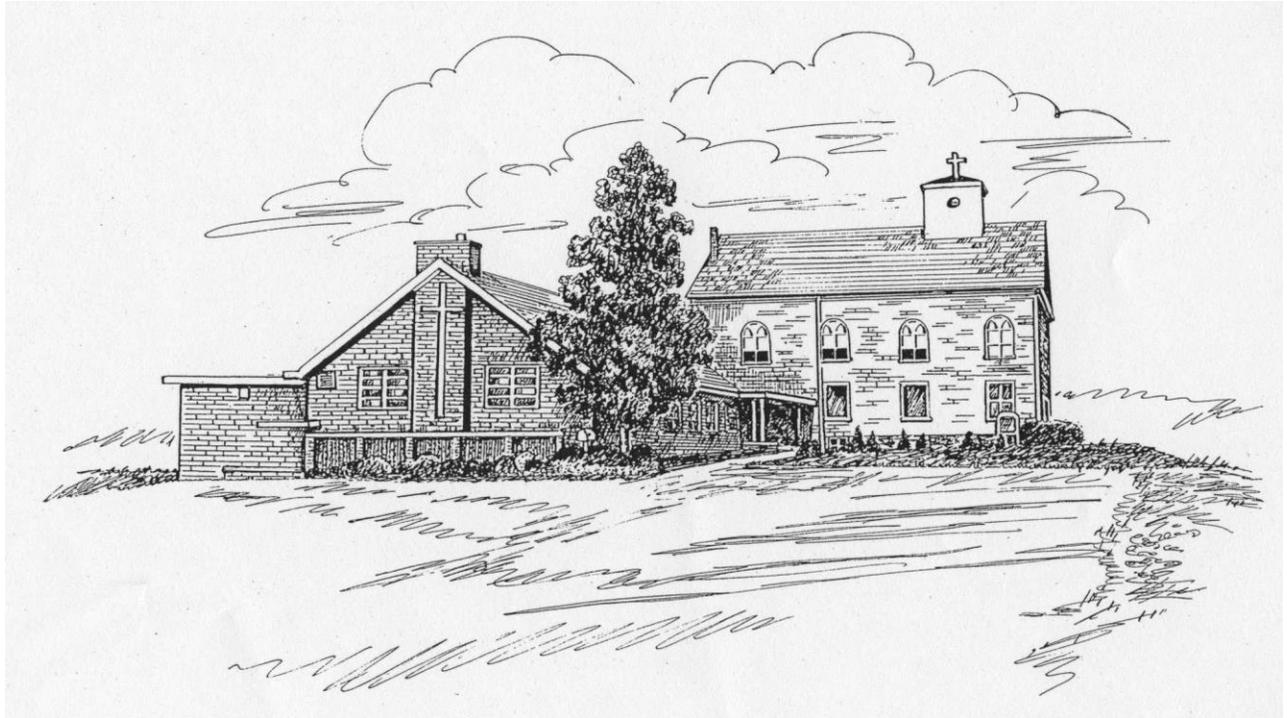


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St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter

November - December 2014

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*“Serving Christ in Word and Deed”
for over 260 Years*

Pastor's Letter

22 "But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

23 Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you,

24 Leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

25 Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still together on the way, or your adversary may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison.

26 Truly I tell you, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny."

Matthew 5:22-26NIV

Dear Friends,

Strong words from Jesus. But perhaps they are words we always need to keep in perspective because our society seems to have forgotten them. One only has to look at the last political election just to see how far we have come in society to use words as weapons against others. You never know when an un-thinking comment can do far more harm than good. When I was 10 years old my music teacher heard me sing, and proclaimed to me that I should never sing on my own or in a choir. While I liked to sing I never again attempted try it until I was 15, when I was in the spring school musical. The next year I joined the high school choir, and in the fall of my senior year I was selected for the New York All State Choir.

In a junior high church youth group that Pam and I led while I was in seminary, we noticed the kids were a bit thoughtless in the way they spoke to one another. So with another adult leader who worked with us we spent time during the devotion section talking about it. Without any prompting from us, the other leader, who was an attractive woman in her thirties, then began to share how, when she was their age, everyone called her "fat" and other hurtful things in that category. She said because of that she became very self-conscious of how she looked, and it still hurt even though she was a grown woman.

The sad thing is when we use such speech we can never take it back. In fact at this stage of my life I have become more aware of my failings in that department. Thankfully though, we do not have to be weighed down by the guilt of such actions of thoughtless speech. Our Savior is there to forgive us and help us move on in a better light. However, the discussion of this reminds me of a quote someone said ***"I have often regretted my speech but never my silence."***

Yet there is a positive side to this discussion of speech. What we say brings hope, help and encouragement. There was a lady in my first congregation who had taught adult Sunday Bible Study for a long time. I told her she had the gift of being a teacher. Apparently no one had ever said that to her. For years after I left that church, she would thank me for saying that, and she taught the adult Sunday School class for many more years after I left.

All of this leads me to the "Thanksgiving" or even "Christmas" portion of this thought. How often do our words to God truly thank God for all God's blessings towards us, or our country? Have we really given adequate thanks to God for gift of our Savior coming to earth not as a "super being" but just like each of us, an innocent defenseless child?

An old expression I have heard, and perhaps you have, is "sticks and stones may break my bones but words may never hurt me." Unfortunately that old saying is wrong. Words do hurt, and sometimes have unforeseen consequences. But on the "flip side" words can be a tremendous force for healing, help or encouragement, especially in our dealings with God. The psalmist says: "I will bless the Lord at all times: his praise shall continually be in my mouth. " Psalm 34:1 KJV

Your Brother in Christ,

Pr. John

Thanks to You --- November

- To our altar guild that nicely makes sure everything is set in our sanctuary. They are right on top of the changes necessary, and through the long "green" after Pentecost Season, changes can kind "sneak up" on you.
- To the many people who volunteer to read or help out at Saturday Evening Service. Readers are selected that evening, and they do a great job.
- To our church musicians Dave Miller and Patrick Csiszlak. Their conscientious work helps make each service a blessing.
- To all who take time help with the buildings and grounds. Since we haven't heard from the community service program for a while, you folks have made sure our cleaning and maintenance needs are being taken care of.
- To Dave and Charlotte Morris who greeted, and gave tours to a number of people when we were part of the Historic Homes and Buildings tour for the township of Pohatcong.
- To our teens who help out in so many ways in the life of our church from one being on the council, helping in the Sunday School, and assisting in worship.
- Again to our dedicated breakfast crew, we had about 101 at the November breakfast.
- To those who coordinate senior league and prepare the nice meals we all share. Pam and I were especially surprised with a nice cake and some movie passes at the October meeting.
- *Pr. John*
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- **"STRAW CHURCH: PRIDE IN OUR PAST, STRENGTH IN OUR PRESENT,
LAYING A FOUNDATION FOR OUR FUTURE"**

Baptism

On Sunday, November 2nd, we welcomed into child membership, through the sacrament of Holy Baptism, Mia Lily Rossoniello.

Mia is the daughter of Frank and Tina Rossoniello, and was sponsored by Michael Dooley and Lindsey Nicastro.



Thanksgiving Celebration

We will be having our Thanksgiving supper and hymn sing in Frey Hall at 5:00 pm on Sunday, November 23rd. Please bring a covered dish to share at this delightful St. James tradition



Wedding Bells

On Sunday, October 12th, Ashley Groff, and Michael Robertson exchanged marriage vows at St. James with Pastor John officiating.



Congratulations to the bride and groom, with our prayers and best wishes for a long and happy future.

Christmas Eve Worship

We will be celebrating the birth of our Savior with candlelight services at both 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm on Wednesday, December 24th. There will be Holy Communion at the 11:00 pm service. More details will be in upcoming weekend bulletins.



Please share this holy and joyous time with us.

Straw Church Craft Vendor Fair

Our 5th annual Craft Vendor Fair will be held on Saturday, December 13th from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Come out and support our vendors, who are supporting St. James. You're bound to find some unique gifts for those special people on your list.

Note also the cookie sale that will be held at the fair. Details are on the next page.

Volunteers are also needed to help with set-up and clean-up. Please call Barbara at 908-421-1199.

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*God doesn't call the qualified,
He qualifies the called.*

Christmas Cookie Bake Sale

We are collecting cookies to make cookie trays for sale at the annual Vendor Fair. If you are willing to participate, please make 2 to 8 dozen of your favorite special cookies to help make this a great success.

The sign-up sheet will be outside Frey Hall. Bring your cookies to the church on Sunday, December 7th, from 10:00 am to 12:00 noon. Call Charlotte at 908-859-0723 or e-mail her at dhmcsm22@yahoo.com if you have any questions, or we can pick them up if necessary.



† In Memoriam †

Long-time member and Phillipsburg native William T. Paulus went to be with his Lord and Savior on Tuesday, October 28th.

William's service to our country qualified him for membership in the Disabled American Veterans. He also served the community as a member of the Huntington Fire Company.

We offer prayers for, and condolences to, his family and friends.

Christmas Pageant

The children of St. James will present their annual Christmas Pageant in Frey Hall at 10:30 am on Sunday, December 21st. Come and enjoy what they are preparing for us.



Please note that the time has changed from the evening performance that has been done in the past.

Footprints in the Snow

One white and wintry Christmas Eve
in a village, long ago,
A young child took a journey,
leaving footprints in the snow.
Clutched within her tiny hand
she carried a small tattered heart,
Fashioned from some scraps of cloth,
wrapped in the charm of childlike art.

A manger scene of wood and straw
was the child's destination.
Her only Christmas wish,
to join Christ's birthday celebration.
She placed her precious handmade gift
upon the straw with care,
And before she turned to leave,
whispered a simple prayer.

The villagers who stood nearby
recall that night with awe,
Retelling every detail
of the miracle they saw...
A second set of footprints
appeared next to the girl's own.
They seemed to walk right by her side,
to see her safely home.

But there's no mystery in the presence
of this unseen Friend—
For once God's touched your heart,
you'll never walk alone again.

Submitted by Liz Kolba

Senior League Notes

Our November meeting was enlivened by



playing an electronic version of "Catch Phrase". The participants showed a lot of creativity in generating the hints required for their teammates to guess the phrases being demonstrated.

IMPORTANT: The December meeting will be two weeks later than usual, at 6:00 pm on Wednesday, December 17th, in order to accommodate the schedule of Ed Saultz and his group. They will once again be entertaining us with their unique blend of Irish and American Christmas music.

Advent Reminder

In a few short weeks we will be starting the Church's preparation for the birth of the Christ Child. In our society, with material distractions all around us, it is not easy to remain focused on the real meaning of Christmas. However, as Christians we should make the effort keep in mind that what happened in that little village over 2000 years ago ultimately trumps all the commercial hype.

A Musical Treat

The Warren County Community Singers, including our own Pastor John and Rick Brunzell, will be giving two Winterfest concerts again this year. The first will be on Saturday, December 6th at 7:30 pm in Grace Lutheran Church, 300 Roseberry St., Phillipsburg.

The second performance will be Sunday, December 7th at 3:00 pm in the First Presbyterian Church, 40 East Church St., Washington, NJ.



Come to either one and enjoy the lovely music of the season presented by this talented local group. More information can be found at www.wcsingers.org.

Thanks from Social Ministry

Thanks to all who contributed hats, gloves and scarves to help keep less advantaged local children warm and comfortable this winter. This is just one more example of the spirit of Christian charity within the St. James family.



Building up the Temple of the Lord



In care of our buildings

In providing worship for all who come

In learning opportunities for all

In good fellowship for all our members

In mission to the community and wider church

" and they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

Nehemiah 2:18 KJV