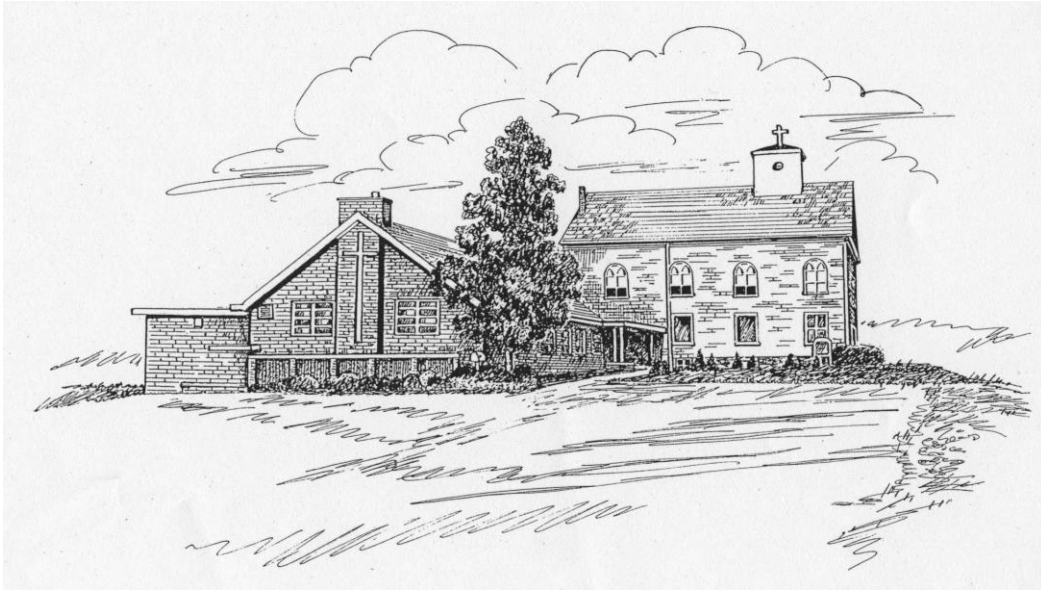


# WISPS OF STRAW



## *St. James Lutheran Church Newsletter*

*May 2010*

*Interim Pastor: Rev. Dr. Paul Brndjar*

Church Office Phone: 908-454-2864

[www.strawchurch.org](http://www.strawchurch.org)

*"Serving Christ in Word and Deed"*

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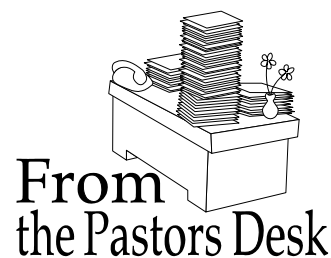
St. James Lutheran Church  
1213 U.S. Highway 22  
Phillipsburg, NJ 08865-4102

## The Pastor's Page

What do you say after you say "hello"? Almost every weekend we have visitors or newer members in worship. Sometimes they're from out-of-town, sometimes they are from the neighborhood "checking out" our church to see if there is something (or someone) here that will speak to them, hold them, or help them.

Whether they are one-time, first-time, occasional or regular visitors, part of our ministry is to welcome them to the household of God, to show Christian hospitality to them, and to let them sense our Christian love and concern.

Many of our visitors tell me our church is warm and friendly. I know it can be awkward for some of us to approach strangers and extend hospitality. But it's our ministry (how would you like to come to church on a Sunday morning or Saturday evening and have no one greet you?).



Let me suggest a few questions and statements you can use to have an initial conversation with some one you don't know:

*"Hello, I'm Pastor Paul. Welcome. Have we met before or are you new to our church or I'm pretty new here myself so I'm still learning my way around or I've been here forever and it's nice to see new faces..."*

*"Let me introduce you to some other folks..."*

*"I've been a member here for several years, and I really enjoy being active here. How did you happen to come here...?"*

*"Is there anything special or specific you're looking for in a church? Maybe I can introduce you to some people here who are interested in similar things..."*

*"What sort of work do you do? Chances are I can introduce you to someone who does something similar..."*

*"Did you meet the Pastor? Let me introduce you..."*

*"Have you lived in other places? How do you find it in this area?"*

You get the point. It is our job to show hospitality. The better we do it, the more welcoming our church, the better we help fulfill the mission of Christ. "I was a stranger," Jesus said, "and you took me in". It still works.

*Pastor Paul*

## *First Holy Communion*

First Holy Communion was celebrated at the 7:00 pm Maundy Thursday Worship, April 1<sup>st</sup>. Receiving our Lord and Savior for the first time was a joyous occasion for the children as well as an inspiration to the congregation. Pastor Brndjar pointed out the appropriateness of the timing, since the Last Supper was in fact the First Communion ever.

Our new Communicants are, in the front row (l-r):

Ryan LaCourte  
Hayley Hardenbergh  
Victoria Esposito  
Emily Carducci  
Jordan Holman

Back row:

Dean Peppe  
Pastor Brndjar  
Shannon Hardenbergh



A reception, complete with a beautiful and delicious cake, was held after Worship to celebrate this milestone in their Christian life.

## *Vacation Bible School*

Mark your calendars for August 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> and join us on a High Seas Expedition as we explore God's love.



Volunteers are greatly needed! Can't commit to a full week? How about helping behind the scenes getting ready for VBS? Teen helpers are needed too. Any students who need service hours (scouts, school, etc.) are encouraged to lend a hand. Last year, we had over 70 children join us. Can you join the fun, too? Contact Beth Van Blarcom if you can help in any way.

## *A New Era Dawns*

Our long wait ended on Sunday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, when a special Congregational Meeting voted almost unanimously to call Pastor John Van Haneghan to be our new spiritual leader. Pastor notified us the same evening that he was accepting the call. He had that weekend conducted both the Saturday evening and Sunday Worship services.

Pastor John comes to us from Syracuse, NY, where he has been the Pastor of St. Stephen Lutheran Church since 2001. All here who have met and spoken with him have been impressed with his deep spirituality and sense of commitment to the church and its people. He will conduct Worship and preach his first sermons as our called Pastor on the weekend of May 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Our new Pastor will be formally installed on Sunday, June 13<sup>th</sup>, at 4:00 pm. Come and be part of this new beginning for your church.

At the same time we have to express our deep appreciation for the Pastors who have given so much of themselves to us over the past four and one-half years. This is especially true of our current Interim Pastor (and, it seems, principal Supply Pastor) Paul Brndjar, as well as his brother, Pastor John Brndjar. Our thanks also go out to Pastor Jane Gaeta, who served as our Interim Pastor for over a year. Without their help and guidance it would have been near impossible for us to have survived this long vacancy as a functioning congregation. Thanks also to the Call Committee for the long hours they devoted to bringing us to this happy conclusion.

## *A New Reality Faces Us*

As joyful as we are to finally once again have a full time Pastor to lead and guide us, we have to at the same time come to grips with the situation that has developed at St. James over these past years. It is painfully obvious that regular Worship attendance has declined markedly during the vacancy. Along with that has gone a substantial drop in Offerings.

The truth is that our current level of income will not be able, over the long term, to meet our expenses. Not having had a full-time Pastor has cushioned us from some financial responsibilities, but that is no longer the case. Although the primary purpose of a church is of course spiritual, operating it in the real world does require money.

Council and the Finance Committee have been working on some ideas for fund-raising efforts, but the cornerstone of any church financial plan has to be the Offering plate. Please prayerfully consider what you can do to help your church in this regard.

If you yourself have been turned away from regular attendance by the vacancy situation, come back to your church home and meet the new Pastor. I am certain you will find it a great way to reconnect with St. James. Likewise, if you know any who might be interested in joining us and becoming members, encourage them to stop by for a Saturday evening or Sunday morning visit.

## *Drinking from my Saucer*

I've never made a fortune  
And it's probably too late now.  
But I don't worry about that much,  
I'm happy anyhow.  
And as I go along life's way  
I'm reaping better than I sowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I don't have a lot of riches,  
And sometimes the going's tough.  
But I've got loved ones around me,  
And that makes me rich enough.  
I thank God for his blessings,  
And the mercies he's bestowed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

I remember times when things went  
wrong,  
My faith wore somewhat thin.  
But all at once the dark clouds broke,  
And the sun peeped through again.  
So God, help me not to gripe  
About the tough rows that I've hoed.  
I'm drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

If God gives me strength and courage  
When the way grows steep and rough,  
I'll not ask for other blessings,  
I'm already blessed enough.  
And may I never be too busy  
To help others bear their loads.  
Then I'll keep drinking from my saucer,  
'Cause my cup has overflowed.

— *John Paul Moore*  
(submitted by Liz Kolba)

## *Baptisms*

At the February 28<sup>th</sup> Worship Service we were pleased to welcome into child membership Zachary Jacob and Gracie Madison Pastula. Zachary and Gracie are children of Matthew and Bridget Pastula of Easton, and grandchildren of Ted Pastula.



The March 27<sup>th</sup> Worship included the Baptism of Hayley Anne and Andrew William Hardenbergh. Our newest child members are the children of Alan and Sharon Hardenbergh of Stewartsville.

## *Recycle for St. James*

St. James is participating in a recycling program to put your used cell phones and inkjet and laserjet printer cartridges to good use. Please consider donating these items to the church. We send them to the Funding Factory who then recycles these items and credits the church. We will use these points to upgrade our technology with specific items such as a computer for the newly called Pastor, a DVD projector for use by the Sunday School and for gathering events here at St. James. Simply place your used cell phones, inkjet or laser printer cartridges in the collection bin outside the Ed Frey Memorial Hall. We will send them into Funding Factory for credit. Corporate donations are gladly accepted. Empty copier toner cartridges will be turned into Staples for credit to offset our current office supply costs. We can recycle up to 10 copier toner cartridges per month with Staples.

# Scouting News

In 2009, St. James Lutheran Church implemented the God and Country program and offered it to all Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, and interested youth in the area.



*On my honor I will do my best  
To do my duty to God and my country  
and to obey the Scout Law;  
To help other people at all times;  
To keep myself physically strong,  
mentally awake, and morally straight.*

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, the Boy Scouts and Cub Scouts received their religious medals for completing this program. Each boy will receive from his respective Cub Scout Pack or Boy Scout Troop a small patch featuring a silver knot on a purple background. This knot signifies a boy's commitment to fulfilling his duty to God and is one of the very few awards he may wear from Cub Scouting through his entire scouting career, even into adult leadership. We applaud the accomplishments of these boys.

God & Me (First through Third Grade):

David Angell  
Bryce Moehler  
Isaiah Ruiz  
Zachary Snyder  
Andrew Warren

God & Family (Fourth through Fifth Grade):

Joshua Crowley  
Eli Mallory  
Dean Peppe  
Wayne Van Blarcom

God & Church (Sixth through Eighth Grade):

Jeremy Edinger  
Mark Urban  
Mitchell Urban

God & Life (Ninth through Twelfth Grade):

Matthew Urban  
Michael Urban



*On my honor, I will try:*

*To serve God and my country,  
To help people at all times,  
And to live by the Girl Scout Law*

On March 7<sup>th</sup>, the Girl Scouts and Brownie Scouts received their religious medals for completing this program. This pin signifies a girl's commitment to fulfilling her promise to serve God and is one of the very few awards she may wear from Brownie Scouting through her entire scouting career, even into adult leadership. We applaud the accomplishments of these girls.

God & Me (First through Third Grade):

Samantha Alfieri  
Nicole Van Blarcom  
Emma Wood  
Ashley Wrede

God & Life (Ninth through Twelfth Grade):

Kelly Dalrymple

## *Food Bank Needs Your Help*

In the current economy, the need for food is greater than ever. Please help the NORWESCAP Food Bank provide for our less fortunate community members by donating canned or other non-perishable food items. Donations should be left in the barrels outside the Ed Frey Memorial Hall.

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*Remember, God promises a safe landing,  
not a calm passage.*