

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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The Rev. Nelson Quiñones, Pastor

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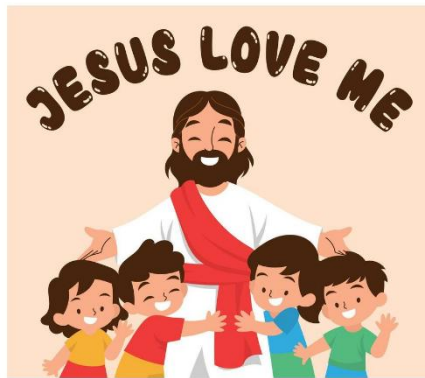
February 2025

COMING IN FEBRUARY:

February 2: Annual Congregational Meeting

(please note the new date)

February 9: Souper Bowl Sunday



LOOKING AHEAD...

3/5 – Ash Wednesday

3/21 – Community Free Dinner

Thank you to everyone who completed a “**NEWSLETTER QUESTIONNAIRE**”! If you have already selected your preference, great, if not it is not too late – simply let us know if you wish to receive your copy by email, pick up in the narthex, or continue through postal mail.

You may change your preference at any time.



FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...

Dear St. John's Members and Friends,

Compassion

The book *Mortality* by the late Christopher Hitchens documents his battle with esophageal cancer.

A quote in the book expressed by a religious believer who mocked Hitchens' condition with the question, "Who else feels Christopher Hitchens getting terminal throat cancer [sic] was God's revenge for him using his voice to blaspheme him?" (Hitchens, 2012, p12).

As soon as I read the question, my immediate response was similar to Hitchens, "which mere primate is so damn sure that he can know the mind of god?" (Hitchens, 2012, p13).

Let's be clear, no one can know the mind of God.

Pastors are in the profession to interpret and translate ancient religious writings. This involves figuring out what the ancient writers' intentions were regarding their view about God and the community. Still, these ancient biblical authors didn't know the mind of God when they were writing.

So this idea that God was getting revenge on Hitchens for his atheistic views begs another question: What revenge was God after by inflicting cancer to those who already believe in God?

God or no God, believers and non-believers have been afflicted by this dreadful disease.

An interpretation based on one's feelings cannot justify God's intentions whether the person be an atheist or a theist. It would be cruel to choose one group as deserving of cancer.

The Gospel writers, however, describe Jesus as having compassion on the sick. “He had compassion for them.” Or “He was moved with compassion for them.” Over and over again, the gospels point to how Jesus showed compassion for the people afflicted by diseases.

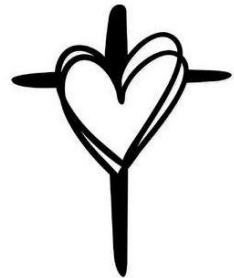
Jesus’s compassion expressed by the authors indicates how believers ought to live with one another especially towards the sick.

At some point or another, believers and non-believers have been moved to compassion. When we utter the popular phrase, “I wouldn’t wish that on my worst enemy”, we understand the pain and sorrow that an illness can cast upon a person and their families. We have found compassion in ourselves and our enemy.

Encountered with Jesus’s compassion, we find a reflection if not of God then of our bound humanity.

Hitchens, Christopher (2012). Mortality. Twelve Hachette Book Group.

Happy Saint Valentine,
The Rev. Nelson Quiñones, Pastor



HOSPITALIZED OR HOMEBOUND??

Please be assured that pastoral visitation and Home Communion are always available at St. John’s. Contact us if you or a family member desires the sacrament or a visit.

OUR CHURCH HOSPITAL CODE IS: #281

Contact the church office and/or the pastor when you are hospitalized. Thank you to those who have been keeping us updated!



REMINDER!!! Church cancellations will be displayed on WFMZ TV (or wfmz.com) on mornings of bad weather. You can also call the church office and listen to the answering machine, it will relay cancellations.



Join us for worship!!!

In order to remain in voting status as a member of St. John's we must have record of your communion at least once each year through the completion of a communion card (found in every pew). We ask that you please take a moment to fill out one of these cards if you have not already done so.



We email readings, prayers, and other resources each Friday so that you may reflect from home. Contact us to be added/removed from this list.

Sunday, February, 2025 – 4th Sunday after Epiphany

Annual Congregational Meeting

Jeremiah 1:4-10 I appointed you a prophet to the nations

Psalms 71:1-6 From my mother's womb you have been my strength.

1 Corinthians 13:1-13 If I speak without love, I am a noisy gong

Luke 4:21-30 Jesus says a prophet is not accepted in his hometown

Sunday, February 9, 2025 – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

Souper Bowl Sunday

Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13] Isaiah says, Here am I; send me
Psalms 138 I will bow down toward your holy temple.
1 Corinthians 15:1-11 I am the least of the apostles
Luke 5:1-11 Jesus calls the disciples to fish for people

Sunday, February 16, 2025 – 6th Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10 Blessed are those who trust the Lord, they are
like trees by water

Psalms 1 They are like trees planted by streams of water.

1 Corinthians 15:12-20 Christ has been raised, the first fruits of
those who have died

Luke 6:17-26 Jesus speaks blessings on the poor and hungry; woes
on the rich and full

Sunday, February 23, 2025 – 7th Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11, 15 Joseph forgives his brothers

Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40 The lowly shall possess the land; they will
delight in abundance of peace.

1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50 The mystery of the resurrection
of the body

Luke 6:27-38 Love your enemies





A Few Things to Keep in Mind:

✝ **Food Card Sales:** ½ of the profit from the food card sales will go towards the Restoration Fund, the other ½ will be sent to Second Harvest Food Bank. Thank you for your continued support of this fundraiser. Stop by the office during the week to make a purchase (Giant, Weis or Redner's).

✝ **2025 Address Directories are available in the narthex.** You may also request a PDF copy by calling the church office.

✝ **Weekly Email** - If you would like to be added, please send us a note to: stjohns.lutheran@verizon.net.

✝ **Flowers & Bulletins:** Bulletins - \$15.00; Flowers - \$48.00 for two vases. Feel free to contact the office with any questions or special requests. Charts for 2025 are posted in the narthex!

✝ **2025 Offering Envelopes** are still available for pick-up. You may pick up a box (with your assigned number) for the year. Please feel free to take them to friends and family. Envelopes have been moved to the church office.

✝ **Methods of giving** include offering envelopes, bank bill pay, and through our website with credit/debit card. Info about the different forms of donation is on our website.

✝ In order to remain in **voting status as a member of St. John's** we must have record of your communion at least once each year by home communion or at an in-house service. Please fill out a communion card, found in each pew.

✝ **Cookbooks** – now \$5 each, please pick one up in the narthex or Fellowship Hall. The proceeds will benefit the Restoration Fund.

✝ **Redner's Receipts** - We are still participating in the "Sav-A-Tape" program at Redner's Market. Deposit tapes in the narthex.

Upcoming Events/Opportunities:

Please plan to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting on February 2, 2025. Your thoughts and views are important!

(The meeting date had to be postponed - due the weather, our Audit meeting had to be rescheduled.)

Super Bowl of Caring – 150 million people will tune into the Super Bowl while 48 million Americans struggle with hunger. Use the bounty exhibited during the football's Super Bowl as a call to action to assist those for whom hunger is an everyday struggle. On Sunday, February 9th our youth will collect \$ and non-perishables to support our local food banks.



Ladies Aid Pizza Kit Fundraiser (from Charlie K's) is coming in March! Please watch for more info soon.

Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday** on March 5, 2025. Join us for worship with communion and imposition of ashes at 7:00 PM.

Community Free Dinners – Dinners will continue on the 3rd Friday, every other month (except November- 2nd Friday). The next dinner will be held on March 21st, sponsored by Bob & Becky Neumoyer. We are in need of dinner sponsors and volunteers. Anyone interested in volunteering please call the church or contact Bob Neumoyer (570-386-3045 or nrich14@ptd.net). *Cash donations or purchased items will be gladly accepted from donors and members who possibly would like to help but are unavailable to attend for preparation and serving.*

On Saturday, April 12th we will again be participating in the **UMT**



Bunny Hop at Grange Park from 1-4 PM. We are looking for donations of plastic eggs and small goodies to place inside. Cash donations may be handed to Cindy Graf. Speak with Cindy if you are interested in helping hand out items at the event on the 12th. We could also use volunteers to help us stuff the eggs on Tuesday, April 8th at 7 PM!

🌿 Thank You... 🌿

- 🌿 To Cindy Graf, Kelsey Herman and Lisa Herman for serving as our Audit Committee this year.
- 🌿 To all our volunteers who continue to help during Sunday in-house services acolyting, welcoming visitors, reading, etc.
- 🌿 To everyone who continues to support St. John's by donating online, through Simply Giving, or with your checks/envelopes!
- 🌿 To everyone who is supporting the Restoration Fund and the Food Bank through the purchase of food cards.
- 🌿 To all who have designated their Thrivent Choice Dollars to St. John's Church.



The Annual Reports for 2024 will be handed out during the meeting on February 2, 2025. If you would like an extra copy, they can be found in the church narthex or by calling the office.

NO Council Minutes:

There was no regular December Council meeting, due to their holiday party.



All minutes from past meetings are available in the church office.



Youth Update

- ✚ We are still looking for any youth that may be interested in serving as **bell ringers, acolytes, or crucifers**. You can use SignUp Genius to chose a date to serve. Speak with Pastor Nelson if you are interested or contact the office for more info.
- ✚ **Sunday School is lots of fun!!** It is never too late to join us - we have classes for toddlers through adult. Please speak with Pastor Nelson if you need information about the Catechetical Class.
- ✚ **Souper Bowl of Caring** – Use the bounty exhibited during the football’s Super Bowl as a call to action to assist those for whom hunger is an everyday struggle. On Feb. 9th our youth will coordinate collecting \$ and food to support local food banks.

Also, check out the “Youth Page” on our website!!!



To the entire congregation, I want to thank you for your continued love and support.

~Diane Heintzelman



In 1990, Souper Bowl of Caring began with a simple prayer from a single youth group:

“Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat.”

Since then, more than \$170 million has been generated for local charities across the country through Souper Bowl of Caring. It has become a powerful movement that transforms the time around the Big Game into the nation’s largest celebration of giving and caring for those in need.

Through this mission, people learn they can make a positive difference in the world as they collect food, raise money and serve at hunger-relief charities and show caring and compassion in local communities across the country.

Share in God’s love for our neighbors in need and give generously on Souper Bowl Sunday. All of the donations collected will go directly to our Tackle Hunger Charity of Choice:

St. Paul’s Food Pantry, Breinigsville

To learn more, visit: TackleHunger.org





JANUARY 2025

ELCA.org/wildfires

In early January, multiple wildfires broke out across Los Angeles County in California, with over 100,000 people under evacuation orders. Sparked by dry conditions, strong winds and a limited water supply, these fires have destroyed homes and businesses and have led to injuries and loss of life.

This disaster is just one of many — including hurricanes, war and famine — to which Lutheran Disaster Response is still responding. Your gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response equip us to respond quickly and generously, whenever and wherever disaster may strike.

Though we don't yet know the full impact of the fires, Lutheran Disaster

Response is here to support the families and communities that will be rebuilding their lives. Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Southwest California Synod and Pacifica Synod to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. We will work with them to provide for immediate needs amid the destruction as well as to assist with recovery efforts for months and years to come.

Gifts to Lutheran Disaster Response equip us to respond to those affected by wildfires and other disasters. By giving to Lutheran Disaster Response, you give the gift of relief today and resilience tomorrow.

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YES, I WANT TO HELP!

- Lutheran Disaster Response \$ _____ DDG0060
- Lutheran Disaster Response: *U.S. Wildfires* \$ _____ DDG0077

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP code _____

Email address _____

Scan to
give online



Give through your congregation or make out your check to Lutheran Disaster Response and send it to:
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, ELCA Gift Processing Center, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009
and write "Lutheran Disaster Response" or "U.S. Wildfires" on your check's memo line.

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