

THE MESSENGER

March 2024

St. John's Lutheran Church at Stone Bank
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Starting a Lenten Journey

"The earth is the Lord's, and all that is in it; the world and those who live in it; for he has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers." Psalm 24:1.

Wait! Look at the calendar—we're almost half-way through Lent! Maybe it's too late to start a Lenten journey. Oh well—I'll start early next year.

But no. It is not too late to start a Lenten journey. Lent, after all, is about turning away from our selves and our selfish concerns, toward God, toward our neighbors, and the earth. Lent is about beginning a practice that honors our God by doing a little good for who and what God loves.

Like the earth. This year, in order protect our planet's land and oceans, St. John's is again fasting from the use of plastic, especially single-use plastic like sandwich bags and disposable water bottles which all too often end up in our oceans, becoming part of giant piles of plastic garbage waste that already float like ugly islands clearly visible from outer space. (Just google "plastic in our oceans" if you have any doubts.)

It's a big problem, and maybe one person's plastic sandwich bag won't matter, in the ocean or out of it. Maybe I should just go back to giving up dessert for the rest of Lent.

But one sandwich bag, water bottle—or yogurt container--can make a difference, and become a worthy discipline to honor God during Lent. Here's how:

Five years ago my family and I were finishing lunch at the Fox Lake cottage that we rent every summer, and I picked up my plate and milk glass and paused at the garbage can to toss in my plastic yogurt container, when my thirty-something daughter Grace snapped "Wait!"

I paused.

"You can recycled those yogurt containers," she explained. "Just rinse it out."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course!"

It seemed like a bit of a hassle but with Grace waiting expectantly, I headed for the sink and rinsed out the container for the Recycling Bin. After vacation, with Grace safely back in her home on the East Coast, I started to fall back into my old toss-in-the-trash habits with the containers, but each time, I could feel Grace's eyes boring into me from afar. So now, automatically I rinse out every yogurt container for the recycling bin. Does it matter?

I just did the math, and it turns out that since I enjoy yogurt with lunch at least three times every week, and five years have passed since that cottage summer, if Grace hadn't spoken up, right now there would be a pile of 780 yogurt containers clogging the oceans somewhere. That's a big pile, that I stopped from adding to our polluted oceans —at the cost of all of 20 seconds per each rinsed out container.

In a small, but conscious way, I honored our creator God by becoming part of the solution instead of the problem of plastic pollution.

Grace told me, and now I'm telling you. So if even one of you accept this particular Lenten challenge, together, we'll have an even bigger pile of garbage that will not be in our oceans.

Select a new plastic saving act. If you already abstain from sandwich bags, disposable water bottles, and rinse out your yogurt containers, then commit to not buying plastic go begin with. Take the time to find the peanut butter, mayonnaise, or pickles that come in glass and not plastic jars. Glass and aluminum we should all remember, are gentle on our environment.

Or collect your flexible plastic like St. John's did last year and schlep it over to a collection site.

Adopt a new practice and then tell someone else about it. Say a prayer of thanks to God every time you do. That's a discipline, and a worthy part of any Lenten journey, that you can start today.

Blessings on your holy Lenten practices this season!
Pastor Karen

CHURCH NEWS



This Sunday St. John's Celebrates 180 Years of Being Together in Christ With Special Guest Bishop Erickson

St. John's 180th Anniversary is this Sunday, March 3rd. Join our 9:00 am celebratory worship service with special guest Bishop Paul Erickson from the Greater Milwaukee Synod. The celebration will continue with a special cake served during the fellowship time following the worship service.

On March 3, 1844 a group of Christians made a charter to form St. John's. Pictures of the history of the church will be on display in the fellowship hall during the coffee hour.



Midweek Lenten Services

St. John's Midweek Lenten Services have begun. There are three remaining midweek services on March 6, 13 and 20. Come to the Lenten devotional services at 6:30 p.m. with a soup and sandwich supper fellowship at 6:00 p.m. See the signup sheet on the bulletin board across from the steps to sign up to contribute soup and/or sandwiches for the supper.



Join St. John's Lenten Plastic Fast

It's not too late to turn back to God and take up a discipline of Lent. **This year St. John's again has taken a stand on behalf of the sparkling planet that God has given to us, to declare a Lenten fast from the use of harmful plastic**, which does not break down easily, and so clogs up our landfills and oceans for years. In fact, according to the World Economic Forum, disposable plastic bottles alone take 450 years to break down in our oceans.

Here's what you can do to help:

Until Easter at least, refrain from using and buying single-use plastic. Instead of sandwich bags, buy reusable glass containers with snap-on rubber tops, or use aluminum foil. Instead of disposable water bottles, plan ahead and buy reusable glass water bottles.

If you can't avoid using it, recycle and reuse single-use plastic. Rinse out and recycle yogurt, milk and clothes detergent containers. Wash and reuse plastic sandwich and freezer bags so you buy fewer of them.

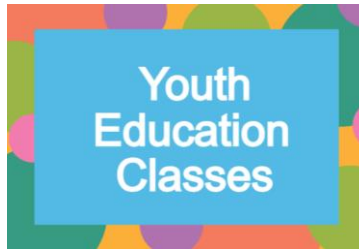
Choose paper over plastic grocery bags—which each take 20 years to break down in our oceans.

Gather your flexible plastic and take it to recycling centers, as St. John's did last year. If you already have incorporated these practices into your routine, **take a step further by choosing to buy products and brands which are sold in glass, rather than plastic containers.** Look for glass jars of honey, peanut butter, mayonnaise, and pickles. Most stores will sell at least one brand of these common products that come in glass.

Let us help humanity to turn back to God, by choosing not to contribute to the harm which humanity has thoughtlessly done to our earth. By the power of the Spirit, and in the name of the Living God and the Risen Christ, together we can be a force for good this Lenten season. Join us!

St John's Church Family Directory

If anyone wants an updated Church Family Directory, you can pick up a copy on the counter at the Fellowship Hall entrance.



Youth Education Classes will meet after Sunday worship services from March 10th to March 31st. Students should meet in the education room after Communion is served.

Stone Bank School Lunch

Nancy Barr, Kris Kaptain, Judy Runt and Pastor Karen had a good time serving lunch to the Stone Bank School teachers and staff to thank them for all they do for the children and families in the community. Everyone enjoyed the delicious soups, sandwiches and desserts made by Debbie Hampton, Kris Kaptain, Anita Olson, Judy Runt, Judy Swanton and Cynthia Tobolt. One middle school teacher made a special trip back to thank us for the lunch. Another staff member specifically asked for Judy Swanton's Lazy Daisy cake recipe which we have included in the recipe section of this newsletter. We plan to have another lunch for Stone Bank School staff in the fall. Let the church office know if you are interested in helping in any way.



Listening Book Club

On February 15, St. John's Listening Book Club had an enthusiastic discussion and lots of laughs about *The Sentence* by Louise Erdrich, a part-Ojibwe Indian and Pulitzer Prize winning novelist. *The Sentence* is a wise, funny novel and ghost story set in the Minneapolis bookstore which the author actually owns!

At the end of the Book Club gathering this month, everyone started discussing what book to read next. There were three suggestion and ALL of them for the same book by James McBride: *The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store*, an uplifting tale of kindness and community that follows the fortunes of a group of Jewish immigrants and African Americans who live together on Chicken Hill in Pottstown, Pennsylvania. It is a popular book that a lot of people are reading. Pick up a copy of this highly recommended book and join us on June 6 at 1 pm.

April Newsletter Submissions

Because of the busyness of Holy Week, we would appreciate that all April newsletter submissions be sent to the church office email, office@stjohnsstonebank.com, by Monday, March 18.



Spring Cemetery Cleanup Day

We could use your help on April 13 at 9 am for our spring cemetery cleanup day. April 20th will be the rain date. Bring your rakes, gloves and other gardening tools to help with cleanup. We will provide water and light snacks. Contact Grant Schuldt if you have any questions.

Office Hours on Wednesdays During Lent

During Lent, the church office hours on Wednesdays will be from noon to 4 pm.

WORSHIP, MUSIC, & HOSPITALITY MINISTRY NEWS

Mark Your Calendars:

Wednesday, March 6th, March 13th, and March 20th – Midweek Lenten soup and sandwich supper at 6 pm and devotional service at 6:30 pm

Sunday, March 24th – Palm Sunday worship with distribution of palms at 9:00 a.m.

Thursday, March 28th – Maundy Thursday worship service at 5:00 p.m.

Friday, March 29th – Good Friday worship service at 5:00 p.m.

Sunday, March 31st – Easter Sunday Worship Service at 9:00 a.m. followed by a Continental Potluck brunch.



Easter Lilies to the Sanctuary

Help decorate the sanctuary on Easter Sunday with Easter lilies. Order forms are available at the entrance to the sanctuary. The cost this year is \$10 per plant. Completed forms and money may be placed in the offering plate or submitted to the office. Please submit orders by March 24th. Plants may be taken home after the Easter Sunday service.



Palm Sunday

Come to our Palm Sunday worship service on Sunday, March 24. St. John's will celebrate Palm Sunday with the distribution of palms to wave in honor of Jesus entering Jerusalem.



Maundy Thursday and Good Friday Services Note Change In Service Times

A special service will be held on Maundy Thursday, March 28th at 5pm. The service will include Holy Communion and stripping of the altar at the end of the service. Attendees will be asked to leave the sanctuary in silence in reverence to the betrayal and arrest of Jesus Christ. Our Good Friday service will also begin at 5 pm on March 29th.



Easter Sunday Service

Easter is March 31! We will be celebrating the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the grave with special music, favorite and uplifting hymns, and, of course, celebratory liturgy. The service will begin at the regular Sunday morning worship service time of 9 am.



Potluck Continental Easter Breakfast

A continental potluck breakfast will be held following the Easter morning worship service. Join us as we continue our Easter celebration with coffee, pastry, fruit and fellowship. A signup sheet for the potluck is posted on the bulletin board in the fellowship hall.

ST. JOHN'S GOOD NEWS REPORT



*Pastor Karen and Jim Edgar's daughter Maris and son-in-law Ravi are new parents to their beautiful and healthy daughter Isa!

*Thanks to those congregants who supported Addie Row's Girl Scout Cookie Sale. All profits stay local with Addie's Troop 2257 in Ixonia. Addie's troop does amazing and enriching activities as well as service projects such as preparing holiday meals and cookies for local families in need and making quilts for the homeless. Addie can add cookies to her order until the end of March if anyone is interested email juliebohen@gmail.com

Call or email the church office to let us know of any "Good News" to include in future newsletters.

WE APPRECIATE ST. JOHN'S COMMUNITY MEMBERS:

Everyone who assisted with providing lunch for Stone Bank School staff.

Scott Hampton for continuing to declutter the church storage areas.

Try A Yummy New Recipe - Lazy Daisy Cake by Judy Swanton

I've had requests for this Lazy Daisy Cake recipe, and I will attempt to "refine it" as it was written down the way my Mom told me!

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease 9x9 cake pan. Beat 2 eggs until light and frothy. Add 1 cup sugar and beat well. Add 1 tsp. vanilla. Sift 1 cup flour 3 times, add 1 tsp. baking powder and 1/8 tsp. salt. Add this to wet ingredients and mix well. Melt 2 Tbsp. butter in 1/2 cup milk in microwave (about 45 seconds) and add last to mixture. Batter will be thin. Pour into cake pan and bake on bottom shelf for 25 minutes or until knife placed in center comes out clean.

Topping

While cake is baking, combine 1/2 cup brown sugar, 4-1/2 Tbsp. butter and 3 Tbsp. cream (I use 1/2 & 1/2) in small cooking pan over low heat, stirring often until it bubbles. Add 1 cup coconut and/or 1 cup nutmeats (I use chopped pecans). Keep stirring and spread warm over top of cake when the cake is done. Place back in oven for 5 minutes to set topping. Cool before slicing. (To make a double batch for a 9x13 cake pan, double recipe except vanilla. Increase vanilla to 1-1/4 tsp. and bake an additional 5 to 10 minutes. Double topping also.)

Sounds
Delicious!



MARCH READINGS

March 3

Exodus 20:1-17 - *The commandments are given at Sinai*
Psalm 19 - *The commandment of the LORD gives light to the eyes.*
1 Corinthians 1:18-25 - *Christ crucified, the wisdom of God*
John 2:13-22 - *The cleansing of the temple*

March 10

Numbers 21:4-9 - *The lifting up of the serpent*
Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22 - *You deliver your people from their distress.*
Ephesians 2:1-10 - *Saved by grace through faith for good works*
John 3:14-21 - *The lifting up of the Son of Man*

March 17

Jeremiah 31:31-34 - *A new covenant written on the heart*
Psalm 51:1-12 - *Create in me a clean heart, O God.*
Psalm 119:9-16 (alternate) - *I treasure your promise in my heart*
Hebrews 5:5-10 - *Through suffering Christ becomes the source of salvation*
John 12:20-33 - *The grain of wheat dying in the earth*

March 24

Isaiah 50:4-9a - *The servant of the Lord submits to suffering*
Psalm 31:9-16 - *Into your hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit.*
Philippians 2:5-11 - *Humbled to the point of death on a cross*
Mark 14:1--15:47 - *The passion of the Lord*
Mark 15:1-39 [40-47] (alternate) - *The passion of the Lord*

March 31

Acts 10:34-43 - *God raised Jesus on the third day*
Isaiah 25:6-9 (alternate) - *The feast of Victory*
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24 - *This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.*
1 Corinthians 15:1-11 - *Witnesses to the risen Christ*
Acts 10:34-43 (alternate) - *God raised Jesus on the third day*
Mark 16:1-8 - *The resurrection of Jesus is announced, and the response is one of terror and amazement.*
John 20:1-18 (alternate) - *Seeing the risen Christ*



MARCH

Birthdays

March 5 – Oscar Kraft
March 7 – Quiana Bonus
March 12 – Glenn Keller
March 13 – Shirley Kraft
March 16 – Paul Peterson
March 23 – Sage Big Mountain
March 30 – Madeline Weiss



St. John's Council

President: Judy Runt

Vice President: Nancy Barr

Council Members at Large: Kris Kaptain

Financial Secretary: Judy Swanton

Acting Treasurer: Judy Runt

St. John's Music Program

Music Minister: Jim Edgar

Pianist: Lauren Genthe

Choir: Nancy Barr, Oscar Kraft, Shirley Kraft, Bennett Shebesta, Judy Runt

Worship Assistants

Alan Abeld, Carol Baird, Phil Baird, Nancy Barr, John Baumann, Julie Bohen, Jim Edgar, Ann Greenseth, Kris Kaptain, Oscar Kraft, Shirley Kraft, Julie Kuhtz, Nancy Kuhtz, Megan Rollefson, Deb Runt, Judy Runt, Grant Schuldt, Judy Swanton, Cynthia Tobolt

Altar Ministry

Nancy Barr, Julie Bohen, Kris Kaptain, Brigitte Katz, Julie Kuhtz, Nancy Kuhtz, Anita Olson, Judy Runt