

St. John's Lutheran Church

NEWSLETTER

Volume 117, Issue 3

March, 2018

“ THE LENTEN SACRIFICE ”

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” - John 3:16

During this holy season of Lent, it is a custom and practice for some Christians to willingly give up something. To promote spiritual discipline, our fellow brothers and sisters in Christ may choose to make a sacrifice of something they dearly enjoy. They may forgo the listening of Country Western music or avoid eating chocolate.

Father Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan priest, refused to give way to the terror of Adolf Hitler and his forces of darkness. He believed God would somehow win. Imprisoned in Auschwitz for his opposition to the Nazis, Father Kolbe heard the prison commandant order ten prisoners to die by starvation as a reprisal for the escape of one prisoner. When the ten were collected together, Father Kolbe saw a pale, quivering Polish army sergeant sobbing, “My wife and my children . . . my wife and my children.” Father Kolbe pushed forward through the rigid formation of prisoners watching the selection, past the security guards, right up to the commandant himself. Looking him straight in the eye, Father Kolbe said in impeccable German, “I wish to make a request, please.”

“What do you want?” sneered the officer.

“I want to die in the place of this prisoner,” he said, pointing to the weeping sergeant. “I have no children or wife.”

The stunned prisoners thought both men would die; one for his weakness and the other for his audacity, but instead the commandant snapped, “Request granted.” Father Kolbe gave himself for another, following the example of Jesus Christ, Who gave Himself for us all. He acted out the words of the apostle in 1 John 4:19: *“We love because He first loved us”*.

Jesus says He must be lifted up in sacrifice so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life. He will be made sin for us and be cursed as He bears the sin of the whole world. St. Paul writes some well-known words in Ephesians 2:8 *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God”*. Many make sacrifices for the wrong reasons, but Jesus made His sacrifice for the right one: in obedience to God the Father, out of love for humanity, He gave His life willingly and generously for the salvation of the entire world.

As you hear the Good News of Jesus Christ, the

Holy Spirit is working in your heart, renewing your Baptism and granting forgiveness of sins, new life, and strength for Christian living. Look to Jesus lifted high on the cross of Calvary, suffering for your sins to earn forgiveness for you. Believe that He died and rose for you. You are a new creation in Christ!

Romans 12:1 says *“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship”*. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ moves us to sacrifice ourselves in service. One aspect of our sacrifice is self-denial. Paul states in Romans 6:6 *“We know that our old self was crucified with Him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin”*. Every day we are to live out our Baptism by dying to sin and rising again to life for God.

We consecrate to God our minds, wills, hearts, ideas, plans, desires, and all our activities. Christ takes all our faculties, and since they are filled with sin, He puts them to death on the cross. He then gives us Himself in exchange: His own mind, will, heart, ideas, plans, and desires. Our old self is denied and Christ is affirmed. Through the waters of Holy Baptism Jesus Christ brings us into His Body, the Church, and He places Himself in us through His Spirit. The action is all His.

A second aspect of sacrifice is serving others. Having been redeemed by Christ and renewed by the Holy Spirit, you and I now live in service to others, walking in the footsteps of Jesus. We do not do this to earn spiritual blessings, but only as an expression of our faith and confidence in Christ alone.

If you are becoming exhausted in doing good works, if you feel like a marionette being moved by strings held in other people’s hands, if you have lost heart and are just going through the motions, look again at Jesus Christ on the cross. He made the supreme sacrifice for you. He forgives your failings and gives you a new heart as you are born again of water and the Holy Spirit. Every day God renews His baptismal grace in you and calls you today to live a little more for others than you did yesterday and to proclaim the love of Christ more powerfully through your service. May we all offer our lives to the praise and glory of Jesus Christ, Who offered Himself for our eternal salvation!

In Service to Our Lord and Savior, Pastor Riley

HOLY WEEK SCHEDULE:



PALM SUNDAY

On Palm Sunday, March 25, we will celebrate Jesus' Entry into Jerusalem and the reading of the Passion. Holy Communion will be celebrated along with distributing Palms. Trumpeter Brooks Holmes will be joining the choir.

On Thursday, March 29, at 7:00 p.m. we will observe Individual Absolution and Holy Communion in remembrance of Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples. Theme: The Garden of Good Works (John 15:1-5)



MAUNDY THURSDAY



On Good Friday March 30, at 7 p.m. we will remember the death of Jesus for our salvation with the Service of Darkness. Theme: The Garden of Golgotha (Matthew 27:33)

Our Easter Celebrations begin with a Sunrise service at 6:00 a.m. at the Springfield Water Department atop of Provin Mountain.



The Festival Service for the Resurrection of our Lord begins at 10:00 a.m. Theme: The Garden of Glory (Matthew 28:1-10)

(NOTE: There is no Sunday School on Easter Sunday.)

MID-WEEK LENTEN SERIES "The Gardens of Lent"

In this season of Lent, I will take you to nine stops on a tour of gardens described in the pages of Holy Scripture. We will begin in the Garden of Eden. Then we will make our way to the Garden Gethsemane to Jesus Christ's garden of glory and finally to paradise. Selected texts from the Gospels and Revelation will reveal to us the Gospel promise found in each glorious location.

- March 7: "Garden of Passion" Luke 22:39-44
 - March 14: "The Garden of Peace" John 19:38-42
 - March 21: "The Garden of Paradise" Revelation 22:1-6
- On Wednesdays, the Services will be held at 11:00 a.m. with a luncheon and 7:00 p.m.

The following have signed up for flowers for the months of March and April:



- March 4 - open
- March 11 - Caba
- March 18 - Sienkiewicz
- March 25 - Ferst
- April 1 - Ferst Fund
- April 8 - Caba
- April 15 - Sienkiewicz
- April 22 & 29 - open

If you would like to sign up in the 2018 FLOWER BOOK located on the round table in the church. We can do up to three bouquets per Sunday. The cost per bouquet is \$21.00.



March 24 at 2:00 p.m.

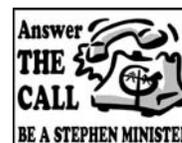
Come and join us in the WINGS room to watch The Passion of Christ at 2:00 p.m. This movie depicts the final 12 hours of Jesus Christ in Jerusalem during his crucifixion. If you have any questions, speak to Erika Slozak.

EASTER FLOWERS:

Due to a new supplier, orders for Easter flowers need to be handed in as soon as possible. This year we are offering : Lilies: Single - \$8.00 Double - \$14.00 Triple - \$20.00 Tulips: 6 inch pot - \$7.00 Daffodils: 6 inch - \$7.00 Hyacinth: 6 inch pot - \$7.00 8"Hydrangea - \$20.00 in blue, pink or white



If you would like to order flowers that will adorn the altar on Easter, in honor or in loving memory of a loved one, please fill out a flower form located on the round table in the church foyer or call Jane McClure (562-0492) to order or for any questions.



Ready to Work for the Lord

Our congregation's Stephen Ministry Leaders have just returned from the Stephen Series Leader's Training Course. Pastor, Dan Provost, Paul & Patti Brose are motivated and set to go! Their next step is organizing a training class for Stephen Ministers. Are you motivated to become part of this ministry? Talk with Paul, Patti, Dan or Pastor about how you might serve. Be ready to go to work for the Lord!



TAKE ME OUT to the BALL GAME

St. John's Lutheran Church Men's group has organized a trip to see the Boston Red Sox vs. the World Series Champion Houston Astros on Saturday, September 8th at 4:00 p.m. The bus will leave the church parking lot at 11:45 a.m. The cost is \$119 per person. If you are interested, contact Gary Wolfe (568-0325). Payment must be given at the time of reservation. Seats fill up fast. First come, first served basis.

A NEW SIGN-UP SHEET HAS BEEN POSTED OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OFFICE



Please help in the continuing outreach mission project of our Radio Broadcast of Sunday morning Worship. Broadcasts can be heard each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on WHYN (560 AM). The cost for the program is \$125 per week. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast (or a part of a broadcast) in memory of or in honor of anyone please call the church or sign up on the sheet outside the office door. Donations of any amount are welcome. Additionally, we have posted previous weeks' broadcasts on our website along with the associated bulletin.

Let us know if there is a shut-in or someone who missed a week, and we will email a link so they can hear the whole service.

Just log onto <http://stjohnswestfield.org>; links to the broadcasts and the weekly bulletins are on the main page. Please see/call Bill Schneeloch (413-568-4906 or 860-604-5264) or e-mail radio@stjohnswestfield.org with any questions.

COFFEE HOURS

Volunteers are needed to help host coffee hours on Sunday Mornings following the worship service. The coffee, juice and half & half are provided. All the host needs to do is provide baked goods or snacks, serve after the worship service, and clean up. There is a sign up sheet in the foyer. This time after church allows for wonderful fellowship among our members. There is a sign up sheet located on the coffee hour tables. If you have any questions, please speak with Linda or Erika Slozak.



New England Branch

Since our formation as a branch in 2014, we have shipped over \$1.5 million in clothing, food, and medical supplies, shipping to both international and domestic folks in need. And, we always include God's Word (thanks to the Gideon Ministry's supplying "gently used" Bibles from hotel change-outs.)

Our next quarterly meeting is on March 10, 2018. This will be at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church in Terryville, CT at 10 a.m. In addition to our regular business meeting, we will be planning our annual cook-out and open house which will be August 11 at Holy Trinity.

Our meetings are open and welcome to all. Please contact Bill Schneeloch if you would like to carpool. He will leaving St John's parking lot at 9:00 a.m.

If you would like to support us financially, donations can be mailed to: Orphan Grain Train – New England
c/o LCMS – NED

400 Wilbraham Road
Springfield, MA 01109-2723
Attn: Branch Manager – Bill Schneeloch

Please keep OGT in your prayers.

MARK YOUR CALENDARS:

Our Annual German Supper is Friday, April 6 at 5:30 p.m. - only one sitting this year. The delicious menu includes roast pork, hot dogs, sauerkraut, mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, bread, rolls, apple sauce and dessert.

Tickets are available after worship services or by calling the church office (568-1417) or Sally Sienkiewicz (562-3186). The cost is \$12.50 for an adult, \$8.00 for children (5-12 years), and children under five are free. Take-out available beginning at 5:00 p.m.



JOIN US FOR A HYMN SING & POTLUCK:

It is with great joy and excitement that we announce a Hymn Sing & Potluck on Sunday, March 18, starting at 3:00 p.m. Come prepared with some of the titles of your favorite hymns from the Lutheran Service Book (LSB) as we sing through a few verses of each. Following the hymn sing in the sanctuary, we invite everyone to bring an appetizer, hot dish or dessert to share for a time of

fellowship downstairs!

Thrivent Notes:

The deadline for submitting Thrivent Choice dollars for 2017 is March 31. Ideally, this should be done early in March to allow time for processing at Thrivent corporate. If anyone has any questions, contact Jane McClure (562-0492)

Reminder, for the Action Team program, benefit members are eligible for two Action Team submissions/awards (\$250 each); associate members are eligible for one Action Team submission/award for \$250. If you would like some suggestions, see Jane.



INTERESTED IN SINGING WITH THE CHOIR FOR HOLY WEEK AND EASTER?:

Starting on Thursday, March 1, St. John's Choir will begin to rehearse music for Palm Sunday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday. No music reading ability required to join ... we are always looking for new singers! If you are interested, speak with Jeff Windoloski following the service or join us this coming Thursday at 7:00 p.m. for our next rehearsal.

CHOIR & CHIMERS: Reminder on March 8, rehearsals will resume at their normal times starting Chime Choir at 6:30 p.m. in the

music room and Adult Choir
at 7:15 p.m. in the lounge.

Why I Give Through the Church

- ✠ Because I know that everything I have comes from God, and, by giving generously of my income to Him through the church, I acknowledge His ownership and my opportunity to be a faithful steward.
- ✠ Because the church is the best place I know through which my money can most profitably be used to extend God's kingdom.
- ✠ Because when I joined the church, I promised to support it, and I want to make that promise good.
- ✠ Because making a pledge and fulfilling it regularly remind me constantly that I have a definite and important share in the ministry of Christ.
- ✠ Because the preaching and teaching ministry along with the compassion ministries and missionary programs of the church have no source of support other than the gifts of church members.
- ✠ Because it is in the church when I can each week hear God's Word preached and taught and receive His body and blood at the Lord's Table.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I was baptized, confirmed, married, and will someday have my funeral service.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I'm blessed to have fellowship with fellow believers.
- ✠ Because it is in the church where I have the opportunity to use my time and abilities to serve the Lord.
- ✠ Because giving my offering generously and cheerfully to the church keeps me from growing selfish and indifferent..