

FEBRUARY
2023

St. John Lutheran
P. O. Box 32
West Alexandria, OH 45381
937-839-5321
Email: stjohningoar@swohio.twcbc.com
www.stjohningomar.org

Church Office Hours
Mondays and Fridays
10:00-3:00 pm
Sunday
Worship Service
10:00 am

EPIPHANY

ASH
WEDNESDAY

St. John Lutheran Church

St. John Lutheran Church comes together to love God and one another, serve others and share God's word. We do these things by God's Grace that comes through the death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ

A PASTORAL LETTER "The Christ Centered Spirituality of Bonhoeffer" What does it mean to be the church today? Or as Bonhoeffer would say, "Who is Christ for us today?"

Pastor Tim Swanson

I have been a reader of Dietrich Bonhoeffer since my seminary days. I have come across a simple book written by a Lutheran pastor from Minnesota that provides a brief outline reflecting on Bonhoeffer's perceptions of where the church needed to move. Here is a brief description that can be centerpiece for each of the five weeks of Lent.

Bonhoeffer was baptized in the church but really did not grow up in it. His father was a liberal thinking psychologist who did not see its need; but tolerated the Christian belief. His mother was influenced by a Moravian Brethren governess. Yet, Bonhoeffer received his Ph.D. when he was 21 and wrote his dissertation for that degree on the church as "Communion of Saints". He became a profound defender of the church as a community of believers. While he was imprisoned by the Nazis, his reflections grew to how the church must be actively engaged within the world. Here is an outline of what would be regarded as **5 crumbling pillars** which he believed prevented the church from being challenged to enter this new world view, as well as his **5 challenges for the church** for the future. We are living in that future today.



First: The crumbling pillar: the "individualism" of a private faith.

The new pillar needed: the church is Christ existing as community (baptism is not a private transaction and holy communion is not to be seen as a private reception of forgiveness apart from the community).

Second: The crumbling pillar: the remote "otherness of God".

The new pillar needed: the God "beyond is in the midst of life" (God is in the center of life, not at the end of ours: the incarnation of Jesus and the Cross are central issues)

Third: The crumbling pillar: religious practices that foster distance from the world (God is found only in prayer, worship, meditation etc.)

The new pillar needed: making Christ's presence in the church "for" the world through prayer and action (the church cannot be self-centered or self-serving)

Fourth: The crumbling pillar: Christianity cannot be a religion of the privileged. (mankind's religiosity causes one to look for God's power in the world)

The new pillar needed: God's kingdom and Christ's suffering for the world needs to be the focus of Christian discipleship and not the individual person's life, loves, and problems (the challenge is to be a disciple of Christ: ask not what God can do for you but what you can do for God)

Cont'd on page 2

Cont'd from page 1

Fifth: The crumbling pillar: immature overdependency: leaning on God for things that humans are able to do for themselves and others (the goal: for mature thinking, deciding and acting responsibly in an interdependent way)

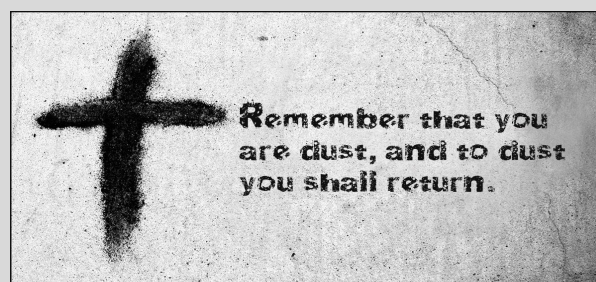
The new pillar needed: here Bonhoeffer lifted up his famous “world come of age” saying. The world has made many advancements in science and technology etc. He saw these advancements, etc. as God-willed. The church needs to see God as the center of all of life (not just the church). It calls for the Christian to live maturely and responsibly within this context.

So, these five pillars are necessary for the church to be challenged today and in the future:

- 1) Christ existing as community
- 2) God as the beyond in our midst
- 3) God claiming the whole world
- 4) Christian faith as life lived for others, and
- 5) in a world come of age.

These are reflections for the five weeks of Lent for Wednesdays evenings.

**Midweek Lenten Services each
Wednesday evening at 7:00 pm
beginning with Ash Wednesday
on February 22 through March 29**



THANK YOU S

I would like to thank the congregation for the gift card I received for Christmas. It is very much appreciated. I'd also like to thank the choir for their efforts this Christmas season. Your hard work and dedication translated into beautiful music for the candlelight service.

Carol McKinley



Thank you for the carolers who came and sang at our home. It was so nice. Thanks for the poinsettia that they brought. Thank you everyone for Glen's birthday and our anniversary cards. Thank you for all the prayers. Glen is better but far from well.

Norma Behnken

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the Christian season known as Lent (no, not the stuff in your belly-button, that's “lint”). Historically, Lent was a time when new Christians prepared themselves for baptism on Easter Sunday. Today, Lent more often is a time when Christians prepare themselves for Easter and are invited to **deeper faith, stronger community, and a closer connection to God**. This preparation happens through an emphasis on a few basic faith practices: worship, prayer, generosity, self-denial, and service to others. Join us Wednesday, February 22 at 7:00 pm.

Women ^{of the} ELCA

The January meeting of St. John WELCA was held on Jan. 12 with 7 members present. Carolyn presented the topic.

The minutes of the last meeting were read and approved. Treasurer reported a balance of \$1104.01.

Card report: 69 cards were sent. Correspondence: Thank you letter from Women of the ELCA in America for the \$475 thank offering and thank you from Ronald McDonald House for \$50 for the speaker for Thank Offering Sunday.

Carolyn reported Women's Council met in December with a carry-in. Next meeting will be March 21.

Chris is coordinating meals for the Shelton family.

The rest of the meeting was spent putting together the programs for this year.

The homeless meal will be provided this month by Becky and Darlene.

Meeting closed with the Missionary Benediction.

Refreshments were served by Becky.

All women of St. John are invited and welcome to attend meetings the second Thursday of each month.

Women of the ELCA seeks to be an instrument of Christian Mission in helping the Church to declare the Gospel of Jesus Christ through:

- Learning of Christ and the mission of His church
- Witnessing in our daily lives to our Christian faith
- Serving the needs of others in the congregation and community
- Supporting the total work of the church through prayers and offerings



WACOCA HYMN SING

Sunday, February 26

7:00 pm

West Alexandria

Church of the Brethren

22 Oak St.

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly...singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs... (Colossians 3:16)

Psalms 59:16: "I will sing of your strength; I will sing aloud of your steadfast love in the morning. For you have been to me a fortress and a refuge in the day of my distress."

February Birthdays

Carol McKinley - 2nd
 Al Souleyrette - 5th
 Harry Eubank - 12th
 Kelly Studebaker - 15th
 Karen Studebaker - 16th
 Darlene Combs - 26th

Anniversaries

Paul & Marna Beneke - 20th
 Happy 69th Wedding Anniversary!

MEMBERS IN OUR PRAYERS

Patrick Collins	Janet Ferguson	Reenie Halsey
Bob Combs	Butch Spitler	Mark McKinley
Catherine Dafler	Marna Beneke	Bruce Sams & Family
Nancy Wright	Lynn Voge	Fred Boebel
Judy Erbaugh	Paula Schiml	Glen Behnken
Cindy Dafler	Amy Stockslager	

FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF OUR MEMBERS

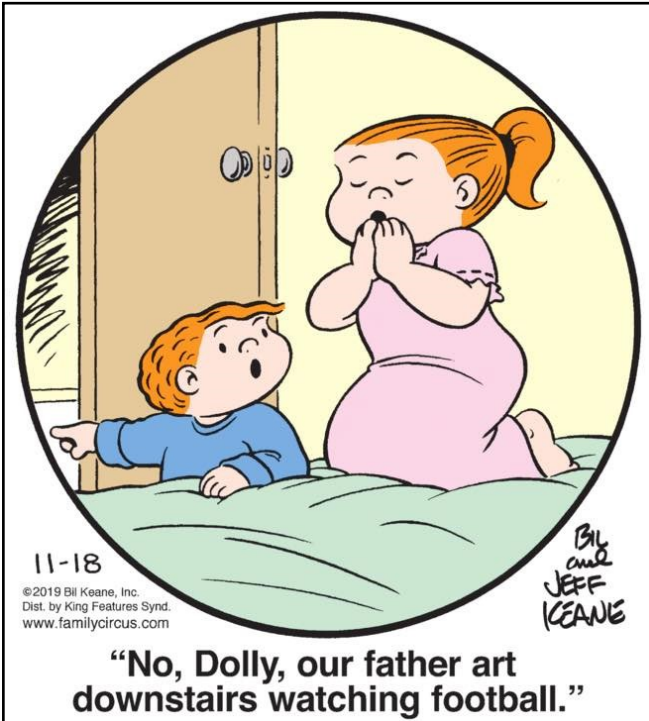
Annie Presley	Terry & Connie Wysong
Don Flory	Amy Leedy
Donele Rice	Dotty
A.J. Hatfield	Andy Eck
Kelly Coffman	Eric Walker
Phyllis Warner	Andrew Obst
Eleanor Steele	A.J. McKinley
Pastor Mary & Tikkun Farm	Maxine Ingram
Don Voge	Dolly Shelton
Alice Blosser	Dan McKinley
Diane Harry	John DeVilbiss
Sue Johnson	Rev. Jim Miller

THOSE GRIEVING

The families of Dane Stockslager and
 Merle Johnson

MISSIONARIES

Jon & Michelle Voge and family



Bible Study - Monday evenings at 6:30 pm in the fellowship hall. This is a study on Paul's use of his triad - Faith, Hope, and Love. During Lent, a study of 1 Peter will begin.

*"Prayer enlarges the heart until it is capable of containing God's gift of himself."
 - Mother Theresa*

February 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
AG-Becky V. CA-Becky S.			1	2	3	4
5 M- Mandy A LR-Chris I 5 Epiphany	6 Bible Study 6:30 pm	7	8	9 WELCA 7:00 PM	10	11 Council & Stephen's Meeting 10:00 am
12 M-Jenny D LR-Earla D 6 Epiphany	13 Bible Study 6:30 pm	14	15	16	17	18 Sleep Mat Project 9-11:00 am
19 M-Mandy A LR- Kathy B Transfiguration	20 Bible Study 6:30 pm	21	22 Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 pm M-Jenny D LR-Carolyn S	23	24	25
26 M-Jenny D LR-Scott H 1 Lent WACOCA Hymn Sing 7:00 pm	27 Bible Study 6:30 pm	28		Ushers- Bill D, Steve D, Scott H, Steve S		

COUNCIL MINUTES FOR JANUARY 11, 2023

Present: Randy Ingram, president (2023), Scott Hittle (2023), Janette Hittle (2024), Fred Boebel (2024), Stephanie Cotterman, treasurer (2023), Interim Pastor, Tim Swanson, Chris Ingram, secretary.

Not present: Melissa Collins, vice president (2023), Mandy Arnett (2023)

Devotion was led by Pastor Tim.

November, 2022 minutes were read by the council president. There were no questions or comments. All those present approved/accepted the November minutes.

Treasurer's Report: It was noted that CD interest rates are expected to rise in January. Part of Accrued balance could be placed in three CDs with varying maturity dates to remain flexible.

Committees

It was suggested the old brass stored in the basement should be donated or sold as the finish on some pieces are badly tarnished and eating up the brass. Chris said she could place it on Facebook Market Place for free. Council agreed to allow her to take care of it.

WELCA's new president is Judy Erbaugh with Stephanie Cotterman as vice president.

Pastor Tim's Report

- Pastor Tim presented to council an outline he created titled "Being the Missional Church". Changing the "Vision" and "Mission" from old to new images within the context of the congregation. He also presented a "Missional model for expanding the vision" and quoted Acts 2:42 as a biblical model. The goal is to move the mission of the church beyond ourselves and our own territory by learning the 'how' to do this.
- Pastor Tim would like to have an Invitational Event with Stephen's Ministry and St. John's Council. We agreed the date of February 11 at 10:00 am works well. The book "The Invitational Christian" written by Dave Daubert will have hopefully been read by all before the meeting.
- Pastor will be leading an Ash Wednesday service Feb. 22 and Wednesday Lenten/Healing services each week on March 1, 8, 15, 22, 29. (services start at 7:00 pm)
- He will be starting a Bible study on Paul's use of his triad – Faith, Hope, and Love. During Lent will begin a study of 1 Peter.
- Looking into the possibility of pursuing a relationship with Emmanuel Lutheran Church in Germantown

New Business

Establishing a new Mission Team needing 3 people.

Three officers and 2 council members terms will be up at the end of 2023.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

In less than one year multiple church council seats will be open. Please take some time and envision how your active leadership on St. John's council might impact the life of this congregational.