Saint John Lutheran Church, Bellmore NY
A congregation of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

June 2020

Mission statement: *We are a community of faith that is: gathered for worship and fellowship, empowered by Scripture and the Sacraments, strengthened for service and sent forth as witnesses to the Good News of Jesus Christ.*

Join us for worship at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday mornings (currently online).

The Eagle

Pastor's Corner

It's an easy bet that we are all experiencing some variety of cabin fever. Getting out to do grocery shopping isn't enough of an excursion to satisfy us. The governor is slowly opening up New York State, yet we realize that Long Island and the five boroughs will be among the last to open their churches. The warmer weather is an enticement to get outside, yet we have to do social distancing.

On May 22, Bishop Egensteiner sent out an email in support of Governor Cuomo's directives to churches. He emphasized that though the churches have been closed, the Body of Christ (US!) has been alive and functioning from the very beginning and throughout this ordeal. We have been staying connected through Zoom and Facebook Live, phone calls and letters. Our website, www.stjohnbellmore.org has the Facebook Live services for you to view at your leisure. Four days out of seven, I offer some form of meditation, vespers, bible study, or worship service. We are more active than ever and staying connected despite the stay at home orders.

Addressing the issue of reopening churches, Bishop Egensteiner wrote: "Drive-in and parking lot services will be permitted. The Governor also informed us that New York is convening an Interfaith Advisory Council to discuss proposals to safely bring back religious services. We realize that the information coming from our governing forces appear contradictory. However, **OUR PRIORITY IS YOU** and your well-being. **Protecting the health and safety of ALL members of our community is both our truth and our precedence as the Office of the Bishop.** Being at the epicenter of this pandemic and in order to protect our flock, **we advise that congregations remain closed until more accurate and uniform information is provided**. As Indiana-Kentucky Synod Bishop, The Rev. Dr. William O. Gafkjen wrote . . . '*The church does not need to re-open. The church – the body of Christ – has been open and working all along.*' **We know we are essential, but it is not essential to gather in person at this time."**

Though we are hungry to gather as we are accustomed to, I thank God that we have such strong leadership in Bishop Egensteiner, who is dedicated to keeping his flock safe. Let us continue to pray for one another, for in this unity we demonstrate we are the Body of Christ. In Jesus name, we pray. Amen. *Pastor Nancy Rakoczy*

Staff at Saint John:

Pastor: Rev. Nancy Rakoczy

Office Manager: Ms. Janet Pescatore

Deacon: Ms. Charlene Drewes

Organist & Music Director: Ms. Quinn Anderson

Newsletter Editor: Ms. Jennifer Cline Sargent

Sexton: Ms. Kristina Kamps

Congregational President: Mr. Tom Sargent

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Special points of interest

- While many of our events had to be postponed or canceled, we will be able to gather once again in the near future. In the meantime, please support local businesses like Guy Anthony's and other restaurants by getting take out or buying gift certificates to use in the future. Give back the support we've enjoyed from our local merchants in the past.

Lectio Divina

On Tuesday evenings at 7 pm, you are welcome to join us over Zoom for Lectio Divina (pronounced, lex-ee-o di-veen-a) (Latin for Divine Reading) Derived from Christian monastic tradition, it literally translates from Latin into divine reading and an ancient way to pray, going back to about the third century. One passage from scripture is read four separate times, with pauses in between for active contemplation on the deeper meaning.

The main difference between Lectio and Bible study is that while you may speak words that come to your mind during the pauses, we don't discuss , comment, approve or disapprove anything that is said, we simply allow the speaker's words to filter into our hearts.

Many people find Lectio Divina peaceful and restful. The silences are often as important as what is said, because God speaks to us in the silence of our hearts. We come away refreshed and renewed. Lectio is a way to calm our restlessness and find rest in God. "Be still and know that I am Lord." Psalm 46: 10

Holidays and Other Celebrations

June 6 is D-Day and June 14 is the 95th anniversary of Flag Day, marked as a holiday by Woodrow Wilson in 1916 to honor the decree that America would have one flag with 13 alternating red and white stripes, and white stars on a blue field put forth as a resolution in 1777. We also celebrate all the men of our congregation on Father's Day, June 21.

June 11 is National Corn on the Cob Day and June 29 is a Hug Holiday - we'll have to do that from afar still to be safe! We must say we're a little disappointed we don't have any photos from Dress Like a Chicken Day...

Whatever you celebrate, try to take a few moments every day for some fun and laughter—it's one of the best remedies for stress!

"...do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand."
— Isaiah 41:10

June Birthdays

Happy birthday to:

5 Melanie Bogen
17 Logan Kugler
18 Lise-Anne Orlich
22 Tom Brucia
22 Ethan Kugler
23 Carol Glen
23 Vivian Devens
24 Stefanie Simone
27 Jesse Robinson
28 Makenzie Medico

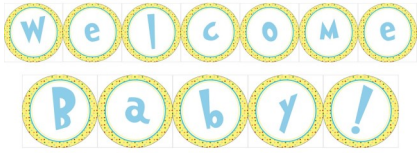
If you are celebrating in June and your name has been inadvertently left off the list, please contact the church office.

News, Notes & Greetings

A big congratulations to Tom Selvaggio and Amy Wee on becoming grandparents! Gabriella Selvaggio was born on April 7, weighing in at 7 lbs, 9 oz. to Stephen and Amanda Selvaggio.

Congrats also to Ira & Jen Bergman on the birth of twin grandsons Michael Kevin and Nicholas Luca on May 13 to daughter Jillian and her husband Michael. Michael was 4 lbs, 7 oz. and 17 1/2 in. while Nicholas was 5 lbs, 6 oz. and 18 1/2 in. Everyone is home and doing well.

And, late breaking news, congratulations to Pam Drewes on the birth of her son Noah Jerard, born May 27 and weighing 6 lbs, 5 oz., 19 1/2 inches long. He was also welcomed by his big brother Cole and Nana Charlene Drewes!



Christian Education

Sunday School is wrapping up for this school year, thanks to the teachers who have sent materials to the kids to work on at home. Summer presents a unique challenge to parents with the loss of school routines while the need to remain somewhat isolated remains. Check out the synod's free children's app for Android and Apple by going to https://www.mnys.org/childrens-app/. There are also many free craft and activity sites for kids to help occupy their time.

The confirmation class also has a few more meetings via Zoom with Pastor before summer. All classes lagged by a week or two from our usual ending date due to the unexpected pause in March. We thank all of our Sunday School teachers and helpers for their dedication and hard work: Charlotte Mooney, Nina Thilesen, Aidan Sargent, Lori Vanderwaren, Kathy Strouse, Jessica Pagano, Tom Sargent and Pastor Nancy, plus of course Ms. Quinn!

Council Notes

As I write this, Long Island is beginning Phase 1 of its reopening. That naturally leads to the next question, "when can we return to live, in-person worship at Saint John?" As we do move forward, here are the words from our bishop, The Rev. Paul Egensteiner. This information was shared at our recent council meeting:

"I realize how difficult this time is for all of us, and how greatly we want to return to our churches, open the doors, and welcome in our flocks so that we may gather in person, together, once again. This desire, faithful as it is, ***must be guided by patience and wisdom that consider everyone's wellbeing****. As your bishop, the pastor of pastors, I have the privilege and holy responsibility to shepherd all of you; you, as leaders, share the responsibility of shepherding your members.* ***We are called, and have vowed, to follow Jesus and proceed with compassion, tenderness, and thoughtfulness.***

According to our Governor and government guidelines and regulations, ***we are not ready to open our congregations without putting members at risk****. Doing so violates our holy calling to make those most vulnerable ("the widow, the orphan and the foreigner," in biblical understanding) our priority concern. I realize that not all our congregations operate in the same context, especially those in the northern parts of our synod, and some may be ready to open their doors sooner than others. But what remains true is that* ***in New York, we are NOT, at the present time, ready to open without jeopardizing the health of our members and communities.***

Based on government and medical information and the example of some ecumenical partners, ***I strongly recommend that we refrain from having any in-person gatherings until July 1.*** *And, should it become permissible before July 1st to have gatherings of ten persons, any in-person gatherings, even when limited to ten persons, we must follow health guidelines to prevent transmission of this virus that is still very much with us. Also, since there is no fully safe way to practice communion,* ***I am asking that we continue to fast from sharing the sacrament until at least July 1.*** *Our Churchwide office is working to suggest ways the Eucharist can be celebrated and distributed so that it remains life-giving.*

Maintaining the connectedness of our faith communities is very important as is every person's health and safety. Therefore, I am recommending that our faith communities remain remotely connected with digital Services of the Word, online Bible Study classes, and Zoom coffee hours, brunches, and wellness meetings, etc."

I have asked Margaret and John Neverka to work on applying the guidelines we are receiving from the bishop's office to our space here at Saint John. No one knows the building and property better than they do, and their scout backgrounds will most definitely ensure that we are prepared when the time comes to gather once again. I would ask that everyone refrain from going into the building as they are coordinating with the sexton to clean and close off certain areas in preparation for us gathering. Bishop Bill Gohl of the Delaware-Maryland Synod (and one-time member of the youth group I led at my previous congregation) has simply said, "patience dear church – be safe and be well." And that's where we are today. I look forward to seeing you all – in person – once it is safe to do so. *Tom Sargent, president*

A Note of Gratitude

Thank you to…

* Karen and Tom Brucia for counting the offering and depositing it at the bank each month.
* Tom Selvaggio and Jeana Dwyer for continuing to research and work on ways to receive grants and loans.
* Jessica Pagano for continuing to send Sunday School lessons and great activities to her class.
* Our council members for reaching out to members by phone to check on everyone.

Please hold our members and friends in your prayers who are infected or healing from the coronavirus, those who were already battling health issues and are more vulnerable and those who work in the health care field or as first responders including Sofia & Kevin Brevogel, Michael Dwyer, Michael Giordano, Pam Drewes, Brian Pellegrino, Kim Smith and Eric Thilesen.

Let's try to be kind and support one another in any way we can. Reach out via phone or email to say hello, send a card or note or have the kids do a drawing to cheer someone up.

EASY CRUMB CAKE

Missing coffee hour? Try this simple recipe: **Ingredients:** any yellow cake mix, **for topping:** 2 sticks of butter (almost melted), 2 cups flour, 1 cup sugar, 4 teaspoons cinnamon

Use a 9 x 13 pan to make cake following directions. Pull out of the oven about 8 minutes before it's done baking. Crumble topping over cake and finish baking.

Worship Opportunities

Here is the weekly schedule for online worship:
Sunday mornings—8:30 am Facebook live, 9:30 am Zoom

Tuesdays—Lectio Divina 7:00 pm on Zoom

Wednesdays—Vespers 7:00 pm on Facebook Live

Fridays—Bible study 12 pm on Zoom

Pastor sends the Zoom links out ahead of time. You can watch live on Facebook or catch up at anytime, it's recorded and accessible on our Facebook page.

Social Ministry

You can check the Food for the Month list, since we are on for June (posted on Facebook), but New Life Center is very low on the following items and would appreciate donations: **cereal, pancake mix, pancake syrup, rice & tuna fish**

The other great need is layette items (have to be new not used). Layette sets are brought by the caseworker to clients in the hospital when they have a baby. The sizes needed are 0-24 months, and those items are: **infant socks, stretchies (cotton knit not flannel), sleepers, sacks, receiving blankets, outfits, bottles, wipes, baby wash, diapers - size 4 & 5**

If you are able to purchase items either online or while doing your grocery shopping, please consider picking up some items for New Life Center. There are more people than ever relying on extra sources to ensure they have enough food for their families. Karen Brucia is willing to make deliveries, so please coordinate donations with her.

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Find us on:

Deadline for the next issue of The Eagle is June 19, 2020. Please email articles to jcsargent@optonline.net.

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