



# St. John's Evangel

## WELCOME

To the newsletter of  
St. John  
Evangelical  
Lutheran  
Church  
LCMS

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## ST. JOHN'S EVANGEL

February 2012



### You Gotta Have Heart!

“let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.” (Hebrews 10:22 ESV)

A couple of weeks ago I had my annual physical. One new little issue came up and the visit went on a bit longer than usual, and has led to scheduling a few more appointments with the requisite poking and prodding that goes with them.

**Be that as it may, don't worry, it is nothing major, but it did lead, as it usually does to a long discussion with this doctor about Medicare and the government's intrusion into health care.** This doctor has opted out of Medicare because, according to him, he would have to see too great a number of patients to practice good medicine. In fact, he said that if he was seeing that many patients he would not have had the time to notice the situation with my heart and would have probably sent me home with the easily solved problem undetected.

**He said, “My job is to take care of hearts and I have to have the time to do that.” That statement stuck me and I pondered out loud, “Hum, that's my job, too!” Which set him to pondering as well, “yes, you're right.”**

I share this with you because this month we celebrate St. Valentine's Day, with the ubiquitous heart symbol. It is so universal that in California you can get the heart symbol as part of your license plate

### The View from the Bridge



number standing in for the word “love.”

With this in mind, February is “National Heart Month.” A time to get that check up on your heart, and not just at your local doctor. **Over 900 times in God's Word we find the word “heart” linked to as the center of our emotions.** We find broken hearts, joyous hearts and everything in between hearts. We find hard hearts and melted hearts, we find hearts of stone, we find hearts of clay molded by the Spirit, we find hearts going out, we find hearts turning away.

**And we find our Father's heart broken when we turn our hearts away from Him. And for us, His Son's heart was pierced by the spear on the cross.**

Not to leave us with a broken heart, but to give us “a true heart in full assurance of faith.”

So come on in for a check up any Sunday morning, or call me to schedule your check up.

Your heart will thank you!

## FASTNACHT

Tuesday night, February 21 is Shrove Tuesday (also known as Pancake Day, Pancake Tuesday, Fat Tuesday, and Mardi Gras) is a term used in English-speaking countries, for the day preceding Ash Wednesday, the first day of the season of fasting and prayer called Lent.



The word *shrove* is the past tense of the English verb *to shrive*, which means to obtain absolution for one's sins by way of confession and doing penance. During the week before Lent, sometimes called Shrovetide in English, Christians were expected to go to confession in preparation for the penitential season of turning to God. Shrove Tuesday was the last day before the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday, and noted in histories dating back to 1000 AD. The popular celebratory aspect of the day had developed long before the Protestant Reformation, and was associated with releasing high spirits before the somber season of Lent. It is analogous to the continuing Carnival tradition associated with Mardi Gras (and its various names in different countries) that continued separately in European Catholic countries.

In the United States, the term Shrove Tuesday is less widely known outside of people who observe the liturgical traditions of the Episcopal, Lutheran, Methodist, and Catholic churches. Because of the increase in many immigrant populations and traditions since the 19th century, and the rise of highly publicized festivals, Mardi Gras has become more familiar as the designation for that day.

## Tuesday, February 21

**Is the date for our FastNacht. We'll gather from 5:30 to 7:00 pm for food and fellowship. Come and go as you please.** Celebrate our family here at St. John as we get ready for Lent.

Deacon Dave will be leading a team of men to **flip the pancakes and fixin's, so just come and enjoy the end of the Epiphany season.**

## Prayer Vigil News:

Last year during our Launch Out campaign, our church did something that many of us had never before experienced. We held a Prayer Vigil on Ash Wednesday. We've heard many positive comments from those who participated in it and so we are doing it again this year!

Ash Wednesday is the perfect day for a Prayer Vigil as we enter into the Season of Lent in the preparation of our hearts for what God Almighty has done for us. Ash Wednesday is February 22nd.

There are a few ways that you can be a part of the Prayer Vigil. First of all, if you have prayers that you wish to submit to be brought before the LORD, please fill out a card accordingly. You can also sign up as a participant during the Prayer Vigil. We will have a schedule with designated slots that we want completely filled so that we as a congregation are in constant prayer throughout the day. We will begin at 10am and end at 6:30pm with Worship following at 7pm.

The actual Prayer Vigil will be a time of intentional and deliberate prayer. You will have time to ponder your thoughts and meditate specific prayers. You will not be asked to pray aloud. Many of the people that joined together in last year's event left feeling replenished as they drew closer to the Lord during their prayer time. If you wish to join in this rewarding experience, please sign up on the register in the entrance to the church. There are prayer request cards there as well.

Finally, if you want to help in other ways, we will need people to be the Door Keepers and Prayer Leaders. Please call Sheryl Larson @ 928-763-9094 or 928-279-2579 if you would like to volunteer your services for either of these two positions.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus' Name,  
Sheryl Larson and the Prayer Team



## Prayer Team and Mid-week Morning Prayer at St. John

*“Audacious prayer, which perseveres unflinchingly and ceases not through fear, is well pleasing unto God,”* wrote Luther. *“As a shoe maker makes a shoe, or a tailor makes a coat, so ought a Christian to pray. Prayer is the daily business of a Christian.”*

Prayer is an essential part of our life together in God's Kingdom. You may recall a few months back, when we celebrated “Back to Church Sunday”, a prayer request card was attached to each and every bulletin. Since that time, the amount of prayer requests received each Sunday has continued to grow, and you may have noticed that the prayer requests on each week's bulletin have continued to grow accordingly. As part of our calling as God's People, we are bold to pray for each of these requests, trusting in God's Word in James 5:16, *“The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.”*

At the December meeting, your Board of Spiritual Care established an additional way to care for the needs of our brothers and sisters in Christ, both at St. John and elsewhere. The Spiritual Care Board established a team to pray for each and every prayer request that comes in to St. John throughout the week, as well as to follow up (if possible) with those submitting requests.

As a supplement to the prayers each week in Sunday Worship, we have also begun meeting each Wednesday morning at 8am (AZ time) for a brief service, including daily Psalm & Bible readings, prayers for each person on the church's prayer chain, prayers for the Church (locally and internationally), and for

our elected leaders and officials. Anyone is welcome to attend this morning prayer service, which is usually led by myself and lasts about 20 minutes.

It's easy to see the emphasis Jesus places on prayer in His words and deeds in the Gospels. It seemed that as often as possible, Jesus went aside from the disciples in prayer. He taught us how to pray in a simple and effective form using very few words, “Our Father, who art in heaven...” The night when Jesus was betrayed, he spent many hours in prayer, in conversation with the Heavenly Father, both for the unity of His people the Church, and as He approached His coming passion and death. St. Paul admonishes Christians to “Pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17).

Regarding prayer, Dr. Luther wrote that it is, *“The hardest work of all – a labor above all labors, since he who prays must wage almighty warfare against the doubt and murmuring excited by the faint-heartedness and unworthiness we feel within us...that unutterable and powerful groaning with which the godly rouse themselves against despair, the struggle in which they call mightily upon their faith.”*

So then, I encourage you to continue to pray for the needs of God's people, especially those listed each week in our bulletin. I also ask that you continue to submit prayer requests, and if at all possible leave your name so that we can follow up with you about those whom we are praying for. More information on prayer is listed in the article on **Women's Ministry in this month's newsletter** as well, including a new series on prayer for **Monday Night Women's Bible Study** and our **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Prayer Vigil on Ash Wednesday (Feb. 22)**.



Your Servant in Christ,  
Pastor Brandon D. Larson  
Brandon@stjohnbhc.org



Orphan Grain Train  
California – Arizona- Nevada Branch  
Is sponsoring a third  
"Undie Sunday"  
February 12, 2012

There are many destitute people in and around our Pacific Southwest District including Tijuana, Mexico and beyond who need basic necessities. These people do not always poses good underwear and socks. Children in Tijuana must have socks to go to school.

You can Help!  
Collect NEW underwear for Orphan Grain Train to distribute to needy people! Men's, women's, boy's and girl's---all sizes are needed. 100% cotton is the most useful kind.

Bring them with you to church by  
Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup>

Our LWML group will assist in gathering the items. There is a large box in the entry to drop your items in. If you care to make a monetary donation the check can be made to St. John, just write Orphan Grain Train in the memo portion. We will send one check from our congregation .



## Growing Together Women's Bible Study News:

Dear Sisters in Christ,

Do you ever find yourself struggling through "prayer time"? Do you sometimes feel inadequate to "go before" the throne of God? Questions, questions, questions such as "How do I pray?", "What should I say?", "When should I say it?", "who, what, when, where, why?????" If you have ever had a yes answer to any of these questions, you're not alone in the crowd.

Beginning on Monday, February 6th at 6:30pm, the Growing Together Women's Bible Study group will embark on a journey into various aspects of prayer. The first subject to be covered will be "What is Prayer?" followed by other points such as "What is an acceptable prayer?", "What attitude should I have in Prayer?", "Will God answer me?", "When and Where Should I pray?", and the list goes on for a total of 12 chapters of studying God's Word on what He says about prayer.

It seems as though "how to pray" may be complicated and/or adjusted to fit man's perception, I'm not sure so I want to know more. What about you? Hope you will make the time to get educated on this subject and share in the time of fellowship with other women. There will be no cost to you for this study. Please call the church office @ 928-758-2301 if you have questions.

Sincerely in Christ Jesus' Name,  
Sheryl Larson



## More Mission News

As a result of your generosity during the Advent season we were able to send \$1,500.00 to our brothers and sisters in Christ in the new nation of Sothern Sudan. This will pay for 1/2 of the cost of a new well for their village. As we have mentioned, over half the illnesses in Africa are caused by water-born diseases from bad water. New water wells combat this problem.

We will continue to contribute to this cause with our Lenten Offerings which will be shared with the Bible Sticks for our servicemen. We have supported this program in the past. Little MP3 players that are about the size of a pack of gum are given to our servicemen in Afghanistan and elsewhere that play the entire New Testament. So, for Lent we will have two mission projects going on: A water well in Sudan and New Testaments for our military overseas.

### Another View of Stewardship

Christian Stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God, and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

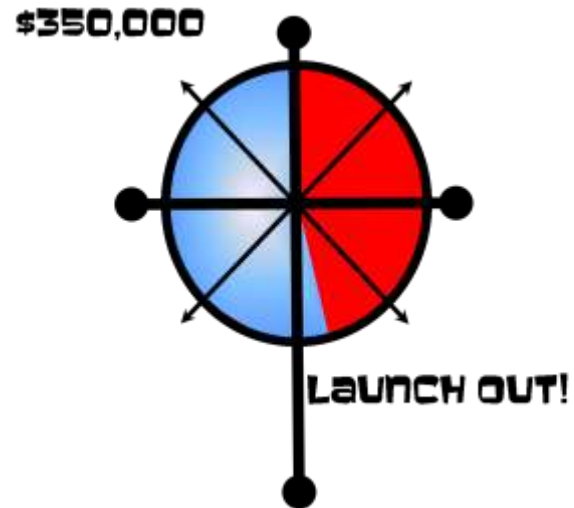
When we think of stewardship we usually think in terms of income and outgo. Your tithes and offerings are the income. We work hard in the office to manage the outgo. At the end of the year we then rejoice that God has blessed us and the numbers line up.

However, there is another aspect to stewardship, that in light of the above definition we keep in mind as well: managing life and life's resources for God's purposes. As you look over our calendar of the month you will see how we are doing that. We have been blessed with a good facility thanks to the dedication of those who have gone before. If we only used the facility for three hours or so on Sunday mornings, I think you would agree that is very poor stewardship. As God has blessed us with growth and opportunities to serve, we have been using more of the building and more often than we have in the past. This includes the improvements we have made in the past few years. Rather than half of our property sitting vacant with weeds growing we have children and adults running and playing on the field and playground. Even during one of the funerals a couple of weeks ago a group of young men were playing football and a family was having a picnic while the children scrambled across the playground.

Looking at our calendar we find very few open spots. We have been trying to find some open times to begin other groups and have been having outside groups wanting to meet here. Unfortunately we have had to turn ourselves and them down. I'm sorry, that will have to wait for our new building.

While it hurts to say that, the reality is that we are practicing really good stewardship. We are using what God has given us as fully as possible. We are managing life's resources for God's purposes. Thank God!

As of the end of January, 2012, over \$160,000 has been contributed to our Launch Out Campaign. This is 45% of our total 3 year goal in the first 10 months.



### Launch Out!

You see the words every week in the worship folder. You see the little chart in each newsletter. And yet, many of you may not know what Launch Out! is all about. Since we have added 40 new members and many regular new guests after Launch Out! began, a brief review is in order.

Launch Out! started in 2010 in response to the blessings of God reflected in the growth here at St. John. In 2007 we developed a vision which included the eventual expansion of our facilities to meet the need. This has occurred a little sooner than most of us expected (**you can't out-vision God**) and so, the Launch Out! campaign was begun. Simply put, Launch Out! is an opportunity for you to give to the Lord **through St. John with an "over and above" pledge that is given over a three year period.** Our pledge Sunday was March 20 when the members came forward with their cards offering nearly \$350,000.00 for our work together. A dollar given in Launch Out! is a dollar not borrowed for our new facilities. You may still participate in this campaign by picking up a pledge card in the entry and putting it in the offering plate. If you would like a copy of the Launch Out! brochure, please contact the church office.





Happy New Year! Thank You to all who voted in November. Since the inception of "Choice Dollars" one year ago, St John has received almost \$15,000 which we have designated to be used for Launch Out. This year your choice dollars will be accumulated as follows: \$2.30 for every \$100 of Premiums on qualifying Insurance Products and \$1.15 per \$1,000 of contract value on Life Insurance and Annuity Products (calculated quarterly). Thank You to everyone who has a Thrivent Product and has designated St. John as your designation for "Choice Dollars". If you are a member and have not designated your Choice Dollars and want to please see me or Mark Larson.

Barbara Krauss Congregation Advocate  
928-770-4375



# JOY

Attention all Seniors! Here's a group designed just for us, and it's called Just Older Youth - JOY for short. Have you checked it out yet? Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> was the first get-together for the new year. Getting off to a great start we enjoyed a South of the Border lunch - hard to find a person who doesn't just love Mexican food! We had a super turnout - food was delicious and the company was excellent.... Dave Gumz's devotion was a charming story about a boy who lost and then found his toy boat in a store window - comparing it to how our loving Father rescues us and "buys" us back when we are lost.... The guest speaker was Barb Kremer our Parish Nurse here at St. John. What an interesting and informative talk she gave us - Barb will be a vital part of our church family and we welcome the important role she will play..... Beginning in February we will be meeting the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of every month instead of the 3<sup>rd</sup> - mark your calendars and we look forward to seeing you then!

## Our Response to Jesus

		<u>2011</u>		<u>2010</u>
Dec.	4	269	\$ 4,066.07	221
Dec.	11	295	\$ 4,493.81	239
Dec.	18	278	\$ 3,927.75	268
Dec.	24	390	\$ 4,635.81	420
Dec.	25	160		169
		<u>2012</u>		<u>2011</u>
Jan.	1	233	\$ 5,954.17	260
Jan.	8	315	\$ 611.02	271
Jan.	15	325	\$ 4,805.55	281
Jan.	22	332	\$ 4,340.07	244
Jan.	29			





## Sunday School News:

Colleen Urbanczyk

**Who helps us spell & write?  
Who helps us cut & glue?  
Our teacher's aides of course,  
Hannah & Leah that's who!**

A special thanks to Hannah Borland and Leah Szirmay for helping each week with Sunday School!

The following students had perfect attendance for the months of December and January.

December: *Olivia Arbogast, Hannah Urbanczyk, Addison Urbanczyk, Rhett Urbanczyk & Hayden Urbanczyk.*

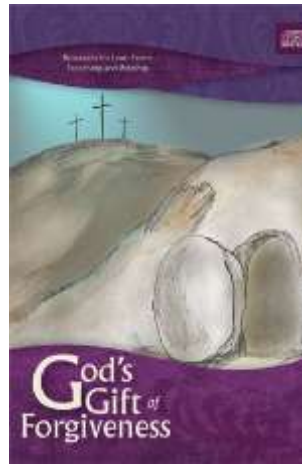
January: *Hannah Urbanczyk, Addison Urbanczyk, Rhett Urbanczyk & Hayden Urbanczyk.*

**Ter r ific Job guys!!!**

Wow! They look great!

Have you noticed how bright and shiny the Sanctuary looks? Our Chairman of Parish Services, Doyle Willis, organized a group of our men to restrain and reseal the pews and altar furnishing from end to end.

Thanks to all for a job well done!



## The Season of Lent

Ash Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 pm, marks the beginning of our Lenten journey to Holy Week and Easter. This year, keeping with our Spring focus on prayer, we are going to focus on **what are called the "penitential psalms."** We start on Ash Wednesday with Psalm 8 and then turn to Psalms 32, 38, 51, 102, and 143 for the Wednesday services.

For Holy Week we consider Psalm 116 on Maundy Thursday, Psalm 130 on Good Friday and then Psalm 16 for the Festival of the Resurrection on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012.

## Lenten Meals

Given our rapid growth in the last couple of years, we are going to return to our soup/salad format for our Wednesday Lenten meals beginning at 6:00 pm (starting on February 29—no meal on Ash Wednesday).

We will have a sign-up sheet in the entry with a list for each week for soups and a list for salads. You may sign up for more than one Wednesday, for more than one thing to bring.

## Meals and Worship?

**As always, feel free to come to the meal even if you can't stay for worship or come to worship if you can't make the meal.** Then again, you can always come to both!

## Confirmation During Lent?

Our young people in Junior Confirmation will continue to meet during Lent. On Ash Wednesday they will join the congregation in worship. On the other Wednesdays, they will get some food at 6:00 pm, head up stairs for the lesson, and then join in worship at 7:00 pm.





## LWML News

A New Year - new ways to serve our Lord - challenges, ideas, projects - how are we going to find the time, energy and resources to do all these projects? If we are honest, it does seem overwhelming at times. Don't despair - the best solution yet has always been the same - thus far God has seen us through ALL our projects - even though we sometimes forget God's promises, we can be sure that God doesn't forget us..... Our first business meeting of 2012 was very well attended - we do have a wonderful group, and I for one, feel so close to each and everyone of our wonderful ladies as time goes by and as we get better acquainted..... Under "new business" we began to plan our next Labors of Love yard sale which will be held April 20th and 21st. Are there things in your house and/or garage that seem to be cluttering up your life? Look at it as spring housecleaning and "bite the bullet" donate it! You will make someone very happy - including yourself. At this point in my life - less is more - I don't always follow my advice however..... Another "Undie Sunday" coming up soon - February 12th. More information on this can be found in another article in this newsletter... Decision time next month - which missions shall we support in 2012 - let's prayerfully check our list and consider the joy we will receive by making a difference in many lives..... Reminder to all St. John ladies - come join us, you will be blessed!

Corinne Lawrence

## VALUES—WHAT'S IMPORTANT AT ST. JOHN

At St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church of the Valley we are:

Hooked on Jesus.

He has Hooked us by His love therefore:

We each strive to express the *love* of Jesus

Through

Modeling a Christian lifestyle

Modeling Christian relationships

Developing relationships with all people

He has Hooked us through His *Word* therefore:

We each strive to *grow*

Through

Learning

Teaching

And Sharing that Word

He has Hooked us into His *mission* therefore:

We each strive to reach out to *all people*,

Through

Meeting needs in the community

Offering activities and events for *families of all kinds*

Being active in our support of LCMS missions