

March/April
May 2025

Issue #165

The Grapevine

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
15 N. Church Street | Thurmont MD 21788

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Greetings from Pastor Joe...

Grace and peace to you - in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ. I'm sure you have heard the old adage "March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb." For those of us that live in this region we know that it isn't always the case. Another old adage is "If you don't like the weather - stick around, it will change." March in our region may not come in like a lion. It may come in like the much anticipated spring weather we long for after a cold winter. It may also go out with snow or ice on the ground. The only consistent thing about the weather in our region is its inconsistency.

The month of March may go out like a lamb, but according to the Gospel of John, Jesus came into the world like a lamb. In the Gospel of John, John the Baptizer describes Jesus this way "Here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)

For most of the month of March and into April we will be walking our Lenten journey. Lent is a time of transition as well as a time for self-reflection that ends with the celebration of the resurrection of our Lord. Because of that first Easter Sunday we can be comforted in knowing that HE IS RISEN! The promise of the empty tomb is a promise of new life for you and for me. The Apostle Paul writes, "You were dead in your trespasses and sins..." (Ephesians 2:1). Thankfully Jesus does not keep us dead in our trespasses and sins. Easter is a season of hope and rebirth. We are called out of our tombs and will be raised up in new life. "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love... made us alive together with Christ" (Ephesians 2:4-5).

The Lamb that took our sin away is the One that promises that we too will one day be resurrected. My prayer for you as we transition into the Easter season is that Christ's death and resurrection is your source of peace, not just through this Easter season but throughout the year.

The Christian faith is a journey and the journey is not meant to be walked out alone. I encourage you as we journey through the Lenten and Easter seasons, and throughout the month of May, that we continue to walk with each other and invite others to be a part of our journey.

In Christ,
- Pastor Joe



Stewardship Report

Due to the extenuating circumstances of Steve Erlitz being incapacitated and recovering and rehabbing at Frederick Crossing Care Community, we are unable to provide his usual Stewardship Report. We hope to have a report for you in our next newsletter.

An Update on Steve:

Pastor Joe regularly visits and speaks to Steve through text messages. He is working hard during his rehabilitation sessions. He was given at least 30 more days from his insurance company to continue to stay and rehab at Frederick Crossing with the hope that he will be able to finally go home after the 30 days are completed.

Until he's able to return to his duties at St. John's, Steve will be taking a leave of absence.

Please keep Steve and Mary Ann in your prayers as they navigate through this trying time together.

If you would like to send Steve a card or letter, you may mail them to either of the addresses below:

Frederick Crossing Care Community
30 North Place
Frederick, MD 21701

12109 B Old Frederick Road
Thurmont, MD 21788

“With Christ, it is not how much we give, but what we do not give that is the real test.”

- Oswald Chambers

“Don't tell me you're trusting God until you trust Him with your pocket-book.”

- J. Vernon McGee

“A leader is one who knows the way, goes the way, and shows the way.”

- John C. Maxwell

“But you, take courage! Do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.”

- 2 Chronicles 15:7

Have you ever wondered why local churches have church councils? Church councils date back centuries where only bishops were present for the administration of the church. The earliest meetings were held in the second century. Then in the year 313 Constantine convened the Council of Nicaea, which produced the Nicene Creed that we say in church today. Over the years councils began to appear in the local church to discuss the administration and the ministries of the church.

Local church councils are vital for guiding a church’s mission and ministry, ensuring its organizational and present life is aligned with its vision, and fostering cooperation and ecumenism among different denominations. They play a key role in planning, implementing, and evaluating programs of nurture, outreach, and witness.

That’s a long-winded way of saying that the church council has the best interest of our church members and the community when meeting and planning for the life of the church. All of our church council members give their time, talent and treasures to assure that we continue to live out our mission statement: *“Loved by God... to love others!”*

Our council is a vital part of our church. If you would like to know more about our council or if you are interested in serving on the council, please contact one of our members listed below:

Current council members:

Julie Eiseman, Carolyn Fraley, Chris Kreitz, Lisa Riffle, Barbarateen Roderick and Gayle Spahr

Preschool News

It's been a long cold winter for us here at the Preschool with numerous snow days, and we are glad Spring is just around the corner

The Preschool, during the month of March, will be holding Registration for the 2025/2026 school year. We will be learning about and celebrating St. Patrick's Day. All classes will be celebrating Dr. Seuss' Birthday, all week with a lot of fun activities each day. All classes will be studying about Community Helpers; the three-year-old class will be having guest speakers to talk about Police, Firefighters and Medical community helpers.

The four-year-old class is in the process of scheduling a possible field trip next door to the Fire Department.

As we move into Spring, we will be studying all things relating to spring. We will be studying the story of Easter, along with enjoying an Easter party. **The Preschool will be closed for Easter Break, April 14-21, 2025.**

We are still waiting on confirmation and finalizing a date in April for the FCCLA Club at Catocin High School to come and present their Raining Strawberries educational program, like they did last year. This was a good educational day working with students from the High School.

After Easter we will begin preparing for the **Graduation/Spring Program on May 22.**

We wish everyone a Happy Easter.

- Wanda Mathias

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember. Involve me and I learn."

- Ancient Chinese Proverb

Meet Our Preschool Teacher *Rachel Mosiychuk*

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

- Aristotle



Tell us a little about yourself.

Rachel: I did not graduate college with a teaching degree. I graduated with a communications degree. My husband and I are from Ohio. We moved out here, started our family and I started with St. John's. It's something that God has lead me to

as far as becoming part of the team here. I was asked to be a long term substitute. When my son was in the three's class I ended up getting hired the next year. It's actually been almost ten years now. We have three children here and one in heaven. My husband is a police officer in D.C. We've been raising our family in Thurmont since 2006. We love being part of the community. Hannah is 15. My son Aaron is 13 and our youngest daughter Leyna is 8. All of my kids have come through the preschool.

What do you like about living in Thurmont?

Rachel: I have really loved the small town feel. I've said from the very beginning it's been a great place to raise a family away from our family. Having most of our family in Ohio we really rely on our church family and our friends in our community that we made here for ourselves to help raise our children in the way that we want. It's a beautiful area. We love to spend time outdoors. We love to hike and camp. It's been a great place to do all of that.

What church do you and your family belong to?

Rachel: When we moved out here we went to Southend Baptist for 16 years. And then actually about two and a half – three years ago – right after COVID, we switched churches and we now attend First Baptist Thurmont.

What do you like most about teaching?

Rachel: I just really love being able to pour into kids that are so receptive to what you want to teach them. I love being able to share God's love with them in an environment that they enjoy being in. I never knew that was what God has had for me the past ten years, but I really loved being a part of molding those kids lives in the stage of life where they're developing that love for school. I've always said they need to learn to love to go to school first before they want to learn.

Meet Our Preschool Teacher

Rachel Mosiychuk

So what do you least like about being a teacher?

Rachel: The hard conversations that maybe you have to have with parents on whether it's their child's behavior or developmental disability that you may start to notice. Maybe before the parents notice and trying to have those conversations with tact and grace can be challenging at times to try to say what you need to say in the right way.

Would you say that's your biggest challenge as a teacher?

Rachel: I'd say yes. And just the day to day unexpected behaviors that sometimes come up. Just some of the different situations that you are not expecting that maybe trickle into the classroom that you learn about what happens at home with the kids. I will never say I've seen it all.

Could you envision doing this someplace else?

Rachel: Wow, that's a really good question. Actually, I have always said I could not envision doing this anywhere else because of the environment that has been created here within the classroom. Being able to have the support of my co-teacher and the freedom to be able to have a bible lesson with the kids and share about why they are so loved by God. I don't know if I really could teach in the public system where it's more stifled.

What do you want the church to know about the school?

Rachel: I would love the church to know how we care about the kids and what we're doing day to day and the hard work that all of the teachers put in. I would love the church to know that we take our reputation as far as what we built – what any teacher for the past fifty years has done to implement the reputation that St. John's Christian Preschool has in the community. We still hold that as the most high value and we work every day to continue to make that reputation and the impression that we leave with families positive and a reflection of the church.

How can the church help the preschool?

Rachel: The biggest help would be to show their support – they don't need to be involved in the classrooms – but somehow show that we're more united or that we're supported in spirit. I really hope that the people of the church considers the preschool as part of the church.

- Interview by Pastor Joe

"Teachers who love teaching, teach children to love learning."

- Unknown

Fundraising Committee

“Faith does not eliminate questions. But faith knows where to take them.”

- Elisabeth Elliot

The Fundraising Committee is formerly known as The Women of the Church.

Easter will be here before we know it and now is the time to start planning Spring Fundraising events.

We will once again host our annual Easter flower and bake sale on Saturday, April 19th from 9am to noon in the Church Social Hall. Hopefully, the weather will be agreeable and we will be able to set up some of our wares outside in front of the Church to entice passersby. We will feature lilies, tulips and hyacinths as well as daffodils, if we can get them from the growers.

We will have sign-up sheets in the Social Hall starting the end of March for Church members to volunteer to bring baked goods and to volunteer for whatever time they can give us. Please help as you are able with making cakes, pies, cookies, brownies, etc.

We will also feature a small assortment of Easter baskets for all ages.

Baked goods can be dropped off at the Church on Good Friday. Times will be announced later depending on the time of the service that day. Items for the sale will also be accepted early on the 19th.

Spring will be most welcome this year and we wish you a beautiful and blessed season of Lent and Easter.

- From your Fundraising Family

Outreach Update

“Loved by God . . . to love others!” A reminder to one and all that this is our St. John’s mission statement.

- **Thurmont Food Bank-** “Thank you” to everyone who so generously contributed to our February collection. We received boxes of our requested Hamburger, Tuna and Chicken Helper, plus packets of Knorr pasta and rice “sides” (which also serve as meal “helpers”). Then, too, an additional number of breakfast items (our focus for January) also made their way into our baskets. And, finally, we received an extensive assortment of individually-boxed beverage mixes, suitable for children and adults alike. As always, the Thurmont Food Bank personnel remain truly grateful for every item donated to this vitally important community-outreach program – the need for which continues to grow more and more each month!

For the months of **March and April**, we ask you to consider bringing in **cans of soup, plus meals in a can (such as Chef Boyardee pastas)**. And please don’t forget that personal hygiene products are always welcome contributions, too.

Thank you, in advance, for whatever you can provide! (Just a friendly reminder to please check the “expiration dates” of your purchases.)

- **Further Outreach-** The Outreach Team will meet with Pastor Joe sometime in March to explore other opportunities for outreach in 2025. Please pass along any suggestions to Carolyn, Mary Lou or Pastor Joe. ... Additional volunteers are always welcome to join the team!

- Outreach Team

“Let’s quit fiddling with religion and do something to bring the world to Christ.”

- Billy Sunday

“The church that becomes focused upon maintaining itself instead of the gospel becomes a dead branch of the living vine.”

- Thomas C. Oden

Looking Ahead... *Mark Your Calendars!*

“Good fortune is what happens when opportunity meets with planning.”

- Thomas Edison

- **Bible Study** - A group meets with Pastor Joe every Tuesday at 11:00am. We are continuing our study of Romans, using the study guide entitled *How to Be a Christian Without Being Religious*. Please join us whenever possible!
- **“A Cup of Joe with Pastor Joe”** - A friendly get-together with Pastor Joe on Tuesdays at Dunkin’ Donuts, 9:00am - 10:00am. It’s a great way to begin the day!
- **Sunday Socials** - Please join us on the **first** Sunday of each month for food and fellowship following our worship service.
- **Terrific Tuesdays** - This gathering gives parents and children the opportunity to understand the Bible using crafts and puppet presentations. We typically meet at 6:00PM on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, with food provided. Come join the fun!
- **Elias Lutheran Church in Emmitsburg** is having a Yard Sale/Soup & Sandwich Sale on March 20, 21, and 22, 9:00am – 2:00pm each day. Stop by if you can!
- **Our Holy Week and Easter Services are as follows:**
 - Palm/Passion Sunday** – April 13 at 8:30am
 - Maundy Thursday** – April 17 at 4:00pm
 - Good Friday** – April 18 at 4:00pm
 - Easter Worship** – April 20 at 8:30am

Everyone is invited to experience each phase of this spiritual journey, which culminates in the glorious Resurrection of Our Lord on Easter morning.

- **Our Annual Flower and Bake Sale** will be held on Saturday, April 19, 9:00am–12:00pm, here at St. John’s in the fellowship hall. An assortment of homemade treats will be on sale, plus a selection of potted plants – tulips, lilies, and hyacinths. Be sure to spread the word about this popular fundraising event!

**Worship Assistants' Schedule
March 2025**

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
3/2	Kelli Donaghue	Harriet & Randy Valentine
3/9	Chris Kreitz	Kandy & Steve Hauk
3/16	Lisa Riffle	Harriet & Randy Valentine
3/23	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Tina Mumm & Carolyn Fraley
3/30	Kelli Donaghue	Kandy & Steve Hauk

**Therefore
welcome one
another as Christ
has welcomed
you, for the
glory of God.
- Romans 15:7**

**Worship Assistants' Schedule
April 2025**

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
4/6	Kelli Donaghue	Harriet & Randy Valentine
4/13 Palm Sunday	Chris Kreitz	Harriet & Randy Valentine
4/17 Maundy Thursday Service at 4:00pm	Chris Kreitz	Mike Kreitz
4/18 Good Friday Service at 4:00pm	Chris Kreitz	Mike Kreitz
4/20 Easter Sunday	Lisa Riffle	Kandy & Steve Hauk
4/27	Chris Kreitz	Tina Mumm & Carolyn Fraley

****Please Note****

**If you cannot be present on the assigned date,
be sure to trade with another assistant. Thank you!**

Worship Assistants' Schedule May 2025

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
5/4	Kelli Donaghue	Harriet & Randy Valentine
5/11	Lisa Riffle	Kandy & Steve Hauk
5/18	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Dottie & Don Valentine
5/25	Chris Kreitz	Tina Mumm & Carolyn Fraley



In March, St. John's launched its newest ministry "*Loads of Love*".

Throughout each month we will be collecting quarters in our *Loads of Love* jar. The money collected will be used to help people in our community wash and dry their clothes at the Super Suds Laundromat at 27 Water Street.

The last Saturday of each month Pastor Joe, and anyone that would like to accompany him, will meet at St. John's at 8:30 and walk down to Super Suds and hand out quarters to patrons of the laundromat. So, check your sofa cushions, your pockets and your vehicles for quarters that you can donate!

See Pastor Joe for further details.

Birthdays & Prayers

March Birthdays

3/5 Dan Bradley
3/9 Harriet Valentine
3/11 Amanda Unger
3/12 Richard Lohr
3/24 Chester Zentz, Jr.
3/28 Kaitlin Fox

April Birthdays

4/6 Michael Delauter
4/9 Rodman Myers
4/15 Randy Valentine
4/16 Darlene Fogle
4/18 Stacey Brown-Hobbs

May Birthdays

5/2 Ryan Delauter
5/11 Zachary Getz
5/25 Scott Hahn
5/26 Brian Getz
5/29 Lisa Riffle
5/30 Inus Lohr
5/30 Kristin Fox
5/31 Nathan Fox

Prayers

Please remember to pray for our Members:

Luke Bradley	Dan & Tracey Bradley	Fred Balius
Jim Riffle	Chester & Jean Zentz	Steve Hauk
Brian Getz	Nancy & Donald Creager	Connie Fox
Denny Edwards	Steve Erlitz	Robbie Freed
Ross Smith, Jr.	Mary Ann Erlitz	

For pastoral care, contact Pastor Joe @ 443-255-5229 or jherb1@yahoo.com

Birthdays & Prayers *(continued)*

Family and Friends:

Don Ardery - MM Griggs
Katie Wisnor - MM Griggs
Hannah Grubb - Lisa Riffle
Yvonne Mbella - Tracey Bradley
John Oravec - Kelli Donaghue
Linda & Keith Williams - Kelli Donaghue
Mandy Valentine - Harriet & Randy Valentine
Sam Kendall - Tonyia Miller
Barbara Bishop - Carolyn Fraley
Tim Pfister - Gayle Spahr
Ethel Brauer - Carolyn Fraley
Alan Cornett - MM Griggs
Cindy Parks - MM Griggs
Carl Thayer - Carolyn Fraley
Nancy Fraley - Carolyn Fraley
Chuck Samuel - Pastor Joe & Linda Herb
Cameron Palmer - MM Griggs
Dana Hance - Tina Mumm
Jim Latham - The Tankersley Family
Becky Gorby - Ashley Tankersley
Irene Denning - Lisa Riffle
Dennis McGrew - Lisa Riffle
Angela Ashenfelter - Tonyia Miller
Michelle Myers - Harriet & Randy Valentine
David Sanders - Tina Mumm
Michael Allshouse - Gayle Spahr

*(Please notify the office of any changes to the Prayer List.
Thank you.)*

In Service to our Country:

Josh Waldron Nickalas Kath

Multi-generational Church!

Martin Luther emphasized the crucial role of families in nurturing faith and passing down the Christian message, viewing the family as a “house of God” and a “little church” where parents are responsible for teaching their children God’s word. St. John’s has a history of multi-generational congregations. However, until recently there have been few young ones worshiping on Sundays. But, in the words of Bob Dylan, “*The Times They Are A-Changin’.*”

Now on any given Sunday, you can find *Logan, Lily and Lincoln Tankersley* coming forward to listen to and participate in a Children’s Message with Pastor Joe. They are the children of Kyle and Ashley Tankersley and grandchildren of MM Griggs. You may also hear the playful cooing of *Evangeline Brandenburg*, daughter of Cody and Sarah Brandenburg and granddaughter of Brian and Traci Getz. *Myah Pulice*, daughter of David and Mary Pulice, is often seen in the arms of her dad while dancing to our worship music. And our favorite four-year-old *Adam Stansberry* has been a regular Sunday morning attendee along with his parents Andrew and Lillith.

It’s an exciting time to worship at St. John’s!



Adam Stansberry



Myah Pulice

**Lily, Lincoln & Logan
Tankersley**

**Sarah & Evangeline
Brandenburg**

Church Office: 301-271-7877

Pastor: Joe Herb

Email: jherb1@yahoo.com

Cell# 443-255-5229

Administrative Assistant: Linda Herb

Email: admin@saintjohnlutheran.org

Website: www.saintjohnlutheran.org

St. John's Preschool: 301-271-4109

Financial Officer: Wanda Mathias

Email: stjpreschl@aol.com

**St. John's Evangelical
Lutheran Church
15 N. Church Street
Thurmont, MD 21788**

"Loved by God ... to love others!"

Ministers: The People of St. John's

**Sunday Worship Schedule
8:30am**

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**Please submit articles for
The Grapevine by
May 9, 2025**
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