



When God Ran

Dear Children of God,

You all know the parable of the prodigal son. This story has been on my heart for weeks. You've also heard me say it might be more helpful if we remember it as the parable of the two sons. When I read the text, attempting to get to the plain meaning historically and contextually correctly, I'm hit between the eyes with how Jesus spoke to the "Pharisees and teachers of the law" who were represented by the elder brother. Jesus wanted them to change. Their "frustration and bitterness" over Jesus' acceptance of the "tax collectors and sinners", the outcasts, the morally and religiously bankrupt, is clearly articulated in Luke 15, "This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them". The religious of the day kept the law, went to temple and prayed constantly. Yet, they didn't have eyes to see the God, in Jesus, who desires to reconcile all. The outcasts and sinners did!

Then there is the other son. Remember the text? "While he was a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with pity. He **ran** to the boy, clasped him in his arms and kissed him." The son dropped to his knees (pain), the father lifted him up (acceptance) and then offered the pronouncement and blessing – The father says, "My son, you are with me always, and all I have is yours." Clearly "the father saw him", not with his physical eyes but with the spiritual eyes of his heart.

Infinite compassion. Unconditional love. Forgiveness.

The father's behavior, in this parable and in this historical context, was incomprehensible, totally embarrassing and unimaginably disgraceful. No self-respecting father of stature, in that day, would ever do something as unthinkable as this man. The father RAN to the one who had turned his back on all he had to offer him. Silly boy. Everything imaginable, even more so, everything unimaginable had always been right in front of him.

What I am beginning to learn, after over sixty years of living, and most of those years committed to honoring and loving God, is that to heal we must intentionally choose to leave our lofty positions. The list of these lofty positions is long, and it includes power, age, position, and financial status. All are potential weapons against God's creation made available to us through privilege. We must have eyes to see and hearts to feel where we have caused harm if we are to ever have a chance to actually experience the father embracing his kneeling son. Remember, the son could only see his sin, his failing, and his resistance to all things called 'home'. It was the father who stood on watch longing for his son's return. It was the father who ran, embraced, and blessed his child.

The struggle to surrender self and see ourselves through our heavenly Father's eyes is the battlefield where Jesus prevails. Just like the younger son, you and I are dressed by our Father in His best robe. You and I are clothed in the righteousness of His Son Jesus. He recognized that accepting love, forgiveness and healing is often harder than giving it. I can relate! Like the younger son, I too know when love takes you in; there is much to celebrate!

That's my Easter story. I share it with you from a deep place in my heart. I extend this invitation for us to come together as one body committed to serving God by getting to know and loving our neighbors.

We've been invited, with the Son, to believe the unbelievable, receive the inconceivable, and see beyond our wildest imagination.

Lord, we come with great expectation.

Be blessed!

Pastor Bob



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STEWARDS OF OUR NATURAL WORLD

"God saw everything that God had made, and indeed, it was very good." – Genesis 1:31

Type "glacier loss" into an internet search engine, examine photos of ice sheets today versus just a few decades ago, and you will draw the same conclusion as the world's best scientists: We are losing ice, and fast.

But melting glaciers is just one of the many crises facing our natural world. Stressed by warming temperatures, rising sea levels, shifting weather patterns, acidifying ocean waters, and pollution of land, air and water, nature itself is under grave threat. Thousands of species of insects, plants and animals are going extinct as habitat, from coral reefs to rainforests to estuaries, is destroyed.

"Our planet is in crisis," says campaignfornature.org. "The natural world is disappearing at an unprecedented rate."

For God's people, appointed as caretakers of God's creation, this is not just troubling news but also a call to action.

This April 22, the 51st Earth Day, let's dedicate ourselves to learning about and fighting for God's creation. Here are some ideas:

- Learn about the growing crises and how they threaten our lives. Teach others.
- Pick one problem and make it a focus for education, awareness, and action in your family or congregation.
- Connect with nature by visiting a park or wild place near you.
- Pick up litter and trash from the street or public land.
- Learn about the plants and animals that live in your area.
- Plant flowers, herbs, vegetables, or trees.
- Advocate for public policies that will promote conservation.
- Find a special way to observe Earth Day in your family, congregation, or community.

Our natural world is under threat, but God's people can make a difference by caring and getting busy.

Rob Blezard Copyright © 2021, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, Maryland, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org.

He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.



COUNCIL CONNECTION

By: Jen Friz, Congregation Council President

I'm going to start this article with a tactic that I've used a few times since I've been elected as Congregation Council President at St. John's – disclose that I am not an expert. I am not an expert in church finances or financial stewardship; I am not a biblical scholar who has studied what the bible has to say about money. In fact, I'll disclose that Jason and I do not do a very good job of budgeting our home finances at all. It is a goal we have, but we have not made it a priority or put in the time.

That being said, I am happy to share that at the February 28, 2021 Annual Report Meeting of the Congregation, a motion was unanimously supported by voting members on the virtual meeting to pay off the remaining loan from the building renewal project. On March 10 the remaining loan balance of \$85,691 was paid off, that's from a total of \$1,200,000 taken out in December 2017. And today, St. John's does not have any debt!

The opportunity to pay off this loan early was made possible by an excess in funds at the end of 2020, due to contributions from our members in 2020 which exceeded the budget as well as increased income from the wonderful endowments with which our church has been blessed.

In 2021, we can say that we have a beautiful facility that has been renewed and refreshed. It's clean, bright, updated and a place in which we are proud. It's a place where we worship, praise and serve Jesus, a place where we can invite the community to get to know Jesus and help those in need. Our congregation has been literally richly blessed by former members who have entrusted St. John's with the money that God provided to them. They have expected our congregation to care for our members and our community in the name of Jesus and as a Congregation Council we will continue to drive clarity to our purpose and keep our actions and behaviors consistent with that purpose.

But I have a fear of that large number in St. John's bank account. I don't know what impact that number has on how our members give to our church. That large number can forgive poor stewardship or bad decision making or could lead us to indifference or complacency. There are lots of examples outside of the church where a financial windfall or gift can ruin lives. Stories of individuals that win a significant amount of money in the lottery or gain overnight wealth as a professional athlete that after a few years of mismanaging and overspending they are bankrupt. The analogy that concerns me the most for our congregation is that of a child of a wealthy individual that is able to grow up and live off of their inheritance and doesn't invest time in themselves to develop their potential and value to serve those around them. Our Congregation Council in partnership with our Finance Team have a responsibility to our congregation to ensure that doesn't happen.

While we are reminded that our faith alone, and not our works, saves us (Ephesians 2:8), Paul also writes to the Corinthians that, "Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver (2 Corinthians 9:7)." Giving is not about the recipient, it's about what it does for the heart of the giver, "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45)."

Easter

ALL SERVICES LIVESTREAMING ON YOUTUBE

St. John's ELC Boyertown

Palm Sunday Sunday, March 28 @ 9:30 am

Maundy Thursday Thursday, April 1 @ 7:00 pm

Good Friday Friday, April 2 @ 7:00 pm

Vigil of Easter Saturday, April 3 @ 7:00 pm

Easter Day Sunday, April 4 @ 9:30 am

plus in-person sunrise parking lot service @ 6:30 am

WORSHIP NEWS

April 11 Parking lot worship services resume at 8:00 am & livestreaming continues at 9:30 am

May 23 Day of Pentecost & Affirmation of Baptism celebrated during 9:30 am livestream

Come to the
Table

FREE
TAKE OUT
DINNER

Saturdays 4:30-5:30 @ St. John's
enter parking lot at N. Reading Ave or Walnut St
and follow traffic directors

bellies filled: hearts warmed



REFLECTIONS ON MY TIME WITH PRESCHOOL

By: Vicky Henry

When I reflect back on my continued teaching at St. John's, I now know that Sister Millicent probably dreaded seeing me come into her office. Once the two-year Play Group got off to a strong start, my mind started in overload again and I went to Sister saying, "I've been thinking....." My idea came once again from my personal experiences with my daughter. You see, she had an October birthday, and just missed the cut-off to begin school. While she came 3 days a week to our four-year class, she could have used a little more. So began my thoughts to convince Sister to try a Transitional Kindergarten class. (It was designed to accommodate children who missed the cut-off or children who needed another year before beginning kindergarten.)

Missy Endy and I were given the green light to give it a try. It was in 2011. The preschool board and Sister decided we needed five children for the class to hold for the first year. Numbers throughout June and July fluctuated up and down and by August, Sister told us the class was a 'go' with five children.

Of the five children, there were four boys and one girl. (The little girl was like a mother to the boys, and she sure kept them in line!) We met in the two rooms that were between the old library and the old chapel.

Soon after school started, Sister came to us and told us we were getting a new student. She told us that he and his mother were from Romania. What she didn't tell us was that he spoke very little English! We had our work cut out for us, but our little 'mother' was the biggest help! By the end of that year, that little boy's English was certainly improved.

Since the start of the Transitional class, it has grown in popularity. When I became Director, I gave up teaching that class, but continue to hold that class dear to my heart. The fact that it continues after all these years, tells me that I did the right thing in following through on what God pushed me to do. I am sure that Sister, too, would agree that the Transitional class is just one of the many wonderful offerings that St. John's Preschool offers our children.

Missed a worship service?

Want to hear a powerful sermon message again?

You're just a click away!

Visit YouTube and search
ST. JOHN'S ELC BOYERTOWN
to get connected!



ST. JOHN'S, A STORY OF HONOR, DUTY AND SACRIFICE TO BE SHARED WITH YOU AND THE BOYERTOWN COMMUNITY AT THE GEN. SPAATZ MUSEUM

There is always a story to be told and what a story there is to be shared with you. It is a story about duty. Duty of 350 men and women from our church that served in the various military branches in WWII. It is a story of sacrifice. Sacrifice of 8 of those men that did not return home. It is also a story of honor. Honor that one of the highest ranking generals on General Eisenhower's staff was a son of St. John's, General Carl A. Spaatz.

It is refreshing that the St. John's story can be told, shared and remembered. With the newly refurbished service board displayed in the Gen. Spaatz Museum Hall of Heroes, the names of the 350 men and women who served will be available for church members and our community to connect with familiar family names. Each man or woman that served could have a story to be told of their service. There will only be one special story told, that of a father who served in WWI and his son who served in WWII but did not return home.



There are mannequins dressed in authentic military uniforms of the father, Claude Croll and his son, Daniel Croll, a paratrooper killed in action in the Battle of Ardennes. Claude, whom many may remember as a tenor in the choir, was the telegraph operator at the Boyertown Railroad Station when the message in Morse Code arrived

that his son, Daniel, was killed in action. Daniel had been a 1942 graduate of Boyertown High School. Families, friends and relatives will have an opportunity to remember and share stories about the 350 service members as you will be invited to share those stories with a research group from Kutztown University compiling the stories into a written pamphlet or book.

The Gen. Spaatz Museum is not the usual just "look" museum but rather it is an interactive museum with those attending being briefed in a mission room, donning flight equipment and flying a mission in a flight simulator, being shot down, captured and escaping. Opening in summer of 2021, all can share the pride and experience for a short moment that the 350 men and women from St. John's together with the 16,000,000 men and women that served in WWII did to protect our freedom and liberty, including the freedom of religion we now enjoy. The Gen. Spaatz Museum is located at the newly named Gen. Spaatz Avenue located near the Friendship Hook and Ladder Fire Company building.

Col. Keith Siewel, USMC ret., is the CEO and moving force behind making the Gen. Spaatz Museum a reality.



PRESCHOOL NEWS

By: Vicky Henry

As you read this newsletter, we are in the process of interviewing candidates to take over the position of director when I leave at the end of this school year. Our interview team includes Betty Long, Lois Wenzel, Debbie Frain, Missy Endy, Pastor Bob and myself.

In addition, things continue to be busy with incoming applications for the 2021/2022 school year. To date, we have 56 children on board. Morning classes continue to be the preferred choice.

Our Joe Corbi pizza fundraiser took place in March. With the help of volunteers, the orders were sorted and delivered using a drive through procedure.

Since we became State Certified, many things have transpired. Most recently, and through the mandate of Governor Wolfe, the staff got their Johnson and Johnson COVID vaccines. While we have been blessed throughout this entire school year with good health, getting the staff vaccinated puts my mind at ease.

We are also in the process of our annual State Inspection to renew our certificate. As with all things affiliated with the State, there is an abundance of paperwork. Due to COVID, things are a bit more 'busy' since much of the paperwork has to be sent electronically. The actual building inspection is set to be done virtually as well!

While our COVID procedures are still in place for this year, we have scheduled our school photographer to take yearly pictures. Plans are to do it outside, weather permitting. If that plan doesn't work, we have plans to do it inside, with safety protocol in place.

Thanks to all who continue to provide us with Redner's tapes. They are a source of 'free money' for our school.

Please keep the staff in your prayers as we continue through this abnormal school year. While this has been a year of learning, thinking outside the box, and everyone giving 110%, God has been guiding us to keep our kids and staff safe while providing them the education they need.



POTATO PROJECT SEED CUTTING

Pick up - Thursday, April 8 @ 7:00 pm

Drop off - Sunday, April 11 @ 1:00 pm

In the spring, potatoes need to be cut in order to plant in the fall. Each pound of seed potato produces anywhere from 4 to 10 pounds of potatoes in the fall. Each 50-lb bag benefits 40-100 families!

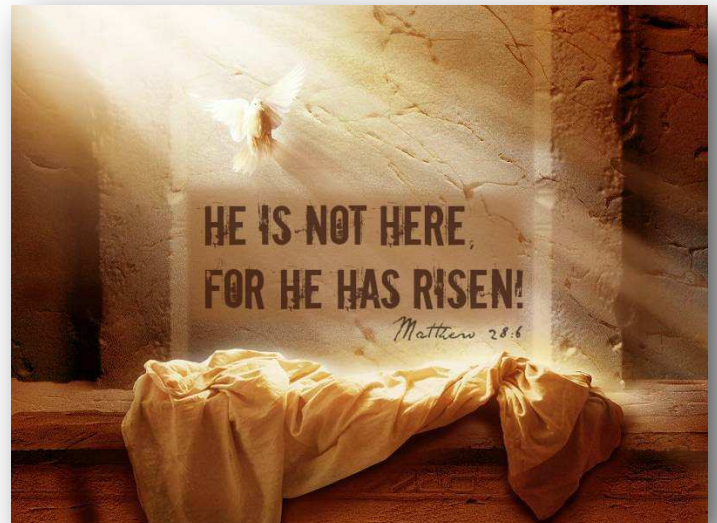
Seed cutting will happen from home again this year. If you'd like to pick up a 50-lb bag (or more than one!), email Karen Pollock at kpollcock@ptd.net. Potatoes can be picked up in our parking lot on Thursday, April 8 and cut potatoes returned to the parking lot on Sunday, April 11.

Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Monday, April 12 for May issue

Monday, May 10 for June issue

Monday, June 14 for July issue



APRIL 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Maundy Thursday 7:00p Worship Celebration Livestream 'First Holy Communion' 8:00p Broadcast	2 Good Friday 7:00p Worship Celebration Livestream	3 Holy Saturday 4:30p Come to the Table 7:00p Worship Celebration Livestream 'Vigil of Easter'
4 Easter 6:30a Parking Lot Sunrise Service 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Moatz) 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Roth) 9:30a Worship Celebration Livestream	5 Office & Preschool Closed 9:00a Boyertown One	6 7:00p Cub Scouts 7:00p Small Group Bible Study	7	8 7:00p Boy Scouts 7:00p Potato Project Pick Up 8:00p Broadcast	9 6:30p Catechism GWBU	10 4:30p Come to the Table
11 8:00a Parking Lot Worship 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Moatz) 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Roth) 9:30a Worship Celebration Livestream 1:00p Potato Project Drop Off	12 9:00a Boyertown One 5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Daisy/Brownie Troop 1759	13 Preschool Picture Day 7:00p Cub Scouts 7:00p Small Group Bible Study	14 Preschool Picture Day	15 9:00a Community Leaders 6:30p Troop Committee 7:00p Boy Scouts 8:00p Broadcast	16	17 4:30p Come to the Table
18 8:00a Parking Lot Worship 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Moatz) 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Roth) 9:30a Worship Celebration Livestream	19 9:00a Boyertown One 6:30p Daisy/Brownie Troop 1759	20 7:00p Cub Scouts 7:00p Finance Team 7:00p Small Group Bible Study	21	22 7:00p Boy Scouts 8:00p Broadcast	23	24 9:00a Ministry Action Group (MAG) 4:30p Come to the Table
25 Good Shepherd Sunday 8:00a Parking Lot Worship 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Moatz) 8:00a God's Word Blesses Us (Roth) 9:30a Worship Celebration Livestream	26 9:00a Boyertown One 6:30p Daisy/Brownie Troop 1759	27 7:00p Cub Scouts 7:00p Small Group Bible Study	28	29 7:00p Boy Scouts 8:00p Broadcast	30	

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Chase Roth	4	5 Samuel Daub Becky Erb Trent Lenhart Cheryl Shankweiler Sandy Wolf	6
7 Lichelle Coale	8	9 Melissa Geary Rachael Geary Lianne Truman	10 Jacalyn Sclafani	11 Charles Grofe Nancy Miller	12	13 Patricia Richards
14 Missy Endy Carole Frey	15	16 Robert Leister Sr Brian Schnable	17	18 Naomi Seavers	19 Tanner Lee Richard Spohn	20 Dennis Frey Shirley Heydt DJ Quinter
21 Jane Dierolf James Dierolf Jason Friz John Gheer II Judy Piersol	22 Kaylee Boyer Thomas Huber Jaclyn Nagle	23 Barbara Miller	24 Bonnie Crump Mitzi Lee Dale Leister	25 Benjamin Strouse	26 Sarah Graver Paul Moatz Jr	27 Edward Adamski
28	29	30 Camryn Friz	31			



EAGLE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | 45 North Reading Avenue | Boyertown, PA 19512
610-369-1024 | 610-369-1463 Fax | www.stjohnsboyertown.org

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We believe God's purpose for the people of
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church is to develop
joy-filled children of God who love the Lord
and share God's Word.

We do this by:

- Maintaining a trusting and welcoming environment.
- Praying daily.
- Reading scripture regularly.
- Sharing our faith through action-based service.
- Encouraging holy conversations.
- Feeding our faith with music.

With a focus on:

- Activities that build relationships.
- Worship that is relevant.
- Meeting the needs of the vulnerable in our community.

Return Service Request - Dated Material
Mailed March 24, 2021

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE:

ONLINE

SUNDAY | 9:30 AM | WORSHIP LIVE STREAM

Office Hours (open by appointment)
Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm
Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Pastor Bob Machamer
Kay Christman, Finance Team
Mason Emmert, Director of Worship and Music
Sue Grofe, Finance Team
Vicky Henry, Preschool Director
Bonnie Moatz, Finance Team
Michael Omlor, Treasurer
Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator
Becky Scheiry, Parish Administrator
Amber Shubert, Sexton

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.