

EAGLE MESSENGER



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JANUARY 2024

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP † INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS † SACRIFICIAL SERVICE † RADICAL GENEROSITY



HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024!

Every year many of us resolve to eat better, exercise more, live on a budget, get organized, read our bibles more, go to church more frequently, join a small group, and get involved in something to benefit others. While there are lots of books we can purchase to help us understand why we don't succeed at getting far from the starting line, I'd rather open 2024 with an invitation to consider a few practices to get us to the finish line.

It probably won't surprise a person who claims faith in Christ that any possibility of arriving at the finish line will involve prayer, bible study, and holy conversation. Even more so, it won't shock anyone to learn that I believe calendar (assigned times), database (people), and task list (the steps you'll need to take to succeed) are joined at the hip with those beautiful disciplines. If you're more inclined to learn from the business world or social sciences, you'll smile when I tell you their suggestion and smile even bigger when you put it all together. They recommend that you surround yourself with people who support your goals, specifically, those struggling with the same or similar issue.

I need all the above. I love engaging God's beautiful creation. Any opportunity to join in where God is smiling and crying brings me great satisfaction. When I read scripture, pray alone or with others, and participate in healthy discussion with those interested in intentional relationship building, I am energized. When I'm with people who seek a regularly scheduled meeting time for this activity, and it is based on a desire to be more intentional in building relationships, I feel especially blessed. When I study scripture, I typically try to visualize the 'scene'. A 'snapshot' in my mind to focus my thoughts so as to not get distracted, has proven to be extraordinarily helpful. Sometimes my snapshots are memories of where I've failed horribly and sometimes they are a scene of where I have seen God at work. What follows is the explanation of the snapshot I carry with me as I serve among you. It helps me to keep my eyes on Jesus.

Recently I was most powerfully affected by the scenes of Christ and Nicodemus in the final two episodes of the series, *The Chosen*. This series on Netflix is based upon biblical texts and filled in with fictional details. Even so, the spiritual lessons remain. Rozann Lee explains, "In Episode 7, we see Nicodemus' conversation with Jesus as recounted in John 3:1-21. A man of great honor and influence, entirely and rightly rooted in the Jewish Law, recognizes in the most profound way that the young itinerant seated across from him is the fulfillment of the Law, the long-awaited Messiah."

She continues, "The series has followed him as he has struggled to understand, with humility and openness, who Jesus is and what

that means. Jesus, at the close of their conversation, asks Nicodemus to follow him. His request was a literal one, and the viewer witnesses how the idea astounds Nicodemus, a man of his age with a family and a place in the Sanhedrin. Should he leave it all behind to walk behind Jesus from village to village proclaiming truths about a "kingdom" that was different than any he'd ever imagined, about a rebirth that defied all understanding? Jesus gave Nicodemus the date, time, and place to meet, and the viewer watches the wheels continue to turn in the mind of this newest convert."

Adding more detail she writes, "This all leads to the most haunting and tragic moment of the series thus far. Episode 8 follows the Apostles as they gather, preparing to leave Capernaum on their way to Samaria—the public ministry of Jesus on its first tour. And as you hear the Apostles count heads, you can see Nicodemus around the corner in agony, knowing the invitation has been offered . . . and knowing he won't take it. Peter finds a purple bag of gold coins that was tossed by Nicodemus toward the group, a recognition of Jesus and his invitation, but a meager and somewhat sad response to that summons to an adventurous, self-forgetful new life. Jesus' face betrays his disappointment as he laments under his breath, "You came so close."

She takes us a little deeper. "Nicodemus had a family. He had a daughter who had just given birth to a new grandson who he had not met. He had a wife who had become accustomed to the stable, secure, and beautiful life his position afforded. The idea of uprooting all those good things without knowing what the uprooting actually looked like was a seemingly insurmountable hurdle. Nicodemus, as hard as he might have tried, couldn't jump over it. He watched in anguish as Christ and his disciples walked away on mission."

Then she brings it home with piercing words, "But . . . that disappointed expression; that "You came so close" on the mouth of the Lord of the Universe. I shudder to think of the number of times those words were spoken about me. Today, let us allow grace to overwhelm our capacities and always lead us to the choice for Christ and adventure of self-forgetful love."

This year you will be offered opportunities to draw closer to God. The heart of St. John, the beloved disciple, can be discovered in the Gospel of John in your bibles. The heart of our beloved St. John's can be discovered in the behavior of our members. "May we always respond with the great "yes" that we, as armchair quarterbacks, put into the mouth of The Chosen's Nicodemus."

Be blessed!
Pastor Bob

WORSHIP NEWS

Sunday, January 7 @ 9:30 am
Baptism of Our Lord &
Commissioning for Mission to Mexico

Our re-creation in baptism is an image of the Genesis creation, where the Spirit of God moved over the waters. Both Mark's gospel and the story in Acts make clear that it is the Spirit's movement that distinguishes Jesus' baptism from John's. The Spirit has come upon us as upon Jesus and the Ephesians, calling us God's beloved children and setting us on Jesus' mission to re-create the world in the image of God's vision of justice and peace.

Sunday, February 11 @ 9:30 am
Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

Wednesday, February 14 @ 7:00 pm
Ash Wednesday

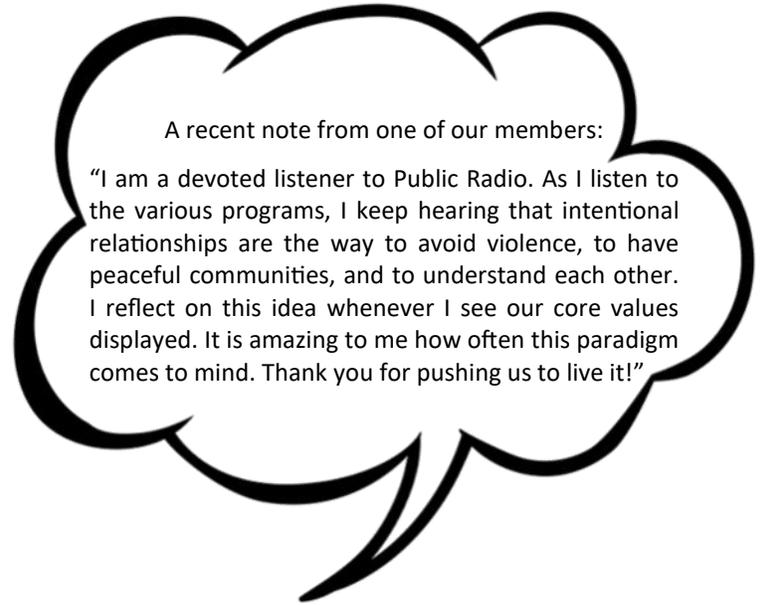
On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world.

sundaysandseasons.com

Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Monday, January 8 for February issue
Monday, February 12 for March issue
Monday, March 11 for April issue

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?



A recent note from one of our members:

"I am a devoted listener to Public Radio. As I listen to the various programs, I keep hearing that intentional relationships are the way to avoid violence, to have peaceful communities, and to understand each other. I reflect on this idea whenever I see our core values displayed. It is amazing to me how often this paradigm comes to mind. Thank you for pushing us to live it!"



WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS

Our 'Inclement Weather' policy at St. John's states that when the Boyertown Area School District is closed, we follow their lead and cancel all meetings and events. For weather related closings, check Channel 69 News or www.wfmz.com.





WHAT'S GOD UP TO IN PRESCHOOL?

By: Melissa Schaeffer, Preschool Assistant Teacher

The children and staff of St. John's Ministry to Families with Children of Preschool Age are settling in nicely as we have already enjoyed three months together. The children are getting to know one another and building friendships while learning about Jesus as well as academic curriculum with some fun activities mixed into our days.

We continue our Bible curriculum:

Judges: God rescued Abraham's family from Egypt, who had been slaves for 400 years. God gave the Israelites judges to help them to know how to live. A wise judge named Deborah sat under a palm tree and people came to her for help with their problems. God told Deborah to send Barak to get rid of Sisera's people. With Deborah's help they were able to save the Israelites. God gives us wise people to help us. We talked about if we need help to ask God.

Esther: King Xerxes was looking for a queen; he chose Esther to be his queen. King Xerxes didn't know Esther was one of God's people. Haman was angry and hated God's people so much so that he asked the King to plan a day to hurt God's people. Esther was scared for all her people. She knew she needed to be brave and ask the King for help. Esther asked God to make her brave, then she asked the King to change the plan. The King said yes and found a way to protect God's people. From Esther we learned when we are scared or afraid we can ask God to help us to be brave.

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In addition to the Bible stories we continue learning a letter from the alphabet each week. We learned H and T and reviewed the previous letters.

At Thanksgiving, the children had a Thanksgiving celebration. Each class made a Thanksgiving bracelet from a pipe cleaner and different color beads. Each bead represented something different about Thanksgiving. The classes then came together to enjoy a special "Thanksgiving" snack and fellowship.

During November we continued discussing what and who we are thankful for. The teachers also had a Professional Development Day on November 3, which was very informative. We all felt as though it was a day well spent working as a team to look at ways to continue to bring our best to the children and their families.

December brought a "Happy Birthday Jesus" party for the students. We also learned the songs "Jesus Loves Me" and "Away In A Manger" to spread some holiday cheer to residents and staff at Walnut Woods on December 20.

On behalf of the preschool staff, we are happy to be part of the St. John's ministry team. Together we hope to bring the children and their families support, guidance, and God's love into their hearts.



Saying prayers before a Thanksgiving snack



Caroling at Walnut Woods



Chapel time with Mrs. Krause



DECEMBER AT ST. JOHN'S

INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS | SACRIFICIAL SERVICE | RADICAL GENEROSITY

Shop with a Cop
December 10

Partnered with
Eastern Berks
Regional Police

19
volunteers
plus Boyertown
High School
cheerleading squad



Boyertown Multi-Service
Festival of Trees
December 1-2

\$5,000 sponsorship
donation plus
time and talent of our
decorating crew



Director's Big Band
Christmas Concert
December 9

Free concert
for the community

17
volunteers

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day	Acolyte	Altar Assistant	Altar Guild	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
1/7/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Baptism of Our Lord	Philip Derr	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer	Mary Kay Heimbach, Bonnie Moatz	TBD	Jason Friz	Ros Moatz	Ashley Gheer	Gerry Krause, Darin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Scott Scheiry	Nathan Wanish
1/14/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Delaney Hersperger	Melissa Eidle, Lauren Frey	Paula Kriebel, Jean Machamer	Dave Babb	Sarah Eidle	Friz Family	Brianna Rohrbach	Charles Haddad, Phil Haddad, Andy & Susan Varzally	Scott Scheiry
1/21/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Philip Derr	Bev & Joe Blake	Shirley Hartman	Lori Carnes	Shannon Omlor	Nathan Wanish	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake, Mike Gilbert, Ed Schaeffer	Justin Jones
1/28/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Delaney Hersperger	George Hill, Bonnie Moatz	Dorothy & Walter Breitreutz	Mary Kay Heimbach	Olivia Alderfer	Karen Pollock	Melissa Eidle	Martha Bentley, Joanne Dykie, Barbara Houp, Nathan Wanish	Camryn Friz
2/4/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Alina Friz	Michele & Dave Eidle	Jodi Dykie, Mary Kay Heimbach	Jay Herbert	Jason Friz	Jean Machamer	Ashley Gheer	Ros & Brian Moatz, Carol Sematis, Terry Wadsworth	Jason Eidle
2/11/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Transfiguration of our Lord	Camryn Friz	Mel Roth, Becky Scheiry	Melissa Eidle, Bonnie Moatz	Susan/George Hill	Sarah Eidle	Sue Grofe	Brianna Rohrbach	Lauren Frey, Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Bill Rohrbach	Abbe Grofe
2/14/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday	Philip Derr		Sue and George Hill	Phyllis Kershner	Shannon Omlor	Michele Eidle	Melissa Eidle	Sandy & Terry Wade	Scott Scheiry
2/18/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 1	Delaney Hersperger	Tom Engle, Jen Schlegel	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	Jill Koch	Olivia Alderfer	Sarah Eidle	Myles Omlor	Mike Gilbert, Gerry Krause, Ed Schaeffer, Scott Scheiry	Nathan Wanish
2/21/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lent Prayer Service	Tatum Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Jason Friz	NA	Ashley Gheer	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Justin Jones
2/25/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 2	Alina Friz	Amanda Ehst, Jen Friz	Shirley Hartman, Donna Little	Dave Long	Sarah Eidle	Mel Roth	Brianna Rohrbach	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Camryn Friz
2/28/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lent Prayer Service	Camryn Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Shannon Omlor	NA	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake	Jason Eidle

JANUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Closed Preschool Closed	2 12:00p Preschool Staff	3 6:30p Worship Team	4 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	5 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	6 Epiphany of Our Lord 4:30p Come to the Table
7 Baptism of Our Lord 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	8 5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club	9	10	11 Wellspring Karitas Trip 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	12 Wellspring Karitas Trip 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	13 Wellspring Karitas Trip 4:30p Come to the Table
14 Wellspring Karitas Trip 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a Coffee & Conversation	15 Wellspring Karitas Trip Preschool Closed	16 Wellspring Karitas Trip	17 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen 6:30p Congregation Council	18 9:30a Community Leaders 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	19 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	20 4:30p Come to the Table
21 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	22 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club	23 6:30p Building a Better Boyertown	24	25 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service w/ Holy Communion 8:00p Worship Broadcast	26 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	27 4:30p Come to the Table
28 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	29 6:30p Girl Scouts	30	31			

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3 Johanna Clark	4 Ryan DiPietro Earl Guinther	5	6
7 Abigail Rhoads	8 Elizabeth Rose	9 Connor Cordero Amy Moyer	10 Chris Schlegel	11	12 Randy Rupert	13
14	15	16	17 Jenny Clark	18	19	20
21 Brandon Levan	22	23 Bev Blake Harper Gaugler	24 Amanda Kulhamer Ronald Sheidy	25 Dennis Strouse Jr	26	27 Annabelle Burkert
28 Lamar Hartline	29	30 Jason Eidle Jackson Fretz	31 Christopher Houser			

Happy Birthday!



EAGLE MESSENGER

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As children of God and disciples of Christ seeking peace and justice in the world, we welcome, affirm, and include all people into the fullness of God's love. We celebrate and lift up people of all races, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, economic statuses, political affiliation, appearances, family status, and citizenship as equally loved and valued in the eyes of God and in this place. All are invited to join this community as we worship God, grow in faith, and strive to love and serve one another.

All, without exception, are welcome in this place.

Return Service Request - Dated Material
Mailed December 22, 2023

WORSHIP

SUNDAY 9:30 AM

IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM ON YOUTUBE

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Pastor Bob Machamer

Kay Christman, Finance Team

Sue Grofe, Finance Team

Donnie Heimbach, Property

Bonnie Moatz, Finance Team

Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator

Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer

Becky Scheiry, Parish Administrator

Renae McClelland, Director of Preschool Ministry

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Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.