

## Pastor's Musings

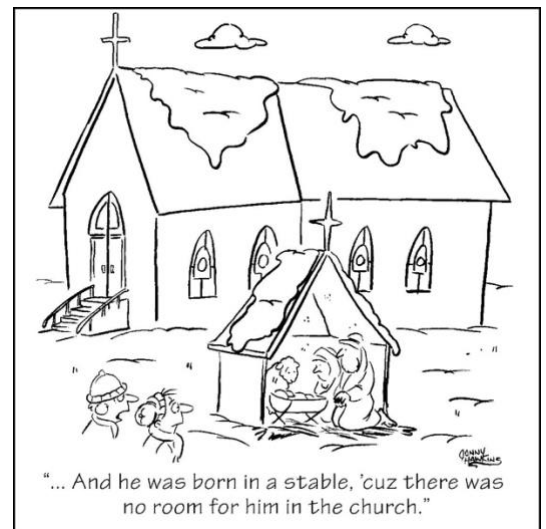
It has become popular for some to say, "Jesus is the reason for the season." I wonder if sometimes believing in Jesus does not mean much. It reminds me about the conversation I had with a golf buddy of mine the other day. He diagnosed the difficulty I was having hitting the ball or miss hitting my ball. He said slow down, work at accuracy not speed. He was right, that is exactly what I needed to do. If I know what I needed to do why couldn't I do it? Knowing and doing are two different things. To get better at hitting the ball correctly, I needed to take lessons and practice.

To just believe in Jesus is the same as my wanting to hit a golf ball. Without practice, instruction, and understanding, it doesn't change anything. Again, it reminds me of one Thanksgiving I was going to a friend's house for dinner. On the way there I thought, "why am I going, I'm too depressed. I forced myself to keep driving there. Being there was the best thing. They invited me in, let me stew and finally I joined a game of Scrabble. I spelled "religion" wrong and we all laughed. It was that interaction with my friends acceptance that changed me that day.

As we go through this season of Advent, of the expectation for Christ (mas), what is that light that will shine into your spirit? What is it that will give you joy? Too often people become depressed at Christmas because they just see the word Christmas and not what is around it. It is the interactions with others, the care that can happen, it is what is behind and beyond Christ (mas) that creates the light in our spirit.

It is not "Jesus is the reason for the season." It is what Jesus did, and how we respond to Jesus that makes this season, a season of light.

Blessings,  
Pastor Gordon





## Advent and Christmas Schedule

### Advent Services

December 6<sup>th</sup> at Zion

December 13<sup>th</sup> at Grace

December 20<sup>th</sup> at St. James

Sunday December 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve

11:00 am service of the word no communion

7:00 pm Candlelight service with communion

December 10<sup>th</sup> decorate the sanctuary after church

December 31<sup>st</sup> take down Christmas decorations



19th Reid Leach  
 26th Sarah Grove Jordan  
 26th Jaxon Diehl



December

3<sup>rd</sup> Lynda Diehl

10<sup>th</sup> Ellen McDonald

17<sup>th</sup>

24<sup>th</sup> – 11am Sherie W-Rohal

14<sup>th</sup> – 7pm Anne Putnam

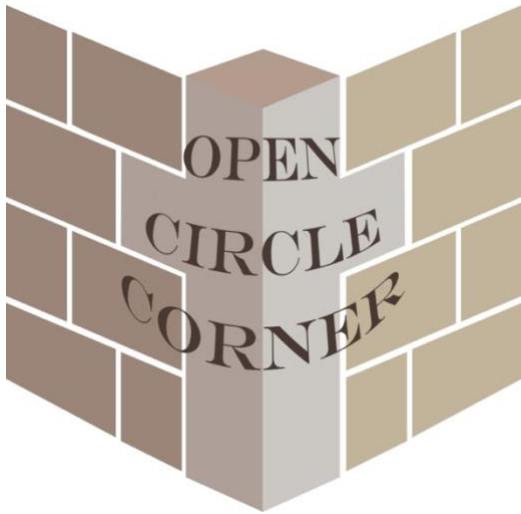
31<sup>st</sup> Debbie Snyder



## Back Pack Needs

We have 17 kids. there are 17 children in the BackPacks Program. Food and monetary donations are used to fill the backpacks. \$330 to \$350 is needed every two weeks to meet this need. Thanks to all who regularly support this ministry.

- |                      |                         |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| Mac and cheese       | Kroger meals            |
| Chef Boyardee meals  | Ramen Noodles, any kind |
| Boxes of cereal      | Poptarts                |
| Oatmeal              | Fruit cups              |
| Boxed juices         | Yahoo chocolate milk    |
| Apple sauce          | Raisins                 |
| "Hugs" Drink Barrels | All single servings     |



**On November 7th**, we met at Ellen’s home. Ellen opened the meeting with a devotional relating to gratitude and grace. One line that stood out – “God’s grace is always blowing on you. You have but to open your sails.”

Katie’s Fund was selected as the recipient of our ThankOffering. For most of the year, we have dropped coins into our banks as the spirit moved us, while taking a moment to reflect on the things we have to be thankful for. \$128.94 was sent to Katie’s Fund. Again, we are small, but mighty.

Katharina von Bora Luther, the wife of Martin Luther, was a practical and bold woman of faith. Through Katie’s Fund, Women of the ELCA honor her life by supporting global connections, leadership development, and living theology. Growing Katie’s Fund is designed to support the organization into the next 100 years of mission and ministry.

**Prayer Concerns**

Ongoing Need for Prayer

Norma Turak, Cecilia Shott, Jean Geiser, Betty Diehl, Gillian Taylor, Charlotte Shifflett (Danny’s aunt), Inez Johnson (Becky and Debbie’s aunt), and Susan Zirges (friend of Sherie & Paul).

Prayer Request for

Zeby (Ellen & Charles’ grandson), Charles, Ellen, and Claire.

**Community Conversations**

- December flowers are given by Gene Giltner.
- Choir practice every Tuesday at 6pm at Betty Bartley’s home.
- Men’s Group meets every Friday at 9:00 am.
- December 5<sup>th</sup> Open Circle at 1pm at Home Town Grill in Staunton. (Dutch Treat).
- December 6<sup>th</sup> Advent service at Zion, 7pm.
- December 10<sup>th</sup> soup luncheon after worship before we decorate the church for Christmas. Sign-up sheet in back of church.
- December 12<sup>th</sup>—Quilt Group meets at St. James, 1pm.
- December 12<sup>th</sup> Council meeting at St. James, 7pm.
- December 13<sup>th</sup> Advent service at Grace, 7pm.
- December 17<sup>th</sup> Christmas Open House at Pastor Gordon and Anne’s home from 2pm to 4pm.
- December 20<sup>th</sup> Advent service at St. James, 7pm.
- For prayer concerns, contact Pastor Gordon.
  - Council Person of the Month
    - December—Lynda Diehl

**On November 28th**, we kicked off our Quilt Group with 6 ladies in attendance. YEAH!

**Upcoming Events:**

**December 5th** – 1pm. We will gather at Home Town Grill for good food and girl talk.

**December 12th** – 1pm. Quilting at St. James.

**January 9th** – 1pm. Open Circle meeting at St. James. Sherie is our hostess.

All ladies of St. James belong to our Circle. Please consider joining us for meetings and events.



Advent	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
First Sunday of Advent December 3, 2023	Isaiah 64:1-9	Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19	1 Corinthians 1:3-9	Mark 13:24-37
Second Sunday of Advent 12/10/2023	Isaiah 40:1-11	Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13	2 Peter 3:8-15a	Mark 1:1-8
Third Sunday of Advent 12/17/2023	Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11	Psalm 126	1 Thessalonians 5:16-24	John 1:6-8, 19-28
Fourth Sunday of Advent 12/24/2023	2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16	Luke 1:46b-55	Romans 16:25-27	Luke 1:26-38
Christmas Eve 12/24/2023	Isaiah 9:2-7	Psalm 96	Titus 2:11-14	Luke 2:1-20)
First Sunday of Christmas 12/31/2023	Isaiah 61:10-62:3	Psalm 148	Galatians 4:4-7	Luke 2:22-40

### St. James Church Business

St. James Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting  
November 14, 2023, at 7:00 p.m.

**Council Members Present:** Lynda Diehl, Joyce Dull, Ivan Diehl, Anne Putnam, Paul Rohal, and Pastor Putnam

**Council Members Absent:** Gene Giltner

**Visitors Present:** None

**Call to Order:** Ivan Diehl, Vice-President, called the meeting to order.

Pastor Gordon opened the meeting with a devotion describing clues on how to live our lives.

The **Minutes** for the October 10<sup>th</sup> Council Meeting were presented. A motion was made by Lynda and seconded by Joyce to approve the minutes. The motion passed.

The **Financial Report** for October was presented. A motion was made by Paul and seconded by Joyce to accept the report. The motion passed.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Gordon reported that he recently officiated at the funeral for Patricia Jones (10/25) and Bob Dixey (11/4). He will be visiting with Eddie Jones and with Tammy & Ronnie Jones on November 15<sup>th</sup>. He reported that he continues to visit our shut-ins. Pastor Gordon also announced an Open House on 12/17. All members of the congregation are invited.



## **Correspondence:**

- Bethlehem announced a Yard Sale on 10/21/2023
- SACRA announced a Christmas Benefit Concert on 12/4/2023
- Stuarts Draft announced a Christmas Parade on 12/9/2023
- A Thank You from Lutheran Disaster Response for \$200 given by a member of St. James; \$100 was designated for the wildfire in Hawaii and \$100 was designated for the hurricane in Florida.
- A note from the VA Synod Office of the Bishop on the installation of Bishop Milton on October 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **Committee Reports:**

- **Property Committee:** Paul updated us with a thorough report of the numerous items being addressed based on priorities established by the committee.
  - With the Congregation's approval at the 10/29 meeting, the replacement of the roof covering the administration "schoolhouse" portion of the building is moving forward.
  - John D. Miller has been notified that the small memorial tree on the northeast side of the parking lot is dead and will be removed.
  - Paul and John Wright are working on the drainpipe just west of the pavilion.
  - Discussion regarding who the installer was of the floors in the Fellowship Hall and the need to have the floors commercially cleaned.
  - Discussion regarding having all of the doors re-keyed to be universal.
  - Paul made a motion to move forward with the purchase of a fire department church entry lock box, to which only the shift captain has the combination. Anne seconded the motion. The motion carried.
  - Anne made a motion that recurring expenses within the range of last year's cost can move forward without bringing it to Council. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion carried.
  - The Council commends the Property Committee for the work that is being done.
- **Stewardship & Finance:** Anne presented the draft 2024 budget from the committee to the Council.
  - Lynda made a motion to accept the 2024 budget as presented by the Stewardship & Finance Committee. Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried.
  - A Congregational Meeting will be called on 12/3 to approve the budget. Pastor Gordon will email this information, along with a copy of the budget.
- **Social Ministry & Evangelism:** Joyce reported that there are 17 children in the BackPacks Program. Food and monetary donations are used to fill the backpacks. \$330 to \$350 is needed every two weeks to meet this need. Thanks to all who regularly support this ministry.
  - Response to the Oyster Dinner has been overwhelming and people have been turned away. We are preparing for approximately 85 guests.
- **Worship, Music, & Altar:** A Cantata is being planned for 12/31 or 1/7.

- Constitution and By-Laws Committee: No report.

### **Unfinished Business:**

- Secure the building and make sure the lights are turned off on Sundays after church.
  - November = Anne
  - December = Lynda
- A list of items currently maintained in our (5x10) Safe Deposit Box at DuPont Community Credit Union was obtained. Both Rebecca Dick and Ellen McDonald, as current keyholders, have asked to be relieved of this responsibility.
  - Paul made a motion to remove Rebecca Dick and Ellen McDonald as keyholders on the account and replace with Deborah Snyder and Anne Putnam. John Wright will remain on the account as a non-keyholder. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Rebecca Dick has also requested to be removed from her responsibilities as a signer on the checking/savings account.
  - Joyce made a motion to remove Rebecca Dick as a signer on account #594846 and add Deborah Snyder to the account in her role as Financial Secretary and to be afforded all rights and privileges of this position. Paul seconded the motion. The motion carried.

### **New Business:**

- Anne made a motion to update the Church Cleaning Agreement with Glenda & Billy Strickler to reflect the increase from \$150 per month to \$200 per month and to convert the annual agreement to an open-ended agreement, that may be terminated by either party with a minimum of two weeks' notice. Lynda seconded the motion. The motion carried.
- Paul made a motion to update the Pastoral Agreement to reflect the increase from \$150 per worship service to \$200 per service and to convert the annual agreement to an open-ended agreement, that may be terminated by either party with a minimum of 30 days' notice. Lynda seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Next Council Meeting** – Tuesday, December 12th in the Fellowship Hall.

With no further business, Ivan moved to adjourn the meeting. We closed with The Lord's Prayer at 8:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Anne Putnam*

Anne Putnam, Secretary

St. James Lutheran Church Financial Report  
October 2023

<b>DCCU Checking Acct Bal as of 10/1/2023:</b>	<b>\$ 2,697.69</b>
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<b>Receipts Deposited:</b>	October 2023	Year to Date
Record of Contributions	\$ 3,545.00	\$ 38,248.00
Loose Offering	191.13	1,229.43
*Property Improvement Fund	50.00	1,830.00
*Social Ministry	30.00	300.00
*Louis Dixey, Jr. Fund	-	1,000.00
*Transfer from Raymond James Acct	-	7,955.76
*Transfer from DCCU Savings Acct	-	2,000.00
Benevolence	500.00	3,000.00
Other Special Appeals	-	1,010.91
Dividend/Interest Income	0.62	5.93
<b>Total Receipts</b>	<b>\$ 4,316.75</b>	<b>\$ 56,580.03</b>

<b>Disbursed:</b>		
Rev. Putnam - Monthly Compensation	\$ 1,250.00	\$ 12,500.00
2 Services @ \$200	400.00	5,250.00
94 Miles @ \$0.66/mile	62.04	1,100.52
Rev. Trost	-	-
3 Services @ \$200	725.00	3,975.00
72 Miles @ \$0.66/mile	47.52	320.85
Musician - 0 Services	-	1,250.00
Supply Pastor	-	200.00
Mileage	-	7.92
Worship Supplies	-	-
- Art Supplies	11.99	119.90
- Annual Bulletin Service	-	398.00
- Church Year Calendars	-	-
- Communion Supplies	41.37	90.82
- Copy Paper	-	95.98
- Toner	-	29.53
- Directory	-	21.00
- Offering Envelopes	-	-
- Postage	-	236.61
- Web Page Renewal	-	-
- Flowers (Easter)	-	313.90
Hannah Pingel, Pianist - 5 Services	625.00	4,500.00
Betty Bartley, Pianist	-	250.00
Glenda Strickler - Sexton	200.00	1,850.00
Cleaning Supplies	31.53	50.53
Christmas Gifts	-	500.00
Bank Safe Deposit Box	-	40.00
Fuel Oil	-	3,146.26
Electricity	110.27	1,079.93
Benevolence	500.00	3,400.00
Repairs & Maintenance	-	1,238.90
Fire & Liability Insurance	412.40	3,751.08
HomeComing Expenses	-	179.51
*Transfer to Raymond James Account	752.00	6,093.77
*Transfer to DCCU Savings Account	-	-
*Transfer to Social Ministry	-	300.00
*Pavillion	-	6,164.62
*Special Appeals	-	200.00
<b>Total Disbursements</b>	<b>\$ 5,169.12</b>	<b>\$ 58,654.63</b>

<b>DCCU Checking Acct Bal as of 10/31/2023:</b>	<b>\$ 1,845.32</b>
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**St. James Lutheran Church Financial Report  
October 2023**

	10/1/2023			10/31/2023
	<u>Beg Balance</u>	<u>Deposits</u>	<u>Withdrawals</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
<u>Dividend/Interest Income</u>				
<b>DCCU Savings Acct Bal as of 10/31/2023:</b>	\$ 1,005.17	\$ 0.04	\$ -	\$ 1,005.21

<b>Raymond James Investment Account</b>	10/1/2023			10/31/2023
	<u>Beg Balance</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>Withdrawals</u>	<u>End Balance</u>
<b>Detail of St. James Fund Designations:</b>				
Property Committee Fund	\$ 38,263.59			38,263.59
Youth Account	2,208.46			2,208.46
James Williams Memorial	264.88			264.88
Linda Diehl Memorial	2,670.55			2,670.55
Non-Designated Funds	7,538.85			6,735.53
Accrued Int. & Dividends & Change in Value		0.11	803.43	
<b>Balance as of 10/31/2023</b>	\$ 50,946.33	\$ 0.11	\$ 803.43	50,143.01

<b>Operating Budget Barometer</b>	<b>Oct Receipts</b>	<b>Oct Disbursements</b>	<b>Over (Under)</b>
	\$4,236.75	\$4,417.12	(\$180.37)
<small>*Does not include transfers into or out of the DCCU or RJ accounts or the Property Fund, which is a pass-through to the RJ account.</small>	<b>YTD Receipts</b>	<b>YTD Disbursements</b>	<b>Over (Under)</b>
	\$43,494.27	\$44,666.87	(\$1,172.60)

