



# **ST. JOHN'S MESSENGER**

## **February 2014**

### **WORSHIP SCHEDULE**

**Worship Services**

**9:30 AM**

**Sunday School Classes (K-Grade 6)**

**9:30 AM**

**Confirmation Classes (7-8 Grades)**

**Wednesdays 7:00 PM**



# Calendar of Events for February 2014 ~

- Sunday, February 9                      Worship, 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 9:30 AM
- Tuesday, February 11                  Council Meeting 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, February 12              Confirmation Class 7:00 PM
- Thursday, February 13                 Bible Study 10:30 AM  
New Member Class 7:00:PM  
Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
- Friday, February 14                    Cadets/Brownie Girl Scout Meeting 3:00 PM
- Sunday, February 16                    Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School goes to Church
- Tuesday, February 18                  WELCA Meeting 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, February 19              Confirmation Class 7:30 PM
- Thursday, February 20                 Bible Study 10:30 AM  
First Communion Class 7:00 PM  
Choir Rehearsal 7:30 PM
- Sunday, February 23                    Worship 9:30 AM  
Sunday School 9:30 AM
- Tuesday, February 25                  Evangelism Meeting 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, February 26              Confirmation Class 7:00 PM
- Thursday, February 27                 Bible Study 10:30 AM  
No First Communion Class  
Choir Rehearsal 7:30 P

## Looking forward to March...

- Sunday, March 2                         Worship 9:30 AM    Fastnachts Sunday  
Coffee and Fastnachts after worship
- Tuesday, March 4                        Music and Worship Meeting 7:30 PM
- Wednesday, March 5                    ASH WEDNESDAY 12:00 NOON & 7:30 PM  
Confirmation Class goes to Ash Wednesday service

## SERVERS FOR FEBRUARY 2014

| DATE        | ACOLYTES |             | ASSISTING MINISTERS |              | LECTORS |              |
|-------------|----------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| <b>2/16</b> | 9:30 AM  | Katie Lenz  | 9:30 AM             | Roger Vargas | 9:30 AM | Roger Vargas |
| <b>2/23</b> | 9:30 AM  | Erin Milano | 9:30 AM             | Bill Lindman | 9:30 AM | Bill Benson  |

If you cannot serve on a day you are scheduled, please find a replacement and notify the church office and the appropriate coordinator:

Bob Koehler: Assisting Ministers 678-6623

Bill Benson: Acolytes, Crucifixion, Torch bearers and Gospel bearers 508-8806

# † A Message from Pastor Alex ~

When you hear the word “February”, what’s the first thing that comes to mind? Snow? Freezing temperatures? Your birthday or a wedding anniversary? Leap years? The Super Bowl? Any of these answers are reasonable and valid. However, my guess is that for most of you, hearing the month “February” immediately brings one particular day to mind. No, I’m not referring to Groundhog’s Day (*I know that I’m not in PA anymore* ☺). I’m talking about Valentine’s Day.

Ahh Valentine’s Day... a day that couples enjoy and single people despise. I say that, but I’ve actually always enjoyed this holiday. As a kid, I loved going out and getting those Valentine cards with my favorite super heroes and cartoon characters on them that I’d give to my classmates. And how could I forget that feeling of looking through my bag of Valentine cards at the end of the school day, hoping that I got one from the prettiest girl in class!? Now even though I’ve gotten older and have since come to recognize how annoyingly commercialized this holiday is, I still appreciate the idea of taking a day each year to honor the person in your life who you love. A day that celebrates love should be cherished not ignored.

But what is love exactly? As Christians, we know that it’s more than just roses, chocolates, greeting cards, or jewelry. True love is sacrifice and service. It’s thinking of others before yourself. True love requires patience, trust, and even some vulnerability. How do we know this? Because we believe that the definition of love is Jesus Christ: the living embodiment of a gracious and merciful God who willingly offered his very life for the sake of the whole world. Jesus’ entire ministry was grounded in a selfless love that sought to serve those in need and in doing this, he provided us with a model for faithful discipleship. When asked by his disciples about which commandment was the greatest, Jesus said, “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’”

I’ve been thinking a lot about this passage in light of the discussion that we had at our annual congregational meeting a few weeks back. For those of you who were unable to attend that meeting, we had a lengthy conversation about visitors who join us for worship, specifically individuals who come in off the street in need of food and/or counseling. We wrestled with the importance of having a safe worship space while at the same time remaining faithful to our call as disciples of Christ. It was a difficult conversation but an important one, and I want to thank everyone who shared their opinion, regardless of where you stood on the issue.

Now the first thing I want to express is that when it comes to our time together on Sunday mornings, there is nothing more important than our safety and well-being. That goes not just for those of us are worshiping in the sanctuary, but also for our Sunday School kids and teachers as well. Our discussion at the congregational meeting raised some potential security issues with our church building, and I’ve already begun to look into some preventative safety procedures that we can easily implement here at St. John’s. This will range from consulting with our local police to instructing our ushers about some proper protocols that they can follow.

Back in our September edition of the Messenger, I encouraged us to remember the importance of being a welcoming congregation, to be accepting and hospitable to everyone who walks through our doors on a Sunday morning. Well you have certainly responded to that challenge in the past few months and I want to commend you for the love and courage that you have shown in doing so. Discipleship is not easy. It requires a love that will leave us feeling vulnerable at times, taking us outside our comfort zone. But we cannot let that anxiety become a barrier that separates us from the outside world.

The Greek word for hospitality in the New Testament is *philoxenia*, a word that literally means “love for outsiders.” So with that, I will leave you with a verse from Matthew 25 that I’ve been reflecting on over the past few weeks. Jesus says, “For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.” May these words guide and strengthen our ministry here at St. John’s as we continue to participate in the mission of God’s work in the world.

Peace,

*Alex*

# News from St. John's Council

## NEW YEAR, NEW COUNCIL

First, I want to thank Dennis Ferenz', Dot Criscuolo, Kevin Hansen and Joan Pirrone for their service to our Church Council. Second, I want to welcome Susan Masciello, Kim Carlstrom, Bill Lindman and for volunteering and accepting their nomination to serve.

There are many exciting things that happen during the church year. I want you to bring ideas, suggestions, complaints, whatever you can think of to me or any council member's attention so we, as your elected council members, can do all we can for the congregation and our community. Council meetings are not "closed" and if you would like to sit in and listen and understand what we do, please let me or Pastor know if you would like to attend.

I want to call everyone to search your hearts and think of a way to serve your church in any capacity. Be it Communion Assistant, Lector, Altar Guild, Acolyte, Usher, Sunday School teacher, property, evangelism, stewardship, worship & music, choir or any other function. We need all the help we can get to promote OUR church. I want to thank all who make our church function and look appealing to all who come in or pass by.

I look forward to serving as your Congregational President this year. I hope we can all make a difference and grow and reach out in our community.

I can be reached at [mrsp061601@optonline.net](mailto:mrsp061601@optonline.net) or by phone at 516-239-7623 or 516-581-1221.

Sincerely,

*Janet Pescatore*

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## INTRODUCING THE 2014 CHURCH COUNCIL

|                 |                   |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| President       | Janet Pescatore   |
| Vice-President  | Daniel Gonzalez   |
| Secretary       | Kim Carlstrom     |
| Treasurer       | Bruce Feltkamp    |
| Council Members | Charlene Comastri |
|                 | Pauline Feltkamp  |
|                 | Daniel Lenz       |
|                 | Bill Lindman      |
|                 | Ursula Lipitz     |
|                 | Susan Masciello   |
|                 | Jill Pace         |
|                 | Cora Sarver       |

Joseph Richetti will continue as our Financial Secretary  
Joan Pirrone will continue as our Financial Rec. Secretary

**Thank you for your service!**



## FROM The INN [The Interfaith Nutrition Network]

On behalf of the individuals whom we feed and shelter at The INN, I wish to extend my gratitude to you for your contribution of \$200.00.

The INN continues to serve families and individuals on Long Island who are homeless and hungry. We provide meals everyday in 14 soup kitchens in Nassau and Suffolk served by volunteers. We also provide housing in our emergency shelters and long-term affordable housing, with support services to families.

Your generous give comes at a time when there is much that needs to be done to assist the growing number of Long Islanders who are faced with hunger and homelessness.

May your days be filled with joy and warmth with the knowledge that you have enabled The INN and its volunteers to continue to care for all those who come to us for assistance.

*Your generous support gives us hope. Thanks so much for once again inspiring us with your thoughtfulness!*

Sincerely,  
Jean Kelly  
Executive Director

## YOUTH GROUP NEWS

### Youth Group Bowling.....

Lets get together for a fun night of bowling at Woodmere Lanes  
Friday, February 28th 9:00pm

Cost will be \$13.00 per person for 90 minutes of bowling, pizza and soda

A Sign up sheet will be in the church narthex or E-mail me that you can make it ,  
[fourjps@optonline.net](mailto:fourjps@optonline.net) or call me 516-599-8896.

Hope to see you there.

WILL PACE

# ST JOHN'S NEWS

WELCA would like to thank the Church Council for their generous gift of \$300.00 for the Barbara Semmig Scholarship Fund.

Congratulations to Stephanie Carlstrom for receiving her Bachelor of Arts from John Jay College. Stephanie completed her undergrad studies in just 3 ½ years, majoring in Forensic Psychology. She will be pursuing a Masters degree in the Fall!

If you are interested in becoming a member of St. John's, please contact Pastor Alex at the church office or email him at [rev.alexkennedy@gmail.com](mailto:rev.alexkennedy@gmail.com).

If anyone has palms from last year and would like to donate them to us to use for this year's ashes, please bring them to church and place them in the box in the narthex.  
Thank you

**Acolytes and Crucifers are needed at St. John's.** It is a wonderful way to serve during service. It is small commitment of 1-2 Sundays every three months. Anyone who has made their First Communion is eligible. If you are interested



Thursdays at 10:30 AM  
in the Church  
room!

**First Communion classes** will begin **February 20<sup>th</sup>**. If you or someone you know is interested in receiving communion for the first time, please contact Pastor Alex at the church office or email him.