



By Pastor Koenig

Long before any of us were born, our ancestors practiced and cultivated a particular tradition, and passed it on from generation to generation through story and experience. Though it has taken on many forms over the years, at its root it has not changed, and those who continue the tradition are convinced of its reliability and success.

Even though it has been understood for so many lifetimes, however, it is still nearly impossible to *perfect* this tradition. Why? Because no one can properly describe the exact timbre necessary when thumping a melon to determine if it is really ripe! And these days, the tradition has been complicated further with so many genetic modifications to choose from—a melon is no longer a melon, the stripes are too difficult to read, and besides, we simply don't have time to carry on our melon-thumping tradition.

Bottom line: "You never really know the heart of a melon until you slice it open."

Nicodemus had similar intuitions when he first approached Jesus in the dead of night. "What do you mean, 'be born again?'" he asked, as if to say, "Can't I tell who's righteous by their stripes, and can't I infer their inner qualities by thumping on their intellect?" But Jesus replies, "Just as you can't tell where the wind comes from or where it blows, so it is with the Holy Spirit." You simply never know how, when, where, or why the Holy Spirit works—or doesn't work—inside someone.

Bottom line: You never really know the heart of a person until you 'slice it open.'

That is precisely what we do during Lent. It is a time of 'slicing open' our innermost selves, of laying bare to God what's really at our core. We confess in public fashion (especially on Ash Wednesday) that we are not really so ripe inside, although we would like to be. It is an admission of our humanity, of our imperfect timbre in God's world. ***But it is also an act of freedom.*** Through Lent, we free ourselves from the expectation that each of us can somehow be the best melon in the bunch. We free ourselves from trying to judge each other through intellectual thumping instead of confessional community. We free ourselves from ourselves, and rediscover who God is, and where God stands, in our lives. So Lent can have a beautiful timbre as well.

As we rediscover ourselves this Lenten season, let us embrace the many wonderful opportunities we will have to grow and ripen into our discipleship. Praise be to the God who loved us before we were born, who picked us out of the bunch to be God's people, and who abides with us as we are! Go in peace. Serve the Lord! Thanks be to God!

DEACON'S CORNER

Are you ready for Lent? Are you ready to look at your life and see if there is something that you need to improve? Something that will make you change what you are doing and turn it around to something positive. This is what Lent is all about, finding something that has bothered you and the chance to change it. Start a new direction in your life and follow it. Maybe God has been poking you to do this and you have pushed him aside and kept moving on. Now is the time to put on your hearing ears and listen to that small voice within telling you what to do.

Come to the Wednesday services during Lent and listen to what God has to say to you. Noon service is in the Chapel and the Soup Supper is at 6 PM with a service afterwards. Join your fellow St. John's members in this endeavor. All through March throw yourself into this time of Christian living. You can also use the devotional being put together by John Dux to help you walk through this time. This is the time for repentance, cleansing and asking God for forgiveness to start a new life and walk with Jesus.

Your servant in Christ,
Deacon Rich



HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Palm Sunday Worship Services, April 5

8AM Fellowship Hall

10AM Nave*

NOTE: There is no Dinner Church during Holy Week, April 8.

Maundy Thursday Worship Services, April 9

12PM Chapel

8PM Nave*

Meal in the Upper Room

6PM by reservation, starts in Nave*

Good Friday Worship Services, April 10

12PM & 8PM Nave*

Easter Vigil Worship Service, April 11

Time TBD at Paul's Episcopal Church

(Joint Service with St. Paul's Episcopal Church and First Lutheran & St. John's Lutheran Churches)

Easter Sunday Worship Services, April 12

8AM Fellowship Hall

10AM & 11:45AM Nave*

Easter Egg Hunt in the Courtyard following 10AM Service



Holy Week

HELP NEEDED

Meal in the Upper Room Help Needed

We need help with any of these services for the Meal in the Upper Room. Please contact Jeanne Jones if you can help with anything. Thank you! 452-1550 jjones@stjohnselc.org

Set-up

Clean-up

Reader

Kitchen help

Table Leader



BIRTHS

We extend prayers of congratulations to

Linda Picciano on the birth of her grandson, **Bowie James Post-Picciano**. **Bowie James** was born on January 14th.

Neal and Melissa Todnem on the birth of their daughter, **Audrey Todnem**. Audrey, who is the granddaughter of **Gary and Lucinda Kaiser**, was born on February 2nd in Brooklyn, New York.



JOURNAL DEADLINE

April – March 8th

Please note that the Journal deadline is the 2nd Sunday of the Month. Please make sure all submissions are in by that date.

When submitting, please forward in Microsoft Word or an e-mail. Please send submissions to Carol Versace (carolav_nd@yahoo.com) Please include name and phone number in case of questions.

THRIVENT FINANCIAL

Thrivent Financial is a membership organization of Christians that helps its' members be wise with money and live generously. The result is stronger members, families and communities. Thrivent has had a long standing relationship with St. John's Lutheran, and as a result many ministries have benefitted.

If you are a Thrivent Member and have a qualifying product, you can designate a donation from the Thrivent "**Choice Dollar**" program to St. John's Lutheran church annually or donate to another charity of your choice.

March 31 is the cut-off date for you to direct the 2019 Choice Dollars you have accrued. If you have questions about how to do this, please contact Steve at 845-891-3390 steve.jones@thrivent.com

ANXIOUS FOR NOTHING

Anxious for Nothing Study

A DVD Study by Author, Max Lucado

Wednesdays, March 4, 11, 18, 25, April 1

1-2pm –Meet & Greet Room

Come early for 12pm Lenten service & 12:30 light lunch.

5-6pm-Blue Room

Stay for 6pm Lenten Soup Supper and 6:45pm Lenten service.

In this five-session Anxious for Nothing DVD Study by Max Lucado, he examines Philippians 4:4–8 to show how we can be anxious for nothing and discover true peace from God that surpasses human understanding.

Sessions include:

Rejoice in the Lord Always

Let Your Gentleness Be Evident to All

Present Your Requests to Go

The Peace of God Will Guard Your Heart

Meditate on These Things



UPCOMING EVENTS

*Nave=Main Worship Space

Food Pantry is open 1st & 3rd Sundays, 9-11am in Church Office. **Church Library** is open every Sunday morning & Wednesdays from 12-2pm.

February 26 Ash Wednesday Services 12pm (imposition of ashes)

Ash Wednesday Service 7:30pm (traditional service)

IMPORTANT: There will be no Dinner Church on Ash Wednesday, February 26.

Wednesdays in Lent (March 4, 11, 18, 25 & April 1)

12pm Mid-Day Lenten Service, Chapel

12:30pm Light lunch provided, Meet & Greet Room

1-2pm Anxious for Nothing DVD Bible Study, Meet & Greet Room

5-6pm Anxious for Nothing DVD Bible Study
5pm Blue Room

6pm Soup Supper, Fellowship Hall

6:45pm Lenten Service, Fellowship Hall

March 1 Youth Go Bowling with PK, 11:15am

March 15 Youth Volleyball/Pizza Night, 6-8pm..

March 22 Hospice Luncheon 11:30am, Fellowship Hall

March 29 First Communion Reception
11:15am, Fellowship Hall (Open to all)

March 29 Youth Ice Skating at McCann,
11:15am

Ongoing Collections:

Love Inc Personal Care Products & Linens
Food for St. John's Pantry

SYMPATHY

We extend our prayers of sympathy and concern to the family and friends of



Jeremy Annis, friend of Joey Tompkins, who died on January 8th.

Missy Dyal, friend of Deacon Rich and Carol Ferolito, who died on January 24th at Westchester Medical Center.

Horst Schaffner, who died on January 4th. His burial will be later this year.

Nancy Riefenhauser, sister of Joan Kraft, who died on February 3rd, in North Carolina.

Eric Coonradt, son of Al and Vinnie Coonradt, who died on January 31st in Alaska.

LAY MINISTRY

PEACE

Recently my Christ Care Group did a study called "Anxious for Nothing" by Max Lucado. The same study is being presented during Lent at 1pm and 5pm on Wednesdays at St. John's. This topic is quite popular because we all seem to battle anxiety at least at some level. If I ever start to think I am immune, all I need to do is consider my train of thought at 4am...

This got me thinking about what I do to keep anxiety from creeping into my thoughts. When people see me on Sunday mornings, I know I often look anything but peaceful as I play piano for 8am service, practice with the worship team, set-up and make coffee for Coffee Hour, teach chapel time with the JAM kids and greet people after services. However, St. John's **IS** a place of peace for me, even if my Sunday mornings might get a bit busy. Here some of the top ways St. John's helps me keep at peace.

Dinner Church I do a lot of work getting chefs, setting up and such, but when I get there, Dinner Church provides me with a time of respite in the middle of the week. It connects me with others in a casual atmosphere.

Sunday Worship I sometimes get preoccupied with the role I play in worship (leader of the worship team at 8am service), but I also find peace in the songs I play and joy deep in my soul being with my church family as we worship and praise God with one voice. Worship can be a great source of peace.

Service There are many ways I serve at St. John's and many offerings for others too. While there is a level of activity to service, there is also a peace I find in my heart when I help others. It gives me satisfaction and contentment to reach out to others in Christ-like love through service opportunities.

Interactions As I said, time spent in worship with my church family gives me great peace, but just hanging out at Coffee Hour, chatting in the hall or participating in Grow and Go activities after the 10am service are all ways I connect and recharge through my church friends & interactions with fellow Christians.

Meditation in Quiet Spaces Honestly, I do not take advantage of quiet spaces at St. John's as a regular practice, but I do know of a few individuals who have used areas of the church building as a place for quiet reflection and prayer to God. If you ever need a place to reflect, pray or recharge, consider using spaces in the church (that are not being used) to have your own personal peaceful time with God. This can be quite a rejuvenating experience.

You don't need St. John's to have peace in your life, God can give that to you as you connect with Him. However, the leaders at St John's work hard to help people feel and experience God's peace through various means in this church. Are there offerings here outlined above or you have yourself that could provide more peace in your life? Think about it, pray about and act on it! I truly believe it is not God's intention in our lives that we live with anxiety, but that we support one another in practices that help combat this in our lives and give us a sense of peace.

Go against the flow of this busy, chaotic world and seek peace. May God's presence give you direction for this and practical ways to incorporate it into you daily life and may the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Jeanne Jones
Director of Lay Ministry



EASTER FLOWERS

Please see the blue folder in the church office marked "Easter Flowers". Fill out the form that is in the folder and leave the form and a check made payable to St. John's Evangelical in the folder. Contributions can be made in memory of a loved one. Contributions can be made any time, but Memorial Forms must be received by **Sunday, March 29** to be included in the Easter bulletin.



MEAL IN UPPER ROOM

The Meal in the Upper Room will be **April 9 at 6pm**. The meal consists of foods similar to what Jesus may have eaten at the Last Supper and is eaten in silence. As congregants eat, the voice of Jesus is heard as if he were dining and eating among us. The service continues throughout the meal, ending with Holy Communion. Reservation forms are in the kiosks and in the church office (blue folders to the right). Suggested donation is \$12 for adults and \$6 for children. See Rev Koenig if cost is an issue so arrangements can be made. **Please sign up by April 5.**



St. John's Leaders

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St. John's Lutheran Church Mission Statement

*“Encountering,
 Connecting,
 Responding
 to Jesus Christ.”*

Articles for publication in the Journal may be submitted through email to carolav_nd@yahoo.com.

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