



By Pastor Koenig

Coming to Poughkeepsie was, quite honestly, not on our radar. We had a goal, a house in western New York, and a specific plan all laid out for how, and when, to get there. Of course, we all know what happens to “the best laid plans!” Still trying to find our way to the upstate synod, but with no churches available in the near future, I asked the metro synod’s staff if there were any short-term positions available while we waited for a permanent upstate call. As it turns out, they were trying to come up with a new plan as well: St. John’s needed a short-term, flexible, bridge pastor... *immediately*. My response was immediate as well: send me! Suddenly, Poughkeepsie wasn’t just on the radar, it was the whole plan!

Accidentally landing in Poughkeepsie has turned out to be one of the best things that could have happened to us! It is such a beautiful area, to begin with. Since I grew up near Schenectady, I am already familiar with the entire area. My mom lives an hour away. My Step-mom lives an hour and a half away. My step-son, who remained on Long Island, is only two hours away (instead of six, as our original plan would have entailed!). Effectively, we live at the center of my core family and my geographic history. Suddenly, we are “home!”

Little did we know that, from the very beginning of our time here, we would sense an increasing captivation toward what has become this permanent call. Yet we felt it, rising in our spirits, from the first time we stepped into the parsonage—the first time I met with the staff—the first time I presided at worship. There was something deep happening, and we knew it was true when the congregation itself began to articulate it. It quickly became very clear that a random call to the synod in an almost desperate attempt to execute my *original* plan was really, the whole time, part of God’s much higher Plan. With a capital “P.”

Listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit quietly urging, steering, compelling us, in the midst of the noise of people’s busy worlds and self-made plans, can be a difficult thing to do. Yet here, in this place, the Spirit has spoken—loudly—and Marlies and I heard it, as spoken through all of you. Through your love; your connection to us; your enthusiasm; your joy; and your trust. Our plan has now become your plan. God’s Plan. We could not be happier to find that Poughkeepsie is where we belong—at St. John’s, together with you! Thank you for making this commitment to us. We look forward with eager anticipation to our new life together: shepherding, serving, in community with you. May God bless each and all of you this Christmas and joyous New Year!

## DEACON'S CORNER

Now is the time that we get ready for the Christmas season. You should already be in the mood from the Christmas music that has been playing since the 9th of November. It seems to be earlier and earlier every year. Pretty soon we will hear it on the Fourth of July. That being said, please join us this Christmas season as we prepare for the coming of the Christ child. Many things are happening at St John's like the Christmas extravaganza with the Hospitality team planning this for Dec 2, at 11:15 (who doesn't like a party?). Come and join us, have your picture taken with Mrs. Claus, I did it last year. Decorate some cookies and partake in some finger foods. There will be fun things to do and the Jam kids will be putting on a Christmas play later.

We will be starting Advent season on Dec 2, with the lighting of the advent wreath each week and having a family who will be reading scripture and saying a short prayer at the start of the service.

Advent is a time for anticipation, a time to get ready for the birth of the Christ Child and remind us of the sacrifice that was made for us. God wants us to rejoice in the Birth of Christ, to be joyful as we go about our busy lives each week as we lead up to Christmas and remember what the season is really about.

Lessons and Carols will be at St. John's on December 16, at 3:00PM come and enjoy the songs and Hymns of the season. Susan has something in store for you.

Speaking of Christmas please join us on Christmas Eve; we have a service for you. At 12:30PM the focus is on family, a pop up pageant and the blessing of the nativity. Then at 7:00 and 11:00PM we will have the candlelight service a powerful service where we are praising God thru song and prayer, culminating

in the candlelight ending. Please try to be at one of these services.

Don't forget to welcome our new Pastor when you come to our Christmas Services, come and listen to his thoughts on the scripture in his sermons. January brings with it our installation of our new Pastor on January 6, where we will formally induct Pastor Koenig into St. John's. We are blessed to have such a talented Pastor.

May you have a blessed and Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy New Year.  
Deacon Rich

## CHRISTMAS EXTRAVAGANZA

The Hospitality Team will be having its 2nd Annual Christmas Extravaganza on Sunday, December 2, after the 10 am service. We will have snacks, cookie decorating, pictures with Mrs. Claus and much more. We hope you will join us for some family fun and holiday cheer.



## LAY MINISTRY

### Footprints

On January 20, 2016 I was told by Pastor Ward that he would be retiring. I wrote down the date on my prayer card, and started praying for the new pastor God would surely send someday. When the Call Team formed, I wrote their names on the opposite side of the card and prayed often for that faithful group of people as they took on the daunting task of seeking our new shepherd. My prayer card looks pretty ragged now, it was well used over these few years, but it was my way of turning over this process to Him; it helped me be patient knowing God's timing would be right.

I am writing this article the very same day we have voted in favor of Pastor Koenig (PK) as our called pastor at St. John's! I have ripped up that prayer card and give thanks for God's faithfulness yet again (He has a pattern of being that way, you know!) I am now writing down November 11, 2018 on my prayer card as a new era at St. John's and will be praying for PK, his family and for the people of St. John's to walk alongside PK as we do God's work here together.

One of the ways some of us helped illustrate PK's new role at our church was to give him a little welcome home present. He was gone on vacation during the time of the voting, and in his absence, the youth group and a few others made a banner that said

"PK, Welcome as our **PASTOR!** May God direct your steps as you lead this congregation on our Faith Walk." We filled his office with "footprints" made by the youth, with their names on them. (Don't worry, we used paper, not muddy boots to make the footprints!) There were signs around the room with Bible passages on them about leading/following. We wanted Pastor to know we are excited about his new role at our church and that we follow him, and also walk alongside him as we walk the new path God has set before St. John's.

Jeanne Jones  
Director of Lay Ministries



## JOURNAL DEADLINE

February Edition – January 13th

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](mailto:carolav_nd@yahoo.com)) Please include name and phone number in case of questions.



## BIRTHS

*We extend prayers of congratulations to*

**Chris & Brigit Woods** on the birth of **Austin John Woods**. **Austin John** was born on April 15, 2018 at Vassar Hospital.



## SYMPATHY

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



**Martin Koch**, cousin of Rosemarie Tompkins, who died on October 10th in Germany.

**Judy Place**, aunt of Sue Place, who died on October 29th.

**Floyd Baker**, husband of Janet Baker (former member who predeceased him), who died on October 26th.

**Valerie Lovegrove**, niece of Mady Christie, who died on November 1st in Utah.

**Joe Giordano**, brother-in-law and friend of Jackie and Sal Boccio, Kathy and Bob Fair, Carol and Howie Meehan; uncle of Dave Boccio, Alison and Brett Castellano, Alana and Tom Mendola.

**Ken Vergili**, brother-in-law of Carol Versace, who died on October 13<sup>th</sup> in San Diego, Ca.

## BAPTISMS

**Dustin John Morley was baptized November 11, 2018.** Dustin John who is the son of David and Courtney Morley, was born on June 12, 2018 at Vassar Hospital.



## IT'S OFFICIAL; WE HAVE A NEW PASTOR!

November 11, 2018 the congregation voted in favor of calling Rev. Jeffrey Koenig as pastor of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church. We are blessed to move forward in the mission of St. John's with Rev. Koenig as our shepherd!

Thanks go out to the 6 members of the Call Team who worked many, many long hours searching for a new pastor for St. John's Lutheran. Their dedicated service to this task is greatly appreciated.

### Call Team Members

Brent Thompson (*chair*), Russ Aykroyd, Betsy Carroll, Amy Huber, Fred Oberender, Erin Potter

## UPCOMING EVENTS

\*Nave=Main Worship Space

Food Pantry is open 1st & 3rd Sundays, 9-11am in Church Office

**The Church Office will be closed on these dates** (*staff vacation & holidays*)

**December 7, 21, 25, 26, 27, 28, January 1**

**December 2** Christmas Extravaganza 11:15am, Fellowship Hall (*Including JAM Christmas Play*)

**December 7, 8, 9** Youth at Advent Camp

**December 8 & 12** Wrapped in Love (*Knitting & Crocheting Ministry*), 1-3pm, Blue Room

**December 11** Wrapping Party for Basket Gifts 10:45am, Fellowship Hall

**December 12** Christmas Basket Assembly 7pm, Book Nook

**December 16** Christmas Basket Delivery by the Youth 10am

Christmas Service of Lessons & Carols 3pm, Nave\*

**December 24** Family Christmas Eve Service (*Blessing of Nativity/Pop-up Pageant*) 12:30pm  
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services 7 & 11pm, (*All Services in Nave\**)

**December 25** Christmas Day Worship Service 10am, Nave\*

**January 6** Epiphany Scholarship Sunday, 10am  
Worship Service, Nave\*

Installation of Rev. Koenig, Reception to Follow (*Time TBD*)

**January 9 & 12** Wrapped in Love (*Knitting & Crocheting Ministry*), 1-3pm, Blue Room

**January 10 & 24** Care & Share Bereavement Group 7pm, Book Nook

**January 22** Egg Salad Sandwich Making

**January 28** Congregation Potluck & Annual Meeting

### Ongoing Collections:

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



## AFFIRMATION OF BAPTISM/ RITE OF CONFIRMATION

At the 10:00 AM Worship Service on October 28, 2018 the following youth were presented for Affirmation of Baptism / Rite of Confirmation:

**Brayden Chase Altman Lewis**

**Michael William Manley**

**Edward Kells Rigby**

**Ian George Schweiger**

**Alexander Jonathan Swatek**

On All Saints Day, November 4, 2018, a candle was lit and a bell tolled as we remembered all the saints from this congregation who have died over the past year.

**Ray Skov**

**Art Kaiser**

**Rich Errickson**

**Susanna Consiglio**

**Ruth Lauritsen**

**Trudy Pectle**

**Elsa Henrich**



## CHRISTMAS SERVICES

**Sunday, December 16<sup>th</sup>**

**Service of Christmas Lessons and Carols, 3PM**

**Monday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Eve Services 12:30\*, 7:00 & 11:00PM**

*12:30PM-"Pop-up Pageant", all children welcome to participate*

*Extended Preludes at 6:30 & 10:45PM*

**Tuesday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**

**Christmas Day Service at 10AM**

**Sunday, December 30<sup>th</sup>**

**Worship Services 8AM & 10AM**

*(No JAM, children may worship with their families)*

**Regular Worship Schedule Resumes January 6 (College Recognition Sunday)**



## JAM CHRISTMAS PLAY

The JAM kids will be putting on a Christmas play called "Who Will Be Upon Our Tree?" at the Christmas Extravaganza event on December 2. The event begins after the 10am worship service in the Fellowship Hall, with the play starting around 11:45am. (The play is about 10-15 minutes long.) The Extravaganza will continue after the play with food, crafts, service project, pictures with Mrs. Claus and more. Come support the JAM kids and enjoy the festivities of the season!



MERRY  
CHRISTMAS

## THANK YOU TO BCA SOLUTIONS

St. John's wants to thank **Recycle Depot Facility owner, Joe (Peppy) Trocino** for his generous donation of 12 yards of mulch to be used to beautify the St. John's grounds. We also want to thank our grounds keeper and custodian, **BCA Solutions owner, Bernandino Cazares** for arranging for the mulch donation and for spreading it on the grounds at a significantly reduced labor cost. Bernandino also donated the mum plants for the courtyard. These lovely fall flowers make this recently upgraded space even more attractive! We appreciate these two business owners and their support of St. John's!

While we are thanking people, we also want to give a shout out to the **Coppola Family of the Coppola Restaurant in Hyde Park**. They donated all the sauce used for the meatballs we made at the last Meatball Event. The meatballs and sauce were served as meatball sandwiches at the Lunch Box (a soup kitchen in Poughkeepsie). We are grateful for the Coppola family's support of this project!

thank  
you!

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## **Christmas Flower Contribution**

Please fill out a form found in kiosks and in the Church Office-white folder labeled "**Christmas Flowers**". Put both the form and contribution in the folder.

Checks payable to: St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

**To have names in Christmas Bulletin, forms must be received by Sunday, December 9.**



Church Potluck and Annual Meeting  
Sunday, January 27

Potluck 11:15AM

Annual Congregation Meeting 12:15PM

Church Fellowship Hall





My name is Katie Thorn. I attended the ELCA Youth Leadership Summit on behalf of the Metro NY Synod. The Summit was held at Carol Joy Holling camp in Ashland, Nebraska. During my time there I got to meet other youth from around the country who were there representing their synods. We talked a lot about our congregations, synods, and the experiences that we have had because of being active in our congregations.

The focus of our time together was advocacy. Kevin Strickland introduced us to the concept of faith based advocacy using Philippians 2:1-5 and the story of the Good Samaritan. As Christians, we are called to model selfless love as Christ did. We do this through caring for our neighbors in many ways. He reminded us that Martin Luther defined "neighbors" as anyone our life touches. His broad definition of neighbor calls us to advocacy.

Abbi Hull, an ELCA Hunger Advocacy Fellow, spent the weekend with us and talked about advocacy being a place where youth and teenagers have a real voice. Abbi talked about how we can use our place in the church to speak to issues that affect the global community. She told us that when people from the church speak up about issues facing the world, leaders and policy makers listen because the words of faith leaders carry a moral weight. Abbi also talked about the needs of a community, such as hunger, will shape their local congregation; advocacy benefits us all.

Dr. Laura Hartman from Roanoke College spoke to us about environmental issues and advocacy surrounding them. Environmental issues are extremely complex and are often interconnected with other social justice issues such as race and class. Those causing the most damage to the environment are often the least affected. For example, rising sea levels in parts of the world (Alaska and the Gulf Coast) have resulted in some of the worlds first environmental refugees. Dr. Laura said that even though these issues are extremely complex, the small things we do can make a huge impact. She named our congregations as a great place to start practicing environmental advocacy and using our voices. She talked about churches that have community gardens, green spaces, and solar panels.

I attended a workshop on racial justice with Nicolette Faison. We played a version of monopoly that Nicolette had adapted. Her version gave real life advantages and disadvantages based on the race and gender of your game character. Everyone in the room was very astonished by the real life wage gaps that exist and how much of a difference they make. Nicolette also talked about her difficulty getting called to a church as a young African American female. She has been out of seminary for two years.

My other workshop selection was AMPARRO. AMPARRO stands for "Accompanying Migrant Minors with Protection, Advocacy, Representation and Opportunities". They seek to protect these children by working with them and by advocating for policy surrounding the border, immigration, unaccompanied minors, and refugees. The Speaker from AMPARRO, Alaide, was able to share so many stories of the ELCA making a difference in the lives of individuals who find themselves in terrible circumstances. She told the story of a man who's refugee status was denied. The ELCA was able to help him obtain a micro loan in his home country to start a bakery.

One of my favorite experiences from the summit was "Candle Time". This was an hour of quiet reflection. There were at least 15 different prayer and reflection stations set up to experience. One of the prayer stations was glueing traced and decorated hands onto the event banner. We had done this with our hands the night before not knowing what they would be used for. It was really cool to see all the hands come together on the theme banner. My favorite station was a reflection wall. There were several inspirational quotes and pictures hung on the wall for us to reflect on. My life, like everyone elses, is very busy. I really liked this whole hour set aside to connect with God through prayer and reflection.

I am very grateful to have had this opportunity and thank all that St. John's, the Metro NY Synod and the ELCA did to make it come together.

Submitted by Katie Thorn