

**JUNE 2010**



*St. John's  
Lutheran Church*  
***Reaching Out In Faith***



1301 Milnwood Road • Farmville, VA 23901 • 434-392-1875 • stjohnsfarmville@gmail.com  
Rev. Joel M. Giese, Pastor

**The note below is a reprint of Vicar Martin's letter to St. John's.**

21 May, 2010

St. John's Lutheran Church  
1301 Milnwood Road  
Farmville, VA 23901

Dear Members of St. John's Lutheran Church:

With joy in my heart and the conviction that God has called me to His service in your midst, I herewith announce my acceptance of the Call which you have extended to me to serve as pastor.

I look forward to installation as your assistant pastor. Please uphold me and my family with your prayers and your common commitment as stewards in God's kingdom.

May the Lord, who gifts His Church, prepare us for His work of service that the body of Christ may be built up in faith and knowledge, and may we grow together in such love and truth that we may welcome Him with joy at His coming.

In the service of Christ,

(Signed)

Brian Martin

**Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow!**

***Mark your calendar now! Vicar Brian Martin will be Ordained into the Office of Public Ministry and Installed as Assistant Pastor on Saturday, the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2010 at 11:00 A.M. A luncheon will follow.***

***We will have representatives from our Circuit and from all around the Southeastern District attending this blessed event. Be sure to be there and invite friends!***

***Vicar Martin will not be a "Vicar" for much longer! Let us praise God that He has raised up another worker to serve His Church!***

Greetings Brothers and Sisters of St. John's, in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ:

I would like to begin this month's newsletter with a bit of news which gives me great honor to report. Candidate Brian Martin has given prayerful consideration to the "Call" extended him from St. John's as assistant pastor. Brian has notified me that he has graciously accepted the "Call" to serve our congregation as assistant pastor. Brian's ordination and installation service is planned for Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup>, 2010 at 11:00 a.m. I encourage all to attend this very special occasion in Brian's life.

I have heard from several people since the last issue of the Lutheran Witness asking about Paul Andreasen's resignation from the roster of ministries with LC-MS. Most of you will remember that Paul served St. John's from 2002 through 2005. Paul left St. John's to serve our country in Kosovo. When he returned, he and his family were transferred to Lawton, OK. He is now being transferred to Texas, 1 hour south of Austin. It is because of his duties and commitment to the military that Paul resigned from the roster of ministries with LC-MS. Please keep Paul and his family in your prayer petitions.

The Sustained Giving Stewardship Emphasis pledges continue to come in. \$362K of the pledged \$392K has been received. Thanks to all who have made this possible. During these hard economic times, God has certainly blessed this church with the continued giving by our members, friends, and neighbors. The *ABLAZE* program continues to benefit from this program as well. The members made a resolution to tithe to the *ABLAZE* program from the SGSE income. If for some reason, anyone has made a commitment to the program, but has been unable to follow through, PLEASE, do not fret or be discouraged. We still have 9 months left in this particular program. If your economic conditions will not allow you to give now, you may give any time. It does not have to be monetary. Gifts of time and talent are every bit as important as the monetary part. If you are in need of financial assistance, I would encourage you to speak with Pastor Giese so that your family here at St. John's may extend a helping hand, anonymously of course.

The building committee is still working hard on the educational wing preparations. The ladies with the fabric committee have decided on a fabric to be used on the sanctuary seating. This puts us one step closer to our permanent seating. Hopefully by the next newsletter, the illuminated sign framing will be in place out in the front yard. Have you noticed the cornerstone? The floor covering has been installed in the choir room. This has certainly brightened the room. "Thanks" to those who made this possible. You will find a proposed floor plan elsewhere in this newsletter. This is just one of several versions. There are not a lot of differences between the versions. I would recommend that the members look the proposed plans over and if you have any suggestions, please submit them to Jack Stamper or Pastor Giese. If you can not get up with either of these fine gentlemen, then bring your suggestions to me. It will be easier to make changes now on paper than later during construction. The building committee will make its final decision on the floor plan by month's end.

Please submit your suggestions no later than Sunday, June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2010. We are still making reports to the state of Virginia concerning soil erosion. Hopefully, this will come to a conclusion soon.

Speaking about the new building, I have noticed a couple of things pertaining to it. On several occasions, I have entered the new building and found exterior doors left unlocked. I know that Pastor Giese has mentioned it in a couple of his newsletter articles in the past, and he has also given brief on-hands demonstrations. As you enter the church building when it is locked, try this. Insert your entry key. Turn the entry key counterclockwise until you hear the lock release. Do not remove your key until you have slightly pulled the door open. Once the door is open, turn your entry key back clockwise and remove your entry key from the cylinder. This should cause the cylinder lock to return to its locked position. Once you are in the building, try and push against the door by placing your hand on the door itself, not the panic bar. If the door will not open by a slight push, then you have successfully entered. The next step will be to depress the panic bar, then take the hex key that is strapped to the panic bar and insert it into the ¼" hole near the hinge end of the panic bar. Turn the hex key 1/8<sup>th</sup> turn until you hear a faint click. Once again, push against the door itself. If the door opens without depressing the panic bar, then you have successfully unlocked the door(s). What this procedure does, is it will allow anyone who is left remaining in the building that may not have a key, to lock and secure the facility when they leave. To secure the facility, simply insert the hex key into the ¼" hole and turn until the panic bar releases. To confirm that the door(s) lock, push on the door itself. The door should not open unless you depress the panic bar. Whether you use an entry key or the hex key, always be sure to check the exterior door(s) when you leave by pulling on the exterior handle and make sure that the door(s) will not open. This procedure applies to any of the exterior doors. If you are the last person to leave the building, check all exterior doors, because someone else may have left the door(s) unlocked inadvertently.

The next thing that I have noticed is that a couple of times at church, there have been pets inside. While pets are nice to have, please remember, that not all people are tolerant of pets, regardless of how nice the animal might be. Some people have allergies when it comes to animals. Please refrain from bringing your pet into the building unless it is a guide animal or there is an event, such as an Easter or Christmas program that may include animals.

Vacation Bible School will be held the week of July 5<sup>th</sup> through July 9<sup>th</sup>. Anyone willing to assist please see Catherine Varner. This years theme is Planet Zoom, where bold BEE-lievers ZIP, ZAP & ZOOM for JESUS.

May the peace and grace of God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you all.

God's Peace,

*Longest*



The Congregation of St. John's Lutheran Church  
is pleased to announce the  
Ordination into the Office of Holy Ministry  
and the  
Installation of Brian Martin as Assistant Pastor.

This blessed event will take place at St. John's on  
Saturday, June 26th, 2010 at 11:00 a.m.  
A light luncheon will follow.

Please accept this invitation to join us for this wonderful  
event as we celebrate the work of the Holy Spirit.  
Families are welcome!

### About Lutheran Pastors

The Augsburg Confession, Article XIV, states: "Our churches teach that nobody shall publicly preach or teach or administer the sacraments without a regular call". Therefore, only those who are called and ordained into the pastoral office may exercise it.

All Christians are made part of God's royal priesthood through Baptism, however not all Christians are ministers. When a man receives and accepts his first call to serve as a pastor, he is then ordained.

Ordination is a confirmation of a man's call into the ministry of the church. He is set apart for service to Christ and Christ's Holy Church as a pastor. Often, during his ordination, he is also installed into the pastoral office of the congregation that calls him. In the future, if he takes another call, he will be installed as pastor at the new location, but he is not ordained again.

The word "pastor" comes from the Latin word for "shepherd." The Scriptures state that the Holy Spirit appoints men to shepherd God's people (Acts 20:28). The Bible also refers to pastors as "ministers," which literally means "slave" or "servant" (Acts 26:16; Romans 15:16; Eph.3:7; 1 Tim.4:6).

Paul describes pastors this way: "We do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord; and ourselves your slaves, for Jesus' sake (2 Corinthians 4:5)." The pastoral office is an office of loving and caring service to the people of God, in the stead and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ.

\*\*\* To God be the Glory! \*\*\*

## **Mark Your Calendars!**

### **The 2010 Southeastern District Ablaze! Tending the Flame Conference: July 30-August 1, 2010**

~ Living Letters ~

Christ has written with the Spirit of the Living God on our hearts that we would be His letters of recommendation. As a living letter, what do people read when they see you? Do they see Christ in you? Are you in the mission field, meeting people where they are, and serving with compassion?

Reggie McNeal, this year's speaker, encourages us to be the people of God serving in the midst of the world that God loves. It promises to be an exciting Conference.

Early Bird registration is \$60 (must be postmarked by June 15)

Regular Registration - \$90

Youth & Children - \$25

Echelon will be performing for the Youth Program!

We are located at the Holiday Inn Koger Center in Richmond, Virginia. Call 804-379-3800 and request the conference rate of \$92 when making your room reservation.

Workshops for everyone, Evangelism Fair, Praise & Worship, Family Friendly

If you want others to see Christ in you as you serve in the mission field, don't miss this conference.

## **THE LUTHERAN LECTURE SERIES**

Presents a day focusing on Medical Ethics. The theme for this year is:

### **COME LET US PLAY GOD**

Four Lutheran scholars who have contributed to the bioethics discussions taking place in our nation will each make a presentation. Have you wondered about in vitro fertilization, surrogate motherhood, and other ethical topics?

These and other issues will be examined from a Lutheran perspective.

This event will take place on October 30th at Augustana Lutheran Church in Hickory, NC. It will start at 11AM and go to 4:30 PM. For more information, contact Rev. Ray R. Ohlendorf at 828.632.4863. or

[revxpistos@charter.net](mailto:revxpistos@charter.net)

– Session I –

*A Lutheran Understanding of Ethics, the Mind  
of the Maker*

By Rev. John Pless - Professor at Concordia  
Seminary, Ft. Wayne

– Session II –

*The Right to Live, It is Good that You are Here*

By Dr. Robert Weise - Professor at Concordia  
Seminary, St. Louis

– Session III –

*The Right to Die, the Considerate Hero*

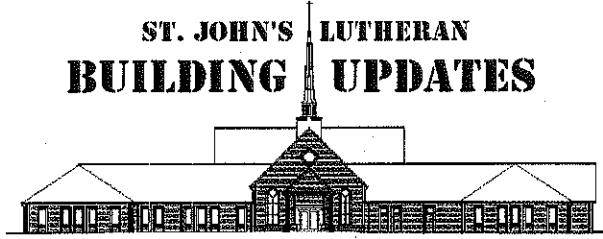
By Dr. James Bachman - Professor at  
Concordia University, Irvine CA

– Session IV –

*A Brave New World, Welcome to the  
Promise Land*

By Dr. Mark Mattes - Professor at Grand  
View University, Iowa

**ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN  
BUILDING UPDATES**



**What is happening with our building project?  
AS OF JUNE 2<sup>ND</sup>, 2010...**

**What is happening now?**

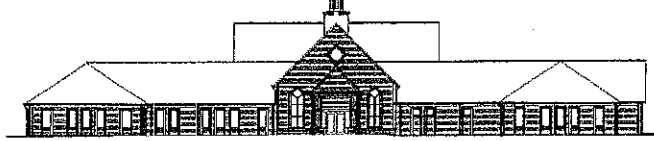
- **1913 S. Main Street.** We patiently wait God's timing.
- **Grounds:** Please take the time to pick up stray pieces of trash when you see them, put rocks back in the landscaping, and pull weeds out of our planters. We all have a responsibility to care for this great building that God has provided for our use. This is a reflection of our stewardship and the people of Farnville are watching!
- **Sanctuary Seating:** The fabric has now been chosen along with the style of chair and wood finish. My understanding is that this fabric is from a company that does not have it on hand. There may be a 4 to 8 week period in which the fabric line will be re-started and then another 8 to 12 weeks for the chairs to be manufactured. These time-lines are all estimates. The actual time from placing the order to delivery may be significantly more or less. There are many factors involved.
- **Signage:** Steps have been taken to install the lighted sign by Milnwood Road. The electrical conduit has been run to the site and two sign companies have been contacted for bids on replacement placards. The concrete footing will be poured and the sign's frame erected. The footing has been designed to put the sign above modest landscaping and to receive exterior facings (such as brick or stone). The Building Committee has approved placards and these will take a few weeks to make.
- **The Educational Wing:** The Building Committee has reviewed the proposed floor plan of the Ed Wing. There have been some improvements suggested, parts of which will be incorporated into the design. These improvements are intended to make this wing more versatile and flexible for future use. Some future options for suggested use are: an emergency shelter in case of manmade or natural disaster (hurricanes, etc...), daycare, afterschool, senior center... We cannot plan for every potential use, but we must consider ways to make the space the most versatile for the next 5, 10, 15+ yrs.
- **The Steeple:** We are making progress toward placing the steeple. Research has continued and will be presented to the Building Committee. Our largest cost associated with the addition of the steeple will be installation. Some of the most important things for us to consider is how and when we will place the steeple without damaging our parking lots and our landscaped side yard. If we continue to get large amounts of precipitation, we may have to wait awhile. Pray for God's guidance

*I know your deeds, your love and faith, your service and perseverance,  
and that you are now doing more than you did at first. Revelation 2:19*

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Giese

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN  
**BUILDING UPDATES**

**Part II**



**An Important Message Every Member Should Read!!!**

**\*\*\* Reminder of How the Church Keys Work \*\*\***

This is very important. It has been brought to my attention that various exterior doors have been left unlocked several times in the past couple of months. I urge everyone to be diligent in locking and unlocking doors properly. If the doors are unlocked correctly, then even someone without a church key can lock the doors when they leave.

The old building had one key for all exterior doors. Keys for the new church are more complicated. The exterior door keys do not function like those in the old building because of the "crash-bars" on the doors that let you out of the building. The new keys are intended to only let you into the building. The doors are then unlocked from the inside.

To successfully enter the building and unlock the exterior doors, please follow these steps:

1. Unlock the exterior door with your key and open the door.
2. Before removing your key, **immediately relock the door** from the outside with your key and enter the building.
3. You have successfully entered the building when you are able to push on the door from the inside and it does not swing open. If the door swings open as you push it, you have improperly entered the building! You *must* exit the building and relock the door before moving on to the following steps.
4. Once you are in the building and certain that the door is still locked from the outside, look on the crash-bar on the door for the black allen-wrench. These allen-wrenches are attached to every exterior crash-bar door by a small cable.
5. To unlock the door, squeeze the crash-bar as though exiting the door and insert the allen-wrench into the small round hole on the crash-bar closest to the side of the door with the hinges.
6. Turn the allen-wrench until you hear/feel a click. If unlocked, the crash-bar will remain pushed in. Push the door and it will swing open.
7. To unlock, squeeze the crash-bar in, place the allen-wrench in the hole and turn. There will be a click and when you release the crash-bar it will pop out. Push the door and it will not open.
8. Remember, the door is not locked if it swings open when you push on it.

It is important that the exterior doors are locked and unlocked in this manner so that those who are left in the building can lock the doors without needing an external key. Please be a good neighbor and a responsible member of the congregation.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Giese

An open letter to the Congregation  
of St. John's Lutheran Church  
From Pastor Giese Regarding Future Military Service



June 2, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ.

I greet you this day in the name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, Who has called us to action in His Kingdom and service in this world.

In the past year you have heard occasional reports regarding my military service with the United States Army. I have informed you of the changes that the Army has been undergoing since 2001 and how these changes have now come into my little corner of the Army. I have attempted to make clear that more changes are in the near future and promised to inform you of these changes as they happen.

As you recall, until now, I have been in a "student" type status with the Army as a Chaplain Candidate. As such I was a non-deployable asset and typically trained in chunks of time that ranged from two to eight weeks. Originally, I had been told that I could have a total of eight years in this status, but with the reorganization these rules have now changed. The time that they are giving Chaplain Candidates has changed from 6 to 8 years to 3 to 5 years. I have served about six and a half years.

The Army has given me an ultimatum. I had to choose between five options. These include: transitioning into the Active Army, the National Guard, or the Reserve, involuntary separation from the Army, or resigning my commission. I have truly struggled and prayed over this decision. I feel the Holy Spirit calling me to military ministry and have felt this way long before going to seminary. I have a talent for it, I am good at it, and I believe that it is an incredibly important ministry. Therefore, I do not feel that voluntary or involuntary separation from the Army is appropriate at this time.

Neither do I feel that the Holy Spirit is calling me away from St. John's at this time. I firmly believe that He has plans for us and work for us to complete together in the coming years. Therefore, I do not believe that Active Duty or the Virginia National Guard (which has told me that deployment will be immediate) is right at this time. Both require me to leave St. John's.

It seems to me, and to those whose pastoral guidance I trust, that the Holy Spirit has opened many doors to a final option. It is with this reasoning that I have chosen to proceed with becoming a Chaplain in the US Army Reserve. After much prayer and consideration, this is the best choice at this time. In the Reserve I have the opportunity to be, as they call it, a "Citizen/Soldier". This means that I may stay at St. John's and continue to serve as Pastor, but it also means that I will continue to serve our country in the Army.

This change of status will mean some adjustment. This is what I know so far. The most noticeable change is that I will be assigned to a Unit (or several units) as chaplain. This means that when they train, I train. I will very likely be gone one weekend every month for training. God has blessed us by providing Vicar Brain Martin as Assistant Pastor beginning at the end of June. I have discussed this situation with him and the Elders and he will take any Sundays that I am gone for training.

There will be other required training. This typically occurs once or twice a year for a week or two. Before, I was expected to train at least once a year for about seven weeks. This will no longer be the case and extended training (over two weeks), while occasionally required,



will be rare. I will train little bits throughout the year rather than in large chunks as before. The one major exception will be the Chaplain Advance Course. This is a multi-week school in South Carolina that I will be required to attend sometime in the next five years.

The last and perhaps the largest change is that I will no longer be a "non-deployable-asset". This is a significant change. This means that at any time the Army may decide that it needs me to go overseas for an extended tour. The upside, I have gotten myself attached to a major command which has some pull. They think that they can protect me (at least in the short-term, 2-3yrs?). The unit is in desperate need of chaplains and has had no indication that they will be deployed anytime soon.

Is deployment a possibility? Yes. However, I believe that I have done everything humanly possible to be in a position which will provide me as much protection against this possibility as is possible.

If I am "called-up" for a deployment, will I go...? Yes, without question.

Though the timing for such an event is never good, I will go where God sends me, when He sends me. Remember, He calls each of us to spread the Good News of Christ Jesus. Who needs to hear this Good News more than the young men and women who have sworn to protect us and fight for our freedom to worship our God? Who needs this more than those who are at times required to place life and limb on the line, and who may have to end the life of another person in the course of their duties? I will go, but let us pray that His timing meets with our approval.

I expect that my transition to the Regular Reserve will be complete by the end of the summer. However, the Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod has a protocol in place to protect both the congregation and the pastor in situations like these. There is a document called the *Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement & Contingency Planning Document* which will be reviewed by the Board of Elders and the pastors. This document will be edited to fit our needs.

Once the Elders and the pastors are in agreement, this document will be presented to the July Voter's Assembly for ratification and signatures. Copies of this document will be kept by the congregation and by me. Other copies will be provided to our Circuit Councilor, the Southeastern District, and the Director of the LCMS Ministry to the Armed Forces in St. Louis.

Copies of the Elder-Board-approved *Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement & Contingency Planning Document* and the associated appendix will be available to the congregation to review before the Voter's Assembly in July.

In the next few months I will be providing more information about the Chaplaincy as well as additional information about the unit to which I anticipate that I will be assigned, and the *Reserve Chaplaincy Agreement & Contingency Planning Document*. If you have any questions, concerns, or comments regarding the information provided above or on this subject in general, please do not hesitate to call the church office at 434-392-1875 to make an appointment to speak with me.

May God bless this venture and expand His kingdom through the local and military ministry of St. John's Lutheran Church.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rev. Joel M. Giese, Pastor  
St. John's Lutheran Church in Farmville, Virginia

# Lutheran Topics

THIS MONTH:

**Pastor, I know the Luther Rose is “Lutheran”, but what does it mean?**

Another great question. In Lutheran circles we frequently see this symbol. We have used the Luther Rose (sometime called the Luther Seal, Luther Crest, or Luther Coat of Arms) at St. John's for some time. In fact, we even have a Luther Rose window placed over the front door so that everyone who drives by may see it. Martin Luther personally oversaw the creation of this symbol. It provides a beautiful summary of his faith, a faith that is common to all Christians, of every place and every time.

Printed below is how Luther himself explained the meaning of his seal in a letter to Lazarus Spengler, dated July 8, 1530:

From Dr. Martin Luther at Coburg Castle

"Honorable, kind, dear Sir and Friend! Grace and peace from the Lord. As you desire to know whether my painted seal, which you sent to me, has hit the mark, I shall answer most amiably and tell you my original thoughts and reason about why my seal is a symbol of my theology.


The first should be a black cross in a heart, which retains its natural color, so that I myself would be reminded that faith in the Crucified saves us. 'For one who believes from the heart will be justified' (Rom. 10:10). Although it is indeed a black cross, which mortifies and which should also cause pain, it leaves the heart in its natural color. It does not corrupt nature, that is, it does not kill but keeps alive. 'The just shall live by faith' (Rom. 1:17) but by faith in the crucified.

Such a heart should stand in the middle of a white rose, to show that faith gives joy, comfort, and peace. In other words, it places the believer into a white, joyous rose, for this faith does not give peace and joy like the world gives (John 14:27). That is why the rose should be white and not red, for white is the color of the spirits and the angels (cf. Matthew 28:3; John 20:12).

Such a rose should stand in a sky-blue field, symbolizing that such joy in spirit and faith is a beginning of the heavenly future joy, which begins already, but is grasped in hope, not yet revealed.

And around this field is a golden ring, symbolizing that such blessedness in Heaven lasts forever and has no end. Such blessedness is exquisite, beyond all joy and goods, just as gold is the most valuable, most precious and best metal.

This is my compendium theologiae [summary of theology]. I have wanted to show it to you in good friendship, hoping for your appreciation. May Christ, our beloved Lord, be with your spirit until the life hereafter. Amen."

**Lutheran Topics**  **NEXT MONTH: THE CHAPLAINCY; A BRIEF HISTORY**



Kids zip, zap, and zoom at *Planet Zoom*. They ZIP into VBS and ZAP into God's Word. They help each other learn with memorable activities, confess that they "BEE" LIEVE in Jesus, our Savior, and then ZOOM out to share Jesus' love in the world. *Planet Zoom* registration is open for ages 3-12 who will attend VBS from **July 5 to July 9, 6 - 8 PM**. Kids meet friends, explore Bible stories, do fun activities, sing great songs, make crafts, play games, and eat snacks. We expect a great response, so enroll your child today.

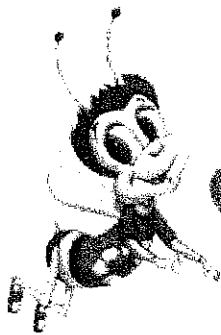
Use the 1/2 sheet below to invite a child in your life. ☺



**We need you!** Through the dedication of our members and friends who volunteer at VBS, we minister to children each year with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you aren't part of VBS yet, why not call today? If you can help some days, just one day, every day, or in advance, we have many levels of involvement to suit your schedule and interests. Call Catherine at 392-8481 for more information.

**We appreciate your prayers** for *Planet Zoom*, our Vacation Bible School. Ask God to bring children to our program so they can know and grow in Jesus, our Savior! And ask God to provide leaders and helpers for this important mission.

## St John's Lutheran Vacation Bible School VBS



GRAB YOUR  
FRIENDS  
AND ZIP  
ON OVER.

Monday July 5 - Friday July 9

6:00 - 8:00 PM

1301 Milnwood Road, Farmville VA

For children Ages 3 - 12

Questions? call church 392-1875 or Catherine at 392-8481

AMAZ-Z-ZING BIBLE STORIES.  
COOL CRAFTS.  
ZANY GAMES.  
SWEET GOOEY SNACKS.  
BEE-BOPPIN TUNES.