

Trinity Evangelical Lutheran Church

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At Trinity, Bechtelsville, we've resolved in the New Year to re-energize our Sunday school program. We're especially encouraging our adults to get involved in regular Sunday school attendance.

This past fall, a couple in our congregation volunteered to team-lead an adult discussion group; this group has gotten popular. They are currently doing a unit on the parables and have generated some interesting Sunday-morning discussions. They're planning to do a unit on the miracles of Jesus later in the spring. We're hoping the class will attract some younger adults who will bring their children to Sunday school.

We're hoping the best way to grow our Sunday school is to provide programming that appeals to the whole family.

(Continued from front)

- **Maidencreek Church**, 261 Main St., Blandon, will hold a **drop in** time from 6-8 a.m. on **Ash Wednesday**, Feb 22, to receive Ashes and Communion on your way to work. This is open to anyone, but specifically those who cannot attend Ash Wednesday Services.
- **Zion's Lutheran Church**, Perry Twp.'s Welcome and Outreach Committee is sponsoring "**Sharing Love, Comfort and Joy**" Day on Sunday, Feb. 12. The congregation and Sunday School classes are asked to bring teddy bears to church and place them in the pews on Feb 5 and Feb 12. The bears will be blessed on Feb 12 and donated to Mary's Shelter and local service organizations for distribution to children during a time of need to bring them Love, Comfort and Joy. A representative from Bear Creek Camp will present an informational program to age appropriate campers on Sunday, Feb. 12 during the Sunday School hour from 9:15-10:15 a.m. The representative will also lead team building games involving the attendees. All are welcome to attend.
- **St. Paul's Lutheran Church** at 117 East Arch Street in Fleetwood invites you to these upcoming events:
 - February 26, at 7 p.m. : The Fleetwood Area School District Music Staff will be performing a variety of music. There will be solos, duets, trios, and quartets.
 - May 6, at 7p.m.: Garment of Praise, a Southern Gospel quartet
 - July 13, at 7 p.m.: King's Brass

Send your Upcoming Events to: lchtsecretary@comcast.net.

Deadline for submissions is the 15th of every month for the following month's edition.

You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no

Salt



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Upcoming Events:

- There will be a Congregational Council Workshop, "Leadership & Personality", on Saturday, February 25, from 9:30 a.m. to noon at Zion Union Church, Maxatawny, PA (just off Rt. 222, north of Kutztown; 329 Church Rd.). The Rev. James W. Bowers, Ph.D., will be the presenter. Cost is \$10/congregation. Registration Deadline is Monday, Feb. 20. If you have not already registered your congregation, please do so by emailing Rev. Houck at revhouck@juno.com. If you have any questions, please call Rev. Houck at 610-926-7176 x 2. All churches in the district are encouraged to participate.
- **Living with Loss**, a free six-week grief support group, will meet Mondays, 6:30-8 p.m., beginning March 19 at the Parish of St. Columbkil, 200 Indian Spring Road, in Boyertown. To register, call Diakon Family Life Services at 610-682-1337.
- **Surviving and Thriving through Separation or Divorce**, a free six week support group, will meet:
 - Tuesdays, 6:30-8 p.m., February 28-April 10, at New Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, New Tripoli
 - Mondays, 6:30-8pm, March 19-April 30, at Calvary Lutheran Church, LaureldalePre-registration is required. Call Diakon Family Life Services at 610-682-1337.
- **2012 WOMEN'S RETREAT - Created by God - Designed for Grace** - April 27-29, 2012, at Mariawald Renewal Center in Shillington. For more information or registration materials, contact Diakon Family Life Services at 610-682-1337, 888-499-2699, or visit "Events" at www.diakon.org/fls.
- **KIDSHAPE: Helping Kids and Families Fight Obesity Together:** A 9-week program for children, ages 6-14, and their families, begins March 1, 6:30-8:30pm, at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Reading. Pre-registration is required. Contact Diakon Family Life Services at 610-682-1337, 888-499-2699, or www.diakon.org/kidshape.

(Continued on back)

Matthew 5:13-16
In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house.

longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot. You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. No one after lighting

Maidencreek Lutheran Church

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“The Body of Christ in the 21st Century”

A question that the faith community continues to ask is, “Where do all those little ones come from?” Five years ago Maidencreek Church was branded a dying church. There were no children in worship, no Sunday School, and when VBS was held, eight children showed up. Last year we had 50 children attend VBS. We had to add a fifth Sunday School class and we now have three youth groups, a junior group for 3rd - 5th grade, a middle school group for 6th -8th grade, and a senior high group. We have 15-20 children come forward for the children’s message, and as you can imagine our worship services have become alive with the noise of children.

This article is not to brag but to give hope to those churches which, right now, are in the dying category. Five years ago, the faith community of Maidencreek Church decided they wanted to continue as a church and made some changes to move into the 21st century.

The community welcomes everyone, and this extravagant welcome only begins when they walk in the door. One family commented that at their first visit to Maidencreek Church, three different people invited their children to Sunday School. Another was given a “busy bag” but was also told that if their children do not sit still, they should not worry about it, it takes more than one worship service to learn how to do church. Everyone is invited to a fellowship time, between worship and Sunday School. Many remain during Sunday School and meet new friends or catch up with old ones.

Of course, it is not only families that are welcomed. When a more mature woman joined, she said that after one visit to Maidencreek she knew the names of seven people. At her former church, of twenty years, she didn’t know the names of the people who sat next to her.

New members to the community are encouraged, welcomed and asked to be a part of our growing list of ministries. Many of these ministries were initiated by our new members. New faces, new ideas, new gifts to share; this is what the faith community of Maidencreek Church believes the Body of Christ looks like in the 21st century.



St. John’s Gernant’s

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610-926-2384 · www.stjohnsgernants.org

“365 Days of Christmas”

When December rolls around many people seem to say, “If I have to do one more thing, I’m going to scream”. Well, it didn’t seem to bother the folks at St. John’s Gernants. Even if their personal lives were busy and even if the economy is tough, everyone was mission minded.

December was St. John’s turn to volunteer for Food Pantry. Both Lutherans and UCC stepped up to the plate to try to bring Christmas joy to the less fortunate. There were oodles of volunteers, bunches of gifts (thanks to the Schuylkill Valley Area Churches through the Angel Tree Project), tons of food (literally), extra toys and clothes and free things to chose from, and even Santa (who gave out teddy bears and candy canes). The atmosphere was more like a Christmas party instead of a food pantry.

But the giving didn’t stop there for St. John’s. What were we to do for our shut-ins? Gift baskets. We collected so much that the gift baskets practically toppled over and even overflowed into gift bags. Our shut-ins where overwhelmed by the generosity and love shown to their brothers and sisters in the congregation.

As part of my sermon on Christmas Eve I asked the congregation (combined Lutheran & UCC), “Where is Christmas?” Pretending to have searched for it, even though all these wonderful ministries had already happened. About half way through my sermon, I ‘planted’ a few folks to help. One was a mom of two small children....and out of the mouth of babes....mom whispered to her youngest, 5, to tell us about the food pantry ministry, so, Chuckie in his usual boisterous voice said, “How about the food pantry? We feed the people, and we LOVE THEM!”. Indeed, the congregation’s hearts melted. Well, his older brother, 7, said, “What about the free lunch? We feed them too and we love them too?” Chuckie, then replied, “We’re BOTH right!” I said, “Yes, you are both right”. Well, more comments came from the congregation sighting examples of the ministries we do at Gernants Church and how this is Christmas, WE are Christmas...each and every day of the year, because Jesus lives in and through us....Immanuel, Emmanuel.

We talked about changing the song 12 Days of Christmas to 365 Days of Christmas, but decided it would take way to long to sing. At Gernants we would rather LIVE Christmas everyday!

