

JANUARY EVENTS

Jan. 5: Annual Youth Bonfire at St. Andrew's Homestead, 5:00pm.

Jan. 25: Renewing the Church through Music and Worship, free workshop at St. Michael Lutheran Church, Wellington (West Palm Beach area), 10:00am-3:30pm.



St. James Lutheran Church
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St. James worships every Sunday at 10:30am, with a bilingual service mostly in English but with some Spanish. The entire liturgy is presented in both languages on the screen above the altar, so that one may follow along in the language one prefers. Pastor Boudon preaches the sermon in English, followed by a brief summary in Spanish.

Green Faith. St. James is participating in a two-year certification program with Green Faith, which will provide the church with a holistic, well-supported and structured program to “green” our worship, education, facilities and outreach. The program will include ecology-focused activities and will showcase the Garden of Our Lord. When completed, St. James will be the first green church in Miami.

Sunday school. St. James offers a full Sunday school program for adults and children at 9:30am every Sunday morning before worship. There is Bible study for adults and Christian education for children.

Monthly Healing. St. James offers a healing liturgy as a part of our normal worship service on the third Sunday of the month, replacing the Prayers of Intercession.

FROM THE PASTOR

January 1 marks the beginning of the new calendar year but the new church year began on December 1. As such, we are now in Year A of the Revised Common Lectionary, the source of our readings every Sunday. As Lutherans, we follow the lectionary and, as a pastor, I am committed to preaching on one of the readings assigned each Sunday, including the psalm. Normally I preach on the gospel reading, which this year comes predominantly from Matthew. As one of the three synoptic gospels, Matthew's gospel shares a great deal with Mark and Luke and all three differ significantly from John. Nevertheless, Matthew's gospel has some unique features that should be noted. First, it is the most Jewish of the four gospels. Scholars believe it was written for a Christian community with a Jewish background somewhere around the end of the first century. As such, Matthew makes frequent reference to scripture, saying that certain events fulfilled prophecies found in the Old Testament. Matthew portrayed Jesus as the fulfillment of Jewish scripture. He calls Jesus "the Son of David" repeatedly, and emphasizes the importance of Jewish law. Matthew's gospel also portrays the Gentiles in a rather negative light, even though at the very end of the gospel he has Jesus instructing his followers to "go therefore and make disciples of all nations (28:19)." From Matthew's gospel we get the more commonly used versions of the Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount, 5:3-12), and the Lord's Prayer (6:9-13). Finally, in Matthew's gospel Jesus talks not about the Kingdom of God but rather the Kingdom of Heaven. It is my hope that this brief introduction will help us understand the gospel readings over the coming eleven months.

Eco-tip of the Month

Transportation: \$6,251: Amount the average two-worker household saves annually by taking public transportation instead of driving a car (Source: Environmental Defense). Have you checked out the mass transit routes near your home, and do you use mass transit as often as possible? Where mass transit is not feasible try other sustainable methods of transportation: walking, riding a bike or carpooling.

Look Outside Yourself for New Year's Resolutions

Many people make resolutions for the New Year: lose weight, watch less TV, study the Bible ... the list goes on. Most of these resolutions are forgotten by February. One reason for this failure is that these resolutions, for the most part, have an inward focus. It is all about "me" and if a resolution is broken, the only one you disappoint is yourself.

This year try something different. Make a resolution with an outward focus. Resolve to volunteer 10 hours a month to help feed the poor, send a monthly gift to make a difference in the life of a child, rescue a dog or a cat from the shelter. By making a resolution that if broken will disappoint someone other than yourself, you will be more likely to succeed. For a list of ideas on ministries that you could become involved with, talk to your pastor or visit www.lsfnet.org. You can also write to Lutheran Services Florida, attn.: Steve Cecchetti, 3627A West Waters Ave., Tampa, FL 33614.