



St. James

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Serving in God's House in October

Trustee: October 1 – Bruce Milleville
 October 8 – Brian DeVantier
 October 15 – Andrew North
 October 22 – Dave Antonelli
 October 29- Dave Milleville

Altar Care: Laurie Schmidt and Margaret Wittmeyer

Communion Assist: October 1 – Maureen Milleville
 October 15 – Ted Washburn

Readers: October 1 – Margaret Wittmeyer
 October 8 – Beth Wruck
 October 15 – Mary Burgio
 October 22 – Stephanie Camidge
 October 29- Kalli Kaminska

Organist: October 1 – Jennifer Parris
 October 8 – Janet Galvano
 October 15 – Jennifer Parris
 October 22 – Janet Galvano
 October 29- Janet Galvano

Congregation meeting October 8th following church service in the gray room. Please contact Sue Milleville with any agenda items prior to the meeting.

HARVEST FESTIVAL

Will be Sunday, October 8th. We would love to have Produce and Flowers to decorate our church with and need your help! Please drop off your harvest items by THURSDAY, OCTOBER 6th as we will put the display together that evening! (Please remember to take your items home with you after the service on the 8th). Thank you for allowing us to display them for that special day of thanks for our many blessings! If you have any questions or would like to donate but aren't able to shop or carry heavy produce, please contact Michelle Gibson or Jennifer Parris and we are happy to help you!

Save the Dates:

Save The Date! St. James Lutheran Church will be hosting their annual Trunk or Treating on Sunday, October 29th. Look for future updates for the time. Any questions, please contact Samantha North (716) 345-2490.

SAVE the DATE! Our next Rise Against Hunger food packaging event is Saturday November 4th starting at nine am. We're usually done by eleven or so. If you've never attended please consider it as it's a great opportunity to serve those less fortunate and also a lot of fun! Sign up sheets will be on the table in the north wing hallway. Any questions please feel free to call or text Maureen Milleville at 716-465-3724.

**REFORMATION
SUNDAY**

October 29th



Trick or Treat?

Already, early in September, I noticed that the trees are decorated, and the houses are all lit up. It seems as though those holiday decorations pop up earlier and earlier every year. No, I'm not talking about Christmas, I'm talking about Halloween. It's about this time every year that the question comes up, "should Christians observe Halloween?"

According to the Irish American Home Society website, "The origin of Halloween dates back to the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain about 2,000 years ago. Samhain was celebrated by the ancient Celts in the belief that the souls of their ancestors returned to earth on this night causing general mischief and damaging crops. The druids (Celtic priests) channeled these spirits to determine the future. Bonfires were built and animals were sacrificed to placate the spirits and to ensure safe passage through the winter period. It was both a celebration of the harvest and the casting of spells to ward off evil for the cold months ahead. Ancient Celtic people in Ireland, the United Kingdom and northern France, celebrated their new year on November 1st. It is regarded as All Saints Day (All Hallows) in the Catholic tradition, followed on the 2nd of November by All Souls day. The last day of October then was All Hallows Eve, which is what we now know as Halloween." The connection of elements of witchcraft or the occult with October 31 thus was in competition with All Hallows Evening and All Saints Day, not a part of it. Here in the United States where Christianity and superstition co-existed, however, elements of the two often became entangled.

Halloween now is a secular holiday that descended from both heathen and medieval observances. It has often had unsavory elements such as occult symbols and vandalism associated with it. The question then is whether these elements have been sufficiently detached from Halloween, and has it become a secular holiday that can be observed without offensive features. Over time the holiday has evolved into something that would be unrecognizable to its early participants. For example, in America we no longer carve turnips, but pumpkins. Although many still dress up in costumes related to the dead, most of what we see is our favorite super heroes or Disney characters and the like.

The fact that some people celebrate Halloween in offensive ways does not in itself rule out the holiday. If this were so, we could not celebrate New Year's Eve or even Christmas. The fact that Halloween occupies the same day as a heathen holiday is not unique. Many Christian holidays like Christmas and Easter in a sense compete with heathen holidays since both were associated with key points of the astronomical calendar. This is also true of the Old Testament holidays prescribed by God. Some of our Christmas and Easter customs have some similarity to heathen customs just as the Old Testament sacrifices had many points of similarity with those of the heathen. Some Christian holidays have become more secularized even while they remain important festivals of the church year (Christmas). Other minor religious festivals have almost entirely lost their religious connotation (Valentines Day). For most people St. Patrick's Day has become more of an Irish ethnic fest than a religious holiday.

Whether or not Christians should participate in Halloween is a question of judgment. Such a holiday may have different meaning and different customs attached to it in different times and places. Whether Christians should or should not participate depends on the meaning of the holiday in the context in which they live and on the impression which their participation will give to others. Naturally, they should refrain from objectionable practices if they participate. Here at St. James, we use this as an opportunity to reach out to the community by means of our "Trunk or Treat" event. There are some good arguments that can be made against Halloween, but individuals should be convinced in their own consciences of what is best for them to do and should be cautious about judging others who may have a different opinion.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Randy