



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
BERRYSBURG, PA | APRIL 2023

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

As April begins, we come again to our observance of Palm/Passion Sunday and the “Three Days” or “Triduum” – the ancient title for the period that begins on Maundy Thursday evening and ends on Easter Sunday evening. If you have never taken the time to experience the power of these holy days focusing on the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus, why not make this the year, especially as our worship continues to return to a more “pre-COVID” feel? Our schedule of worship and related activities will be as follows:

- **Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday, April 2:**

At **9:00am**, we will proceed with our normal in-person Faith Formation activities. At **10:15am**, we will likewise join in our new normal “hybrid” worship, combining in-person and Zoom opportunities and, while we will not have a procession of palms of any sort, we will be handing out our beautiful Equal Exchange palms to those present in-person (***and have them available for a day or two beforehand for picking up here at the church for those who will be Zoom-ing that morning***). Our worship will begin with the Liturgy of the Palms and we will again enjoy Vincent Lamenza’s reading of The Passion of Jesus (this year According to St. Matthew) as the center point of our worship.

- **Maundy Thursday, April 6:**

At 7:00 P.M., we will gather (both in-person and on Zoom) for a Liturgy of Holy Communion, sharing in the mystery and the meaning of that Upper Room – the body and the blood given for us – the betrayal and desertion of our Lord. Reflecting that betrayal and desertion, for the first time since the COVID years, our worship will end with the solemn stripping of the altar by members of altar guild as the senior choir intones the haunting words of Psalm 22.

- **Good Friday, April 7:**

At 7:00 P.M., we will gather (both in-person and on Zoom) for the Liturgy of Good Friday – a dark and solemn, and yet hopeful, time when we hear again of the extent of Jesus’ great love and sacrifice for you and me. Members of Youth Group and Pastor Tom will again lead us in our worship.

- **Holy Saturday, April 8:**

At 9:00 A.M., members of Youth Group will set up for our annual Easter Egg Hunt, with the hunt getting underway at 10:00 A.M. for children in four age groups: preschool, grades K-1, grades 2-3, and grades 4-5. At 7:00 P.M., we will continue our worship downstairs with a Liturgy of Readings and Prayer, which will not be available on Zoom, with the much smaller and quieter and darker setting of our downstairs chapel. This liturgy, a part of the ancient liturgy of Easter Vigil, features a series of lengthy readings from the Old Testament, telling of the creative and saving actions of God, beginning with Genesis 1, that point the way to the ultimate creative and saving action of Easter. There will be no music and no offering – only my reading by the light of a single candle, silence for meditation, and prayer.

- **The Resurrection of Our Lord, Easter Day, April 9:**

We will once again gather in-person for a brief time of Sunrise Worship at **6:30am** in the field across from the pavilion, next to the sexton house (or under the pavilion roof in case of inclement weather). At **9:00am**, we will again proceed with our normal Faith Formation activities. And at **10:15am**, we will likewise join in our new normal “hybrid” worship, combining in-person and Zoom opportunities as we celebrate the Good News that Jesus is Risen!

And it occurs to me that I would be remiss if I didn't also mention that, on **April 16**, this **Second Sunday of Easter** will once again be the day of our **Easter Celebration Worship**. While the rest of the world will have already stored away the Easter decorations, concluding that Easter is over and done, we choose to live the truth that Easter is, in fact, a “week of weeks” – 49 days plus 1 – and our young persons, guided by Miss Laurie, will lead us in continuing that celebration. As Miss Laurie and the young persons continue to remind us, our God Is a Great Big God! Let's prepare to celebrate together just How Great and just How Big!!

I will look forward to being in worship with YOU, my sisters and brothers in this wonderful congregational family that is St. John, in this most Holy of times. Please don't hesitate to contact me with any questions or ideas!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy April everyone! This month, our Lenten journey comes to a close and we now anticipate the promise of Easter! Grab your pens and take down these important dates:

- Sunday, April 2nd – It's our “Parade of Palms” SONday Celebration! Join us as we recreate Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem! We hope you'll stay for church too, and help us welcome in church-goers with shouts of “Hosanna” and waving palms!
- Wednesday, April 5th – Join us from 6:30 – 8:00 for our “Easter Bunny Bonanza” Celebration Club!
- Saturday, April 8th – It's the youth-run Easter Egg Hunt at St. John's! Grab your baskets and meet us at the church at 10:00 for the fun!
- Sunday, April 9th – Come celebrate our risen Lord during our “Jesus Lives” SONday Celebration! The fun will continue right through Celebration Time!
- Sunday, April 16th – It's our annual Easter “Celebration” service! Join us for this kid-friendly service featuring contemporary music, a Sunny Sermon, and an Easter Object Lesson.
- Sunday, April 23rd and 30th: - We continue our exploration of events that happened after Jesus rose from the grave.

We hope you can join us ALL month as we rejoice in our risen Savior! In this season of rebirth, may you feel your faith renewed and your heart made new with the hope Easter brings. Get ready to Celebrate - Jesus LIVES!!

Miss Laurie

Book Group

Walking the Bible movie, based on the book by Bruce Feiler - **April 17 6:30 pm at church**. Everyone is welcome to bring food or drink to share.

Please call or email Ann 717.362.7895 rahbruner@gmail.com with any questions.

Midweek Bible Study

Our spring session of Midweek Bible Study will get underway on Wednesday, April 19 and run for six weeks, meeting each week from 6:30 to 8:00pm and wrapping up prior to Memorial Day weekend. Prior to April 19, the folks who have signed up will make the decision whether we will meet in a hybrid fashion (in-person with a Zoom option) or via Zoom only – Pastor Tom will be open to doing whatever the group decides. For our spring study, we will be “following the lead” of Book Discussion Group, reading and discussing the acclaimed book ***Walking the Bible*** by Bruce Feiler, in which he engages us in his experiences of traveling over and through those lands we commonly refer to as the “Holy Lands”, helping us see familiar biblical passages with new perspectives. Depending on how our gatherings run, we may finish with a May 24 Movie Night to take in the film based on the book together, maybe even with popcorn! ***To take part in this spring study, you do not have to have taken part in Book Discussion Group in March or April – nor will you be “bored” if you did!*** And, as always with these studies, no previous Bible study experience is required – only an interest and enthusiasm to study, reflect on, and (if and when you are comfortable doing so) discuss God’s Word together! So that the correct number of study books can be ordered for our study, please register in advance (by speaking with Pastor Tom) and let him know if you will need a copy of the book **by the end of the day on Maundy Thursday, April 6.**

2nd Planning Meeting – Annual Strawberry Festival

The second planning meeting for our Annual Strawberry Festival will be held on **Monday, April 24, beginning at 7:00 P.M.** at the church. Since there really isn’t a fixed committee and the meeting is literally made up of those interested persons who show up each time, all interested persons are (really!) invited to attend as we work together to plan this event by which we are known by our neighbors, near and far. (The Festival itself is planned for the first Wednesday in June: June 7.)

Summer Camp

It’s not too late to be thinking about how you might take advantage of summer 2023 church camping opportunities. Please contact our **Congregational Camperson, Amy Gehring**, who can connect you with the latest and most current information about schedules and registration information for the camps of our Lower Susquehanna Synod, Kirchenwald and Nawakwa, and for Camp Mt. Luther in the Upper Susquehanna Synod. Please bear in mind that, for baptized members of St. John, camping scholarships are provided, making any camping experience a great value as well as a life-changing experience.

Annual Yard Sale

Too Much Stuff?? No Problem! Now is the time to start gathering together your gently used treasures for our upcoming congregational **YARD SALE** to be held August 3, 4 and 5. Watch for your June Newsletter for more details.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to **Blake & Sarah Maurer** on the safe and healthy birth of **Declan Blake** on Sunday morning, March 5, at UPMC Harrisburg. Declan weighed 7 pounds 6 ounces and was 21 inches long. Congratulations and our prayers also to the Maurer and Dietrich families!

Attention All Women of St. John’s Congregational Family!

A very important meeting is scheduled for April 16th at 2:00 p.m.

The future of our ministry together as the Women of St. John will need to be discussed and addressed and new ideas are most welcome.

Please make every effort to attend this meeting. Thank you.



St. John's Youth Group

APRIL
2023

PALM SUNDAY - APRIL 2ND

On **Palm Sunday, April 2nd**, the youth group will meet immediately following worship service for a pizza party. After the pizza party we will stuff eggs for the egg hunt. Parents can pick up their youth at 1:30 p.m. Please RSVP to Olivia.

EASTER EGG HUNT - APRIL 8TH

The annual Easter Egg Hunt is Saturday, April 8th at 10:00 a.m. The youth group is in charge of the whole hunt. **All youth group members will meet in the kitchen at 8:30 a.m. for breakfast.** After breakfast, the youth will team up to take charge of a specific age group and set up for the Egg Hunt. Please RSVP to Olivia.

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT

Monday, April 10th is Family Movie Night!! The youth group has rented the Twin Valley Players Colonnade in Millersburg. We will play the family friendly movie, "Family Camp". There is no cost to you; however, don't forget to visit the concession stand to help support the Colonnade. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., movie starts at 6:30 p.m. Bring your family and friends!!

UPCOMING EVENTS

July 21-22 - Camp Out: This summer, we plan to have a **Camp-Out**. We will sleep outside, have a campfire, play camp games, tell Bible ghost stories, and more!

Sept. 22-24 = Allve Junior High Retreat at Camp Nawakwa. Registration deadline is August 27th.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 4pm - Marriage of Kayla Henry and Daniel Eyler (off site)
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Sunday of the Passion/Palm Sunday 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person), Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person), SONday Celebration (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Liturgy of Palms, Dramatic Reading by Vincent Lamenza of The Passion According to St. Matthew , Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person (In-Person and On Zoom) 11:30am - Youth Group Gathering at the Church Starting with Pizza Lunch 4pm - Congregational Council March/April Meeting	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	Pastor Tom's Day Off (instead of 4/8)	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie 7pm - Maundy Thursday Liturgy Practice/Senior Choir Rehearsal Passover Begins at Sunset	Maundy Thursday 7pm - Liturgy of Holy Communion, concluding with Solemn Stripping of the Altar	Good Friday 6:15pm - Youth Leaders Meet to Prepare for Evening Worship 7pm - Solemn Good Friday Liturgy, with Youth Leaders	Holy Saturday/Easter Eve 9am - Youth Group Members Gather to Prepare for Annual Easter Egg Hunt 10am - Annual Easter Egg Hunt 7pm - Easter Eve Quiet Liturgy of Readings and Prayer
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Day 6:30am - Brief Outdoor Easter Sunrise In-Person Worship 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person), Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person), SONday Celebration (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Sacrament of Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person (In-Person and On Zoom) Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 6:15pm - Congregational Family Movie Night at the Twin Valley Players Colonnade in Millersburg, hosted by Youth Group Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off	7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal Pastor Tom Taking Vacation Day				Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off Deadline to Submit Items for May "St. John's Epistle"
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
2nd Sunday of Easter 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person), Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person), Confirmation Class (In-Person) 9am - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Easter Celebration Worship (Both In-Person and on Zoom), including Sunny Sermon with Miss Laurie 11:15am - Mutual Ministry Committee Meeting 2pm - Meeting of the Women of the ELCA of St. John	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 6:30pm - Book Group Monthly Gathering (In Person at the Church) 7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at St. Michael, Klingerstown	7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off Earth Day
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
3rd Sunday of Easter 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person), Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person), Confirmation Class (In-Person), SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person (In-Person and On Zoom)	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Annual Strawberry Festival Planning Meeting #2	Mark, Evangelist 6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting 7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal	6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
30						
4th Sunday of Easter 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person), Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person), Confirmation Class (In-Person), SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person (In-Person and On Zoom)						

Pastor Tom's Office Hours

Monday, Tuesday: 8am – 9:30am

Wednesday, Thursday: 8am – 12 noon

Friday: 8am - 9:30am

(Other times by appointment)

Contact Information

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Ty Troutman, Choir Director	kimjtroutman@gmail.com	717-686-2758
Rachel Henry, Secretary	henryfamily2004@gmail.com	717-439-3897
Joshua Paul, Council President	joshpaul1995@gmail.com	717-460-0670
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911 Emergency/GPS Location:

215 St. John Road, Elizabethville, 17023

For US Mail Deliveries:

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Church Website: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch