

Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

911 Emergency/GPS Location:
215 St. John Road, Elizabethville, 17023

For US Mail Deliveries:
PO Box 270, Berrysburg, 17005-0270

717-362-9519 | pt@stjohnhillchurch.org | www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Our Mission

St. John congregation, responding to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, unites together to preach and teach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission. With God's guidance and grace, we strive to boldly proclaim by word and action the reconciling Gospel of Jesus: Working together for justice and peace, and caring for those in need in our community and world. We invite everyone to join us wherever you are on your faith journey.

Adopted December 8, 2013

Serving Today

The Rev. Thomas G. Bruner, Jr.	Pastor
Laurie Little	Young Christians Minister
Judy Ferree	Organist
Ty Troutman	Senior Choir Director
Gail Billow	Lead Usher
Jeff Buffington	Greeters
Landon and Bennett Troutman	Acolytes
Matt Williard	Lector
Joshua Paul	Council President

For the month of December, the ***Celebrate Inserts*** are presented by Bob and Faye Weaver as we celebrate the birth of the Christ child. The support of one pastor for one month in the ***Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania*** are presented by Sandra and Randy Paul for the Glory of God. ***Tree 4 Hope*** is presented by Delmar and Ginny Enders for the blessing of grandchildren: Miana, Olivia, Caleb, Axten, Sophia and Kyrax.

The ***Altar Flowers*** are presented to the glory of God and in celebration of our wedding anniversary by Sheila & Brian Barder.

Welcome to all who are worshipping with us this morning. If you are a visitor, please sign our guest book in the foyer and please worship with us again and join in other congregational family activities!

Sunday Morning Liturgy – ELW Setting 10

God Gathers Us in Prayer and Praise

Announcements

Organ Prelude and Silent Prayer

*Confession and Forgiveness:

P: Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, our life, our mercy, our might.

P: As we await the day of the Lord, let us confess our sin.

(brief silence follows)

P: Great and Holy One,

C: **IN THIS TIME OF WANING DAYLIGHT, WE CONFESS THE SHADOWS OF SIN IN OUR LIVES. WE BUILD OURSELVES UP AT THE EXPENSE OF OTHERS. WE RELY ON OUR OWN EFFORTS TO MAKE OUR LIVES SECURE. YET YOU, O LORD, ARE THE POTTER, AND WE ARE THE CLAY. COME TO RESTORE US IN YOUR IMAGE, REMAKE US INTO YOUR PEOPLE, AND REBULD WHAT SIN HAS BROKEN, THAT WE AND THE WHOLE CREATION MAY REJOICE. AMEN.**

P: Fear not, people of God: the Almighty has done great things for us. God casts away our sin from us and makes of us a new creation. In Jesus Christ, God comes to set us free. Take heart in the tender compassion of our God.

C: **AMEN.**

*Opening Hymn #244 "Rejoice, Rejoice, Believers"

*Apostolic Greeting

*Kyrie (sung in unison)

*Hymn of Praise: "Glory to God..." (sung in unison)

*Prayer of the Day

Advent Wreath Litany – *See Insert in Bulletin*

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We Hear God's Word

First Reading: Isaiah 40:1-11

Psalm: 85:1-2, 8-13

Second Reading: II Peter 3:8-15a

*Gospel Acclamation (sung in unison):

ALLELUIA! LORD AND SAVIOR: OPEN NOW YOUR SAVING WORD. LET IT BURN LIKE FIRE WITHIN US; SPEAK UNTIL OUR HEARTS ARE STIRRED. ALLELUIA! LORD WE SING FOR THE GOOD NEWS THAT YOU BRING. (Pg. 205)

*Gospel: Mark 1:1-8

Response after the reading is announced: **GLORY TO YOU, O LORD.**

Response after the reading is concluded: **PRaise TO YOU, O CHRIST.**

Young Persons Go with Miss Laurie for Celebration Time

Sermon

We Respond to All That God Gives Us

*We Proclaim Our Faith:

I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST, GOD'S ONLY SON, OUR LORD, WHO WAS CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, SUFFERED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE, WAS CRUCIFIED, DIED, AND WAS BURIED; HE DESCENDED TO THE DEAD. ON THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE AGAIN; HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, HE IS SEATED AT THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER, AND HE WILL COME TO JUDGE THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. (THIS MEANS THAT) I BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST, TRUE GOD, BEGOTTEN OF THE FATHER IN ETERNITY, AND ALSO A TRUE HUMAN BEING, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY, IS - MY LORD. HE HAS REDEEMED ME, A LOST AND CONDEMNED HUMAN BEING. HE HAS PURCHASED AND FREED ME FROM ALL SINS, FROM DEATH, AND FROM THE POWER OF THE DEVIL, NOT WITH GOLD OR SILVER BUT WITH HIS HOLY, PRECIOUS BLOOD AND WITH HIS INNOCENT SUFFERING AND DEATH. HE HAS DONE ALL THIS IN ORDER THAT I MAY BELONG TO HIM, LIVE UNDER HIM IN HIS KINGDOM, AND SERVE HIM IN ETERNAL RIGHTEOUSNESS, INNOCENCE, AND BLESSEDNESS, JUST AS HE IS RISEN FROM THE DEAD AND LIVES AND RULES ETERNALLY. THIS IS MOST CERTAINLY TRUE.

-Martin Luther's *Small Catechism*

Offering of Our Gifts and Choir Anthem

*Offertory Hymn (#182) (sung as gifts are brought forward):

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD, AND RENEW A RIGHT SPIRIT WITHIN ME. CAST ME NOT AWAY FROM YOUR PRESENCE, AND TAKE NOT YOUR HOLY SPIRIT FROM ME. RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION, AND UPHOLD ME WITH YOUR FREE SPIRIT.

*Prayers of the Church

*Our Lord's Prayer – traditional version on right side of page

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God Sends Us to Share the Good News

*Blessing:

P: God most high, God with us, God poured out on us, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, bless us now and forever.

C: **AMEN**

*Dismissal:

P: Go in peace. Prepare the Way.

C: **WE WILL. THANKS BE TO GOD!**

*Closing Hymn #264 "Prepare the Royal Highway"

*Organ Postlude and We Depart to Serve

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* Please stand, if able to do so.

Hospitalized/Residing in Senior Living/Dealing with Acute Illness:

- **Cindy Carr** – At Home, Undergoing Treatment for Autoimmune Disorder and Resulting Organ Damage
- **Judy Cheatham** – Rm. #47B, Complete Care at Annapolis, 900 Van Buren Street, Annapolis, MD 21403
- **Timothy Enders** – Rm. #120, The Gardens at York Terrace, 2401 W. Market St., Pottsville, 17901
- **Cora Mace** – Rm. #3647, Roosevelt 3, Masonic Health Care Center, 600 Freemason Drive, Elizabethtown, 17022
- **Joyce Matter** – Rm. #128, Viva Senior Living at Harrisburg, 150 Kempton Avenue, Harrisburg, 17111 (717.909.0417)
- **Steven Schlegel** – **Steven Schlegel** – Penn State Hershey Medical Center – Undergoing Inpatient Chemotherapy
- **Fred Weaver** – Rm. #103, Spring Creek Rehab. and Healthcare Center, 1205 S. 28th St., Harrisburg, 17111

Our Faith Active in Worship – December 3, 2023

Current – Approx. Budget Goal	\$2,796
Current – Offerings Received	\$3,347
Benevolence – Offerings Received	\$265
Improvement – Offerings Received	\$50
Children & Youth Ministry – Offerings Received	\$1,100
Total Attendance	Zoom – 15, In Person – 87

Today, Sunday, December 10

- 9am Adult Bible Study (In-Person)
- 9am Youth Group Faith Formation with Matt & Olivia (In-Person)
- 9am Confirmation Class
- 9am SONDay Celebration (In-Person)
- 10:15am Worship, Including Lighting of the Advent Wreath and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for In-Person Young Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom)
- 11:15am **Part One of our Annual Congregational Meeting** (In-Person and On Zoom, we will take action on the election of four members to our Congregational Council and proposed budgets for 2024. A copy of the main 2024 budgets is included in the December/January **St. John's Epistle**, along with the names of the four nominees for Congregational Council. All voting members – those confirmed members who have communed and contributed during 2022 or 2023 – are especially encouraged to attend this brief, but very important, meeting!)
- 2-4pm Everyone is invited to this year's different sort of Advent/Christmas Program, a Christmas Pajama Party!! Put on your favorite holiday pj's and come on out for a movie and other fun surprises! Please contact Miss Laurie to learn more.

Monday, December 11

- 8-9:30am Pastor Tom's Office Hours
- 7pm Church Dartball League Match – Faith United Methodist at St. John

Tuesday, December 12

- 8-9:30am Pastor Tom's Office Hours
- 7pm Choir Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 13

- 8am-12pm Pastor Tom's Office Hours
- 6pm Congregational Council December Meeting

Thursday, December 14

- 8am-12pm Pastor Tom's Office Hours

Friday, December 15

- 8-9:30am Pastor Tom's Office Hours

Saturday, December 16

- Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off

Next Sunday, December 17

- Third Sunday of Advent
- 9am Adult Bible Study (In-Person)
- 9am Youth Group Faith Formation with Matt & Olivia (In-Person)
- 9am Confirmation Class
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- 6-9pm Advent/Christmas Open House Hosted by Ty and Kim Troutman (After hearing the regrets of folks who couldn't attend last year, Kim & Ty will again be welcoming all members of their St. John Congregational Family who can stop by at any point during those hours, While many of us may already know their home as "the Christmas house in Loyaltown" their address (also in the current directory) is 100 Deitrich Road, Lykens.)

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Our Women of the ELCA of St. John remind us all, as we send our Christmas cards, to remember and include the folks in our congregational family who are "homebound" and who get out very little if at all.

For our worship on December 31, when Pastor Tom is planning time away and Jim Watson will be leading our traditional Liturgy of Lessons and Carols, Pastor Tom is looking for readers for the seven traditional Christmas readings which make up an important part of the morning. In recent years, members of Youth Group have handled this ministry duty but, this year, a number of our youth will be away at a retreat that morning and so readers of all ages are being sought. Please speak with Pastor Tom as soon as possible if you would like to share in this joyous morning.

2024 offering envelopes are available in the foyer. Please stop by the table and take along those of family members and neighbors!

Four new 2024 sponsor sheets are now posted on the bulletin board in the foyer area – three of them 1. for continuing ministry support for our **Celebrate** bulletin inserts (\$22/month); 2. for **Tree 4 Hope**, an innovative anti-poverty ministry begun by our neighbors at Tree of Life Evangelical Lutheran Church, Linglestown Road, Harrisburg, and serving those in need in Guatemala, involving an orphanage, mission trips from our area, and, now, a new girls' school called "Hope Academy" - a world mission with a local connection (\$50/month) – and 3. for providing one month of a **Konde Diocese (in Tanzania, Africa) Pastors Salary** (\$50/month). The fourth is the separate sign-up sheet for sponsoring weekly altar flowers in 2024, (\$35 per week) – **please note that we are especially in need of sponsors for our altar flowers for the Sundays in January.** To sponsor any of these four ministries in honor or in memory of loved ones or events, please simply stop by to sign up or, if easier, please feel free to call or email Pastor Tom, who can place your name on the desired month(s).

Amy Gehring continues to collect donations to Bethesda Mobile Mission. Gently used, unstained, clean blankets and casual clothing for MEN & WOMEN are always a need since the homeless do not typically have the ability to launder items. Sleeping bags, tarps, mats, backpacks/large totes or bags are also useful. New underwear, socks, batteries (all sizes), toilet paper, candles, and matches are highly valued. Those served by the Bethesda Mobile Mission also need TRAVEL SIZE toiletries—don't leave those small bottles behind when you are traveling. Pass them along to Amy. Please contact Amy at church with any questions or call her at 1-717-503-7623. Donations can be placed in the designated hampers in the foyer.

End of Used Battery Collection: After many years of recycling and re-charging our old batteries, Larry Gessner has had to bring that ministry to a close. We thank him for all those years of faithful, behind-the-scenes service and ask that no more batteries be brought to the church.

To make sure that our blessed prayer shawls get to as many folks in need of God's healing touch as possible, it is now possible for anyone from the St. John congregational family to deliver a prayer shawl to a person who is known to them to be hurting in body, mind, and/or spirit, and who would be blessed by receiving one of our shawls. To obtain a shawl, please first contact Pastor Tom, who will help you with the process. ***(Please bear in mind that it is the intention of the prayer shawl ministry that each person receive just one shawl "for life", to be used in whatever time(s) of brokenness they may face.)***

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