

## Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

### 911 Emergency/GPS Location:

215 St. John Road, Elizabethtown, 17023

### For US Mail Deliveries:

PO Box 270, Berrysburg, 17005-0270

717-362-9519

[stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com](mailto:stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com) | [www.stjohnhillchurch.org](http://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
Tanner and Abby Bixler	Acolytes
Matt Williard	Lector
Jeff and Heidi Lehman	Greeter
Roy Henry	Council President

For the month of December, our **Celebrate** lectionary bulletin inserts, our support of **Tree 4 Hope**, and our support of one pastor for one month in the **Konde Diocese of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania** are all sponsored by Pastor Tom and Ann with love and gratitude to God and to our St. John Congregational Family for another year of faithful ministry accomplished in Jesus' name.

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

### 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 #257 "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

\*Greeting:

P: From God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, grace and peace be with you all.

C: **AND ALSO WITH YOU.**

\*Prayer of the Day

Advent Wreath Litany

See Insert

### We Hear God's Word

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16

Psalm: 80:1-7, 17-19

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7

\*Gospel: Matthew 1:18-25

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

A New Creed:

**WE ARE NOT ALONE,**

**WE LIVE IN GOD'S WORLD.**

**WE BELIEVE IN GOD:**

**WHO HAS CREATED AND IS CREATING,**

**WHO HAS COME IN JESUS,**

**THE WORD MADE FLESH,**

**TO RECONCILE AND MAKE NEW,**

**WHO WORKS IN US AND OTHERS**

**BY THE SPIRIT.**

**WE TRUST IN GOD.**

**WE ARE CALLED TO BE THE CHURCH:**

**TO CELEBRATE GOD'S PRESENCE,**

**TO LIVE WITH RESPECT IN CREATION,**

**TO LOVE AND SERVE OTHERS,**

**TO SEEK JUSTICE AND RESIST EVIL,**

**TO PROCLAIM JESUS, CRUCIFIED AND RISEN,**

**OUR JUDGE AND OUR HOPE.**

**IN LIFE, IN DEATH, IN LIFE BEYOND DEATH,**

**GOD IS WITH US.**

**WE ARE NOT ALONE.**

**THANKS BE TO GOD.**

Offering of Our Gifts and Anthem by Senior Choir

\*Prayers of the Church

\*Our Lord's Prayer:

**OUR FATHER, WHO ART IN HEAVEN, HALLOWED BE THY NAME, THY  
KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE, ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN.**

**GIVE US THIS DAY OUR DAILY BREAD; AND FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES,  
AS WE FORGIVE THOSE WHO TRESPASS AGAINST US; AND LEAD US  
NOT INTO TEMPTATION, BUT DELIVER US FROM EVIL.**

**FOR THINE IS THE KINGDOM, AND THE POWER, AND THE GLORY, FOREVER  
AND EVER. AMEN.**

**God Sends Us to Share the Good News**

\*Blessing:

P: The God of hope, through Christ our peace, in the power of the Holy Spirit, bless  
you now and forever.

C: **AMEN**

\*Dismissal:

P: Go in peace. Bring Good News to the poor.

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

\*Closing Hymn #267 "Joy to the World"

\*Organ Postlude and We Depart to Serve

\* \* \* \* \*

\* Please stand, if able to do so.

## **Poinsettia Sponsors**

### **The Henninger Family**

In loving memory of Henry and Lorraine Henninger

### **Clint and Amy Gehring**

In thankfulness for our children, Gracie and Gabe, and for the gift of  
God's grace

### **LuAnn Ressler**

In memory of Jeffery Ressler  
In memory of Mary & "Juney" Yeager  
In memory of nephew, Mason Miller

### **Chris and Dana Klouser**

In memory of George and Mary Yeager  
In memory of Richard Klouser and Jean Kessler

### **Tim and Lori Motter**

In honor of the birth of The Christ Child and for blessings of our parents,  
children and congregational family

### **Kim and Barry Williard, Jr**

In honor of Barry & Barb Williard  
In memory of Paul & Lovel Welker

### **Judy and John Ferree**

In honor of Christ, the new-born King and in loving memory of John's  
parents and our grandparents

### **Jim & Lois Watson**

In loving memory of Jim's parents, Austin & Jean Watson

### **Mike & Carol Hubler**

In celebration of the birth of Jesus and in honor of all the dedicated &  
enthusiastic choir members and accompanist, who, over the years,  
have enhanced & enlightened our worship. Thank You!

### **Bonnie and Ron Erb**

In memory of John & Mary Ellen Hoover by daughter, Bonnie Erb  
In memory of Paul & Gloria Erb by son, Ron Erb

### **Delmar and Ginny Enders**

In honor of the Christ Child's birth

### **Sheila and Brian Barder**

In honor of the birth of Jesus  
In memory of Sheila's parents, Marie & Jim Casner

### **Heidi & Jeff Lehman**

In honor of our grandchildren, Harper, Robyn and Ollivander  
In memory of our dad, Bruce Lehman

### **Bob and Faye Weaver**

As we celebrate the birth of our Savior - Jesus  
In loving memory of our loved ones, Ellen & "Pete" Custer and Winnie &  
Harry Weaver, Sr.

### **Gail Billow**

In loving memory of Duane Billow, Betty and Warren Hassinger

### **Carl and Louise Baumgardner**

In loving memory of Carl & Mary Baumgardner, Sr.  
In loving memory of grandparents, Harry & Winnie Weaver, Sr. and  
Baylord I. & Ellen Custer

### **Rob, Courtney & Grayson Foreman**

In honor of Courtney's parents, Kim & Barry Williard  
In memory of Rob's parents, Nancy & Jack Foreman

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## Our Faith Active in Worship – December 11, 2022

<b>Current – Budget Goal</b>	<b>\$2,606</b>
Current – Offerings Received	\$2,998
Benevolence – Offerings Received	\$60
Improvement – Offerings Received	\$60
Children & Youth Ministry – Offerings Received	\$1,315
Total Attendance	<b>Zoom – 19, In Person – 77</b>

## “St. John’s Restoration 250” Financial Update – As of December 11, 2022

Total Estimated Project Cost	\$220,000
Memorials Interest Money Designated for Project (Letting \$100,000 Reserve of Interest)	\$88,000
Total Financial Gifts Received	\$78,015
Total Financial Gifts Pledged, Not Yet Received	\$55,150
<b>Total Pledges &amp; Gifts Received in Excess of Goal – (Memorials Interest Saved for the Future</b>	<b>+ \$1,165</b>

Pledge/Gift Forms Are Available in Hard Copy by the Guestbook in the Foyer.

## 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, Cadia Healthcare, 900 Van Buren Street, Annapolis, MD 21403
- **Timothy Enders** – Rm. #122, The Gardens at York Terrace, 2401 W. Market St., Pottsville, 17901
- **Jane Grosser** – Rm. #705, Northern Dauphin Nursing and Rehab. Center, Millersburg, 17061
- **Dale Hassinger** – Discharged from UPMC Harrisburg on 12/15
- **Cora Mace** – Rm. #3647, Roosevelt 3, Masonic Health Care Center, 600 Freemason Drive, Elizabethtown, 17022
- **Roni Mace** – Headed Back to Work Part-time as Healing Continues
- **Joyce Matter** – Rm. #128, Commonwealth Senior Living at Harrisburg, 150 Kempton Avenue, Harrisburg, 17111 (717.909.0417)
- **Robert Schaffer** – Discharged from UPMC Harrisburg on 12/13

## Today, Sunday, December 18

*As we in Dauphin County continue to dwell close to the line between the Low/Green level and Medium/Yellow level of COVID-19 Community Transmission as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, it continues to be the case that the very best things we can do in this transition time are*

- *getting fully vaccinated*
- *wearing a mask if you have 1. COVID symptoms or 2. a positive test for COVID or 3. exposure to someone with COVID. (Better yet, our congregational family policy has been to ask that folks in any of these three categories please simply avoid in-person activities entirely and join in worship via Zoom.)*

*In addition, those at high risk for severe illness are strongly encouraged to mask when indoors and masks are a good additional protective measure for everyone.*

9am	Adult Bible Study (In-Person)
9am	Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person)
9am	Confirmation Class (In-Person)
9am	SONDay Celebration (In-Person)
10:15am	Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie (In-Person & Zoom)
6-9pm	Advent/Christmas Open House Hosted by Ty and Kim Troutman (All members of the St. John Congregational Family who can stop by at any point during those hours are invited to do so. As Kim herself said, <b>“They can stay for five minutes or for hours; it doesn’t matter. This will give us a chance to get to know them all better.”</b> While many of us may already know their home as “the Christmas house in Loyalton” their address (also in the current directory) is 100 Deitrich Road, Lykens.)

## **Hanukkah Begins at Sundown**

### Monday, December 19

8-9:30am Pastor Tom’s Office Hours

### Tuesday, December 20

8-9:30am Pastor Tom’s Office Hours

7:30pm Senior Choir Rehearsal

### Wednesday, December 21

8am-12pm Pastor Tom’s Office Hours

### Thursday, December 22

8am-12pm Pastor Tom’s Office Hours

### Friday, December 23

8-9:30am Pastor Tom’s Office Hours

### Saturday, December 24

Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Eve

4pm Christmas Eve “Celebration” Worship (In-Person and On Zoom)

8pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship (In-Person and On Zoom)

## Next Sunday, December 25

Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas Day

10:15m "Come As You Are" Worship (In-Person and On Zoom) *(Please note that no other activities will be held at the church on this morning of Christmas Day, so please feel free to come just in time for worship, in your pajamas or whatever you happen to be wearing as you finish up your opening of gifts!)*

**From the end of worship next Sunday until the morning of Thursday, January 5, Pastor Tom is planning his annual family time away. In his absence, Pastor Godfred Effisah, who serves the Rife/Killinger Parish, will again be on call for any emergency needs for pastoral care. Should you need to get in touch with him, please call Fay Nichols, our Telephone Prayer Chain Coordinator, at 717-329-7447, who will both place the concern on the prayer chain and contact Pastor Godfred. Or, Pastor Godfred can be reached directly by calling 571-572-0119. For all non-emergency matters, Pastor Tom will return to the office the morning of January 5.**

## Looking Ahead

Youth Group will hold a Christmas Gathering at the church on Thursday, December 29, from 6:00 to 8:30 P.M.

\* \* \* \* \*

2023 offering envelopes are available in the foyer. Please stop by the table and take along those of family members and neighbors!

Our winter session of Midweek Bible Study will get underway on Wednesday, January 11 and run for six weeks, meeting each week from 6:30 to 8:00pm and wrapping up in time for the beginning of Lent on Ash Wednesday. Pending COVID and other illness developments, we will plan to meet in-person at the church, with the option for participants who would prefer to do so to "Zoom in" (and the possibility of going to Zoom-only if necessary). The title of our study this winter will be ***Dialogues On: Race***, during which we will take time, as Brothers and Sisters in Jesus, to honestly and respectfully reflect on and talk about what our Bible, our Church traditions, and our history tell us about this potentially difficult and divisive topic. Using a study book and a documentary-style DVD, we will delve into the scholarship, the stories, and the experiences of people of many different racial backgrounds as we engage in this six-week process. 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) **by the end of the day this coming Tuesday, December 20.**

Upcoming 2023 Dates for Book Discussion Group (books still to be chosen):

**January 9**

**February 6**

**March 6**

Call or email Ann 717.362.7895 [rahbruner@gmail.com](mailto:rahbruner@gmail.com) if you need a book or have any questions.

Because family travel plans will make it impossible for our secretary, Rachel Henry, to have the 2022 Annual Report prepared in time for Part 2 of our Annual Congregational Meeting, which is required by our congregational constitution to be held on January 15, we will be doing things a bit differently next month:

- We will still hold the required congregational meeting right after worship on **January 15**, but our agenda will not include going over the Annual Report as normally. Instead, the floor will be open for any other business as may properly come before the meeting. **There will be at least one item of business to be covered on January 15 – a proposal from Congregational Council (in response to much expressed congregational family interest) that, starting with summer 2023, we worship outside in our pavilion every Sunday during the summer, starting with Memorial Day weekend and ending with Labor Day weekend. (If approved, there will be one exception to this plan for 2023 only – since the Day of Pentecost, and therefore the Rite of Confirmation, falls on May 28, 2023, we will still worship inside on that one summer Sunday.)**
- A Special Congregational Meeting has also been called by Pastor Tom for Sunday, **January 29**, immediately following worship, to go over the 2022 Annual Report. Per our congregational constitution, this will be the only business we can take care of at that special meeting.
- Those having reports to be included in the 2022 Annual Report are asked to please forward them to Rachel no later than Monday, **January 16**, as a Word document only – no hard copies please, as these require re-typing by Rachel.

Please don't hesitate to check with Pastor Tom or with Rachel with any questions!

Three new 2023 sponsor sheets are now available (currently on the table outside Pastor Tom's office, but soon being posted on a bulletin board in the foyer area) – for continuing ministry support for our ***Celebrate*** bulletin inserts (\$22/month); 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, a girls' school called "Hope Academy" - a world mission with a local connection (\$50/month) – and for providing one month of a ***Konde Diocese (in Tanzania, Africa) Pastors Salary*** (\$50/month) . To sponsor any of these three ministries in honor or in memory of loved ones or events, please stop by the table 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). ***Please note that a separate sign-up calendar will soon be posted for 2023 altar flowers.***

Dianne Schell would like to thank her congregational family for all of the get-well and Christmas cards, for all of the beautiful notes, for all of the calls, and for all of the wonderful prayers for her family and for her (they have been and still are much needed). Thank you all – especially Pastor Tom for his calls and visits – very much!