

Saint John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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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
Clint and Amy Gehring	Greeters
Briana Radel and Avery Brosius	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 Kyrak.

The **Altar Flowers** are presented by Randy and Sandra Paul in celebration of Christ Jesus birth and in loving memory of Dorothy & Jacob Hassinger and Bobby Paul.

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

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"

*Apostolic Greeting

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*Kyrie (sung in unison)

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

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*Prayer of the Day

Advent Wreath Litany – *See Insert in Bulletin*

We Hear God's Word

First Reading: II Samuel 7:1-11, 16

Psalmody: Luke 1:46b-55

Second Reading: Romans 16:25-27

*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: Luke 1:26-38

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 #267 "Joy to the World"

*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** – Headed to Penn State Hershey on 12/28 for Planned Final Round of Inpatient Chemotherapy
- **Fred Weaver** – Rm. #306, Harmony at West Shore, 1910 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, 17050

Our Faith Active in Worship – December 17, 2023

Current – Approx. Budget Goal	\$2,796
Current – Offerings Received	\$3,937
Benevolence – Offerings Received	\$690
Improvement – Offerings Received	\$50
Children & Youth Ministry – Offerings Received	\$325
Total Attendance	Zoom – 13, In Person – 84

Please Read



Poinsettia Pick Up

Poinsettias can be taken **after** the 8:00 PM service on Christmas Eve, December 24.

Plants not picked up on Christmas Eve will be put in the kitchen for pick up during the following week, please.

Check the “Order List” to verify plant(s) ordered **AND** be sure to mark the **“Picked Up”** box on the order form so we know who received their plants.

A plastic sleeve is available for each plant. They will protect your beautiful poinsettia plant from the cold for your trip home.

Please - **DO NOT** take the plastic saucer. We hope to use them for many years to come.

Thank you for making this beautiful poinsettia tree possible!

Next Sunday, December 24

Fourth Sunday of Advent:

- 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)

The 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)

Monday, December 25

The Nativity of Our Lord/Christmas Day

*From tomorrow through Thursday morning, January 4, Pastor Tom is planning to take time away. In his absence, Pastor Patrick Wirick, who serves the Klingerstown Parish, will be on call for any emergency needs for pastoral care, particularly in the event of a death or a critical illness. Should you need to get in touch with Pastor Pat, 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 Pat. **Because the pastors in our conference are still “stretched thin” with the continued inability of the Rife/Killinger Parish to locate an interim pastor, and because Pastor Pat and his wife will also be doing family things even though not going away, if an emergency is other than a death or critical illness, please clarify when you contact Fay whether you would like Pastor Pat to be notified or if you are calling “only” to place your need on the telephone prayer chain.** Or, Pastor Pat can be reached directly by calling 717.439.9037.*

Next Sunday, December 31

First Sunday of Christmas

- 9am Adult Bible Study (In-Person)
- 9am SONday Celebration (In-Person)
- 10:15am Annual Liturgy of Lessons & Carols, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for In-Person Young Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom) – **thank you to Jim Watson, who will be our guest worship leader, and the readers who will be sharing the Christmas Bible readings!**

Looking Ahead

The January ***Do-nut Forget, Jesus Loves You*** gathering of ***Celebration Club with Miss Laurie*** will be held in-person at the church on Wednesday, January 3, from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M.

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

Book Discussion Group continues meeting on Zoom for the winter months, with snacks still a part of the experience! Pick them up in the kitchen on the Sunday which is the day before each book discussion gathering to share while online the following evening. The next Zoom gathering will take place at **6:30 P.M. on Monday, January 8**. If you have any questions or need to locate a book, please contact Ann (rahbruner@gmail.com) and she'll quickly locate a book for you. Please join in anytime – the fellowship is wonderful, the snacks are yummy, and all are welcome!

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.

Poinsettia Memorials

In memory of John & Maryellen Hoover by Bonnie & Ron Erb

In memory of Paul & Gloria Erb by Bonnie & Ron Erb

In honor of The Christ Child's Birth by Bob & Faye Weaver

In honor of the birth of Jesus and for our many blessings by Louise & Carl Baumgardner

In honor of our parents, Faye & Bob Weaver and Mary & Carl Baumgardner, Sr. by Louise & Carl Baumgardner

In honor of the birth of Jesus by Lois & Jim Watson

In memory of our parents, Jean & Austin Watson
by Lois & Jim Watson

In memory of Paulino Ventura, Felomina Ventura, Epehema Ventura & Melagros Ariola by Wayne & Daisy Thomas

In memory of Duane Billow and Betty & Warren Hassinger by Gail Billow, Holly, Corey, Granger & Bristol Scheib

In honor of Barry & Barb Williard by Kim & Barry Williard, Jr.

In memory of Paul & Lovel Welker by Kim & Barry Williard, Jr.

In memory of loved ones by Dale & Carol Hassinger

For the many blessings of parents, children and in celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ by Tim & Lori Motter

In memory of our parents: George & Mary Yeager; Richard Klouser & Jean Klouser Kessler by Chris & Dana Klouser

In memory of her husband, Jeff Ressler, her parents George & Mary Yeager, and her Uncle Terry Witmer by LuAnn Ressler

In memory of their nephew, Mason Miller
by Dana Klouser & LuAnn Ressler

In honor of the Birth of Jesus by the DeSoto Family

In honor of the birth of our Savior, who is Christ the Lord and for our many blessings by Judy & John Ferree

In celebration of the birth of Jesus and for our many blessings by the Barder Family

For the many blessings of our family and church family by Heidi & Jeffrey Lehman

In memory of our parents, Ira "Pete" & Alberta Antes and Eugene Howard by Marilyn & Ira Antes

For the many blessings of family and friends this holiday season by Rob, Courtney & Grayson Foreman

In memory of the Christ Child's birth by Delmar & Ginny Enders

In loving memory of husband, father and grandfather,
Andrew Nichols, by the Nichols Family