

ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA | FEBRUARY 2024

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

Even though, as I write these lines, the Season of Christmas is just a few days in the rear-view mirror, the passage of time in general and the Church Year in particular pause for no one. And so it is time to lift up the fact that we will observe **Ash Wednesday**, the traditional beginning of the Season of Lent, on **February 14 at 7:00 P.M.** with a hybrid Liturgy of Holy Communion, including the optional imposition of ashes for those who are present in-person. Those desiring to receive the mark of a cross, traced in ashes on their forehead, will come forward at the appropriate time in the worship, much as we come forward to receive Holy Communion.

Then, on subsequent Wednesday evenings during Lent, the Lutheran, United Church of Christ, and United Methodist congregations of the Berrysburg and Elizabethtown area will again join together for worship and a light supper. The supper, consisting of simple items like soup and sandwiches, will begin at **6:15 P.M.** Following supper, at **7:00 P.M.**, we will join in worship. Worship will end before 8:00 P.M. Once again this year, the host pastor of each congregation will lead the worship, while the pastors will each take turns preaching in a congregation other than their own. Our theme for this year's Lenten series will be **Mountains of Faith**. Each week we will consider a different mountain (or mount) where God interacts in powerful ways with people in the Bible. The details for these Wednesday evenings are as follows:

Date	Host Congregation	Preacher/Mount
February 21	St Peter "Hoffmans" UCC Crossroads	Pastor Ken Campbell Mount Moriah (Where Abraham's Faith is Tested)
February 28	<u>St. John</u>	Pastor Ray Holland Mount Sinai (Where Moses Receives the Word of God)
March 6	Salem United Church of Christ Elizabethtown	<u>Pastor Tom</u> Mount Carmel (Where Elijah Calls for Faith and Faithfulness)
March 13	Trinity United Methodist Church Elizabethtown	Pastor Su Rider Mount of Beatitudes (Where Jesus Assures Us We Too are Children of God)
March 20	Salem Lutheran Church Elizabethtown	Pastor Bill Romberger Mount Calvary (To View God's Own Sacrifice)

Please don't miss these opportunities to have your faith refreshed and deepened, as we journey together through the Season of Lent.

And, having mentioned Christmas as I began this letter, I want to, before I close, again join with Ann in thanking you, our congregational family, for the many expressions of love we received during the Christmas and Advent seasons. Your kind words, your cards, your gifts and, of course, the congregational gift were truly sources of great joy for us. We are indeed blessed as we approach twenty-four years of life and ministry together with you here on "The Hill"!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy 2024, everyone! I hope you all had a happy holiday and are well on your way to a Happy New Year (with or without the resolutions)!

Looking at faith formation for our young Christians, it's going to be ANOTHER great year at St. John's! Each month, we've got lots of fun and engaging opportunities to help our children grow in faith and to feed their spiritual souls. Grab your calendar and mark these activities planned in February:

- Wednesday, February 7th – Join us from 6:30 – 8:00 for our monthly meeting of Celebration Club! February's theme is "Yes, Jesus Loves Me"!
- Sunday, February 11th – It's our "Jesus is My Valentine" SONday Celebration!
- Sunday, February 25th – Break out your favorite pj's, it's time for one of our most favorite activities - our SONday Celebration "Pajama Party"!

Join us for all these special engagements and remember, EVERY SONday Celebration, Celebration Time and Celebration Club is like a mini-VBS with music, crafts, and fun activities that reinforce a biblical theme! Come and be part of the fun!!

Thanks to all those who help make these activities possible! It is an honor and my pleasure to be part of the faith formation team at St. John's and I look forward to another awesome year leading the charge as your Young Christians Minister! Thanks, again, for your support.

Miss Laurie

Coming Up on the Morning of February 11...

Since this is the day of Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas, we will continue with a "tradition" we had only just begun in pre-pandemic days – designating the day as "**Jersey Day**" and encouraging one and all to come to worship that morning dressed in the fanwear of a favorite team or player of any sport and any level of play, from peewee to professional.

And then, immediately following worship, we will again observe "Souper Bowl" Sunday with a special offering to benefit the work of our Youth Group to help local folks in need. Youth Group Members will meet us at the door with soup bowls in hand to receive our votes for which team will win the Super Bowl later that day, with a \$1 donation as the suggested "vote". Let's have a great response on behalf of those in need in our area, and let's see if we're right in predicting the winner!

And Then on the Morning of February 25...

We will once again be led in our worship by our gifted Youth Group members. (We are blessed by their leadership in many different capacities all through the year, but this is the annual time when they take on the entire leadership of worship, with just some guidance and input from Pastor Tom.) Senior Youth Group Member **Gabe Gehring** will be sharing the Sermon of the morning and Pastor Tom is working with everyone else to line up the many other important parts of worship leadership. As always, that worship will be available both in-person and on the Zoom platform.

Communion Records

As we begin a new year, please be sure that, if you are a communing member of St. John, you turn in at least one communion record card this year. (If during the year you live and worship out of the area, or if you commune even once at another congregation, please be sure to have that congregation send notice to Pastor Tom.) If you are a contributing member of St. John, please be sure that you use your offering envelopes at least once this year, so that you are on record as having made a contribution. Please do your part to make sure that our parish records are as accurate as possible!

Congregational Council

At Congregational Council's reorganizational meeting on January 14, newly-installed members **Justin Adams, Karen Gehring, Sandra Paul, and Matthew Riland** were welcomed to their duties and the following persons were elected as our congregational officers for 2024: President – **Joshua Paul**, Vice President – **Craig Peters**, Secretary – **Sandra Paul**, Treasurer – **Jamie Doyle**, Financial Secretary – **Pat Herb**, Assistant Secretary – **Courtney Foreman**, and Cemetery Board Representatives – **Gail Billow** and **Matthew Riland**. We thank these folks for their willingness to serve throughout the coming year!

Many thanks...

From the Gessner and Schaffer families, with our many thanks for sympathy cards and phone calls since Mary's death at 8:29am on Friday, December 8, 2023. We received about 30 cards and others concerning get well, better etc., prior to that day. 2023, started early for Mary's declining health, primarily fluid buildup on her lungs causing weakness, limited walking, very low oxygen input requiring much use of oxygen/generators. Your cards expressed your true concerns and helped as the days spread by. One card that was sent by our prayer chain from Hallmark released in 2012 bears worth repeating and something to share with others going through a death crisis at any time. I have read through it numerous times since I received it, all 3 paragraphs bring tears but the very last one brings tears of hopeful joy for our future in God's concern and care for his peoples. I'm sharing this in closing and hope Rachel bears with me for its reproduction.

*"Good-bye" can sometimes be
the saddest word that we must say,
because it seems so final
whenever loved ones pass away.*

*But looking back in memory,
we're comforted to know
that love has never left us,
and will never let us go.*

*And even though we cannot know
exactly where or when,
we say good-bye believing
we will surely meet again.*

Wishing you comfort, Larry Gessner

Creation Care Team

In case you haven't heard, the St. John Green Team is now the Creation Care Team! While the name has changed, the goals are very much the same. We aim to continue a number of the projects started by our predecessors while, at the same time, finding new and creative ways to lessen our impact on this planet that God has blessed us with.

Initially, we restarted the recycling program at the church. There are two bins located in the kitchen. The taller bin is for plastic bottles (#'s 1, 2, and 5) and aluminum and tin cans (no foil or pie pans). Please be sure to rinse out items placed in this bin. The shorter bin is for paper and corrugated cardboard. Please be sure to remove any staples from the paper and break down the cardboard, so it lays flat. Also, these bins are for recycling generated at the church. Please do not bring recycling from home to place in these bins. The only recycling items that should ever be brought to the church are aluminum cans (again, no foil or pie pans) that are collected by the Youth Group. Those aluminum cans should be placed **inside** the lower portion of the barn.



The next meeting of the Creation Care Team is on Sunday, January 21st at 6:30. Anyone interested in joining the group should plan to attend or speak with Ann Bruner for more information and keep an eye out for more projects and events to come!



St. John's Youth Group

**FEBRUARY
2024**

SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY

Sunday, February 11th is Souper Bowl Sunday. Don't forget to bring your extra change along to vote for your favorite team to win the Super Bowl or for the halftime show. All proceeds go toward helping out those in need. The Youth Group decided to keep the money in the valley again this year. We will be donating the money to Paws for a Cause in Tower City. All youth attending church on the 11th should meet by the front doors before the end of the last hymn.

YOUTH SUNDAY

Sunday, February 25th is Youth Sunday! Watch your email to find out how you can participate in Youth Sunday. Gabe Gehring will present the sermon that day.

COMING UP:

Palm Sunday, March 24th Youth Group meet to stuff eggs for egg hunt then play games. Includes a pizza lunch.

Friday, March 29th Good Friday Service

Saturday, March 30th Youth Group breakfast, then set up for Egg Hunt.

More information to follow!!

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Congregational Council Minutes

November 12, 2023

The council meeting was called to order by President Joshua Paul. Devotions were offered by Pastor Tom.

Present: Pastor Tom Bruner, Christie Kahler, Joshua Paul, Ira Antes, Jeff Lehman, Sandra Lamenza, Sheila Barder, Michael Henninger, Craig Peters, Ty Troutman, and Courtney Foreman.

Excused: Dana Klouser

Absent: Gail Billow

Minutes: Motion by Joshua Paul to accept the October 2023 minutes as read. Second by Craig Peters. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer Jamie Doyle joined Council to discuss the proposed 2024 Budget. Motion by Josh Paul to forward the proposed budget as presented to the congregational meeting in December. Seconded by Christie Kahler. Motion approved unanimously.

Reception of Petitions and Communications:

- Received a request from Trinity United Methodist Church for a monetary donation to assist with the UDAMS Power Pack Program. A \$300 donation was suggested.
- Upper Dauphin Human Services Center in Lykens is doing Christmas Express to provide Christmas meals to families in need. Requested 6 oz. boxes of stuffing mix. A \$200 donation to cover the number needed was suggested. Motion for both donations made by Sandra Lamenza. 2nd by Christie Kahler. Motion approved unanimously.

Pastor's Report: Motion to accept Pastor Tom's report was made by Craig Peters. 2nd by Ty Troutman. Motion approved unanimously.

Children and Youth Ministry Report: Motion to accept Miss Laurie's report by Jeff Lehman. 2nd by Josh Paul. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Pastor provided a summary. Motion to accept the treasurer's report by Craig Peters. 2nd by Shelia Barder. Motion approved unanimously.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Church Property: Had meeting on 10/31/23. Discussed several projects and covered winterizing needs. Still waiting on elevator phone board (back order).

Finance Committee: Met on 10/30/23 to work on the proposed budget.

Worship and Music: Next meeting scheduled for next Tuesday.

Cemetery Committee: No report.

Faith Formation: No report.

Mutual Ministry: No report.

Executive: No report.

Nominating: Nominees are Matt Riland, Karen Gehring, Justin Adams, and Sandra Paul.

History and Archive: Sandra continues to work with genealogy requests.

Bell Ringing: No report.

Care Creation: First meeting will be next Sunday.

Women of the ELCA: Fill the Pew event proposed for January to support the UDAES Snack Pack program. Motion to approve event by Mike Henninger. 2nd by Craig Peters. Motion approved unanimously.

Youth Group: Matt Williard provided a brief report.

Council was joined by Roy and Rachel Henry to discuss what would be needed to project the service onto the screen in the sanctuary every Sunday. A second laptop, HDMI cable, and desk/chair(s) would need to be purchased. A second team of tech savvy people would need to be assembled to format the text to be projected and run the projection during the service each week (in addition to the Zoom team). The Zoom teams would not be able to run both operations. Mike Henninger is going to ask the team at Salem UCC in Elizabethtown to come to a future council meeting to discuss how they were able to start projecting their service. The discussion was tabled until the new year.

Unfinished Business:

Today was the first time that we started to pass the offering plates during the choir anthem with the flow suggested by Sheila after the last council meeting. Things seemed to go ok with traffic flow and having the option to leave envelopes in the plate prior to the service.

New Business:

Ty Troutman provided a quote for the proposed pavilion expansion project that is being discussed by the Property Committee. Ty is willing to act as the project coordinator. Looking at \$15,000 - \$18,000 to complete.

Next Council Meeting: Wednesday, December 13, 2023, at 6 PM.

Adjournment: Motion by Josh Paul to adjourn the meeting. 2nd by Christie Kahler. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtney Foreman, Secretary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
* In-Person ** In-Person and On Zoom				1	2 Presentation of Our Lord Groundhog Day	Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Fifth Sunday after Epiphany 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9am - Youth Faith Formation with Olivia & Matt (In-Person) 9am - Confirmation Class (In-Person) 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Sacrament of Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom)	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Church Dartball League Match – St. John at Faith United Methodist, Fisherville	7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie – Yes, Jesus Loves Me	2pm - Pastor Tom Leads Worship at Polk Assisted Living, Millersburg	Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East	Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Transfiguration of Our Lord 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9am - Youth Faith Formation with Olivia & Matt (In-Person) 9am - Confirmation Class (In-Person) 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - "Jersey Day" Worship, Including Sacrament of Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom) 11:15pm - "Souper Bowl" Collection by Youth Group	Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off 9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Church Dartball League Match – Lykens United Methodist at St. John Lincoln's Birthday	7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	Ash Wednesday 7pm - Worship (Both In-Person and on Zoom), including Sacrament of Holy Communion and optional Imposition of Ashes Valentine's Day	Deadline to Submit Items for March "St. John's Epistle"		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
First Sunday in Lent 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9am - Youth Faith Formation with Olivia & Matt (In-Person) 9am - Confirmation Class (In-Person) 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom) 6pm - Congregational Council Meeting	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Church Dartball League Match – St. John at Valleys EC Church, Halifax President's Day	7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	6:15pm - Lenten Supper & Worship (7:00) at St. Peter "Hoffmans" United Church of Christ, Crossroads			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
25	26	27	28	29	Washington's Birthday	
Second Sunday in Lent 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9am - Youth Group Members Prepare for Worship Leadership 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Annual Youth-Led Worship (Both In-Person and on Zoom), including a Sermon with Miss Laurie, Sunny & Friends	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Church Dartball League Match – Messiah Lutheran at St. John	6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	6:15pm - Lenten Supper & Worship (7pm) at St. John (Both 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

The Rev. Thomas Bruner, Jr., Pastor	pt@stjohnhillchurch.org	717-362-9519 (O) 717-362-7895 (H)
Laurie Little, Young Christians Minister	misslaurie.little@gmail.com	717-571-5058
Lewis Weaver, Sexton	bootsdagreat@gmail.com	570-809-1014
Grace Weaver, Sexton	No Email	570-809-1510
Judith Ferree, Organist	jjferree@epix.net	717-362-4228
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
Fay Nichols, Prayer Chain Coordinator	fnichols46@comcast.net	717-329-7447

911 Emergency/GPS Location:

215 St. John Road, Elizabethville, 17023

For US Mail Deliveries:

PO Box 270, Berrysburg, 17005-0270

Church Website: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch