

ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA MAY 2021

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

In what amounts to a continuation of my letter on this page last month, this month I would like to report on some plans for our congregational family worship life during May. ***But first, I want to thank everyone who has been joining in Sunday worship via Zoom for hanging in there with me/us!*** We certainly had a rough start during March, thankfully with some improvement in time for Palm/Passion Sunday. But it was only when we acquired a particularly-capable (and pricey) microphone that things finally got at least close to where we want them to be for the long haul – thankfully in time for our celebration of the Resurrection of Our Lord/Easter Day. There will still be much tweaking ahead because, like so many things in this unique time, it is an ongoing journey!

After missing a year in 2020, I am delighted first to share that we will once again be gathering for worship on the evening of the Ascension of Our Lord, Thursday, May 13, at 7:00. Please note that it will take place on Zoom only and so our annual Blessing of Seed & Soil for instance will accordingly be adapted. We will use the same Zoom contact information as on Sunday mornings, but I will send a reminder email about that as we get closer.

Ten days later, on the 50th Day of Easter, Sunday, May 23, we will observe the Day of Pentecost, the third of the three great annual Christian festival days (along with Christmas Day and Easter Day) and the day when we traditionally have celebrated the confirmation of our young adult members. With things almost certainly still not sufficiently close to our “new normal” to allow us to set aside such things as masks and safely distanced seating by May 23, I have consulted with the families of our confirmands and we have agreed that we will instead plan to celebrate this faith milestone on All Saints Sunday, November 7, also a very fitting day when we, along with the rest of the Church, celebrate what amounts to a “congregational family reunion”, including those seemingly separated from us by distance and even death. This year, we will look forward to including in that celebration the young men who would have been last year's confirmands – **Gabe Gehring, Aidan Roadcap, and Hoyt Schlegel.**

Moving to the end of the month, on the Sunday of Memorial Day weekend (and Memorial Day itself), May 30, it will once again be time for us to switch to our summer schedule of 1. **Sunday Morning Bible Study for Adults at 8:45 A.M. still only on Zoom at least to start with**, ending by about 9:15, 2. **Worship (available both in-person and on Zoom) at 9:30 A.M.**, ending promptly by 10:30 so that everyone can get on to those reunions and other summer Sunday plans, and 3. **SONDay Celebration for our younger persons with Miss Laurie, (in-person at the church with a Zoom option) also at 9:30 A.M.**

And finally, May 30 will also be the morning that we move out to the pavilion for the first of our planned outside summer worship opportunities. With our wifi connection for Zoom-ing coming through a mobile hotspot, the plan is that our outdoor worship will be just as available on Zoom as our indoor worship (although we will obviously have some different things to check out and tweak to make that transition). I hope this will be a great help to folks who find outside worship in general not to their liking and to anyone who, on a particular Sunday morning, finds that it will be just too breezy and/or cool to join in outdoor worship!

Thank you all for your partnership, your patience, and your forgiveness as we all continue as a congregational family on this journey that is living into the “new normal”!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy last full month of the school year, everyone! Can you believe we're THERE already? It's hard to believe we made it through this covid-crazy school year! Here's hoping with herd immunity and vigilance, we can look forward to a closer to normal return to school in the fall!

But before we head off for summer vacation, we have a lot of fun activities scheduled for May! Grab your calendars, and jot down these dates:

- On Sunday, May 2nd, we're having a “Pajama Party” in SONday Celebration! I know we had one earlier in the year, but it's just not the same on Zoom. This one will be in person! Slip into your favorite pj's and join the fun!
- Wednesday, May 5th is our last meeting of Celebration Club and we're having a PIZZA PARTY! Join us at 6:30 in the Pavilion for some “za”! Celebration Club will resume the first Wednesday of September!
- On Sunday, May 9th, we're celebrating Mother's Day in SONday Celebration! Come and make a fun craft especially for Mom!
- Pastor Tom and I will be doing another “Drive Through Communion” on Sunday, May 16th, after worship at 11:30.
- Finally, we'll be kicking off the Summer Schedule for SONday Celebration on Sunday, May 30th! From this date through September 12th, join us from 9:30 – 10:30 in person at the church (or on Zoom by clicking on:

<https://zoom.us/j/94870256130?pwd=cC9YR1drQXFrcWlvd2RUZTRIY2VnZz09>).

Remember, SONday Celebration and Church run concurrently through the Summer Schedule, so there is no need for Celebration Time. Come and be part of the fun!!

Have a GREAT May and an excellent end to your school year! See you at the celebrations!!

PS: SAVE THE DATE!! Mark your calendars for our VBS adventure – “Knights of North Castle” – July 19th through July 23rd! Join us as we “armor up” and remain strong with God by sharing God's love in the world! It's going to be a GOOD one!!

Miss Laurie

National Day of Prayer

As the National Day of Prayer is observed this year on May 6, the traditional first Thursday in May, we are all encouraged to be sure to take time that day, wherever we may be, to be in prayer for our country – that, especially in these days of global pandemic, we might be a force for peace with justice and healing, both within our own borders and throughout God's world.

Book Club

You are invited to our Book Discussion on Zoom!

We continue our monthly times of reading and sharing via Zoom. Next up:

Monday, May 10, 7:00 P.M. Small Victories by Anne Lamott

Monday, June 7, 7:00 P.M. The Bluest Eye by Toni Morrison

Everyone is welcome, so if you would like to participate and haven't joined in before, you can borrow a physical or e-copy of the current book at your local library or pick up a copy at church - on the bench under the bulletin board in the foyer, just inside the main doors. Please let Ann know if we run out of books, and she will locate more.

Questions? Call or email Ann at 717-362-7895 or rahbruner@gmail.com.

Church Aprons

Last year about this time the Women of the ELCA of St. Johns were making plans for the purchase of new church aprons. The ordering was put on hold because of the Pandemic. The women would like to reopen this project. The aprons, both full and half, will be available in gray. The color will be a bit lighter than the original aprons we purchased 8 years ago. The full aprons will have 2 pockets and will cost approximately \$8.00. The half aprons will have 3 pockets and will cost approximately \$7.00. We still have the original sign-up sheet which is posted at church. We will continue to take orders through April 25th. The sign-up sheet will remain posted through that time. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Pat Herb. Thank you.

In Other Women's Group News

As a result of the ongoing Covid 19 pandemic the Women of Saint John have had to discontinue regular meetings since March 2020 when an election of officers was slated to happen. Since meetings have not resumed and the group feels the need to move forward with these elections the executive board has presented the following slate for adoption: President-Fay Nichols, Vice President-Janet Denlinger, Treasurer-Barbara Bullock with Pat Herb as her assistant and Secretary-Ginny Enders with Rachel Henry as her assistant. The executive board has also decided that going forward all meetings will be held in the afternoon instead of the evening hours. Our booklet is currently being prepared and it is hoped that regular meetings will resume in the near future. Watch your bulletin and newsletter for details.

-Janet Denlinger, Outgoing President

Pavilion Use

As our world continues to “open up”, Pastor Tom is getting more requests from folks who are not members on the rolls of the St. John congregational family about “renting” our pavilion, and so it seems like it might be a good time for all of us to be reminded about how the pavilion can be used for things other than official congregational family functions. In 1983, soon after the original part of the pavilion was constructed, a policy was adopted by the Congregational Council which says **“the use of the Grove and Pavilion shall be restricted to the members of the congregation of Saint John’s Evangelical Lutheran Church”**. It then goes on to clarify that this means that at least one member on the rolls must be a member of the group using the facilities, that this person must be present during the event, and that they will be the person taking responsibility for making sure that nothing about the event violates the other guidelines – for instance about no alcohol on the premises and taking away their own trash. Annual family reunions, for instance, can continue to use the pavilion only so long as there continues to be that responsible “official” congregational family member identified and present, which there has been/is in each case. While there is no rental charge, donations are welcome and virtually always given by folks using the pavilion in this way. Please don’t hesitate to contact Pastor Tom (or any Council members) with any questions about this policy.

Tithes and Offerings

If you are not yet ready to take part in in-person worship, there are **three** very simple options for giving your tithes and offerings. You are welcome to 1. mail your offering to the church (PO Box 270, Berrysburg, 17005-0270) or 2. drop it by the church and place it in the red plastic tub that is prominently visible in the Sunday School Room, on the table just outside Pastor Tom’s office door. ***In addition, 3. if neither of those is easily done, you may wish to contact your bank about setting up an automatic payment, as some of our congregational family members also have done, whereby the offering you direct is sent by your bank as a check mailed directly to the church.*** In all cases, Pastor Tom will then see that all offerings received get securely passed along to our counters.

Congratulations Rose Kell!

Rose Kell graduated from Misericordia University with a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy in October 2020. She was working full time at Penn State Hershey Medical Center Rehabilitation while going to school full time for the first two and a half years. Then she worked part time at the rehab during her practicums. It turned out to be a blessing that she continued to work part time for Hershey since that is where she ended up being approved to complete her field work due to all of the other placements being cancelled due to COVID.

She then passed her boards and received her license to practice Occupational Therapy in both Pennsylvania and California. Rose is currently employed by an agency which provides Occupational Therapists on a short-term basis throughout the state of California. She is currently residing in Clear Lake, CA working in a hand therapy clinic. Prior to relocating to CA, Rose experienced an injury which resulted in a spiral fracture on her left hand. Through this she has a new understanding of what her patients experience. She will be in Clear Lake, CA until the end of May. She will then move to a new location. May God bless her in her important work in healing!

St. John's Youth Group

St. John's Facebook: facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch

St. John's Children and Youth Ministry: facebook.com/childrenandyouthministry

ELCA Gathering Website: www.elca.org/youthgathering



Remember: Masks are required at all church / youth group in-person events!!!

Youth Group Meetings

- **May 16 - 6-7:30pm** – Youth Group Game Night (Outdoor at Church)

With the warmer weather upon us, we hope our zoom youth group meeting days are behind us. Watch your email and the newsletter for information on future youth group meetings.

2022 ELCA Youth Gathering Theme (July 24-28, 2022)

The ELCA Youth Gathering team announces the theme of the 2022 Gathering, "boundless: God beyond measure," based on Ephesians 3:19 CEV.



"I want you to know all about Christ's love, although it is too wonderful to be measured. Then your lives will be filled with all that God is."



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St John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Minutes
March 14, 2021

The council meeting was called to order by President, Roy Henry. Pastor Tom opened the meeting with devotions and a prayer.

Present: Roy Henry, Matt Williard, Sandra Lamenza, Ron Erb, Heidi Lehman, Lori Motter, Ira Antes, Michael Henninger, Dana Klouser, Sheila Barder, Arlene Doyle, and Pastor Tom Bruner

Absent: Ken Koller

Minutes: Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Lori Motter to accept the February minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

Reception of Petitions and Communications:

Water testing inspection was passed for February.

A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Ron Erb to make Gift of Love contribution of \$300 to the family of Alex Rodriguez, an Upper Dauphin student who is suffering a serious illness, and a \$500 contribution to the Lutheran Camping Corporation. Motion approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Matt Williard to approve a request from Amy Gehring to use the pavilion on April 10 for Gabe's birthday. Motion approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Heidi Lehman to approve a request made by Ann Bruner for the Friends of the Elizabethtown Library to use the pavilion for their annual book sale on July 15, 16, and 17. Motion approved unanimously.

The use of the pavilion for the annual family reunions was discussed. It was agreed upon that the use of the pavilion would be honored as it was in previous years. There is a sign-up sheet in the church lobby. All previous rules still apply.

Pastor's Report: In addition to Pastor's written report, he added that he was asked to provide the leadership for the Upper Dauphin Baccalaureate Service for the 2021 graduating class. He has accepted. Motion made by Matt Williard and seconded by Ira Antes to accept the pastor's report. Motion approved unanimously.

Children and Youth Ministry Report: Motion was made by Ron Erb and seconded by Matt Williard to accept Miss Laurie's report. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Ron Erb and seconded by Michael Henninger to accept the treasurer's report. Motion approved unanimously.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Many of the committees have not been meeting due to the COVID 19 pandemic. Any business that needed attention has been handled through phone calls.

Church Property: The property Committee will move forward with the repairs to the sexton house and the church with the Silk Brothers. They will also oversee the replacement of the gutters on the pavilion and meet with Farmer Boy Ag, Inc. regarding the condition of the roll-up curtains.

Finance: No report

Worship and Music: No report

Faith Formation Team: No report

Youth Ministry: They have had game time events on Zoom and made plans for a COVID safe egg hunt for the children. Pastor Tom praised the youth and the leaders for the exceptional job they did with the youth led worship.

Mutual Ministry: No report

Executive: No report

Nominating: No report

History and Archive: Organization and inventory of archives continues with a focus on securing missing confirmation photos.

Women of ELCA: No report

Strawberry Festival: The committee met and decided to pursue plans for a drive through event this year because of the continued concerns regarding the COVID pandemic. Jeff Lehman is contacting each of the committee chairs to get input regarding the amount of support we would have for preparation and service on the actual day. A weekend day is being considered.

New Business: The usher responsibility was discussed. We updated the lead usher list and agreed to continue with the plan for the lead usher to see that they have three people needed for ushering at this time. When we resume full in-person service the usher responsibilities will be reviewed and we will go back to a more traditional schedule.

The computer currently on the admin desk is not being used and it was agreed that we offer it to one of our parishioners.

We will offer a Zoom Fellowship opportunity on Thursday evenings from 6pm to 7:30 pm beginning on April 8, 2021. Pastor Tom will offer more detail in his communications.

Next Council Meeting: The next council meeting will be April 18 at 4pm via Zoom. The May meeting will be May 16 at 4pm.

Adjournment: Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Michael Henninger to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Lamenza, Secretary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Philip & James, Apostles Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
2 Fifth Sunday of Easter 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship (<u>Both</u> In-Person at the Church <u>and</u> on Zoom), including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person	3	4	5 6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study on Zoom 6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie (In-Person at Church) 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	6 6-7:30pm - Weekly Congregational Family Drop-By Fellowship on Zoom National Day of Prayer	7	8 Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
9 Sixth Sunday of Easter <i>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</i> 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship (<u>Both</u> In-Person at the Church <u>and</u> on Zoom), including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person Mother's Day	10 7pm - Monthly Gathering of Book Discussion Group (On Zoom)	11	12 6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study on Zoom 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	13 Ascension of Our Lord 7pm – Worship with Blessing of Seed & Soil (<u>on Zoom only</u>)	14 Matthias, Apostle	15 Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off Deadline to Submit Items for June "St. John's Epistle"
16 Seventh Sunday of Easter 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship (<u>Both</u> In-Person at the Church <u>and</u> on Zoom), including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person 11:30am - "Drive Through" Holy Communion with Pastor Tom & Miss Laurie at the Church 4pm - Congregational Council Meeting on Zoom 6-7:30pm – Youth Group Game Night (Outdoor at Church)	17	18 6:15pm – Worship & Music Committee Meeting on Zoom	19 6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study on Zoom 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	20 6-7:30pm - Weekly Congregational Family Drop-By Fellowship on Zoom	21	22 Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
23 Day of Pentecost 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship (<u>Both</u> In-Person at the Church <u>and</u> on Zoom), including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person 7pm – Pastor Tom Speaking at Upper Dauphin Area High School Baccalaureate Program	24	25 5:30pm – <u>Combined</u> Pavilion Cleaning Night for Strawberry Festival <u>and</u> Church Outside Property Work Night (Possible – Please Watch for More Information)	26 6:30pm - Midweek Bible Study on Zoom 7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	27 6-7:30pm - Weekly Congregational Family Drop-By Fellowship on Zoom	28	29 Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
30 Holy Trinity 8:45am - Adult Bible Study on Zoom 9:30am - OUTDOOR WORSHIP (<u>Both</u> In-Person <u>and</u> on Zoom) 9:30am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person at the Church with Zoom Option) Memorial Day	31 Visit of Mary to Elizabeth Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off Memorial Day (observed)					

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	stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com	717-362-9519 (O) 717-362-7895 (H)
Laurie Little, Young Christians Minister	misslaurie.little@gmail.com	717-365-5099 (H) 717-571-5058 (C)
Lewis Weaver, Sexton	bootsdagreat@gmail.com	570-809-1014
Grace Weaver, Sexton	No Email	570-809-1510
Judith Ferree, Organist	jiferee@epix.net	717-362-4228
Carol Hubler, Choir Director	mchubler@gmail.com	570-758-5052
Rachel Henry, Secretary	henryfamily2004@gmail.com	717-439-3897
Roy Henry, Council President	henryfamily2004@gmail.com	717-215-9837
Fay Nichols, Prayer Chain Coordinator	fnichols46@comcast.net	717-329-7447

Physical Address (for deliveries): 215 St. John Road Elizabethville, PA 17023

Mailing Address: PO Box 270 | Berrysburg, PA 17005

Church Website: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch