

# ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH  
BERRYSBURG, PA | NOVEMBER 2023

## Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

On the first Sunday of November the 5<sup>th</sup>, we will observe a festival called **All Saints Sunday**. We do this because, just four days earlier on November 1, a very ancient Christian festival called **All Saints Day** appears on the Christian calendar each and every year. In centuries past, when the Christian Church calendar pretty much set the agenda for the rest of society, All Saints Day was a big enough thing that usual business would shut down for the day and most everyone would be in worship, regardless of the day of the week. In more recent times, in coming to terms with the fact that this is no longer the case, but not wanting to completely lose sight of the day when it doesn't happen to fall on a Sunday, we have settled on a sort-of compromise – All Saints Sunday, to be observed each year on the Sunday closest to but falling after November 1, hence the 5<sup>th</sup>, with which I began this paragraph.

You might think of All Saints Sun/Day as being a kind of Annual Christian Family Reunion. It is a day when we celebrate the fact that you and I are part of a VERY BIG Christian Family which, by virtue of the fact that death is not the final word for the people who follow Jesus, includes each and every one of the followers of Jesus who have gone before us, in addition to those we now meet and greet on any given day.

- Personally, it is a day to especially take stock of and give thanks for those People of God who had a hand in setting each of us on our journey in the faith, but who are no longer with us in this life.
- As a congregational family, it is a day to especially take stock of and give thanks for those People of God who had a hand in seeing to it that there would be a St. John Congregational Family and a beautiful and historic place for that family to get together and do things, but who are no longer with us in this life.

On November 5, and each and every Sunday actually, you might try picturing our worship space bursting at the seams with the hundreds and hundreds of folks who, in their earthly lives since ended, called this place home – gathering right along with us, as the Word of God indeed promises is the reality, even if not visible to you and me. It can be a very comforting and reassuring thing to recall that they navigated their way in faith through times at least as challenging as our own – a Revolutionary War, a Civil War, a much deadlier 1917-1918 global pandemic than ours ever was, a Great Depression, two World Wars, just to name a few. We are not the first to face a world at times seemingly gone berserk AND WE ARE NOT ALONE!

Practically speaking, on November 5 we will continue with a very old tradition of naming those folks from our congregational family who have died since last All Saints Sun/Day. As I write these lines in early October, that would be **Cynthia Phillips, Benjamin Crabb, Martha (Jane) Grosser** and **Dawn Warner**. We will have a floral arrangement placed up front in memory of each of them as we gather for worship, to which you may well have added your own floral arrangement in memory of your own loved ones, as we've all been invited to do over the past few weeks by our Flower Committee.

In closing, I want to commend to you the cemetery which surrounds our congregational family worship/ministry home as another wonderful and comforting reminder of the saints who continue to surround us and cheer us on. Over the years, I've heard from a few folks who (perhaps having watched one too many scary movies 😊) find a cemetery just outside our walls "creepy", especially at night. But the reality is in fact just the opposite – reassurance and comfort and "safety in numbers". If you never have, or if it has been a while, I'd encourage you to take a stroll around our cemetery and consider how, just as God enabled all those folks to face and deal with the difficulties they encountered, so too shall we with that same God. (And, since we'll all be joining in wonderful chicken and waffles after worship on November 5, hosted again by Youth Group, maybe that stroll will be just the thing for All Saints Sunday, both to settle your spirit and to settle your food after that big meal!)

**Pastor Tom**

## News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy November, everyone! I hope the cooler temperatures are putting a little "pep" in your step! I also hope you're enjoying all the sights and smells of autumn!

With the hoopla of Halloween behind us and the craziness of Christmas just ahead, November is a great time to relax and focus on our many blessings! It's also a great time to join us for some fun faith formation!! Mark your calendars for these upcoming activities:

- **Wednesday, November 1<sup>st</sup>** – It's our "Autumn Blessings" Celebration Club! Join us from 6:30 – 8:00n for the fall fun!
- **Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>** – Come and be part of the "Pumpkin Palooza" SONday Celebration with lots of pumpkin activities!
- **Sunday, November 19<sup>th</sup>** – It's our "Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks" SONday Celebration! And there will be a Sunny Sermon during worship, too!
- **Sunday, November 26<sup>th</sup>** – It's the first of a two-part "Preparing for Jesus" SONday Celebration. At this gathering, we'll make decorations for our tree and celebration space. We'll also kick off the Advent season!

I'm sure the "Jingle Elves" will reunite again for some holiday merri-ment! I'll keep you posted as performance and practice dates become available!!

Wishing you all a bounteous harvest and may you celebrate Thanksgiving with love in your heart and gratitude in your being to the One who makes all things possible!! Have a great month!!

**Miss Laurie**

## Book Group - November 2023

Book Group will move online for November and winter months to alleviate the need to cancel because of nasty weather and travel after dark. This also allows our cross country and world travelers to join from wherever they are! Never fear ... there will still be snacks to pick up in the kitchen on Sunday and share while online Monday evening! (Sign up to provide the snack by notifying Ann.)

We'll gather on Zoom at **6:30pm, Monday November 6** to discuss **Rise and Shine by Anna Quindlen**. Copies are available in the church library, and both physical copy and ebook can be requested at your local public library. If you have questions or need to locate a book, contact Ann ([rahbruner@gmail.com](mailto:rahbruner@gmail.com)), and she'll quickly find a book for you.

Please join us anytime! The fellowship is wonderful, snacks are yummy, and all are welcome!

## Green Team / Creation Care Meeting November 19

Would you like to join with others to share ideas and work on projects to care for God's world together? We want to revive the Green Team which was active for several years, and we'll learn about our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America's Creation Care resources. Everyone, of all ages, is invited to an initial meeting to share ideas and resources, and to consider a few initial projects. Two first projects will be to revive our recycling efforts at church and decide on a name for our team. Please join us **Sunday, November 19, 6:30 pm** in the fellowship hall. If you have questions - or can't make it but have ideas to share -- please talk with Ann Bruner.

## Women of the ELCA

Stay tuned to the Sunday Bulletins for updates on an event coming on December 5<sup>th</sup>!

## News from the Upper Dauphin Conference

Here in the Upper Dauphin Conference at this time of the year we are busy packing boxes for Lutheran World Relief. These projects are done by the ladies of the conference as well as the Lutheran Youth Organization. This year we all worked very hard to make a difference for our neighbors in this world. We used the talents our Lord has given to us to make the following for LWR:

- 570 quilts
- 387 school kits
- 133 personal care kits
- 24 baby care kits
- 9 blankets

There were also 127 quilts sent to local agencies and 30 Covered with God's Love baby quilts were sent to agencies dealing with childcare. So, as you can see we are making a difference in God's world. Along with our groups merchandise we were joined by Christ Lutheran Church from Conyngham Conference; they also help to pay for the transportation. So, we say Thank You to the folks from Christ Lutheran. Enjoy the beautiful fall weather.

Fay Nichols, W-ELCA Board Member

## Pastoral Acts

### At the Font

During worship on Sunday, October 1, Pastor Tom presided as we welcomed **Aaron Troutman**, along with his and **Shannon's** daughter, **Malorie**, into the Kingdom of God and the St. John Congregational Family in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. We pray that God will grant them, their sponsors, their other family members and all of us their congregational family members the strength and grace to be faithful to the promises they and we all have made together!

### At the Altar

On Saturday afternoon, September 23, Pastor Tom presided at the marriage of **Matthew Motter** and **Nichole Holman**, following a rehearsal the evening before. We pray God's blessing on Nichole and Matt, that they may each be given the grace and strength to faithfully live out their vows of commitment! (And please be sure to add/update their listing in your congregational family directory:

**MOTTER**, Matthew & (Nichole)  
1234 Newport Road  
Duncannon, PA 17020  
717-307-0744

### Please Help!

To do your part to keep our elevator functioning properly, please don't hold the doors open with your hand or by putting something else in the way of their closing. Please be sure to instead use the "door open" button on the control panel, but do so as sparingly as possible. (The technicians who maintain our elevator report that 90%+ of the service calls they receive – whether with a high traffic elevator as at a hospital or with a limited-use elevator like ours – have to do with door alignment issues, caused by people forcing and/or holding them open.)

And, as another heating season soon gets underway, please help your congregational family be a good steward of heating oil and heating dollars. First, please be sure to keep doors closed between different heating zones – especially 1. all doors on the second floor going into the nave or up to the balcony and 2. all doors on the first floor going into the Sunday School room. Second, if you turn up a thermostat for any reason, please be sure to turn it back down again when you leave. All areas of the church other than our nave – which is automatically kept at 55 degrees – are normally kept at 60 degrees. Thank you!



# St. John's Youth Group

October  
2023

## CHICKEN AND WAFFLES DINNER

**Sunday, November 5th** is the annual Youth Group Chicken and Waffles dinner. We will need help from youth and their parents. Bring a knife and cutting board to cut up potatoes. If you have a waffle maker we can borrow, please let Olivia know. Please arrive at 8:00 a.m. ready to work! All youth group members are asked to bring a baked good for dessert. Thanks everyone!!

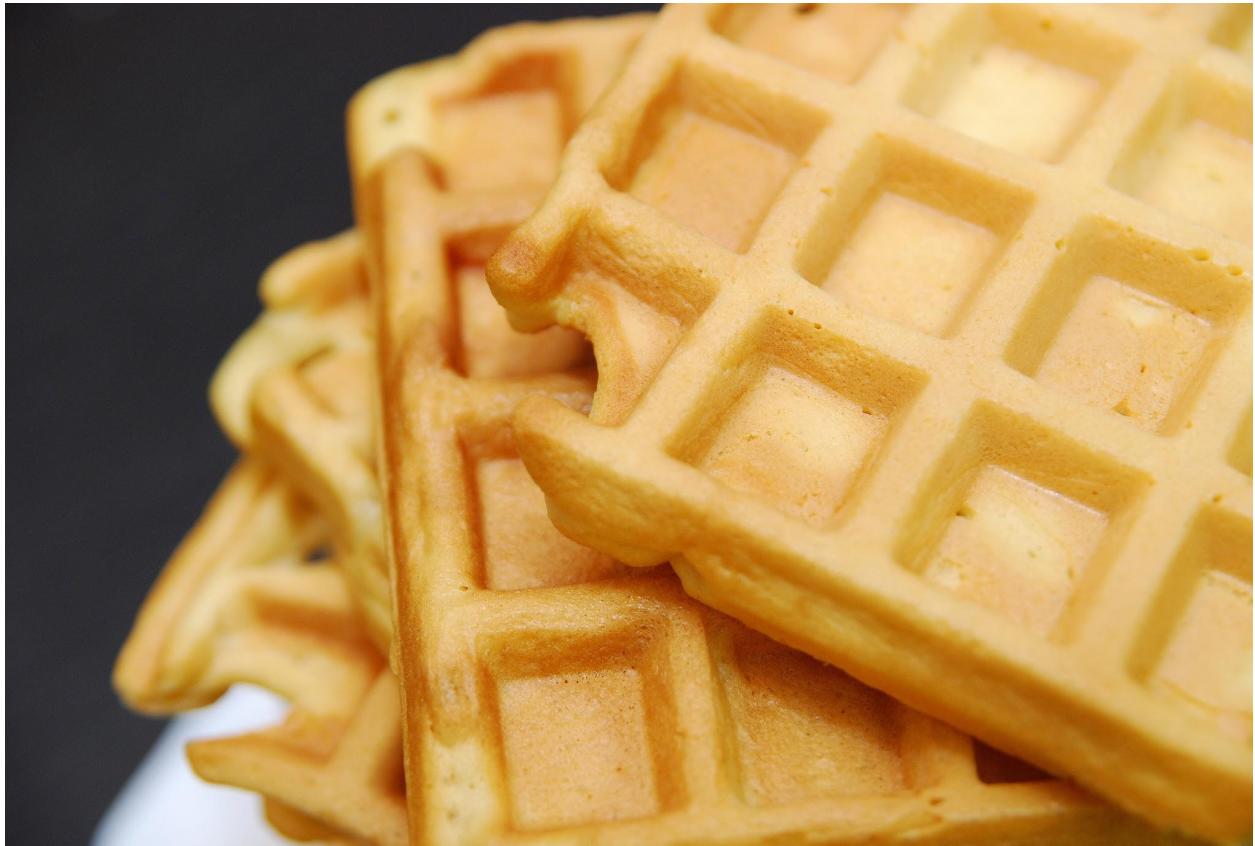
## ST. JOHN'S YOUTH GROUP CHRISTMAS BREAK RETREAT

**Friday, December 29th to Sunday, December 31st at Camp Hebron in Halifax:** This year we are having a youth group retreat the last weekend of December. Our speakers / teachers are Amy and Clint Gehring. The cost to attend the retreat is a nonrefundable \$50.00, which includes the room, linens, meals, and snacks. The registration deadline is Sunday, November 29th.

We will meet on Friday at the church at 6:00 p.m. and return before church is over on Sunday. If you prefer to drop off and pick up your youth at Camp Hebron or at the church, please let us know. We will be staying in Hillside Villa. The villa has individual motel style rooms with private bathrooms and sleep 3-4 people in each room. The girls will be on one floor and the boys on another floor. Can't wait for a weekend full of fun!



**Winterfest 2024** runs from Friday, January 5 to Sunday, January 7, 2024 at the Wyndham Resort in Lancaster. Winterfest is hosted by the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Our group will join youth, young adults, and advisors from across the Synod. Friday night will be filled with live music, worship, and introduction to the theme for the weekend: **The Way**. Saturday will be filled with fellowship time, live music, and large and small group sessions led by Synod leadership. The weekend wraps up with worship Sunday morning, shared with the parents. The cost to attend is \$100.00 for high school age and \$175.00 for college age. Registration deadline is Sunday, November 29th. Watch your emails for additional information!



# **St. John's Youth Group Chicken and Waffles Dinner**

Sunday, November 5, 2023

**THE MEAL WILL BE SERVED IMMEDIATELY  
FOLLOWING WORSHIP SERVICE.**

**~ Free Will Donation Collected ~**

# St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Congregational Council Minutes

### September 10, 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, Dana Klouser, Gail Billow, Jeff Lehman, Sandra Lamenza, Sheila Barder, and Courtney Foreman.

**Excused:** Michael Henninger, Craig Peters

**Absent:** Ty Troutman

**Minutes:** Motion by Joshua Paul to accept the July 2023 minutes as read. Second by Jeff Lehman. Motion approved unanimously.

#### **Reception of Petitions and Communications:**

- Thank you note from the Weekend Snack Pack program at UDA.
- Two letters from companies that do solar power development with proposals to rent church farmland for solar power fields. Discussion was held. Motions by Josh Paul to table the proposals at this time. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sandra Lamenza. Motion passed unanimously.
- Pastor Tom received an email about a concern over a fire risk with batteries in the container for the recycling program. Larry Gessner explained that the risk is minimal, and that the benefit of the recycling program outweighs the risk. Council agrees.
- Jamie Doyle and Louise Baumgardner discussed enveloping the Sunday School account into the cash account.
- Ann Bruner and Courtney Foreman will be organizing the Equal Exchange items and forming a committee to help.

**Pastor's Report:** Motion to accept Pastor Tom's report was made by Christie Kahler. 2nd by Dana Klouser. Motion approved unanimously.

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

**Treasurer's Report:** Pastor provided a summary. Motion to accept the treasurer's report by Jeff Lehman. 2nd by Sandra Lamenza. Motion approved unanimously. Sandra raised the point that offering donations may be down due to not passing the offering plate during the church service. Council agreed to monitor and adjust practice as necessary.

#### **Reports of Standing Committees:**

**Church Property:** Awaiting repairs to the Sexton house. Trees were removed as planned. Next meeting is planned for 9/26/23.

**Finance Committee:** Next meeting: 10/30/23 at 7 PM.

**Worship and Music:** Next meeting: 9/19/23. Choir meets 9/26/23.

**Cemetery Committee:** Stones have been flagged for repair. Trees were removed as planned.

**Faith Formation:** No meeting. Will begin to discuss Advent and Christmas within the next few weeks.

**Mutual Ministry:** No meeting.

**Executive:** No report.

**Nominating:** Will start compiling a list of candidates soon.

**History and Archive:** Working with two genealogists now. One is coming to see the organ. Ann found many videotapes of services and activities from years ago. Sandra will screen them to determine usefulness.

**Bell Ringing:** No report.

**Care Creation:** Ann has a list of potential committee members that she will be talking with.

**Women of the ELCA:** Had Bonnie Kent as a speaker last week at an ice cream social. There were 17 – 19 in attendance.

**Youth Group:** First meeting of the school year will be held next Sunday to assemble school kits.

**Unfinished Business:**

None noted.

**New Business:**

September 17 & 24<sup>th</sup>, and October 1<sup>st</sup> services will be indoors at 10:15. October 8<sup>th</sup> will be outside in the pavilion at 10:15 for the Blessing of the Animals.

**Next Council Meeting:** October 1, 2023, at 6 PM.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Sandra Lamenza to adjourn the meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> 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
			1 <b>All Saints' Day</b> 6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie	2	3	4  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
5 <b>All Saints Sunday</b> 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) 11:30am - Annual Youth Group-Served Chicken & Waffles Dinner <b>Daylight Saving Time Ends at 2:00 A.M.</b>	6 9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief  6:30pm - Monthly Book Discussion Group Gathering (On Zoom)	7 9:30am - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting  7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal  <b>Election Day</b>	8	9 <b>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</b>  2pm - Pastor Tom Leads Worship at Polk Assisted Living, Millersburg	10 <b>Martin Luther's Birthday (1483)</b>	11  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off  <b>Veterans' Day</b>
12 <b>24<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 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 Monthly Meeting	13 9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	14 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	15 <b>Deadline to Submit Items for December/January "St. John's Epistle"</b>  12:00 Noon Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at Max's in Millersburg	16	17	18  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
19 <b>25<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 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 - Annual Thankoffering Worship, Led by the Women of St. John, Including Sunny Sermon and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers (In-Person and On Zoom) 6:30pm - Green Team/Creation Care Organizing Meeting at the Church	20 9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	21 6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting  7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	22	23 Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off  <b>Thanksgiving Day</b>	24	25  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off  Miss Laurie's Jingle Elves Sing at Gratz Holiday Parade
26 <b>Christ the King</b> 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)	27 9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	28 6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting 7:30pm - Choir Rehearsal	29	30 <b>Andrew, Apostle</b>		

## 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	<a href="mailto:pt@stjohnhillchurch.org">pt@stjohnhillchurch.org</a>	717-362-9519 (O) 717-362-7895 (H)
Laurie Little, Young Christians Minister	<a href="mailto:misslaurie.little@gmail.com">misslaurie.little@gmail.com</a>	717-571-5058
Lewis Weaver, Sexton	<a href="mailto:bootsdagreat@gmail.com">bootsdagreat@gmail.com</a>	570-809-1014
Grace Weaver, Sexton	No Email	570-809-1510
Judith Ferree, Organist	<a href="mailto:jjferree@epix.net">jjferree@epix.net</a>	717-362-4228
Ty Troutman, Choir Director	<a href="mailto:kimjtroutman@gmail.com">kimjtroutman@gmail.com</a>	717-686-2758
Rachel Henry, Secretary	<a href="mailto:henryfamily2004@gmail.com">henryfamily2004@gmail.com</a>	717-439-3897
Joshua Paul, Council President	<a href="mailto:joshpaul1995@gmail.com">joshpaul1995@gmail.com</a>	717-460-0670
Fay Nichols, Prayer Chain Coordinator	<a href="mailto:fnichols46@comcast.net">fnichols46@comcast.net</a>	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](http://www.stjohnhillchurch.org)

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch)