



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA NOVEMBER 2020

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

I'm going to use this space this month to highlight a few scheduling items relating to the month of November.

First, there is the matter of an upcoming time change. For a good many years now, we have all made the jump back from Daylight Saving Time to Standard Time in early November, but this year it comes up really quickly – at 2:00am on All Saints Day, **November 1**. So, different from any recent year I can recall, this year be sure to set your clocks back before you turn in on the last night of **October**, Reformation (and Halloween) Day, October 31!

Just a couple of days after that, there is also the matter of an upcoming election. I'm guessing there are few, if any, of us who don't already have that November 3 date seared into our brains. I'm also guessing that you, like I, are growing weary of the many voices telling us how we ought to cast our ballots, including those voices claiming to have the "one faithful" way to vote. So it is worth remembering that (often to the great chagrin and frustration of the People of God then and now), the Bible makes clear that God grades leaders (and the citizens who support them) not based on who promises the lowest taxes -or- who plans the strongest military-or- who engages in the most God-talk, but rather on who does the best job of taking care of those folks who find themselves at the very bottom of the societal "ladder" – in biblical times, widows, orphans, and "resident aliens" (yes, immigrants) – the most vulnerable in our midst. What might that God-view mean for our casting of our votes? PLEASE BE SURE TO DO YOUR DUTY AS A CHRISTIAN AS WELL AS YOUR DUTY AS A CITIZEN OF OUR GREAT NATION, THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, AND (IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY SUBMITTED YOUR MAIL-IN OR ABSENTEE BALLOT) **VOTE** on November 3!!

Moving to later in the month, you might note that, missing from the monthly calendar later in this St. John's Epistle is our traditional Thanksgiving Eve Community Worship, shared with our neighbors of the Lykens Valley UCC Charge. In this pandemic year, it would have been a prudent decision to not hold this worship in any case, but our Congregational Council, with the recommendation of Worship & Music Committee has also made the decision that we will no longer hold this worship in 2021 and beyond. With Pastor Jeff Wagner's retirement from Peace and St. Peter's congregations, and with his and my having come up "empty" in trying to interest other neighboring congregations in joining with us in this worship opportunity, it

is a good time to put this steadily-shrinking (but still beloved by me and the rest of the hardy crew who made it a priority) event to a well-deserved rest.

Finally, on the last Sunday of the month, **November 29** – also earlier than is many times the case – a brand new Christian Year will begin with the **First Sunday of Advent**. As per our congregational family tradition, at sundown that day we will light our steeple stars. It is also Congregational Council's and my hope that November 29 will mark our return to our familiar Sunday morning schedule of 9:00 Faith Formation Time and 10:15 Worship. Between now and then, we need to assemble the necessary "people power" (see the separate article in this newsletter about the **Video Ministry Team**) and "Wi-Fi power" to enable all interested folks to "Zoom into" in-person worship here at the church, instead of having a separate time of Zoom worship as presently. As with so many things these days, all of this is subject to change, depending, for instance, on what happens between now and then with regard to the virus, so please stay tuned!

Advent is the blue season, the Season of Hope, and ours is a Hope that nothing and no one can ever take away – we have Jesus' word on it. Thank you for reading and for your partnership in following Him!!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy November everyone! As we begin the 8th month since the COVID shutdown, our new normal continues to emerge! We have begun IN-PERSON SONday Celebration with a few modifications – everyone wears a mask, we have assigned seating, we don't hold hands or have snack time, and we've adjusted our activities in accordance with our prescribed safety procedures. Even though there is SO much more to think about, it's GREAT to be back with the kids worshipping God and making a joyful noise in our Celebration Space!

For those children who are unable to attend the IN-PERSON SONday Celebration, we've added a Zoom Meeting that runs concurrently with the in-person session. We have at least a couple of children who join us on Zoom each week! So, whether it's in-person or online, please join us Sunday mornings for the fun!

Speaking of Sunday mornings, mark your calendars for the following special events in November:

- **Sunday, November 1st** – in lieu of our annual Hayride, we're going to have a special "Nature Scavenger Hunt and Craft" during SONday Celebration
- **Sunday, November 22nd** – it's a SONday Celebration "Autumn Bash" with pumpkin decorating, make your own masks, and our version of bobbing for apples!!

And don't forget - Celebration Club has gone LIVE as well! Last month, we had 14 "clubbers" join us for our first in-person gathering and we had a blast! Celebration Club meets the first Wednesday of each month, THIS month that is **Wednesday, November 4th**! Join us from 6:30 – 8:00 for the fun as we talk about "bee-ing" good to others!

Even though things are a little different, we are still staying connected with God and with each other! Save the above dates – these are some "Celebrations", and some connections, you won't want to miss!!

Have a wonderful November and a happy and blessed Thanksgiving!

Miss Laurie

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



Keep a look out in your email for more events!

As our congregation moves to indoor worship on October 25th, our Church Council continues to work to maintain a plan of safety for our congregation. This is the same with our youth group.

We miss meeting in-person with all of you. We miss seeing your smiling faces. We miss joking around, playing games, sharing meals, completing service projects, etc. So, we are coming up with opportunities for our youth group to meet together. We invite any suggestions that you or your parents may have!!

Youth Meeting/Trunk or Treat

On **Saturday, October 31st**, the Girl Scouts will be hosting a trunk or treat on church property. We are looking for youth group volunteers to help hand out voting ballots at the beginning of the line or hand out goody bags at the end of the line. The trunk or treat is from 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. We are required to wear a mask at all times and practice social distancing!

Before the trunk or treat, we will have a very quick youth group meeting starting at 1:30 p.m. We will be playing some fun fall games and catching up on all things youth group / school / life. Remember to bring your own water bottle if you like since we cannot share drink. We are required to wear a mask at all times and practice social distancing! (Note to parents: I will be wearing gloves to set up the games and during the games to keep everyone safe.)

Monthly Meetings

Our goal is to get back into the swing of monthly youth group meetings. Starting in November, we will have Zoom youth group meetings. The first zoom youth group meeting will be **Sunday, November 15th from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.**

We will keep you posted with future zoom meeting dates.

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."



Please Help!

As we near the end of the year, please be sure that, if you are a communing member of St. John, you have turned in at least one communion record card this year. If during the year you have been living and worshipping out of the area, or if you have communed even once at another congregation, please be sure to have that congregation send notice to Pastor Tom. If you are a contributing member of the congregation, please be sure that you have used 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!

And, as another heating season gets underway, please do your part to help your congregational family be a good steward of heating oil and heating dollars. 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 when no one is present. Thank you!

Video Ministry Team

As we make plans for continuing with the Zoom platform as a part of our worship for the foreseeable future, we are trying to form a **Video Ministry Team**, which would be coordinated by Rachel & Roy Henry, our faithful Zoom hosts, but which would allow them to share those duties with our congregational family members on a regular schedule. Basic familiarity with the internet and with Zoom is helpful, but the Henrys will help all interested folks to get up to speed, which is easily done. Please contact Roy or Rachel with any questions or to serve!

Notes on the Blanket Bunch

On behalf of the Blanket Bunch I wanted to bring the congregation up-to-date on what has been happening since the last Blanket Sunday in October 2019.

As we all know in March of this year our lives changed because of the Virus. The blanket bunch discontinued meeting in Mid-March and hasn't made any blankets since then.

I would like to report on the number of blankets that we completed and where they were distributed.

We completed a total of 147 blankets. A total of 91 blankets was sent to Lutheran World Relief in New Windsor, Maryland for distribution to wherever there was a need. A total of 50 blankets were given to Amy Gehring who took them to the Bethesda Mission in Harrisburg. We donated a total of 5 blankets to fire victims in Berrysburg and also donated 1 blanket to Lifeline in Millersburg to raise money for their Silent Auction.

Even though our numbers were not as high as some years we feel blessed that we were able to help fill a need in the world.

We are blessed to have the support of our congregation. Words cannot express how thankful we are for all the donations we receive. It helps make this ministry the success that it is.

Thank each and every one of you and may God Bless You.

Pat Herb

Pastoral Acts

At the Altar

On Saturday, September 19, Pastor Tom presided at worship as **Whitni Rudisill** and **Mackenzie Ney** were joined in marriage on the grounds of the Erdman Sportsmens Association, following a rehearsal the evening before. We pray that God will grant them grace and strength to remain faithful to their vows of love!

With the beginning of November, we bid a prayerful farewell to **Tammy Becker** and her service with us these past years as Sexton, as she moves to begin a new life in Boiling Springs. We thank her for all of her hard work in helping our building and property to give Glory to God through their cleanliness and beauty! And, in turn, we welcome Tammy's son-in-law and daughter, **Lewis & Grace Weaver**, to the Sexton role. Their contact information is as follows:

- **Lewis:** 570-850-2050 (cell phone) | Bootsdagreat@gmail.com
- **Grace:** 717-319-4131 (cell phone)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>1</p> <p>All Saints' Day 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11am - Worship Including Holy Communion (In-person in Church) 4pm - Congregational Council October/November Meeting via Zoom Daylight Saving Time Ends @ 2am</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p> <p>Election Day</p>	<p>4</p> <p>6:30pm-8pm – Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie (In-Person at Church) 6:30-8pm – Midweek Bible Study via Zoom 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families</p>	<p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>7</p> <p>Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off</p>
<p>8</p> <p>23rd Sunday after Pentecost 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11am - Worship Including Holy Communion (In-person in Church)</p>	<p>9</p> <p><i>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</i></p>	<p>10</p> <p>Martin Luther's Birthday (1483)</p>	<p>11</p> <p>6:30-8pm – Midweek Bible Study via Zoom 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families Veteran's Day</p>	<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>14</p> <p>Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off</p>
<p>15</p> <p>24th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11am – Worship Including Holy Communion (In-Person in Church) Deadline to Submit Items for December/January "St. John's Epistle"</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at Zion Lutheran, Rife (In-Person)</p>	<p>17</p> <p>6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting (Zoom or In-Person TBA)</p>	<p>18</p> <p>6:30-8pm – Midweek Bible Study via Zoom 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families</p>	<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>21</p> <p>Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off</p>
<p>22</p> <p>Christ the King 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11am – Worship Including Holy Communion (In-Person in Church)</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p> <p>6:15pm Property Committee Meeting (Zoom or In-Person TBA)</p>	<p>25</p> <p>7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off Thanksgiving Day</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>28</p> <p>Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off</p>
<p>29</p> <p>1st Sunday of Advent Sunday Morning Schedule to be Announced Our Steeple Stars Will Be Lighted at Sunset</p>	<p>30</p> <p>Andrew, Apostle</p>	<p>* (Adult Bible Study via Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church)</p>				

Pastor's Office Hours

Mon, Tues
8am – 9:30am

Wed, Thurs
8am – 12 noon

Friday
8am - 9:30am

*(Other times by
appointment)*

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