



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA NOVEMBER 2021

Dear Friends in Jesus,

As we continue to dwell in times which are very fluid and where change, even last-minute change, seems to be the norm, I wanted to use this space this month to highlight plans for our Sunday life together as a congregational family, plans which include some important catching up and the return of several well-loved November traditions after a year of cancellations. One comment on those Sundays – Congregational Council will be meeting immediately following worship on October 31 to make decisions about where we will worship in November – inside or outside, and with what precautions – and so please watch for more information as we go forward together.

Sunday, November 7

On this All Saints Sunday, we will have the honor of celebrating the Affirmation of Baptism/Confirmation of six of our younger members: **Gabe Gehring, Aidan Roadcap, Hoyt Schlegel, Avery Mace, Ashton Schreffler, and Madeline Williard**. (Gabe, Aidan, and Hoyt are celebrating this milestone in their faith journeys almost 18 months late, after postponement just after the beginning of the COVID pandemic.) Worship will conclude with a time of “drive-through/walk-up” Holy Communion with Miss Laurie and me. Please be sure to turn your clocks back one hour before you turn in for the night on November 6, with our return to Eastern Standard Time at 2:00am on the 7th.

Sunday, November 14

If the coming of November sets your taste buds to hankering for chicken and waffles served by the members of Youth Group, and you have never quite gotten over its cancellation last year, to paraphrase the words of the Christmas Angel, “Behold, I bring you good news of great joy”! Chicken and waffles are back, immediately following worship on the 14th, with some adapting for the times, as a takeout/to go event only. Please watch for further details!

Sunday, November 21

After being cancelled last year, our Annual Thankoffering Worship, led by the Women of the ELCA of St. John, will also be back this year, on the final Sunday of the Church Year – the festival day of Christ the King. Look forward to a special speaker and the sharing of our gifted women!

Sunday, November 28

As the old Church Year ends the previous Sunday, just so a new one begins this Sunday with the First Sunday of Advent. Advent, the season of blue, is a season of HOPE, as we prepare to celebrate anew the Birth of our Savior. Come to worship to hear more! And at sunset, our restored and improved steeple stars, also missing last year due to mechanical problems, will once again be lighted for the season.

Thank you for reading and, especially, thank you in advance for keeping an eye out for updates about our November life together. Our God is a great and gracious God and is very much on the job just like always, and we will go forward together toward that blessed future that God intends!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Get ready to turn those clocks back friends...November is here! I hope you're enjoying the beautiful colors, the crispness in the air, and the awesome smell of autumn! The beauty of God's creation is SO visible at this time of year – don't you just LOVE it?

Speaking of things you'll love, grab your calendars – here are some activities that we hope you'll love as well:

- Wednesday, November 3rd is the next meeting of Celebration Club! Join us from 6:30 to 8:00 for our "Giving Thanks" Celebration!
- On Sunday, November 14th, we're having an "Autumn Scavenger Hunt" in SONday Celebration! Join us for the hunt, a cool craft, and a game or two of Autumn Bingo – it's going to be "fall-funtastic"!
- On Sunday, November 28th, we're going to start preparing our Celebration Space for Christmas! Join us at 9:00 for a SONday Celebration Decorating Party! (And the decorating might continue right into Celebration Time!)



Plan to join us for all of the above activities!

Have a GREAT November – see you at the Celebration!!

Wishing you all a blessed and wonderful Thanksgiving!! For the record, I count the opportunity to minister to the children of St. John's as one of MY greatest blessings!! Thank you all for your love and support!!

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



Happy Fall, Youth Group!!

October 31st

Our next youth group meeting is Sunday, October 31st - think Fall Fun! Weather permitting, we will head out to Schwartz Farm in Hegins for the corn maze and hayride. If it is rainy or too muddy at the farm, we will have games, snacks, and a movie at the church. No matter what we end up doing, the meeting will start right after worship at approximately 11:30 a.m. Pizza is on the menu for lunch. Masks are required.

November 14th

How many of you missed having chicken and waffles last year? We sure did! Good news is it's back!! The famous chicken and waffle dinner is set for Sunday, November 14th immediately following worship. This year it will be a "TO GO" event only. Please watch your email for a sign-up sheet for youth group members and their parents to help that day.

With the rising number of COVID cases in our area, all youth group events are subject to change. Please watch your email for any updates.

Faith Formation on Sunday Mornings

Due to the issues with COVID, the Youth Group Faith Formation class (5th & 6th grade and high school - plus 7th & 8th grade when not having confirmation class) will meet **outside** in the pavilion at 9:00 a.m. as long as the weather permits. We will let you know when class moves inside to the youth room on the 3rd floor. By being outside, we can distance ourselves and not have to wear masks (unless told otherwise). So, bring your own camp chair, blanket, long underwear, etc. Whatever you need to be comfortable. We will have cocoa for the chilly mornings. Don't forget your bible!! If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to talk to Matt or Olivia. Thanks!

Gathering News

On September 15th, the ELCA released the following statement: "After much prayer and conversation, Gathering leadership have decided to require full COVID-19 vaccination or proof of a negative test result (likely 72 hours before arrival) to attend the 2022 Gathering, MYLE and the tAble. As of now, leadership have not decided on any additional safety measures. We commit to continued transparency in the decision-making process and will release information as it becomes available regarding additional safety measures or adjustments to key dates. Any updates will be communicated via Gathering social media, gNews and our website."

The Gathering leadership continue to listen to advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the host city local government, etc. For more information and many frequently asked questions, please visit the Gathering website at <http://www.elca.org/youthgathering>.

This does not change St. John's plans to attend the Gathering next year. Please know that we are watching this ever-changing situation. The health and safety of our youth are our top priority. If anything changes in the future, you will be the first to know.

So we forge ahead!! There will be an informational meeting in December about the Gathering. Our registration opens January 1st. There will be several fundraising opportunities in the near future. Please stay tuned!

ST. JOHN'S YOUTH GROUP
TO GO ONLY

CHICKEN & WAFFLE DINNER

Sunday, November 14th

11:30 a.m.

**** Free Will Offering ****



You are Invited to Book Discussion and Fellowship!

Monthly times of reading and sharing continue, with November's likely taking place on Zoom. Next up: **Monday, November 8, 6:00 P.M.** 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. Questions? Call or email Ann at 717-362-7895 or rahbruner@gmail.com – again, please watch for further details or contact Ann as to the location and format for the evening!



Pastoral Acts

At the Altar

On Sunday morning, October 10, Pastor Tom presided as we “officially” welcomed **Bryan, Kylie, Braydon, and Brooklyn Bender** into the St. John congregational family, through the order for Affirmation of Baptism. Please be sure to add them to your congregational directory as follows:

BENDER, Bryan & Kylie
Braydon, Brooklyn
625 West Market Street
Gratz, PA 17030
(B) 717-877-1386 (K) 717-856-2823

At the Graveside

Pastor Tom presided at graveside funeral worship for **Ruth Kaufman**, the wife of **Kim Hassinger's** father **Richard Kaufman**, following her death at Harrisburg Hospital on September 30. Worship was held at Greenwood Memorial Cemetery in Tower City on October 8. We pray that God will grant rest and peace to Ruth and the hope and joy of the Resurrection to Richard and Kim and all their other family members and loved ones!

Heating Zones

As another heating season soon gets underway, please do your part to 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!

Congregational Family Directory

As we look forward to a new bi-annual Congregational Family Directory, which will become available in January with the Annual Congregational Report, there has been a good bit of interest expressed in including best email addresses along with mailing addresses and telephone numbers in the new directory. If you would like to share your best email address(es) for the upcoming directory, please send that information with your permission to both Rachel and Pastor Tom, and it will be included. ***Please note that, even though Pastor Tom and/or Miss Laurie might already have your email address(es), they will not share that information for the directory or for any other reason without your further permission, as they agreed when given that information, so please be sure to send this new email if interested!***

Our Faith Active in Our Financial Giving – as of September 30

After concluding the year 2020 with very strong giving of tithes and offerings, despite all of the COVID-related impacts to our congregational family life together, the first three quarters of 2021 have likewise seen us all pulling together in solid fashion in giving to God’s work in this place as a congregational family. Here are summaries of our three largest funds for the first nine months of 2021 – the **Current Fund** (much like your main checking account at home, from which most of the day-to-day bills of ministry get paid), the **Children & Youth (C&Y) Fund** (through which Miss Laurie’s ministry is funded), and our **Larger Church Benevolence** (through which our congregational family supports the work of our Lower Susquehanna Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on all of our behalf):

	Current	C&Y	Larger Church Benevolence
Sept. 30 Budget Goal	\$114,188	\$18,249	\$9,000
Sept. 30 Total Giving*	\$112,552	\$20,313	\$9,566
Sept. 30 Giving Adjusted for Lump Sum Gifts*	\$107,932	\$19,163	\$9,066
Sept. 30 Total Expenses	\$ 98,098#	\$19,100	\$9,566^

* Our September 30 Total Giving reflects the kindness of several folks who shared all of their 2021 offerings right at the beginning of the year. The “Adjusted” line subtracts out the ¼ of these advance gifts which applies to the three months which remain in the year.

While our Current Fund Total Expenses are currently well under budget, there will be some “catch up” going on as year-end approaches and some large year-end bills arrive, such as annual insurances. So it will also be important to have our giving “catch up” a bit toward budget as well.

^With our Larger Church Benevolence, we simply send on exactly what we receive each month, and so the Total “Expenses” equal the Total Giving.

The above information is based on a summary which Pastor Tom (putting on his “CPA Hat”) shares each month with Congregational Council. Please don’t hesitate to ask him any questions you might have about these numbers. For questions about the details of our giving or our expenses, please speak with **Treasurer Jamie Doyle**. Thank you for your partnership in this wonderful ministry which is St. John, and especially for your kindness in “going the extra mile” to mail or drop off your offerings in these challenging times! Please watch for future updates every few months. (And please remember that, if you are not currently comfortable taking 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.)

St John Evangelical Lutheran Church

Congregational Council Minutes

September 12, 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, Ira Antes, Lori Motter, Ron Erb, Michael Henninger, Dana Klouser, and Pastor Tom Bruner

Excused Absent: Heidi Lehman, Arlene Doyle, Sheila Barder

Minutes: Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Ira Antes to accept the July minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

Reception of Petitions and Communications:

Harold Herb painted the bench that is outside at the pavilion. Pastor pointed out that this is an example of a good deed done quietly without expectations of acknowledgement. He noted that we are fortunate to have many people in our congregation who are willing to give of their time and talents.

Nicole Radel requested the use of the pavilion for a Girl Scout troop event on September 26 as well as the Trunk or Treat event on October 30. A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Ron Erb to approve the request. Motion approved unanimously.

Arlene Doyle resigned from Church Council effective immediately.

Joe Doyle resigned from Property Committee effective immediately.

Pastor's Report: Motion made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Dana Klouser to accept the pastor's report. Motion approved unanimously.

Children and Youth Ministry Report: Motion was made by Ron Erb and seconded by Ira Antes 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:

Church Property: We had a bat in the church. The exterminator was contacted. No action is required at this time.

Finance: No report

Worship and Music: No report

Faith Formation Team: No report

Youth Ministry: Hot dog food sale was successful. A Welcome Back Congregational Family Picnic is scheduled for Sunday September 19. Upper Dauphin Lutheran Youth Organization will meet at St John Pavilion on September 19 for the School Kit Project.

Mutual Ministry: No meeting

Executive: No report

Nominating: Will begin working on new council members for 2022.

History and Archive: No report

Women of ELCA: Will delay the start of blanket making because of COVID.

Church Dartball League: Will not meet until January at which time they will review the COVID status.

COVID: It was decided that we would continue outside services as long as the weather permits. This will be addressed again at the October 3rd council meeting. The return to our normal service protocol with greeters and acolytes will be reviewed at that time as well. The training for ringing of the bell and the fire drill have been put on hold.

New Business: Confirmation is scheduled for November 7. A computer has been purchased for Zoom worship, and we continue to work on improving the sound quality.

Next Council Meeting: The next council meeting will be October 3, 2021, at 7PM.

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

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Sandra Lamenza".

Sandra Lamenza, Secretary

NOVEMBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2	3	4	5	6
* (Both In-Person and on Zoom)	All Saints' Day	9:30am - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting 6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting Election Day	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie (In-Person at the Church) 6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study 7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families			8am-12pm - Pickup at the Pavilion for St. John's Women's Group Cold Quart Soup Sale Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
All Saints Sunday 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am – Worship*, including Celebration of Confirmations and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/31)</i> Soup Sale by Women of the ELCA of St. John Daylight Saving Time Ends at 2:00am	6pm - Monthly Book Discussion Group Gathering (Probably on Zoom)	Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East	6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study 7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families Martin Luther's Birthday (1483)	2pm - Pastor Tom Leads Worship at Polk Veterans' Day		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
25th Sunday after Pentecost 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am – Worship*, including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/31)</i> 11:15am - Annual Youth Group Chicken & Waffles Dinner – Take Out/To Go Only This Year 2pm – Women of the ELCA monthly meeting 4pm - Congregational Council Meeting	Deadline to Submit Items for December/January "St. John's Epistle" 7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting – Planned in Person at Salem Lutheran, Killinger	6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting – Planned in Person at Church	6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study 7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
Christ the King 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Annual Thankoffering Worship, Led by Women of St. John*, including Sunny Sermon and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/31)</i>			7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off Thanksgiving Day		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
28	29	30				
1st Sunday of Advent 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am – Worship*, including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/31)</i> Our Steeple Stars Will Be Lighted at Sunset Hanukkah Begins at Sundown		Andrew, Apostle 6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting				

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	jjferree@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

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