



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
BERRYSBURG, PA | NOVEMBER 2022

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

On the first Sunday of this new month, November 6, we celebrate the annual festival of **All Saints Sunday**, which is basically a relocation of the ancient festival of **All Saints Day**, which comes along every year on November 1, no matter what day of the week that happens to be.

Essentially, **All Saints Sunday** is a recognition that most Christians (with notable exceptions like our Roman Church sisters and brothers) no longer gather for worship on the festival day itself when it doesn't happen to fall on a Sunday – and yet we don't want to miss out on this important festival day completely – and so a “compromise” is made in the Church Year.

We don't want to miss out on a chance to celebrate the festival of **All Saints** because it has so much to say to you and to me and to these times in which we live. But first, a definition... **Biblically speaking, a “saint” is, simply put, anyone and everyone whom God calls to the ministry and work of God's Kingdom** – a ministry and work to which even you and I have been called in the waters of Holy Baptism. Saints come in all shapes and sizes and colors and rarely, if ever, do they (we) look like the kind of person which probably comes to your mind when you hear that word.

- Saints aren't perfect, only forgiven and empowered by God.
- Saints fully admit that their sainthood is marred and tarnished by the reality of Sin and so they (we) regularly make use of the Means of God's Grace – receiving God's Word and Sacrament of Holy Communion in worship as often as we can.

What happens on the annual festival of **All Saints** is that we call to mind and give thanks for all of God's servants – the saints – the members of the Family of God – who have served to bring us to where we are as the People of God and who are now at rest in God – the household names like Peter or Paul as well as the names of those unique to each of our walks in the faith. In worship on November 6 for instance, we will take time to name and call to mind the members of our congregational family who have died and joined the Saints Triumphant since the last festival of **All Saints**.

And what happens as we call to mind the almost 2000 years and worldwide scope of the Family of God (the Church) is that we get a renewed sense that our lives and our work are a part of Someone and something so mind-bogglingly vast that we can keep a perspective, a big picture view, even when the voices around us might be encouraging us to get ugly and be afraid and panic and lose hope and in general act as if the issues of right now are somehow the biggest deal that ever has been. (I think God must give a – likely tired and rueful – chuckle

as voices are once again raised in our time suggesting that things are so very bad that these just must be The End Times, being that God has been hearing this very thing so very many times and in so very many places all these past 20 centuries.)

The End Times will come in God's good time and pleasure, make no mistake, but the festival of **All Saints** reminds us that, in the meantime, our job is to "suck it up and push on" (a catch-phrase from a young member of my former congregation referring to his military basic training days) knowing that we are in very good company and that it turns out God is really good and faithful when it comes to seeing us through.

YOU AND I are the SAINTS OF GOD – just mull that over for a moment... and then let's get busy acting the part!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Wow! Can you believe it's November already? Before we know it, Christmas will be here (I guess that's not too surprising seeing as the Christmas decorations have been out in the stores before Halloween)!

But let's not get ahead of ourselves....grab your calendars and jot down these dates for some November fun:

- Wednesday, November 2nd - It's the first Wednesday of the month and the next meeting of Celebration Club! Join us from 6:30 – 8:00 for our "Give Thanks" Celebration!
- Sunday, November 6th – Hop on the wagon and join us for our SONday Celebration Hayride! We'll take off soon after 9:00! Bring your blankies and dress accordingly!!
- Sunday, November 20th – Come and be part of the fun at our "Thanksgiving is for Giving Thanks" SONday Celebration! There's a Sunny Sermon in church too!
- Back by popular demand, we're reassembling the "Jingle Elves" for the first time since covid! Our first gig is the Gratz Holiday Parade on Saturday, November 26th! I'll give you more details as they become available!!
- In preparation for the parade, I'm scheduling "Jingle Elf" practices for the 6th, 13th and 20th (all Sundays) at 2:00 at the church! Tell your friends – the more elves the better!!
- And finally, on Sunday, November 27th, join us for our "Preparing for Jesus – Part 1" SONday Celebration on this the first Sunday of Advent!

As you can see, there are lots of faith formation opportunities throughout the month of November! I hope you'll join us for the fun!! And best wishes for a fabulous Thanksgiving with your family and friends.

Miss Laurie

Please Make a Note!

Due to a scheduling conflict, the date of next year's Annual Strawberry Festival has been moved from June 14 (as set at the Festival Wrap-Up Meeting a couple of months ago and since publicized) to **Wednesday, June 7, 2023**. This will apparently be the first time we have ever planned the Festival for the first Wednesday in June, so it may take some extra work on all of our parts to help folks realize it won't be the very familiar "second Wednesday in June" next year. It has been checked and confirmed that going with this earlier date won't conflict in any way with local school schedules and shouldn't cause any problems with regard to having strawberries. (The first planning meeting remains unchanged, on Tuesday, March 7, at 7:00pm here at the church.)

Book Group

Please join us for upcoming Book Group gatherings! We will meet at the church, in the fellowship hall, at 6:30 pm. All are welcome to bring a snack to share.

- November 7 -- Martin Luther: The Man Who Rediscovered God and Changed the World by Eric Metaxas
- December 5 -- The Parables of Peanuts by Robert L Short

Call or email Ann 717.362.7895 rahbruner@gmail.com if you need a book or have any questions. Hope to see you there!

News from the St Johns Women of the ELCA

The ladies at St. John's are busy planning their activities for the next few months. The next event on our list is our soup sale. There are order forms in the foyer on the shelf as well as in your bulletin. Fill it out and give it to **Pat Herb**, as she is keeping track of all orders. Remember all orders must be in by October 23rd after our Sunday service.

The quilting bunch is back in the swing of making quilts. If you should find material you're not using and would like to donate it talk to any of the ladies who help with the quilting project. They are always thankful for donations.

Our Annual Thank-Offering Service will be held on Sunday, November 20, 2022. Our speaker will be Rev Carla Christopher Wilson. We are quite anxious to have her with us.

Also, we need your help if you serve on any committee with the ladies. If you want to change a position, please contact Rachel Henry who is making up the new booklets. Also, if there is a change in your phone number. So many of us have cell numbers and we really need to have them to be able to contact you.



St. John's Youth Group

**November
2022**

CHICKEN AND WAFFLES DINNER

On **Sunday, November 6th**, the youth group hosts the annual chicken and waffles dinner. This year we return to the sit down meal. Each Youth Group household must sign up to bring cookies for dessert. Please watch your email for the sign-up link.

8:00 a.m.: Parents and youth arrive to start work. Meet in the kitchen.
Parents and youth peel, cut up, and start cooking potatoes.
Please bring your favorite knife / slicer and cutting board.

9:00 a.m.: Parents are relieved of their duties and youth take over the meal prep.
Youth make waffles.
(Please let Olivia know if you have a waffle maker you can bring.)

10:00 a.m.: Youth set up "dining room" and finish meal prep.

Approx. 11:30 a.m. Meal is served.

Approx. 1:00 p.m. Parents and youth help with clean up in kitchen and dining room.

** A free-will donation will be collected for the meal.

This is one of our biggest fundraisers, so all hands on deck. Please wear a Thrivent Action Team shirt. Don't have one? We will get you one! Please let Olivia or Amy know if you can help.. Thank you in advance!!!

WINTERFEST 2023

Registration is now open for **Winterfest 2023**. All high school and college age young adults are eligible to attend the retreat. Winterfest runs from Friday, January 6, 2023 to Sunday, January 8, 2023 at the Wyndham Resort in Lancaster. Winterfest is hosted by the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Registration for St. John's Young Adults is \$100.00.

Please RSVP to Olivia by Sunday, November 13, 2022.



St. John's Youth Group:

Chicken and Waffles Dinner

**Sunday, November 6th
11:30 a.m.**

**A sit down dinner will be
served immediately following
worship. (Take out available.)**

**A free-will donation is
collected at the meal.**

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!

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

After concluding the past two years 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 2022 have likewise seen us all pulling together in solid fashion in giving to God's work in this place as a congregational family, in fact with one of the best results we have ever had in the Current Fund in comparison to budget! Here are summaries of our three largest funds for the first nine months of 2022 – 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 Fund** (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	\$117,207	\$18,889	\$9,000
Sept. 30 Total Giving*	\$120,163	\$15,765	\$9,289
Sept. 30 Giving Adjusted for Lump Sum Gifts*	\$115,357	\$14,865	\$8,789
Sept. 30 Total Expenses	\$105,764#	\$19,650	\$9,289^

* Our September 30 Total Giving reflects the kindness of several folks who shared all of their 2022 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 insurance premiums.

^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, as an incorrigible numbers guy, shares each month with Congregational Council. Please don't hesitate to ask him any questions you might have about this big picture view of our finances. 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!

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Minutes
July 10, 2022

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

Present: Roy Henry, Pastor Tom Bruner, Gail Billow, Joshua Paul, Ira Antes, Heidi Lehman, Lori Motter, Carl Baumgardner, Sheila Barder, Michael Henninger and Courtney Foreman. Excused: Dana Klouser and Craig Peters

Minutes: Motion by Josh Paul to accept the April 2022 minutes as read. Second by Carl Baumgardner. Motion approved unanimously.

Reception of Petitions and Communications:

1. Thank you from the Friends of the Elizabethtown Library with a \$200 honorarium for allowing the use of our pavilion for the annual book sale.
2. Request for a Gift of Love for the victims of the house fire in Gratz was addressed by the Benevolence Committee earlier today.

Pastor's Report: Report(s) will be emailed later this week for Council to review.

Children and Youth Ministry Report: Motion to accept Miss Laurie's reports for May and June by Heidi Lehman. Second by Lorri Motter. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurer's Reports: Motion to accept the treasurer's reports for May and June by Michael Henninger. Second by Carl Baumgardner. Motion approved unanimously. Bicentennial Fund report submitted by Lynn Henninger.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Church Property: Carl will be contacting Houck Restoration tomorrow to discuss possible scheduling for the steeple repair. He has been assured that the work will be completed by this fall. Reno 250 project is moving along nicely. The mixer for the sound system is on backorder. Next meeting scheduled for 9/13/22 at 6:15.

Finance Committee: No report.

Worship and Music: No report.

Faith Formation: No report.

Youth Ministry: There was a nice turnout for the youth gathering last week. 7 high school students are registered for VBS. Gabe Gehring is attending "Leaders in Training" at Nawakwa this week. 5 Youth and 4 Advisors are registered to attend Boundless at Nawakwa at the end of July.

Mutual Ministry: Discussed the Reno 250 project. Also discussed the concerns that were voiced about the upcoming information sessions about abortion and the recent Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe v. Wade. The sessions are scheduled for 7/17 and 7/31, in person, and are meant to discuss the social position of the church. The Mutual Ministry meeting is to be held in October.

Executive: No report.

Nominating: No report.

History and Archive: No report.

Women of the ELCA: Still collecting soap for personal care kits.

Cemetery Association: No report.

Strawberry Festival: Notes from final meeting of 2022 were sent via email to council members.

Unfinished Business: Format changes to the bulletins seem to be successful.

A tutorial for the bell ringing will take place at the September Council meeting.

Communion will be moved to its original place in the Sunday service while outside this summer in order to eliminate some of the noise and distraction while some people are waiting for communion and others are tearing chairs down.

New Business:

AED pads are expiring in September. Courtney Foreman will order two sets in order to have an extra set on hand and to keep everything up to date.

A discussion was held about putting the physical address of the church near the phones and in the weekly bulletin in case of emergency so that the correct address can be provided to 911.

Next Council Meeting: September 11, 2022 at 6 pm.

Adjournment: Motion by Michael Henninger, Second by Josh Paul to adjourn the meeting. 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	2	3	4	5
		All Saints' Day 9:30am - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting 7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie 6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
*Both In-Person <u>and</u> on Zoom ** In-Person						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
All Saints Sunday 9am - Adult Bible Study**, SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie**, Youth Group Members Prepare for Chicken & Waffles Dinner 10:15am – Worship*, including Sacrament of Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons** 11:30am - Annual Youth Group-Served Chicken & Waffles Dinner – Eat In with Take Out Available Daylight Saving Time Ends at 2:00am	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 6:30pm - Monthly Book Discussion Group Gathering	7:30 Senior Choir Rehearsal Election Day	Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East 6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study	Martin Luther's Birthday (1483)		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
					Veterans' Day	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
23rd Sunday after Pentecost 9am - Adult Bible Study**, Youth Bible Time with Matt & Olivia**, Confirmation Class**, SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie** 10:15am – Worship*, including Sacrament of Holy Baptism and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person 2pm - Monthly Meeting of Women of the ELCA of St. John 6pm - Monthly Meeting of Congregational Council	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	Deadline to Submit Items for December/January "St. John's Epistle" 6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting 7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal	6:30-8pm - Midweek Bible Study			Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Christ the King 9am - Adult Bible Study**, Youth Bible Time with Matt & Olivia**, Confirmation Class**, SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie** 10:15am - Annual Thankoffering Worship, Led by Women of St. John*, including Sacrament of Holy Communion, Sunny Sermon with Miss Laurie, and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at Zion Lutheran, Rife	2pm - Pastor Tom Leads Worship at Polk Assisted Living in Millersburg 6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting 7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal		Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off Thanksgiving Day		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
27	28	29	30			
1st Sunday of Advent 9am - Adult Bible Study**, Youth Bible Time with Matt & Olivia**, Confirmation Class**, SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie** 10:15am - Worship*, including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person Our Steeple Stars Will Be Lighted at Sunset		7:30pm - Senior Choir Rehearsal	Andrew, Apostle			

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	717-571-5058
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
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

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