



# ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

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

## Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

As I write these lines, we have just returned to inside worship at our “non-summer” starting time of 10:15am. At the risk of confusing things (just as we are starting to get used to a new Sunday morning “routine”) by already talking about a change in that routine, I’m very excited to tell you about something we are trying for the first time on Sunday morning, October 8. On that morning, following our regular Faith Formation activities for all ages inside at 9:00am, we will head outside to the pavilion for just one more time of outdoor worship at 10:15am. The reason we will be headed outside for worship one more time is so that our animal friends and family members can join us that morning for worship, as we ask God’s particular blessing upon each of them! ***Yup, you heard that right – at 10:15am on Sunday, October 8, I am hoping that we will have a wonderful gathering in the pavilion of our “normal” eager congregational family members accompanied by the animals they love, of all sizes and shapes, the more the merrier.***

Those who have been a part of the St. John Family for a longer time will likely remember that, for a few years in the early 2000’s, we held a separate time for the Blessing of the Animals on a Sunday afternoon in early October. This eventually ended as it became ever harder to commit to that separate gathering time on what is often a busy family day in a particularly busy time of the year. So, my hope this year (and going forward) is that making the Blessing of the Animals a part of our regular Sunday morning worship time will enable more people and more animals to more easily take part. Because we all know that not all animals “play well together”, the sextons and I will make sure that our chairs are more widely-spaced and everyone will have the option of bringing along their own chair and spacing themselves where it might seem most comfortable and doable. By gathering in the pavilion and thereby having all of the surrounding space to use as well, there is room and space even for larger animals like horses – yes, horses and other large animals too!!

Now, why October 8/early October you ask? Good question! This dating comes from the fact that St. Francis of Assisi is commemorated on October 4 each year, the date of his death in the year 1226. Francis is remembered and celebrated amongst Christians for many reasons, but one of those is his reputation as someone who stressed our brotherhood and sisterhood with all animals and with all of God’s Creation. It is even said that it was Francis who began the idea of the “nativity scene” as a Christmas thing – thereby teaching others about the important presence of the “non-humans” at the time and place of Jesus’ birth. So, we are gathering on a Sunday nearby to that important date of October 4.

In closing, I really mean all of the above – really!! I'm hoping to see lots of animals of many different kinds as we come together on October 8, including yours!! You will be able to get up and move around as may be helpful and, if it should feel helpful to have your animal family member spend part of the time back in the car for any reason, that too is no problem – but please don't feel as if you have to do this! And please don't feel like your animal will look less well-behaved than the next one. Yoshi, our beloved dog who died four years ago now – on October 4 ironically enough – really didn't do well with other dogs, maybe having to do with the rough start he had in life as an abandoned and then rescued animal. No one is going to be judging you or your animal(s) on October 8. Simply do what you need to do to make it comfortable for all of you, and come and worship together!

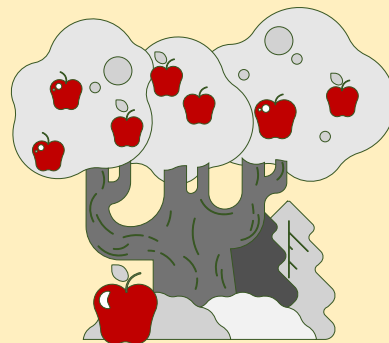
And of course, please contact me at any time with any questions you might have!

**Pastor Tom**

## News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Leaves are falling on the ground, on the ground, on the ground. Leaves are falling on the ground – must be AUTUMN! (If you read that to the tune of “London Bridge is Falling Down”, you did it JUST right!) As you can probably tell, we're gearing up for autumn in preschool, and some fun, fall faith-formation is coming to St. John's, as well! Grab a pencil and jot down these dates:

- Sunday, October 1st – We're having an Autumn Scavenger Hunt in SONday Celebration! Then we'll take what we find and create works of art!
- Wednesday, October 4th – Join us for our “I Be-‘leaf’ in Jesus” Celebration Club! The fun begins at 6:30, and, weather permitting, we'll have the session OUTSIDE!
- Sunday, October 15th – It's the “I'm the Apple of Jesus' Eye” SONday Celebration where we'll have apples, apples, and more apples!!
- Saturday, October 28th - For the first time ever, we're planning a Celebration Halloween Party! Get “costumed up” and join us at the church from 6:00 – 7:30 for some not-too-spooky fun!!
- Sunday, October 29th – It's our annual “Harvest Hayride” in SONday Celebration! Join us as Bryan Bender takes us on an autumn “spin” in his hay wagon!!



We hope you can join us for ALL of these awesome autumn activities!! Come and be part of the fun!!

Have an OUTSTANDING October, everyone! See you at the celebrations!

**Miss Laurie**

## Book Group - October 2023

Book Group will start up again in October. Please join us even if you haven't before. All are welcome! Let's gather at **6:30 pm, October 2**, at the church (possibly in the pavilion, if it's a nice evening). We'll be discussing **Still Life** by **Louise Penny**. Some copies are available in the church library and more at your local public library, both physical copy, large print, and ebook. If you have questions or need to locate a book, please contact Ann ([rahbruner@gmail.com](mailto:rahbruner@gmail.com)).



## Acolyte Ministry

We will be re-starting our acolyte ministry on Sunday, October 15. If anyone is interested in becoming an acolyte, please contact me at 717-503-6177, or Pastor Tom. I will be having training/orientation on Sunday September 24, October 1, and October 8th after the worship service. I would like to start to assemble the schedule, so for my current acolytes if you know of any dates you would not be available to serve, please let me know; my email is [rbpaul@epix.net](mailto:rbpaul@epix.net). Thank you for your service! - **Sandra Paul**

## Food Donations

Please place your non-perishable food donations for the food pantry at the Upper Dauphin Human Services Center in Lykens on any shelf inside the north (right side, coming in the front doors) closet in the foyer, where the door is labelled accordingly. As the contributions add up, deliveries will be made to the pantry by **Larry Gessner**. Thank you!

## Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meeting to prepare the 2024 Current Fund and other budgets will be held both in-person at the church and on Zoom on **Monday, October 30, at 7:00 P.M.**

## Women of the ELCA

Thank you so much to all the women who attended our first event the Ice Cream Social. We had a wonderful turnout and learned so much from our speaker Bonnie Kent. Please stay tuned for our next event in December.

## 35<sup>th</sup> LSS-Women of the ELCA Convention

On Friday, August 18, 2023, the women of the Lower Susquehanna Synod came together to praise God and to celebrate another year of working together. Our theme this year was "Shepherd Me O God". We opened the convention with the business of elections. Peggi Norman has been re-elected to the position of president. We are still in need of a treasurer, but Chris Todd has been appointed to this position till our next convention. We unfortunately lost our former treasurer to the death of Kathy Kauffman. New members to the board are Sally Hagy, Donna Griefzu and Fay Nichols. The secretary and vice-president are still in office as well as other board members.

Friday evening's service was with The Rev. Marissa Becklin, who was also our convention chaplain. Her reflection was on John 10:11-26. It was a very moving service. We also had a question and answer session with Bishop James Dunlop. This was very interesting. He told us about the change in the church and how we will be affected. Saturday morning started with a worship service with the Bishop also. His service was on John 10:1-10 & 27-30. He spoke about the lost sheep and how we must all work together to praise God in our daily lives.

We had two workshops to attend. One was "Living Smaller-Living in Abundance" and the other was "Sustaining Women of the ELCA for Future Generations". Both were very good workshops. We also had speakers from LWR and the United Lutheran Seminary. We wish to say thank you to all who helped with the collection of non-perishable items and gift cards that were donated. We collected 304 food items, 59 toiletry items and \$2,065 in gift cards. This was from all those who attended.

Our convention offering will be sent to the home office in Chicago; we collected \$1,734. Our Ingathering offering went to two local food banks; we had an offering of \$1,510 and for Katie's Fund we collected \$120.75. It was a very successful convention.

I can only say to the ladies take the time to think about attending the 36<sup>th</sup> convention. We do make a difference not only in our church, but in our community and world too. Come join us and find out how much we really do.

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church Berrysburg, Pa.**

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**All Saints Day Centerpieces**

**November 5, 2023**

Arrangements by: Elizabeth's Flowers

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Centerpieces are being offered  
"In Loving Memory of" loved ones who have passed.

Note: Centerpieces are purchased by the Flower Fund in memory of members who have passed since last All Saints Day, Nov. 6, 2022.

**Arrangements will be in beautiful fall colors and cost \$25 each.**

**Number of Centerpieces: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Cost \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

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Please **print** desired memorial as you want it printed in the bulletin:

In Loving Memory of

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A sample centerpiece will be placed on the baptismal font on October 22<sup>th</sup>.

Orders, with payment, should be given to any Flower Fund Committee Member:  
Sheila Barder, Gail Billow, Dana Klouser, or Fay Nichols



# St. John's Youth Group

October  
2023

## FALLOUTING

On **Sunday, October 15th**, the youth group will be heading out to Schwartz Farm in Hegin for the corn maze and hayride. We will meet immediately following worship in the kitchen for lunch. After a quick lunch, we will head out to Schwartz Farm. The cost to attend is \$5.00 each. Please RSVP to one of the youth advisors by Sunday, October 1st. Don't forget to complete the emergency contact form and the travel form.

## CHICKEN AND WAFFLES DINNER

**Sunday, November 5<sup>th</sup>** is the annual Youth Group Chicken and Waffles dinner. Mark your calendars! We will need help from youth and their parents!! More information to follow.

## POSSIBLE CHRISTMAS BREAK RETREAT

We need your input!! The advisors are considering having a Christmas Break Youth Group Retreat from **Friday, December 29th to Sunday, December 31st at Camp Hebron in Halifax**. We would meet on Friday at the church to leave around 6:00 p.m. and return before church is over on Sunday. Please let us know via email if your youth group member is interested in a retreat! Thanks!!



**Winterfest 2024** runs from Friday, January 5, 2024 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 Lower Susquehanna Synod. Friday night will be filled with live music, worship, and the 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 each. Watch your emails for additional information and registration deadlines!

## Pray for Our Students in Higher Education

The following young members of St. John are currently involved in a first venture in higher education. Where it has been provided to Pastor Tom with permission to share, best contact information for each of our students is shown below, with the hope that many members of the congregational family will reach out in love and caring via text or email or phone or mail all through the year. Please refer to your congregational family directory for additional contact information where needed:

### **Reyann Cheatham**

Harrisburg University of Science & Technology  
[r.cheatham14@gmail.com](mailto:r.cheatham14@gmail.com)

### **Gracie Gehring**

West Chester University  
[gehringge@gmail.com](mailto:gehringge@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:  
East Village 256-04B  
181 Carey Drive  
West Chester, Pennsylvania 19383

### **Kelsey Henninger**

Harrisburg Area Community College  
Cell Phone for Texting: (717) 635-0876

### **Ryan Henninger**

Shippensburg University  
[ryrhenninger@gmail.com](mailto:ryrhenninger@gmail.com)

### **RJ Henry**

Lebanon Valley College  
[royhenryjr88@gmail.com](mailto:royhenryjr88@gmail.com)

Mailing Address:  
Funkhouser Hall, Rm W013  
101 N. College Ave  
Annville, PA 17003

### **Kinsley Schreffler**

Central Penn College, Enola  
[kschreffler2003@gmail.com](mailto:kschreffler2003@gmail.com)

In addition to the above young persons, we also note that **Robert Foreman** is studying at Harrisburg Area Community College, pursuing his Associates Degree in Biology.

And finally, in post-graduate degrees: **Courtney Foreman** is working on her Masters Degree in Nursing (Leadership & Management) through Western Governors University.

Please remember these students with your prayers and expressions of caring. If any students have been missed, or if any of the above information is in error, please contact Pastor Tom and corrections will be made in the next issue of the **Epistle**.

**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Minutes**  
**July 9, 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, Michael Henninger, Gail Billow, Jeff Lehman, Ty Troutman, Sandra Lamenza, Sheila Barder, and Courtney Foreman.

Excused: Dana Klouser, Craig Peters

**Minutes:** Motion by Joshua Paul to accept the May 2023 minutes as read. Second by Sandra Lamenza. Motion approved unanimously.

**Reception of Petitions and Communications:**

- Fay Nichols shared that the Women of the ELCA wants to do a special offering of food and food gift cards for the Food Drive at the Synodical Women's Gathering to benefit the food pantry at United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg. Motion by Ty Troutman to promote the food drive. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Gail Billow. Motion passed unanimously.
- When the barn was cleaned out in June, the tables were disassembled and disposed of. We no longer have tables to lend out. Motion was made not to allow the loaning of pavilion tables was made by Sandra Lamenza. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Christie Kahler. Motion passed unanimously.
- September 10<sup>th</sup> will be Fall Celebration Sunday with an outdoor service in the pavilion at 9:30 with a blessing of the backpacks and devices, to be followed by a Sundae Bar and fellowship.
- The pit toilets were pumped out by Kissy's Septic. Kissy's found that there was trash thrown into the toilets.
- Strawberry Festival Fund Donations proposed:
  - \$100 to the Elizabethtown Library Yearly Book Drive
  - \$500 gift to the Berrysburg Fire Company for the yearly drive
  - \$1000 to the Snack Pack Program at UDA Elementary School.Motion to approve the donations made by Sandra Lamenza. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Jeff Lehman. Motion passed unanimously.

**Pastor's Report:** Motion to accept Pastor Tom's report was made by Josh Paul. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Courtney Foreman. Motion approved unanimously.

**Children and Youth Ministry Report:** Motion to accept Miss Laurie's report by Sandra Lamenza. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Sheila Barder. Motion approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Pastor provided a summary. Motion to accept the treasurer's report by Ty Troutman. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Christie Kahler. Motion approved unanimously.

**Reports of Standing Committees:**

**Church Property:** The siding on the Sexton house will be repaired tomorrow. A special meeting will be held next Sunday to discuss the status of the trees.

**Finance Committee:** No report.

**Worship and Music:**

- The Elevator Usher is to ride up and down the elevator with members/guests.
- Starting this Fall we will offer the Common Cup on special holidays, sharing of the Peace, and signing cards for those that are hospitalized – all as done prior to COVID.

- Pastor Tom is proposing doing a blessing of the animals on the Sunday closest to October 4<sup>th</sup> annually. This service will be held in the pavilion each year (October 8<sup>th</sup> this year).
- We will begin having the acolytes extinguish the candles during the postlude.

**Cemetery Committee:** Held the walk-through with Elizabethtown Monument Company as planned. Approximately \$5,000 worth of damage noted.

**Faith Formation:** A VBS planning meeting was held two weeks ago.

**Mutual Ministry:** Met this morning. Discussed Living Lutheran magazine.

**Executive:** No report.

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

**History and Archive:** No report.

**Bell Ringing:** No report.

**Women of the ELCA:** Having a speaker in September. See St. John's Epistle for information.

**Youth Group:** Had outside game night. Tshirt sale is happening now. Next meeting will be in September.

**Strawberry Festival Committee:** Wrap up meeting was held. The first planning meeting for next year's festival will be held Monday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. Next year's Strawberry Festival will be held on Wednesday, June 12, 2024.

Note: Ann Bruner would like to get a "Creation Team" going again. Tentative name will be the Creation Care Team. The ELCA has some resources available to help. She is hoping to amp up the recycling program again.

**Unfinished Business:**

Josh has been unsuccessful with getting in touch with PSP thus far. Will continue to try.

Courtney will provide a CPR summary to be distributed with the "Hands Only" video for distribution to the congregation.

Pastor Tom and Sandra reported that there was much discussion about electing a new Bishop at the Synod Assembly.

**New Business:**

The October council meeting would normally be held on October 8<sup>th</sup>, but Pastor Tom will be travelling and asked if we can move the date to October 1<sup>st</sup> at 6 PM. Date change approved by council unanimously.

**Next Council Meeting:** September 10, 2023, at 6 PM.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Sheila Barder 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
<p><b>1</b></p> <p><b>18<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b>  <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study*, Youth Faith Formation with Olivia &amp; Matt*, Confirmation Class*  <b>9am</b> - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie*  <b>10:15am</b> - Worship, Including Sacraments of Holy Baptism and Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers**  <b>11:15am</b> - Mutual Ministry Committee Meeting  <b>6pm</b> - Congregational Council Meeting</p>	<p><b>2</b></p> <p><b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief  <b>6:30pm</b> - Monthly Book Discussion Group Gathering</p>	<p><b>3</b></p> <p><b>9:30am</b> - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting  <b>7:30pm</b> - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>4</b></p> <p><b>6:30-8pm</b> - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie</p>	<p><b>5</b></p>	<p><b>6</b></p>	<p><b>7</b></p> <p>Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off</p>
<p><b>8</b></p> <p><b>19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b>  <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study*, Youth Faith Formation with Olivia &amp; Matt*, Confirmation Class*  <b>9am</b> - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie*  <b>10:15am</b> - <b>OUTDOOR WORSHIP</b>, with Blessing of the Animals and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers**</p>	<p><b>9</b></p> <p><b>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</b>  <b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief  <b>Columbus Day</b></p>	<p><b>10</b></p> <p><b>7:30pm</b> - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>11</b></p>	<p><b>12</b></p>	<p><b>13</b></p>	<p><b>14</b></p>
<p><b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off October 9 through October 25, returning to the office on Thursday, October 26.</b></p>						
<p><b>15</b></p> <p><b>20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b>  <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study*, Youth Faith Formation with Olivia &amp; Matt*  <b>9am</b> - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie*  <b>10:15am</b> - Worship, with Guest Leader James Watson and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers**  <b>11:15am</b> - Youth Group Outing to the Schwartz Farm in Hegins for Corn Maze &amp; Hayride Begins with Lunch in the Kitchen  <b>Deadline to Submit Items for November "St. John's Epistle"</b></p>	<p><b>16</b></p> <p><b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief</p>	<p><b>17</b></p> <p><b>7:30pm</b> - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>18</b></p> <p><b>Luke, Evangelist</b></p>	<p><b>19</b></p>	<p><b>20</b></p>	<p><b>21</b></p>
<p><b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off October 9 through October 25, returning to the office on Thursday, October 26.</b></p>						
<p><b>22</b></p> <p><b>21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b>  <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study*, Youth Faith Formation with Olivia &amp; Matt*  <b>9am</b> - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie*  <b>10:15am</b> - Worship, with Guest Leader Matthew Williard and Sunny Sermon &amp; Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers**</p>	<p><b>23</b></p> <p><b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief</p>	<p><b>24</b></p> <p><b>7:30pm</b> - Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p><b>25</b></p>	<p><b>26</b></p> <p>Pastor Tom's Planned Return to the Office   <b>5:30pm</b> - Community Meal at Salem United Church of Christ, Elizabethtown</p>	<p><b>27</b></p>	<p><b>28</b></p> <p><b>Simon &amp; Jude, Apostles</b>   Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off   <b>6-7:30pm</b> - Celebration Halloween Party with Miss Laurie</p>
<p><b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off October 9 through October 25, returning to the office on Thursday, October 26.</b></p>						
<p><b>29</b></p> <p><b>Reformation Sunday</b>  <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study*, Youth Faith Formation with Olivia &amp; Matt*, Confirmation Class*  <b>9am</b> - SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie*  <b>10:15am</b> - Worship, Including Sacrament of Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Younger In-Person Worshipers**</p>	<p><b>30</b></p> <p><b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief   <b>7pm</b> - Finance Committee Meeting to Prepare 2024 Budgets</p>	<p><b>31</b></p> <p><b>9am</b> - "Blanket Bunch"  Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief   <b>7pm</b> - Finance Committee Meeting to Prepare 2024 Budgets</p>	<p><b>* In Person</b>  <b>** In Person and On Zoom</b></p>			

## 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:jiferee@epix.net">jiferee@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](http://www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch)