

ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA OCTOBER 2020

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

As we all continue to try our best to carry on the activities of congregational family life as safely as we can in this time of ongoing pandemic, with cases of COVID-19 continuing to increase in northern Dauphin County as I write these lines, this October *St. John's Epistle* certainly looks vastly different from any previous one. Blanket making and dartball, both of which would normally be getting into high gear this month, are missing from the calendar, as is our traditional display and blessing of those beautiful blankets. But other essential activities go on, albeit with changes.

One of the very noticeable changes is our new interim Sunday morning schedule, which should be up and running by the time you read these lines. As I have explained before, it is only our "for now" schedule, the best compromise that Congregational Council and I could come up with to accommodate worship both on Zoom and in-person for now.

With virus case counts continuing to rise in our area, Congregational Council and I are trying our best to keep in place multiple layers of safety precautions for our in-person activities such that, if any one of us should later test positive for the virus, those who were also present at a given event can feel reasonably certain that they have not been exposed. We want to keep moving forward together in faithfulness, but carefully and deliberately and responsibly. That is why, for instance, we are planning to continue to celebrate our in-person worship outside in our beautiful pavilion until Reformation Sunday, weather permitting. It has been shown that the odds of virus transmission go up as people gather indoors versus outside in the fresh air. And these next weeks of continuing to worship outside will also give Council and me additional time to work out all of the details of safely moving back inside, such as seating arrangements upstairs, disinfecting of surfaces, and use of our elevator, just to name a few.

Then, as we move back inside for worship and get a few weeks of experience under our belts, the plan is that we will also be moving to add the "Wi-Fi power" and the "people power" to make it possible to host Zoom worship at the church, which in turn will make it possible to combine in-person and Zoom worship, which will mean that we can then return to our more familiar 9:00/10:15 Sunday morning schedule, hopefully by sometime around the end of November/beginning of the Season of Advent. All of this is subject to change, of course, as no one can predict what will happen next regarding the virus, especially with the coming of colder weather and the traditional flu season.

And one final important item for your October planning. Our autumn session of Midweek Bible Study will get underway on **Wednesday, October 21** – after I return from some annual planned time away. Then, in light of

all of our very changed schedules in these pandemic times, I would like to continue the study each Wednesday through December 16, except for Thanksgiving Eve, when we will take the evening off. We will meet each week from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M. and, as the COVID-19 case count continues to rise in northern Dauphin County, we will tentatively plan to gather again on Zoom. The topic of this autumn study will be ***The Book of Revelation***. Living as we are in a time of global pandemic in particular and global and national upheaval in general brings to mind thoughts of this final book of the Bible and its many strange images and allusions to the End of All Things. Together, we will take an in-depth look at what God might be – and might not be – trying to tell us in this powerful book, a book which, it turns out, has a whole lot to say to us about our Amazing God right here in the present, as well as in The End. No previous Bible study experience is required – only an interest and enthusiasm to study, reflect on, and (as you are comfortable doing so) discuss God’s Word together! So that the correct number of study books can be ordered for our study, please register in advance (by speaking with me in person, over the phone, or by email) no later than Sunday morning, October 4.

Thank you for reading these lines and for your commitment in these uniquely challenging times to doing all you can to keep our St. John congregational family the place of love and mercy and support that has for so long identified us as a beacon for Jesus on “The Hill”!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy October, everyone! Don’t you just love the crisp evening and early morning temperatures that mean autumn is here? And the “smell of fall” - I LOVE it!! Autumn really is a multi-sensory experience!! Thank you, God, for the beauty of Autumn and ALL the seasons!!

With fall upon us, I wanted to let you know about a few upcoming autumn activities:

- Wednesday, October 7th – Celebration Club meets IN-PERSON at St John’s! Join us at the church from 6:30 – 8:00 pm for our first gathering back in our Celebration Space!!
- We’ll continue to use the Safety Procedures established for in-person meetings like wearing masks and social distancing. Treats and snacks will be ‘take home’ until further notice and the ending time (8:00 instead of 8:30) reflects the fact that there will be no “snack time”. All youth aged 3 through 4th grade are invited to join in the fun!!!
- Friday, October 16th – Drive-In Movie Night. To get you in the mood for Halloween, we’ll be showing our new favorite character, Shawn the Sheep, in “Little Sheep of Horrors”. Sunset is around 6:30 on that date, so we should be able to get the movie started around 7:00!
- Saturday, October 31st – Drive-Thru Trunk or Treat. The Girl Scouts are hosting this event in the parking lot of St. John’s and we’re going to have a “Celebration Stop”! Join the fun from 2:30 – 4:30 that afternoon!
- And just a reminder: We have begun IN-PERSON SONday Celebration!!! For the time being, we meet every Sunday at the church from 9:45 – 10:45 am! Please join us for this time of fun, faith formation!!

Mark your calendars and plan to join us for all these fun activities!!!

Have a GREAT October and enjoy the sights, and sounds, and tastes, and SMELL of autumn!!

Miss Laurie

PS: I enjoy this verse for fall:

“And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up.”

- Galatians 6:9

St. John's Youth Group

St. John's Facebook: [facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch](https://www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch)

St. John's Children and Youth Ministry:
[facebook.com/childrenandyouthministry](https://www.facebook.com/childrenandyouthministry)

ELCA Gathering Website: www.elca.org/youthgathering



Keep a look out in your email for more events!

School Kits

On September 20th, several area youth groups joined to assemble 500 school kits for Lutheran World Relief.



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."



Fall Book Discussion

You Are Invited to Fall Book Discussion Group on Zoom!

We are continuing with our monthly times of reading and sharing via Zoom – next up on **Monday, October 26, at 7:00 P.M.** (later than the usual first Monday of the month because of Pastor Tom and Ann's planned time away). Everyone is welcome, so if you would like to participate and haven't joined in before, you can pick up a copy of the current book on the bench under the bulletin board in the foyer, just inside the main doors. (That selection for October, **Murder at the Vicarage** by Agatha Christie, is available there, but please let Ann know if we run out of books, and she will order more. Also, please give her a call if you have any other questions – 717.362.7895.)



Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meeting to prepare the 2021 Current Fund and other budgets will be held via Zoom on **Tuesday, October 27, at 6:30 P.M.**

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!

Amazon Smile



If you are an Amazon.com shopper, perhaps especially in this time of pandemic, our congregation is registered with the "Amazon Smiles" program, whereby Amazon donates one half of one percent of your purchase amount to a charitable organization that you select. Please note that, to qualify, your purchase has to be made through the "smile" side of things, to which you will find a very easily identifiable link from the main part of the Amazon.com website. (Once there, it can be a bit tricky to pick out our congregational name from all of the "St. John's" – look for **St John Evangelical Lutheran Church, Berrysburg, PA**. Once you have selected us the first time, we will automatically be designated each time you shop

and you won't need to re-do the search.) All monies received in this way will be automatically deposited for use in the Current Fund.

Girl Scout Troop 10010 Presents



**October 31st
2:30pm – 4:30pm**

**St. John's Evangelical Church Baseball Field
215 St. John Road, Elizabethville, PA 17023**

Drive Thru Entrance: Route 225 Towards Berrysburg

Drive Thru Exit: Route 225 Towards Elizabethville

***Signs will be posted**

St. John's Evangelical Church, local organizations, and local businesses have come together to help Girl Scout Troop 10010 of Elizabethville host a Drive Thru Trunk or Treat to create a safe and fun experience at Halloween for children in the local community during these difficult times.

Free Admission!

Vote for Your Favorite Decorated Trunk by Local Organizations!

At the end, each child will receive a treat bag while supplies last.

For more information or if you are interested in donating, please call or email Nicole Radel at 717-903-3212 or nicolebrianaradel@gmail.com.

Pray for Our Students in Higher Education

The following young members of St. John are currently involved in a first venture in higher education.

This year, we are discontinuing the ministry of outreach to our folks in their first higher education experience that we have carried on for almost 20 years. When it was begun almost two decades ago, the experience of a typical student was very different from now (especially right now in this time of pandemic), and getting mail from someone “back home” in the congregational family was a “big thing”. This year, where it has been provided to Pastor Tom, best contact information for each of our students is shown below, with the hope that many members of the congregational family – instead of just one designated person – will reach out in love and caring via text or email or phone all through the year.

Thank you to the many faithful sponsors who have carried on this ministry for all these past years, and especially to **Lori Motter** and **Ann Bruner**, who have coordinated it!

Reyann Cheatham | Email: r.cheatham14@gmail.com
Harrisburg University of Science & Technology

Caleb Enders | Cell: 717-919-1545 | Email: CNE159S@gmail.com
Commonwealth Technical Institute | Hiram G. Andrews Center | Johnstown, PA

Ryan Henninger | Email: ryryhenninger@gmail.com
Harrisburg Area Community College

Allison Mace | Email: allisonmace26@gmail.com
Harrisburg Area Community College

Cameron Thompson
Millersville University

Zachary Thompson | Email: zacharythompson646@gmail.com
Messiah College

In addition to the above young persons, we also note that **Valerie Buffington** is working on her Bachelor’s Degree in Organizational Behavior/Applied Psychology through Albright College.

And finally, we also have a number of congregational family members who are pursuing post-graduate degrees: **Bryan Henninger** is working on his Master’s Degree at the Pennsylvania State University at State College while also serving as an undergraduate instructor; **Nicholas Motter** is pursuing his Master’s Degree in Education at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia; **Jacob Paul** is working on his Master’s Degree in Business Administration through the Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg; and **Kristen Spicher** is pursuing her Master’s Degree for Certified Nurse Practitioner through the University of Southern California.

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**.

Congratulations Benjamin Paul!

Our congregational family's congratulations, prayers, and good wishes go to **Benjamin Paul**, who graduated in August from Bloomsburg University with his Master of Science Degree in Biology, with a focus on stream ecology. Ben would like to thank the Congregational family for all their love and support!

Happy Birthday Katie!

Katie Gessner, still living with her mother in Alberta, Canada, far from her former home and family and friends here in Pennsylvania, will be celebrating her 16th birthday on October 24. Her grandfather, **Larry Gessner**, is requesting that we might send her birthday greetings as her day approaches at:

Katie Gessner
6 Greystone Close
Spruce Grove, Alberta, Canada
T7X2A6

Larry reminds everyone that postage will vary from the first class rates we are used to within the United States and that it might be a good idea to not include a return address, in order to prevent a costly return-to-sender if anything should go awry with your mailing. Please speak with him with any questions.

Pastoral Acts

During both Zoom and In-Person worship on August 23, Pastor Tom presided as we officially welcomed **Courtney, Robert, & Grayson Foreman; Rita & Paul Glace; Christie Kahler;** and **LuAnn Ressler** into the St. John congregational family. The Foremans and Christie came to us by making affirmation of their baptisms, while Paul & Rita and LuAnn came to us by transfer from sister Lutheran Christian congregations. Please be sure to personally welcome them and add them to your congregational directory as follows:

FOREMAN, Robert & Courtney
Grayson
215 West Broad Street
Elizabethville, PA 17023
(C) 717-805-0556 (R) 717-736-3844

GLACE, Paul & Rita
2784 St. Route 147
Dalmatia, PA 17017
570-758-9270

KAHLER, Christie & (Tad)
219 Pleasant View Road
Halifax, PA 17032
717-579-8919

RESSLER, LuAnn
60 Mayfield St.
Elizabethville, PA 17023
717-905-2473

Staffing Changes

Even as we have recently bid farewell to **Rebecca Conte** as our Congregational Secretary with her relocation to the Hershey area with her family, **Tammy Becker** will now be completing her years of faithful service as our Sexton at the end of October, 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. It is planned that Tammy's daughter and son-in-law, **Grace & Lewis Weaver**, will continue on with the sexton duties as of the beginning of November. Please try to find an opportunity to express your personal thanks and best wishes to Tammy!

St John Evangelical Lutheran Church Congregational Council Minutes Special COVID Meeting August 16, 2020

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

Present: Roy Henry, Carol Hassinger, Sandra Lamenza, Matt Williard, Barbara Bullock, Dan Maurer, Ron Erb, Heidi Lehman, Lori Motter, Ken Koller, and Pastor Tom Bruner

Excused Absence: Darrell Denlinger, Arlene Doyle

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

COVID 19: Council members met in the sanctuary to review a safe seating plan for indoor worship services. We also discussed the movement of people and the necessary signs. There was discussion regarding a safe way to hold various youth services in the downstairs space. Laurie Little will develop a plan for youth services, and Sandra Lamenza will develop a plan for utilizing ushers to manage the safe movement of people before and after the services. At this time adult Sunday School classes will continue the Zoom platform and outdoor services will remain outdoors as long as the weather permits.

It was decided that Sunday worship would continue with the current schedule until September 20. A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Barb Bullock to adjust the schedule post September 20 to a new schedule proposed by pastor Tom. Motion approved unanimously.

The pandemic has forced us to find alternative ways to continue with worship. The Zoom services have been well attended and the plan is to continue them even after we are able to worship in the church under more normal conditions. It will be valuable to many who are unable to attend services for various reasons. Zoom Worship will become part of the regular worship service. To do that we need to improve the WIFI in the church. Comcast will be providing a plan and cost estimate for providing the necessary improvements.

We will also need a volunteer team to handle the tech help needed to for video streaming the service. Pastor Tom will make an announcement for volunteers for this new "Video Ministry Team."

New Business:

Trunk or Treat: A request was made to hold a Trunk or Treat event for Halloween on the church property. A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Dan Maurer to approve the request. Motion approved unanimously.

Church Secretary: Becky Conte has given notice that she will be moving and will be resigning as church secretary. Pastor Tom will make an announcement that anyone interested in the position should contact Pastor Tom or Roy Henry by August 26.

New Members: On Sunday August 23, six adults and one child will be joining St John.

Sexton: Tammy Becker, our current sexton has given notice as she will be moving in October. Her daughter and son-in-law, Grace and Lewis Weaver have been living with her and doing much of the work for the past year. They are interested in taking over the position. A motion was made by Sandra Lamenza and seconded by Carol Hassinger to offer the position to Grace and Lewis Weaver. Motion approved unanimously.

Next Council Meeting: Scheduled for September 13 at 4pm at the church.

Adjournment: Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Heidi Lehman to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Lamenza, Assistant Secretary

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
* (Adult Bible Study via Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church)						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Pastor Tom on Vacation Today through Tuesday, October 20, returning to the office on Wednesday, October 21						
18th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11 am - Worship Including Holy Communion (In-person in Pavilion)			6:30pm-8pm – Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie (In-Person at Church) 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families		<i>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</i>	
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Pastor Tom on Vacation Today through Tuesday, October 20, returning to the office on Wednesday, October 21						
19th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom, Guest Worship Leader, Mr. James Watson) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11 am – Worship (In-person in Pavilion; Guest Worship Leader, Mr. James Watson)	Columbus Day		7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families	<i>Deadline to Submit Items for November "St. John's Epistle"</i>		
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Pastor Tom on Vacation Today through Tuesday, October 20						
20th Sunday after Pentecost 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom, Guest Worship Leader, Mr. James Watson) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11 am – Worship (In-person in Pavilion; Guest Worship Leader, Mr. James Watson)			8am – Pastor Tom Returns to the Office 6:30-8pm – Midweek Bible Study 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families			
25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Reformation Sunday 8:30am - Worship (via Zoom) 9:45am – Faith Formation Time* 11 am - Worship Including Holy Communion (In-person in Church)	6:15pm – Property Committee Meeting 7pm – Book Discussion Group Monthly Gathering (via Zoom)	6:30pm – Finance Committee Meeting to Prepare 2020 Budgets	6:30-8pm – Midweek Bible Study 7pm – Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families			Reformation Day Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off 2:30pm-4:30pm – Drive Through <i>Trunk or Treat</i> on Ballfield Halloween

Pastor's Office Hours

Mon, Tues
8am – 9:30am

Wed, Thurs
8am – 12 noon

Friday
8am - 9:30am

*(Other times by
appointment)*

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)
Tammy Becker, Sexton	No Email	717-319-0703
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

Physical Address (for deliveries): 215 St. John Road Elizabethville, PA 17023

Mailing Address: PO Box 270 | Berrysburg, PA 17005

Church Website: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 270
Berrysburg, PA 17005