



# ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BERRYSBURG, PA OCTOBER 2021

Dear Friends in Jesus,

Over the last couple of years, you may have noticed that Miss Laurie and I almost never speak about “Sunday School”, instead using the term “Faith Formation”. I’ve even had a couple of folks ask if we maybe don’t do Sunday School anymore – a fair question! The answer is no and yes.

No, we don’t do “Sunday School” anymore in the sense that that well-loved and familiar term, which conjures up images of rows of students gathered in front of a teacher and distinct grade levels and promotions, really doesn’t accurately describe what we do, for instance, at 9:00am each Sunday this month.

And yes, we have never stopped doing “Sunday School” in that we are carrying right along with doing the important work of helping persons of all ages to always be growing in their understanding of who God is and all that God has done and is doing in their lives and world, as God commands us to do. But the creative and ever-changing ways in which we are doing that work are really better described by thinking of it as being about helping to “form” the faith of baptized disciples of Jesus who are always growing and changing and developing in their faith walk, no matter what their age or ability.

So, for instance at 9:00 on Sunday mornings we no longer begin with an opening led by a superintendent. To maximize the time available for faith formation, we simply have all ages go right to it, keeping the valuable experience of worship and singing God’s praises for 10:15am. And, at 9:00 on Sunday mornings, we indeed have creative learning and growing options for all ages: SONDay Celebration in person downstairs with Miss Laurie for our very youngest disciples, Confirmation Class in the downstairs conference room for our 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders as they prepare for their Affirmation of Faith/Confirmation at the end of 8<sup>th</sup> Grade, Youth Bible Time with Olivia & Matt Williard either up on the balcony level in our youth space or outside weather permitting for everyone in Youth Group except for those 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Graders, and Adult Bible Study (currently on Zoom only) for everyone who has completed high school. But it doesn’t begin or end on Sunday mornings at 9:00!

During the week for much of the year, on Wednesday evenings, we gather for Midweek Bible Study. Here is the information for that study which will begin later this month: Our autumn session of Midweek Bible Study will get underway on **Wednesday, October 27** – much like last year, after Pastor Tom returns from his planned time away – and, again much like last year, will then continue each Wednesday through December 15, except for Thanksgiving Eve, when we will take the evening off. We will meet each week from 6:30 to 8:00 P.M. Please stay tuned for more information as to our format this fall – in person/Zoom/hybrid, which will be guided in good measure by what is happening COVID-wise closer to that time. The topic of our autumn study will be something

a bit different – ***Reading the Old Testament Through Jewish Eyes: A Study of the Scriptures Jesus Read***. As summarized so well in the study description, “(Our writer) Rabbi Evan Moffic has a passion for sharing Jewish faith and traditions with Christian audiences. In this new study, Rabbi Moffic explores the first five books of the Hebrew Bible (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and highlights the key points of interest to Christians. He presents the biblical text and interpretations of it in the way Jewish leaders during the time of Jesus would have studied it while examining different commentaries from thousands of years of Jewish sources.” As always with these studies, no previous Bible study experience is required – only an interest and enthusiasm to study, reflect on, and (if and when 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 Pastor Tom) by the end of the day Wednesday, October 6.

And once each month, typically on the first Monday and the first Wednesday of the month, there are, respectively, ***Book Discussion Group*** led by my library and information science professional spouse and ***Celebration Club*** led by Miss Laurie.

And don’t forget to add to that the faith formation times that come along every so often, such as “Vacation Bible School” coordinated by Miss Laurie each July or one of my ***Inquirer’s Classes*** (next one coming up on Monday, September 27, at 6:00pm), a fast and (hopefully!) fun trip through Lutheran Christian history and belief for everyone from the newest visitor to St. John to the longest-time member or ***First Holy Communion Instruction*** (this year for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Graders who are baptized, being held on September 29 and October 4).

We don’t exactly do “Sunday School” any longer, but the faithful spirit of all of the gifted persons who have been doing “Faith Formation” here at St. John ever since 1780 is alive and well and active. Please check it out – you won’t be disappointed!

***Pastor Tom***

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## News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy October, everyone! I hope everyone has safely transitioned from summer to fall!

Speaking of safety, when we are inside the church in our Celebration Space, we ask that everyone wear a mask. We’ll try to get outside at least part of the time during SONday Celebrations so we can take a “mask break”. When we come back inside, we’ll mask back up!! Thanks to everyone for your cooperation!!

This month, we’re going to get “autumny” starting on October 6<sup>th</sup>, the date for our next Celebration Club! In honor of the season, the theme for this meeting is “Fall-ing” for Jesus!! Join us from 6:30 – 8:00 for the fun! Weather permitting, we’ll meet outside in the pavilion!

The following week, on Friday, October 15<sup>th</sup>, we’re planning the annual Autumn Drive-in Movie Night! The fun starts at sundown – we’ll get the flick started as soon as it’s dark enough! I’ll keep you posted on the exact time! Mark your calendars and plan to attend – there are always plenty of treats and lots of laughs!!

This year, Halloween falls on Sunday (October 31<sup>st</sup>), so we’re planning a special “Jesus is the Best Treat” SONday Celebration, AND we’re including the annual HAYRIDE! Dress warmly and be prepared for some autumny surprises!!

It’s going to be an awesome autumn on the “Hill”! Mark your calendars and join us for all the fun! As always, we hope to see you at the Celebration!!

***Miss Laurie***

# St. John's Youth Group

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

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

ELCA Gathering Website: [www.elca.org/youthgathering](http://www.elca.org/youthgathering)



## Happy Fall, Youth Group!!

### October 31<sup>st</sup>

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!

## Inquirer's Class

Pastor Tom will be leading an Inquirer's Class on Monday, September 27, from 6:30-8:15pm, probably outdoors in the pavilion, but exact location TBD based on weather. This class is designed for folks who are interested in joining our congregational family, folks who are trying to figure out if this is where God might be guiding them to a faith home, and folks who are already a part of the congregational family but would like to have a bit of a refresher in the basics of Lutheran Christian history and belief. Simply speak with Pastor Tom any time before September 27 to sign up. New members will be received during morning worship on Sunday, October 10.

## Book Club!

### You are Invited to Book Discussion and Fellowship!

Monthly times of reading and sharing continue, with October's location still to be determined as of "press time" depending on weather and our COVID situation. Next up:

### Monday, October 4, 6pm – You Belong: A Call for Connection by Sebene Selassie

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](mailto:rahbruner@gmail.com) – again, please watch for further details or contact Ann as to the location and format for the evening!



## Finance Committee

The Finance Committee meeting to prepare the 2022 Current Fund and other budgets will be held both in-person and on Zoom on **Tuesday, October 5, at 6:15 P.M.**

## Congregational Family Directory



As work begins on 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!***

## 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:

<b>Lilly Boyer</b>	The Pennsylvania State University, College Park Campus
<b>Reyann Cheatham</b> ( <a href="mailto:r.cheatham14@gmail.com">r.cheatham14@gmail.com</a> )	Harrisburg University of Science & Technology
<b>Gracie Gehring</b> ( <a href="mailto:gehringge@gmail.com">gehringge@gmail.com</a> ) Commonwealth Hall-732A 715 South New Street West Chester, PA 19383	West Chester University
<b>Ryan Henninger</b> ( <a href="mailto:ryryhenninger@gmail.com">ryryhenninger@gmail.com</a> )	Harrisburg Area Community College
<b>Allison Mace</b> ( <a href="mailto:allisonmace26@gmail.com">allisonmace26@gmail.com</a> )	Harrisburg Area Community College
<b>Owen Mattern</b>	The Pennsylvania State University, Harrisburg Campus
<b>Cameron Thompson</b>	Harrisburg Area Community College

In addition to the above young persons, we also note that **Valerie Buffington** is working on her Bachelors 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: **Nicholas Motter** is pursuing his Masters Degree in Education at the University of the Arts in Philadelphia; **Jacob Paul** is working on his Masters Degree in Business Administration through the Pennsylvania State University at Harrisburg; and **Kristen Spicher** is pursuing her Masters 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*.

## Pastoral Acts

### At the Font

Pastor Tom presided on Sunday, August 29, as we welcomed **Layla Marie Miller**, daughter of **Courtney & Eric Miller**, into the Kingdom of God and the St. John Congregational Family in the Sacrament of Holy Baptism.

We pray God's blessings on Layla, her parents and other family members, and her sponsors as they live out the promises they have made!



# St John Evangelical Lutheran Church

## Congregational Council Minutes

### July 11, 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, Heidi Lehman, Dana Klouser, Sheila Barder, Arlene Doyle, and Pastor Tom Bruner

**Absent:** Michael Henninger

**Minutes:** Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Arlene Doyle to accept the May minutes. Motion approved unanimously.

#### **Reception of Petitions and Communications:**

A thank you note was received from the Lutheran Camping Corporation for the "Gift of Life" given to them from the church.

The elevator inspection was completed by Dominion Elevator of York, PA. The elevator will require a pressure test in the fall of 2021.

An inquiry was made about a fire drill for the church. After some discussion it was decided that we would schedule a presentation and drill in late September. This would include information about where the fire extinguishers are located, an update on the emergency lighting, and the procedure for exiting the church in the event of a fire.

The Knobles Park outing is scheduled for September 12, and the Youth Group has scheduled a Welcome Back party on September 19.

**Pastor's Report:** Motion made by Ira Antes 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 Sheila Barder to accept Miss Laurie's report. Motion approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Motion made by Lori Motter and seconded by Ron Erb to accept the treasurer's report. Motion approved unanimously.

#### **Reports of Standing Committees:**

*Church Property:* The damaged tree was removed and lights to the outhouse were replaced along with Strawberry Festival prep and many additional maintenance issues.

*Finance:* No report

*Worship and Music:* The Lykens Valley Blue Grass Band joined us for Sunday worship on June 27. We expect to have our worship services back to what will be our "new normal" on the first Sunday in November. This is All Saints Day and Confirmation. Service will include acolytes, greeters, etc. and will be simultaneously broadcast through Zoom.

*Faith Formation Team:* Final planning for VBS. It will be all outside

*Youth Ministry:* The youth group has been meeting regularly and enjoying game nights. They will have a Sausage and Hot Dog Stand at the Mid Penn Bank on July 17. They will have a new group of youth joining in the fall.

*Mutual Ministry:* Met on July 11. The discussion was focused on life at the church post-COVID.

*Executive:* No report

*Nominating:* Looking for a replacement for Ken Koller

*History and Archive:* The confirmation photo project has been completed. After many years of service, Carol Hassinger has resigned from the responsibility of maintaining the Memorial Book. The Archive Committee will take over the responsibility.

*Women of ELCA:* Will resume Breaking Bread project and will organize a soup sale fundraiser in November. They are hosting the Lower Susquehanna Synod meeting on September 25.

*Strawberry Festival:* The next Strawberry Festival has been scheduled for June 8, 2022. The first planning meeting will be on Tuesday, March 1 at 7PM.

*COVID:* There was a discussion regarding masking for children. A motion was made by Ron Erb and seconded by Arlene Doyle to be consistent with the guidelines established by the Upper Dauphin School District. Motion approved unanimously.

**New Business:** The next council meeting will include a lesson on ringing the bell as the ushers will take on the responsibility of ringing the bell before service begins.

**Next Council Meeting:** The next council meeting will be September 12, 2021, at 7PM.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Ron Erb and seconded by Arlene Doyle to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,



Sandra Lamenza, Secretary



# OCTOBER 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	
						1	2
*(Both In-Person and on Zoom)							Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	
<b>19<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - <b>OUTDOOR WORSHIP*</b> , including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person 11:15am - Pavilion/Drive Through Holy Communion with Pastor Tom & Miss Laurie 11:30am - Mutual Ministry Comm. Quarterly Mtg. 7pm - Congregational Council Meeting in person	6pm - Monthly Book Discussion Group Gathering (Probably on Zoom) 6:30-8pm - First Holy Communion Instruction Meeting #2 (In-Person at the Church)	9:30am - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Monthly Meeting 6:15pm - Finance Committee Meeting to Prepare 2022 Budgets (Both In-Person and on Zoom)	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie (In-Person at the Church) 7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families			<b>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</b>  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off	
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
<b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off Today through Tuesday, October 26, returning to the office on Wednesday, October 27</b>							
<b>20<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship*, including Reception of New Members and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/3)</i>	<b>Columbus Day</b>		7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families		<b>Deadline to Submit Items for November "St. John's Epistle"</b>		
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	
<b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off Today through Tuesday, October 26, returning to the office on Wednesday, October 27</b>							
<b>21<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship with Guest Leader Matt Williard*, including Sunny Sermon with Miss Laurie and Celebration Time for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/3)</i>	<b>Luke, Evangelist</b>		7pm - Weekly Congregational Family Time of Prayer for Medical Professionals, Educators, Students & Their Families				
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
<b>Pastor Tom Taking Time Off Today through Tuesday, October 26, returning to the office on Wednesday, October 27</b>			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	<b>Simon &amp; Jude, Apostles</b>		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off  Drive Through <b>Trunk or Treat</b> on Ballfield ( <b>Time TBA</b> )	
<b>22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9am - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15am - Worship with Guest Leader Jim Watson*, including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/3)</i>							
31							
<b>Reformation Day</b> 9pm - Faith Formation Time (Adult Bible Study on Zoom; Younger Groups In-Person at the Church) 10:15pm - Worship*, including Celebration of First Holy Communion and Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person <i>(Inside/Outside TBD by Congregational Council on 10/3)</i> 11:30am - Halloween Outing for Youth Group <b>Halloween</b>							

## 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:stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com">stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com</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>	717-365-5099 (H) 717-571-5058 (C)
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:jjferree@epix.net">jjferree@epix.net</a>	717-362-4228
Carol Hubler, Choir Director	<a href="mailto:mchubler@gmail.com">mchubler@gmail.com</a>	570-758-5052
Rachel Henry, Secretary	<a href="mailto:henryfamily2004@gmail.com">henryfamily2004@gmail.com</a>	717-439-3897
Roy Henry, Council President	<a href="mailto:henryfamily2004@gmail.com">henryfamily2004@gmail.com</a>	717-215-9837
Fay Nichols, Prayer Chain Coordinator	<a href="mailto:fnichols46@comcast.net">fnichols46@comcast.net</a>	717-329-7447

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