

SAINT JOHN'S
EPISTLE
SEPTEMBER 2015

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

P.O. BOX 270, BERRYSBURG, PA 17005
The Rev. Thomas G. Bruner, Jr., Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

On the Sunday following Labor Day, **Sunday, September 13**, we really turn the corner from summer to fall in our congregational family life. This happens first of all in our timing that morning, as Sunday School returns to its 9:00 A.M. beginning time, followed by worship at 10:15 A.M.

During that Sunday School hour, beginning at 9:00, we will mark the beginning of a new year of learning and sharing centered on God's Word, as we hold our **Annual Promotion Sunday** ceremonies. This is the day when all Sunday School participants through Grade 12 are advanced to their next Sunday School class and when we hear a presentation on the experiences of those who have been involved in church camping during the past summer. A Women's Choir will also provide special music.

During our worship, beginning at 10:15, I will have the pleasure of again leading what has come to be our annual **Blessing of the Backpacks**. All persons from Pre-School through Grade 12 (members of the congregation as well as friends they will hopefully invite!) are asked to bring their school backpacks along to worship that morning, during which they will be called forward for a time of recognition, prayer, and blessing, as a new school year gets underway. Each participant will also receive a small "keepsake" to put in their backpacks as a reminder of the fact that God goes with each of them through the joys and challenges of the school year to come!

In the afternoon and evening, two of our key congregational life groups resume their activities after a break for the summer. Youth Group (designed for all congregational youth as well as their friends, in Grades 6-12) will get back underway with a poolside gathering at the home of Dennis & Mary Ann Smeltz from 2:00 to 5:00 P.M. while, at 6:00 P.M., following Congregational Council, Women's Group will gather in the Sunday School Room.

May the remaining days of summer be good and blessed ones for you. And may our wondrous God lead us toward ever greater faithfulness and new and wonderful opportunities to serve, as the seasons turn!

Pastor Tom

WANTED – SENIOR CHOIR MEMBERS

On Tuesday, September 8, Senior Choir will begin rehearsals for another year of music leadership in worship. Rehearsals take place each Tuesday at 7:30 P.M. at the church. We are in need of men and women of all voice parts and no previous experience is required – just a desire to serve God in the beauty of music. It is not even necessary to sit in the balcony in order to sing – many choir members, including Pastor Tom, make the “commute” from downstairs at anthem time. Please see Lorraine Henninger or Pastor Tom with any questions and please join us!

CONFIRMATION CLASS RESUMES

On Sunday morning, September 20, those baptized members of St. John who are in at least 7th Grade and who have not yet been confirmed will begin a new year of study with Pastor Tom. The focus this year will be a look at what it means to be a Christian who is also a Lutheran – taking in the story of how we have come to be Lutheran Christians in the first place, as well as what that identity means for our daily lives. Two of our young members are in their second of two years of study, leading toward their Confirmation next year on the Day of Pentecost. Approximately six other young persons will begin a first year of study.

HARVEST HOME TO BE OBSERVED

On the fourth Sunday of September, September 27, we will observe our annual Festival of Harvest Home. On that day, everyone attending worship is encouraged to bring non-perishable food items (canned goods must be purchased—home canned foods are still not able to be accepted) or fresh produce for the decorating of the chancel and then delivery to the food pantry at the Upper Dauphin Human Services Center in Elizabethville.

Y’ALL COME!

Our **Annual Congregational Square Dance** is coming right up, on its traditional last Sunday in September and same time – **Sunday, September 27, beginning at 6:00 P.M. in the barn of Lynn & Helen Henninger.** This evening is designed for square dancers of all ages and abilities, including those who, like Pastor Tom, have only rarely, or never, attended a square dance. (Our caller gives us plenty of instruction in the basics.) There is also lots of room for those who only want (or are only physically able) to come and watch the mayhem. There will, of course, also be lots of fellowship, snacks, and fun. The only “price” of admission – besides your enthusiasm – is a snack and a container of drink to share. The evening will wrap up by around 8:00/8:30. Fall is always a busy time, but please try to make this evening a priority in your schedule. It is a great opportunity to spend time together as a congregational family, relaxing and having fun. This year, y’all come!

IT'S SOON TIME AGAIN FOR A WALK IN THE WOODS!

Our annual "Walk in the Woods" is being planned for Sunday, October 4. The tentative plan for this year is that we will meet at the church at 1:30 P.M. and then caravan by car up the road to the Shikellamy State Park Overlook, which provides a spectacular view of the confluence of the North and West Branches of the Susquehanna River at Sunbury and Northumberland, as well as a play area for our younger "walkers". After some time up on the hill, we will stop by the Northumberland home of the famous 18th-Century scientist, Joseph Priestley, as well as the sites of colonial Fort Augusta and the grave of Native American diplomat Shikellamy in Sunbury, with Pastor Tom providing a bit of historical background on each. Then, we will drive to the island portion of Shikellamy State Park, where we will conclude the afternoon with our traditional hot dog roast and food shared together, probably in one of the pavilions. Please plan to bring along a snack to go with hot dogs and a container of drink to share, and sign up on the sheet on the foyer bulletin board, when it is posted.

NEWS FROM THE WOMEN OF THE ELCA AT ST JOHN'S

Here we are back to the fall schedule again. It's good to be back in the swing of things. Our first meeting will be on September 13, 2015 at 6:00 PM. Our leaders will be Lorraine Henninger and Gail Billow. The hostesses are Rachel Henry and Gail Billow. We will be assigning our election committee. This year we will need a Secretary and Assistant Secretary as well as a Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer. If you would be interested in volunteering for any of these positions please contact your presidents Lorraine Henninger or Fay Nichols. Mark your calendar for Monday mornings as the ladies will be getting back in the quilting action. If you would like to help with this please contact Pat Herb or Fay Nichols. Also don't forget the Prayer Shawls. If you would like to do this contact Barbara Bullock. One of our projects for the fall will be our annual Thank Offering Service. We will be planning this very soon.

TALLYING THE BERRIES...

As we look back on our Annual Strawberry Festival, held on a spectacularly-beautiful Wednesday, June 10, record financial results reflect a total count of persons attending that was also the highest ever in the past several years that we have been keeping track. Gross receipts for the day were **\$19,164.71**, up about \$3,300 from a very stormy 2014, while total expenses of **\$4,682.09** were actually about \$700 lower than in 2014, thanks to a great many donations of all kinds. The resulting record net proceeds of **\$14,482.62** were added to the "Bicentennial"/Local Benevolence Fund. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make the Strawberry Festival another wonderful success! A special thank you to Thrivent Financial for those matching funds received again this year.

Looking ahead to 2016: Please mark your family calendars for next year's Festival, scheduled for Wednesday, June 15, 2016, (WHICH IS THE 3RD SUNDAY IN JUNE). Also, the first planning meeting for next year's Festival, open to all interested persons, will be held on Tuesday, March 1, from 6:15 to 7:30 P.M. at the church.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS

Here is the list of events for St. John's youth group for 2015-2016.

September 13	Pool Party at the Smeltz's 3-6pm We will meet at the church at 2:40pm -Youth Group kick-off event and election of officers
September 27	Annual LYO conference school kit assembly hosted by St. John's 3:00-6:00pm
September 15	Congregational Square Dance at Lynn and Helen Henninger's
October 4	Congregational Time- Walk in the woods
October 12	Help load truck for New Windsor, Corn Maize trip
October 25	Youth Group Halloween outing – details to be determined
October 31	Youth meet at church to prepare for meal on Sunday 10:00am
November 1	Chicken and Waffle fundraiser meal after worship service
November 15	Youth Group fun night. To be determined.
December 6	Congregational Christmas caroling to shut-ins.
January	Youth help with liturgy of lessons and carols.
January	Little Caesar Pizza fundraiser
January 10	Meeting to plan Spaghetti Supper and youth group game night
January 24	Spaghetti fundraising dinner. Youth set up at 2:00pm. Dinner starts at 5:00pm
Jan. or Feb.	LYO Volleyball tournament
February 7	Collect for Souper Bowl Sunday after worship
February 14	Youth led worship service
February 28	Ski Roundtop trip. Skiing, snowboarding, snow tubing
March 7	Bethesda
March 23	dyeing of eggs/Plan Easter egg hunt
March 25	Youth group members assist with Good Friday Service
March 26	Annual Easter egg hunt Youth arrive at 9:00am. Hunt begins at 10:00am
April	Serving Lykens Valley Alumni Banquet?
May	Serving Mason Dinner?
June 15	Youth help with Strawberry Festival

Meeting times are 4:30pm-6:00pm unless otherwise listed.

YARD SALE REPORT

Our annual Yard Sale was held on August 13, 14, and 15 in the pavilion. A total of **\$1,434.00** was raised over the three days, including some matching funds from the Dauphin County Chapter of Thrivent Financial, all of which will be sent to the Domestic Disaster Relief fund of our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Thank you to all who helped with publicity, set up, working the days of the sale, and clean up afterward!

PASTORAL ACTS

At the Font

On Sunday, June 28, Pastor Tom presided as we welcomed **Karen Rickert, John & Connie Schaffer**, and **Maryjane "M.J." Zellner** into the St. John congregational family. Karen, John, and Connie came to us from other branches of the one Christian Family (Karen returning to her "roots" here at St. John), by making affirmation of their baptisms, while M.J. came to us by transfer from St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Millersburg. If you have not already done so, please be sure to welcome them! Full addresses and telephone numbers for your congregational directory will be included in a future update.

Pastor Tom also presided at three baptisms – on July 12, as we welcomed **Sadie Lynn Endicott Bork Henninger**, daughter of **Tonya Henninger** and **Sarah Bork**; on August 2, as we welcomed **Giuliana Elizabeth Rose Conte**, daughter of **Rebecca & Michael Conte**; and on August 9, as we welcomed **Makayla Elizabeth Crabb**, daughter of **Ryne & Christina Crabb**, into the Kingdom of God and the St. John Congregational Family. We pray God's blessings on Sadie and Giuliana and Makayla, their parents and other family members, and their sponsors as they live out the promises they have each made!

At the Altar

On Sunday, June 28, Pastor Tom presided at the marriage of **Bonnie Boyer & Ronald Erb** at the church, followed two weeks later, on July 11, by the marriage of **Jeffrey Buffington, Jr. & Stephanie Vassar**, also at the church, followed three weeks later, on August 1, by the marriage of **Kris Kell & Gary MacCready**, at the Yuengling Mansion in Pottsville. We pray God's blessing on these couples, that they may each be given the grace and strength to faithfully live out their vows of commitment!

At Graveside

Funeral worship was held at the church for **Donald Markel, Sr.**, following his death at home on June 29. Worship was held on July 6, with interment at Maple Grove Cemetery in Elizabethville. Because Pastor Tom was out of town on a previously-scheduled trip, Pastor Allan Briggs of Davids Church presided at this worship. We pray God's comfort for Donnie's family and friends!

OUR FAITH ACTIVE IN OUR FINANCIAL GIVING – AS OF JUNE 30

In recent years, Congregational Council has asked that we all periodically receive an update in the *Epistle* about how we are doing in meeting our ministry commitments adopted in our annual budget.

Regarding our Current Fund... (The Current Fund is the fund from which most day-to-day bills get paid, much like your home's checking account.) At the half-way point in the year, with 26 of 52 Sundays behind us as of June 30, to be right on **budget**, we would have received and spent \$70,628 out of our total 2015 budget of \$141,256. We have **actually received** \$68,299 in offerings and other income, placing us behind budget by \$2,329. (This places us in the top half of giving compared to budget results for the past 15 years, and is especially nice to note following our worst-ever results back as of the end of February!) Our **expenses** as of the end of June total \$66,974 and are \$3,654 under budget. Since we have spent less than we have taken in, we are running a **surplus** of \$1,325 as of June 30. The bottom line is that our ministry here together continues to be very blessed, especially in light of the continued struggles of our economy!

As to our benevolence offerings which we share with our Lower Susquehanna Synod and our Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, to be exactly on **budget** as of June 30, we would have received and forwarded half, or \$6,000, out of our total 2015 commitment of \$12,000. As of June 30, we have **actually** received and shared a total of \$5,456, meaning that we are **slightly behind** our commitment by \$544. We will want to be sure to close this gap as the year goes along.

Thank you for your partnership in the ministry of St. John, and for your financial stewardship. Again, please watch for future updates every few months, and please feel free at any time to ask questions of or share ideas with Pastor Tom or any member of Council!



SUNDAY SERVICE FOR SEPTEMBER 2015

Altar Guild for Month of September

Jean & Fred Weaver

Lector for Month of September

Vincent Lamenza

Ushers for the Month of September, (L) Gail Billow, (E) Dale Hassinger Carol Hassinger & John Ferree

SEPTEMBER 6, 2015

15th Sunday after Pentecost

8:45 Sunday School

9:30 -Liturgy of Holy Communion

OUTSIDE WORSHIP

Greeters-

The Maurer Family

SEPTEMBER 13, 2015

16th Sunday after Pentecost

9:00 - *Promotion Sunday*

10:15 -Liturgy of Holy Communion

Sunday School Superintendent-

Sunday School Pianist-

Greeters-

Acolytes-

Henry Henninger

Judy Ferree

The Jim Watson Family

Kelsey Henninger & Reyann Cheatham

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015

17th Sunday after Pentecost

Sunday School Superintendent-

Sunday School Pianist-

Greeters-

Acolytes-

Jeff Lehman

Jean Weaver

The Brian Thompson Family

Ryan Henninger & Aidan Roadcap

SEPTEMBER 27, 2015

18th Sunday after Pentecost

Harvest Home, Collection

Sunday School Superintendent-

Sunday School Pianist-

Greeters-

Acolytes-

Ken Koller

Louise Baumgardner

Jim & Barb Bullock

Eli Conte & Cameron Thompson

SEPTEMBER 2015



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>6 The 15th Sunday after Pentecost 8:45 Summer Sunday School 9:30 <u>Outdoor Worship</u> with Holy Communion</p>	<p>7 Pastor Tom's Day Off Labor Day</p>	<p>1 10:00 Pastor Tom at Conf. Pastors Mtg. 6:30 Gathering of Children's/ Youth Ministry Position</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>	<p>5 Pastor Tom's Day Off</p>
<p>13 The 16th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 Promotion Sunday Ceremonies 10:15 Liturgy of Holy Communion, with Blessing of the Backpacks 2:00-5:00 Youth Group Kickoff with Election of officers at home of Dennis and Mary Ann Smeltz (Meet at Church 1:40) 4:00 Congregational Council Meeting 6:00 Women's Group Mtg. 7:30 Congregational Council Mtg. Grandparent's Day</p>	<p>14 Holy Cross Day 9:00 Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7:00 Final Summer Dartsball League Fun Match at St. John</p>	<p>15 10:00 Pastor Tom at Conf. Pastors Mtg. 7:30 Sr. Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>9 <i>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</i></p>	<p>10 Citizenship Day</p>	<p>11</p>	<p>12 Pastor Tom's Day Off 7:00-9:00 A.M. Men's Prayer Group Meets at the Church - Please contact Ray Matter for more</p>
<p>20 The 17th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 Sunday School 9:00 Confirmation Class 10:15 Liturgy of the Word</p>	<p>21 Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist 9:00 Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7:00 Upper Dauphin Conf. at Messiah Lutheran Fisherville</p>	<p>22 10:00 Pastor Tom at Conf. Pastors Mtg. 6:15 Property Comm. Mtg. 7:30 Sr. Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>23 Yom Kippur Autumn Begins</p>	<p>24 5:30 Community Dinner at Trinity United Methodist Elizabethtown</p>	<p>25</p>	<p>26 Pastor Tom's Day Off</p>
<p>27 The 18th Sunday after Pentecost 9:00 Sunday School 9:00 Confirmation Class 10:15 Liturgy of the Word - Harvest Home Collection 3:00-6:00 Upper Dauphin Lutheran Youth Kickoff Event at St. John's 6:00 Congregational Square Dance at home of Lynn & Helen Henninger</p>	<p>28 9:00 Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief</p>	<p>29 Michael and All Angels 10:00 Pastor Tom at Conf. Pastors Mtg. 7:30 Sr. Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>30</p>			

**St John Evangelical Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Minutes
May 17, 2015**

The council meeting was called to order by President, Roy Henry.

Pastor Tom opened the meeting with devotions and a prayer.

Present: Lorraine Henninger, Dale Hassinger, Jeff Lehman, Gail Billow, Roy Henry, Ken Koller and Pastor Tom Bruner

Excused Absence: Joseph Doyle, Sandra Lamenza, Cheryl Shadle, Tamara Spicher and Sandra Shade.

Minutes: Motion by Lorraine Henninger and seconded by Jeff Lehman to approve the minutes from the April 12, 2015 meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Reception of Petitions and Communications: Vincent Lamenza would like to offer an AARP Smart Driver Class. He is looking for suitable dates sometime in October of 2015. Motion made by Dale Hassinger, seconded by Lorraine Henninger to approve the class. Motion approved unanimously.

Pastor's Report: Motion made by Ken Koller and seconded by Tamara Spicher to accept the pastor's report. Motion approved unanimously.

Treasurers' Reports: Motion made by Lorraine Henninger and seconded by Dale Hassinger to accept the treasurer reports. Motion approved unanimously.

Reports of Standing Committees:

Church Property: The boiler and heating system was serviced and inspected on May 6. The elevator was serviced and inspected on May 14. Everything is in good order. The light on the north side of the building was replaced.

Finance: Larry Gessner would like to put half of the Trivent money into the Infant Community Foundation to provide some protection in the event the market drops. Motion was made by Dale Hassinger and seconded by Lorraine Henninger to reinvest the money as suggested. Motion approved unanimously.

Worship and Music: No report.

Christian Education: Meetings were held on April 14 and May 3 to plan Vacation Bible School and the Walk in the Woods.

Stewardship: No report

Youth Ministry: No report

Mutual Ministry: No report

Executive: No report.

Nominating: No report

History: Still working on the history book.

Green Team: No report

Other Reports:

Prayerful Planning Group: The group has developed a child protection policy for those working with children in our ministry that will protect the children from abuse and comply with laws regarding background checks and mandatory reporting etc. The policy is consistent with state guidelines. All teachers working with children under 18 must be in compliance by July 2016. A copy of the policy was presented to council.

Unfinished Business: New summer hours begin on Sunday May 24. Sunday school is 8:45AM to 9:15AM. Church service starts at 9:30AM.

Next Council Meeting: July 12, 2015 at 4:00PM. The May meeting will be the third Sunday because of Mother's Day.

Adjournment: Motion by Lorraine Henninger and seconded by Gail Billow to adjourn the meeting. Motion approved unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,

Ken Koller

Acting Secretary

Treasurer Reports

April 2015

	Prior Balance	Receipts	Expenses	EOM
Current	7457.03	12,311.35	11,308.82	8459.56
Benevolence	54.45	1075.00	1075.00	54.48
Memorial	31,182.27	8.97	2500.00	31,191.24
Improvement	5313.97	318.50		6031.97
Bicent Ck Acct	18,269.08	180.61	500.00	17,949.69
Bicent Svngs	5,300.91			5,300.91
Flower	453.86	155.85	140.00	469.71

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

PARISH STAFF

The Rev. Thomas Bruner, Jr., Pastor stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com.....362-9519 (O)
362-7895 (H)
Tammy & Bill Becker, Sextons (no email).....319-0703
Judith Ferree, Organist jjferree@epix.net.....362-4228
Sandra Paul, Secretary rbpaul@epix.net362-4117
Roy Henry, Council President webmaster@randrhenry.com..... 579-0244
Lorraine Henninger, Prayer Chain Coordinator (no email)..... 362-9108

Find Us on Facebook

PARISH WEBSITE: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

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

Mailing Address: P. O. Box 270 Berrysburg, PA 17005

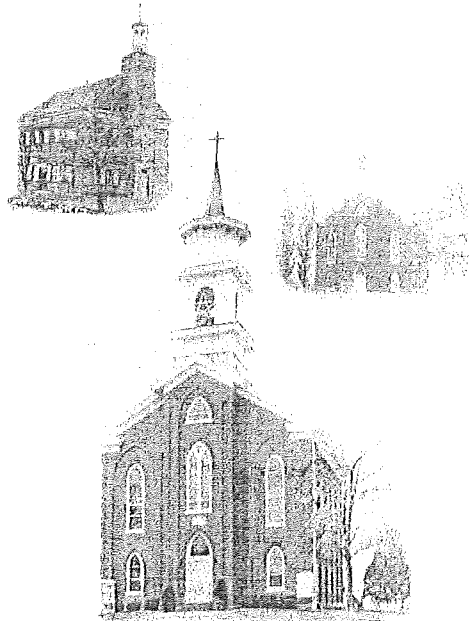
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Pastor's Office Hours: Monday 8:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.
 Tuesday 8:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.
 Wednesday 8:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
 Thursday 8:00 A.M. – 12:00 Noon
 Friday 8:00 A.M. – 9:30 A.M.

(Other times by appointment)

OUR MISSION

St. John congregation, responding to the call of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel, unites together to preach and teach the Word, administer the sacraments, and carry out God's mission. With God's guidance and grace, we strive to boldly proclaim by word and action the reconciling Gospel of Jesus: Working together for justice and peace, and caring for those in need in our community and world. We invite everyone to join us wherever you are on your faith journey.



St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Berrysburg, Pennsylvania
1780-2005

