

# ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

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

## Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

The following poem, ***Do It Anyway***, is many times spoken of as having been written by Mother Teresa prior to her 1997 death. However, most sources now say that it is actually a paraphrasing of an earlier work by an American named Kent Keith, called ***The Paradoxical Commandments***. What everyone appears to agree on is that these words were displayed prominently by Mother Teresa in at least one of the Calcutta homes for orphaned children administered by her and by her religious order, The Missionaries of Charity.

When someone mentions Mother Teresa, what tends to come to mind is someone who is/was literally “holier than thou”, spending her life living amongst and caring for the poorest of the poor and the sickest of the sick in a city home to unspeakable desperation. In other words, what comes to mind is someone so unlike you and me as to have nothing in common with the likes of us, being the mixture of saint and sinner that we know ourselves to be.

How refreshing then to know that, as has been seen in her journals and other private writings since her death, Mother Teresa was in fact a Child of God in all the complexity that comes with that relationship – someone who struggled profoundly with holding onto her faith in God in the midst of so much suffering, someone with notable shortcomings as well as well-known strengths, someone with critics as well as admirers, someone in short who turns out to have a great deal in common with the likes of you and me. And so, how much more meaningful it is that, instead of writing and posting the following words as some kind of faith “expert”, it may very well be the case that Mother Teresa came across these words and latched onto them and posted them as a source of hope and inspiration for her own times of struggle...

**People are often unreasonable, illogical, and self-centered;**

**Forgive them anyway.**

**If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives;**

**Be kind anyway.**

**If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies;**

**Succeed anyway.**

**If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you;**

**Be honest and frank anyway.**

**What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight;**

**Build anyway.**

**If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous;  
Be happy anyway.  
The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow;  
Do good anyway.  
Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;  
Give the world the best you've got anyway.  
You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and God;  
It was never between you and them anyway.**

And so, may they still be a source of hope and inspiration for you and for me as we make the transition from summer to fall and face the challenges which lie ahead!

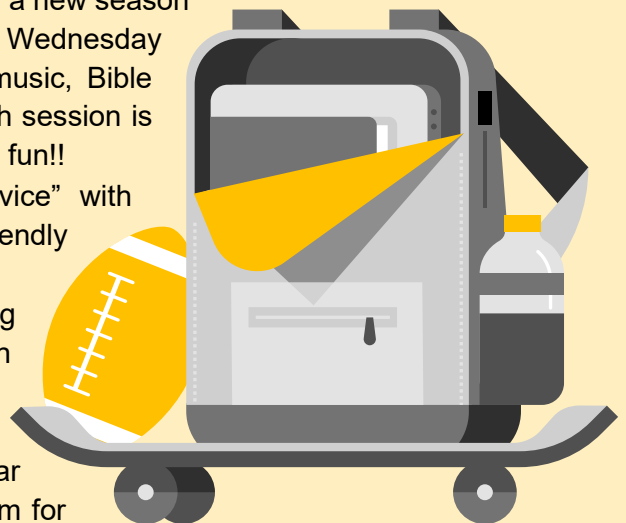
***Pastor Tom***

## **News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister**

Happy September, everyone! I hope everyone had a fantastic summer and a great beginning to the school year! It's hard to believe it's "back to school" time already – the summer literally FLEW by! It's like my Grandma always said, "The older you get, the faster time goes by!" She got THAT one right!

And as we begin another school year, there are a couple of important church dates that you'll want to remember, so grab your calendars and jot these down:

- Wednesday, September 6<sup>th</sup> – Join us for the "blast off" of a new season of Celebration Club! Celebration Club meets the FIRST Wednesday of each month and runs from 6:30-8pm. We have music, Bible stories, active games, crafts, and LOTS of treats!! Each session is like a mini VBS! Mark your calendars and join us for the fun!!
- Sunday, September 10<sup>th</sup> - It's our "Celebration Service" with "Blessing of the Back Packs"! Join us for this fun, kid-friendly service on the last Sunday of the summer schedule.
- Immediately after the "Celebration Service", we're trying something new and we're calling it - a Celebration "Sundae" SONday! Stay after the service and join us for a make-your-own ice cream sundae treat!! Yummy!
- Sunday, September 17<sup>th</sup> – We're BACK to our regular schedule for SONday Celebration! Join us from 9-10am for our amazing Sunday School! Then stay for church because Celebration Time begins again too!



We hope you all have a great school year! And while you're hitting the books, join us for some fun faith formation experiences too! 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)).



## Confirmation Classes

On Sunday morning, September 17, those baptized members of St. John who are in at least 7<sup>th</sup> 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 close-up look at Martin Luther's **Small Catechism** and what it is that makes us Christians who are "Lutheran". Six of our young members will be in their second of two years of study, leading toward their Confirmation next year on the Day of Pentecost, while three other young persons are eligible to begin their first year of study.

## Senior Choir

Here we are in the month of August already. The time to start up choir again will be here before we know it. The first practice will be Tuesday the 26th of September at 7:30.

Looking forward to singing will all of you again and if there are others out there who would like to join with us in singing on Sunday mornings, we would love to have you.



-Ty Troutman, Choir Director

## Strawberry Festival

As we look back on our Annual Strawberry Festival, held June 7 here on The Hill, we were truly blessed to have a record turnout, leading to, as reported during worship on July 23, record total receipts for the day of **\$29,142.09**. (Note that these record receipts also got a great boost from your very generous donations toward the sponsorship of Festival items.) Our total expenses of **\$14,116.37** were also higher than in previous years, with some higher costs, but also because we invested more in quality entertainment for our young persons and also again added some equipment to continue fine tuning how we organize and carry out the Festival. The result was our second highest net proceeds ever of **\$15,025.72**, which 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!

***Looking ahead to 2024: Please mark your family calendars for next year's Festival, already scheduled for Wednesday, June 12. Also, the first planning meeting for next year's Festival, open to all interested persons, will be held on Monday, March 11, beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the church.***

# Yard Sale News

A great big THANKS to all who supported this years' St. Johns Congregational Yard Sale!

We appreciate everyone who contributed in any way and are truly blessed to have so much support for this meaningful ministry.

The financial results are as follows:

Thursday (and prior) Receipts \$1497.80

Friday Receipts \$775.00

Saturday Receipts \$183.75

Sunday (and later) Donations \$98.00

This makes 2023 our BEST YEAR EVER with \$2554.55 being donated to ELCA Domestic Disaster Relief.

In addition, items not sold at the yard sale were all donated to these other very important charities:

Believe in Blessings Thrift Shop

Unto Ministry

GoodWill

The Lighthouse

Thank you for making this all possible!

With deepest gratitude and appreciation, Tam Spicher and Sheila Barder



# St. John's Youth Group

SEPTEMBER  
2023

## SEPTEMBER YOUTH GROUP MEETING

**Sunday, September 17th from 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.** - This the first youth group meeting of the new school year!! It is also the Sunday we gather with other youth and advisors from area churches to pack school kits for Lutheran Youth Organization and Lutheran World Relief. Bring a snack, drink, or dessert to share. There will be a pizza dinner provided.

**\*\*\* Don't forget to complete the St. John's Youth Group Medical Form each year to participate in youth group!! \*\*\***

## YOUTH GROUP FAITH FORMATION

The youth group faith formation class with Matt and Olivia Williard starts back up again on **Sunday, September 17th at 9:00 a.m.** Everyone in grades 5th & 6th, and 9th through 12th are invited to join us in the youth group room, which is on the balcony level of the church on the north side. The 7th and 8th graders meet with Pastor during this time for confirmation class.



**September 22-24 - Alive Junior High Retreat at Camp Nawakwa:** Registration has opened for Alive 2023!! Registration deadline is August 27th. All St. John youth group members in 6th through 8th grade are invited to attend. Information has been emailed to the junior high parents. Alive is brought to us by the Lower Susquehanna Synod.

# **LYO EVENT:**

**Packing School Kits**

**Sunday, September 17th**

**at**

**St. John's Lutheran Church**

**Berrysburg**

**3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.**

**Stick around after packing is complete for:**

**Yard Games**

**Gaga Ball**

**Pizza Party**

**Bring a snack, drink, or dessert to share.**

## Women of the ELCA

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Our first event will be on **September 6<sup>th</sup>** at the church for all women of the congregation from **6:30-7:30pm (only an hour of your time!)**. We will be having an ice cream social and Bonnie Kent of Northern Dauphin Human Services will be our speaker for the evening. We will have a free will offering at this event. Please sign up at the church or by emailing Rachel at [henryfamily2004@gmail.com](mailto:henryfamily2004@gmail.com) so we can have a general count for ice cream 😊



**Stay tuned for an event in December, March and May!!**

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Also, one of our purposes we believe is to keep all the women of the congregation apprised of events that are happening throughout the year. Below are some important events coming up!

### **Camp Hebron Fall Retreat (Please see registration form in this newsletter)**

We hope each and every one of you are doing well.

It was great to see those of you that were able to attend the 2022 Camp Hebron Retreat after a two year absence. Hopefully this year you will be able to join us for a wonderful weekend of good fellowship, new and renewed friendships and a time away to relax and "breathe" in God's wonderful work.

Our speaker will be Pastor Beth Hawk and her theme is "Fearfully and Wonderfully Made by God" (Psalm 139:13-14).

Due to increased costs for the Retreat, registration costs have increased slightly from last year.

There will be a wagon ride and craft session on Saturday.

Please mark your calendar for **October 27-29, 2023**, and be sure to extend this invitation to others!

Take care and Blessings,

Chris Todd and Shirley Keister, Camp Hebron Retreat Co-chairs

### **Other Upcoming Events:**

- Twelfth Triennial Convention and Gathering to be held September 19-24, 2023, in Phoenix, AZ.
- 35th Annual LS SWO Convention, Swamp, Reinholds, August 18 & 19, 2023
- Fall Retreat, Camp Hebron, Halifax, PA, October 27-29, 2023
- Day of Renewal, 2024, St. Paul, Lititz

# Registration Form for Oct. 27—Oct. 29, 2023 Fall Retreat

**Use one form per person. Copy as needed.**

(please print information legibly)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Street City State Zip

Home congregation: \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency phone number: \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to room with: \_\_\_\_\_

**(possible up to 4 to a room sharing two double beds)**

1. TOTAL AMOUNT (WEEKEND PACKAGE) \_\_\_\_\_ \$205.00  
(includes 2 nights lodging and 5 meals) (Friday & Saturday night)
2. FRIDAY NIGHT ONLY, AND SATURDAY \_\_\_\_\_ Total of \$135.00  
(Friday night lodging and 3 meals + speaker)
3. SATURDAY ONLY \_\_\_\_\_ Total of \$70.00 (3 meals + speaker)
4. I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A DONATION TOWARD THE CAMP HEBRON ATTENDEE  
SCHOLARSHIP FUND \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **(this scholarship fund is not for the Manow  
Lutheran Secondary School weekend special offering)**
5. TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED \$ \_\_\_\_\_



**Because of our obligation to pay Camp Hebron, we will not accept registrations after the  
postmarked date of Tuesday, September 5, 2023**

THOSE INTERESTED IN THE FRDAY NIGHT LODGING MAY NEED TO BOOK  
ROOMS WITH OTHER WEEKEND' REGISTRANTS TO AVOID SINGLE  
ROOM RATE CHARGES.

**NO REFUNDS**

Make check payable to "LS SWO Women of the ELCA" and mail check with Registration Form  
by **Tuesday, September 5, 2023** to: **Kathy Kauffman, 970 Stevens Road, York Haven, 17370**

**SATURDAY BREAKFAST IS SERVED AT 8:00 A.M.**

**IT IS IMPORTANT TO CHECK ONLY THE MEALS YOU PLAN TO ATTEND**

**SATURDAY MEALS: Breakfast \_\_\_ Lunch \_\_\_ Dinner \_\_\_**

**SUNDAY MEALS: Breakfast \_\_\_ Lunch \_\_\_**

QUESTIONS REGARDING REGISTRATION OR THE RETREAT, SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO  
CHRIS TODD, 717-682-0729 (H) 717-439-6071 (C)  
Or SHIRLEY KEISTER 717-362-8666



**St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**Congregational Council Minutes**  
**May 7, 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, Craig Peters, Michael Henninger, Gail Billow, Jeff Lehman, Ty Troutman, Sandra Lamenza, and Courtney Foreman.

Excused: Dana Klouser, Sheila Barder

**Minutes:** Motion by Joshua Paul to accept the April 2023 minutes as read. Second by Jeff Lehman. Motion approved unanimously.

**Reception of Petitions and Communications:**

None noted.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Tom shared his vacation plans for the year, which are as follows:

August 7 – 16, with Matthew Williard leading the service on August 13.

October 9-25, with Jim Watson covering the service on October 15 and Matthew Williard covering the service on October 22.

December 25, 2023 – January 3, 2024, with Jim Watson and the Youth Group covering the service on December 31.

A motion to approve the requested vacation time was made by Sandra Lamenza. Second by Ty Troutman. Motion approved unanimously.

Motion to accept Pastor Tom's report from April 2023 was made by Sandra Lamenza. 2nd by Joshua Paul. Motion approved unanimously.

**Children and Youth Ministry Report:** Motion to accept Miss Laurie's report for March 2023 by Ty Troutman. 2nd by Christie Kahler. Motion approved unanimously.

**Treasurer's Report:** Pastor provided a summary. Motion to accept the treasurer's reports for April 2023 by Jeff Lehman. 2nd by Mike Henninger. Motion approved unanimously.

**Reports of Standing Committees:**

**Church Property:** Installed new door on South side of Church. Woodwise will be removing a tree near the pavilion and trimming some branches as needed prior to the Strawberry Festival. Steeple inserts with LED lights were donated and installed by Optilumen. The Committee will be cleaning out the barn after the Strawberry Festival while the dumpster is here.

**Finance Committee:** No report.

**Worship and Music:** Confirmation will be Sunday, June 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Cemetery Committee:** Doing a walk-through in June with Elizabethtown Monument Company to determine needed repairs.

**Faith Formation:** Starting to plan for VBS. Confirmation classes are wrapping up for the year.

**Mutual Ministry:** The vestibule looks beautiful. Ty made a beautiful cross that is now hanging and a verse has been installed as well.

**Executive:** No report.

**Nominating:** No report.

**History and Archive:** No report.

**Women of the ELCA:** Will be doing Jammin' with the Ladies at the Strawberry Festival again this year.

There will no longer be a President, but there will continue to be a Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Secretary and Assistant Secretary that will meet quarterly to discuss any business concerns. The group will continue with its mission work.

**Youth Group:** Had lunch and a meeting on Palm Sunday. Provided readings during the service on Good Friday. Held the Annual Egg Hunt on April 8<sup>th</sup>. The Eagle Scout Award ceremony for RJ Henry was held today. The next lunch meeting will be held on May 21<sup>st</sup>.

**Strawberry Festival Committee:** Need assistance – Flyers are available. All signs have been distributed.

Sign ups are available for the donations needed.

**Unfinished Business:**

Josh is going to stop by the PSP barracks on Tuesday to try to talk with someone.

Miss Laurie and Tiffany will be holding some type of fundraising battle to help Lifeline Pregnancy Center. More to come.

Synod Assembly will take place in June. Pastor Tom and Sandra Lamenza will represent St. John's.

Reminder that June 4<sup>th</sup> is Confirmation. Council will meet at 9:15.

**New Business:**

The lead Usher is to bring the offering plate just inside the worship space when finished distributing bulletins.

Have 3 or 4 people ring the bell for worship on a rotating basis. Motion by Sandra Lamenza to elect Jeff Lehman the head of the bell committee. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Craig Peters. Motion approved unanimously.

Congratulations to RJ Henry for being awarded the St. John's Scholarship (to be presented by Pastor Tom and Joshua Paul at Class Night) and for the Eagle Scout Award Ceremony today.

**Next Council Meeting:** July 9, 2023, at 6 PM.

**Adjournment:** Motion by Mike Henninger to adjourn the meeting. 2<sup>nd</sup> by Courtney Foreman. Motion approved unanimously. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,

Courtney Foreman, Secretary

# September

2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
* (Both In-Person and on Zoom)					1	2  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost</b> 8:45am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9:30am - Worship <u>Indoors</u> , Including Sacrament of Holy Communion (In-Person and On Zoom) 9:30am - SONDay Celebration (In-Person)	Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off  <b>Labor Day</b>	Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting	6:30-8pm - Fall Kickoff of Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie 6:30 - 7:30pm Women of the ELCA of St. John Gathering in Pavilion		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off (instead of 9/23)	<b>Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East</b>  Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost</b> 8:45am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9:30am - <b>OUTDOOR SONDay Celebration WORSHIP</b> , with Blessing of the Backpacks & Devices and Sunny Sermon* 10:30am - Celebration Sunday Sundae Bar 6pm - Congregational Council Meeting <b>Grandparent's Day</b>	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief			<b>Holy Cross Day</b>	<b>Deadline to Submit Items for October "St. John's Epistle"</b>	Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost</b> <b>9am</b> - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) <b>9am</b> - Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person) <b>9am</b> - Confirmation Class (In-Person) <b>9am</b> - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) <b>10:15am</b> - Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person* 3pm - Upper Dauphin Lutheran Youth Organization School Kit Project (in the Pavilion)	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief 7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at St. Christopher Lutheran, Lykens	6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting		<b>Matthew, Apostle &amp; Evangelist</b>	5:15pm - Rehearsal for Motter/Holman Wedding Youth Group Campout Begins after Movie	2:30pm - Marriage of Matthew Motter & Nichole Holman  <b>Autumn Begins</b>
<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost</b> 9am - Adult Bible Study (In-Person) 9am - Youth Group Bible Time (In-Person) 9am - Confirmation Class (In-Person) 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie (In-Person) 10:15am - Worship, Including Celebration Time with Miss Laurie for Young Persons In-Person*	9am - "Blanket Bunch" Blanket Making for Lutheran World Relief	6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting			<b>Michael and All Angels</b>	Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off

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