



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
BERRYSBURG, PA | SEPTEMBER 2022

Letter from the Pastor

Dear Friends in Jesus,

Even more than usual, the coming month of September is a time of transition in our congregational family life – as usual, from summer to autumn, but also this year a planned transition back to inside worship with the planned conclusion of **St. John Restoration 250**, along with continued scheduling and planning in our ongoing transition toward our apparent future of learning to co-exist with the reality of COVID.

With regard to our COVID transition, as I write these lines in mid-August, Dauphin County has just been downgraded to a **COVID-19 Community Level of Yellow/Medium**, with guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention continuing to call for getting fully vaccinated and for wearing a mask 1. if you have COVID symptoms or 2. a positive test for COVID or 3. exposure to someone with COVID. (Better yet, our congregational family policy has been to ask that folks in any of these three categories please simply avoid in-person activities entirely and join in worship via Zoom.) In addition, those at high risk for severe illness are strongly encouraged to mask when indoors and masks are lifted up as a good additional protective measure for everyone at this time. Clearly, things are in flux, so please don't forget that there is still a tentativeness to all of our plans, especially the further we get into the new month. Be sure to keep an eye out for Miss Laurie's and my weekly emails as well as our weekly bulletins for the latest updates. (And Youth Group members – please be sure to watch your inbox for Olivia's update emails!) Here are our Sunday plans for the new month:

Sunday, September 4

We will be following our summer schedule on this holiday weekend, worshipping outdoors in the beauty of our pavilion, and sharing in the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

Sunday, September 11

As we gather once again outdoors in our grove pavilion, I will lead a combined Adult Bible Study on our summer schedule, from 8:45am to 9:15am. Our 9:30am worship will be a "SONDay Celebration" worship as we prepare to transition back to our fall schedule, including a **Sunny Sermon** by Miss Laurie, a **Food Truck Party: We've "On a Roll" with God** VBS slideshow, and our **Annual Blessing of the Backpacks & Devices** led by Pastor Tom (for which all students – Preschool through Grade 12 – are asked to bring along their school backpacks (or devices) for a time of recognition, blessing, and prayer, as a new school year gets underway). When our worship ends at 10:30am, it will be time to head out for our congregational outing to Knoebel's, where everyone attending will gather with their covered dish and container of drink for sharing to join in lunch together, followed by plenty of time for riding. Our younger members will have some ride tickets provided.

Sunday, September 18

As per our annual practice, we will return to our “rest of the year” Sunday morning schedule, but with a twist this year. Faith Formation activities for all ages will return to **9:00am**, including Adult Bible Study, Youth Group Bible Time, and SONday Celebration with Miss Laurie. And worship will follow at **10:15am**, but **outdoors in our beautiful pavilion** one final planned time as ***St John Restoration 250*** wraps up.

Sunday, September 25

Our 10:15am worship will be planned as our very first time back inside and upstairs following the completion of ***St John Restoration 250!***

Thank you for reading and, especially, thank you in advance for your willingness to continue to “roll” with things!

Pastor Tom

News from Miss Laurie, Young Christians Minister

Happy September, everyone! It’s hard to believe summer vacation is over and the kids are back to school! I hope you all had a great summer and were able to spend some quality time with family and friends. Even though summer is “the bomb”, I know I’M ready to meet a new bunch of friends as we begin another year of preschool!

As we unofficially say goodbye to summer, grab your pens and mark your calendars with these important dates:

- **Wednesday, September 7th** – Join us as we “kick-off” a new season of Celebration Club! Club meets the first Wednesday of each month and is open to children preschool through 4th grade. Start time is 6:30 and we finish up around 8:00. If you’ve never experienced Celebration Club, I hope you’ll give it a try – it’s a monthly, mini-VBS experience...and we have a blast!!
- **Sunday, September 11th** - It’s our annual end of the summer Celebration Service with Pastor Tom’s “Blessing of the Backpacks” followed immediately by our Congregational Picnic and Knoebel’s Grove Outing! Bring your backpack and your favorite covered dish and join us for the fun!
- **Sunday, September 18th** – We return to regular schedule with SONday Celebration meeting from 9:00 – 10:00! Celebration Time during the church service resumes as well!

So, even though summer is coming to an end, the fun and faith formation at St. John’s continues!! See you at the Celebration!!

Miss Laurie

PS: Wishing all you “back to school-ers” a FANTASTIC and fun-filled school year!! Go with God!!



Book Discussion Group News

For the next several months, book discussion reading and sharing will continue in-person at the church, either in the beauty of our pavilion or in the Fellowship Hall. Next up:

- **Monday, September 12, 6:30 P.M – The Island of Sea Women by Lisa See.**

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 or pick up a copy at church. Questions? Call or email Ann at 717-362-7895 or rahbruner@gmail.com.

And Other Upcoming Books:

- October and November: **Martin Luther** by **Eric Metaxas** and **The Parables of Peanuts** by **Robert L Short**.

Hope to see you there!

Confirmation Classes

On Sunday morning, September 25, 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 close-up look at the Bible and what it contains, both Old and New Testaments. Two 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 six other young persons will begin a first year of study.

Greeter and Usher Ministries

As part of our planned "return to normal" in October, we are looking to re-start our Sunday morning Greeter and Usher ministries.

- **Greeters** are the folks who, as the name suggests, say a first warm "hello" to those arriving for worship. In addition, they are there to point the way (to the restroom, upstairs for worship, etc.) for those who may be entering those doors for the first time. Greeters are posted in the foyer, just inside the main doors, ideally by no later than 10:00am. Greeter(s) on a given Sunday morning may be an individual, a couple or other team of two, or an entire family of three or more. Louise Baumgardner and Lois Watson will be preparing a Greeter schedule for distribution to everyone who is willing to serve, but it is absolutely no problem if an assigned Sunday morning won't work for those assigned. Simply contact another nearby Sunday's Greeter(s) and arrange a swap, and then please let Pastor Tom and Rachel (if in time to update the bulletin) know about the change.
- **Ushers** typically work in teams of four for the Sundays in a given month, under the guidance of that month's Head Usher, who is a member of Congregational Council. Before worship, ideally no later than 10:00, one usher is stationed at the elevator door to welcome those arriving that way and help with any elevator questions, while the others are posted upstairs to distribute bulletins and help with any other needs. In "normal" times, the usher team receives the morning offering and works together on Holy Communion Sundays to guide everyone forward to the altar and back. Persons who would be new to this ministry would receive orientation from the Head Usher prior to their service. Here again, if an Usher cannot serve on an assigned Sunday, they simply notify the Head Usher and a swap/coverage is arranged.

If you would be interested in serving in either or both of these important ministries of hospitality, whether or not you ever have before, please contact Pastor Tom, who will be happy to answer any questions and who will then pass your name along for scheduling.

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



Boundless Retreat Recap/Youth Group Year in Review Sunday Service

On Sunday, September 18th, youth advisor Matt Williard will be leading worship. As part of the service, we will have a Boundless Retreat Recap and Youth Group Year in Review. Be sure to join us!!

Lutheran Youth Organization: Pack School Kits

On **Sunday, September 18th**, we will meet at **3:00 p.m.** at the St. John's pavilion to pack school kits for LYO. Youth from several area churches will be joining us. Each church is responsible for providing one of the items for the kits. This year, St. John's is responsible for the pens. Many thanks to Pat Herb for using one of her Thrivent Action teams to purchase the pens for the youth group.

After the school kits are filled and packed for shipping, there will be time for outdoor games and a pizza party. The gaga pit will be set up, along with several other outdoor games. Bring a water bottle!

Welcome 5th Graders

All youth entering 5th grade are welcome to join the youth group starting **September 18th** for the Youth Group Faith Formation Class and youth group activities.

Youth Group Faith Formation

The Youth Group Faith Formation class meets every **Sunday at 9:00 a.m.** in the youth group room on the balcony level of the church. All youth from 5th to 12th grade are invited to join us. The leaders are Matt and Olivia Williard. (We just lead the class. Sometimes it's the *youth* who are teaching *us*.)

Due to the construction in the church, our first faith formation class on September 18th will be held outside in the pavilion. Please bring your camp chair and Bible.

Mark Those Calendars: Upcoming Activities

10/23/22 = Youth Group Outing to Nawakwa

11/6/22 = Annual Chicken and Waffle Dinner

As always, continue to watch your email and the church newsletter for any upcoming youth group outings and events.

~ The Youth Advisors



HOW CAN **YOU**  KEEP FROM SINGING?



Join the fun – first choir rehearsal on **Tuesday, October 4, 2022**

Please contact Pastor Tom, Judy Ferree or Carol Hubler if you have any questions or need additional information.

See you Tuesday, Oct. 4th



Senior Choir Update

After two years of inactivity, we are attempting to restart our Senior Choir. The first choir rehearsal is scheduled for Tuesday, October 4th at 7:30. There are sure to be lots of questions, and probably some issues that we hope to deal with as they occur.

First of all, we hope that all choir members are fully vaccinated and boosted. Regarding masks, that will be each person's preference. Our congregational family will be purchasing masks which are expressly designed for singers and will have these available for each choir member if and when they would desire to wear them. These masks work better than regular masks because they are created with a chamber that allows for freedom of movement in the jaw with more distance between the mask and your mouth, thus making it easier to sing and breath with a mask in place.

I am confident with a lot of common sense and some creative thinking, we should be able to return to providing a musical addition to our worship experience. If you have any questions/concerns please contact Pastor Tom, Carol Hubler, or Judy Ferree.

Hope to see lots of enthusiastic singers in October.



Our Faith Active in Our Financial Giving – As of June 30

After concluding the past two years with very strong giving of tithes and offerings, despite all of the COVID-related impacts to our congregational family life together, the first half of 2022 has likewise seen us all pulling together in solid fashion in giving to God’s work in this place as a congregational family, and this in addition to the special giving response to our **St John Restoration 250** project! Here are summaries of our three largest funds for the first six months of 2022 – the **Current Fund** (much like your main checking account at home, from which most of the day-to-day bills of ministry get paid), the **Children & Youth (C&Y) Fund** (through which Miss Laurie’s ministry is funded), and our **Larger Church Benevolence** (through which our congregational family supports the work of our Lower Susquehanna Synod and Evangelical Lutheran Church in America on all of our behalf). It is worth noting that our Current Fund giving in comparison to our budgeted figure is one of our strongest ever as we enter into the “summer doldrums”:

	Current	C& Y	Larger Church Benevolence
June 30 Budget Goal	\$78,138	\$12,593	\$6,000
June 30 Total Giving*	\$87,717	\$11,861	\$6,781
June 30 Giving Adjusted for Lump Sum Gifts*	\$78,106	\$10,061	\$5,781
June 30 Total Expenses	\$72,024	\$13,088	\$6,781 [^]

*Our June 30 Total Giving reflects the kindness of several folks who shared all of their 2022 offerings right at the beginning of the year. The “Adjusted” line subtracts out the half of these advance gifts which applies to the final six months of the year still to come.

[^]With our Larger Church Benevolence, we simply send on exactly what we receive each month, and so the Total “Expenses” always equal the Total Giving.

The above information is based on a summary which Pastor Tom shares each month with Congregational Council. Please don’t hesitate to ask him any questions you might have about these numbers. For questions about the details of our giving or our expenses, please speak with **Treasurer Jamie Doyle**. Thank you for your partnership in this wonderful ministry which is St. John, and especially for your kindness in “going the extra mile” to mail or drop off your offerings in these challenging times! Please watch for future updates every few months.

St John Restoration 250

And having just mentioned giving toward our **St John Restoration 250** Project, here is an update on that appeal as of the most recent Sunday prior to this newsletter “going to press”:

As of August 21, 2022

Total Estimated Project Cost	\$ 220,000
Memorials Interest Money Designated for Project (Letting \$100,000 Reserve of Interest)	\$ 88,000
Total Financial Gifts Received	\$ 71,845
Total Financial Gifts Pledged, Not Yet Received	\$ 36,400
Total Pledges & Gifts Still Needed to Reach Goal	<u>\$ 23,755</u>

Thank you to all who have pledged and contributed – we are closing the gap! And if you didn’t already receive a pledge/giving form or if you have misplaced it, please don’t hesitate to contact Pastor Tom.

Still on the Theme of Thanksgiving for Faithful Financial Stewardship....

As we look back on our Annual Strawberry Festival, held June 8, the final financial report confirms what we experienced that day here on The Hill – that it was indeed a “return to normal” in terms of support and participation, leading to, as reported during worship on July 17, close-to-record total receipts for the day of **\$25,714.15**. Deducting our total expenses of **\$10,956.14** left us with our second-highest-ever net proceeds of **\$14,758.01**, which were added to the “Bicentennial”/Strawberry Festival Fund. Thank you to everyone who helped in any way to make our “return to normal” Strawberry Festival another wonderful success!

And looking ahead to 2023: Please mark your family calendars for next year’s Festival, already scheduled for Wednesday, June 14. Also, the first planning meeting for next year’s Festival, open to all interested persons, will be held on Tuesday, March 7, beginning at 7:00 P.M. at the church.

And Continuing Still One More Time with the Theme of Thankfulness...

A big thank you to **Sheila Barder** and **Camie Leitzel** for coordinating this year’s Yard Sale to Benefit Lutheran Disaster Response, which ended up raising a total of **\$974.18**, all of which will be sent on to help in Jesus’ Name those who are victims of natural or human-created disasters. And here is the “final word” from our coordinators:

We would like to express our deepest appreciation and gratitude to all who donated items and/or their time to help make this year’s Yard Sale a success. The financial results are as follows:

Thursday Receipts	\$608.50
Friday Receipts	\$281.00
Saturday Receipts	\$125.00
Sunday Donations	\$40.00
(less supplies purchased for future Yard Sales)	<u>(\$80.32)</u>
Total to ELCA Domestic Disaster Relief	\$974.18

We greatly appreciate your generosity and support. Thank you, **Camella & Sheila**

First Aid and Preparedness News

St. John's has recently acquired some new (to us) first aid supplies. We now have a Philips HeartStart FRx AED (automatic external defibrillator), a bleeding control kit, and an evacuation chair.

On Sunday, July 10, approximately a dozen people attended an AED familiarization session conducted by Courtney and Rob Foreman and Gary Daniels. The intent was to allay/dispel fear, boost confidence, and get as up close and personal as possible to the device. There were good questions asked and good comments/suggestions made. The next step will be to arrange a CPR/AED class in the near future. Stay tuned for further information.

Some things to think about with our AED: First, it is a small package (roughly 2.5"x6"x7") but it will deliver enough energy to reverse ventricular fibrillation, which is a hallmark of sudden cardiac arrest. Second, the battery pack is powerful enough to deliver up to 200 shocks. This is quite an improvement over earlier technology. Third, our AED can be used on adult, child, or infant victims. For a child eight years old or younger and /or 55 pounds or less, there is a key in the pouch on the lid of the unit. Insert the key in the slot, and less energy is delivered, but still enough to resuscitate the victim.

Finally, a few thoughts on maintenance and upkeep. The device automatically and remotely does daily, weekly, and monthly self-checks. You will know it is "ready for use" by looking into a small window in the upper right corner of the device. A green light will blink, about once every two to three seconds. If you need further assurance or encouragement, there is a small blue "i button" below the main power button on the front of the device. Press that, and it should tell you that it is "ready for use." If the machine is chirping, press that "i button" to find out what the problem might be. The owner's manual lists several possibilities and associated remedies that should fix the problem. DO NOT remove-and-replace the battery pack unless prompted. This reduces battery power and life and may deplete the battery prematurely. DO NOT open the case with the AED pads unless you intend to use them. This interferes with the device self-check, and it will assume it is being used.

The AED has been deployed for a little more than a month, for worship services and other events. There is a wall cabinet for it, and when our renovations are complete, the cabinet will be mounted somewhere obvious and accessible, and the AED will be ready to go when needed.

-Gary Daniels

Congratulations!

These past weeks have certainly been filled with visits by "the stork" to households in our congregational family and extended family! Congratulations and continued prayers of thankfulness are in order for:

- Eli Hassinger & Elena Werth following the birth of Eliza Charlie on Thursday, July 7.
- Drs. Alayna (Peters) & Benton Miller following the birth of Elsie Elizabeth at 5:16pm on Monday, July 18, at the Chambersburg Hospital. Elsie was 20.5 inches long and weighed 8 pounds 6 ounces.
- Sara & Daniel Shaffer who welcomed Josie Grace into their family on Tuesday, June 28.

(Congratulations of course also to the Hassinger, Werth, Peters, Miller, Shade, and Shaffer families!)

Offering Submission Guidelines

In order to help those who faithfully carry out the important ministry of offering counting and record keeping do so efficiently, please help with the following:

1. Counter-signed checks are no longer accepted by **Mid Penn Bank**, and so all checks must be made payable to "St. John Church", no endorsing a check over to the church.
2. **Please** feel free to write a single check even if it's for multiple envelopes or purposes.
3. **Please** no staples or tape on your checks or envelopes.
4. Please write clearly on your envelopes. (If no designations are made, enclosed offering will go to Current Fund.)
5. For **Restoration 250** contributions, if no Memorial is designated, the amount will appear on your year-end Giving Statement.
If a Memorial is included, the amount will not appear on your year-end Giving Statement and your "Thank You" note will instead serve as your receipt for tax purposes.

Amazon Shoppers

If you are an Amazon.com shopper, 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.

September

2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
*Both In-Person <u>and</u> on Zoom ** In-Person						Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost 8:45am - Adult Bible Study in Pavilion** 9:30am - OUTDOOR WORSHIP* 9:30am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie**	Pastor Tom Taking Monthly Extra Day Off Labor Day	9:30am - Pastor Tom at Conference Pastors Meeting	6:30-8pm - Monthly Celebration Club with Miss Laurie		Day of Prayer for Peace with Justice, Beginning in the Middle East Pastor Tom Leading Rehearsal for Shoop/Snyder Wedding (at Himmel's Church)	Pastor Tom Presiding at Marriage of Kellie Shoop and Guy Snyder (at Himmel's Church)
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost 8:45am - Adult Bible Study in Pavilion** 9:30am - OUTDOOR SONDay Celebration WORSHIP , with Blessing of the Backpacks & Devices and Sunny Sermon* 10:30am - Departure for Congregational Outing to Knoebel's Grandparent's Day	9am – Blanket Bunch 6:30pm - Monthly Book Discussion Group Fellowship in Pavilion Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off (instead of 9/10)	6:15pm - Property Committee Meeting	Holy Cross Day	Deadline to Submit Items for October "St. John's Epistle"	Pastor Tom's Day Off (Instead of 9/10)	Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Fifteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie** 9am - Youth Group Bible Study** 9am - Adult Bible Study** 10:15am - OUTDOOR WORSHIP* – Guest Worship Leader, Matthew Williard 3:00pm - Upper Dauphin Lutheran Youth Organization School Kit Project (in the Pavilion)	9am – Blanket Bunch 7pm - Upper Dauphin Conference Cabinet Meeting at Immanuel Lutheran, Williamstown		Matthew, Apostle & Evangelist Pastor Tom Returns to the Office	Autumn Begins		Pastor Tom's Weekly Day Off
25	26	27	28	29	30	
Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost 9am - SONDay Celebration with Miss Laurie** 9am - Confirmation Class** 9am - Youth Group Bible Study** 9am- Adult Bible Study** 10:15am - Worship (Planned Return to Inside)*	9am – Blanket Bunch	6:15pm - Worship & Music Committee Meeting		Michael and All Angels		

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	stjohnhillchurch@frontier.com	717-362-9519 (O) 717-362-7895 (H)
Laurie Little, Young Christians Minister	misslaurie.little@gmail.com	717-571-5058
Lewis Weaver, Sexton	bootsdagreat@gmail.com	570-809-1014
Grace Weaver, Sexton	No Email	570-809-1510
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

911 Emergency/GPS Location:

215 St. John Road, Elizabethville, 17023

For US Mail Deliveries:

PO Box 244, Berrysburg, 17005-0270

Church Website: www.stjohnhillchurch.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stjohnhillchurch