

# St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

*"A Place for Everyone"*

*God's Work. Our Hands.*

715 Lincoln Highway -- North Versailles, PA 15137

[www.stjohnsnorthversailles.com](http://www.stjohnsnorthversailles.com)

[www.facebook.com/stjohnnorthversailles](http://www.facebook.com/stjohnnorthversailles)

Youth of St. John's: [sjnyouth@gmail.com](mailto:sjnyouth@gmail.com) and [Facebook.com/sjnyouth](https://www.facebook.com/sjnyouth)

*A Reconciling in Christ congregation of the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod*

Rev. Richard W. Krug, Pastor



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[sjnvoffice@verizon.net](mailto:sjnvoffice@verizon.net)

Pastor's Home Phone: (412) 673-1779

[richardwkrug@gmail.com](mailto:richardwkrug@gmail.com)

Office Hours:

Monday through Thursday – 8:00 AM – 2:30 PM

## SERVICES

Saturday Contemporary Service – **5:00 p.m.**

Sunday School for all ages – **9:30 a.m.**

Sunday Traditional Worship - **10:45 a.m.**

# January/February 2018

Dear Family in the Faith:

Growing up I remember seeing (not in church!) the slogan "The Family that prays together stays together". Prayer keeps us connected to God and each other. And those connections help us deal with the ups and downs of life.

Here at St. John's our 'families' reflect our variety and diversity. Some families have younger kids, others do not; some are a single generation, others span several generations. We want to connect and nurture faith in youth and adults alike, and so we are starting to use the word 'households' to include all kinds of families.

I'm excited about an opportunity for our households/families to grow in faith and prayer together. On Tuesday, January 16 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. we will gather for a meal and then learn about FAITH 5. FAITH 5 is a simple 'discipline' or practice for families to talk and pray together for about 10 minutes every evening to stay connected to God and each other. Pastor Natalie Hall will be with us to introduce FAITH 5. We are seeking households to commit to this practice for their journey of faith in Jesus Christ (our mission statement).

Then in February we will gather on Tuesday, February 13 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. for Mardi Gras (this replaces what we had been doing on Shrove Tuesday). This event for households of all ages will feature prayer and pretzels and preparing for Lent; it begins with a meal.

With a new year upon us, what do you need to do (or do differently) to make time for God? How will you stay connected to God, your family, and to our St. John's household of faith?

Life will always have its ups and downs, there will always be things to keep us busy. Making time for God and staying connected involves our choices and our priorities.

Let's pray for wisdom in this new year to do our part in staying connected to God and each other. It makes all the difference in the world, and in our hearts.

## Our Mission Statement

St. John's Lutheran Church exists to nurture people of all ages on the journey of faith in Jesus Christ, to support those in need and to reach out into the community with God's healing and love.



Connected with you in Christ,  
*Pastor Richard*

### Blessing and Gratitude

Will and I give thanks for all of your cards, gifts, and prayers as we celebrate Christmas. My family and I are truly blessed to be part of a loving and supportive church family who live the gospel of grace. God is good, and so are you!

God's peace and power to you  
in the new year,  
*Pastor Richard and Will*

### 2018 Congregation Council

The members of St. John's Congregation Council for 2018 are: Harrison Biddle, Clark Buskey, Sherie Cannin, Theresa Drye, Melissa Hess, Judy Jamison, John Kennedy, Pastor Richard Krug, Brenda Neundorf, Judi Rogers, Julie Sacriponte, and Cody Schaar. We are still discerning the filling of the 12<sup>th</sup> Council position.

We give thanks to Sarah Lundie and Herb Willson who have concluded their Council terms, to Jen Jones who served until her move to Erie, and for Ed Ward, who filled Jen's position until increased work commitments led to his resignation. We appreciate their dedication and ministry to our St. John's family.

Called to *Serve*

## Congregation Council to Elect Officers & Appoint Committee Chairs for 2018

At the Annual Planning Workshop on January 6, the Congregation Council officers will be elected and committee chairpersons/liaisons will be appointed. Installation of 2018 Council and officers will take place in worship January 6/7.

St. John's voting members to the 2018 Southwestern PA Synod Assembly will be appointed at the January 28 annual congregation meeting.

We give thanks to these people for their commitment to serve their church. Please continue to give support to your elected leaders with prayers, as well as your own willing eagerness to serve.

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### **ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING SUNDAY, JANUARY 28**

About 12:30 p.m. in Miller Hall

Soup & sandwich luncheon in Miller Hall following the 10:45 a.m. worship service.

Plans are for Reports to be available in the narthex the weekend of January 13-14 Please take one Bulletin of Reports per family.

We are the Body of Christ, his Church together. Please plan to be present as we review and give thanks for the ministry accomplished in 2017 and seek the guidance of the Spirit in our dialog and decisions together as we nurture faith, support need and reach out with God's healing and love.

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## Thursday Bible Study

*Pour out your Holy Spirit...the Spirit of wisdom and understanding...*

These words prayed over the newly baptized and quoting Isaiah 11:2, teach us that the Spirit calls us to grow in wisdom and understanding as people of the Word and the Way.

Join us for Thursday evening Bible Study, 6:30-7:30 p.m. Each week we will use the appointed scripture lessons for the coming Sunday as the basis of our study. You will have a chance to go deeper in wisdom & understanding of the scripture which shapes us as a worshipping community of believers. And your reflections will help inspire Pastor in his preaching!

Thursday Bible Study will meet:

January 4, 11, 18 and 25

February 1, 15 and 22

## A Revelation for the World



The revelation of Jesus to the nations is celebrated on the Festival of the Epiphany of Our Lord (January 6<sup>th</sup>) as we remember the arrival of the Wise Men to visit the Child Jesus.

Epiphany is one of the oldest festivals in the church. It predates Christmas. The earliest Epiphany observances included the birth of Jesus. Now it concludes the twelve days of Christmas and begins the Epiphany season which emphasizes the discovery of Jesus as God and Savior.

## Coffee and Conversation

We kick off the new year with a new twist. Two of our class members, Will and Cody, enjoyed an exciting week at the Lay School of Theology at the United Lutheran Seminary in Gettysburg last summer. Will would like to share a bit of what they learned while there, entitled "Observations from Gettysburg." In this four-part series, we will be exploring our relationship with God and what our purpose as a church is. The goal is to have a conversation that can contribute to other discussions in our congregation about the future of Saint John's. We begin January 7.

Next up will be a five-part series entitled "Embracing Interfaith Cooperation." You may know that Lutherans are highly regarded leaders in the world of ecumenical relations and interfaith ministry. We have led the way in the dialogues with Roman Catholics; in the achievement of full communion agreements with 6 other denominations; in the current dialogues expected to produce yet additional full communion agreements; in social ministry and disaster relief programs all over the world with many ecumenical partners; in dialogues and other forms of cooperation with Orthodox Christians, Pentecostal churches, Jewish and Muslim bodies; and in a variety of other important ways. It is in the DNA of Lutherans to see the world through an ecumenical and interfaith lens. Unity and cooperation, where possible, are always goals.

The author of the series, Eboo Patel, has delivered TED talks, has been a speaker at the Nobel Peace Prize Forum, speaks frequently on college and university campuses, writes regularly for the Washington Post and other news media outlets, and challenges us to "change the world" through interfaith cooperation in a variety of ways.

What more fitting way to follow-up our extended study last year of the Protestant Reformation and our Lutheran heritage than to go the next step to see what we have in common, what we share, what we can do together and how we can best demonstrate our respect for other faith traditions? Each class will include a video presentation from which our discussions will begin.

Variety, conversation among friends, refreshments, laughter, community – what more could you ask? You can only enjoy all of this by being there. Don't be on the outside looking in. You know you are curious about this energetic, fun loving but serious group.



## Christian Education

On December 10, we gathered together for 'Breakfast at the Manger'. After a breakfast of cereal and muffins, we enjoyed the Christmas story two ways. First Brenda and Mandy shared one of the Speed Sketch videos. Then the kids helped to tell the Christmas story using plain white pillows. We know the adults enjoyed this version. The kids got to keep their pillows. Ask one of them to tell you the story.

On Saturday, December 30 we caroled to shut-ins. What a blessing to be a blessing!

We look forward with anticipation for what will be in store for us in the New Year. Please join us for Sunday School – 9:30 a.m. every Sunday!

- \*Elementary grades taught by Michelle Thomas, and Sue & Ed Ward
- \*Older grades taught by Brenda Neundorf
- \*Adult classes (Coffee and Conversation) lead by Pastor Richard, Jack Sutter, Ed Sites, Judy Sabolic and Marti and Robert Gastel.

## St. Afterschool at St. John's

The Fall 2017 program of St. Afterschool concluded on December 13<sup>th</sup> for the Christmas holiday. This semester we had a great group of 18 children! In addition to weekly crafts, games and playing Bingo with prizes, we had visits from the Pittsburgh Zoo and Aquarium and the Carnegie Science Center. Funding for these programs came from the Shop 'N Save S.E.E.D. program.

We are looking forward to beginning the Spring session on Wednesday, January 17<sup>th</sup>. This session of St. Afterschool will run for 16 weeks through Wednesday, May 16, 2018 (excluding March 28 because of Holy Week) and the fee for this session is \$20.00. St. Afterschool offers homework assistance, snacks, great games and delicious dinners for children in grades K through 3. If you are interested in enrolling a child in the St. Afterschool program, contact

the church office, or Debi Freeman, Program Coordinator, at 412-302-2226.

## Old Ink & Toner Cartridges Needed

St. John's saves hundreds of dollars in office supplies each year by recycling old ink cartridges! We need your donations of empty cartridges – the 'cupboard' is bare as we begin the new year.

## Souper Bowl of Caring 2018



*"We can do no great things, only small things with great love."*

*-Mother Theresa*

Our church will again be participating in the *Souper Bowl of Caring* this year. To show that we love and care for our brothers and sisters who are needy, we ask everyone to please remember to bring an extra dollar or two with you to worship on **February 3/4 (Super Bowl weekend)**. Our young people will collect your donations. Every dollar received here at St. John's will go directly to **MA's Pantry**.

The *Souper Bowl*, which began as the fruit of prayer, has seen tens of thousands of congregations together generate millions of dollars for hurting and hungry people over the years.

Our donations will be called in and reported right after we total our collection on February 4 along with other congregations across the nation.

## A Note About That Initial Offering Envelope

You are encouraged to fill the *Initial* envelope found in the front of the **2018** box of envelopes. This offering is used to cover the cost of purchasing our envelopes. If we all do a little to defray the cost, our regular offerings can be used to fund the many ministries we do.

## Using Your New Envelopes

Regular offering envelopes for the year **2018** have been available in the narthex since December. They have **Current, Mission Support** (Benevolence) and **Property Upkeep** sections on the right side of them. **Current Expenses** is an undesignated category for any need: from the electric bill to salaries to supplies. **Mission Support** (Benevolence) offerings are designated for our partnership ministry with the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod and entire Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. **Property Upkeep** is a fund for maintenance and upkeep of our property. **Property Upkeep is not** the Building Fund for paying off our mortgage. Use your numbered envelopes for all “regular” contributions. Write your envelope number on special contribution envelopes such as *Flowers, Mother’s Day, Father’s Day, World Hunger, etc.* Giving records are posted by envelope number, not name. If you place a check in the collection plate without showing your envelope number, you may not be credited with that contribution. If amounts are not marked for the 3 specified categories it will automatically go into *Current Expenses*. The counters do not have access to your “*Estimate of Giving*” or “*Pledge*” amounts.

Your box of envelopes contains a monthly **Seminary Support envelope (gold border)**. Your offerings using the Seminary Support envelope will support United Lutheran Seminary as we train pastors and deacons for future leadership in the ELCA.

The same white envelopes will still be used for the **Building Fund**. Building Fund monies are counted and deposited separately and should not be included in your “regular” numbered envelopes. White Building Fund envelopes will also be distributed for the coming

year, and are always available in the narthex or church office. Plans are to continue using these envelopes for the new organ appeal, once the building mortgage is paid off early this year.

And last but not least, let’s make life easier for the counters. Please do not use scotch tape or staples on your envelopes. **Also the use of one envelope is sufficient for contributions of more than one Sunday.** The contribution is posted to your giving record on the date received, not by the dates on the envelopes.

Theresa Drye, Financial Secretary, is responsible for the 2018 “regular” envelopes, special giving and the compiling and mailing of the quarterly financial statements. Our Building Fund Treasurer is Steve Grbach. Please don’t hesitate to talk to Steve (412-829-0146, srgrbach5355@aol.com) or Theresa (412-609-0434, theresafdrye101404@gmail.com) with any questions or concerns you may have.

## Hilltop Community Event

*Lunch, Movie, Discussion*

The Hilltop Ministerium is again sponsoring a community event!

We will gather at **Linway Presbyterian Church on Sunday, February 11 at 12:30 p.m.** for a delicious lunch of soup provided by our pastors and congregations. **At 1:00 p.m. we will watch a movie and remain after for an opportunity to discuss** what we have seen and our life together as church and community. We plan to finish around 3:30 pm. Please join us!

## Women of the ELCA

The Women of the ELCA will meet on Wednesday, January 17 and Tuesday, February 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. in Miller Hall. After our business meeting, we will have Bible Study and dessert.

The annual November Thankoffering Services for Women of the ELCA were well received and a portion of the offering will be sent to the church wide organization.

Christmas gift bags for St. John’s shut-ins were assembled on

December 14. Fourteen people were served by this ministry. Thanks to Sarah Lundie and Dotty Sites for purchasing items for the bags and members who donated items. Dotty Sites coordinated delivery of the bags. The volunteers who visited the shut-ins and delivered the gifts are also an important part of this ministry – thank you very much!

Mission Central and MA's Pantry continue to be an important part of our ministry. Collection of MA's Pantry items is on-going – donations may be placed in the box on the table in the narthex. Mission Central items can be placed on the table in Miller Hall.

**We are excited to announce a new ministry! Our “Loves and Dishes” program will be beginning this month.** St. John's has a tradition of reaching out to our community (MA's Pantry) and the world (ELCA and Rise Against Hunger) to help provide food were needed. There are many instances among our St. John's family where a meal prepared and delivered during a difficult time would be a way to give our love and support; a new baby, illness, or surgery of a family member are a few instances. The women of our group propose to coordinate a program to recruit people who would be willing to:

- 1) let us know when there is a need for a meal;
- 2) to be willing to prepare a meal (or team up with someone to work together to prepare one); and
- 3) be willing to make a meal delivery.

Not everyone would have to do all three steps each time, the workload could be shared. We could also make menu suggestions. Anyone who would like to share in this ministry, but needs financial support to purchase the groceries needed for the meal, would be able to receive assistance from money that is currently designated as the Funeral Fund. **We will be asking for volunteers and will answer questions about this new ministry in January.**

As always, if you have any questions or ideas, please contact Sarah Lundie at 412-673-6434. All women are members – plan to join us!



## 2018 Flower Chart

Reservations for the 2018 altar & chancel flowers are now being taken. Flowers are placed weekly on the altar (and chancel if a weekend has two sponsors) to remember, honor, or show appreciation of loved ones or to observe a special occasion. They add to the beauty of our worship service. The cost is \$25.00 for two vases. If you would like to provide flowers for a particular weekend or weekends during the year, please fill out a flower chart form. Forms are located on the table in the narthex and also in the office next to the chart. Please DO NOT fill out the office chart yourself, just leave the form on the secretary's desk and she will fill in the wall chart. Plenty of dates are still available. Please plan on reimbursing the church (clearly noting Altar Flowers) by the weekend you reserved.

## Progress on Strategic Planning at St. John's

We continue to use the goals developed as part of the Strategic Planning process to guide us into the future. Here are some of the things we have learned about ourselves in the process:

Events are better attended if we hold them at the church building.

Events that have a defined time frame and commitment level are well attended.

We need to have a plan “B” when plan “A” doesn't work.

We need to allow people the grace to step out of a leadership position when they have overcommitted.

In some cases a Task Force with a defined assignment and time frame works better than a committee.

Perhaps the biggest lesson we have learned is that we are so focused on the plan that we forget to publicize and celebrate our successes!! So here is to more celebrating in 2018!!!

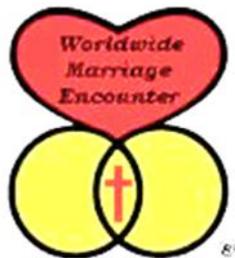
“On dieting: Seize the moment – Think of all those women on the Titanic who waved off the dessert cart.” *Erma Bombeck*

## Lutheran Marriage Encounter

**ATTENTION MARRIED COUPLES:** Your marriage relationship is one of the things in life that provides the greatest potential for happiness. Is yours living up to this potential? Please make 2018 the year you resolve to attend a Lutheran Marriage Encounter weekend.

- **March 16-18, 2018** in Lancaster, PA, at the all newly renovated Heritage Hotel Lancaster, home of the unique tree-house inspired restaurant, “Loxley’s”.
- **April 6-8, 2018** at Toftrees Golf Resort Conference Center – a peaceful resort nestled in 1500 wooden acres in State College, PA.
- **September 14-16, 2018** at Spruce Lake Retreat Center, a new hotel-style facility on Spruce Lake in the heart of the Pocono Mountains in Canadensis, PA – an hour north of Allentown.
- **October 19-21, 2018** at Olmsted Retreat Center. A stunning, hotel-style retreat next to Olmsted Mansion in Allegheny National Forest.

Two nights lodging, 5 meals for each of you, and all supplies are included with your \$100 per couple registration fee, plus toward the end of the weekend you will be given an opportunity to make a confidential contribution of whatever amount you wish toward the continuation of the program. To be sure to get the weekend of your choice, go to the website [www.GodLovesMarriage.org](http://www.GodLovesMarriage.org) and pay the registration fee using your credit card, or take the option to mail a check. For questions, or if you would like a brochure mailed to you, contact Fred & Julie Schamber at 724-325-3166 or email at [fjschamber@comcast.net](mailto:fjschamber@comcast.net). Registrations are limited, so act quickly to ensure that you can attend the weekend of your choice.



## Mardi Gras

*(Formerly Shrove Tuesday...!)*

### **Save the Date! Tuesday, February 13!**

All households are invited to join us for a Mardi Gras celebration on Tuesday, February 13 from 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. Join us for pancakes, sausage and potatoes, and then learn about the three disciplines of Lent:

- Fasting – what is FASTNACHT?
- Prayer – Make soft pretzels and learn the significance of the design.
- Alms giving – receive a Lenten “Piggy Bank” to be returned on Palm/Passion Weekend March 24.

We look forward to celebrating with you as we turn our hearts and minds toward Lent.

### **Looking Ahead: Ash Wednesday February 14**



We enter the Lenten season each year by gathering in worship for Corporate Confession, the Imposition of Ashes, and the Celebration of Holy Communion on Ash Wednesday. This special service is the first act of our Lenten Discipline of repentance, prayer, and spiritual growth.

Ash Wednesday begins the forty days (excluding Sundays, which are always celebrations of the Resurrection) of the Lenten season of reflection and repentance. This period symbolizes the forty day fasts of Jesus, Elijah, and Moses. As followers of Christ, we enter this season that leads to the cross with an act of humility and repentance trusting in the grace of God given to each of us through that cross of Christ.

The use of ashes as a sign of repentance has a long scriptural history (see Jonah 3:5-9; Job 42:6; Jeremiah 6:26; and Matthew 11:21). The early Christian church continued the use of ashes from Jewish practice as an external mark of penitence. Ashes wonderfully

symbolize both God's condemnation of sin and of renewal when we remember that fields are burned in the spring to prepare them for new growth. Please join us at the Lord's Table on **Ash Wednesday, February 14 for services at 11:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m.** as we begin our Lenten journey of faith.

### Drive-By Ash N Pray

As an outreach to the community, St. John's will again offer 'Drive-By' ashes and prayer – in the St. John's parking lot on Ash Wednesday, February 14 from 7:00 to 9:00 a.m. and from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m. Pray for a warm winter day so Pastor Richard doesn't get frostbite!

### Special Worship Services During Lent

Wed. February 21	Community Lenten Service 7:00 p.m. at <b>Linway Presbyterian</b>
Wed. February 28	Community Lenten Service 7:00 p.m. at <b>St. Robert Bellarmine</b>

At the time of printing, the **locations** of the remaining Community Lenten Services had not been finalized; however, there will be Lenten services on each Wednesday during Lent at 7:00 pm. Watch your bulletin and the next newsletter for the remainder of the schedule, including the noon Good Friday Service.

### Blanket the World with Love

**February 10/11** has been designated as our **Annual Blanket Weekend**. Hearts and envelopes will be distributed in the bulletins at both the Saturday and Sunday services. Please fill out the heart with your name and the name of the person you wish to honor or remember with your contribution. Suggested amount is \$5.00 which provides a warm, wool blanket to someone in need anywhere in the world.

Social Ministry Committee members will be waiting in the narthex to collect your hearts and donations as you leave worship. The hearts will then be pinned on our display blanket (which is a sample of the blankets distributed). **Please make checks payable to St. John's**. The blanket program is administered through Church World Service.

Recipients have used their blankets as tents, first-aid stretchers, draperies, doors, and sleeping pads. Blankets are a "*tool of hope*" to disaster victims and refugees; all those left homeless and in need of a safe, dry place to spend the night. Help bring hope of better things to come. If you are unable to attend worship the weekend of February 10/11, your donation may be mailed directly to the church, and we will see that your heart gets pinned on the blanket.

### Desserts for Meals-On-Wheels

St. John's is responsible for providing desserts for Meals-On-Wheels **Monday, February 19 through Friday, March 2** (2 weeks). Watch for the sign-up sheet for the day/s you can contribute which will be on the stand in the narthex. Besides cookies (3 or 4 doz.), you can donate fruit - fresh or canned (institution size cans), cake (plain or angel food), Jell-O or pudding - two 6 oz. boxes (please deliver these unmixed the day before you are scheduled). Deliver to Linway Church - back door by 9:00 a.m. **preferred**, or leave at the church office. Thank you!

### Game Night

Calling all Monopoly, Scrabble, Twister, Battleship (etc.!) lovers - Join us on **Saturday, January 20 for a Pot Luck Game Night** after worship (approx. 6:00 p.m.) for a fun-filled **Game Night!** Bring your favorite board game **AND** your favorite snack or dish to share with other members of the congregation – **young and old alike!** Please RSVP to Melissa Hess in person or at [hess.melissa18@gmail.com](mailto:hess.melissa18@gmail.com) by January 13.

## Our ELCA Missionary to Singapore

Rev. Jeffrey Truscott is sponsored by:

### January

6/7 -available  
13/14 -available-  
20/21 -available-  
27/28 -available

### February

3/4 -available-  
10/11 -available-  
17/18 -available-  
24/25 -available-

## St. Valentine's Day Dance

Dust off your dancin' shoes! Make your favorite recipe! St. John's **FIRST EVER Valentine's Day Dance and Pot Luck Dinner** will be held on Saturday, February 10 after worship (approx. 6:00 p.m.). Households of all ages and sizes are welcome to come join the fun. There will be a guest DJ, a photo booth and other surprises. There will be a sign up sheet in the narthex closer to the event or let Melissa Hess know if you plan to attend.

## New Organ Update

At its January 6 Annual Planning Meeting, the Council will be finalizing recommendations to present to the congregation for consideration and vote at the Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday, January 28 on replacing our almost 40 year old organ. Herb Willson, Derek Schofield, and Pastor Richard have received and explored several bids. We're excited about improving our worship of God with an excellent new instrument using up to date electronics which will glorify God for years to come. The recommendation will include financing through the Mission Investment Fund of the ELCA and conducting an initial 3 year New Organ appeal. Watch for more information in January on the New Organ recommendation. Please prayerfully consider becoming an organ donor!

## Birthdays and Anniversaries

### January Birthdays

1 Rick Luke  
2 Anthony Palmieri;  
Asher Cristina  
3 Bryan Boyle  
6 Serenity Jamison;  
Dutchie Wojtowicz  
7 Susan Whittaker  
8 Ava Dowling  
9 Lori Boyle  
10 Amanda Maderas;  
Justin Meyer  
12 Thomas Cosgrove;  
Ian Cristina; Lacey Felt;  
Debbie Willson  
13 Virginia Mols; Wayne Vozar  
15 Jen McNemar;  
Sandy McNemar  
16 Milan Sapos;  
Jameson Harvey  
17 Marcus Marcincavage  
18 Bertie Palmieri;  
Bill Stewart;  
Steve Woelke;  
Carol Gailey  
19 Cindy Wilkins  
23 Darlene Skorupski;  
Clayton Moon  
24 Al Agatucci  
25 Sharon Ellenberger;  
Laura May Mann, John Fletcher  
26 Erik Fritzberg  
29 Cyndee Degelman  
31 Don Costa;  
Kirsten Haliko; Bob Reimer  
Clark Stewart;  
Aurora Thompson;  
Rozanne Moreland;  
Jan Burkhart



### February Birthdays

2 Aggie Kwin  
6 Joy Young  
7 Jackie Light  
9 Michael Tiernan;  
Michelle Thomas  
10 Garrett Moon  
11 Jason Light;  
Diane Patrick  
13 Gavin Kroner;  
Dotty Sites  
15 Kendall Janosko  
16 Jacob Jacko;  
Norris Kieffer  
17 Roddy Marcincavage  
18 Nick Skorupski  
19 Jordan Perri  
21 Joshua Cannin  
22 Beverly Motichak  
23 Judy Sabolic  
24 Bethanie Stein;  
Jayci Patterson;  
Marla Stevick  
25 Zachary Marzec  
26 Sarah Jacko;  
Jennifer Junecko



### January Wedding Anniversaries

13 Mike & Carla Jamison  
25 Anthony & Bertie Palmieri

### February Wedding Anniversaries

12 Jerry & Sharyn Donahue  
16 Marcus & Jill Marcincavage

## People Serving at SJ

### JANUARY

#### Saturday Worship Assistant

6 – Debbie Sharp  
13 – Sherie Cannin  
20 – Brenda Neundorf  
27 – Glenda Miller

#### Saturday Host

6 – Joe Yurechko  
13 – Doug & Josh Cannin  
20 – Nancy Cutler  
27 – Jerry & Sherry Baur

#### Sunday Greeters

7 – Carl & Shirley Dickson  
14 – Joh & Karan Cehlar  
21 – Joe & Sarah Lundie  
28 – Jack & Julie Sacriponte

#### Sunday Worship Assistant

7 – Brenda Neundorf  
14 – Ed Sites  
21 – Herb Willson  
28 – Bob Reimer

#### Acolyte

7 – Mandy Ruffing  
14 – Jack Sacriponte  
21 – Mandy Ruffing  
28 – Rachel Motichak and  
Brenda Neundorf

#### Head Usher

7 – Tim Hess  
14 – Clark Buskey  
21 – Ed Ward  
28 – Tim Hess

#### Ushers

7 – Bertie Palmieri; Judy Jamison  
14 – John & Karan Cehlar  
21 – Joe & Sarah Lundie  
28 – Julie Sacriponte; Susan Reimer

#### Counters

Margie Trunzo; Susan Reimer; Bob  
Reimer



“Do not resent growing old; many are denied the privilege.” *Jim Reed*

## People Serving at SJ

### FEBRUARY

#### Saturday Worship Assistant

3 – Melissa Hess  
10 – Debbie Sharp  
17 – Brenda Neundorf  
24 – Sherie Cannin

#### Saturday Host

3 – Joe Yurechko  
10 – Brenda Neundorf  
17 – Jerry & Sherry Baur  
24 – Doug & Josh Cannin

#### Sunday Greeters

4 – Rick & Cindy Luke  
11 – Dee Simon; Dutchie  
Wojtowicz  
18 – Herb & Debbie Willson  
25 – Ed & Dotty Sites

#### Sunday Worship Assistant

4 – Ed Sites  
11 – Brenda Neundorf  
18 – Patty Buskey  
25 – Herb Willson

#### Acolyte

4 – Rachel Motichak and  
Brenda Neundorf  
11 – Mandy Ruffing  
18 – Jack Sacriponte  
25 – Rachel Motichak and  
Brenda Neundorf

#### Head Usher

4 – Clark Buskey  
11 – Tim Hess  
18 – Ed Ward  
25 – Clark Buskey

#### Ushers

4 – Rick & Cindy Luke  
11 – Bob & Susan Reimer  
18 – Herb & Debbie Willson  
25 – Joe & Sarah Lundie

#### Communion Bread

11 – Donna Hess

#### Counters

Karan Cehlar; John Cehlar; Jack Sutter

## Memorials

During the months of *November & December* a memorial gifts of money were given by St. John's to the Undesignated Memorial Fund in memory of Holly Gernhardt and Millie Matthews.

## Directory Updates

Please update your Church directory with the following:

**Douglas Kearns** – change of address: 400 S. Chester Pike, Apt. A3, Glenolden, PA, 19036

## Advent Blessings from Your Missionary in Singapore

Dear Friends:

It seems like every time that we look back on the year that is past we think that it was a terrible year! This year appears to be no exception, especially with the tensions over North Korea's missile and nuclear weapons programs and now the upheaval over the decision to acknowledge Jerusalem as Israel's official capital. Is there no end to the conflicts of this world?

As Christians, we know that the answer to this question is "yes." In Advent, our hearts and minds are turned toward Jesus the Coming Lord, whose reign of peace has begun. Obviously, his work is not finished, and so we wait. But as we wait we endeavor to be signs of his kingdom through words and deeds of love, even toward those whom we dislike and with whom we disagree. And of course, we pray "Come, Lord Jesus."

The time of waiting may be filled with sorrow and discouragement, but the Lord himself stands with us, and we can taste this coming kingdom when we eat the bread and drink the cup that are his body and blood. "Come, Lord Jesus," then, is not a cry of despair, but a shout of hope! May the Coming Lord keep your hearts and minds focused the hope that is to come.

As always, receive my gratitude for your journeying with me in my ministry of teaching at Trinity Theological College, Singapore.

Regards in Christ,  
Jeff Truscott

## Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events Training

### C. R. A. S. E.

The North Versailles Police are currently scheduled to offer 2 C.R.A.S.E. training events in the Hilltop Ministerium for churches and their members.

*"The Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) course, is designed and built on the Avoid, Deny Defend (ADD) strategy developed by ALERRT (Advance Law Enforcement Rapid Response Training) in 2004. It provides strategies, guidance and a proven plan for surviving an active shooter event. Topics include the history and prevalence of active shooter events, civilian response options, medical issues, and considerations for conducting drills."*

The events are scheduled for **Sunday, January 28 at 12:30 p.m. at Mt. Carmel Baptist Church** (right after their worship service) and **Saturday, February 17 from 10:00 a.m. to noon at St. John's**.

Everyone from St. John's congregation is invited to participate in these training events. In order for the Police department to adequately prepare materials for the size of the group attending please RSVP to the congregation you will attend one week prior to the event:

Mt. Carmel: call/email by Sunday, January 21.  
412-823-2841 / [huldaah@aol.com](mailto:huldaah@aol.com)

St. John's call/email by Saturday, February 10  
412-824-0277 / [sjnoffice@verizon.net](mailto:sjnoffice@verizon.net)

## Luther Longears Has Heard...

...that we continue to remember in prayer our shut-ins and members who were in the hospital, had surgery or were ill during November & December: Tammy Acklin, Jerry Baur, Carrie Cosgrove, George Freeman, Sarah Haag, Donna Hess, Paige Hess, Jim Howell, Joan Kennedy, Frances Loughner, Joe Lundie, Dan McNemar, Debi Maurizi, Edith Zoric.

...that we thank Sarah Lundie, the Women of the ELCA, and everyone else that helped with the meaningful Thankoffering Services celebrated on November 11 & 12.

...that congratulations are due to Cindy and Joe Blasko for the birth of another granddaughter Hunter Augustine on December 1. Hunter is the daughter of Carrie and Joe.

...that we send thanks and our appreciation to Herb Willson and his committee for organizing the beautiful Hanging of the Greens service on Sunday, December 3. The service was beautiful, informative and inspiring. It is wonderful to continue this St. John's tradition.

...that we rejoiced to receive by Holy Baptism Tristyn Leigh Tedesco on December 3, and Everett Willson Moon on December 10. To God goes our thanks for His gift of new birth, and to Him our prayers that Tristyn and Everett will remain faithful to their baptismal covenant. Welcome!

...that the sympathy of the congregation is extended to the family of Holly Gernhardt who died on November 26, 2017, and to the family of Millie Matthews who passed away on December 13. May Holly and Millie rest in the eternal peace of God our Father.

...that thanks go to Shirley and Carl Dickson for coordinating the Christmas card exchange this past December. This ministry is appreciated and so are your efforts.

...that thanks and appreciation is extended to Sarah Lundie and Dotty Sites who bought the goodies for the Christmas bags that were delivered to our shut-ins, and to Sarah and Judy Sabolic for filling them. These bags offer not only special treats, but warm thoughts this time of year!

...that Janice and Jim Winkles send their thanks to the Women of the ELCA for the Christmas treat bag they received. They very much appreciated the thoughtfulness of the women!

...that LLE (Luther Long Ears) thanks the Reimers for putting up the beautiful window and door decorations adorning our church for Christmas, and to Clark Buskey for putting up our lovely Christmas tree and hanging the wreath above the front door.

...that thanks go to everyone who ordered a Poinsettia to help decorate our church for the Christmas holiday. We had a total of 25 plants. The Sanctuary looked beautiful! Thanks to our Altar Guild and others for their faithful time setting everything up and making our church look so lovely.

...that our thanks go to the Lundie Family for providing the luminaries on Christmas Eve. That glowing touch helped make the evening even more special!

...that everyone enjoyed the chocolates from Dorothy's Candies that were distributed on Christmas Eve. Thanks to Marti and Robert Gastel for continuing to indulge our collective sweet tooth!

...that St. John's received a Christmas card from East Allegheny Meals on Wheels thanking us for our faithful support "that has helped many in our community".

...that the Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services were a joy...the children arranged the Nativity scene at the altar after the birth story was told; the special music by the choir and Handbell Choir (magnificent), filled the church with melodic sounds; the poinsettias, candles, window decorations and luminaries that lined the sidewalk added such beauty...Joy...unto us!

...that thanks go to the December 30 carolers who sang to our local shut-ins. What a blessing to sing the joy of Jesus!

...that all committee and organizational chairpersons are reminded that year-end reports and financial statements ***were due in the office by December 31***. Congregation Council chairpersons who have recently completed their terms of office are still responsible for compiling and submitting this report. Please email reports ASAP to [sjnvoffice@verizon.net](mailto:sjnvoffice@verizon.net).

...that MA's Pantry Food Bank distribution times are January 6 & 20 and February 3 & 17 (Saturdays) from **9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.** at Broadway Alliance Church in East McKeesport. Recipients need to be residents of East McKeesport or North Versailles; first time recipients need to provide photo ID, proof of residence, and proof of income to meet guidelines.

...that the Epiphany Season begins January 6<sup>th</sup> with the journey of the Magi, announcing God's offer of salvation to all people and nations.

...that the installation of 2018 Congregation Council & Officers will take place on Saturday & Sunday, January 6 & 7 during the worship services. Please pray for God's love & guidance to these members who graciously made this commitment.

...that **Choir** members are reminded that Choir rehearsal will resume on **Thursday, January 11** at 8:00 p.m. The **Handbell choir** will resume practice on **Monday, January 29** at 7:30 p.m.

...that sincere thanks and appreciation is extended to everyone who served as greeters, ushers, counters, acolytes, hosts, and worship assistants this

past year. Also to the Altar Guild members for preparing the altar for worship each weekend and to those who baked bread for communion when needed. And thank you to Brenda Neundorf for changing the outdoor sign regularly so that the community sees fresh and inspiring messages that offer a welcome to St. John's and the Christian faith. Without **each of you**, these important ministries of St. John's would not have been possible.

...that we give thanks for those who contributed food, money and their time for the community "MA's Pantry" during the past year. We also give thanks for your contributions toward the "Christmas Turkey Fund". Because you cared, it was a special holiday season for those in need in our area and they are all grateful. Please continue to give your support as it is needed. Thanks!

...that thanks are extended to all the members of St. John's who helped to make this year's "Giving Tree" project a success! Your generosity has helped to provide 48 presents (out of 200!) and Christmas cheer for the children & adults assigned to St. John's among the hundreds served by "MA's Pantry." Your Christmas gift giving makes a difference in many people's lives. 'Tis good!

...that thanks and appreciation is extended to all the Altar and Chancel flower sponsors for 2017. The flowers add much beauty to our worship every Saturday & Sunday.

...that the Finance Committee thanks the counters for 2017. The new schedule for 2018 is being prepared. If you are willing to serve in this ministry please contact Theresa Drye (412-609-0434).

...that heartfelt thanks go to the members & friends of St. John's for faithful giving, for those who gave special year end gifts, and for Joe Lundie who secured a grant from the Anne Monroe Foundation.

...that the year-end financial statement of contributions to the congregation's ministries and Building Fund contribution statements for 2017 will be mailed out during January. If you have any questions see Financial Secretary Theresa Drye who is responsible for the regular 2017 envelopes (412-609-0443, [theresadrye3675@gmail.com](mailto:theresadrye3675@gmail.com)) or Steve Grbach (412-829-0146, [srgrbach5355@aol.com](mailto:srgrbach5355@aol.com)) for the Building Fund.

...that we need to thank Joe Yurechko for 'trimming' the sacristy door so it now opens and closes easily.

...that we appreciate that Clark Buskey freed up seating space in the narthex by hanging the stained glass window (from St. John, McKeesport, which closed) in the narthex. It looks great!

...that our **annual Congregational Meeting** is scheduled for **January 28** after Sunday worship (a luncheon will precede the meeting, the meeting begins about 12:30 – 12:45 p.m.). Mark your calendar now and plan to be here.

...that a sign-up sheet for sponsoring our ELCA missionary Jeffrey Truscott in 2018 is now posted in the narthex and there are **MANY** dates available. Please consider sponsoring this important ministry!

... that we should mark our calendars for the FAITH 5 event on Tuesday January 16 (6:30-8:00 pm) and the Mardi Gras dinner and Lenten event at St. John's on Tuesday, February 13.

...that Ryan & Milan Sapos are expecting their second child in July 2018.

...that Danielle and Austin Wilson – prospective members (!) – are awaiting the birth of their second child in mid-January. (He's a boy ....!).

...that we received a thank you letter from the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Pittsburgh thanking us for supporting their mission through the Pull Tab Program. The note says that this program continues to grow every year and the revenue that is raised is used to help support the families who utilize their services.

...that the greenhouse does not yet have the Easter Tulip and Lily pricing and information available. The order forms will be in your bulletin and on the table in the narthex in a few weeks.

**...that the staff at St. John's, Pastor Richard, Debra, Tim, Derek, Jim (and Nursery Attendant Melissa) wish all of you a Happy, Healthy & Joyous New Year!**



Looking for Scoops!  
*Luther Longears*

# Staff & Congregation Council

## **Staff**

Pastor.....*Richard W. Krug*  
Director of Music.....*Derek Schofield*  
Church Secretary.....*Debra Maurizi*  
Custodian.....*Tim Hess*

## **Congregation Officers**

President (ex-officio).....*Richard W. Krug*

*Officers for 2018, as well as committee representatives, will be elected and appointed at the Council Planning Workshop on January 6 and installed the weekend of January 6-7.*

## **2018 Congregation Council**

Harrison Biddle	Clark Buskey
Sherie Cannin	Theresa Drye
Melissa Hess	Judy Jamison
John Kennedy	Pastor Richard Krug
Brenda Neundorf	Judi Rogers
Julie Sacriponte	Cody Schaar

A 12<sup>th</sup> Council position is being discerned.

