

ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
3597 WEST MAIN STREET  
PO BOX 5716  
BELLEVILLE PA 17004

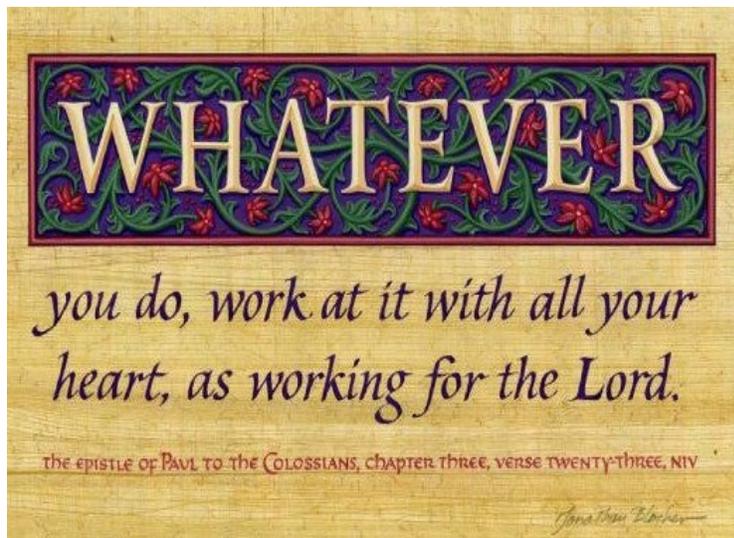
ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# The Parish Messenger



St. John's Lutheran Church, Belleville, Pennsylvania

## SEPTEMBER 2023



### ***Our Mission Statement***

*We, the members of St. John's congregation,  
promise to share the good news of Jesus Christ  
and to love one another through worship and service  
in our homes, church, community and the world.*

St. John's Lutheran Church  
3597 West Main Street  
P.O. Box 5716  
Belleville, PA 17004

9:30am Worship  
10:45am Sunday School  
September through May

Church Office ~ 935-2032  
St. John's Christian Day Care and Preschool ~ 935-2959  
E-mail us at [secretary@stjohnsbelleville.org](mailto:secretary@stjohnsbelleville.org)  
Website ~ [stjohnsbelleville.org](http://stjohnsbelleville.org)





## HEALING and WHOLENESS

What are our prayers? What do we hope for, long for? Are there some things in the world we find so distressing but so powerless to change it seems all we can do is pray?

Are there times we feel so overwhelmed we don't even know how to shape the prayers we know we want to pray?

The words of Paul's letter to the Romans 8:26-28 - this translation from the Living Bible and the NRSV - offers us comfort and assurance in this:

*26 And in the same way—by our faith[e]—the Holy Spirit helps us with our daily problems and in our praying. For we don't even know what we should pray for nor how to pray as we should, but the Holy Spirit prays for us with such feeling that it cannot be expressed in words. 27 And the Father who knows all hearts knows, of course, what the Spirit is saying as he pleads for us in harmony with God's own will.*

And from the New Revised Standard Version: *28 And we know that all things work together for good for those who love God.*

Other translations of Romans 8 use the expression "the Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words." I am always deeply touched by the prayers brought forward in a Healing and Wholeness service as I was again on our fifth Sunday in July. A Healing and Wholeness service gives us the opportunity to acknowledge those 'groanings' that often manifest as complaints or frustration and instead gives us words to express them as prayers for God's intercession.

People bring forward their prayers individually, prayers for themselves so that they may function better in their relationships and the work they do for others; prayers for others that they will be healed and strengthened and kept safe; and most of all prayers for our church, our community and our world that we may find unity and peace and a better world for our young ones to live into.

More than one word in this passage from Romans is based on the Greek root 'syn' or 'sym'. 'Synergeo' from "We know that all things 'work together' is one and the word for 'helps' comes from a long and loaded Greek word, 'synantilambanomai.' We know this root 'syn-' from words like 'synthesis' or 'synergy' or closely related 'sympathy' or 'symphony.' When we come together to express our deepest desires for ourselves, others and the world we bring our prayers to work together in harmony with, in sympathy with the Holy Spirit, with Christ, with the Creator and with each other. We create a synergy, a symphony that we believe will resound in the world in time fulfilling and restoring God's peace.

The strength, sensitivity, unity and faith expressed in the St. Johns community is evident in these prayers. I have to say this makes it difficult for me to think about transition as the Call committee continues to work on creating a church profile in preparation for seeking a new pastor, and Huntingdon presbytery churches continue to investigate partnerships of which I could be a part. We hope to hear official updates as Council and other committees meet in the coming weeks.

As the sun rises this morning, broad rays of light streak through dark clouds touching Big Valley from the steeple of St. Johns to Allensville. We are reminded once again that God works with us (Gr. 'synergeo') in all that we do and that "all things will work together for good."

In God's grace,  
Pastor Ela,  
Rev. Ela J. Robertson

## MUSIC and WORSHIP

Music and Worship met on Wednesday August 23. Hymns for gathering and praise, sending and themes of the day were selected from ones suggested by the lectionary through to the New Year. If a tune was unfamiliar Susi could sing it for us and plan to play it in preludes in the preceding weeks to familiarize the congregation with these less familiar but great hymns. Discussion was lively bringing forth the expertise from Reba as a former choir director, Rosalie and her years as a pastor, Rosemary as a former Lutheran pastor's spouse, Pastor Ela's theological and liturgical insights, and Jami's organizational knack.

If there were any favorite hymns missed during the summer let us know. We are always flexible to change and there will be opportunities to suggest favorite carols at the end of the year.

### CHURCH ACCESS during week days:

If you are visiting the church when Day Care is in session approx. Monday - Friday 7AM - 6PM, please drive into and park in the front parking lot; do not drive through or park in the area behind the back door to the church as during the week it is reserved for safe Day Care access to the playground.

Also if you are visiting the church during the week when Day Care is in session do not let another person in the door with you. They will either use the code for entrance they have been given as a Day Care parent or staff member, or may ring the buzzer at the door by the office for someone in the church office or Day Care, who is expecting them to let them in.

Thank you. We know most of you are aware of this; the reminder helps us all preserve the security of the church and our Day Care children.

### **Thursday September 7<sup>th</sup> Our Town: Big Valley Premiere!** Broadcast on Public Television

WPSU is seeking Phone volunteers for this viewing.

Volunteers will answer phones from Our Town Big Valley supporters. They will have an easy, scripted form to follow and fill out for each caller. The Volunteer Coordinator for the evening will train everyone on what to expect. It's easy & rewarding and I hope you will join us!

**VOLUNTEERS: Please arrive by 7:30 pm so you can enjoy food from Reedsville Creamery and Hostetler's Country Market and cold soda while we hold a brief training session.**



NEWS from the ELCA & the PARLIAMENT OF WORLD RELIGIONS  
with excerpts from the message on Sunday August 27

One of my goals for the conference of World Religions was to see how the Lutheran and Presbyterian denominations played out in the global religious community. Although there were not many Protestants at the conference I was not disappointed.

One of the highlights for me was hearing the Chicago community choir - their rehearsals and performances housed, supported and sponsored by the Presbytery of Chicago - bringing together in this rather segregated city people from the neighborhoods from the North and the South, creating music so infused with the breath and fire of the spirit, you could not help but be moved, changed and affirmed in your faith

I also had an opportunity to meet the Presiding bishop of the ELCA, Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, pass on greetings from Bishop Miller and catch a quick conversation with her. An excellent workshop was offered by a Lutheran minister and representative on the consultative panel task force for Lutheran - Jewish relations which had been meeting with her office over the last year.

This committee, made up of representatives of several denominations and faiths met together to identify: Problematic interpretations and perspectives on the identity of the early Church drawn from the early Jewish communities and problematic interpretations of the Jewish identity of Jesus himself and of his message. For each problematic perspective - i.e. ones that could tend to stereotype or even demean the religion of which Jesus and all of his disciples were a part, a 'better' alternative is offered, one that respects the wisdom of the Torah as living alongside not cancelled out by the wisdom of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The panel *"hoped that readers will increasingly identify with the spirit and approach of this guide, finding it helpful for the tasks of ministry and for building up the body of Christ, particularly in our understanding of Jews and Judaism."* And the speaker added that this this outline can be applied to a better understanding of and respect for other world religions whether referenced in the Bible or not.

The guide is available from the ELCA as a downloadable document or you may ask Pastor Ela for a copy. I will continue to reference other take-aways from the 'Parliament of World Religions' in the coming weeks. The little I have shared about this conference is not the same as being there, but everyone of us can imagine opening our hearts to people around the world in turbans, and saris, serapes and ponchos who like us have belief that through God we are called to create a world where people can live in peace and unity.

We need to acknowledge the prejudices and perspectives that dismiss or degrade or meet with fear those who are different than us. We need to approach with humility the gifts of understanding and love given us through Jesus Christ. We need to claim our own identity as Christians and as the church and live into our identity that sings "They will know we are Christians by our love." Let us extend this love to like purposed individuals of all denominations and faiths in our country and around the world. Let us expand our vision of what is possible in the world when we do.

**Parliament of the  
World's Religions**

A Call to Conscience:  
Defending Freedom &  
Human Rights

**2023 PARLIAMENT  
OF THE WORLD'S RELIGIONS**



CHICAGO, USA

## St. John's Lutheran Church

Pastor – Reverend Ela J. Robertson  
Phone 740-338-7123  
Organist – Susie Yoo  
Sextons – Calvin and Kelly Byler  
Church Secretary – Kelly Byler  
Office Phone 935-2032  
Email us at [secretary@stjohnsbelleville.org](mailto:secretary@stjohnsbelleville.org)

### St. John's Christian Daycare and Preschool

Valerie McTavish ~ Director  
Phone 717-935-2959

## St. John's Congregational Council

	<u>Term Expires</u>
Ed Bilich ~ Treasurer	end of 2024
Jim Buchanan	end of 2025
Carol Fultz ~ President	end of 2023
Michele Harshbarger ~ Vice Pres.	end of 2025
Joe Kanagy	end of 2025
Nancy Penepacker ~ Secretary	end of 2024

## St. John's Financial Report

Checking account balance 8/29/2023  
\$ 4,604.67

January 1 through August 29, 2023

Income \$ 170,065.87\* Expense \$ 178,353.74  
Net Income \$ -8,287.87\*

\* \$7,000.00 was transferred from the Money Market  
to help cover monthly expenses.

## Daycare Financial Report

Checking account balance 8/29/2023  
\$ 13,091.27

January 1 through August 29, 2023

Income \$ 213,181.32 Expense \$ 232,488.79  
Net Income \$ -19,307.47

\*Daycare had a 3-pay month in June along w/end of  
school year which has been reflected in the net  
income figure. It should decrease with new school  
year enrollment and tuition increase this month.

I finally found a diet plan  
that really works.  
It's called "The Price of Food."



After taking a break for the summer, council  
will resume meeting on Thursday, September 14.  
**PLEASE NOTE** ~ since council did not meet in  
July, the June minutes have not been reviewed and  
approved. They will be included in the October  
newsletter.

Our constitution states we can have no more than  
12 or fewer than 6 council representatives in order to  
conduct the business of the church. At this time, we  
have 6 members, one whose term expires the end of  
December. While we can operate with 6 having 2, 3  
or even 4 more would be helpful, especially when  
members are unable to attend a meeting.

The December congregational meeting is three  
months away. Please take this time to *prayerfully*  
consider serving. Council meetings now begin at  
6:30pm and are held the 2nd Thursday of each  
month with the exception of July and August (no  
scheduled meetings during summer), and "normally"  
last no longer than 1-1½ hours.

## In Our Church and Community

### Daycare

The daycare thanks everyone who helped make this year's sale another success. Those who donated baked goods, those who came to browse and buy, and especially for your donations. Your junk and unwanted items are definitely another person's treasure! We made \$1,827.00!!!!

In order to comply with state regulations, the daycare is required to upgrade the type of smoke detectors being used throughout the building. The old ones, which are still in good usable condition (replacement recommendations are 10 years from the date listed on the back of the device) need a home to protect. A box containing the old detectors has been placed in the narthex. Please feel free to take one.

This year's gift show is scheduled for Friday, November 24 and Saturday, November 25. More information will be included in the October and November newsletters.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the "Liberia Tuition Sponsorship Program". A total of 38 students were sponsored at an average of \$104.00 per student, for a total of \$3,965.00. Joe still has one more child available if you would like to support another or become a new sponsor.

Your gift has helped to change the life of a child by providing them with an education and hope for a better life.

The season of Advent begins in three months, and we are going to compile a devotional, with help from West Kish members **IF**, enough people are interested. This year will focus on the four themes of Advent ~ Hope, Peace, Joy and Love.

Volunteers are needed to write the meditations. A sign-up sheet along with scripture readings can be found in the narthex. **Submissions are needed by Friday, November 10...PLEASE.**

After taking a summer break, the Knotters will gather together again on Thursday, September 7th and 21st at 9:30am in the blue room.

Blanket Sunday is October 1st. Envelopes will be included in the September 24 bulletin and placed in the narthex. A selection from the comforts they finished this past year will be displayed throughout the church.



The Adult Sunday school which meets in the blue room will resume on Sunday, September 24. Michele Harshbarger and Ed Bilich are leading the weekly sessions. You are invited to come and join.

St. John's has Meals on Wheels the end of September/beginning of October. There is a sign-up in the narthex for desserts, along with monetary donations to purchase pies. Money can be given to Sue Lynch, or dropped off at the church office.

Tuesday, September 26 ~ 5 Angel Food Cakes  
*(Make your own, or purchase homemade from WHS or Peight's)*

Thursday, September 28 6 ~ 4 cans of Cherry Pie Filling

Tuesday, October 3 ~ 5 dozen cookies (any kind)

Thursday, October 5 ~ Donations to purchase pies  
*(Please give to Sue Lynch or drop off at the church office)*

We currently have a need for substitute drivers, who would be willing to help with meal delivery when our regularly scheduled drivers are not available. If you have any questions or can help in this way, please contact Sue Lynch (935-2013). Thank you!

# ***SEPTEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE***

## **September 3**

**Elevator:** Joe Kanagy

**Greeters:** Mike and Michele Harshbarger

**Lay Reader:** Mike Harshbarger

**Money Counters:** John and Denise Chester

**Sound System:** Joe Kanagy

## **September 10**

**Elevator:** Randy Harshbarger

**Greeter:** Deb French

**Lay Reader:** Deb French

**Money Counters:** Sue Lynch and Carol Fultz

**Sound System:** Joe Kanagy

## **September 17**

**Elevator:** Joe Kanagy

**Greeters:** Jim and Georgianna Buchanan

**Lay Reader:** John Boring

**Money Counters:** Jay and Joy Byler

**Sound System:** Jay Byler

## **September 24**

**Elevator:** Randy Harshbarger

**Greeters:** John and Brenda Boring

**Lay Reader:** John Boring

**Money Counters:** Joe Kanagy and Randy Harshbarger

**Sound System:** Jay Byler

**Altar Care** ~ Georgianna Buchanan

**Altar Flower Delivery** ~ Georgianna Buchanan

**Bulletin Delivery** ~ Jim and Georgianna Buchanan

**Please remember:**  
If you are unable to be present  
on your scheduled day,  
**it is your responsibility,**  
to find a replacement

# St. John's Lutheran Church

## September

### 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>9:30am</b> <b>Worship</b> <b>10:30am</b> <b>Sunday</b> <b>School</b>	Looking Ahead  October 1 ~ Blanket Sunday October 29 ~ Reformation Sunday				1	2
3 Holy Communion	4  DC and Church Office Closed	5	6	7 9:30am Comfort Knotting <i>Our Town Big Valley</i> on PBS at 8:00pm	8	9
10	11	12 	13	14 6:30pm Council Meeting	15	16
17 Holy Communion	18 6:30pm Property Committee Meeting	19	20	21 9:30am Comfort Knotting	22	23 
24 Adult SS Class resumes in the blue room	25	26 St. John's has Meals on Wheels	27	28 St. John's has Meals on Wheels	29	30