

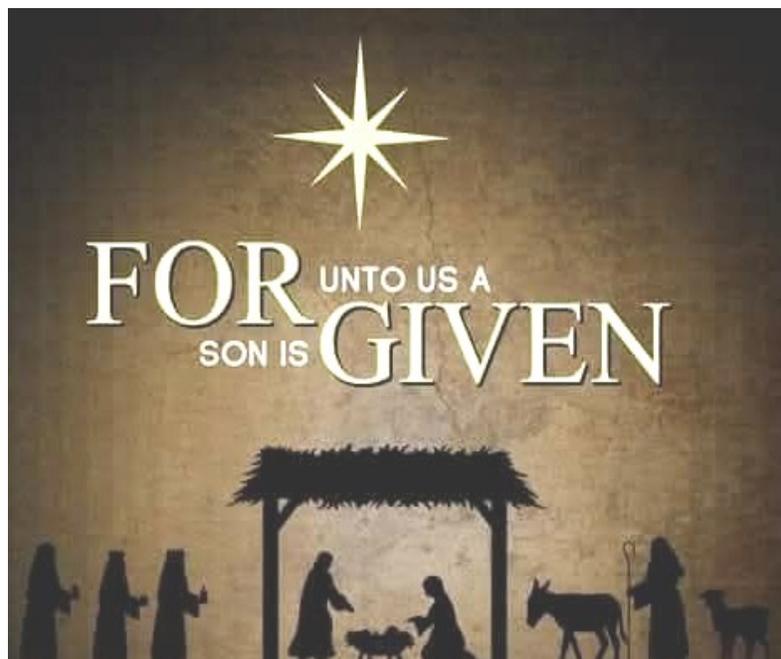
ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH  
3597 WEST MAIN STREET  
PO BOX 5716  
BELLEVILLE PA 17004

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

# The Parish Messenger

St. John's Lutheran Church, Belleville, Pennsylvania

**DECEMBER 2025**



### ***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

9:00am 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)



# Pastor's Page

When one of my favorite authors, the late James A. Michener was nine years old, he regularly mowed the lawn of an elderly neighbor lady named Mrs. Long. She could not afford to pay him very much, but she did promise James Michener a Christmas present. Young Jim had visions of a baseball glove or ice skates, or perhaps a toy train. But when she handed him his Christmas present it definitely was not a glove or skates or a train. It was a flat box about nine inches by twelve inches.

When he opened the gift on Christmas morning he found a box with ten flimsy sheets of black paper labeled "CARBON PAPER, REGAL PREMIUM." His aunt Laura, a school teacher, was there when he opened the box and exclaimed, "It's magic!" She then took some paper and showed young Jim how it worked.

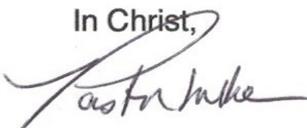
Years later, after he had achieved fame as one of the best novelists in the world and had won the Pulitzer Prize for his work, Michener said, "I was enthralled! I can honestly say that on that Christmas morning I understood and learned as much about printing and the mystery of disseminating ideas as I have learned in the remaining half century of my life." It was not a gift that he neither wanted or expected, but it was something much better for which he would look back upon in his life and thank God.

There is much about our lives that is this way for us too I believe. We sometimes receive gifts that we neither want nor expect at the time we are given them, and perhaps we would not even want to call them gifts at all. However, when we look back we can in retrospect see them for the wonderful treasures that they are; gifts that have helped to mold and shape us to be the people we are now.

Christmas day will soon be upon us when the best and greatest gift that we could ever receive is given to us. I very much doubt that God's people were expecting a baby boy born to Mary and Joseph on a cold night in Bethlehem. Little did the world know that the God whom we worship would gift us with His own self.

Every Christmas Eve we sing the hymn Silent Night which in part says "How silently, how silently the wondrous gift is given." Indeed so! The good news which the Christian faith has preached, taught and confessed for two thousand years says that in that little baby boy born in a manger, a feeding trough, on that night long ago is one who became like us in our common humanity; knowing us fully, understanding us completely, accepting us without condition, and forgiving us endlessly. He who was born in Bethlehem grew up to live his life in the common haunts of people with all the same hopes and dreams and good and evil that we are subjected to now. This little infant, needing love and milk, yet wrapped in the divinity of God is God's gift to us and for us. He would grow up and live his life completely out of love for others and he would die on a cross out of that same love and then be raised from the grave to be with us now as I write these words. All of this out of his love for us and God's determination to give us the greatest gift we would ever want or need. All that is left for us to do is to receive this gift of God freely given.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Mike". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Mike

Pastor – Reverend Mike Sigler  
Office hours ~Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
10:00am till noon  
(subject to change to accommodate meetings, etc.)  
Phone ~ 717-437-7007 or 717-310-4444  
Organist – Rick Cole  
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**

Angela Parko, Director  
Phone 717-935-2959

**St. John's Congregational Council**

	<u>Term Expires</u>
Jim Buchanan ~ Treasurer	end of 2025
Carol Fultz ~ President	end of 2026
Michele Harshbarger ~ Secretary	end of 2025
Joe Kanagy	end of 2025
Sue Lynch	end of 2027
Nancy Penepacker ~ Vice Pres.	end of 2027

Meetings are held at 6:30pm the second Thursday of each month, with the exception of July and August.

**St. John's Financial Report**

Checking account balance 11/25/2025  
\$ 9,149.90

January 1 through November 25, 2025

Income \$ 162,081.60 Expense \$ 157,668.06  
Net Income \$ 4,413.54

Does not include offering for November 30 and end of month expenses.

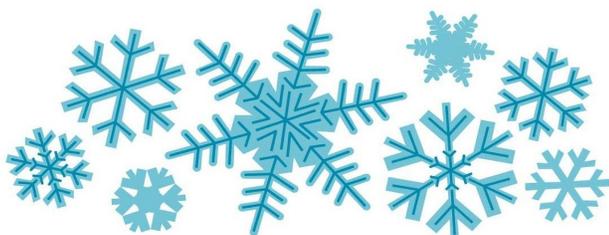
**Daycare Financial Report**

Checking account balance 11/25/2025  
\$ 10,847.79

January 1 through November 25, 2025

Income \$ 272,740.35 Expense \$ 267,820.33  
Net Income \$ 4,920.02

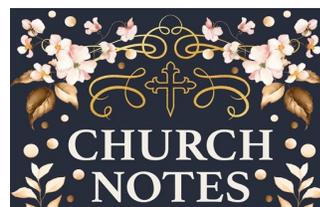
Does not include end of month income and expense.



**FYI ~ New Phone Feature**

We are adding a feature to our phone service which will allow the church office to send out text messages to those who provide their cell phone number, along with voice mail messages. **This will be especially beneficial if worship is cancelled due to inclement weather conditions.**

For those who do not have a cell phone and/or do not receive text messages, the voice mail message will be sent to your landline/answering machine.



Our congregational meeting is scheduled for December 14 following the service. Information will be available in member mailboxes on Sunday, November 30. Any remaining envelopes will be mailed out on December 1. Please contact the church office if you did not receive yours.

Due to the Christmas/New Year's holiday Bible study, will only be held on Wednesday, December 3rd, 10th, and 17th. It will resume again on January 7th.

December hand bell and choir rehearsal will also be held the same weeks as Bible Study, but will not resume again until Wednesday, January 14 as Rick will be away the first week in January.

## IN OUR CHURCH and COMMUNITY

The Lions Club sponsored *Belleville Family Christmas* celebration is being held on Friday, December 12 at the Union Township Community Center .

**VOLUNTEERS are needed to help hand out goodie bags to the children from 6:00-8:00pm. It is always a fun time, and the bags go quickly! When you run out, you can either leave, or stay and enjoy the festivities!! Ask a friend, or family member(s) to help.**

If interested, please see Ed Bilich or contact the church office.

Thank you to those persons who continue to help with the Sunday morning duties. We are in need of a volunteer for the following in December ~

### **Christmas Eve Service Elevator Operator and Sound System**

Please contact the church office if you can help in this way.

*Shining Light Through the Darkness* annual Christmas light display at Derry Community Park (former Kish Park) begins Friday, December 6 and runs through January 2.

Featured are thousands of lights and displays for young and old to enjoy. There is no cost, free entertainment, carriage rides, food and more.

The park is open (most) evenings 5:00-9:00pm and Saturdays from 9:00am to 5:00pm.

More information can be found on their website.



The 2026 offering envelopes will be available in member mailboxes on December 14. Please contact the church office if you did not receive or would like to have one. Feel free to deliver to a member who may not be able to pick theirs up.



### *~ In the Narthex ~*



Advent begins on Sunday, November 30. Thank you to those who signed up to write the meditations.

The devotionals are available on the old altar. If you know of others who would enjoy having one to use as part of their daily devotions, please feel free to take for them.

Sign-up sheets for anyone who would like to place Altar flowers next year.

**Please remember to notate** whether you would like to keep the flowers or have them delivered. Deihl's has recently informed us that the cost is not increasing and will remain at \$40.00.

The 2026 church birthday calendars will be available on Sunday, December 14. **There is no cost, feel free to take one or more.**

Reminder ~ only the names of active members, along with the persons they have requested to add, will be included on the calendar.

St. John's has Meals on Wheels the first 2 weeks in December. Please sign-up if you can help provide needed desserts. Monetary donations are also needed to purchase pies/cheesecakes. See Sue Lunch/church office if you can help in this way.



### **Mitten Tree**

Needed are ~ Mittens, gloves, scarves, hats, socks, slipper socks and slippers for children and adults.

Social Ministry is continuing to collect canned goods/non perishables for the Shelter Service through December. Donations may be placed in the boxes located in the narthex.



**Shelter Service Inc.**  
**13 Depot St. Lewistown, PA 17044**

St. John's Lutheran Church  
3597 West Main St.  
Belleville, PA 17004

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Dear St. John's Lutheran Church,

Thank you for your very generous donation of 43 Large comforters, 22 small comforters, and 2 blankets. With the cold weather on the horizon, these comforters and blankets will provide lots of warmth to our residents and community members. We are grateful for your kind-heartedness and support during these challenging times and appreciate you coming alongside us in an effort to help the homeless, both inside and outside our shelter. With your help, we can continue to help and assist those in need. Thank you for all you do and contribute.

Blessings to you,

Scott Allen  
Site Coordinator



Jane E. Neff  
Executive Director

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*Note: No goods or services were received by the donor for this donation.*

**BELLEVILLE  
FAMILY**

# **CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION**

**12/12/2025 • 6PM-8PM**

**OUR NEW LOCATION:  
UNION TOWNSHIP COMMUNITY CENTER  
95 N PENN STREET, BELLEVILLE, PA**

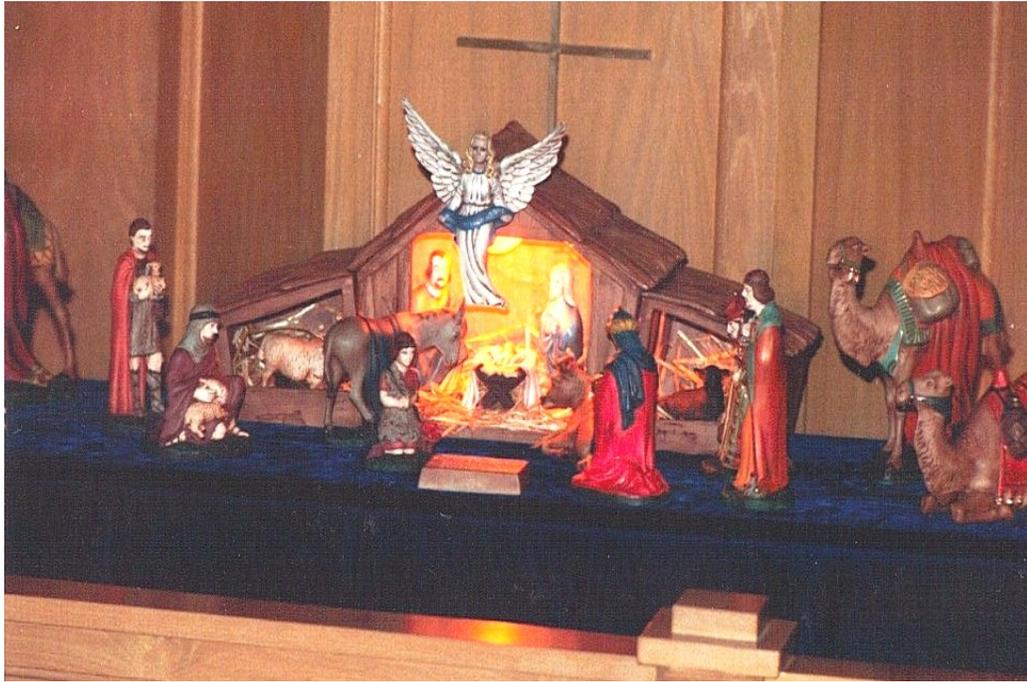
- Live Nativity
- Live Music
- Tree Lighting
- Outdoor Games
- Crafts & Face Painting
- Scavenger Hunt
- Prize Drawing
- Festive Food
- Live Reindeer
- Card Signing
- Santa Claus
- Story Time
- Coffee

**SPREAD THE JOY! PLEASE BRING A  
NON-PERISHABLE ITEM FOR THE FOOD BANK**



## *Christmas through the years...*

None of the very few Christmas pictures we have are dated, but an educated guess would be they were taken sometime in the 1970's or 80's up to possibly 2007. If anyone can provide more information, please contact the church office.



The Nativity, which was hand painted by Bernard and Barbara (Stuter) Conner was gifted to St. John's in December of 1972. It used to be displayed in front of the pulpit. (you can see the cross behind it). This picture may have been taken sometime in the 1970's or 80's. After 50+ years some of the animals are missing ears and there are a few small chips here and there, but overall, it is still well-preserved for its age.



The window candles were made by Glenn and Tom Bigelow, in Glenn's basement sometime in the late seventies or early eighties. They were shown how by a gentleman, who made them for the church he attended in Lewistown. They too, are still in good shape for their age.



Reba Harmon faithfully directing the choir in one of the many Christmas cantata's they presented over the years. You can see the bottom of a hanging poinsettia above Sharon Dancy's head (below). The year was either 2006 or 2007. Pastor Kampa is singing with the choir, and he came in 2006. Jody Stuter is also in the photos and she died in November of 2008.

FYI ~ The pew candles which we mostly now use for our Christmas Eve worship were purchased by St. John's choir. They held sauerkraut dinners on New Year's Day to raise the money.



Who could forget the big live trees with the handmade Crismon ornaments?? How many of you remember making them during Sunday school? And, the smell of fresh pine when you walked up the steps to the sanctuary. Not sure where the trees came from every year, but one may have been donated by Nellie Orbin? Does anyone remember a large pine tree in her front yard on Walnut Street?

At one time, St. John's was the only local church who held a Christmas Eve service. If you wanted to get a good seat, you needed to be here by 6:00 or shortly after...maybe earlier. Ushers walked down the aisles looking for empty spaces to seat people, and would set up metal chairs wherever they could find room.

Anyone remember Pastor Kramm's memorable Christmas Eve sermon about the warm fuzzies and cold pricklies. Do any of you still have your warm fuzzy? Believe it or not there are people who still do!

# ***DECEMBER SERVICE SCHEDULE***

## **December 7**

**Elevator:** Mike Harshbarger  
**Greeters:** John and Denise Chester  
**Lay Reader:** John Chester  
**Money Counters:** John and Denise Chester  
**Sound System:** Ed Bilich

## **December 14**

**Elevator:** Randy Harshbarger  
**Greeters:** Mike and Michele Harshbarger  
**Lay Reader:** Mike Harshbarger  
**Money Counters:** Carol Fultz and Sue Lynch  
**Sound System:** Joe Kanagy

## **December 21**

**Elevator:** Joe Kanagy  
**Greeters:** Chelsea and Merritt Reed  
**Lay Reader:** Chelsea Reed  
**Money Counters:** Jay and Joy Byler  
**Sound System:** Calvin Byler

## **December 24 ~ Christmas Eve**

**Elevator:** Volunteer Needed  
**Greeter:** Ed Bilich  
**Lay Reader:** Ed Bilich  
**Sound System:** Volunteer Needed

## **December 28**

**Elevator:** Ed Bilich  
**Greeter:** Lucy Magda  
**Lay Reader:** Joe Kanagy  
**Money Counters:** Randy Harshbarger and Joe Kanagy  
**Sound System:** Jay Byler

**Altar Care** ~ Carol Fultz

**Altar Flower Delivery** ~ Carol Fultz

**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.

**Aside from being included in each  
newsletter, a copy of the service  
schedule for those fulfilling  
monthly worship duties can be  
found on the bulletin board in the  
hallway between the offices.**

**St. John's Lutheran Church**  
**Minutes of the October 9,2025 meeting**

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

**Vision Statement:** To be welcoming people who encourage God's love in our community through our prayers, devotion, benevolence, and deeds.

The monthly meeting of St. John's Lutheran Church council was held on, October 9,2025 at 6:30 pm in the blue room.

**Present:** Pastor Mike Sigler, President Carol Fultz, Sue Lynch, Jim Buchanan, Michele Harshbarger, Joe Kanagy and Nancy Penepacker.

The meeting was called to order by Carol Fultz

**Devotions:** \_Sue Lynch led devotions.

The devotion schedule for2025is:

February –Sue Lynch

March –Jim Buchanan

April –Joe Kanagy

May –Nancy Penepacker

June – Michele Harshbarger

July & August – no meetings

September –Jim Buchanan

October -Sue Lynch

November – Joe Kanagy

December – Nancy Penepacker

**Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from the 9/11/25 meeting were presented. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Pastor Sigler and seconded by Sue Lynch. Motion carried.

Pastor's Report presented

**Financial Reports:**

The financial reports were presented

St. John's – A motion to accept the church financial report was made by Michele Harshbarger and seconded by Joe Kanagy . Motion carried.

St. John's Daycare – A motion to accept the daycare financial report was made by Pastor Sigler and seconded by Sue Lynch . Motion carried.

**Committee Reports:**

**Cemetery** - Nothing to report

**Christian Ed/Youth** – Nothing to report

**Day Care** – Carol- Director provided a report.

**Finance** – Jim- Budget for next council meeting

**Music & Worship** – Pastor-Choir up and running to sing on non-communion Sundays  
Hand Bell practice has begun

**Mutual Ministry** – Nancy-Nothing to report

Property- Joe—3 windows in the offices need replaced, Property committee to select contractor

Woman's Restroom fan to be fixed

Basement Bathroom waiting for permits

Sign out front

**Social Ministry** – Sue-November 23 Thanksgiving potluck

December 14 Congregational Meeting refreshments in FH

**Missions** – Michele- Operation Christmas boxes to be available in Narthex

Belleville Fire Dept. \$200 Donation

Motion to accept Nancy Penepacker and seconded by Joe Kanagy

Peaceful Mind Veterans \$100

Motion to accept Pastor Sigler and seconded Nancy Penepacker

**Old Business:**

**Church Phone Tree-and Prayer Chain being worked on**

**Pickle Ball in FH-ED Bilch needs to be here and he'll bring equipment**

**People need to sign releases**

**Council member terms ending-Jim,Michele,Joe**

**Hand Bells-Wednesdays 6pm-7pm then Choir 7pm-8pm**

**New Business:**

Council meeting frequency-to be kept at every month

Perpetual Care to Vanquard-Motion made to accept Pastor Sigler and Seconded by  
Sue Lynch

Gingerbread House Fundraiser for Faiths House of Hope to use FH-11/5 5-7pm or  
12/3 5-7pm Motion to accept Michele and seconded  
By Joe

Ask people to join Prayer Chain in bulletin

With there being no further discussion, the meeting was properly adjourned and closed with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting will be held on November 9,2025 at 6:30 p.m

Respectfully submitted, Michele Harshbarger, Secretary

## **Daycare October Council Meeting Report**

**Enrollment** ~ 48

Enrolled 4 more children.

**Staff** ~ 11 staff

We have had several individuals express interest in working at the daycare, but we are not in a position to hire anyone until the state budget is passed.

**Fundraisers**

The Gift Show is scheduled for Friday, November 28 and Saturday, November 29. We are looking for 2 or 3 additional vendors to fill all the spaces. If you know of someone who may be interested in participating, please let us know. The only requirement is that the items must be handcrafted.

**Pre-K Counts**

Still waiting on a state budget to be passed. The daycare continues to cover all necessary Pre-K expenses with the exception of payroll.

**St. John's Poinsettia Order Form**



*There is no set price again this year.  
A variety will be purchased  
and placed throughout the church.*

*Anyone placing poinsettias,  
may take theirs home following  
the Christmas Eve service.*

In memory of

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In honor of

---

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Given by

---

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**Please return this form along with your donation  
to the church by Sunday December 14th.**

# *St. John's Lutheran Church*

## DECEMBER

### 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><b>9:00am</b> <i>Worship</i></p> <p><b>10:15am</b> <i>Sunday school</i></p>	1	2  St. John's has Meals on Wheels	3  10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	4 9:30am Comfort Knotting  St. John's has Meals on Wheels	5	6
7  Second Sunday of Advent Congr. Meeting	8	9  St. John's has Meals on Wheels	10  10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	11  St. John's has Meals on Wheels 6:30pm Council Meeting	12  6:00-8:00pm Belleville Christmas Celebration at Twp. Comm. Center	13  
14  Third Sunday of Advent Holy Communion	15   Poinsettia Orders Due	16  6:30pm Property Committee	17  10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	18	19	20
21 Fourth Sunday of Advent  	22  	23	24  Office Closed 7:00pm Christmas Eve Worship	25  The Nativity of Our Lord	26  Office Closed	27
28  First Sunday of Christmas	29	30	31  New Year's Eve No Bible study Hand bell or Choir rehearsals			