

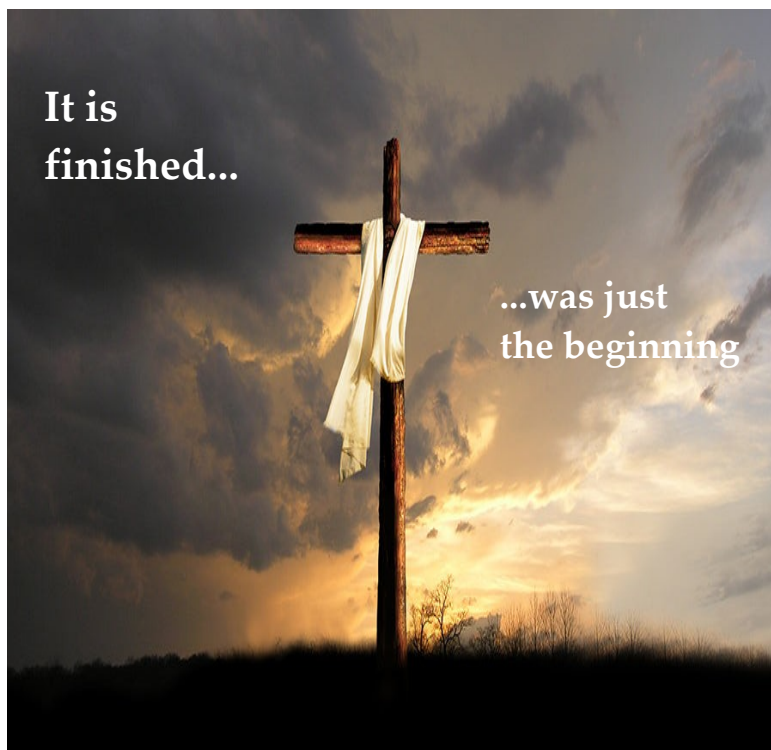
ST JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
3597 WEST MAIN STREET
PO BOX 5716
BELLEVILLE PA 17004

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

The Parish Messenger

St. John's Lutheran Church, Belleville, Pennsylvania

APRIL 2026



It is
finished...

...was just
the beginning

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
Website ~ stjohnsbelleville.org



Pastor's Page

Hanging on a wall in my library is a picture from my seminary days at Gettysburg. It was my senior year and I was chiefly responsible for the annual talent night program which every year drew a big crowd. That year, 1977, a half dozen of us decided to imitate our professor with a sketch we developed. Looking at that picture brings back some wonderful memories, both of the professors we poked fun at and my classmates and I who did it! Only one of my seminary professors is still living, and in that photo even more than a few of us students who were young then, have since died.

When I read THE LUTHERAN magazine that comes to our home, increasingly there are more and more names of my classmates who have entered into their eternal rest. And when I go back to the seminary it is a different place now for me and I am left to draw on memories of long ago. This is mostly because of death.

I read somewhere that years ago a Washington D.C. funeral director advertised his business with pictures of pin-up girls and the slogan, "Beautiful Bodies by Chambers." What most of us want to see when someone we love dies is something suggesting the person has not died, cosmetics and lighting denying whatever pain and suffering have attended the end of life, so that we can say to ourselves that the person looks as though they are only sleeping. But the reality of death will not go away.

I have heard the criticism that Christians are accused of longing for pie-in-the-sky; of glossing over the pain and loss of death by dreams of a future paradise. Not so. Christians begin with the basic truths of this life, which is that we are very mortal. We die, and death is always with us, and has St. Paul so aptly says it, death is our last enemy to be defeated.

Good Friday says that Christ died. Those who were there on that hill called Calvary saw what had happened with their own eyes. He was not in a coma when they took him down from the cross. He was dead and they took his dead body and placed it in a tomb and sealed it so that what they believed would shortly be the stench of decay would not be smelled. And he died in such a way as to underscore the cruelty, the ugliness and the horror of death. He had been starved, beaten to a pulp, mocked, and tortured to the point of death then hung on a pole with iron spikes driven between his feet and hands.

Christians begin with the death of Jesus and refuse to deny the gruesome details of all of it. The reason why we begin with the bitter reality of death is because of the resurrection. If Christ had not really died, the resurrection would have been a fraud and those first Christians who gave their lives up in certainty of the resurrection would have died for nothing. In his rising from death and the grave Christians believe that death has been destroyed and holds no grip over us. We need not fear the grave and the threatening darkness of it. All that is meant by way of suffering and pain, inequity and cruelty, loss and loneliness have been changed because Christ now lives and shall forevermore.

The Christian faith rises or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is because Christ lives that we too who believe in shall also be raised. Our end will not be our end. Eternal life is the sure and certain hope by which we are to live. All this is promised and made sure by what the Christian Church has always confessed and believed; that because Christ lives we too shall live!

Blessed Easter to all!

In Christ,

Pastor Mike

A LENTEN *AND* EASTER CHURCH

By Yehiel Curry

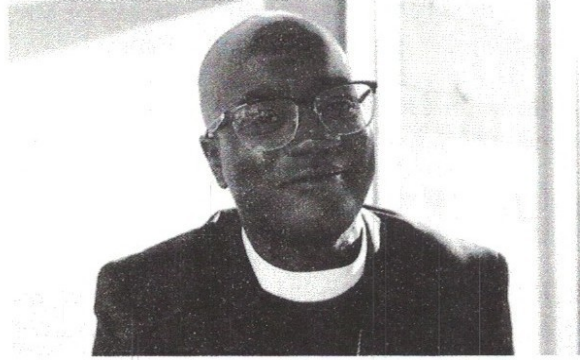
I often hear this phrase when I'm visiting congregations or sitting in meetings: "We are an Easter church." I like that idea and the reasoning behind it. Who wouldn't want to live into the resurrection? We are a people who welcome the return of "Alleluia" with passionate voices, celebrating the renewed hope that death does not have the final word. That good news is the joy of Easter that everyone needs to hear, carrying us through our struggles and grief.

But what if we don't feel like an Easter church? In this moment, it can seem like many of us are wondering if we aren't a Lenten church instead, dwelling in a place that is waiting and hoping for renewal, wondering when God will move us, yearning for that time when we felt God was with us.

Most of us know what it's like to want to skip ahead to the celebration. We want the resolution without the journey, the goal without the work, the "Alleluia" without the silence that Holy Saturday brings. But that isn't how life unfolds for us, and it surely isn't what Jesus' journey on earth looked like either.

The journey to the empty tomb didn't begin on the cross of Good Friday but in a manger decades earlier. Jesus was born with a purpose: to reveal God's love, demonstrate grace, and call us into a life of justice, mercy and compassion. It was a long journey, a ministry that spread across the hills of Judea, well beyond his birthplace in Bethlehem and his home in Nazareth. And along the way, he showed us what it means to be children of God.

During this time, Jesus met a woman at the well and offered her living water when she expected judgment. He told the story of a Samaritan as a model of mercy. He fed the hungry, welcomed the downtrodden, healed those who were



brokenhearted, and called his followers to live in a grace and love that will not let go. He challenged systems that oppressed and questioned norms that did not serve God. This ministry wasn't to simply bring people into his fold, but an invitation to live a more radical, loving life.

Only after all of this—the work and wisdom of his ministry, the conflict among his followers and with those who felt threatened by his teachings—do we arrive at the final chapter of Jesus' earthly life. Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and, finally, Easter Sunday, where the empty tomb weaves the entire ministry of Jesus Christ into a mission that continues for us all.

This is why I ask if we are not only an Easter church but also a Lenten church. We are a church willing to serve those in-between moments where we don't know what tomorrow will bring, doing the holy work that Jesus modeled long before the stone had rolled away. We are a church that trusts in a God that continues to make waves even when we are holding our breaths for that first "Alleluia" to be sung out.

The ministries we carry out in our congregations, our communities and everywhere we go to serve in God's name are not interruptions of our Easter but preparations for the resurrection already stirring within us. So let us keep walking this road of waiting, together, trusting in the God who is always there and serving with the confidence that hope is on the horizon. And when Easter dawns again and we start singing "Alleluia," may it rise not only from the triumph of the resurrection but from having lived the gospel in our seasons of waiting. †

A message from the ELCA presiding bishop.
His email address is bishop@elca.org.

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

**St. John’s Christian Daycare
 and Preschool**

Angela Parko, Director
 Phone 717-935-2959

St. John’s Congregational Council

	<u>Term Expires</u>
Steve Cleck	end of 2028
Jim Buchanan ~ Treasurer	end of 2028
Carol Fultz ~ President	end of 2026
Joe Kanagy ~ Secretary	end of 2028
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 03/25/2026
 \$ 20,106.14

January 1 through March 25, 2026

Income \$ 77,789.55 Expense \$ 59,055.12
 Net Income \$ 18,734.43

* Funds were trf from the Thrivent Investments (\$30,141.32) to cover the bathroom expense, and a payment of \$10,000 has been paid to Sunset Constr.

Daycare Financial Report

Checking account balance 03/25/2026
 \$ 9,853.78

January 1 through March 25, 2026

Income \$ 100,562.66 Expense \$ 97,217.00
 Net Income \$ 3,345.66



Maundy Thursday Worship
 7:00pm ~ April 2
 Holy Communion

Good Friday Tenebrae Service
 7:00pm ~ April 3

Easter Sunday ~ April 5
 The Resurrection of Our Lord
 Holy Communion
 Fellowship time before/after
 worship in the blue room



All Lenten offering, including Maundy Thursday and Good Friday will be directed to the Lumina Center.

Council voted to direct all loose offering on Easter Sunday to the Discretionary Fund.

Council is once again hosting a *Fellowship Time* before and after our worship on Easter Sunday. Please come a little earlier or stay for a little while after the service, and enjoy a cup of coffee with a hot cross bun and other refreshments.

IN OUR CHURCH and COMMUNITY

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Valley View Haven is in need of volunteers!

The areas they could most use help with are in-house transportation of residents to and from beauty shop appointments (M-F 8am-4pm) and Sunday chapel services (9:30am). Volunteers do not need to sign-up for an entire day; any amount of time given would be extremely helpful!

There are also opportunities available helping with activities, Café or Memory Lane unit. They currently have a resident in Memory Lane who has her own sewing machine, and would love to have a volunteer assist her with sewing projects.

If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Wendy Garlock at 717-935-2105 ext 1523 or email her at WGARLOCK@VVRCONLINE.ORG

Thank you to those persons who have begun bringing us their yard sale items. If you too are cleaning out/downsizing or just looking to get rid of things you no longer use or need, we are glad for ANYTHING in clean, usable condition.

~ Reminder ~
No televisions or clothing!
Please place donations on the stage. Thank you!!



The church will once again pay fees for any child who would like to attend the camp this summer. Flyers can be found in the narthex and more information is available at www.campmountluther.org.

Belleville Christian School 61st Annual Auction April 24 & 25

Friday, April 24th

Turkey Dinner, 5:00-7:00 PM (take-outs available)
Live Music /Auction Merchandise Preview 5-6:30pm
Youth Auction 6:30 PM
Gift Certificate Auction, 7:00 PM
Ag & Outdoor Auction, 7:30 PM

Saturday, April 25th

Merchandise Auction, 9:00 AM
Outdoor Kids' Carnival, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM
Student Projects, 10:30 AM
Special Feature Certificates, 11:00 AM
Gun Raffle Drawing, 12:00 PM
Quilts will be sold at the top of each hour

For an updated listing of featured auction items, visit the [Auction Website](#)

St. John's has Meals on Wheels this month. If you can help to provide any of the following desserts, please sign-up in the narthex.

Tuesday, April 14 ~ 5 Angel Food cakes
(can also be purchased locally at SS, Peight's or WHS)

Thursday, April 16 ~ monetary donations to purchase pies and cheesecakes
(give to Sue Lynch or church office)

Tuesday, April 21 ~ 4 cans of cherry pie filling

Thursday, April 23 ~ 5 dozen cookies (any kind)



At the February meeting, Council voted to direct this year's Lenten offering to the Lumina Center. An envelope was found in your box for March 8. The Maundy Thursday/Good Friday offering will also be directed toward this mission.

LUMINA LEGEND

Dear friends of LUMINA!

Spring is right around the corner, and I haven't heard a single person complaining about that! The birds chirping and the sun finally feeling a little warm again is enough to bring a smile to your face and a feeling of hope to your heart!💜 Something to be thankful for!

Something else to be thankful for: We have just wrapped up our biggest annual fundraiser with current overall proceeds coming in around \$14,076, and we are super grateful for all who donated as well as those who came and bought something! **Your support of our mission to serve the needs of our at-risk children and youth is the key to our ability to do so.**

To put this into organizational context, the total of auction proceeds equals about **8%** of our operating budget. This means we have a lot more fundraising to do in order to maintain our current programs **AND** continue making progressive building infrastructure upgrades. While the burst pipe and insurance coverage denial due to 'lack of reasonable care' was a hard pill to swallow, it was the strobe light needed to prompt moving forward with building upgrades, while reaching out to the community and abroad for increased financial support. We have steadily been working on upgrading highest risk factors, focusing specifically on electrical, plumbing and emergency systems, looking at \$15,000+. A quote for comprehensive camera security system for our two buildings is coming in around \$16,500. This is just the start.

As far as restoration of the flooded rooms goes, progress here is also impacted by the necessary 'background' repairs/upgrades that need to be taken care of. For every piece you fix in an old building, another need is revealed. Upgrading 74- and 107-year-old buildings is going to be a long process, but we are committed to ensuring the safety of our students and working hard to do so without negatively impacting our programs. Our students and ministry partners have been very gracious with all the extra activities going on around here, and we are blessed by all who have stopped by with or mailed in donations, words of encouragement and offers of help. It truly means more than you know!

One part of our job that I really enjoy is helping our students understand what a privilege it is to participate in a program that is fully sponsored by the community. They will respond with questions like "Why do they care?" or "Why would they want to spend time with us?" Watching them thrive under the mentorship of community friends is enough to make one's heart fill with joy! Having teens come in as a peer mentor is a whole other gem that reaps phenomenal results!

FUNNY STORY: A student was recently called to my office to discuss being disrespectful to my friends who drive the van to pick up our students. Student: "Wait, they're your friends?" I said, "Well, that shouldn't matter where respect is concerned, but yes, they are my friends. Actually, one is a board member." Student: "What's a board member?" Me: A board member oversees the organization, making sure it's successful. They are my boss." Student: "Wait, can they fire you?" Me: "Yep." Student: 😊

Our kids are splendidly funtastic!! Deciding to invest in them by regularly supporting the mission of LUMINA will yield massive returns! Please consider becoming a regular partner of ours if you aren't already.

*Delighted to serve,
Sherri Bickert, Executive Director*

Check payable to
LUMINA Center

DONATE ❤️

PAYPAL

<https://bit.ly/LUMINAKids>

PO Box 1243, 18 E Third St, Lewistown, PA 17044

OUR MISSION

To serve the needs of the children, youth and families of Mifflin County in the name of Jesus Christ.



A container for donations of tabs can be found on the old organ bench located inside the side door, by the coatroom/narthex areas. Thank you Carolyn for taking care of collecting and delivering the tabs all these years.



Ronald McDonald
House Charities®
of Central Pennsylvania

745 West Governor Road
Hershey, PA 17033
717.533.4001
www.rmhc-centralpa.org

House **TAB**ulations

To:

Carolyn Connor
738 Westfield Drive
Belleville, PA 17004-9701



Thank you for collecting aluminum can tab
Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Central Pennsylvania!

This fundraiser started quietly, but has grown through the generosity
of many friends beyond what anyone thought possible...

Over \$291,000 has been raised since 1996!

THAT EQUALS:

329 tons

659,000 pounds

or

Over 923 Million tabs!

Because of your support through our recycling programs, we help
families stay near their sick child receiving treatment at Penn State Health
Golisano Children's Hospital.

**Thank you for supporting
Ronald McDonald House Charities® of Central PA!**

APRIL SERVICE SCHEDULE

April 5 ~ Easter

Elevator: Mike Harshbarger
Greeter: Deb French
Lay Reader: Deb French
Money Counters: John and Denise Chester
Sound System: Ed Bilich
Ushers: Mike and Michele Harshbarger

April 12

Elevator: Randy Harshbarger
Greeters: Don and Rosalie Smith
Lay Reader: Ed Bilich
Money Counters: Carol Fultz and Sue Lynch
Sound System: Joe Kanagy
Ushers: Sue Lynch and Joe Kanagy

April 19

Elevator: Jim Buchanan
Greeter: Lucy Magda
Lay Reader: Chelsea Reed
Money Counters: Jay and Joy Byler
Sound System: Calvin Byler
Ushers: Carol Fultz and Nancy Penepacker

April 26

Elevator: Joe Kanagy
Greeters: Jim and Georgianna Buchanan
Lay Reader: Jim Buchanan
Money Counters: Randy Harshbarger and Joe Kanagy
Sound System: Jay Byler
Ushers: Jay and Joy Byler

Altar Care ~ Carol Fultz

Altar Flower Delivery ~ Carol Fultz

Bulletin Delivery ~ Jim and Georgianna Buchanan

April 3 ~ Maundy Thursday

Greeter/Lay Reader: Jami Zook

April 4 ~ Good Friday

Greeter: Joe Kanagy

Volunteers are needed to run sound system and elevator for Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

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 February 12 2026 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, February 12, 2026 at 6:30 PM in the blue room.

Present: Pastor Mike Sigler, President Carol Fultz, Sue Lynch, Jim Buchanan, Joe Kanagy, Nancy Penepacker, Steve Cleck

The meeting was called to order by Carol Fultz

Devotions:

Schedule for 2026

February---Sue Lynch

March--- Jim Buchanan

April---Joe Kanagy

May---Nancy Penepacker

June--- Steve Cleck

September--- Jim Buchanan

October—Sue Lynch

November---Joe Kanagy

December---Nancy Penepacker

Approval of Minutes: The minutes of the January Meeting were presented. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Nancy Penepacker and seconded by Pastor Sigler. Motion carried.

Pastor`s Report was presented.

Financial Reports:

The Financial reports were presented

St. John`s----A motion to accept the church financial report was made by Pastor Sigler, and properly seconded by Sue Lynch. Motion carried.

St John`s Daycare---A motion to accept the daycare financial report was made by Pastor Sigler, and properly seconded by Joe Kanagy.

Committee Reports:

Cemetery---Joe---Nothing

Christian Ed---Carol---Nothing

Daycare—Carol---Report Presented

Finance—Jim—Ready f/ Congregational

Evangelism/Mission—Steve---Nothing

Music/Worship---Nancy—Had meeting

Mutual Ministry---Nancy—Nothing

Property—Joe—Bathroom coming along.

Social Ministry---Sue—Planning a
dinner for church and Daycare

Ceiling, painting, and flooring done

Old Business:

New Church Phone Tree and prayer chain still in the works

Pickel Ball still in the works by Ed

Hand Bells—Wednesday 6pm- then Choir 7pm-8pm

New Business:

Lenten Offering--- A motion was made for offering to the Lumina Center, in Lewistown, by Sue and seconded by Nancy.

Social Ministry is planning a Ham Pot Pie dinner March 13 in Fellowship Hall for church members and daycare

Discussion about a grant of \$500, from the Synod to be used to start a food and clothing distribution center with one of the churches in the Juniata Valley Conference

There being no further discussion, the meeting was properly adjourned and closed with the Lord`s prayer. Next meeting will be March 12 2026

Respectfully submitted, Joseph Kanagy, Secretary

Daycare March Council Meeting Report

Enrollment ~ 50

Staff ~ 12 staff (one is a part-time college student)

Fundraisers

The annual yard sale is scheduled to be held again in August. We are already off to a good start. Donations can be placed on the stage.

Pre-K Counts

One of our Pre-K Counts teachers, Alicia Hartzler informed us she will be leaving at the end of the school year in June. Alicia worked in an orphanage in Romania when she was on an extended mission trip and loved it. Her sister and husband are currently serving as missionaries in that country, so she will be with family while she discerns where God is leading her next in life.

We have begun advertising for the position, and a potential candidate reached out this week for an interview. Out of the 22 Pre-K Counts spots we have available for the 2026-27 school year, we now have 19 of them filled. This leaves only 3 spots and most parents do not begin to contact us concerning preschool until June.

DHS

Our annual inspection will be in May. We always try to be in a state of readiness.



There is no set price, anyone wishing to place a flower(s), is asked to make a donation and a variety will be purchased to decorate the church.

An insert with the names of the persons placing them, along with those they are in honor/memory of will be included in the bulletin on Easter Sunday.

In honor of




Given by

**Please return this form along with your donation
to the church by Sunday, March 29**

St. John's Lutheran Church

APRIL

2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>Worship</i> 9:00am 10:15am <i>Sunday School</i></p>		<p>APRIL  F^OLS' DAY</p>	<p>1 10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.</p>	<p>2 9:30am Comfort Knotting 7:00pm Maundy Thursday Worship</p>	<p>3 Daycare and Church office closed 7:00pm Good Friday Service</p>	4
<p>5 Easter Holy Communion Fellowship time before/after worship</p>	<p>6 </p>	7	<p>8 10:30am Bible Study NO Hand bell or Choir rehearsals</p>	<p>9 6:30pm Council Meeting</p>	10	11
12	13	<p>14 St. John's has Meals on Wheels</p>	<p>15 10:30am Bible Study NO Hand bell or Choir rehearsals</p>	<p>16 9:30am Comfort Knotting St. John's has Meals on Wheels</p>	<p>17 </p>	18
<p>19 Holy Communion</p>	<p>20 Pastor away through Saturday April 25.</p>	<p>21 St. John's has Meals on Wheels 6:30pm Property Committee</p>	<p>22 NO Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.</p>	<p>23 St. John's has Meals on Wheels</p>	24	25
26	27	28	<p>29 10:30am Bible Study 6:30pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.</p>	30	<p>Looking Ahead Sunday, May 10 ~ Mother's Day Monday, May 25 ~ Memorial Day Office and Daycare closed Parade begins at 9:30am</p>	