

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

OCTOBER 2026



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

The last Sunday in October, every year, is set aside in Protestant churches as Reformation Sunday. It is a time, especially for Lutherans, to recall the reform movement of the one, holy, catholic and apostolic church that was set in motion by Martin Luther and others in the 16th Century. At the heart of Luther's efforts to reform the church of his day was his conviction that our salvation in Christ is given to us as a gift by God. It is what the church calls grace and no one, Luther insisted, can possibly earn that salvation. It either comes to us as God's free gift through grace, forgiveness and mercy or it will not come to us at all.

And yet, in my decades as a pastor I have repeatedly heard it said to me by members of the various congregations where I served something which goes like this: "If I am good enough, maybe I will go to heaven." I heard it but a few weeks ago from a person who was dying and her wonderment was whether she would be included in the Kingdom of God. She didn't think she had done enough throughout her life to merit God's consideration of her.

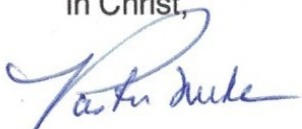
I know she never heard from me that if we are just good enough and do enough good works we will have it made, as if God keeps a scorebook or a ledger counting the good and the bad which we do in this life and then you just hope that the good outweighs the bad. You and I could not do enough good works in a million years if we had that long, to earn our way into God's Kingdom. It is because God loves us that we are given the gift of the Holy Spirit to love one another. It is because God has first forgiven us that we are able to forgive one another. It is because God is merciful to us that we extend mercy and pardon to those who cause us injury and pain. It is not the other way around. We do not do good works in order to EARN anything from God.

Why then, I was asked, do we bother with going good works? Why show care and concern for others, especially if they could care less about anything we might do for them? What if our kindness is met with hostility? We still are to love our neighbors as ourselves because God has first loved us.

Luther never said good works, kind deeds, and help shown to others wasn't important. Of course this is important! It is that those acts of kindness follow God's grace. Show me someone who knows that God has forgiven them much and I will show you someone whose life reflects God's mercy in how they live. Show me someone who believes that everything he or she has is a God-given gift, undeserved on their part, and I will show you someone whose life is marked by generosity.

It is sad to see people struggle to be accepted in their lives, always wondering, never sure if God will be gracious to them. We are called to live by faith in Christ who for our sakes bled and died and was raised from death for us and our salvation. We are to hold fast by faith in Christ and live a life marked by love as best we are able.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Pastor Mike", written in a cursive 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

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 09/23/2026
 \$ 9,888.45

January 1 through September 23, 2026

Income \$ 166,431.44 Expense \$ 160,336.24
 Net Income \$ 6,095.20

*Does not include end of month expenses and
 Sunday 9/27 deposit.

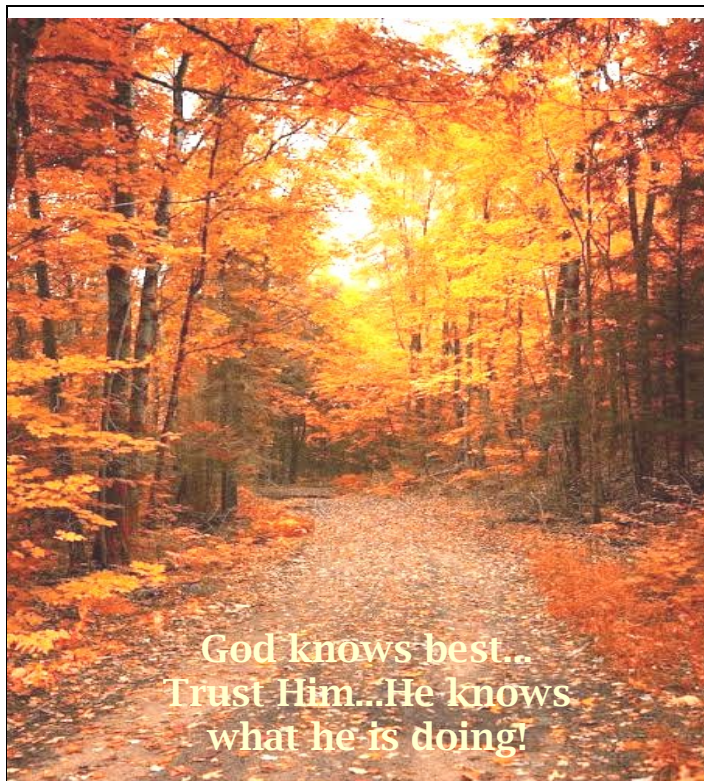
Daycare Financial Report

Checking account balance 09/23/2026
 \$ 6,129.50

January 1 through September 23, 2026

Income \$ 301,987.19 Expense \$ 306,330.64
 Net Income \$ -4,343.45

*Does not include end of month income/expense.



The Adult Sunday school class which meets in the blue room will resume on Sunday, October 4. Ed Bilich and Michele Harshbarger take turns leading the sessions. You are welcome to come and join in.

Pastor Sigler is accompanying the Bishop and a group from the synod to Germany in October. They are scheduled to leave Saturday, October 10 and return on Monday, October 19.

Ed Bilich will be preaching/leading worship on the 11th and 18th.

Holy Communion will be held on October 4th and again on the 25th, which is Reformation Sunday.

IN OUR CHURCH and COMMUNITY



Our Advent devotionals continue to be well-received, so we are “hopefully” going to compile another. The theme this year is *God's Perfect Timing*.

The Old and New Testament readings will show us God's plan from the promises and prophecies, to the fulfillment of them through Jesus birth, thousands of years later, at exactly the right time and place.

Volunteers are needed to write the meditations. A sign-up along with the scripture can be found in the narthex.

Please note ~ submissions are due by Sunday, November 1.

Blanket Sunday is October 4. The comforts lovingly pieced, sown and knotted by the group this past year will be displayed throughout the sanctuary and narthex. Envelopes have been included in the September 27 bulletin and can also be found in the narthex. Your donation to support this ministry, can be made through Sunday, October 11.



The 2027 birthday calendar will be completed in November. Any member who would like to add/remove persons to/from the calendar is asked to PLEASE contact the church office with the name(s) and birthdate(s) **by Sunday, November 8th.**

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

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
120 N. Main St. - Lewistown

Handel's Messiah



Sunday, December 6th
3:00 PM

Conducted by Fred Benner
Patty Loudenslager - Organist

Rehearsals

Sundays at 3:00 PM
November 1st • 8th • 15th • 22nd • 29th

INTERESTED SINGERS ARE WELCOME

Please contact Fred Benner at:

drfbenner@gmail.com

Gift Show

This year's gift show is scheduled for Friday, November 27 and Saturday, November 28. We are pleased to have returning vendors along with a few new ones. Sign-ups to pre-order wreaths, and/or donate soup and baked goods will be placed in the narthex the end of this month, for anyone interested.

More information, including a list of the vendors participating this year will be included in the November newsletter.



Seafarer's International ~ Christmas at Sea

90% of global trade is transported on the world's oceans by crew members on container ships who remain invisible to most people, yet our supply chains depend on their services and sacrifice of being at sea for months on end. Seafarers are often overworked and lonely. We invite you, your congregation to spread the joy of Christmas among those who will not be home with their loved ones. Our port chaplains deliver satchels filled with gifts. Mariners regardless of their faith or nationality will receive

- One Sweatshirt – hooded or unhooded (size M-L)
- Three Pairs of Socks – thermal or gym
- One T- Shirt (size M-L)
- One Knitted Winter Cap (coordinating scarf optional; no pastels please)
- One Can of Nuts, Large Bar of Chocolate, or Health Snack Bar
- A Holiday or Christmas Card from YOU!

Please
include
ONLY what
is listed.

You pick the colors, styles and brands, but please no substitutions from the list. For the safety of seafarers, please do not add fringes or pom-poms to the hats and scarves. The Christmas-at-Sea satchels should be comparable for each member of the crew. Please assemble each satchel with sweatshirts and T-shirts of the same size and label the satchel with a M or L on the back side.

What might otherwise have been another lonely night at sea becomes a joyous occasion, because complete strangers share the spirit of Christmas with seafarers!



Satchels can be found on the table in the narthex. If you would rather make a monetary donation, we will purchase the items and fill one of the bags for you. Please notate 'Seafarer Christmas' on your check or envelope.

Filled bags may be placed in the narthex, and must be turned in by Sunday, October 18.

WHAT IS NEVER PAID FOR AT SEA

By Captain Alexandros Lignos, Master Mariner

People think seafarers are well paid. They are not. What they are really paid for is living where most people would refuse to spend a single night.

In 2026, we have satellites, AI, sensors, predictive maintenance, and digitalization. Yet none of them changed one simple fact. The sea remains one of the most hostile environments on Earth.

Right now, beneath thousands of ships crossing the oceans, there are thousands of meters of darkness below the keel. A cold, silent, liquid grave capable of erasing every trace of your existence within minutes. And that is where a seafarer goes to work.

A wet deck can break a career. A dropped shackle can crush a skull. A swinging load can end a life. A rotating machine cannot tell the difference between steel and human flesh. A mooring line under extreme tension can snap the life out of you in a blink of an eye.

Then comes the danger nobody sees. The danger inside the mind. A heart attack ashore is minutes from help. In the middle of the Pacific, it can be days away. Fatigue becomes normal. Sleep fragmented. Stress routine. Isolation a silent companion. Birthdays, anniversaries, and funerals are missed. Life continues without you. Mental health organizations identify depression and psychological exhaustion as the fastest-growing challenges facing seafarers. Some wounds heal. Some never do.

Then comes the nightmare every seafarer respects. Fire. More than 250 shipboard fires were reported globally in recent reviews. At sea, there is no fire station coming. Only the crew. Only the training. Only the courage of the people standing next to you.

Then come explosions, flooding, loss of stability, groundings, and collisions. Rogue waves appearing from nowhere. Storms powerful enough to remind every Master that technology can predict the weather but cannot negotiate with it.

Beyond all that wait dangers no radar can fully identify. Piracy. Kidnappings. Missiles. Drones. War. Recent attacks prove innocent seafarers can become targets of conflicts they never created and never chose.

And if that was not enough, thousands are still abandoned by employers, stranded in foreign ports without wages or far away from home.

So no. Seafarers are not paid for their labor alone. They are paid to remain alert when fatigue says sleep. To remain calm when fear says run. To make decisions when mistakes cost lives. To stand watch above a liquid abyss while carrying the weight of global trade on their shoulders.

Technology reduced some risks. The ocean never signed that agreement. The world pays for cargo. But tell me honestly ... If your office floor could kill you, your workplace catch fire, your nearest hospital was days away, missiles crossed your route, and beneath your feet lay thousands of meters of darkness ...

What salary would you consider enough?

Note from the author:

I truly appreciate the work Seafarers International House has been doing for seafarers and vulnerable communities for so many years. I would be honored to have "WHAT IS NEVER PAID FOR AT SEA" (previously posted on LinkedIn) included in your Port Call Newsletter. Thank you for helping its message reach people who genuinely care about the lives and welfare of seafarers. ⚓



SIH Port Chaplain Pastor Tammy Sharp (left) visited this crew while they were in the port of Houston in July 2026.

OCTOBER SERVICE SCHEDULE

October 4

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

October 11

Elevator: Randy Harshbarger

Greeters: Ken and Nancy Wyland

Lay Reader: Ken Wyland

Money Counters: Carol Fultz and Sue Lynch

Sound System: Joe Kanagy

Ushers: Sue Lynch and Joe Kanagy

October 18

Elevator: Jim Buchanan

Greeter: Joe Kanagy

Lay Reader: Joe Kanagy

Money Counters: Jay and Joy Byler

Sound System: Calvin Byler

Ushers: Carol Fultz and Nancy Penepacker

October 25

Elevator: Joe Kanagy

Greeter: Cindy Burk

Lay Reader: Ed Bilich

Money Counters: Randy Harshbarger and Joe Kanagy

Sound System: Jay Byler

Ushers: Jay and Joy Byler

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.**

Altar Care and Flower Delivery ~ Michele Harshbarger

Bulletin Delivery ~ John and Brenda Boring

St. John`s Lutheran Church
Minutes of the June 11, 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, March 19, 2026 at 6:30 PM in the blue room.

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

The meeting was called to order by President, 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 May 14 Meeting were presented. A motion to accept the minutes was made by Nancy Penepacker, and seconded by Steve Cleck. 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, Sue Lynch, and properly seconded by Nancy Penepacker. Motion carried.

St John`s Daycare---A motion to accept the daycare financial report was made by Pastor Mike, and properly seconded by Nancy Penepacker. Motion carried.

Committee Reports:

Cemetery---Joe---Nothing	Christian Ed---Carol---Nothing
Daycare---Carol---Report Presented	Finance---Jim---trying to meet June and
September	Mutual Ministry---Replace Rosemary plus
one more person	Antiquities Susan Keller added will meet
June	
Evangelism/Mission---Steve---Meeting 6 16 Working on church brochure and card	
Property---Joe---Bathroom inspected and in use	
Social Minisrty---Picinic 8 23 for church and day care	

Old Business:

New Church Phone Tree and prayer chain still in the works
Pastor wants to get committees up and running

New Business:

A motion was made by Pastor Mike and seconded by Nancy Penepacker to donate \$500 to To L W Relief.
There being no further discussion, the meeting was properly adjourned and closed with the Lords prayer
. Next meeting will be September 3 2026

Respectfully submitted, Joseph Kanagy, Secretary

Daycare June Council Meeting Report

Enrollment ~ 43

With preschool ending we lost several students. Will pick-up again when school begins.

Staff ~ 13 staff Alicia is working through the end of July as our school age teacher (7 school age children). She will be leaving for Romania in August.

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 in front of the stage

Pre-K Counts

Emilee Fisher-Hanson has been hired to fill the Pre-K Counts teacher position. She graduated from Susquehanna University with a Bachelor's in Early Childhood education, and will begin in August.

DHS

Our annual inspection was held last month and we passed with only a few very minor "quick-fix" issues.

St. John's Lutheran Church

OCTOBER

2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
9:00am Worship 10:30am Sunday school	UPCOMING November 1 ~ All Saints Sunday Daylight Saving Time Ends November 22 ~ Christ the King November 27 & 28 ~ Holiday Gift Show November 29 ~ First Sunday in Advent			1 9:30am Comfort Knotting	2 11:00am Lila Warner Graveside service	3 
4 Holy Communion Blanket Sunday	5	6	7 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	8 6:30pm Council Meeting	9	10 Pastor leaving for Synod trip to Germany
11 Ed Bilich leading worship	12 	13	14 No Bible Study 6:00pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	15 9:30am Comfort Knotting	16	17
18 Ed Bilich leading worship Last day for Seafarer Bags	19 Pastor returns from Synod trip to Germany	20 6:30pm Property Committee	21 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	22 	23	24
25 Reformation Sunday Holy Communion	26	27	28 10:30am Bible Study 6:00pm Hand bells 7:00pm Choir reh.	29	30	31 