



St. John's Lutheran Church

Hatboro, PA
Faith – Service – Community

Monthly News & Updates

January 2026



A Letter from Pastor Bo

January 2026

An Epiphany

Foreshadowing Easter

(This might get a little nerdy)

Some of us, when we were younger, may have memorized John 3.16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life." (If you didn't, it wouldn't be a bad idea to commit that one to memory.)

There's another 3.16 verse in the Bible that succinctly shares the Gospel. It may not be as popular or seem as easy to understand, but when I look at how our weeks in January unfold, it's wild to me how much it reminds me of 1 Timothy 3.16 (at least in part): "Without any doubt, the mystery of godliness is great: He was revealed in flesh, vindicated in spirit, seen by angels, proclaimed among gentiles, believed in throughout the world, taken up in glory." Though these statements seem to be referring to an Easter-season, post resurrection itemization of what we believe, these 4 weeks of January will be marked by four feasts fitting an Epiphany season, and they match up with the first four of these six phrases from 1 Timothy (not on purpose).

January 4th – Epiphany: He was revealed in flesh. Technically, Epiphany is January 6, and I was going to do 2nd Sunday of Christmas until I noticed this pattern, and since it's Matthew, and Matthew has the story of the Magi, let's do Epiphany on the Sunday before Epiphany. This is historically in Christianity just as big of a celebration, if not sometimes bigger, than Christmas itself. Jesus was born, and here is where the whole world sees him. Epiphany means 'make manifest, reveal.'



Our Mission:

To be a loving,
accepting
community
centered on
growing in Christ.

Our Vision:

To give people a
place to belong at
any stage of their
journey with God.



Important Dates in January

January 10 –
Taking Down the
Greens

January 24 –
Pasta Dinner
(Youth Group
Fundraiser)

January 31 –
Karaoke & Pizza
Night

A Letter from Pastor Bo – Continued

January 11th – Baptism of Jesus: Vindicated in spirit. Technically, I think 1 Timothy is referring to the resurrection, but Jesus' baptism is a foreshadowing of the resurrection, just as our own baptism into Christ foreshadows our own resurrection with Christ. Just as the Holy Spirit resurrecting Jesus tells the world that Jesus truly was rightly God's guy, a similar vindication happens when the Spirit descends on Jesus in baptism.

January 18th – Confession of Peter: Seen by angels. "Seen by angels" is such a weird statement. Who cares if angels see someone? Don't they see everything? (Isn't that what freaked me out when I was a kid - I'm always being watched?) The word "angel" also means "messenger" and 1 Timothy seems to be referring to the apostles as the messengers who saw Jesus after the resurrection, and then were sent to proclaim the good news. When Peter confesses correctly that Jesus is the Messiah, this is an initial 'seeing' by this apostolic messenger.

January 25th – Conversion of Paul: Proclaimed among gentiles. When the Pharisee Saul gets knocked off his horse and encounters Jesus and starts going by his Greek name Paul, this marks a shift of the Jesus movement to being a universal faith shared by people from every nation.

May this January open your mind and your spiritual eyes to see God in new ways!

Grace and peace,

Pastor Bo



A Letter on Hope, from Laurie Schenfelt of the Generosity Committee

As we enter the Advent season — the season of hope — I've been thinking a lot about what hope truly looks like in the life of a church. Not the abstract kind, not the kind you read about on a greeting card, but the kind you can *feel*... the kind you can *see* happening right in front of you.

Over the past few months, we've seen something extraordinary here at St. John's.

We've cleaned up the church, painted bulletin boards, organized rooms, cleared out the basement, and prepared for our Holiday Bazaar. But more than the cleaning or painting, what stood out was this:

People showed up.

People from our congregation — some who have been here for decades, some who are newer — rolled up their sleeves and simply *showed up*.

They set up tables. They helped vendors unload their cars. They welcomed guests at the doors. They brought over **60 baskets** for the raffle — sixty! Others baked desserts and cookies that alone brought in **\$600**.

Everywhere I looked, I saw conversations happening — joyful, warm, genuine conversations between members, guests, neighbors, and vendors who had never stepped inside our church before.

A Letter on Hope – Continued

All of it felt like...

new life breathing through this place.

Almost like the church itself was waking up again, stretching, smiling, and remembering who it is.

St. John's is home for me. I've grown up here since 1974. This is where I went to Sunday School, made crafts, sang worship songs, and first learned about Jesus. This is where I had my First Communion...

where I was confirmed...

where I got married...

and where my two boys were baptized, had their first communion and were confirmed.

I went to youth group here — where we had retreats, played volleyball (we're actually the reason there are cages around the lights in Fellowship Hall...), danced to live bands, went caroling, spent days down the shore, attended a multi-church revival, fed people at a soup kitchen, raked leaves for older members, went skiing (and ended up on crutches), and acted and sang in HiTops, our church musical.

So many memories. So many faces. So many people who shaped my faith, my character, and who I am as a person.

And as I watched all of us working together these past few weeks, something inside me said:

This is what hope looks like.

Hope isn't passive. Hope is active. Hope is people showing up. Hope is a spark — and we saw that spark come alive again.

My hope for St. John's is that this spark grows into a flame.

That we continue to grow, to reach out, to invite, to welcome, to love.

I hope to see this church filled again the way it once was — when every seat was taken, when my sister and I couldn't even sit with our parents and had to sit up by the acolytes because there was no room. I remember chairs set up in the aisles because so many people came to worship.

I believe that can happen again. I believe this church still has that calling. I believe God is not done with St. John's — not even close.

And now more than ever, the world needs the hope we find in Jesus Christ. A hope that is steady when life feels uncertain. A hope that brings peace when everything around us feels chaotic. A hope that reminds us: **Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.** As we begin this Advent season, may we hold onto that hope.

May we nurture this spark God has rekindled in our church.

And may we continue to show up — for God, for each other, and for our community.

Hope is here. Hope is alive. And hope is leading us forward.

Amen.

Food Pantry Report

December 8, 2025

November was a whirlwind month. The combination of the media focus on the pause of SNAP benefits and the approaching holiday season resulted in an incredible increase in donations to all food pantries. Montgomery County commissioners even voted to extend another grant for first half of 2026 to assist pantries in the county with increases in clients. We were the beneficiary of a \$7000 grant to cover purchases from January thru June 2026. We closed out the 2025 MAHN grant with deliveries the last week of November.

We registered 42 new families in November serving 443 families during the month.

Donations during the month were too numerous to list but I will give a shout out to the largest contributors. Thank you to Giant Foods, Grocery Outlet, Neshaminy School District and Redeemer Lutheran for their donations of turkeys. We provided 136 complete Thanksgiving meals to our clients and provided 27 turkeys to Hatboro Baptist Church for their Thanksgiving community dinner. We received more than 350 bags of non-perishable food items from the Scout food drive. In addition, Endo Pharma provided seven SUV's filled with non-perishable items from their employee food drive. We are still trying to find storage space for all of the canned goods. From this abundance we were able to send six SUV's full of oatmeal, Ramen, fruit cups and juice boxes to HATPACKS! As I have said before and will continue to reiterate, we are blessed to live in such a caring, compassionate community.

We continue to search for a substitute team leader. We are trying to be patient as we wait for the right person to step up and assist us.

As always, we are grateful for our volunteers and all of the organizations that support us in our efforts to provide food for those in need.



Hatboro Community Cupboard Most Needed Items

Due to the influx of donations that continue to arrive at the pantry every day it is impossible for me to determine what we need **except for toilet paper**. Hopefully, we will get control of our inventory soon.

In addition to food and toiletry donations, the Community Cupboard is looking for donations of metal cabinets to hold our inventory.

LAST MONTH

Hatboro Holiday Parade

We were in Hatboro's Holiday Parade for the third year in a row! Thank you to Bob and Michele Muller for making the trip from Alabama to make sure we had a float this year! We had musical talent on the truck, and another group of members walking behind to give out candy canes. Back at the church, we also gave out hot dogs, hot chocolate, and other snacks to others walking in the parade. Thank you to everyone who shared hospitality with our community!



Youth News & Events



Join us for Sunday School! Bring your child to Sunday School on Sunday mornings at 10 am. All kids ages 3 (and potty trained) through 6th grade are welcome to join us! Youth in grades 7 and up are invited to help teach the younger kids!

Lesson Schedule:

January 4 – **No Sunday School**

January 11 – Escape to Egypt

January 18 – **No Sunday School
(Youth Sunday)**

January 25 – John the Baptist



The next class is on **January 18, 2026**.

We will be discussing The Small Catechism. Please read chapters 4-7 of *The Story* and complete your homework.



Youth Group is typically held on the third Saturday of every month at 6:30 pm, from September – May.

This month's event will be our Pasta Dinner fundraiser on **Saturday, January 24th at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall**. The dinner starts at 6, but kids should get here early! Check your emails for more details!

Youth Sunday

Our Sunday School children and Confirmands will be leading worship on **Sunday, January 24th**. There will be no Sunday School that day. Instead, children should come to the Sanctuary and sit in the front pew.

Please let Sunday School teachers know as soon as possible whether your child(ren) will be able to attend, so we can assign parts accordingly.

We ask that readers get to church by 9:30, and all other parts arrive by 9:45.

CHURCH NEWS



Congregational Vitality Survey

Please take the time to fill out the Congregation Vitality Survey that the Synod provided to us, either using this link, or filling out a paper copy in the Narthex and turning it in to the office.

Link: [St. John's Lutheran Church Congregation Survey Questions](#)



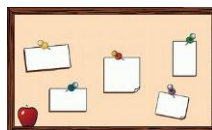
Book Club

Come join us at book club! We meet monthly and discuss the book of the month. Each member chooses a book and we rotate through each member. Our next book for book club is "The Last Noel" by Michael Malone. We'll meet on **Sunday, January 11th at 1 pm** in the church library.



Taking Down the Greens

We are looking for volunteers to help us take down the greens and Christmas decorations on **Saturday, January 10th at 9 am.**



Next Newsletter Deadline

The deadline for the February Newsletter is **January 15th**. Please send any events, notes, or volunteer opportunities to Ashdon at office@sjlch.org.



ANNUAL MEETING

If you are the chairperson of a committee, please get your annual report in to the office by **Sunday, January 18th**.

Our Annual Meeting will be on Sunday, February 1st directly following the Sunday worship service.



Faith Explorers

The next Faith Explorers meeting will be on **Thursday, January 22nd at 6 pm** in Fellowship Hall.



Pasta Dinner

Join us on **Saturday, January 24th at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall** for our annual Pasta Dinner! Our Youth Group will be serving pasta, salad, and dessert. We will be accepting free will donations to raise money for our Youth Group. Please come out and support them!



Scouts Court of Honor

St. John's charts Scout Troop 81, and their Court of Honor will be **Monday, January 26th at 7 pm** in the Sanctuary, with a potluck dinner to follow in Fellowship Hall. Please come out to support our scouts!



Karaoke Night

We will be holding a karaoke and pizza night on **Saturday January 31, 2026. In fellowship Hall. 6:00-8:30pm.**

To hold this event, we need a Karaoke Machine. Does anyone in the congregation have a Karaoke Machine that Fellowship Connections could borrow for this event? Please see a member of Fellowship Connections, if you have a Karaoke Machine or know where to rent one!

There is a sign-up sheet on the Fellowship Bulletin Board. Please sign up by **Sunday January 19, 2026.**



Air Conditioning Fundraiser

We are anticipating that we will need to replace the sanctuary's air conditioner next year, and it's time to get a head start on fundraising! We are aiming to raise \$100,000, and as of the end of October we have raised over \$14,000! Please mark your donations for the air conditioner, and watch our progress on the thermometer in the Narthex!

Coming Soon:

Fastnacht Afternoon Talent Show

Our annual talent show will be on Sunday, February 15th in the Sanctuary, with donuts to follow in Fellowship Hall.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is on February 18th. We will once again have Drive Thru Ashes from 6:30-9 am in the loop out front, and an evening service as well.

Trip to the Flyers Game

St. John's is going to the Flyers game on March 24th! It is \$85 per person. Please pay by cash, check (made out to St. John's), or venmo to AlanDivver2929

Contact Alan Divver (215-436-0730 or alan.m.divver@gmail.com)

Thank You!

A sincere thank you to our "greens crew" of Karl, Debbie, and Delores for all their hard work helping to hang the greens on November 29th. Steve and I couldn't have done it without you! In addition, Laurie Schenfelt graciously donated the ribbon and her time and talent to craft the beautiful new bows on the wreaths. The property committee did a great job with the big task of setting up the trees. Thank you to everyone for making our sanctuary beautiful this holiday season. Sincerely, Tracy Kirner

Dear friends, Thank you for the prayers, cards and altar flowers during this past year. Hopefully I am at the end of my "medical adventures" and looking for better health in the new year! Blessings, Joe Wolf

Thank you to Pastor Bo and the congregation for the altar flowers, delivered to us by Carole DePue. Thank you to Carole as well for bringing us home communion as homebound members. – Bob and June Crippen

Dear Rev. Bo:

We are truly grateful to you and your congregation for your continued support of our community ministries. During these challenging times, more people are feeling the effects of rising food prices and are not always able to afford to feed or clothe their families. We are committed to serving these families in need, so we sincerely appreciate your contributions of gift cards and food. These funds and food allow us to serve over 250 families. We truly value the relationship that we have developed over the years with your congregation, and hope that these words demonstrate the impact of your contributions. I appreciate your desire to help and serve others, and may you always be blessed!

Sincerely, Linda D. Baldi-Boyd, Food and Clothing Director

Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church

Finance Corner:

End of November 2025 Deficit Update

Year-to-Date Financial Status through 11/30/25	
Income	\$346,599.61
Expenses	\$358,841.46
Deficit	\$12,241.85



Committee Members Needed

We need members for the following committees:

Altar Guild - We are looking for volunteers to join Altar Guild. Can you set up for a communion service and put away everything after the service? You will be working alongside someone that is an experienced team member. Set up and take down for communion takes approximately 40 minutes each time. Altar Guild is looking for members to help us out every four to five weeks. Contact the church office or Chris Brinkworth at 267-474-1395.

Coffee Hour - Coffee Hour is offered every Sunday following the 10:00 service in Fellowship Hall. Volunteers are needed for coffee hour. The teams make coffee and put out snacks, and clean up and put away after. Currently once every 3 weeks until we are able to add an additional team. Contact Marcie Diver. Thank you.

Property Committee - The Property Committee is inviting members of St. John's to consider joining the committee. This committee is responsible for the church building, the church grounds, as well as the building and grounds at 457 Crescent Rd (parsonage). Committee needs are currently most often handled by email contact. Check the tab for committees on the church website to see the postings of what has been done each month. If you are interested in joining, please contact the office.

Women's Ministry - Our Women's Ministry program is going to be "Re-imagined." We are looking for volunteers to join our committee to help plan future Women's Ministry activities and events. Please consider volunteering and being part of the future of Women's Ministry at St. John's. If you are interested, please see Carolyn Kircher or Pastor Bo, or email Carolyn Kircher at kirchercj615@verizon.net.



Help Wanted

Are you...

- a Confirmand who needs to meet your Worship Participation requirements?
- a student looking for Community Service Opportunities?
- someone interested in learning a new skill and helping out behind the scenes?

We would love your help running the cameras, lights, and sound equipment that take our weekend and online services to the next level! Please reach out to the church office if you're interested in joining the Media Team!



Check Out Our Website!

Please find us at www.stjohnslutheranhatboro.org to stay up to date on what's happening at St. John's! Find Pastor Bo's sermons, upcoming events, and information about the church and the food pantry, and more!

Like Us on Facebook & Instagram!



St. John's Lutheran
Church – Hatboro



@sjlch505



Subscribe to Our YouTube Channel!

We're trying to get to 100 Subscribers! You can find us on YouTube by searching "St. John's Lutheran Church Hatboro."

Church Staff & Contact Information



Pastor Bo Bannister

Cell: 765-426-0500

Email: pastorbo@sjlch.org

Minister of Music: Michael Brinkworth

Director of Christian Education: Abbie Metheny

Email: sjchrised@gmail.com

Office Administrator: Ashdon Bobbie

Social Media Coordinator: Jess Flynn

Church Office: (215) 675-2031

Church Email: office@sjlch.org

Church Website:

www.stjohnslutheranhatboro.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Friday 9 am – 2 pm.

Please call the office before coming in.