



**BONNIE  
BATES**

# St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

A monthly update from the people of St. John's UCC, Fullerton

**Volume 18 • Issue 159 • December 2025**

## God's Faithfulness and Our Future

My dear friends at St. John's,

November 21, 2021, I stepped into the sanctuary to lead our first worship service as your called and settled Senior Pastor. As I look back on these four years of ministry together, my heart is filled with gratitude. It's hard to believe how much life we've shared in that time—baptisms and memorials, celebrations and challenges, new beginnings and faithful continuities. Together we have prayed, planned, laughed, served, and sometimes wept. Through it all, we have witnessed God's faithfulness again and again preparing us for the next season of our shared future.

When I think of our journey, I'm reminded of the words of Philippians 1:3–6: "I thank my God every time I remember you... because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am confident of this, that the One who began a good work among you will bring it to completion by the day of Jesus Christ."

Partnership is the word that stands out to me. Ministry is not a solo act; it's a shared calling. We believe that all who claim the name of Christ are ministers. "The Priesthood of All Believers" is the theological term that describes every person having a ministry as we serve Christ. Over these four years, I've seen the Spirit at work in your generosity, your resilience, your creativity, and your compassion for one another and for our wider community. You've shown what it means to be the body of Christ: each person bringing unique gifts, all working together for a common purpose, all of us doing our part as we worship, love and serve.

We've grown together — sometimes in ways we planned, and sometimes in ways only God could have orchestrated. The landscape of church life has changed, shifted once again through our pandemic experience, and yet our mission remains steady: to love God, to love our neighbors, and to follow Jesus into the world with hope and courage.

As this anniversary is marked, and another year of ministry together continues, we are positioned as a forward-looking people. I believe we stand on the edge of another chapter of grace and hope. The same Spirit who has carried us this far continues to call us forward — to listen

for new voices, to nurture new leaders, to deepen our discipleship, and to extend Christ's love beyond our walls. We don't yet see the full picture of what's ahead, but we can trust that God is already preparing the way and leading us in our next steps.

So, thank you — each of you — for your faithfulness, your prayers, your trust, and your partnership in ministry, especially when it hasn't been easy. Thank you for the ways you have cared for one another and for me and my family. And thank you for daring to believe that the best stories of St. John's are still unfolding.

As we enter this season of Advent, inviting us to anticipate and prepare for the fullness of God to become flesh among us, may we keep walking together in hope, peace, joy and love, confident that "the One who began a good work among us will bring it to completion," together as the people of St. John's UCC, Fullerton, where...

**"We Worship, We Love  
and We Serve  
~ No Matter What!"**

Yours in grace and hope,

*Steve Davis*

Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



Dear Friends at St. John's United Church of Christ,

Thank you for your donation to the United Church of Christ.

As you requested, your gift of \$585 will be used for "Severe Storms" disaster relief. Your witness matters in this world. With your generous gift, we can help people recover not only when disaster strikes but also for long-term recovery.

Sincerely,

Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson

General Minister and President

United Church of Christ

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## On The Cover...

**BONNIE BATES**

On our cover we usually have a member of the St. John's family and get to know a little bit more about them from their point of view. This month, we are honored to have our Conference Minister, who while not a member, is definitely a part of our St. John's family. For the past eight years, Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates has faithfully served as our Conference area.

Bonnie was ordained in 2005. She served churches in the New York Conference, and also directed and taught in the Graduate Human Resource Development program at St. John Fisher College in Rochester. She worked in

Human Resources for several non-profits, and served on several not-for-profit Boards.

While in the New York Conference, she served in a variety of association and conference positions including chair of the Conference Personnel Committee, Executive Council and Executive Committee, Church and Ministry Committee, Staff Redesign, Visioning and Constitutional Revision Committee.

Bonnie then went on to serve as the Associate Minister for Congregational Vitality and Development in the Eastern Ohio and Western Reserve Associations, which is now known as the Living Waters Association. Her role there was to support pastors and congregations in transition, assist with search and call, work with congregational revitalization, and explore new church starts.

Bonnie began her work here as the Penn Northeast Transitional Conference Minister in September of 2017 and then the Settled Conference Minister in 2020. In all her areas of leadership with us, Bonnie expressed the honor it has been to serve here, in this capacity, as her last ministry call, especially working alongside Patty Rehrig and Barbara Jennings. Their wealth of knowledge and experience along with their support and friendship made them a great team.

Continued on pg. 6

## Bonnie Bates - continued

Bonnie has never been afraid of using her voice, both written and spoken, especially to speak out against injustices. She is self-admittedly stubborn, and she often needs to be reminded to rest. In the last eight years, the Penn Northeast Conference has seen the implementation of the Governance and Ministry Model and the restructuring of the Committee on Ministry. Communities of Practice and Coaching were introduced as a way of offering support to both pastors and congregations, along with many continuing education opportunities.

Bonnie pointed to our willingness as a conference to be open, supportive, willing to embrace change, and willing to step up, that enabled all of these things to happen. Not that there wasn't push back from time to time, but together we all grew both professionally and personally.

The visioning and now the transition to the Keystone Conference has been a significant part of her work over the last few years. She expressed gratitude for the opportunity to work with and become closer to her colleagues - Bill, Carrie, Dave, Nora, Kevin, Sean and with all those who have been a part of this process.

Her role in the day-to-day ministry, included both joys and sorrows including being present and offering support to pastors and congregations during difficult times. Bonnie reflected on the lovely people that we have lost through the years, as well as the celebrations and the rituals that soften the sadness of loss and give balance to ministry. She will cherish worshipping with congregations, celebrating ordinations, installations, and anniversaries, and the great relationships and connections. Reflecting on this journey of ministry, Bonnie said, "Leaving this role will be hard. I loved this work and I loved this place."

On December 14, we will celebrate Bonnie's ministry as she shares her message of Advent Joy with us in worship. For the gift of Bonnie's faith and love, leadership and grace shared with us, we say, "Thanks be to God for Bonnie Bates!"

## Music at St. John's

### Twass the Night Jesus Came - A Christmas Poem by Pepper Basham

*Twass the night Jesus came and all through the town, not a person would guess The Messiah came down. The earth gave no warning to speak God's intent, but this magical night I would never forget.*

*The streets were all busy with strangers from far; No time to hear singing or see the bright star. As my young friends and I kept our watch over the flock. We had no idea we would soon get a shock. When out of the darkness there rose such a light, I sprang from the hilltop to gaze at the sight.*

*An angel came shining brightly as noonday, more fearsome and brilliant than I've words to say. At first, he said, softly, "There's no need to fear." Which I found hard to do since this host first appeared, but he said, "Be of Joy! I bring you great news! Your Savior is born; there is no time to lose." "This babe wrapped in cloths has no crib for his bed but rests his sweet head in a feed-trough instead."*

*And then other angels, more than I can know, Rejoiced through the dark with their songs and their glow. Like millions of stars dancing down to the earth, they lifted their voices in praise of his birth-Singing, "Glory to God." Through the stillness of night "and peace to all," then they flew out of sight. It did not take long to break out of our shock. We ran down the hill leaving our field and flock, and found the sweet baby inside a damp cave, but could this be Christ – the entire world to save?*

*The donkeys and horses had left a foul smell. The straw was all muddy, the manger as well. But everything was as the angel had said, A babe wrapped in cloths in a crude manger bed. Then I know – it was clear. Where else would he be? The Teacher and Healer to make the blind see. The Savior who would carry the sins of us all, where else would show love than an old cattle stall?*

*This baby, The Christ, would clean up all our messes. He would take on our curses and give us His blessings. So, as I adored Him, God's Son, the true Light, God was whispering to all a "good night."*

*I hope as the Christmas season approaches, you will find time to join your church family on Sunday, December 21 for our fourth annual Service of the Nativity beginning at 6pm with prelude music beginning at 5:30pm featuring our bell ringers and guest violinist, Stephani Bell and guest cellist, Audrey Simmons.*

*Wishing everyone a very Merry and Blessed Christmas!*  
**Patrick**

## **Faith Formation & Worship Celebrations**

### **A Season of Anticipation and Preparation**

Something marvelous happens within us as we tell the familiar story and allow the excitement and nostalgia of Advent to remind us of the roots of our faith. We tell the story of Jesus coming as the promised Messiah, God in the the flesh, fully human and fully divine. This is our sacred story which we proclaim with great joy!

Maybe you have some form of an Advent Calendar in your home... the house with all the flaps to open that share a special surprise... the Christmas tree with ornament pouches, each one holding a sweet treat. However you share in celebrating the building joy of the season, we invite you to find something each day you can celebrate as a gift from God. Post it online, share it on Facebook, write about it in a journal or call someone and brighten their day with the thing you celebrate as a sign of God's hope, peace, joy and love being born into your life, our church, community, nation and world. We share our joy at St. John's, no matter what our age. We all have joy to share as we experience the growing faith of children, youth, and adults throughout the year.

Our Confirmation collaboration with UCC Greenawalds and Grace UCC, Allentown, has now completed three months of activities. Please pray for the now 11 people going through our G.I.F.T. (Growing in Faith Together) Confirmation Class from the 3 congregations. Pray for our confirmand, Ryan Szoke.

Here are some things you can take part in to grow in faith and celebrate God's presence:

- Verso-Chat Lectionary Study - Wednesdays at 9am on Zoom
- Friendship Class - Sundays at 8:15am, a time for adult study and sharing
- Holy Moly Children's Faith Formation - during worship, beginning with the children's message, followed by engaging stories and activities with our leaders
- Confirmation Class (G.I.F.T. - Growing in Faith Together) for youth, in collaboration with Grace UCC Allentown and UCC Greenawalds, meeting the 2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 6-7:30pm

In the Spirit of Advent and Christmas joy, let's embrace the faith that causes us to be renewed, even as we embrace new questions. Let's tell the amazing story of God-with-us that we might inspire faith in others. Let's intentionally create new connections, nurturing one another, and growing in hope, peace, joy and love, celebrating Jesus, the gift of God to all the world.

## **Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Worship Celebration**

**Monday - November 24, 6pm at St. John's**

Ecumenical relationships are relationships between different kinds of Christian churches that are striving for greater unity with each other.

Join us for worship with our siblings in faith from neighboring congregations in an ecumenical gathering of faith and thanks. We will worship together on Monday, November 24 at 6pm. Our congregation will host this year's gathering of gratitude and thanks. We will share our praise of God and our gratitude to be those who follow Jesus together.

This ecumenical gathering will bring together friends from:

- St. John's Lutheran (ELCA), Fullerton
- Holy Trinity Memorial Lutheran (ELCA), Catasaquua
- Assumption of the Virgin Mary Orthodox Church, Northampton
- Salem UCC, Catasaquua
- St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church, Catasaquua
- Hokendauqua Presbyterian Church
- Catasaquua Presbyterian Church
- St. John's UCC, Mickleys
- St. John's UCC, Fullerton

Following the worship service, we will enjoy some fellowship refreshments brought by each congregation, and begin our decorating for the Season of Advent which begins November 30.



# ADVENT- CHRISTMAS- EPIPHANY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

What do the candles of our Advent wreath celebrate? Why are there 12 Days of Christmas? What are the gifts shared by the wise men on Epiphany? And what does Epiphany mean? We explore all these things during these seasons where God's Light is hoped for and anticipated... where that same Light is born into human lives and shines in a new story of God's great love... where the Light of God expands and guides us in a new journey of faith, because we have heard the Good News of Great Joy to All People!

Over the last four years, the Advent season's themes of hope, peace, joy and love have been shared through holiday classic movies. The magical and nostalgic, the mysterious and the fanciful, all telling a story we long to hear. This year, we continue that tradition with some great holiday films. Come to worship, then watch the movie and let your spirit move closer to the heart of Christmas.

## **SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 30**

*The First Sunday of Advent - HOPE*

**Isaiah 2:1-5 - "Come, Let Us Walk in the Light of the Lord"**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122;  
Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44





During the Season of Advent, sentimental stories often share great spiritual truths which with we connect. We will start off the "Advent at the Movies" season message series presenting the first movie, "Wonka," for our theme of Hope, and discover how Willie became Wonka!

We often think we have to create something wonderful for people to believe in us. HOPE is found not in the things, but in who we share life with as we believe in God's gift to us. We begin this Advent seeing how God's Hope guides us to discover the real gift that lies within us all. Pastor Steve Davis will bring the first of our Advent messages.

Then on Saturday, December 6, at 6:30pm, we will gather in Fox Hall for Movie and Ice Cream Night, and see the movie "Wonka" together. Be sure to eat dinner ahead of time, unless you're okay with an ice cream feast as your meal.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

*Communion and The Second Sunday of Advent - PEACE*

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 11:1-10; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-19;  
Romans 15:4-13; Matthew 3:1-12

This week's film is "The Bishop's Wife", a timeless Christmas classic filled with warmth, wonder, and a gentle touch of heavenly humor. Bishop Henry Brougham, having difficulties finding the funding for the building of a new cathedral, prays for divine guidance. His plea is seemingly answered by a suave angel named Dudley, who reveals his heavenly identity only to the clergyman.

Dudley's mission, however, is to guide Henry and the people around him spiritually. Henry has become obsessed with raising funds, to the detriment of his family life. His relationships with wife, Julia, and their young daughter, Debby, are strained by his focus on the cathedral. Where will genuine peace be experienced and found?

Our Ministry Intern, Samantha Kistler, will bring the Advent message, helping us all with a fresh experience of God's peace.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14

*The Third Sunday of Advent - JOY*

**Special Guest, The Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates  
(Penn Northeast Conference Minister)**

Luke 1:46b-55 and Matthew 11:2-11

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 35:1-10; Psalm 146:5-10  
or Luke 1:46b-55; James 5:7-10; Matthew 11:2-11

This week's film is *"It's a Wonderful Life"*, a beloved Christmas favorite that explores how one ordinary life can overflow with extraordinary joy. Another angelic messenger, Clarence, has a mission to help George Bailey discover that George's life has really made a difference. Even in his most challenging moments and facing great trials, there is enthusiastic joy because of the people who share themselves with George.

Rev. Dr. Bonnie Bates will bring the third of our Advent messages, as together we celebrate the joy God brings us in discovering our value to others. Come share in the joy as we celebrate the ministry of our Conference Minister as she retires, having served the Penn NE Conference for the last 8 years.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

*The Fourth Sunday of Advent - LOVE*

**Matthew 1:18-25 "Joseph's Love at Second Sight"**

Lectionary Readings: Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;  
Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

This week's film is *"While You Were Sleeping"*, a charming holiday romance that lets love appear in the most unexpected places. Fare token collector, Lucy (Sandra Bullock), works for the Chicago Transit Authority. She is secretly infatuated with commuter, Peter, though they are strangers. On Christmas Day, Lucy rescues Peter from the Chicago "L" train after muggers push him onto the tracks. She accompanies the comatose Peter to the hospital, where a nurse overhears her mumbling, "I was gonna marry him." Misinterpreting, she tells everyone that Lucy is his fiancée. And that's where the problem begins.

Not all our Christmas wishes come true. However, the gift of God's love at Christmas always helps us see where love is present, with us,

guiding us. The story of Joseph reminds us of how God helps us embrace even troublesome circumstances in order to find the gift of God.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 21

*Service of the Nativity, 6pm*

St. John's Music Ministry presents this soul moving music, scripture, candlelight and story presentation of the Christmas story. Come early and enjoy this wonderful evening as a gift to us all this season. There's always room for you as we gather around the cradle of Christ and welcome the birth of love.

## ASBURY UMC, QUIET CHRISTMAS



Asbury's Quiet Christmas Service will be held on Thursday, December 18, 2025 at 7pm in the Sanctuary and streaming at [live.asburylv.org](https://live.asburylv.org) (please note the special date for this year). Led by Rev. Evelyn Stupp, Asbury's Pastor of Bereavement and Care Ministries, we'll gather with our friends at Asbury to experience God's hope and healing in the midst of grief, relationship/job loss, or other life transitions/events that weigh us down. The service will include hymns and special music, scripture and reflection, prayers, and candle lighting. This is always a wonderful time for contemplative reflection in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. All are welcome.

## WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 6pm

*Christmas Eve Carols, Communion and Candlelight*

This holy night is always a sacred celebration at St. John's. There will be wonderful music prior to the service to welcome us to worship. The sounds of Christmas carols, the anthems shared by choir and bells, and the message of God's gift to all in the Christ Child, Jesus, will renew our faith. We will receive Holy Communion as we welcome Emmanuel, God with us, and share in the beauty of candlelight together. Come celebrate with the faith family as we gather to worship the Babe of Bethlehem's manger.

## SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28

### *Carols and a Christmas Story*

Welcome to worship that is relaxed and casual, wearing your new Christmas clothes, or your favorite holiday sweater. We all love a great holiday story that shares our hope and faith. Come enjoy many of the season's favorite carols and hear a Christmas Story shared by Pastor Steve.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 4, 2026

### *Epiphany Sunday*

Celebrate the gifts of the magi and the promise of God to protect the Holy Family as God's guiding spirit leads them and still guides us today. This first Sunday of 2026 will invite us all to consider how we prepare for challenges and blessings of the new year as we begin with Holy Communion.

## SUNDAY, JANUARY 11, 2026

### *Baptismal Renewal Celebration*

Remembering the baptism of Jesus, we come to renew the covenant we have in God's unconditional love. This moving time invites us to claim our faith in Jesus Christ and our identity as beloved children of God, using the waters we have gathered from around the world as part of our sacred time of renewal.

## **Decorating for Advent - "Let Every Heart Prepare!"**

We all love how beautiful the sanctuary looks for worship during the Advent and Christmas seasons. Preparations are already underway for these festive and moving celebrations of worship and WE NEED YOUR HELP!

Come help prepare our space for worship on Monday, November 24, following our Ecumenical Community Thanksgiving Worship Celebration. It doesn't take very long if we have several handy helpers to fluff ribbons, bows, branches and wreathes. Let's get in the spirit of the season together! Please contact Patrick Sandt if you can help!

Use the [order form](#) for Christmas Poinsettias by December 4!

## Holiday Shopping at St. John's

A selection of crafts by our  
**"Keeping You in Stitches"**  
 crafters can be purchased on  
 the following dates:



**November 30  
 & December 7**

Before and after Worship  
 in the Foyer

Looking for household furnishings for the holidays? We've got Christmas t-towels, table runners, stocking stuffers, stockings, wine totes, coasters, tree ornaments, fabric baskets, reindeer food, and more!

Have a new baby or children in the family? We've got cross-stitch and cloth baby bibs, knitted baby sweaters, burping cloths, tooth fairy pillows, boo boo bunnies, American Girl doll sweaters, stuffed teddy bears and more!

Need birthday or thank-you gifts? We've got wine totes, coasters, table runners, cross-stitch finger-tip towels, bread cloths, kitchen towels, potholders, dishcloths, church cookbooks, 12-bean soup mix, and more!

Other Specialties! We've got bowl cozies in 2 sizes, foldable cloth shopping bags that fit in your purse, casserole totes, tissue box covers in 2 sizes, pillowcases, tank covers, bookmarks, "what-not" baskets, jar openers, and more!

If you have any questions, contact Carol Raszler (610) 393-7572 or email [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com)

## About Our St. John's Cross Logo

Over the last few months, we've been sharing more about the origins of our St. John's Cross in a newsletter article in September, and a video shared during the Consistory meeting and Sunday Social / Ask the Pastor and Elders time in October. We've actually used this logo since the January 2022 issue of the Connection Newsletter, and in every edition since. We use the cross on our website, in our YouTube livestream and on our digital bulletins. Since we don't often print our publications in color due to cost, it's possible to miss the beauty of the digital publications and presentations that help others come to experience St. John's for the first time.

Hearing the recent questions of some in the congregation, it was clear that more communication was desired about our "kaleidoscope" cross. The Elders and Consistory have spent about three months in conversation and discernment, reflecting on who we are as a people who welcome all to know the love of God in Jesus Christ. As an "Open and Affirming Congregation," we intentionally looked for ways to visually communicate that inclusive welcome to the community and congregation.

The choice to incorporate many colors represents the diversity of all we are as a congregation today. We are not simply one thing or another, one label of identity of another, and we share many gifts for ministry. Our kaleidoscope cross of many colors, seen in print on our worship bulletins and newsletters in black and white, often doesn't help us discern the distinction of the fullness of God's love. So the visible reminder of this colorful kaleidoscope cross is on our worship screen and digital/website version of our bulletin and newsletter, helping our online and on site worshippers, and anyone else who finds St. John's online, have more information about us.

Also, note that the cross in the center is empty. We worship the Christ of resurrection life. All of the colors on the outside point to the center, reminding us that the focus we all share is to point people to the love of God we know in Jesus. People get to visually know that we are a place of faith intentionally including every person in the "you are... welcome here" of God's love. This symbol invitingly says,



"We are part of a great and diverse place, where we worship, we love, and we serve – no matter what!" To see a video and more information about the design and creation of the St. John's cross, please follow this link. <https://stjohnsuccfullerton.org/about-st-johns>

## Sunday Socials

### Connecting Around the Tables

At St. John's, we believe there's something sacred about gathering around food and friendship. Whether it's a potluck, a mid-week meal, or a simple cup of coffee after worship, sharing food and conversation deepens our connection to one another and to God.

That's why we're investing in our Sunday Socials - our after-worship fellowship time where we slow down, laugh, catch up, and enjoy being part of this community. These moments around the tables may seem small, but they are building blocks of belonging and the heartbeat of our church family.

And here's where you can make a difference: we're looking for Sunday Social hosts!

Hosting is simple, meaningful, and something you can do solo or with a group of friends. It's a beautiful act of hospitality that helps every person who walks through our doors feel welcome and at home.

Ready to host? Here are a few easy ways to sign up:

- **Stop by the red display board at the back of the sanctuary.**
- **Call the church office and let Alison know which Sunday you'd like.**
- **Want to see the kitchen first? Colleen Kulhammer is glad to give you a quick tour and answer any questions.**

Let's keep building a community where food, fun, and fellowship flourish.

Sign up to host a Sunday Social and help keep this joyful tradition going strong!

# Service of the Nativity

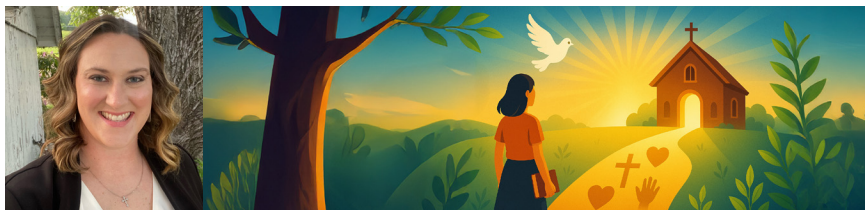


A Night of Meditation, Prayer and Song



Sunday, December 21, 2025  
Music beginning at 5:40pm - Service at 6pm

St. John's United Church of Christ, Fullerton  
575 Grape Street  
Whitehall, PA 18052  
(610) 264-8421



## Seeds of Faith from Samantha K.

As I think back over my childhood, there was something so magical about experiencing Christmas as a child but the feeling I get watching my own children experiencing Christmas is unexplainable. Their eyes widen at the first snowfall, their laughter fills the room when they decorate cookies, and their excitement builds as they count down the days until Christmas morning. They notice things that we adults tend to overlook like the twinkle of lights, the warmth of a hug, the mystery in a story we've heard a hundred times before.

My oldest daughter broke out her Rudolph pajamas November 1st and my youngest daughter has been perfecting her list for Santa for weeks. The anticipation that my children have this time of year also helps me to realize in this season of Advent that faith isn't just about knowing what we believe but instead it's truly about being open to wonder. In Mark 10:15 Jesus asserts that we must receive the kingdom of God "like a little child." I think that what he is speaking to is that to receive the kingdom of God "as a little child," is to receive it after the manner of a child, with simplicity and faith, humility and love. It means being willing to be surprised by grace, to find joy in small things, and to trust that God is still doing something beautiful, even when we can't quite see it yet.

It is easy for December to become one long to-do list. I know I am more than guilty of this. We rush from one event to another, we make sure we have pictures with Santa, cards in the mail, gingerbread houses constructed, the tree decorated and the perfect gifts purchased and wrapped. The joy of the season quickly turns into a process of checking boxes and managing expectations. But what if this year, we tried to approach things a little differently and tried to see the season through the eyes of a child? What if we slowed down long enough to marvel at the lights, to sing carols with gusto, to let ourselves be moved by the story of a baby born in a manger?

The birth of Jesus was God's way of saying that love shows up in unexpected places; in small towns, in ordinary people, and in moments that seem simple but are sacred. Children understand that better than most of us.

So this Advent, may we look for Christ in the small and simple things. May we let wonder lead us closer to the heart of God. And may our eyes, like the eyes of a child, be open to see the holy all around us.

## How We Give Makes a Difference

We are grateful for the steady, faithful generosity that fuels the ministry of St. John's. Your gifts, whether supporting mission partners, sustaining community outreach, or strengthening the ministries that shape our life together, transform compassion into action every single week.

Each month, Pastor Steve and the Stewardship and Finance Committee highlight stories that show how your giving makes a real difference. These moments remind us of the church God is forming through us: a community that cares deeply for one another and shines Christ's light far beyond our walls.

As we look ahead, our hope is not only to sustain the vibrant



ministry we share, but to expand it, reaching more people with Christ's message of welcome, love, and service. That growth depends on the steady partnership of our whole community. Unfortunately, we're still not reaching our monthly goals toward

our operating budget. We are generally meeting expenses, but still forecasting a loss for the year.

One of the most effective ways to support this ministry is through automatic recurring giving via ACH (automatic clearing house, i.e. direct from a bank account). This method is simple, secure, and provides consistent support throughout the year. Even more importantly, ACH giving comes with significantly lower processing fees, ensuring more of your contribution directly strengthens the ministries you care about.

Would you consider becoming an automatic ACH giver or increasing your current recurring gift? Michelle Gutekunst and our



team are ready to help you set it up. It only takes a few minutes and makes a lasting impact. Will you help St. John's end our budget year in the black and start 2026 with a strong and consistent stream of income?

Every gift matters. Every gift helps us share Christ's love with the world. Thank you for your continued faithfulness, generosity, and partnership in ministry. Together, we will keep answering God's call with open hearts and outstretched hands.

## **Meet Our New Consistory Members for 2026**

At our Fall Congregational Meeting on November 16, 2025, the congregation affirmed the nominations of a new Elder and three Deacons for the class of 2028. We are still hoping to have a young person to serve as our Youth Deacon.

Elder - Linda Powell

Deacons - Rev. Janet Boyd, Bobbi Pope, Mike Aggripine

Our sincere thanks for the three years of service given by Elder, Wendy Fox, and Deacons, Sharon Antrim, Kathy Roth and Tyler Shankweiler.

## **Bus Trip to Sight & Sound: "Joshua"**

June 3, 2026

Get ready for an inspiring day! St. John's is planning a bus trip to Sight & Sound Theatre in Lancaster on Wednesday, June 3, 2026, to see their new show, "Joshua."

The bus leaves St. John's at 8am for an 11am show. Afterwards, we'll enjoy a buffet lunch at Yoder's Restaurant.

Total Cost: \$150 per person (Includes show ticket, bus, driver tip, and buffet lunch).

Reserve Early! A \$75 deposit per person is needed to hold your spot. See Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler to sign up!

## **Mountain Valley Association of The Keystone Conference UCC**

We join in celebrating the decision of the PNEC Conference Board in the vote to name our new Association the Mountain Valley Association of the Keystone Conference. And, we have a space for the Mountain Valley Association in St. Paul's United Church of Church, 105 East 19th Street, Northampton, PA.

### About the Name...

Rev. Becky Sausser and Samantha Kistler made the name suggestion to the Board using the following: "We believe this would be a great fit because it not only captures the geographic description of our area but also expresses a biblical message. In 1 Kings 18 when Elijah made his offering before God to speak truth to power, we see that mountain top moment. Following this prophetic action, he has a moment of severe doubt and anxiety, and heads to a cave, and we see his valley moment. Though we sometimes walk through the valley of the shadow of death, God is always with us, and God is still speaking!

We lift up Isaiah chapter 40:4 as the guiding text for this name. "Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain." The Conference Board will be working on a logo based on the suggestions provided by Becky and Sam. Thank you to all who submitted a suggestion.





## NYC Bus Trip - December 13

New York City takes on a magical spirit during the holidays. Lights and decorations abound! There's so much to see and do! So don't wait another day!

Our "Fun-Raising" Committee offers one last opportunity before November closes out, to reserve your seat on the bus for a great day in the City. Contact the Church Office TODAY to get your name on the list and make your \$50/person payment for the day trip.



Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!

# December

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting	<b>3</b> 9:00am Verso Chat 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba-Fox 7:00pm SAA-Recover
<b>7</b> <b>Newsletter deadline</b> 8:15am Fellowship Class 9:30am Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b> 1:00pm Staff Meeting 6:30pm Stewardship & Finance	<b>10</b> 9:00am Verso Chat 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba-Fox 7:00pm SAA-Recover
<b>14</b> 8:15am Fellowship Class 9:30am Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour	<b>15</b> 6:00pm "Fun-Raising" Committee	<b>16</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 6:00pm Elders 7:00pm Consistory	<b>17</b> 9:00am Verso Chat 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba-Fox 7:00pm SAA-Recover
<b>21</b> 8:15am Fellowship Class 9:30am Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour 6:00pm Service of the Nativity	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:00pm PEEPS	<b>24</b> 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Painting G 6:00pm Christmas 7:00pm SAA-Recover
<b>28</b> 8:15am Fellowship Class 9:30am Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting	<b>31</b> 9:00am Verso Chat 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba-Fox 7:00pm SAA-Recover

# December 2025

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>3</b> with Pastor Steve Group Group k Hall y Support-Room 302	<b>4</b> 9:30am Visitation Committee 6:30pm Property Committee 7:00pm Choir Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 5:30pm St. George Church School	<b>6</b> 8:30am Men's Breakfast-Ham Fam 9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall 6:00pm Movie & Ice Cream Night "WONKA"
<b>10</b> with Pastor Steve Group Group k Hall y Support-Room 302	<b>11</b> 6:00 Bell Choir 7:00pm Choir	<b>12</b> 5:30pm St. George Church School	<b>13</b> 9:00am Bus Trip - NYC 9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall
<b>17</b> with Pastor Steve Group Group k Hall y Support-Room 302	<b>18</b> 6:00pm Bell Choir 7:00pm Choir 7:00pm Quiet Christmas - Asbury	<b>19</b> 5:30pm St. George Church School	<b>20</b> 9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall
<b>24</b> Group Group Eve Service y Support-Room 302	<b>25</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Office Closed</b>	<b>27</b> 9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall
<b>31</b> with Pastor Steve Group Group k Hall y Support-Room 302	<p>If inclement weather requires cancellation of Sunday services, notices will be on Channel 69 news or</p> <p><a href="http://www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter">www.wfmz.com/weather/stormcenter</a></p>		

## A Day at the Bazaar

On Saturday, November 8, Fox Hall was a buzz for its first annual Bazaar. Would-be buyers were greeted by our St. John's volunteers in order for them to purchase many flea market treasures, homemade candy and baked goods, crafts, and to enjoy a bite to eat for lunch. At the end of the day, buyers could stop back and for five dollars they could fill a grocery bag with any unsold items of their choice. The rest of the unsold items were packed up and given to charities like the Salvation Army and Goodwill. Many books went to the "Free Library" groups sponsored by the Pancreatic Cancer Network, the Kiwanis Club, and St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Allentown.

We could not have done all this without giving a big "thank you" to all the volunteers in the various departments, the kitchen crew, the many bakers and candy makers, the set-up and clean-up crews, and everyone who donated items.

As Pastor Steve said, "What a wonderful experience. I hope we enjoyed the preparation, the relationships made, the work and celebration when it was complete!" It was truly an exciting and rewarding day.







## Lady PEEPS

The December meeting of the Lady PEEPS (Positive Extraordinary Encouraging Prayerful Sisters) will be at the City View Diner (1831 MacArthur Road, Whitehall) at 1pm on Wednesday, December 17. Each person will be covering her own meal and beverage cost. Please contact Regina Mohr at (610) 390-0872 if you need to know more.



## Applebee's Burger Cards



Buy a card for \$10 and use it at any area Applebee's for any burger and fries on the menu.

Applebee's burgers are priced from \$13 to \$19, so you will save money with each card. Card does not expire.

See Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler. These cards make great stocking stuffers!

## RaiseRight Gift Card Sales

For everyone who ordered RaiseRight gift cards for the holidays, your order has been processed. As soon as the church receives the cards, you will be notified when they can be picked up. If you have questions, please contact Karen Stoitsits (610) 262-0746 or email [littlekdr@yahoo.com](mailto:littlekdr@yahoo.com)



RaiseRight™



## SaveAround Lehigh Valley

Coupon Books 2026 are Here!

These coupon books contain hundreds of buy one get one free, 50% off, plus many more discount offers, and includes a 12-month Savings App with additional local and national offers...save on the go.



Whether you are shopping for restaurants (dining and fast food), food, clothing, sporting goods, fun & recreational activities, services & retail, or car rentals, the SaveAround coupons make life more affordable and help St. John's raise funds for the church. It makes the perfect Christmas gift and features the most popular merchants locally and in our area. A sample copy for you to view can be found on the table in the lounge area.

The cost of the coupon book is \$25.00. Please make checks payable to St. John's. When you receive your book, be sure to read the book's front cover to register your App for thousands of additional local and national savings on your phone. You can get a book from the church office or see Carol Raszler any Sunday before or after worship.

## Gobble, Gobble, Gobble!

During the upcoming holiday, many of you will win turkeys, get them as gifts, or earn them with the supermarket rewards program. If you would like to donate your turkey for our fundraising events, please contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 to make arrangements.



## **Prayer Shawl Ministry**

Bringing Blessing, Warmth, and Prayer to Those in Need

St. John's has long been blessed by the loving hands of those who knit, crochet, and quilt prayer shawls and prayer squares. These handmade gifts become spiritual companions for people walking through illness, grief, hospitalization, or other difficult seasons, offering not just warmth, but a tangible reminder of God's presence and our community's care.

Over the years, pastors and congregational visitors have delivered these shawls to members in hospitals and care centers, to those facing serious diagnoses, and to seniors, children, and young adults navigating physical and emotional challenges. Each shawl is a quiet testimony of love with one more way we say, "You are held. You are remembered. You are not alone."

Thanks to the faithful work of Connie Viglione, Emilie Moyer, Nancy Weaver, Donna Held, and others, we have a beautiful supply of shawls ready to be shared. This fall, we are renewing this ministry and putting these gifts back into the hands of those who need them most. You may have noticed the display near the sanctuary elevator lobby; even more shawls are prepared and waiting.

Here's how you can take part:

### **Know someone who needs a prayer shawl?**

Contact the church office with their name. A shawl will be set out before worship so anyone in the congregation may stop by to offer a prayer over it. The recipient will be named in the Prayers of the People, and after worship, you (or one of our pastors or visitors) can deliver the shawl to bless them personally.

### **Want to help create shawls or squares?**

If you knit, crochet, or quilt—or would like to learn—let the church office know. We would love to include you in this ministry of comfort, support, and prayer.

## Stop and Pray as you enter the sanctuary for worship!

After sharing about renewing this important ministry, one of our knitters suggested we have the prayer shawls on display in the back of the church as people enter for worship so they can pause and pray over them before being seated.

Together, we can wrap others in God's love, one stitch, one prayer, one act of compassion at a time. Thank you for participating and adding your prayers.



## Men's Breakfast Group



The Men's Breakfast Group of St. John's meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Hamilton Family Restaurant located at 2027 Hamilton St. in Allentown. Our next meeting is on **December 6 at 8:30am**. We would be pleased to have you join us. If you would like to know more about this group, please contact Bob Bold at (610) 393-6123 or Pastor Steve.

## Sharing Christmas Joy with Our Homebound Members



Each year, our Homebound Ministry prepares Christmas gift bags to bring cheer, comfort, and connection to those who can no longer join us regularly for worship or church activities. These beloved members treasure the ways we remember them, loving reminders that they remain an important part of our St. John's family.

A pair of warm slippers, a cozy blanket, a favorite snack, a notepad or pen, simple gifts become meaningful expressions of care. Time and again, our homebound friends tell us how touched they are by the thoughtfulness and love behind each item.

This year, as our list of homebound members has grown, and because of St. John's generosity and faithfulness, we prepared 30 Christmas gift bags with LOTS of goodies to be delivered in early December.

Your donations, large or small, help us share the warmth, joy, and hope of the season. Thank you for your continued generosity and for the love you share all year long, especially at Christmastime.

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you! Together, we can brighten this season for those who most need a reminder that they are remembered, cherished, and deeply loved.

**The Visitation / Homebound Ministry**



## Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Shirley Abel  
Phyllis Ambearle  
Anita Beil  
Clarence Biehn  
Sherry Castello  
Shirley Downing  
Jeanne Fischl  
Milton Focht

Sally Gibson  
Gus Geissinger  
Sandy Glass  
Tracy Glass  
Lucille Hicks  
Geraldine Keim  
Bill Meckes  
Dale Millham

Karen Moyer  
Mary Jane Ott  
Helen Ryer  
Bert Smith  
Leona Snyder  
Nancy Weaver  
Bonnie Weikel

To protect privacy, please contact the church office for a listing with mailing addresses.

## Deadline for January Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the January newsletter, please email your single-spaced submission in PDF, DOC, RTF or unformatted text to: - [newsletter@sjuccf.org](mailto:newsletter@sjuccf.org) by Sunday, December 14.

Photos or graphics for your article should be sent as attachments to your emailed article. Please do not send inside a .DOC file.

[Style guide recommendations here](#)



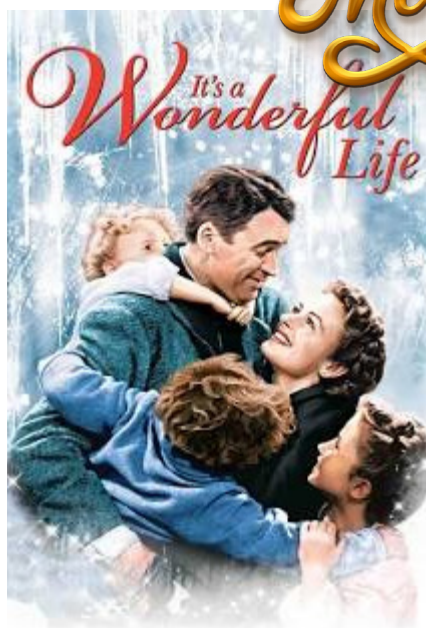


## November 30

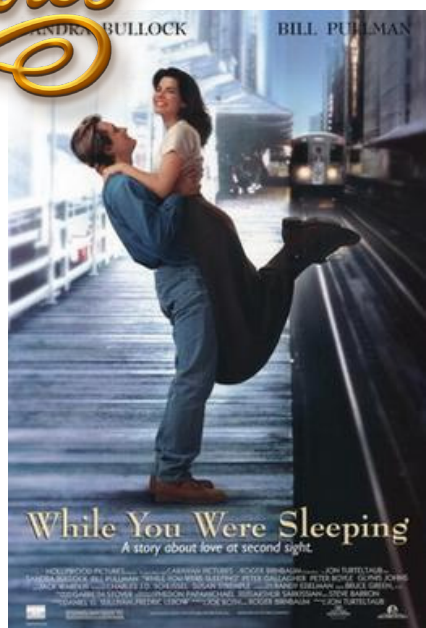


## December 7

# Advent at the Movies



## December 14



## December 21



## Movie & Ice Cream Night



Join us for our Movie & Ice Cream Night on Saturday, December 6, at 6:30pm as we choose from a big selection of ice cream flavors, toppings, popcorn, snacks and watch the movie "Wonka."



"Wonka" is a 2023 musical fantasy film that depicts a young Willy Wonka (played by Timothée Chalamet) as he arrives in the city with a dream of opening his own chocolate shop. He becomes entangled in a predatory contract with a ruthless boarding house owner, forcing him into servitude and also faces opposition from a cartel of established, greedy chocolatiers who want to crush any new competition. With the help of a young orphan named Noodle and other new friends, he sets out to make his unique chocolates and defeat his rivals. The story is a heartwarming tale of determination, friendship, and the idea that it only takes a dream to make a difference.

A sign-up sheet is posted on the bulletin board by the lounge area or call the church office to make your reservation. For your comfort, we suggest you bring your own lawn chairs. If you have any questions, see Pastor Steve or Bill Castello.



## God Is Still Speaking!

Verso-Chat: Exploring Scripture Together  
Wednesdays, 9am and Online Anytime!

Looking for a meaningful way to stay rooted in Scripture each week? Verso-Chat offers a welcoming space to explore the upcoming Sunday lectionary readings with curiosity, honesty, and a deep openness to God's still-speaking voice.

Join us on Wednesday mornings for thoughtful, Spirit-centered conversation. Whether you're brand new to Bible study or longing for something richer than a traditional verse-by-verse approach, Verso-Chat invites you to wonder, question, and listen together for how God's Word speaks into our lives today. Unable to attend in person? Each session is recorded and available upon request.

As we move through the various seasons of our faith story, our readings draw us into themes of hope, light, calling and community, in the everyday practice of following Jesus. Together, we explore how these ancient texts shape the way we love, serve, and grow as God's people.

Everyone is welcome. Click the Verso-Chat link below or visit our website to learn more.

Interested in an evening option? Let Pastor Steve know. We're always open to starting new groups. Come discover something new in Scripture each week at Verso-Chat.

<https://bit.ly/VersoChat>



# VERSO-CHAT

## Honoring Timothy Ott - Legacy Tree

St. John's has long maintained a memorial book recognizing contributions made in honor or memory of loved ones. When the parlor upgrade was discussed, it was decided that a visual symbol would be a more meaningful way to keep these memories alive, and thus our Legacy Tree was created. In developing the current tree, a review of the memorial book identified individuals who, over the years, made significant contributions to the church, and a leaf for each of these names was added.

Since then, this symbol of recognition has continued to grow as new leaves are added in honor or memory of loved ones. Recently, a new leaf was added by Susan Rarich to honor her brother, Timothy Ott, who died in October of 2023. Tim was a computer programmer by profession, and outside of work he enjoyed restoring his vintage Toyota. He was also an avid NASCAR and Minnesota Vikings fan. Appreciation is extended to Susan for this contribution honoring Tim.

At your convenience, take a moment to visit our Legacy Tree and read the names of those remembered there. If you would like to consider honoring or memorializing someone special, information is posted at the Legacy Tree.



## Grocery Shopping is as Easy as A, B, C

Whether you drive to the grocery store to shop, order online, or have your groceries delivered, we all need groceries. Do you realize that by purchasing Giant and Weis gift cards and by saving Redner's register tapes you are contributing money to St. John's?

For every Giant and Weis card sold, the church receives 5% back. You also get discounts for gas at both stores. Gift cards can be purchased through the church office or by seeing Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler every Sunday morning before or after worship.

For every Redner's tape collected, the church receives 1% back from its "Save-A-Tape Program." The Redner's tapes can be mailed to the church office or placed in a collection jar found on the table in the lounge area. If you have any questions, please see Karen Stoitsits.

It's an easy way to give financially to the church. Think of St. John's every time you go grocery shopping or need to fill up your car.

**GIANT®**



**Gift Cards**

**REDNER'S**  
WAREHOUSE MARKETS

**Receipts**

# Grocery Shopping = Giving Back to St. John's

**Buy Giant and Weis Gift Cards  
from St. John's**

➔ You spend the full value.  
The church receives a percentage.

**Save your Redner's  
Tape**

➔ Redner's donates 1% of your  
total back to St. John's!

**Every receipt counts. Every grocery trip helps.**



## Upcoming “Fun-Raising” Events at St. John’s

**Movie & Ice Cream Night – Saturday, December 6 – 6:30pm** in Fox Hall. Grab some popcorn, pick from a selection of ice cream flavors & toppings & enjoy the movie “Wonka,” starring Timothee Chalamet. Sign-up sheet is on bulletin board in lounge or call the church office. See Pastor Steve and Bill.

**Bus Trip to NYC – Saturday, December 13** – Tour the “Big Apple” on your own. Bus leaves 9am from St. John’s and from NYC at 7pm.

**Applebee’s “Burgers for a Cause”** – \$10 coupon entitles you to a gourmet burger and French fries. Good at any location. No expiration date. Makes a great stocking stuffer for Christmas. See Tom.

**Lehigh Valley SaveAround Coupon Books 2026** – Discounts to restaurants (dining and fast-food), stores, sporting goods, fun & recreation, reliable services, car rentals, etc. Cost \$25. Good all year. Makes a great Christmas gift. See Carol.

**Giant & Weis Gift Cards** – Church gets 5% back. See Tom or Carol.

**Redner’s Register Tapes** – Church gets 1% back. Please do not roll the register tapes or submit receipts from other stores. See Karen.

### Coming in 2026

**St. Patrick’s Gift Card Bingo – Friday, March 13**

**Basket Social – Saturday, May 2 & Sunday May 3**

Now accepting reservations:

**Bus Trip Wednesday, June 3, 2026**

**“Joshua” at Sight & Sound Theatre in Lancaster**

**Buffet meal at Yoder’s Restaurant**

**Cost \$150 – Will take \$75 in advance to save seat**

*See Tom Moyer*

### Committee Contacts:

Amy Feidler, Chairperson (835) 210-5944

Ginny Brokenshire	(610) 439-0443	Carol Raszler	(610) 393-7572
Bill Castello	(651) 492-1399	Karen Stoitsits	(610) 262-0746
Pastor Steve Davis	(610) 264-8421	Lori Stocker	(610) 703-2666
Brian Fisher	(610) 762-1134	Brian Strauss	(610) 248-9119
Tom Moyer	(610) 432-3372		

## December Birthdays

If you have an upcoming birthday or notice an omission, please update the church office.

12/1 .....	Barbara Thomas	12/14 .....	Jo Ellen Wexler
	Rev. Todd Fennell	12/18 .....	Amanda Kaiser
12/2 .....	Andrew Mill	12/19 .....	Daniel Schlenker
12/4 .....	Phyllis Ambearle	12/20 .....	Annamarie Barrall
	Xayden Kuhns	12/22 .....	Joanne Ziegler
12/5 .....	Nancy Weaver		Michael Agrippine
	Carol Buskirk		Robert Sherman
12/8 .....	Kelsey Gallagher		Walter Walenta
	Elijah Fox	12/23 .....	Robert Menges
12/9 .....	Ryan Weiner	12/24 .....	Daniel Reid
	Craig Bryant		Sally Gibson
12/10 .....	Donna Brown	12/26 .....	Paul F Geissinger
	Rev. Cliffert Herring		Christopher Kuhns
12/11 .....	Rachel Pollitt	12/27 .....	Robert Stevens
12/12 .....	Kim Hillegass	12/29 .....	Fay Salivonchik
	Keith Fox Jr.		Dennis Pascoe
	Kaitlyn Weidner		Debra Hausman
	Steven Schlenker	12/30 .....	Kerry Geissinger
12/13 .....	Melissa Szoke		





## December Wedding Anniversaries

If you have an upcoming anniversary or notice an omission, please update the church office.

12/27

Walter & Janice Walenta

12/28

Gerald & Patricia Yanavok

12/29

Peter & Regi Mohr

12/31

Adam & Emma Rarich



Worship, Love and Serve - No Matter What!



## **The Christmas Fund**

For over one hundred years, The Christmas Fund has provided direct financial assistance to United Church of Christ ministers, church workers, and their families with emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities, health premiums, and Christmas "thank you" gift checks to our lower-income retirees. This year's Christmas Fund theme is "When they saw the star, they were filled with joy" from Matthew 2:10.

Enclosed with this newsletter is special offering envelope for The Christmas Fund. Please place your donation in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or donate online or by text. Be sure to specify "The Christmas Fund" in the memo section. The offering will be received on Sunday, December 21, and for the entire month of December.

## **"Operation Santa"**

### **Mitten Tree Project**



We will continue to receive donations for "Operation Santa" until Sunday, November 23. You will find the Mitten Tree in the lounge area. If you would like to sponsor a gift for a senior resident at Phoebe Ministries, please take a yellow or pink mitten. If you would like to sponsor a gift for a child or young adult at Pinebrook Family Answers, please take a blue or orange mitten. Make your check payable to St. John's UCC, Fullerton and be sure to specify Phoebe and/or Pinebrook in the memo section. Put your donation in the offering plate, mail to the church office, or donate online or by text.

## Whitehall Food Pantry

We continue to look for donations of boxed or packaged stuffing mix for the holiday. Our goal is to receive 180 boxes, which can be placed in the shopping cart found in the coatroom area by the sanctuary.

During the government shutdown, funding to the SNAP Program (food stamps) and to food banks were in limbo. Millions of Americans who relied on government assistance struggled to put food on the table and families were finding empty shelves at the local food banks. We have been asking for monetary donations to help with this food shortage. Special offering envelopes for the pantry can be found on the table at the back of the sanctuary and can be put in the offering plate, mailed to the church office, or donated online or by text.

Should you consider volunteering in the morning or evening of the 4th Monday of the month, please contact Gary Black (484) 274-2405 or [gary.t.black@outlook.com](mailto:gary.t.black@outlook.com)

## Response to Hurricane Melissa

On October 28, Hurricane Melissa made landfall in Jamaica as a Category 5 storm, one of the most powerful and destructive Category 5 storms on record in the Caribbean. Its devastation also impacted Haiti and Cuba. The United Church of Christ has issued an appeal to help immediate and long-term recovery efforts in these countries. The primary needs at this recovery stage are shelter, safe drinking water, sanitation, healthcare, and food. Monetary contributions will be used by UCC's partners (ACT Alliance, Church World Service, Global Ministries) in the areas of greatest need. You can send your donation to:

United Church of Christ,  
PO Box 71957, Cleveland, OH 44194

Put "Hurricane Melissa" in the memo section of your check or contact via email: [giving@ucc.org](mailto:giving@ucc.org)

## Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative

WCHI and the Faith-Based Community are providing free meals to low-income Whitehall-Coplay households on the 1st Sunday and 3rd Tuesday of each month from 4pm to 6pm. WCHI will post a meal reminder on Facebook and Instagram and state if it is an inside sit-down meal, take out, or a version of both. The meal being served will also be posted. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Karen Haberern, Program Chair, at (610) 730-3184. The host churches are as follows:

Date	Place	Address	Phone
Sunday, 12/7	Muslim Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698
Tuesday, 12/168	Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church	3300 Seventh St., Whitehall	(610) 434-8661

## Update on Other Outreaches

Thank you to everyone who contributed to Neighbors in Need in October. A total of \$345.00 was received. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund an array of local and national initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries.

We express our gratitude to everyone who sponsored this year's CROP Walk. A total of \$922.00 was received. CROP Hunger Walks have become community-based events held in cities across the United States, raising dollars to support the global mission of Church World Service to eradicate hunger and poverty. Twenty-five percent of the funds raised stay within our local community to support the Ecumenical Food Bank and the Lehigh Conference of Churches' Conference Kitchen.

# How did St. John's Family do?

Mission	Oct. 2025	YTD 2025	YTD 2024	YTD 2023
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$871.00	\$9,590.00	\$10,748.00	\$10,543.00
Neighbors in Need	\$275.00	\$ 345.00	\$ 210.00	\$ 145.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$175.00	\$175.00	\$ 2,655.00	\$ 3,465.00
General Disaster Fund	\$100.00	\$ 280.00	\$ 629.00	\$ 575.00
CROP Walk	\$922.00	\$ 922.00	\$ 1,390.00	\$ 1,020.00

“...WHEN THEY SAW  
THE **STAR**,  
THEY WERE FILLED  
WITH **JOY**...”  
MATTHEW 2:10

**Donate to The Christmas Fund**

Your care and compassion will make a tangible difference in the lives of our ministers, church workers, and their families in need.

Donate Online Here!



# BUDGET UPDATE

## St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances

Oct 2025

Income	Electronic	10/5/2025	10/12/2025	10/19/2025	10/26/2025	Total
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$7,240.98	\$4,037.00	\$1,511.00	\$1,007.00	\$1,724.00	\$15,519.98
Rental Income--Gross	\$1,375.50	\$150.00			\$35.00	\$1,560.50
Fundraising Income--Net of Exp	\$120.00	\$2,338.00	\$424.35	\$3,335.25	\$(3,234.80)	\$2,982.80
Endowment Interest	\$5,825.00					\$5,825.00
Flowers		\$25.00	\$25.00		\$50.00	\$100.00
Faith Formation	\$39.00	\$25.00	\$10.00	\$10.00	\$15.00	\$99.00
Special Gifts						\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$14,600.48</b>	<b>\$6,575.00</b>	<b>\$1,970.35</b>	<b>\$4,352.25</b>	<b>\$(1,410.80)</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>

Expense Summary	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pastoral Services	\$10,374.79	\$10,258.50	\$(116.29)
Staff Salaries & Expense	\$9,987.38	\$9,479.75	\$(507.63)
Building Services	\$2,332.14	\$2,787.50	\$455.36
Faith Formation	\$294.96	\$104.17	\$(190.79)
Parish Programs	\$532.85	\$1,969.25	\$1,436.40
Fundraising Tithe	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$23,522.12</b>	<b>\$24,599.17</b>	<b>\$1,077.05</b>

	Month	Year
Total Income	\$26,087.28	\$256,525.70
Total Expenses	\$23,522.12	\$256,458.37
<b>Net INCOME (LOSS)</b>	<b>\$2,565.16</b>	<b>\$67.33</b>

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### Mission Giving, Oct 2025

Our Churches Wider Mission	\$871.00
Neighbors in Need	\$275.00
UCC Severe Storms	\$100.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$175.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,421.00</b>

### St John's UCC Fullerton Account Balances For Month Ending, Oct 2025

Account	Sep-25	Oct-25	Difference
Checking Account	\$31,211.72	\$71,782.41	\$40,570.69
Giant Card Funds	\$547.76	\$1,347.76	\$800.00
Weis Card Funds	\$876.00	\$701.00	\$(175.00)
sub-total General Fund Assets	\$32,635.48	\$73,831.17	\$41,195.69
Restricted/Property Checking	\$35,670.52	\$35,152.23	\$(518.29)
Restricted/Property Investments	\$81,356.00	\$782,017.00	\$700,661.00
sub-total Restricted Assets	\$117,026.52	\$817,169.23	\$700,142.71
Endowment Fund--Quadrant	\$564,855.00	\$568,116.00	\$3,261.00
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$714,517.00</b>	<b>\$1,459,116.40</b>	<b>\$744,599.40</b>
Cornerstone Pavillion Loan	\$(81,312.48)	\$(81,181.39)	\$131.09
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	<b>\$(81,312.48)</b>	<b>\$(81,181.39)</b>	<b>\$131.09</b>
<b>NET FUND BALANCE</b>	<b>\$633,204.52</b>	<b>\$1,377,935.01</b>	<b>\$744,730.49</b>





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## Entered the Church Eternal



*"I have fought the good fight; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on there is reserved for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have longed for his appearing."*

*- 2 Timothy 4:7-8*

On Tuesday, November 11, 2025, Larry Albright went home to be in the fullness of God's love at the age of 84. He will be greatly missed by our congregation and the Fellowship Communities residents. We're grateful for all the ways Larry helped us see the love of God and face of Jesus in each other. His spirit lives on in our hopes for the Church today.

Larry's memorial service will be held on Saturday, November 29 at the Fellowship Community Center, Zentz Hall, with visitation beginning at 10am and Celebration of Life service at 11am with a luncheon to follow. All are welcome to attend. Memorial contributions may be made to St. John's UCC, Fullerton.