



**NICHOLAS  
SANTEE**

# St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

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

**Volume 18 • Issue 151 • April 2025**

## “Finding a Faith that Makes Us Better Human Beings”



### *Finding Faith* in a World of **Doubt**

As we journey forward in Lent and look with greater joy to celebrate Easter, the heart of our faith comes into focus: the triumph of love over fear, life over death, and hope over despair. The resurrection of Christ is more than a historical event; it's an invitation — an invitation to become people of grace, compassion, and transformation. Easter reminds us that faith is not just about believing the right things, but about becoming the right kind of people.

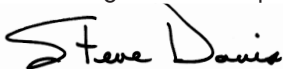
A faith rooted in the resurrection should make us better human beings — more patient, more forgiving, more generous. It should help us see the divine image in every person we meet. It should soften our hearts toward those who suffer and strengthen our resolve to pursue justice and mercy. If our faith doesn't lead us to love more deeply, then perhaps it's time to ask if we're truly following the way of Christ.

Jesus spent his life reaching out to the marginalized, offering kindness to the broken, and standing up for those who had no voice. We persevere and persist, recognizing we participate in a struggle to create the change we are called to make in the world. With life's challenges it would be easy to give in to fear and despair. The change we seek, the change we need, will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. The best way to make a difference is to get up and do something in keeping with the example of Jesus. His resurrection is a call to continue that work — to be people who embody his love in the way we speak, serve, and show up in the world. It's not always easy; loving others can be messy and costly. But Easter reminds us that love always has the final word.

This Easter, let's embrace a faith that brings life — not just to us, but through us. Let's be people of resurrection, bearing hope in a world that so desperately needs it. Let's be the kind of people who offer grace when it's hard, forgiveness when it's undeserved, and compassion without condition. May the power of Christ's love shape us into better neighbors, friends, and human beings. He is risen — may we rise, too. We are those who love, in grace and hope. We are St. John's UCC, Fullerton, and...

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

Yours in grace and hope,



Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



## **Consider Making St. John's Your Faith Home**

For those interested in uniting with us and making St. John's your official faith home, our next [5G Connection class](#) will take place in May with people being received May 18!

To accommodate busy schedules, we ask participants to attend two of the four session opportunities to be received on May 18. Let Pastor Steve know if you'd like more information. Class dates will be:

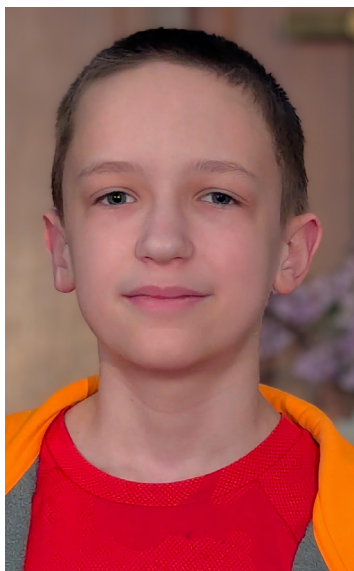
**Sunday, April 27 at 11am**  
**Wednesday, April 30 at 7pm**  
**Monday, May 5 at 10:30am**  
**Wednesday, May 7 at 7pm**

## Table of Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| 2025 Together We Are Stronger . . . . .                         | 17 |
| A Look at Ukraine on the Third Anniversary of the War . . . . . | 22 |
| April Birthdays . . . . .                                       | 30 |
| April Wedding Anniversaries . . . . .                           | 31 |
| Budget Update. . . . .  | 38 |
| Celebrate Earth Day! Tuesday April 22. . . . .                  | 27 |
| Children's Easter Egg Hunt . . . . .                            | 15 |
| Church Chuckle . . . . .  | 37 |
| Church World Service. . . . .                                   | 36 |
| Consider Making St. John's Your Faith Home . . . . .            | 3  |
| Convalescent & Homebound Residents . . . . .                    | 18 |
| Deadline for May Newsletter. . . . .                            | 5  |
| Dinner & Devotionals Wednesday Evenings During Lent. . . . .    | 10 |
| Donations Needed for Our Basket Social. . . . .                 | 26 |
| Faith Formation Schedule . . . . .                              | 8  |
| "Finding a Faith that Makes Us Better Human Beings" . . . . .   | 2  |
| How Did Our St. John's Family Do? . . . . .                     | 36 |
| Inclement Weather Notices . . . . .                             | 20 |
| In Memoriam . . . . .   | 19 |
| IronPigs Baseball Game Scheduled . . . . .                      | 32 |
| Lady PEEPS March Meeting . . . . .                              | 27 |
| Lenten Message & Devotional Series . . . . .                    | 11 |
| Lent Worship & Devotional Series Schedule . . . . .             | 12 |
| Men's Breakfast Group . . . . .                                 | 29 |
| Music Ministry . . . . .  | 6  |
| Ocean City, NJ Bus Trip Saturday June 28 . . . . .              | 33 |
| Reminder: Return Easter Baskets for Youth . . . . .             | 29 |
| "Souper Bowl of Caring" . . . . .                               | 34 |
| Spring Walking Challenge . . . . .                              | 7  |
| Staff Contacts. . . . .   | 39 |
| St. John's Kitchen Corner. . . . .                              | 24 |
| St John's Night At The Ironpigs Party Porch! . . . . .          | 32 |
| Sunday Socials - So Much More than a Coffee Hour! . . . . .     | 28 |
| Update on Other Mission Outreaches. . . . .                     | 36 |
| Verso-Chat Bible Study . . . . .                                | 16 |
| Wanted! Crafter-Sewer. . . . .                                  | 5  |
| Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative's Community Meals . . . . .  | 35 |
| Whitehall Food Pantry. . . . .                                  | 35 |
| YOU Make the Difference. . . . .                                | 17 |



## On The Cover...



### NICOLAS SANTEE

My name is Nicholas Santee. I am in 7th grade at Whitehall Coplay Middle School.

I enjoy music, video games, and vehicles.

I was baptized here at St. John's and also went to Sunday School here. My family, going back to my great grandmother, also went to St. John's. I am currently in confirmation class here at St John's.

## Wanted!

A sewer is needed to join our Crafters group "Keeping You in Stitches." We are looking for someone willing to help sew our table runners, bowl cozies, baby bibs, etc. Fabric and directions will be provided along with help if needed. Please contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com) if you are interested.



## Deadline for May Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the May newsletter, please email your single-spaced submission in PDF, DOC, RTF or plain text format to: - [newsletter@sjuccf.org](mailto:newsletter@sjuccf.org) by Sunday, April 13.

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

[Updated style guidelines here](#)

## Music Ministry

### A Love Story

By Roddy Hamilton

*Gather round! I have a story to tell of one who reached inside himself and took a handful of love like a pile of stardust and said: "This is for you, it is all you need, it is all you will ever need, there is enough here to change the whole world, so take it!"*

*Many laughed at him, mocked him, and ignored the invitation but some dared to take it and those who did noticed something about this love they found. They could do what the gift-giver could do. They could stand with the lost, welcome the traveler, eat with the hungry. They found themselves doing what the man first did to them; give something of themselves to others. They became like the man; offering themselves and as they offered themselves, others took the invitation and many still do. And, many still trust it is enough to change the whole world.*

The holiest week of the church year, Holy Week, begins with the waving of palms and a celebration, a triumphant entry as you would, to an upper room where a meal was shared with the very one who would betray Him with a kiss, to the Garden and the arrest of an innocent man, to scenes of cruelty, anger, and hopelessness in His own crucifixion. And finally, the scene of unbelievable joy and hope. So many emotions within the course of seven days!

One of my favorite weeks of the liturgical year is Holy Week. Being able to tell the story of what each day represents through song and allowing the listener to feel those emotions through those words, has made me into the stor-telling music director I am today.

I hope you are able to join us for this holiest of weeks and be with us during the journey to Resurrection joy on Easter Sunday. Come and hear the story through prayer, song, and feel the emotions that define our very faith!

A blessed and happy Easter!

Patrick



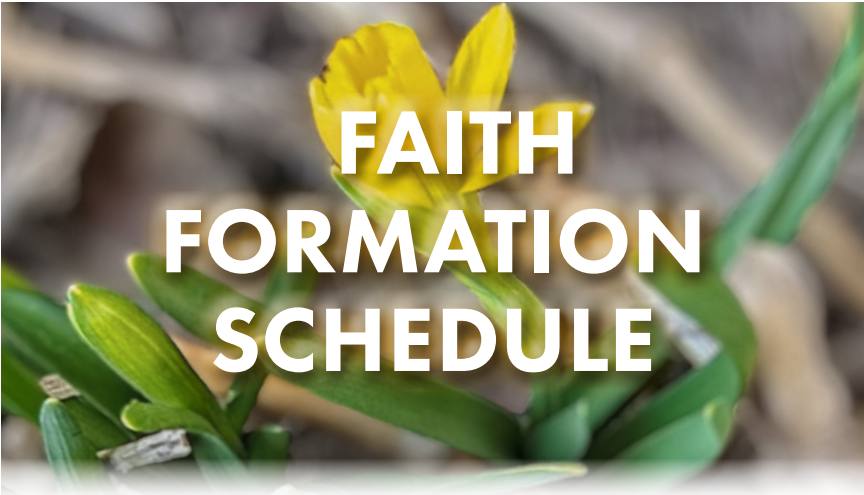
## Spring Walking Challenge

The 2025 Spring Walking Challenge is almost here! Mark your calendars—it will begin on April 27 and continue through May 24. I've scheduled the challenge a bit later this year, hoping we'll enjoy nicer, sunnier weather after experiencing rainy Aprils in the past. Let's welcome spring with enthusiasm and sunshine!

This walking challenge is an excellent opportunity to step into better health, reconnect with friends, and enjoy the outdoors. Whether you're an experienced walker or just starting, everyone is invited to join. All you need to participate is a pedometer (or any device that tracks your steps) and a comfortable pair of walking shoes.

To sign up, please contact me directly [sharonantrim@yahoo.com](mailto:sharonantrim@yahoo.com) or call me at (610) 216-6207. Feel free to invite family, friends, and neighbors—the more, the merrier! Together, we can motivate each other toward healthier habits and a vibrant spring season.

I'm looking forward to sharing another fantastic challenge with all of you! Warm regards, Sharon Antrim



# FAITH FORMATION SCHEDULE

## and Worship Celebrations! Sunday Mornings for Children, Youth & Adults

Welcome to the growing and expectant faith we share together at St. John's! Here's what we have to look forward to as we engage in faith formation and worship together.

**8:30am Adult Faith Formation** - The Friendship Sunday School Class meets in Room 201, to accommodate those with physical mobility needs. All are welcome to topical studies, biblical reflection and group discussion, led by various class members. Anyone needing assistance, please use the Grape Street elevator entrance and come to the sanctuary level. There's always great conversation and some tasty treats to start your Sunday morning well! Contact Tom and Emilie Moyer for more information.

**9:30am Children's Faith Formation** - Children gather with the congregation in worship through the Children's message, then are led to Room 101 and our "mini theater" room for the weekly topic lesson. "HOLY MOLY" is our curriculum theme this year! We believe our children are blessings, and we want them to grow in our love and the love of God. Please see our "HOLY MOLY" article for more details or contact Rev. Becca Stephens or Wendy Fox.

The children's table is set up in the Parlor for activity if desired for those who choose to remain during worship with parent supervision for any children not participating in regular faith formation activities. "Kids Busy Bags" are also available at the welcome table.

#### REMINDER TO PARENTS FOR COMMUNION SUNDAYS.

On the first Sunday of the month when the congregation celebrates the sacrament of Holy Communion, children who normally participate in "Holy Moly" Faith Formation will remain in the sanctuary with their family in worship. We know some parents welcome their children participating in the sacrament. Others want their children to wait until they are confirmed or until they have a stronger understanding of the meaning of this sacred meal of love and grace.

At St. John's UCC, Fullerton, we observe an OPEN Communion Table, which means that ALL PERSONS, regardless of age or full understanding of the sacrament, are welcome to receive. After all, how many of us as adults in our faith can fully express or explain the significance of this sacred meal. Children will stay with their parents on the first Sunday of the month to accommodate their participation in Holy Communion, as those who observe in participation, or as those who receive in participation. We have both wine and grape juice in the trays to meet the needs of all.

**9:30am Morning Worship** - Our faith community gathers to Worship, Love and Serve every Sunday morning! We have a place for you, one and all, and YOU ARE... WELCOME HERE! We have created places in the congregational seating for those with mobility issues and assistance support. We are working to make our spaces and worship experience more accessible for everyone, including those with hearing impairment.

Join us each week in the gathering spaces, the classrooms, the sanctuary, online, and with Sunday Social time following worship in Fox Hall. We welcome you into the experience of God's love through St. John's.

**11:00am Confirmation Class for 7th & 8th Graders - Youth Room (3rd Floor)**

### **AFFIRMING FAITH**

ALL YOUTH are welcome to come to the youth room during our Sunday Social time and share with our Confirmation Class as well as spend time with other youth and grow in your faith.

Confirmation Class participants will be visiting with you during our Sunday Social time. Please look for Nicholas Santee, Aiden Hannis and Lucas Williams in the minutes before we move to our class sessions each week, or on 4th Sundays when they generally have more time to connect with the congregation. Pray for them by name each week for this time of exploring and affirming their own faith. Express your thanks for their worship participation and leadership. Join them in the journey of discovery to affirm their faith in God through Jesus Christ.

Confirmation sessions continue through the end of May with class lessons, worship experiences, service projects, church life, and learning with friends, leaders and mentors. These young men will look to YOU, the people of St. John's, to model what faith looks like. They will witness how you WORSHIP, LOVE and SERVE to create your own "No Matter What" kind of faith. What we live before them matters every single day!

As we make this Affirming Faith journey together, you are invited to get to know these guys and help them know who we are and how our lives have been changed in the love of God.

### **Dinner & Devotionals Wednesday Evenings During Lent**

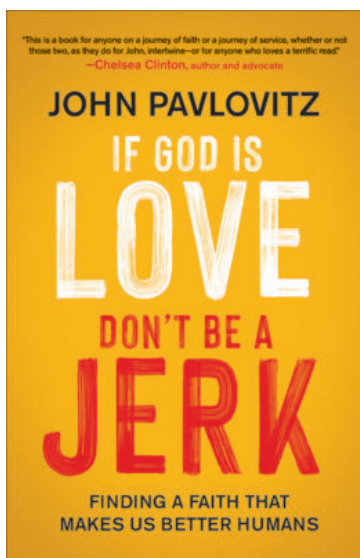
Each Wednesday evening at 6pm during Lent (beginning March 5) we will gather in Fox Hall for Dinner and Devotionals. A Soup and Bread sign up sheet will be posted on the red display board in the sanctuary for volunteers and groups to 4 different soups and some sliced bread for our shared dinner meal. Come enjoy something to warm and fill your stomach and your spirit.



## Lenten Message & Devotional Series

Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings in Lent, starting March 5) we will seek to open our faith to a greater experience and realization of God's love for us. With the backdrop of the book by John Pavlovitz, *If God is Love, Don't Be a Jerk! Finding a Faith that Makes Us Better Humans*, we will journey with Jesus and each other toward a deeper relationship with God. In the introduction we learn the author's intent: "This book is about the walking: about imagining what love should or could look like if we take that mandate seriously. It's about the ways a bigger God is going to yield a greater capacity to love more people, and about what that will cause us to confront and confess and jettison."

While Pavlovitz addresses many of the doctrines that are core to the Christian faith, he looks at them in new ways, particularly at the actions that result from our theological beliefs. I acknowledge in advance that John writes with a particular point of view as a decidedly progressive, liberal pastor, not afraid to deal with faith and the policies and practices that touch our lives every day. While we might disagree with some of his assertions, he shares out of his many years of pastoral experience how his faith and understanding has changed as he has come to experience God in bigger ways, opening his own capacity for love and being a better human being. I hope you will enjoy the journey together.



Wednesday evenings will offer more conversation and interaction with the book subject matter. Each message will focus on what we can do to grow our understanding of loving God and loving our neighbor, the first and greatest commandment. Plan now to take part in worship and devotionals this Lent as we journey together toward Holy Week and the triumph of God's love this Easter.

## **Lent Worship & Devotional Series Schedule**

**"If God Is Love, Don't Be a Jerk!"**

**Finding a Faith that Makes Us Better Humans"**

Our worship and devotionals theme for Lent invites us to expand our experience of Love for God and Love for Each Other. Just as Jesus experienced a period of struggle in the wilderness, we too face challenges to our faith. Jesus shared his experience with his disciples so they could learn and understand from the challenges Jesus faced. As we open our lives of faith to God's love we will experience a greater connection with others. The primary message of the book is about embracing a compassionate and inclusive faith, emphasizing that true spirituality should lead to being kind and loving towards others. It encourages readers to live out their faith in a way that reflects love and acceptance. This will be our journey of faith guiding us to the gifts of God in Holy Week and the joy of Easter living!

### **SUNDAY, MARCH 30**

*Worship*

*Joshua 5:9-12, Psalm 32,2,  
Corinthians 5:16-21, Luke 15:1-3, 20-32*

**If God is Love: "Holy Ferocity"**

We've heard the story of the Prodigal Son so many times that we forget to see the Prodigal nature of the Father, reckless and extravagant, not with one son, but two. Jesus invites us to a bold and loving approach to justice and inclusion.

### **WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2**

*Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional*

**If God is Love: "Good Book, Lousy Hammer"**

Scripture has often been used as a sacred weapon rather than our guide for living in the fullness of God's love. Over the centuries, scripture has been "cherry picked" to provide "authority" for all kinds of "atrocities," especially to those already marginalized. Jesus welcomes us to encounter him as the Life-giving Word upon which our lives can find hope.

## SUNDAY, APRIL 6

*Worship with Holy Communion*

*Isaiah 43:16-21, Psalm 126*

*Philippians 3:4b-14, John 12:1-8*

**If God Is Love: Love Your \*Bleep\* Neighbor**

Our faith example, Jesus, models the call for empathy and kindness to "our enemy" who also happens to be our neighbor. All of humanity shares some of life in common, yet some aspects of our understanding are in great conflict with each other. How do we make sure love wins in our lives?

## WEDNESDAY, APRIL 9

*Soup & Bread Dinner & Devotional*

**If God is Love: "The Church of Not Being Horrible"**

No matter how hard we may try to model the Jesus Way of doing life, we all participate in harmful religious practices which even the "best of us" still do. How can we be more aware and make changes to our faith each day?



**HOLY WEEK**

April 13 - 20

## PALM / PASSION SUNDAY, APRIL 13

*Worship with Palm Processional*

*Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29, Luke 19:28-40*

*Isaiah 50:4-9a, Psalm 31:9-16, Philippians 2:5-11*

*Luke 22:14-23:56 or Luke 23:1-49*

**If God Is Love: "The Gospel According to You"**

We all eventually have to "own up" to our faith practices and beliefs. When challenged with ideas and information which cause us make adjustments to our faith understanding, we each model the personal responsibility Jesus showed us, as well as recognizing our need for embracing a new way of being in our faith.

## MAUNDY THURSDAY, APRIL 17

*Worship at 7pm*

*Exodus 12:1-4, (5-10), 11-14*

*Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26*

*John 13:1-17, 31b-35*

### **If God Is Love: "A Title or a Towel?"**

The story of Jesus washing the feet of his disciples powerfully reminds us of his humility in taking up the towel of the servant. We like to be known as followers of Jesus. Yet do we want the title more than the model of what it means to serve with love?

## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

*Worship, "Stations of the Cross" at 12pm*

Come join us for worship to guide us through the stations of the cross and remember Jesus life and death for us all to embrace the hope we have in Christ.

## GOOD FRIDAY, APRIL 18

*Worship, Tenebrae "Service of Shadows" at 7pm*

*Isaiah 52:13-53:12, Psalm 22, Hebrews 10:16-25*

*or Hebrews 4:14-16; 5:7-9, John 18:1-19:42*

### **If God Is Love: "Forgiven"**

The reading of Jesus' suffering, his passion and death, often makes us want to look away. As we look to the cross, it holds each of us with the message of forgiveness. Jesus is the one who declares us to be those with him in paradise.

## EASTER SUNDAY, APRIL 20

*Worship with Communion at 9:30am*

*Celebrating the Resurrection and Resurrection Cross*

*Acts 10:34-43 or Isaiah 65:17-25, Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24,*

*1 Corinthians 15:19-26 or Acts 10:34-43*

*John 20:1-18 or Luke 24:1-12*

### **"Believe the Women!"**

## HOLY HUMOR WEEKEND, APRIL 26-27

*Saturday Comedy Night and Meal at 6pm*

*Sunday Holy Humor Service at 9:30am*

*Acts 5:27-32, Psalm 118:14-29 or Psalm 150*

*Revelation 1:4-, John 20:19-31*

**“That’s a Great Trick! Do It Again!”**

Join us for a festive weekend of laughing... hopefully at ourselves and with others! As God has shared the ultimate trick on death, the resurrection in the surprise that makes us giggle with delight! Grave, where is your victory? Death, where is your sting?

*Hahahaha! LOVE WINS!*

### **Children’s Easter Egg Hunt**

**Saturday, April 12 10am-Noon**

Join St. John’s annual egg hunt festivities by donating candy to fill Easter eggs. More information will be shared each week in worship. Egg cartons will be available for those who would like to prepare eggs at home.

Parents are invited to register participating kids online in advance. Share this with neighbors and friends and join us for all the EGG-CITEMENT this Easter! Watch our Facebook page for a link to the registration page.





## **God Is Still Speaking...**

**with Verso-Chat Bible Study - Wednesdays, 9am**

Join us for our weekly Bible Study on Wednesday mornings, where we explore the scriptures and discover God's "still speaking" voice.

Verso-Chat offers another Faith Formation opportunity for growth, especially for those who may not be comfortable with traditional Sunday School or have limited Bible knowledge.

Ask questions, laugh, learn, and strengthen your faith with us!

During Lent, Holy Week, and Easter (April and May), the Revised Common Lectionary readings for Sunday services will guide our worship and Verso-Chat discussions.

Experience God's beloved community and the Spirit speaking to and through us. EVERYONE is welcome to join our Verso-Chat Bible Study to deepen their worship experience.

Each week's study offers a unique opportunity to discover God's "still speaking" words.

Let's study and discuss the scriptures together!

If you're interested in an evening Bible Study, contact Pastor Steve via email to inquire about a Verso-Chat PM session starting this Spring, also on Wednesdays.

Use this link to join the Verso-Chat on ZOOM

<https://bit.ly/VersoChat>



# **VERSO-CHAT**



## 2025 Together We Are Stronger YOU Make the Difference

Dear Friends,

Time and again, the generosity of the St. John's community shines through, uplifting our ministry through your compassionate hearts and enthusiastic support for special needs, mission projects, fundraising events, and outreach efforts. Thank you!

Each month, the Stewardship and Finance Committee strives to inspire us by highlighting what's possible when we unite to build a community rooted in love, hope, and justice. Your generosity truly impacts our church, our community, and the wider world.

Our ongoing goal is not only to meet our basic needs but to surpass them—allowing our ministry to grow and positively touch more lives. This vision can't be realized through the efforts of a few; it requires each one of us to contribute and make a difference. My family and I have thoughtfully reviewed how we can further support this ministry, and we warmly encourage you to do the same.

At our Annual Meeting in February, Treasurer Sue Weldner reminded us that even a small weekly increase in contributions can significantly enhance our ability to expand our ministries.

We invite you to consider increasing your regular contributions in 2025 wherever possible.

- ***Thank you for considering becoming an Automatic Contributor.***
- ***Thank you for making heartfelt special donations.***
- ***Remember, no gift is too small—every contribution matters.***

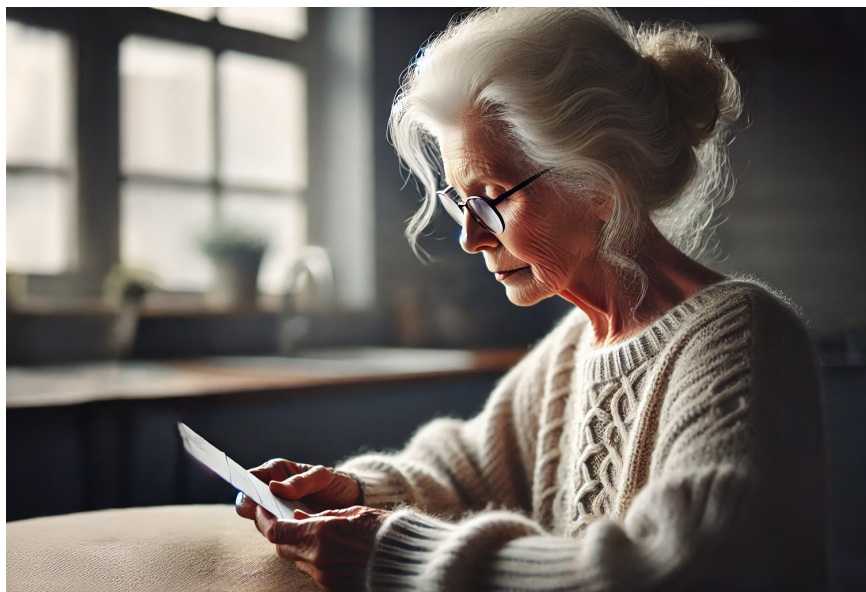
With gratitude as we worship, love, and serve together,

The Stewardship and Finance Committee

The St. John's Consistory Leadership

Rev. Steve Davis

P.S. If you haven't yet become an Automatic Contributor, please consider this convenient and reliable option. Michelle Gutekunst and our team will cheerfully help you set up this easy and consistent method of supporting our ministry.



## **Convalescent & Homebound Residents**

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

|                     |                   |                        |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Shirley Abel        | Ron Glass         | Mary Jane Ott          |
| Larry Albright      | Gus Geissinger    | Marilyn (Jean) Piskula |
| Phyllis Ambearle    | Robertta Haberern | Helen Ryer             |
| Anita Beil          | Lucille Hicks     | Madeline Slivka        |
| Clarence Biehn      | Geraldine Keim    | Bert Smith             |
| Sherry Castello     | Emma Repp Kuczek  | Leona Snyder           |
| Sandra Diefenderfer | Jean Litzenberger | Nancy Weaver           |
| Shirley Downing     | Bill Meckes       | Bonnie Weikel          |
| Jeanne Fischl       | Gayle Mihulec     | Arline Yoder           |
| Milton Focht        | Dale Millham      |                        |
| Sally Gibson        | Karen Moyer       |                        |

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

## In Memoriam

Owen Eberhart, Jr., 85, entered eternal life on March 9, 2025.

A viewing will be held at 9:30am on Saturday, March 22, at GFH, followed by a Masonic Service at 10:45am. The funeral service will begin at 11:00am. Interment will take place at St. John's Union Cemetery at Mickleys. A luncheon will follow in Fox Hall immediately after the interment.

Friends and family are warmly invited to attend as we celebrate Owen's life and legacy.

**If you haven't already, please consider becoming an "Automatic Contributor" through your giving.**

**Michelle Gutekunst and others will be happy to help you get that transaction process set up. It's easy and reliable, and most importantly, provides consistent support for our ministry.**



Aim your  
smartphone camera  
**HERE**



# April

| Sunday  | Monday  | Tuesday   | Wednesday   |
|---|---|---|---|
|   |   | <b>1</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting  | <b>2</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat<br>12:00pm Painting<br>6:00pm Painting G<br>6:00pm Soup & Stud<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery                   |
| <b>6</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00am Confirmation Class   | <b>7</b>  | <b>8</b><br>1:00pm Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm Stewardship and Finance  | <b>9</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat<br>12:00pm Painting<br>6:00pm Painting G<br>6:00pm Soup & Stud<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery                   |
| <b>13</b><br><b>Newsletter deadline</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Sunday Worship-Palm Passion<br>10:30am Social Hour<br>11:00am Confirmation Class | <b>14</b>   | <b>15</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting<br>10:00am Community of Practice<br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:00pm Elders<br>7:00pm Choir<br>7:00pm Consistory | <b>16</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat<br>12:00pm Painting<br>6:00pm Painting G<br>6:30pm Zumba-Fo<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery                     |
| <b>20</b><br><b>EASTER</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Sunday Worship-Easter   | <b>21</b><br><b>Office Closed</b><br>6:30pm "Fun-Raising" Committee | <b>22</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting<br>6:30pm PEEPS   | <b>23</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat<br>12:00pm Painting<br>6:00pm Painting G<br>6:30pm Zumba-Fo<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery                     |
| <b>27</b><br>8:30am Friendship Class<br>9:30am Children's Faith Formation<br>9:30am Holy Humor Sunday Worship<br>10:30am Social Hour                          | <b>28</b>   | <b>29</b><br>9:30am Staff Meeting   | <b>30</b><br>9:00am Verso Chat<br>12:00pm Painting<br>6:00pm Painting G<br>6:30pm Zumba-Fo<br>6:30pm STARS Mee<br>7:00pm SAA-Recovery |

| Wednesday  | Thursday  | Friday   | Saturday  |
|--|---|--|---|
| <b>2</b><br>t with Pastor Steve<br>Group<br>Group<br>y<br>Support-Room 302               | <b>3</b><br>9:30am Visitation Committee<br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:00pm Girl Scouts<br>6:30pm Zumba-Fox Hall<br>7:00pm Choir   | <b>4</b>   | <b>5</b><br>8:30am Men's Breakfast at HamFam<br>9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall |
| <b>9</b><br>t with Pastor Steve<br>Group<br>Group<br>y<br>Support-Room 302               | <b>10</b><br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:00pm Girl Scouts<br>6:30pm Zumba-Fox Hall<br>7:00pm Choir   | <b>11</b>  | <b>12</b><br>9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall<br>10:00am Easter Egg Hunt         |
| <b>16</b><br>t with Pastor Steve<br>Group<br>Group<br>k Hall<br>y Support-Room 302       | <b>17</b><br>6:00pm Girl Scouts<br>7:00pm Maundy Thursday Worship Service   | <b>18</b><br>12:00pm Good Friday Worship Service<br>-Stations of the Cross<br>7:00pm Good Friday Worship Service | <b>19</b><br>9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall                                    |
| <b>23</b><br>t with Pastor Steve<br>Group<br>Group<br>k Hall<br>y Support-Room 302       | <b>24</b><br>6:00pm Bell Choir<br>6:00pm Girl Scouts<br>6:00pm Property Committee<br>7:00pm Choir   | <b>25</b>  | <b>26</b><br>9:30am Zumba-Fox Hall<br>6:30pm Comedy Night Dinner      |
| <b>30</b><br>t with Pastor Steve<br>Group<br>Group<br>k Hall<br>ting<br>Support-Room 302 | <b>Reminder: Pastie Sale Pickup</b><br><br>Thank you to everyone who placed an order for our recent Pastie Sale. A total of 148 pasties were sold. Pickup is scheduled for Thursday, March 27, from 6pm to 8pm and on Sunday, March 30, following worship in Fox Hall. If you have any questions, contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or email <a href="mailto:craszler@aol.com">craszler@aol.com</a> |  |   |

## A Look at Ukraine on the Third Anniversary of the War

It was three years ago on February 24, 2022, that Russia conducted a full-scale invasion of Ukraine, provoking the bloodiest and most destructive war in Europe since World War II. The World Council of Churches noted with sadness that three years later, the war continues; however, there is a glimmer of hope for a cease fire and peace agreement.

The futility of this war is written in the enormous loss of lives among those in combat, civilians, and children, and the vast toll of destruction and displacement. One quarter of the pre-war population has fled the country as refugees. Essential civilian infrastructure, including schools, hospitals, and water supplies have been damaged or destroyed. Ukraine has become the most heavily mined country in the world and attacks on and around nuclear power facilities threaten an environmental catastrophe.

Over the past three years, St. John's members have made **monetary contributions amounting to over \$6,400**. Funds were sent to UCC National, the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA, Project HOPE, and World Central Kitchen. Listed below is a how some of those funds have been used:





## Project HOPE

- Delivered essential pharmaceuticals, medical supplies and equipment worth over \$15 million.
- Operated 64 mobile medical units and activated staff at nearly 40 health facilities.
- Trained nearly 12,000 health-care workers.
- Reconstructed and repaired 116 health and social facilities.
- Supplied 9 ambulances to equip first responders.
- Delivered nearly 9 million liters of clean drinking water and over 178,000 sanitation and hygiene supplies.

## World Central Kitchen

- Served over 276+ million meals to people fleeing the front lines and provided grocery kits to families in de-occupied regions.
- Provided 2+ million gallons of water.
- Distributed 500+ million food and vegetable kits.
- Distributed 216,000+ seed kits.



While we are no longer accepting contributions for Ukraine at this time, this is just a portion of how your contributions and contributions from those around the world have helped the Ukrainian people. We continue to keep them in our prayers for a just and equitable peace.

## St. John's Kitchen Corner



Welcome back to St. John's Kitchen Corner! We have been very busy the past two months in the kitchen creating marvelous aromas of spaghetti sauce and garlic bread, Fastnachts, cookies, cakes and more. If a kitchen could smile, ours would be grinning ear to ear!

I generally set up for social hour on Saturdays during Zumba which takes place between 9:30am-10:30am. Their loud and rhythmic music keeps Fox Hall Rockin' and Rollin' for one hour and I feel healthier just watching them! I sometimes torture these hard working fast moving Zumbites by baking something scrumptious for social hour during this time.

I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank this group that rents this space. Every week after they are done exercising, some of them stay to help me set up the tables and chairs for our social hour. They smile while they do it and the task is done in 5 minutes. It would take me 30 minutes alone and my back would not be happy! So thank you Zumba!

I would also like to thank everyone who has volunteered for social hour and those who help me when I do it alone. You are all God's special kitchen angels! This hour of sharing food and conversation after the service each week has become a very special time for St. John's and hopefully will continue for years to come.

Please help us continue by signing up to help out. I am happy to help when ever needed!

**Colleen - the kitchen manager**

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

**Thursday, March 27 and Sunday, March 30 – Pastie Sale Pickup** – Thursday from 6pm to 8pm and Sunday after worship in Fox Hall. See Carol.

**Saturday, April 26 – Comedy Night & Meal** – 6pm to 9pm In Fox Hall. Enjoy an evening of laughter and a great lasagna meal. Cost \$10 per person. Signup sheet on board in lounge area soon. Comedians wanted. See Pastor Steve.

**Friday, May 2 – Kentucky Derby Gift Card Bingo** – 6pm doors open. 7pm bingo begins. Tickets \$20 In advance; \$25 at the door. Food available to purchase. 50/50 drawing & tricky tray. See Tom.

**Sunday, May 25 – IronPigs vs. Buffalo Bisons Party Porch at Coca Cola Park** – 6:35pm. Cost \$40 includes ticket & meal. Fireworks. See Tom.

**Saturday, May 31 – Basket Social & Bake Sale** – 9am to 2pm In Fox Hall. Cost \$5 for 26 tickets. Tickets drawn at 11:30am on June 1. See Carol or Amy.

**Sunday, June 1 – Basket Social & Bake Sale** – 8am to 9:30am and 10:30am to 11:30am. Cost \$5 for 26 tickets. Tickets drawn at 11:30am. See Carol or Amy.

**Saturday, June 28 – Bus Trip to Ocean City, NJ** – Information available shortly.

**Tuesday, August 5 – IronPigs vs Scranton/Wilkes Barre RailRiders at Coca Cola Park** – 7:05pm. Cost \$14 Includes ticket & food voucher. Hotdogs \$1. See Carol.

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

**Redner’s Register Tapes** – Church gets 1% back. See Karen.

### COMMITTEE CONTACTS:

|                    |                |                 |                |
|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|----------------|
| Ginny Brokenshire  | (610) 439-0443 | Brian Fisher    | (610) 762-1134 |
| Bill Castello      | (651) 492-1399 | Tom Moyer       | (610) 432-3372 |
| Pastor Steve Davis | (610) 264-8421 | Carol Raszler   | (610) 393-7572 |
| Amy Feidler        | (835) 210-5944 | Karen Stoitsits | (610) 262-0746 |

## Donations Needed for Our Basket Social

May is fast approaching, and we need donations of baskets for our annual Basket Social. There are many themes you could choose from, some of which are the following:

|           |                     |              |                              |
|-----------|---------------------|--------------|------------------------------|
| Books     | Children/Baby Items | Sports       | Beauty/Spa Items             |
| Baking    | Games/Toys          | Camping      | Gardening/Plants             |
| Beverages | Snacks              | Picnic       | Restaurant Gift Certificates |
| Crafts    | Car Care            | Pet Supplies | Theme Park Gift Certificates |
| Puzzles   | Grocery Gift Cards  | Linens       | Movie Gift Certificates      |

The list is endless. **Be sure to include a tag listing all the items in your basket.** We have room now to store the baskets, so get started and bring them into church as soon as possible.

**Monetary donations are also accepted if you would like us to assemble a basket for you.**

In addition, we are collecting empty baskets if you would like to donate a basket(s) you are no longer using or need. Please bring them to the church office.

### **Reserve the dates:**

**Basket Social & Bake Sale in Fox Hall**

**Saturday, May 31 – 9am to 2pm**

**Sunday, June 1 – 8am to 9:30am & 10:30am to 11:30am**

Tickets will be pulled at 11:30am on Sunday. Tickets are \$5.00 a sheet (26 tickets per sheet). Checks are made payable to St. John's UCC, Fullerton.

**Donations are also needed for our Bake Sale.**

Please contact the event Co-Chairs Amy Feidler (835) 210-5944 [alfeidler@gmail.com](mailto:alfeidler@gmail.com) or Carol Raszler (610) 393-7572 [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com) if you would like to donate a basket or baked goods or if you have any questions.



# Lady PEEPS

Hello Lady PEEPS! Lady PEEPS stands for Positive, Extraordinary, Encouraging, Prayerful, Sisters! We are the Women's Group at St. John's. Every month we meet from September through May with a variety of program themes and activities. All women ages 18 and over are welcome to come to any of these meetings. Our next meeting will be Tuesday, April 22nd at 6:30pm in Fox Hall. Our guest speaker will be DonnaLee Yeatts and the theme will be "The World of Honey and Tea". Come and enjoy one of DonnaLee's very informative tea parties and spend a relaxing evening with the ladies of St. John's. Please use the elevator entrance!

## Celebrate Earth Day! Tuesday, April 22

Earth Day invites us all to appreciate our planet's resources and commit to their protection for future generations. For over 50 years, Earth Day has inspired global action on vital environmental issues such as air quality, ocean health, wildlife protection, and human wellbeing.

This year's theme, "Our Power, Our Planet," encourages worldwide efforts to adopt renewable energy and triple clean electricity production by 2030. Renewable energy—such as solar, wind, geothermal, biomass, hydroelectric, and tidal power—is sustainable and essential for combating climate change.

Learn more at [www.earthday.org](http://www.earthday.org)



## **Sunday Socials - So Much More than a Coffee Hour!**

### **Sharing With Friends After Worship**

Please take a look for available Sundays this month and sign up to help with a Sunday Social. Invite someone to partner with you. If you have enjoyed the love and efforts of others, consider signing up with a friend to help share this experience, or call the Church Office and let Alison know what Sunday you want to provide refreshments. Colleen Kulhamer is always happy to help orient you in the Church kitchen.

Our Sunday Social events following worship provide the perfect opportunity to put a name and face together and get to know one another better. Come to Fox Hall following worship and share in the food and fun. Every week following worship, we have the opportunity to connect with our faith community in new ways. Our gathering time meets a vital need - guiding us to build relationships and understanding - to welcome people to discover a more open circle of connection. We love the time to visit around the tables and enjoy good food. It always blesses us to visit with different people and get to know new friends.

Sign up today to help host a Sunday Social as an individual, family or group using the sign up sheet located on the red display board at the back of the sanctuary. Nothing elaborate is needed. Our gatherings have been both simple and extravagant. Some have had themes, while others simply brought out old favorites to share with coffee, juice and conversation, the savory and healthy and the sweet and indulgent.





## An Easy Way to Contribute to St. John's

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. For every Redner's tape collected, the church receives 1% back. Gift cards can be purchased through the church office or by seeing Tom Moyer or Carol Raszler every Sunday morning before or after worship. 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.

Thank you to Karen Stoitsits for tallying the Redner's receipts in February, which amounted to \$5,106.19, and with Redner's sending us a check for \$51.06. It's a simple way to give financially to the church. Think of St. John's every time you go grocery shopping.

## Reminder: Return Easter Baskets for Youth

At the Annual Meeting, 15 baskets were given out to members of the congregation to be filled with goodies such as candies, fidgets, knickknacks, or whatever else is going to make it an "eggstravagant" Easter basket! The baskets will be delivered to Pinebrook Family Answers to youth between the ages of 8 to 18 years old who are in low-income families and have a mental health diagnosis. All baskets are due back in the church office no later than Sunday, April 6. Contact Emma Rarich (610) 462-6777 or email [erarich@pbfalv.org](mailto:erarich@pbfalv.org)

## 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 **April 5 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 email [QVRRBold@aol.com](mailto:QVRRBold@aol.com)

## April Birthdays

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

|            |                           |            |                   |
|------------|---------------------------|------------|-------------------|
| 4/1 .....  | Rev. Matthew Seeds        | 4/15 ..... | Julia Gross       |
|            | Kevin Fox                 | 4/16 ..... | Ashley Venanzi    |
|            | Dale Millham              | 4/18 ..... | Crystal Schwenk   |
| 4/3 .....  | Larry Albright            | 4/19 ..... | Craig Headman     |
|            | Aiden Hannis              | 4/20 ..... | Leia Stocker      |
| 4/5 .....  | Mark Yura                 | 4/21 ..... | Jacob Clewell     |
|            | Maya Williams             | 4/22 ..... | Stephanie Hanzl   |
| 4/6 .....  | June McCracken            | 4/23 ..... | William Hausman   |
| 4/7 .....  | William Meckes            | 4/24 ..... | Gabriella Ferioli |
| 4/8 .....  | Karen Moyer               | 4/25 ..... | Geraldine Keim    |
| 4/9 .....  | Christopher Leibensperger | 4/26 ..... | Rev. Janet Boyd   |
| 4/11 ..... | Olivia Weidner            | 4/28 ..... | Michael Kern      |
|            | Zoe Roth                  | 4/29 ..... | Jacqueline Thomas |
| 4/12 ..... | Maci Dovico               |            | Archer Hunsicker  |
| 4/13 ..... | Donna Held                |            | Carson Strauss    |
|            | Sarah Young               |            | Shirley Downing   |
|            | Bonnie Weikel             | 4/30 ..... | Nicholas Bach     |
|            | James Tretter Sr          |            |                   |



## April Wedding Anniversaries

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

4/8/1972

Rev John & Charlene Hoff

4/8/1961

James & Patricia Molinaro

4/20/1963

Roger & Lucille Schneck

4/23/1994

Todd & Sandra Heffelfinger



Apologies to Karen Schmoyer, whose birthday March 27, was inadvertently omitted from last month's newsletter.

## **St John's Night At The Ironpigs Party Porch!**

**Sunday, May 25 at 6:35pm (Memorial Day Eve)**

Tickets are \$40, which includes:

- Admission to Coca Cola Park
- Your seats on the Party Porch (1st base side)
- Ironpigs baseball game vs Buffalo Bisons
- Picnic Buffet from 6-8pm
- Unlimited bottled water and soft drinks
- Easy access to restrooms
- FIREWORKS FOLLOWING THE GAME!

See Tom Moyer to make your reservation. As always, we will have a great time!



## **IronPigs Baseball Game Scheduled**

We have reserved 80 seats in Section 104 of the grandstand at Coca Cola Park for the IronPigs vs. the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders baseball game. Game day is Tuesday, August 5, at 7:05pm. The cost is \$14.00 per person which will include a ticket to the game, \$2 ballpark credit, and a raffle ticket. It'll be Dollar Dog Night where hotdogs are only \$1.00. So, mark your calendar—we won't be taking reservations and payment until later in the Spring. Please contact Carol Raszler (610) 393-7572 or [craszler@aol.com](mailto:craszler@aol.com)



## Ocean City, NJ Bus Trip Saturday, June 28

St. John's is heading back to the beach, and you're invited! Pack your outdoor chairs, blankets, swimsuits, suntan lotion, and walking shoes for a fun-filled day trip to beautiful Ocean City, NJ. Whether you want to relax on the sand, take a refreshing swim, stroll along the famous boardwalk, or enjoy the local shops and eateries, this trip is the perfect way to soak up some sun and make great memories with friends and family.

A charter bus will pick us up from the church parking lot on Saturday at 7:30am and take us directly to Ocean City. You'll have the entire day to enjoy the shore at your own pace before we gather for the return trip. The bus will depart from Ocean City at 7pm, so you'll have plenty of time for a full beach day.

The cost for this fantastic getaway is \$50 per person, which covers round-trip transportation. More details, including how to reserve your seat, will be available in the next newsletter, or you can check the church website for updates. Don't miss out on this chance to join us for a refreshing and enjoyable beach retreat!





## **"Souper Bowl of Caring"**

*"Well done, good and faithful servant." ~ Matthew 25:21*



Thank you to each and every one of you who contributed to this year's "Souper Bowl of Caring" campaign. Our goal was to collect 250 cans of soup in January and February. We are happy to report that we received a total of 330 cans of soup. The Confirmation Class also participated by manning soup pots after worship on Super Bowl Sunday and \$160 was collected from the congregation. All the soup cans and the monetary contributions were given to the Whitehall Food Pantry.

## Whitehall Food Pantry

For the month of March, we are collecting pancake mix, jelly, and coffee. Any other non-perishable food items are always welcome. A shopping cart can be found in the coatroom area by the sanctuary where you can place your donations. Monetary contributions are always accepted and can be forwarded to the church office, placed in the offering plate, or given online or by text.

If you would like to volunteer at the food pantry, we meet at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church in Whitehall on the 4th Monday of each month in the morning from 9am to 11am and in the evening from 5:30pm to 7:30pm. For more information, contact Gary Black [gary.t.black@outlook.com](mailto:gary.t.black@outlook.com) or (484) 274-2405.

## Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative's Community Meals

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, (610) 730-3184. The host churches are as follows:

| Date            | Church                                   | Address                          | Phone          |
|-----------------|--|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Sunday<br>4/6   | Muslim Assoc. of the<br>Lehigh Valley    | 1988 Schadt<br>Ave., Whitehall   | (703) 346-8698 |
| Tuesday<br>4/15 | Shepherd of the Hills<br>Lutheran Church | 4331 Main St.,<br>Whitehall      | (610) 730-3184 |
| Sunday<br>5/4   | Faith Evangelical Lutheran<br>Church     | 3355 MacArthur<br>Rd., Whitehall | (610) 435-0451 |
| Sunday<br>5/20  | Whitehall Active<br>Community Center     | 2301 Pine St.,<br>Whitehall      | (610) 533-1357 |



## Church World Service

We are getting ready to assemble and ship out the CWS buckets and cleaning supplies with the help from our Confirmation Class. You might be interested in knowing that because of donations received from people across the country, the following items were distributed to those in need in 2024:

10,084 emergency cleanup buckets

60,580 hygiene kits

17,610 school kits

27,275 blankets

278 welcome backpacks

11,179 period packs

### Update on Other Mission Outreaches

We will continue to receive contributions for One Great Hour of Sharing to the end of March. Simply send your donation into the church office, place it in the offering plate, or give online or by text.

Reminder: Return filled Easter baskets for youth at Pinebrook Family Answers HFW by April 6. Contact our member Emma Rarich at (610) 462-6777 or email at [erarich@pbfalv.org](mailto:erarich@pbfalv.org)

Requests for contributions for California Wildfires ended on March 31.

### How Did Our St. John's Family Do?

| Mission                              | Feb 2025   | YTD 2025   | YTD 2024   | YTD 2023   |
|--------------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| Our Church's Wider Mission           | \$1,148.00 | \$2,143.00 | \$2,375.00 | \$2,171.00 |
| Whitehall Food Pantry                | \$ 175.00  | \$ 610.00  | \$ 415.00  | \$1,160.00 |
| "Souper Bowl of Caring"              | \$ 158.77  | \$ 158.77  | \$ 245.00  | N/A        |
| Disaster Relief—California Wildfires | \$ 735.00  | \$1,375.00 | N/A        | N/A        |
| General Disasters – Unnamed          | \$ 50.00   | \$ 180.00  | \$ 10.00   | N/A        |

Mission Outreach giving for February totaled \$2,266.77 and is now at \$4,466.77 YTD.

# Church Chuckle



*What's the difference between a pastor with allergies sneezing during his sermon and a cell phone ringing during prayer?*

*One is God trying to tell you something—  
and the other is God trying to tell y'all something!*

Dear Friends at St. John's:

Thank you for choosing to support our 2024 Holiday Appeal with your contribution of \$1288.35 to Turning Point of the Lehigh Valley. Your generosity allows us to create safe spaces, empower those seeking our services, and raise awareness in our community. Your donation is a gift that provides survivors with confidence, counselors who will listen, freedom to make choices, and the promise of a safer tomorrow. Last year with the support of donors like you, we reached over 8,900 survivors and community members, and we plan to reach even more lives in this upcoming year. Looking ahead to a new year, we invite you to continue alongside us in our mission to eliminate domestic and intimate partner abuse. As always, we are deeply grateful for your compassion and commitment to our missions.

In peace,

Lori Sywensky

Executive Director

Turning Point of Lehigh Valley

# BUDGET UPDATE

|                                  | Actual            | Monthly<br>Budget | % to Budget   |
|----------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| OFFERINGS FOR OPERATING EXPENSES | \$18,467          | \$16,039          | 115.14%       |
| CHRISTIAN EDUCATION OFFERINGS    | \$135             | \$85              | 158.99%       |
| FLOWERS INCOME                   | \$150             | \$150             | 100.00%       |
| SPECIAL GIFTS                    | \$350             | \$208             | 168.00%       |
| FUNDRAISING INCOME - NET OF EXP  | \$3,451           | \$6,000           | 57.51%        |
| ENDOWMENT INCOME                 | \$-               | \$-               | #DIV/0!       |
| RENTAL INCOME                    | \$140             | \$1,417           | 9.88%         |
| <b>TOTAL INCOME</b>              | <b>\$22,693</b>   | <b>\$23,899</b>   | <b>95.0%</b>  |
| PASTORAL SERVICES                | \$(10,405)        | \$(10,259)        | 101.43%       |
| STAFF SALARIES & EXPENSE         | \$(8,976)         | \$(9,330)         | 96.21%        |
| BUILDING SERVICES                | \$(5,957)         | \$(3,388)         | 175.84%       |
| FAITH FORMATION                  | \$-               | \$(104)           | 0.00%         |
| PARISH PROGRAMS                  | \$(3,139)         | \$(1,919)         | 163.58%       |
| FUNDRAISING TITHE                | \$-               | \$-               |               |
| <b>TOTAL EXPENSE</b>             | <b>\$(28,477)</b> | <b>\$(24,999)</b> | <b>113.9%</b> |





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The  
April 2025  
edition of St. John's  
CONNECTIONS  
is in memory of  
Robert Weaver.

Robert became an active church member  
after joining in 1979, serving as a deacon  
and contributing to the publication committee,  
Kitchen Krew, and property committee.

He also assisted his wife, Nancy, with the altar guild.

He is deeply missed by his beloved wife, Nancy,  
and his children, Donna, Susan, Michael, Robin, and Scott.

