## CHARLIE APPLE

# St. John's CONNECTIONS

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

Volume 17 • Issue 141 • June 2024

#### "No Matter What!"

"Now to our God who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to God be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen." – Ephesians 3:20-21

We have a statement at St. John's that fundamentally empowers the focus of our ministry.

"We Worship, We Love, We Serve – No Matter What!" Our activity becomes rooted in a determination to go beyond what we might believe is possible in our own ability and to rely on who God says God is for us and through us! I continue to celebrate the many ways in which our ministry finds strength and energy as God does something, surpassing our expectations and creating an even more spectacular outcome.

Does that mean we have no troubles and all is sunshine and celebration? Definitely not. Yet our perspective shifts and we view our experiences differently. Through the difficult times, the moments of connection get cherished a bit more. The gentleness and smiles from friends give us a boost and we appreciate "the little things."

There are many things I imagine for St. John's. Some things are great and magnificent. Some are wild and crazy. Some and poignant and heartfelt. Others grip my spirit, knowing and being fully convinced that "we must do this!" I love it when God's Spirit empowers our possibilities, allowing us to begin to think beyond our initial observations and dream something into existence. In recent years, you did precisely that, and our "No Matter What!" spirit is shining through.

St. John's held on to the "Field of Dreams" vision when it was literally a field. Today, we have a beautiful open space, garden and pavilion in which to welcome our community, share and offer ministry, and celebrate with families. "No Matter What!"

With Pastor Becky's doctoral program, you opened the door to the use of visual media to enhance our worship experience. Little did we know at the time how that would pave the way for us to continue to provide worship and other connections with the congregation and community during the pandemic. The enhanced presence allows us still today to connect with at least 25+ people/families who would not otherwise be able to participate in St. John's ministry for worship. "No Matter What!"

You've stepped up to connect with people in fellowship, building relationship and celebrating new friends with our Sunday Social time following worship. What began as a small handful of folks to enjoy coffee and conversation has grown over the last year plus to include 30-40 people every week who stick around and share delicious treats with delight among friends. Because of you, our "No Matter What!" spirit continues to grow our ministry.

As the summer months come our way and our programming welcomes new experiences, let's not be those who "take a break" or "sit back." Instead, let's step forward with the same spirit that inspires our friendships to also inspire our service and outreach. We have many events coming up where the opportunity to welcome friends will create space for us to bear witness to God's great love.

- Flag Day Bingo
- Father's Day Outdoor Worship and Bluegrass Music at the Pavilion
- Ocean City, NJ Bus Trip
- Open & Affirming Sunday
- Vacation Bible School
- St. John's Neighborhood Block Party at the Pavilion and Field of Dreams
- Summer Faith Fun Days on the 1st Sunday of June, July, August
- and much more!

Let's create that momentum and feeling together all summer long. In all we share as we celebrate our faith in Jesus Christ, may we be

those who bold and enthusiastically experience God's life and love as "We Worship, We Love and We Serve ~ No Matter What!"

Yours in grace and hope,

Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



#### **Table of Contents**

2023 Tax Filing Date Has Passed—Now Plan For 2024	17
A Few Words from Our Crafters	
A Word Of Thanks From The Retired Financial Secretaries	
Basket Social and Bake Sale were A-W-E-S-O-M-E !	28
Call for July Newsletter Submissions	31
Calling All Green Thumb Plant Lovers!	
Church Chuckle	
Clergy Milestones	
Collection of Backpacks & School Supplies	
Confirmation Class 2024	
Convalescent & Homebound Residents	
Do You Eat? Buy Groceries!	
General Disaster Relief Fund	35
Here We Grow Again!	13
How did St. John's Family do?	
Hungry for Ice Cream?	27
IronPigs – Not Much Time Left!	
It's a Simple Way to Support St. John's	20
June Birthdays	32
June Wedding Anniversaries	33
Let's Get Ready To Party At The Pavilion!	24
Luncheon for Friendship Bible Class	18
May Consistory Faith Formation Update	18
Men's Breakfast Group	21
Mission Moment	
"No Matter What!"	2
Pentecost Season Worship Schedule	8
Picture Directory Dates	26
Recognition of Our Members	20
Sacred Water Gathering	22
Save The Dates!	
Staff Contacts	
St. Johns UCC Fullerton Presents	25
Subscribe to our YouTube Channel	23
Sunday Social Following Worship	
Update on Other Mission Outreaches	
Verso-Chat Bible Study	30
Whitehall Food Pantry	
Will You Help Us Get To 75?	
YouTube Statistics	37

#### On The Cover...



#### **CHARLIE APPLE**

Hi, I'm Charlie Apple, your fellow St. John's UCC church member. And "No, I am not related to that other Apple." You have probably seen me occasionally around the church, tinkering with something that doesn't work right. I have been privileged to serve for many years as a member, and occasionally as chairperson, of the Property Committee. I was also chairperson of the Church Restoration Task Force during our "Extreme Makeover" work from 2005 to 2013. When I am not at church, you can usually find me either at home in Macungie or at my beloved cabin on the banks of Little Pine Creek (hence the name "Little Pine Apple Lodge") in Lycoming County.

This summer, my wife, Linda, and I will celebrate the 59th anniversary of our wedding, which took place right here in St. John's. Wow, how quickly those years have passed! But I consider myself extremely lucky to be blessed by God with reasonably good health, a lovely and caring wife, two beautiful and talented daughters and six grandkids of various temperaments. Among my other blessings, I also count the St. John's church family, who have been my supportive friends and treasured companions through life's journey.

#### **Convalescent & Homebound Residents**

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Shirley Abel Phyllis Ambearle Anita Beil Clarence Biehn Sandra Diefenderfer Shirley Downing Jeanne Fischl Milton Focht Sally Gibson Ron Glass Gus Geissinger Roberta Haberern Lucille Hicks Geraldine Keim Adrianne Kiesbar Emma Repp Kuczek Jean Litzenberger Bill Meckes Dale Millham Karen Moyer Mary Jane Ott Marilyn Piskula Marietta Seyfried Madeline Slivka Bert Smith Jolene Weaver Nancy Weaver Bonnie Weikel

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

#### **Confirmation Class 2024**

On Sunday, May 19, we were thrilled to receive our 2024 Confirmation Class, a vibrant group of young individuals who have shown remarkable commitment and growth throughout their spiritual journey. This year's class demonstrated a level of dedication to their faith, participating in numerous projects, engaging in thoughtful discussions, and showing an understanding of the values and principles that guide our community. Their journey has been one of discovery, reflection, and personal development, culminating in this significant milestone.



As we welcome these young people, we look forward to witnessing the positive impact they will continue to make within our community and beyond.



#### Gabriella Marie Ferioli

What I know about God is that he watches over the world to guide us. God means everything to me and I keep that relationship through prayer. I'll always trust God no matter what. When I go to heaven, I'll see him right next to me to comfort me.

Jesus loves me and is there to help me get through life's ups and downs. He also gives me comfort in knowing he will be there for me no matter what.

The Holy Spirit will always be around me to guide me through my walk in life. It will always direct me too whenever I get lost on my path.

The church we have is like family to me since I have lots of people there who comfort and support me. I love the church and I help them with services whenever they need help for anything. I like singing along with the church because it makes me feel good and allows me to participate with worship.

#### Matthew Will Buskirk

Faith is a strong belief in God. I believe there is one God existing as three people, Father, son, and holy spirit. I believe God is the creator of this Earth. I believe God is the maker of everything.

I believe in Jesus Christ. I believe Jesus is the son of God and the Savior of the world. I believe Jesus died for our sins on the cross and came back to life.

I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe the Holy Spirit is God's presence at work in the world, church, and anywhere else. I believe the Holy Spirit exists in my heart because I am a follower of Jesus.

After confirmation, I plan on becoming a member and come to the church often. I always want to try to become closer with God. I want to be the best person I can possibly be with the help of God.

#### Sophia Elizabeth Pagan

What I know about God is that he watches over the world to guide us. God means everything to me and I keep that relationship through prayer. I'll always trust God no matter what. When I go to heaven, I'll see him right next to me to comfort me.

Jesus loves me and is there to help me get through life's ups and downs. He also gives me comfort in knowing he will be there for me no matter what.

The Holy Spirit will always be around me to guide me through my walk in life. It will always direct me too whenever I get lost on my path.

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#### Zachary William Szoke

I believe in God as our Lord and Savior. He made us and he loves us. He, along with the Holy Spirit, guides us to be what we can be.

He sent Jesus to forgive us of our sins and lead the people. God judges, and forgives. He made us in his own image and guides us away from aimlessness and sin. After the passing of Jesus the Holy Spirit came down to guide us.

The Holy Spirit is in every single one of us and guides us away from sin.

Both God and the church give us love and support, like an extended family. Both help and support through difficult times.



#### Pentecost Season / June Message Series "Faith & Core Values!" & June 9 Keystone Worship

The Spirit of God empowers our lives and our worship every day! As we begin the season of Pentecost, we will focus on the faith that is grounded in core values of being followers of Jesus.

June is also LGBTQIA+ Pride Month across the world. While Lehigh Valley PRIDE is celebrated in our area on August 18, we will also observe Open & Affirming Sunday in the UCC on June 30. In this season where the Body of Christ recognizes how God's Spirit is "Still Speaking" to, in and through the Church today, we will embrace the contributions of our diversity and celebrate the ways in which ALL means ALL in our welcome and ministry! We hope you will join us in renewing our commitment to faith in God and our core values as followers of Jesus! Additionally, the Penn Northeast Conference meets for an historic gathering with the other UCC conferences of our commonwealth at the Penn Stater in State College, PA, June 7-9! All 4 conferences will be considering merging to form a new Keystone Conference, and will hear reports, share in dialogue and discernment, and meet for worship and learning together in plenary sessions as well as separately. A vote by each conference will take place on November 9 to determine if we become one conference together. For more information, please visit https://psec.org/keystone where all the history and resources prepared by the Keystone Working Group are available for all to review and consider.

On Sunday, June 9, worship at St. John's UCC will be shared from the leadership of the 4 Conference Ministers. A Keystone Worship experience has been prepared by our 4 area Conference Ministers, which every congregation is invited to utilize in the absence of their pastor and delegation leaders being at State College. The morning message will be shared by the Conference Ministers by video at St. John's. This is an important time to be in worship together, not a Sunday to sit out. Come and take part in this collective experience others across the commonwealth will also participate in. The one Spirit of God which empowers us all will be shared in great ways.

#### May 26 (Trinity Sunday) -"Faith & Core Values!" - A People of Jesus

Isaiah 6:1-8 and John 3:1-2, 16-17

We begin our Faith & Core Values message series focusing on our first core value - who we are as followers of Jesus! Just as Isaiah was sent to tell the people how to find hope in God, so Nicodemus came to Jesus, to learn of God's love for all the world, and then went out to share his newly found faith with others. Come to worship on Memorial Day Weekend Sunday as we celebrate our faith and life together!

#### June 2 - "Faith & Core Values!" - A People of Compassion 2 Corinthians 4:13-5:1

Because we choose to follow the life teachings and example of Jesus, our second core value is being people who focus on living with compassion for others and ourselves. What does it mean to love our neighbor as ourselves? How can we extend the grace and compassion of God to more and more people?

#### June 9 - "Faith & Core Values!" - Keystone Worship Service

We gather in worship with others all over the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in a worship experience created by the four area Conference Ministers of the Penn Northeast, the Pennsylvania Southeast, the Penn Central and the Penn West Conferences of the United Church of Christ.

The morning message will be shared by the conference ministers through video! Come share in this Keystone moment and experience what the Spirit of God is speaking to the churches.

#### June 16 (Father's Day) Outdoor Worship & Bluegrass Music at the Pavilion

#### "Faith & Core Values!" - A People of Hope

2 Corinthians 5:6-7, 16-17

Because we follow Jesus and lives as people of compassion, we have a confidence, a third core value of hope that moves us to walk by faith and not by sight. Bring your lawn chair if you like to sit in the grass, or join St. John's under the pavilion as we worship outdoors (weather permitting) and enjoy some great music by Gregg Fisher and friends!

#### June 23 - "Faith & Core Values!" - A People of Grace

2 Corinthians 6: 1-4a, 11

We open our hearts wide open as people of God's grace with our fourth core value. Because we follow Jesus, we not only experience God's unconditional grace, but we share that grace with others. Our commitment to all people knowing God's gift of salvation means we are committed to all people knowing that we believe in them and the endless possibilities God gives us all.

#### June 30 - Open & Affirming Sunday in the United Church of Christ "Faith & Core Values!" - A People of Inclusion 2 Samuel 1: 17-27

When St. John's UCC, Fullerton, became an Open & Affirming (ONA) congregation, we didn't begin with that name. While we were certainly welcoming of all people, we began with expressing ourselves as Open and Accepting. What's the difference? What does it mean for us to embrace our final core value of being a people of inclusion? As we welcome ALL people, we also welcome the diversity of expression, life experience, abilities and disabilities, and a commitment to celebrate every human being as a child of God... No Matter What!



### Calling All Green Thumb Plant Lovers!

Adopt-A-Flowerbed



Do the beautiful flowerbeds and gardens around your home just miraculously happen? NO?

They don't at St. John's either. Years ago, a few deeply committed people made sure the flowerbeds around the buildings were well maintained. They left us a great legacy and memory of beauty. However, in recent years, the beds have needed "some extra love" and a few "green thumbs!" The Property Committee is asking for your help.

Would you be willing help purchase some new bedding plants? Fill a potted vase? Weed a planter? Add mulch? Simply said, "Many hands make for light work." The flowerbeds on the St,. John's campus could use your loving attention.

Help the Property Committee by volunteering to "Adopt-a-Flowerbed" for the year. We will give you suggestions for some consistency of look around the grounds. You "adopt" one of the planting areas we have identified and take it from there. Clean up the space, plant new flowering plants or small shrubs or ground cover, and check on it every couple of weeks. Help us keep St. John's a lovely place, inside and out!

Contact Wayne Lichtenwalner or the church office to select your gardening spot to "Adopt."

#### Here We Grow Again!

St. John's proudly welcomed 5 new persons in covenant relationship on Sunday, April 7, 2024! We hope you've been intentional to meet June McCracken, Regina Hickman, Pam Repetz, Karen Schmoyer and Scotty Siegfried. As we share in worship, Sunday Socials and other activities, please take a moment to introduce yourself to our new members of the St. John's UCC, Fullerton faith community.

During the month of June, our messages will focus on our "Faith & Core Values" which are part of the teaching in our 5G Class gatherings for all those considering being part of the St. John's congregation. If you are interested in uniting with this faith community, please let Pastor Steve know, or contact the church office to learn more about our next class sessions to be held in July.

We look forward to welcoming new people, friends who have been around a while, and others who have found us online and want to more personally connect in relationship. God continues to add to this congregation, gifts of love through people who join us in following Jesus! We look forward to celebrating YOU!



June McCracken



Regina Hickman



Pam Repetz



Karen Schmoyer



Scott Siegfried



#### Will You Help Us Get To 75?

Because Of You... In 2024!

Over the last two years, our Stewardship & Finance Committee has been urging our contributors, month after month, to adopt a consistent "Automatic Contribution" to support the ministry of St. John's. Over the two years, we've increased by five, a good start, but not enough to keep our traditional "summer slump" from taking place as people travel.

As we come to the end of Spring and begin our Summer season, it is increasingly important for us to have consistent income to support our ministry. We ask for your help. St. John's needs to know we can count on your regular financial participation whether you are in worship or traveling on vacation.

We want to GROW our AUTOMATIC CONTRIBUTOR base from 56 giving units to 75. Will you help the church be more effective?

BECAUSE OF YOU... we hope to secure a more consistent financial base to support and grow our ministry.

Some of you have chosen to make a contribution online through our secure website portal. Thank you for trying it out! We hope more will make the switch by setting up recurring automatic contributions for your regular support of our ministry at St. John's UCC, Fullerton.

We've made it easy for you to share your gifts for ministry. Using the QR Code above with your smart phone is a safe and secure means of supporting and sustaining the ministry to which God calls us.

A new authorization form is available on our red information table and on our website for you to download, print, fill out and return to the church office to begin your recurring contributions from a bank account or credit card. Because of YOU, our regular participants and friends, our ability to meet the needs of our church and community changes lives.



UPDATE:

Betty and Dale Millham have been proud automatic contributors since November 2014. That's almost 10 years!

Betty and Dale say that it's the best thing they did for their church contributions because it's so much easier than having to worry about filling envelopes and they don't have to worry about missing church because it's already taken care of.

They encourage you to be stress free as well. Just ask Betty, she'd love to tell you all about it.

#### **Clergy Milestones**

We congratulate the following pastors who will celebrate the anniversaries of their ordinations in June:

#### **Rev. Cliffert Herring**

 - 52nd Anniversary of Ordination June 11, 1972 – currently serving as Interim Pastor at St. Peter's Church, West Penn in Tamaqua.

#### Rev. John Hoff

- 51st Anniversary of Ordination June 10, 1973 - Retired.

#### Rev. David Mohr

- 61st Anniversary of Ordination June 1, 1963 - Retired.

#### A Word Of Thanks From The Retired Financial Secretaries

One cold day in early January of 1978 our doorbell rang multiple times. It was the well-known ring of Pastor Fox. He was at our house to tell us that the Financial Secretary of St. John's had suddenly passed away yesterday, and wondered if we might be interested in taking that position.

Like any clear-thinking people, we told him of the many reasons why we could not possibly fulfill the needs of this position. He listened, then told us why we could. If you knew Pastor Fox, you know he didn't easily take "no" for an answer. He urged us to try it for awhile and see if it worked out.



Forty-five years later, we felt we had given it a fair trial, and it was time to pass on the joy of being Financial Secretaries to someone else. In January of 2022 we met with Pastor Steve and we told him that it was time to seek someone else, but we would serve another year until someone was found.

January of 2023 came and went, with nobody interested in assuming this position, so we said we would continue until a replacement was found. Finally in the early autumn of 2023, Michelle Gutekunst stepped up and said she would take this position.

We are grateful that a good replacement was found, and we hope that St. John's will give Michelle the same wonderful support that you have given us for the past 45 years.

We are also very grateful to the congregation for the generous financial gift you have presented to us. It is deeply appreciated. We truly enjoyed the 45+ years of service to St. John's.

Tom & Emilie Moyer

#### 2023 Tax Filing Date Has Passed—Now Plan For 2024

As you know, the Legacy Tree behind the church parlor serves to recognize or honor individuals or events.

Donations received for the purchase of a leaf are deposited in our Endowment Accounts which has, for many years, served to supplement church income.

For those members who have 401k accounts and must take a Required Minimum Distribution (RMD), it is possible to contribute to the Legacy Tree or any other church need in a way that reduces federal tax liability.

To reduce the RMD tax liability one can make a direct contribution from the investment account to St. John's or any 503(c) charitable organization.

A gift of \$1,000 would, in effect, reduce the federal tax liability by that amount. If one were in the 20% taxable bracket, the tax savings would be \$200. In effect, taking into account tax savings, the net cost would be \$800.

Having just completed the 2023 tax filings, if this scenario fits your situation, it might be worthwhile considering this giving option.

As always, it is best to consult your tax advisor on how this might apply to your situation.

#### **May Consistory Faith Formation Update**

At a Zoom meeting April 22, the leaders of children's faith formation decided the following:

We will be offering Children's Faith Formation the first Sunday of June, July, August and September, all communion Sundays. Each of the four leaders will teach on one of those Sunday. The other Sundays of the month, the children can sit with their parents. Susan Rarich will refurbish the busy bags. Also, some of the kids really enjoy the mini white boards. And we talked about having an area in the back of the sanctuary for the kids to work at a low table, where hopefully they would be joined by a parent. We will NOT be offering room 201, as that requires an adult to supervise them. Classes will resume in September, the first Sunday after Labor Day.

Over the summer I will be looking for a curriculum we can purchase, hopefully one with video enhancements as the mini-theatre on the children's wing is now operational. Since the pandemic our Faith Formation expenses have been minimal. It's time to invest in a versatile curriculum which will not be as dependent on my leadership.

> Blessings, Becca Stephens

#### **Luncheon for Friendship Bible Class**

The Friendship Bible Class will celebrate their time together as St. John's Adult Faith Formation Class. They will be attending a luncheon after worship on Sunday, June 2, at 1:00pm at the Deitsch Eck Restaurant in Lenhartsville. It'll be a time of fun and fellowship as they enjoy a wonderful Pennsylvania Dutch family-style meal. Thank you to Nancy Bowman, Kay Chryst, Tom Chryst, Bill Fink, Kirby Hower, Tom Moyer, Paul Raszler and Tyler Shankweiler for teaching and leading the class in discussion this past year.

Upcoming "Fun-Raising" Events at St. John's
Sun., May 26 – IronPigs Party Porch – 6:35pm. Enjoy the game.
Fri., June 14 – Flag Day Gift Card Bingo – Doors open 6:00pm; game begint 7:00pm. Tickets \$20 in advance; \$25 at the door. Food available to purchase.
Wear red, white, & blue. See Tom.
Sat., June 22 – Bus Trip to Ocean City, NJ – \$45. For reservations, see Brian Thurs., June 27 – Dine & Donate at Drizzle's Ice Cream, 5040 Rt. 873, Schnecksville – 12:00 noon to 9:00pm. Percentage of sales come back to church No flyer needed. See Mike.
Sat., July 13 – Block Party at Pavilion – Noon to 8:00pm. Details shortly.
Fri., July 26 – Phillies vs. Cleveland Guardians – 6:40pm. \$55. Tickets only Provide your own transportation. See Brian S.
Tues., Aug. 6 – IronPigs Grandstand – 7:05pm. Cost \$13. Cap give-away for those 17 years old & younger. Appearance by Phillie Phanatic. See Carol.
Sat., Aug. 10 – Community Yard Sale at Pavilion – 8:00am to 2:00pm. \$10 your own table; \$15 to use St. John's table. See Brian S.
Sun., Oct. 20 – Annual Road Rally – 1:30pm. See Tom Moyer.
Sat., Nov. 2 – Craft & Vendor Fair – Details in future newsletters.
Fri., Nov. 8 – Gift Card Bingo – Details in future newsletters.
SaveAround Lehigh Valley Books – Cost \$25. Coupons for restaurants, businesses, and entertainment venues. Good for entire 2024. See Kathy.
Nut & Fruit Sale – Details Coming in Late Summer – See Carol.

Nut & Fruit Sale – Details Coming in Late Summer – 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:**

Mike Borgman	(610) 762–8959	Kathy Haggerty	(484) 358-7453
Ginny Brokenshire	(610) 439-0443	Tom Moyer	(610) 432-3372
Bill Castello	(651) 492-1399	Carol Raszler	(610) 393-7572
Amy Feidler	(610) 657- 0654	Karen Stoisits	(610) 262-0746
Brian Fisher	(610) 762-1134	Brian Strauss	(610) 248-9119

#### It's a Simple Way to Support 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. 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.

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.

#### **Recognition of Our Members**

Pastor Cliff Herring and Diana Beck are St. John's members who were recognized recently at the St .Luke's/Sacred Heart/ Allentown Volunteer Awards Dinner. Diana clocked over 1000 hours of service, and Cliff has spent a good portion of his life serving God in many capacities.

John Viglione was also recognized at that dinner (not pictured). Thank you members for "being the church" and making us proud!



#### IronPigs – Not Much Time Left!

The deadline for reservations is Sunday, June 16. We have reserved 80 seats in Section 105 of the grandstand at Coca Cola Park for the IronPigs vs. the Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders baseball game. Game day is Tuesday, August 6, at 7:05pm. The cost is \$13 per person, which includes a ticket to the game and a \$2 ballpark credit. It'll be Dollar Dog Night where hotdogs are \$1. For the first 1500 attendees, there will be a Cap Giveaway for any youth 17 years old and younger. The Phillie Phanatic is also scheduled to make an appearance. For reservations, please see Carol Raszler before or after worship, contact her at (610) 393-7572, or email <u>craszler@aol.com</u> Checks are payable to St. John's UCC, Fullerton.



#### 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 June 1 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

#### **Sunday Social Following Worship**

Connecting With God And Others

The Sunday Social events following worship continues to add to our whole experience of building community and connections week after week at St. John's! Thank you to all who have hosted, individuals, families and groups. We all enjoy your efforts to increase our hospitality and welcome to all following worship.

The list with dates open to host the Sunday Social events is posted on the red display board in the sanctuary. Please take a look for available Sundays over the summer months and sign up to help. Invite someone to partner with you. If you have enjoyed the love and efforts of others to share food and fellowship through the Sunday Social time, please consider signing up with a friend to help share this experience with others, or call the church office and let Alison know what Sunday you want to provide refreshments. Colleen Kulhammer is always happy to help orient you in the church kitchen.

Join us after worship in Fox Hall for our Sunday Social!

#### Sacred Water Gathering

Many of you have already started water gathering while on vacations so far this Spring. Thank you! Please be sure to pick up water bottles from the basket at the welcome table as you enter the sanctuary. Then bring back your small bottles of water from various places, near and far along with the location and your name with the returned bottles.

We began handing out small bottles on Easter Sunday for collecting through August. A basket of small bottles to collect water from various places will be available at the center aisle until they are gone. Give the returned bottles to Pastor Steve or bring them to the Church Office for safe keeping. The water will be received, purified and then next Fall on our "Gathering Sunday," we will begin using this water for our celebrations of baptism and other sacred moments in worship. Thank you in advance for helping create a new ritual to touch us with the waters of life from all over the world.

#### Do You Eat? Buy Groceries!

Of course you do! We all make trips to the various stores to get our groceries. St. John's want's to receive the full benefit of our shopping power. In partnership with Weis, Giant and Redner's, we participate in several programs that donate back to St. John's based on our purchases. **You can make a huge difference** (and yes, we purposely included a second article on this topic in this edition)!

Weis and Giant Gift Cards are available every Sunday to purchase before and after worship, in the Parlor (look for Carol Raszler or Tom Moyer) and in Fox Hall during our Sunday Social. Week after week, we leave our money \$\$\$\$ in the pockets of the grocery stores rather than having them give back to St. John's.

By purchasing and using gift cards we receive a percentage of the total of your shopping. You can purchase different gift cards to use. Please consider changing how you pay for your groceries, and start by getting some gift cards each Sunday morning!

If you shop at Redner's, be sure to save your groceries receipt and add it to our basket on the red table when you come on Sundays, or drop them by or send them in to the church office. Everyone who shares their receipts is also making a difference.

BUY YOUR GIFT CARDS! BRING YOUR RECEIPTS! Help St. John's support our ministry every week!



#### Subscribe to our YouTube Channel

#### Let's Get Ready To Party At The Pavilion! (A Block Party, That Is)

Everyone loves a good party, especially with friends and neighbors, some fun and games, good music, and of course food! Plan now to Party at the Pavilion with the St. John's family and area community on Saturday, July 13, from 12 - 8pm!

We hope to have a great afternoon and evening, open to our neighbors and other friends! Look for...

 Dunk Tank with Pastor Steve and others taking the seat of honor Rock and more!

"Griller Mike's" feast

• Food Truck

- Gem Fishing
- BINGO for cash

and more!

Ice-Cream Fun!

- Bluegrass Music, Classic
- Bring a lawn chair and come join us for the Party at the Pavilion Neighborhood Block Party! More information coming soon!



#### St. Johns UCC Fullerton Presents...

Gift Card Bingo – Friday, June 14, 2024, 7pm



Want to help make this event a success? Sponsor a game (\$50). Your name will be in the program! Donate a "Tricky Tray" item: Baskets, gift cards, or anything worth \$20 to \$30. Make a crockpot of Perogie casserole. Any recipe is fine. Make some hamburger barbeque. We will put them all together that evening. Bring some bake goods for our sale. They should be individually wrapped. Donate your help that evening. Come to gift card bingo. You will have a great time. You may even be lucky!



#### **Picture Directory Dates**

Sign up today to have your picture made for our 2024 Picture Directory. <u>Use our website tab "Directory"</u> to secure your ten-minute time and date. If you're not able to access the website, simply contact the church office (610) 264-8421 and Alison will assist you with available dates and times.



New (final) dates are available:

June 15 (Sat), 11am-3pm June 17 (Mon) 3pm-8pm June 18 (Tues) 3pm-8pm June 19 (Wed) 3pm-6pm June 20 (Thur) 3pm-8pm June 21 (Fri) 3pm-8pm June 23 (Sun) 11am-4pm

In order to complete our Church Directory on schedule and have it ready for distribution by our Gather Sunday, September 8, our LAST DAY FOR PICTURES will be June 23.

#### You will not be featured in the new picture directory if you have not signed up for a photo sitting.

Our photographer, Bill Castello, will schedule separate appointment visits to photograph our homebound members to include them, or they may send in a photo to be used. Out-of-area members may send in a photograph. If you are not able to come to St. John's and want to be in the new directory, please call the church office and we will find a time to come to your home for a quick photo. You'll be amazed at what "Photographer Bill" is able to do!

Additional photos may be purchased in either 1-8x10 or 2-5x7 prints. Sign up for your additional photos at the time of your portrait sitting. St. John's is grateful for a private donor who is providing for the additional cost of printing the color directory! We are blessed by this gift of generosity.

#### Hungry for Ice Cream? Check Out the Next Dine and Donate Event



Enjoy delicious soft serve ice cream, hand dipped ice cream, Penn State ice cream, amazing sundaes, and much more! Stop by Drizzle Ice Cream located at 5040 Rt. 873 in Schnecksville on Thursday, June 27, between the hours of 12:00 noon to 9:00pm. St. John's will receive a percentage of all sales. No flyer is needed. Any questions, contact Mike Borgman (610) 762-8959 or <u>blackbear402@rcn.com</u>

#### A Few Words from Our Crafters

Here's a challenge for you all! We'd like to give ourselves another name other than just Crafters or Crafters Group. Be creative and propose a new name for us. Some ideas...

Stitches & Blessings	<b>Blessed</b> Creations	Artisan Guild
Crafting Angels	Faithful Fingers	Crafting Circle
Yarn & Grace	Crafty Crew	Sewing Sisters
Divine Designs	Stitching Society	Artisan Assembly

Suggestions can be submitted to Carol Raszler <u>craszler@aol.com</u> or give her a call (610) 393-7572 or see her before or after worship.

We're looking for more people who can crochet. All we need is your time and talent to crochet the tops on our T-towels. Supplies will be provided.

Our St. John's Crafters would like to thank everyone who purchased items from our Easter and Spring Craft Sale. The church realized a profit of \$427.25 in sales. Our next sale will be on Saturday, August 10, at the Community Yard Sale at the Pavilion.

#### Save The Dates!

Flag Day Gift Card Bingo – Friday, June 14 Block Party at the Pavilion – Saturday, July 13 Community Yard Sale – Saturday, August 10 Annual Road Rally – Sunday, October 20

#### Basket Social and Bake Sale were A-W-E-S-O-M-E!



Fox Hall was abuzz on Saturday and Sunday, May 4 and 5, when St. John's annual Basket Social took place along with a Bake Sale. Crowds came throughout the two-day event enthusiastically hoping to be a lucky winner in order to receive

at least one basket of the 121 baskets on display. There were all kinds of baskets and gift cards to select from, some with various themes. One of the most coveted items was a gift certificate to King Kone for a free ice cream cone every week for an entire year.



Co-Chairs Amy Feidler and Carol Raszler along with Kathy Haggerty greeted 106 visitors in those two days. A total of 384 ticket sheets (26 tickets per sheet) were sold for the event. This amounted to \$1920.00 in outstanding sales.



With the assistance of Ginny Brokenshire and Robin Brensinger, Nancy Bowman made her selection of items from a vast assortment of baked goods. The sold-out Bake Sale saw earnings of \$478.00. We

had 14 bakers who baked and generously donated their goodies.



There was a steady stream of buyers like Don Schneck and Scotty Siegfried who made their purchases of tickets. Don was lucky enough to be the winner of more than one basket. Out of 106 entrants, we had a total of 60 winners. Several people were fortunate enough, like Leeza Ohl and Wendy Fox, to be the winners of multiple baskets.







As the event came to a close, we would be remiss if we did not mention that Co-Chair Mike Borgman did an amazing job in securing sponsors. He was able to get baskets and over 30 gift cards donated from many businesses. Some of those donations came from numerous vendors at the Allentown Farmer's Market and from Jersey Mike's, King Kone, Kornfeind's Market, Drizzle Ice Cream, Auto Zone, Advanced Auto, the Ritz, and more.

Marion DeMilio was another lucky winner. She was thrilled to be the recipient of a patriotic-themed gift basket everything in it was red, white, and blue. It had a special meaning to her since her grandson, Dominic DeMilio, is currently serving in the U.S. military.

On behalf of the "Fun-Raising" Committee, we would like to sincerely thank everyone who came out with their support by purchasing tickets; the bakers; those who donated baskets, gift cards, or monetary donations; those who helped assemble baskets; the kitchen workers; and the crew who set up, tore down, and cleaned up for the event. It was an amazing and awesome event at St. John's.

#### God Is Still Speaking... with Verso-Chat Bible Study - Wednesdays, 9:00am

We love learning more about God and each other at St. John's! Our weekly lectionary study gives us opportunity to hear from God through the "still speaking" Word and through each other with our sharing. We welcome you to take part in this weekly time of faith formation. Maybe you're not a "Sunday School" person or don't feel like you know much about the Bible. Questions are welcomed in our study time! We laugh! We learn! We grow in our faith together! We welcome you to this time of sharing with us.

For the Easter season (March 31 - May 19) and Pentecost, we return to the lectionary readings as our foundation readings for worship. ALL are welcome to enhance your experience by joining our weekly Verso-Chat Bible Study. Each week is its own contained experience to discover God's "still speaking" words. You will find the "Verso Chat" link below and on the website to participate. Let's study and chat about the verses of scripture together!



https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81571428042



"One Sunday morning, the preacher noticed little Jacob staring up at the large plaque in the church foyer. The plaque was covered with names, and it had small American flags on either side of it. The preacher walked up, stood beside the boy, and said, 'Good morning, Jacob.'

'Good morning, preacher,' replied the young boy, still focused on the plaque. 'Preacher, what is this?'

The preacher replied, 'Well, son, it's a memorial to all the young men and women who died in the service.'

Soberly, they stood together, staring at the large plaque. Finally, little Jacob's voice, barely audible and trembling with fear, asked, 'Which service, the 9 o'clock or the 11 o'clock?'"

#### **Call for July Newsletter Submissions**

If you would like to contribute pictures or an article for the June newsletter, please email your submission in PDF, DOC, RTF or plain text format to: - <u>newsletter@sjuccf.org</u> by Sunday, June 9.

Any photos or graphics for your article should be sent as attachments to your emailed submission. Please do not embed them into a document, as this usually reduces image quality.

Authors, some helpful newsletter guidelines are here:

https://stjohnsuccfullerton.org/stylenotes

#### June Birthdays

If you have an up	coming birthday or notice
6/1	Kevin Weidner
6/2	Kay Chryst
6/3	Aaron Young
6/4	Keith Held
	Linda Luckenbill
6/5	Jeffrey Seeds
	Zachary Szoke
6/6	Gregg Fisher
	0 0
	Joan Yura
6/12	Julie Beck
	Alexander Bach
	Linda Geissinger Lynn Miller
	Pam Repetz

If you have

ice c	in omission, plea	ase update the church office.
r	6/16	Melody Fox
st		Charles Ápple
g		Sophia Pagan
ď	6/21	Kristen VanFleet
	6/22	Brandon Deutsch
s		Cheryl Mill
е	6/24	Stephen Reck
r		Ernest Zellner Jr
	6/25	Dale Serfass
а	6/26	Patricia Yanavok
k	6/29	Thomas Gersbach
h	6/30	Michele Robinson
r		



#### June Wedding Anniversaries

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

6/2/79 Robert & Cheryl Mill 6/3/63 George (Rick) & Roberta Borgman 6/5/65 Glenn & Carol Buskirk 6/9/18 Donald & Dianna Schneck 6/11/83 David & Donna Brown 6/13/64 Thomas & Doris Hunsicker 6/14/69 Gary & Ruthann Hallman 06/19/???? Linda & Keith Helfrich 6/20/87 Andrew & Judith Doyle 6/21/75 Franklin & Natalie Reichl 6/24/89 Randy & Cathy Bachman 6/29/02 Brian & Bonnie Strauss 6/30/79 George & Sharon Romberger





#### Whitehall Food Pantry

St. John's commitment to help the fourth Monday of each month continues throughout the summer. Because of vacations, holidays, sports, and other activities, we are in need of fresh faces to help us in our commitment to help those less fortunate. To learn more as to what we are about, please re-read our article that was in this past April's newsletter. If you are available this Memorial Day, May 27, or any fourth Monday of the month, please contact Gary Black <u>gary.t.black@outlook.com</u> or (484) 274-2405. The morning session (stocking the shelves and organizing food received from various vendors) runs from 9am to 12:00 noon. The evening session (distribution of food to the pantry's patrons) runs from 5:30pm to 8pm. If you could help at any one or both of these sessions, it would be greatly appreciated.



For the month of June, we are collecting macaroni and cheese, canned corn, canned tuna, peanut butter, jelly, pancake mix, and pancake syrup. 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.

#### **General Disaster Relief Fund**

While the relentless wars continue in Ukraine and in Israel and Gaza, the Mission Committee has decided to "pause" requests for monetary donations at this time. The Mission Committee wishes to thank everyone who made contribution over the past two plus years since Russia invaded Ukraine on February 24, 2022. More than \$6300 was sent to UCC National, Ukrainian Orthodox Church of USA, Project HOPE, and World Central Kitchen. The committee would also like to thank everyone who contributed over \$150 after Israel was attacked by Hamas on October 7, 2023. Those funds were given to UCC National for their outreach in the Middle East. We continue to keep these countries and their people in our thoughts and prayers and pray for a peaceful resolution.

#### **Collection of Backpacks & School Supplies**

Just to let you know, we will be asking for donations of backpacks, calculators, and school supplies for the Whitehall-Coplay School District in July. A collection box will be in the coatroom area by the sanctuary. We will also have a donation drive-by on Saturday, July 20, from 10:00am to 12:00 noon at the Pavilion.

A list of items needed and further details will be in the July newsletter.

#### 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 4:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.—Dine-in Only. The host churches are as follows:

Date	Date Church Address		Phone	
Sunday, June 2	St. Peter Roman Catholic Church	4 S. 5th St., Coplay	(610) 262-2417	
Tuesday, June 18	Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church	3300 7th St., Whitehall	(610) 434-8661	
Sunday, July 7	Muslim Assoc. of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698	
Tuesday, July 16	Whitehall Active Community Center	2301 Pine St., Whitehall	(610) 533-1357	

#### Update on Other Mission Outreaches

We will continue to receive special offering contributions for UCC National's "Strengthen the Church" until the end of May. Funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and renewal initiatives in existing congregations. Penn Northeast Conference and the national ministries work together to use these funds for projects that matter now and for the future of the UCC.

Save the date for the annual CROP Walk scheduled for Sunday, October 13. The walk will start at 1:30pm from St. Timothy's Lutheran Church located at 140 S. Ott St. in Allentown. Walkers and sponsors will be needed. More details will follow in upcoming newsletters.

Mission	Apr. 2024	YTD 2024	YTD 2023	YTD 2022
Our Church's Wider Mission	\$ 941.33	\$4,603.33	\$4,573.00	\$5,930.10
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$ 400.00	\$1,225.00	\$1,740.00	\$ 580.00
Wheat Basket	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	\$ 15.00	N/A
Disaster Relief Fund – Ukraine	-0-	\$ 130.00	\$1,130.00	\$2,430.00
Disaster Relief Fund — Middle East Support	-0-	\$ 70.00	N/A	N/A
Disaster Relief Fund – Unspecified	\$ 10.00	\$ 30.00	\$ 155.00	N/A

#### How did St. John's Family do?

Mission Outreach giving for April totaled \$2,152.00 and is now at \$6,743.33 YTD.

#### **YouTube Statistics**



With a little imagination, we can envision our weekly worship service being viewed by people around the world. Not too outlandish when you consider that YouTube is available almost

everywhere! By sharing our services online, we're extending our community beyond our walls, reaching hearts and minds across the globe. It's a beautiful opportunity to spread our message of faith and love to a broader audience.

To make sure our message reaches as many people as possible, we need your help with a simple action: using the "like" button on YouTube. When you watch our service online, you'll see a thumbs-up icon below the video. Clicking this button helps YouTube's algorithm

recommend our videos to more people. Every time you view a St. John's video, click the thumbs-up "like" button! It really does make a difference by helping our videos reach more people who might benefit from our messages and join our growing online community. Your "like" isn't just a click—it's a way to support our mission and extend our reach far beyond our local community.



#### St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances Apr 2024

Income	Electronic	4/7/2024	4/14/2024	4/21/2024	4/28/2024	Total
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$6,186.45	\$2,379.33	\$2,271.00	\$1,160.00	\$2,382.00	\$14,378.7
Rental IncomeGross				\$59.50		\$59.5
Fundraising IncomeNet of Exp	\$136.00	\$76.39	\$204.50	\$(981.55)	\$100.00	\$(464.6
Endowment Interest		\$5,898.00				\$5,898.0
Flowers				\$23.00	\$13.00	\$36.0
Christian Education	\$10.00	\$20.00		\$65.00	\$15.00	\$110.0
Special Gifts						
Total	\$6,332.45	\$8,373.72	\$2,475.50	\$325.95	\$2,510.00	\$- \$20,017.0
Expense Summary			Actual		Budget	Differend
Pastoral Services		\$10,21	19.91		93.00	\$(573.09)
Staff Salaries & Expense		\$8,82		\$8,9	27.00	\$(100.42)
Property		\$3,50			61.00	\$39.27
Parish Programs		\$2,78			79.50	\$203.58
Total		\$25,32	29.84	\$25,7	60.50	\$(430.66)
			Month	Year		
		Total Income Total	\$20,017.62	\$96,942.52		
	E	xpenses	\$25,329.84	\$100,479.22		
	L	Net	\$(5,312.22)	\$(3,536.70)	******	
Mission Giving, Apr 2024	-					
Our Churches Wider Mission		\$941	.33			
Our Churches Wider Mission Whitehall Food Pantry		\$941 \$415				
Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster		\$415 \$10.	.00 00			
Whitehall Food Pantry		\$415	.00 00			
Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster		\$415 \$10. <b>\$1,36</b>	.00 00			
Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster		\$415 \$10. \$1,36 St John's Func	6.33			
Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster		\$415 \$10. \$1,36 St John's Func	.00 00 6.33 UCC Fullerton I Balances Ending, Apr 20	24	-24	Difference
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Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster Total Account Checking AccountKNBT	sub-total General Fund	\$415 \$10. \$1,36 \$1 John's Func For Month I <u>Mar</u> \$44,317.63	.00 00 6.33 UCC Fullerton I Balances Ending, Apr 20 24	24 Apr 39,004.14	-24	\$(5,313.49)
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Whitehall Food Pantry General Disaster Total Account Checking AccountKNBT Giant Card Funds Weis Card Funds IN & OUT AccountKNBT	General Fund	\$415 \$10. \$1,36 \$1 John's Func For Month I <u>Mar-</u> \$44,317.63 \$592.01	.00 00 6.33 UCC Fullerton Balances Ending, Apr 20 24 \$ \$45,549.89	24 39,004.14 \$1,757.01 \$1,640.25		\$(5,313.49) \$1,165.00 \$1,000.00
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\$585,703.49

\$562,523.02

\$(23,180.47)

NET FUND BALANCE



Rev. Steve Davis Senior Pastor

Patrick Sandt Director of Music Ministry / Organist

Alison Berger Boor Office Administrator

Sue Weldner Treasurer

Michelle Gutekunst Financial Secretary Coordinating Custodian

Bill Castello Worship Tech Connections Newsletter Editor

Bob Czekner Custodian

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575 Grape Street, Whitehall, PA 18052 (610) 264-8421

# June 2024

<b>30</b> 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour	23 9:30am Sunday Worship 110:30am Social Hour 11:00am Photos Fax Hall		<b>16</b> FATHER'S DAY 9:30am Outdoor Worship 10:30am Social Hour		<b>S</b> Newsletter Articles Due 9:30am Sunday Worship 10:30am Social Hour	230am Children's Faith Formation 9:30am Sunday Warship- 10:30am Social Hour 2:00pm Fellowship Class dinner		Sunday
	24		17 3:00pm Photos Fox Hall		<b>10</b> 6:00pm "Fun-Raising" Committee	3 6:30pm Personnel Committee		Monday
	<b>25</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting	<b>Directory photo</b>	<b>18</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Community of Practice 3:00pm Photos Fox Hall	7:00pm Consistory	<b>T1</b> 10:30am Visitation Committee 1:30pm Staff Meeting 6:00nm Flders	<b>4</b> 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:30pm Stewardship & Finance		Tuesday
	26 Steve 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm ZAA-Recovery Support	Directory photos in Fox Hall - reserve your time here	19 Office closed - Juneteenth 3:00pm Photos Fox Hall 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA:Recovery Support	7:00pm SAA-Kecovery Support	<b>12</b> 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm Zumba	5 9:00am Verso Chat with Pastor Steve 6:30pm STARs Committee 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA.Recovery Support		Wednesday
	27 12:00pm Drizzle Ice Cream Dine & Donate 6:30pm Property Committee	<u>e your time here</u>	20 3:00pm Photos Fox Hall 7:00pm Summer Choir		<b>13</b> 6:00pm Summer Choir	0		Thursday
	28		<b>21</b> 3:00pm Photos Fox Hall		<b>14</b> 6:00pm Flag Day Bingo	<b>7</b> PNEC Conference Meeting at State College PA through June 9		Friday
	29		<b>22</b> Ocean City Bus Trip 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall		<b>15</b> 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall 11:00am Photos Fox Hall	8 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall	<b>1</b> 8:30am Men's breakfast: Hamilton Femily Restaurant 9:30am Zumba class: Fox Hall	Saturday