



**RYAN
SZOKE**

St. John's **CONNECTIONS**

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

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On The Cover...



RYAN SZOKE

Hello, my name is Ryan Szoke. My mom is Melissa Szoke and Kathy and Bill Roth are my Grammy and Pappy. I go to Brandywine Heights Middle School and I am going into eighth grade. I like to play soccer, hangout with friends, and play video games. I have a Dog and a tortoise, I also have an older brother named Zachary but he doesn't come much anymore.

My original church was Dubbs but it shut down. Most of the Congregation came here so my family did too. I am currently doing confirmation classes with other churches.

Order your Fall Mums NOW!

The order form is available on our website:

<https://stjohnsuccfullerton.org/forms>



Deadline for October Newsletter

If you would like to contribute an article for the October newsletter, please email newsletter@sjuccf.org by Sunday, September 13.

If you have photos to accompany your story, please attach them to your email. Comments and suggestions are always welcome!

[Style guide can be found here](#)

Welcome Home!

There's something sacred about the place we call "home." It may have little to do with the place you grew up and much more about the places where you know you belong, where you are not just welcome, but where your whole self is invited and encouraged to live fully and joyfully. When you know you're welcome in such a place, we find a freedom in how we express ourselves and we participate in the life of that "welcome" with greater enthusiasm. We want to do more than watch, more than attend when we can, we begin to prioritize our lives around this kind of "welcome" and find each time we gather to be one where we leave feeling refreshed, encouraged, sometimes challenged, always hopeful.

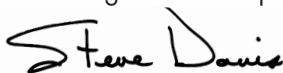
On September 6, a new season of activity begins at St. John's UCC, Fullerton. Our fall program year speaks life and opportunity back into our routines following summer breaks. Our "Welcome Home" Sunday will invite us back to the table of Christ, to feast and celebrate who we are called to be as followers of Jesus. Many of us will return to "our pew." Others will "tune in" to participate on YouTube from a variety of places across our communities and even across the country. There are many who claim St. John's as their "Welcome Home" place, even though they can no longer attend on site with us. There are others who don't have that capability where they are who rely on the compassion and service of our members who bring worship to them, with a visit or call, sharing the recent activities we embrace together, and recalling their involvement in a previous chapter of their lives which still hold powerful memories for them.

However we celebrate the "Welcome Home" expressed on Sunday, September 6, we will come once again, humbly, joyfully, expectantly, trusting that the community we share will once again offer us the embrace of God's love, the grace of Jesus' heart, and the inspiration and nudging of the Holy Spirit to this new chapter in faith. I invite you to be with us, however you are able, as we come to the open table of Jesus to find there's plenty of room for us and to hear our friends and Savior say, "Welcome home!"

In this place where we are open to the love of God and affirming of every person as a child of God, we celebrate our shared mission as...

**We Worship, We Love and We Serve
— No Matter What!**

Yours in grace and hope,



Rev. Steven Davis, Senior Pastor



The Keystone Connection



Keystone

CONFERENCE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

St. John's is part of something larger than our own congregation. Through the Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Mountain Valley Association, we are connected with congregations and leaders across Pennsylvania and beyond who are seeking to Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What!

This wider church connection matters. We learn from one another, share resources, support one another in ministry, and discover new ways God is at work through the collective witness of UCC congregations.

One of the easiest ways to stay connected is through the Conference's weekly e-newsletter, The Keystone Connection. Each week, it offers news and stories from across the Conference along with opportunities for continuing education, leadership development, congregational resources, mission and outreach, upcoming events, and ways to learn from the ministries of other churches.

Whether you are looking for an opportunity to deepen your faith, strengthen your ministry, find a resource for St. John's, or simply see what is happening throughout our wider church, the Keystone Connection is a wonderful way to stay informed and connected.

Worship, Love and Serve — No Matter What!

Faith Formation & Worship Celebrations!

Growing in Faith Together (G.I.F.T.)

Confirmation Sunday - September 27



growing in faith together
celebrating every gift

The year of lessons and activities from our 2025-2026 Confirmation Class comes to the celebration of Ryan Szoke being confirmed in his own faith expression as we welcome Ryan as a full member of St. John's UCC, Fullerton. The three congregations of Grace UCC, Allentown, UCC Greenawalds, and St. John's have shared faith lessons, life stories, and many hours of participation, serving and growing in faith together this past year.

Join us for worship on September 27 as Ryan Szoke, featured as our cover person this month, is confirmed. Bill Fink has served as Ryan's mentor through this journey of faith.

NEW Confirmation Class for 2026-2027

- Faith for Young Teens Growing In Faith Together (G.I.F.T.)

If you have a young person in 7th or 8th grade (or an exceptional 6th grader) who wants to be part of the new 2026-2027 Confirmation Class, we are preparing now for our next Confirmation Class and inviting parents and youth to an information evening on Tuesday, September 22 at 6:30pm in Room 201. Class sessions will begin in October.

Adult Faith Formation Opportunities

Come curious. Get connected. Grow in faith.

Growing in faith never ends. There is always another question to explore, another story to hear, another perspective to consider, and another way God is inviting us to grow. Faith is formed not only in worship, but in the conversations, relationships, questions, and experiences that help us recognize God's life-giving presence in our lives.

This fall, we invite you to discover — or rediscover — the joy of Adult Faith Formation at St. John's. Our September and October opportunities will explore the themes of Faith and Generosity, inviting us to consider what we treasure, where our hearts are drawn, and how our faith shapes the way we live and give.

Whether you have been studying Scripture for years or are simply curious about what faith might mean for your life, there is a place for you. Come for the fellowship. Stay for the questions. Grow through the conversation. And discover how God's Word continues to form and transform us.

Friendship Class Sundays at 8:15 am in Room 201

Begins Sunday, September 13

Start your Sunday with coffee, donuts, good company, and a conversation that will stir your mind and deepen your faith. The Friendship Class gathers each week to explore meaningful topics in a relaxed and welcoming setting before worship.

During September and October, the class will explore Faith and Generosity, reflecting on the things we treasure and what creates lasting meaning in our lives. Bring your questions, your experiences, and your curiosity — and enjoy the joy of learning and growing together in Friendship!

Reflections

Sundays at 11:00am in Fox Hall

New opportunity begins Sunday, September 13

What did you hear in worship today? What question stayed with you? Where did the Scripture or sermon connect with your own life? When you look at light through a prism, you find all kinds of colors and dimensions you would not normally see without seeing light through different angles.

Reflections offers a new opportunity to continue the conversation after worship. Grab some refreshments during Sunday Social in Fox Hall, then join us at the designated table closest to the kitchen and coffee for conversation about the morning's Scripture, theme, and sermon.

Facilitated by members of our Pastoral Team and Generosity Team, Reflections is an invitation to linger a little longer with what we have experienced in worship. Together, we will explore how God's Word speaks into our lives and how our response to God's grace and love can shape the way we live. If enjoyed by those who can attend, we will revisit this kind of short-term learning opportunity on Sunday mornings as part of our Sunday Social time. Come with a thought. Come with a question. Come simply to listen. There is room at the table for you.

Verso-Chat Lectionary Study

Wednesdays at 9:00am on Zoom

Begins Wednesday, September 2

Our mid-week conversation returns as Verso-Chat gathers around the Scripture readings that will shape our worship in the weeks ahead. Each Wednesday, we explore the lectionary together, looking at the texts from different perspectives and asking how these ancient words continue to speak to our lives today.

As we enter September and October, our conversations will connect with the themes of Faith and Generosity, exploring how Scripture offers us grounding, grace, gratitude, and growth.

Verso-Chat is a place where curiosity is welcome. No special preparation or biblical expertise is required—just bring your Bible, your questions, and your willingness to listen and share. We look at upcoming readings several weeks in advance, giving us the opportunity to enter worship already wondering, listening, and thinking about what God might be saying to us.

And who knows? You might even hear one of your comments or insights find its way into our pastors' messages! Each week stands on its own, so you can join us whenever you are able. Contact Pastor Steve or Samara Bush in the church office for more information and the Zoom connection.

Faith is not something we finish. It is something we continually receive, question, practice, and live. At St. John's, we believe God's life-empowering Word keeps calling us deeper — into relationship with God, relationship with one another, and a life of Worship, Love, and Service — No Matter What!



Music at St. John's: New Beginnings

As we move into a new season of ministry together, I have been reflecting on the beauty of new beginnings. Scripture reminds us that God is always at work, making all things new, even when we cannot fully see what He is doing. Each new season invites us to step forward in faith, trusting that God is leading us toward greater growth, deeper worship, and renewed purpose.

This year marks a meaningful milestone for me personally. I am humbled to celebrate four years serving as your Director of Music. Looking back, I am filled with gratitude for all that God has accomplished through our ministry. Together, we have navigated challenges, celebrated victories, introduced new music, strengthened our liturgical life, welcomed new members, and created countless opportunities for worship that have touched the hearts of our parish community from nativity services, to Good Friday Tenebrae, to the Holy Trinity Hymn Festival.

Over these past four years, I have witnessed the power of music to unite us in faith. Week after week, dedicated choir members, handbell ringers, instrumentalists and the poor volunteers who can't seem to tell me no, have generously shared their gifts, understanding that music ministry is far more than singing notes on a page. It is a ministry of prayer, encouragement, and service. Every rehearsal, every choral piece, every handbell piece, every hymn, and every Sunday has been an opportunity to help lead others closer to Christ.

This season also coincides with another personal milestone as I prepare to celebrate my 43rd birthday on September 10. Birthdays often encourage reflection, and as I approach this one, I find myself especially thankful. Thankful for God's grace throughout the years, thankful for the people He has placed in my life, and thankful for the privilege of serving alongside all of you. More than anything, I am thankful that God continues to call each of us into new opportunities to grow, serve, and share our faith.

New beginnings are not always about starting over. Often, they are about building upon the foundation God has already established. The accomplishments of the last four years are not simply memories

to celebrate; they are stepping stones toward what God is calling us to become. As we look ahead, I believe our music ministry has tremendous opportunities for continued growth, deeper fellowship, and even greater service to our parish. That is why I would like to extend a special invitation to anyone who has ever considered joining the choir. Whether you have years of musical experience or simply enjoy singing and wish to share your gifts, there is a place for you in our music ministry. You do not need to be a professional musician. You simply need a willing heart and a desire to serve God through music.

The strength of our ministry over the last four years has been built by people who answered God's invitation to participate. Every voice added to the choir has enriched our worship and strengthened our community. As we begin this next chapter, I encourage you to consider becoming part of that tradition. Your voice, your presence, and your gifts could help shape the future of our music ministry and make a meaningful difference in the spiritual life of our parish.

As we look toward the future, my prayer is that we continue to welcome new opportunities with open hearts. Let us encourage one another, support one another, and remember that our ultimate purpose is not performance but worship. When we focus on glorifying God, He is faithful to use our gifts in ways far greater than we could imagine.

Thank you for allowing me the privilege of serving as your Director of Music these past four years. Thank you for your commitment, your friendship, and your faithfulness. I am excited to see what new beginnings God has in store for our ministry and our church in the days ahead.

May we move forward together with gratitude for the past, joy in the present, and hope for the future.

If you have been thinking about joining the choir, now is the perfect time. Come be part of this new beginning. Together, let us continue building a music ministry that inspires, welcomes, and leads others into the presence of God through the gift of sacred music.

With thanksgiving and anticipation - your grateful Director of Music,

Patrick

September - October Worship Theme



"Where your treasure is,
there your heart
will be also..."
- Matthew 6:21

Hearts open with smiles and hugs, handshakes and renewing friendships with those we haven't seen for a while. Each year as we return from summer activities, our program welcomes us to fresh experiences of faith in worship. Music inspires us to share the melody of our heart's faith. Messages encourage us to walk with God with hope. Friends remind us we are strengthened as a community. We treasure these gifts shared with each other and our hearts beat stronger in the love of Christ.

So, welcome home, St. John's. Let's come home to one another—and let love lead the way.



OUR SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SCHEDULE

SEPTEMBER 6 - WELCOME HOME! "LOVE IS THE WAY" WORSHIP WITH HOLY COMMUNION WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

What if the most important thing we owe one another is love?

In Romans 13:8-10, Paul reduces the complexity of faithful living to something remarkably simple: "Love one another." Love, he says, fulfills the heart of God's law—not as a feeling we experience, but as a way of living that seeks the good of our neighbors.

That makes Welcome Home Sunday more than a return to our familiar rhythms after summer. It is a return to the heart of our calling. We gather again to remember that faith is lived together—in the ways we welcome one another, care for one another, make room for one another, and extend God's love beyond these walls.

As we return to worship, we return to the work that defines us: Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What! Because when love is at the center, worship becomes more than what we do on Sunday, and service becomes more than what we do for others. Both become ways of embodying the love of Christ in the world.

Lectionary Connection:
Romans 13:8-14

"Love Is the Way"

Focus: Love fulfills the heart of God's law — not as a feeling we experience, but as a way of living that seeks the good of our neighbors.

SEPTEMBER 13
FAITH FORMATION SUNDAY IN THE UCC
WITH SAMANTHA KISTLER PREACHING

There Our Hearts Will Be!

Lectionary Connection:
John 12:1-8 and Romans 14:7-12

"Extravagant Devotion"

Focus: Mary's extravagant devotion shown to Jesus reflects a life fully belonging to Christ.

SEPTEMBER 20, - WORSHIP
WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

There Our Hearts Will Be!

The Power of Prayer (Bold Intercession)

Lectionary Connection:
Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and Philippians 1:21-30

"The Heart of the Faith"

Focus: Wholehearted devotion and faithful discipleship. The only thing God ever really wanted from us is love. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. Keep these words in your heart."

SEPTEMBER 27 - CONFIRMATION SUNDAY
WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

There Our Hearts Will Be!

Lectionary Connection:
Proverbs 3:1-12 and Philippians 2:1-5

"Living Your Best Life"

Focus: Trust, Humility and the Mind of Christ. Confirmation is the beginning of our next step as followers of Jesus.

OCTOBER 4 - WORSHIP WITH REV. STEVE DAVIS PREACHING

There Our Hearts Will Be!

Lectionary Connection:

Mark 8:27-38 and Philippians 3:10-14

"Hidden Treasure, Open Cross: Generosity Beyond Applause"

Focus: Faithful discipleship and fruitful community.

Relive the Inaugural Annual Meeting

Did you miss the June Keystone Conference Inaugural Annual Meeting? Or perhaps you would like to experience again some of the inspiring messages from keynote speakers and worship preachers.

Visit the Keystone Conference UCC YouTube channel to watch these messages and be inspired by the vision, faith, and ministry we share across our Conference. Watch the Keystone Conference UCC on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@KeystoneConferenceUCC>

Together We Are Stronger and your participation is part of this wider ministry!

Subscribe today and discover how God is moving through the ministries of the Keystone Conference! Visit the Keystone Conference website: <https://keystoneucc.org>

Here's the link to sign up for the weekly news:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/nKpYydv/TheKeystoneConnection>



Samantha Kistler's Growing Ministry



There is exciting news to share about the continuing journey and growing ministry of Samantha "Sam" Kistler at St. John's!

This past spring, we celebrated Sam's graduation from Moravian University with her Master of Ministry degree. She has continued preparing for ordination, completing her ordination paper and preparing for her Ecclesiastical

Council on Saturday morning, September 19 at St. John's. **Save the Date!** At that meeting, representatives will vote on authorizing her for ministry in the United Church of Christ. Pending authorization, a ministerial call, and ordination, we may soon have the joy of calling her Pastor Sam and Rev. Samantha Kistler—possibly as early as October!

Over the past year, Sam has gained valuable ministry experience working alongside Pastor Steve, our ministry staff, and the congregation. Her gifts for collaboration, teaching, relationship-building, and ministry leadership have become an important part of the life of St. John's.

Recognizing those gifts and the ways her ministry has enriched our congregation, St. John's leadership and Sam have agreed to expand her role from ¼-time to ½-time ministry once she is authorized and ordained.

As our Associate Pastor, Sam will take on increased responsibilities in leading worship and preaching, pastoral visitation with those who are hospitalized or homebound, and continuing to support our Children and Youth Faith Formation ministry.

Wendy Fox, along with our Elders Paul Raszler, Colleen Kulhamer, and Linda Powell, will work with Pastor Steve and Sam to develop a Call Agreement outlining her expanded ministry. The agreement will then be presented to the Consistory and congregation.

We have come to greatly appreciate Sam's spirit of collaboration and partnership in ministry. We are grateful for the ways she has shared her gifts with us and excited to see how God continues to call her into ministry.

We look forward to soon welcoming Sam into her next chapter among us as Pastor Sam and Rev. Samantha Kistler!

Settling In With Samara "Sam" Bush



Our newest staff member was welcomed in July by immediately having the church office and main floor turned into a moving and storage area during our renovations.

Our new office administrator, Samara (pronounced like Tamara) "Sam" Bush has started settling in and making the office a comfortable and welcoming space for her gifts and skills

to be used in service to St. John's UCC along with our other Ministry Staff.

Many of you had the opportunity to meet "Sam" as you have come by the office. If you come to the church during the week, please be sure to introduce yourself by name at the call box so "Sam" can let you in the building. As we did with each new staff person, please continue to introduce yourself by name until she calls you by your name first. There are many of us to get to know.

The church office operates Monday - Friday, 8:30am - 3pm.

“And the Lord added to their number...”

WELCOMING FRIENDS AND GROWING OUR COMMUNITY

Next Joining Classes on October 4-5 and October 11-12

You are... WELCOME HERE!

One of the great joys of being a community of faith is watching new relationships take root and seeing people discover a place where they can belong, grow, and share their gifts. At St. John's UCC, Fullerton, we celebrate every person who walks through our doors and becomes part of our shared journey of faith.

You may have noticed some new faces in worship over the summer months. Friends from many different places have begun worshipping with us as they discern where God is leading them in their next steps of faith. We are grateful for each person who has found their way to St. John's, and we invite you to continue building friendships, discovering your place, and sharing in ministry with us. Some have already transferred their membership, while others are prayerfully considering making St. John's their faith home.

If you are ready to explore that next step, our upcoming Joining Classes offer a welcoming opportunity to learn more about St. John's, meet others who are making the same journey, and consider what it means to unite with us in faith and ministry.

JOINING CLASS OPPORTUNITIES:

October 4 at 11am — in person, Pastor Steve's office

October 5 at 10am — Zoom or in person, Pastor Steve's office

October 11 at 11am — in person, Pastor Steve's office

October 12 at 6:30pm — Zoom or in person, Pastor Steve's office

Every new face is an opportunity to practice what we proclaim. At St. John's, radical hospitality means more than simply saying hello. It means creating a community where people know they are valued, their stories matter, their questions are welcome, and their gifts have a place.

When we say, “You are... WELCOME HERE!” we mean it.

If you are considering making St. John's UCC, Fullerton, your faith home or if you simply want to learn more about who we are, what we believe, and how you might become more connected, we would love to hear from you. Contact the church office or speak with Pastor Steve.

There is always room for one more at the table. We would love to welcome you home to St. John's!

Love Your Neighbor Churches Fundraiser

UNDUE MEDICAL DEBT - WE EXCEEDED OUR GOAL!



Medical Debt

fellowship, food, music, and faith in who we could be collectively for our community.

The community picnic on August 16 at Union UCC, Neffs, included members from over 14 different congregations and faith traditions. Over 250 people gathered to enjoy great

Through the collaboration of many of our area congregations, we are able to partner with an outstanding agency called Undue Medical Debt. With contributions from congregations, individuals, businesses and service organizations, we hoped to raise \$20,000 which would eliminate \$3,000,000 of medical debt in the Lehigh and Northampton County areas. As a congregation, our Missions Committee kicked off the contributions from St. John's UCC, Fullerton with a gift of \$500, which translates to eliminating \$50,000 of medical debt! That's incredible.

But the people of God trusted the power of God to do "exceedingly, abundantly above all we ask or think" and by the end of the day, our collective efforts raised \$45,000+ which increases the effect of relief to approximately \$6 million dollars! God is AMAZING and so are YOU!

THANK YOU for believing in this opportunity to work together and make such an incredible difference in our community together!

Renovation Updates

RENEWING OUR SPACE, STRENGTHENING OUR WELCOME

All summer long, St. John's has been busy making changes to our building and grounds, updating and modernizing our facilities and resources to create greater access, efficiency, and capacity for ministry. These improvements are more than renovations to a building. They are investments in our welcome, helping more people experience the inclusive hospitality of St. John's in meaningful and practical ways.

Much of the work will be completed by our September return to regular worship rhythms. However, one of our most important accessibility projects, the modernization of our elevator, has experienced delays. Work finally began the week of August 10, and installers anticipate approximately 5–6 weeks for completion, putting the anticipated finish sometime in mid-September.

During this time, the elevator will not be available for worship or other activities. We recognize how significant this is, particularly for members and friends who rely on accessible building access. We will continue to offer worship online through our YouTube channel for those who cannot participate in person while the elevator is unavailable. We will also provide updates through email and Facebook as the project progresses.

WHAT'S CHANGING?

Among the improvements completed or underway are:

- Elevator modernization and fire-safety upgrades
- New carpeting throughout the sanctuary, offices, parlor, and hallways
- Hearing assistance loop installed in the sanctuary
- Energy-efficient LED lighting and updated controls
- New worship technology booth
- Improved storage inside and outside the building

We know that change, even good change, can sometimes feel unsettling when it alters spaces and routines that have become familiar. Yet we believe these improvements will help St. John's welcome many more people more easily and support our ministry for years to come.



We are especially grateful to everyone who helped move things out and back in, cleaned and refreshed our spaces, and continues to monitor the projects still being completed before the end of the year. And thank you for your patience and good spirit

during our Sundays worshipping in Fox Hall and our outdoor worship at the Pavilion. Those experiences reminded us that the church is wherever we gather to worship, love, and serve together!

CARING FOR OUR GROUNDS

As the weather begins to cool, we also have an opportunity to make our grounds reflect the same welcome we are creating inside. We are looking for volunteers who can help with weeding and caring for the garden beds around the church, especially the Field of Dreams corner Prayer Garden.

If you have some time to share, please contact Bruce Pope or the church office. We want the first impression people receive when they arrive at St. John's to be one of beauty, care, and welcome.

We remain deeply grateful for the many volunteers who faithfully tend our property whenever they are able. Consistent care from many hands makes a beautiful difference.

Thank you for embracing these changes with patience, generosity, and hope. Every project is helping us create a church home that reflects who we are and what we believe: welcoming all, removing barriers, and creating beautiful, functional spaces where people of every generation can encounter God's love.

Prayer that Expresses Our Love

"I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them... This is good and pleases God our Savior." - 1 Timothy 2:1, 3

Sharing our love for God and for one another doesn't happen only on Sunday mornings. Prayer is one of the ways we carry God's love with us throughout the week.

Our Ministry Staff prays for you. Our knitters pray as they create Prayer Shawls. Our Visitation Team prays with people during visits, calls, and through cards. Our Bereavement Ministry surrounds grieving families with prayer and care. And our Prayer Team receives the needs and celebrations shared by our congregation and invites others to join in prayer.

In all these ways, prayer gives us a tangible way to express our love for one another and to trust in God's unconditional love and grace.

SHARING YOUR PRAYERS

Each week, you'll find a Prayer Basket at the Welcome Table. You are invited to write the name of a person or situation you would like included in our prayers during worship. It may be a need, a concern, a moment of gratitude, or a celebration.

Because our worship is livestreamed, we share first names only from the pulpit to help protect individual privacy. If you would prefer that a prayer concern be shared only with Pastor Steve and the Ministry Staff, simply indicate that on your request. We will honor your desire for confidentiality.

You'll also find a prayer list in the worship bulletin with names submitted by members and friends of St. John's. We encourage you to carry these people and situations with you in prayer throughout the week.

If you would like to add someone to the prayer list, or if a prayer need has been resolved and the person or family can be removed, please contact Samara Bush or Pastor Steve in the Church Office.

Keeping our prayer list current helps us care for one another well.

GROWING TOGETHER THROUGH PRAYER

When we pray for one another, something beautiful happens. We bring another person's need, joy, fear, hope, or gratitude into the presence of God — and in doing so, we become more deeply connected to one another.

Our prayer ministry is one expression of how we Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What! We worship by turning our hearts toward God. We love by carrying one another's lives in prayer. And we serve by becoming a community that refuses to let anyone journey alone.

As we gather in September, we ask you to help us update the prayer status of those currently on our prayer list by adding names to the prayer book at the back of the sanctuary on the clear podium, or by contacting the Church Office.

Keep praying... and know that you are being prayed for, too!



Our Story of Generosity

*“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” —
Matthew 6:21*

Stories are at the heart of our faith.

Scripture tells the sacred story of a God who creates, calls, loves, liberates, and remains faithful to God’s people. And our own stories become part of that larger story as we discover the ways God is present in our lives and at work through this community of faith.

Our generosity tells a story, too.

What we give—our time, our talents, our financial resources, our compassion, and our presence—is a reflection of what matters to us. Jesus understood this connection when he said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Our treasure follows our hearts, and our hearts are revealed by what we choose to treasure.

This September and October, St. John’s will enter a season of Generosity as we prepare for our 2027 ministry budget. But this campaign is about more than numbers on a budget page. It is an opportunity to reflect together on who we are, what we value, and the story we want to continue telling through St. John’s.

We are a congregation that believes we are called to Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What! We treasure worship because it is where we gather to encounter God and one another. We treasure love because we know that God’s love transforms us and sends us outward. And we treasure service because faith is not something we simply believe—it is something we live.

Our core values of Compassion, Inclusion, and Liberation tell another part of our story. They describe the kind of community we strive to be and the kind of world we believe God calls us to help create. When we give, we help turn those values into ministry: welcoming people, caring for one another, nurturing faith, reaching beyond our walls, and responding to the needs of our neighbors and our world.

Our generosity connects what we treasure with how we live our faith.

That is why, over the course of our Generosity Campaign, I hope we will ask ourselves more than, “How much can I give?” I hope we

will also ask, “What do I treasure about St. John’s? What part of our ministry matters most deeply to me? What story do I want my generosity to help continue?”

For each of us, the answers may be different. Some may be called to increase their financial commitment. Others may be called to sustain their giving through a challenging season. Still others may discover new ways to offer their time, talents, creativity, or presence. Generosity is not about everyone giving the same thing. It is about all of us giving from the heart.

And when we bring those gifts together, something beautiful happens. Our individual stories become part of our shared story. One person’s generosity helps make worship possible. Another’s supports children and families. Another’s provides care and connection. Another’s helps us serve our community. Another’s makes our congregation a place where someone who has felt excluded can finally hear the words, “You belong here.”

This is how the story of St. John’s continues.

I am deeply grateful for the generosity that already fills this congregation. I see it in the people who arrive early and stay late, in those who quietly care for others, in the ministries that happen week after week, and in the many ways you Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What!

This fall, we will celebrate those stories and consider what story we want to tell together in 2027.

As you pray about your generosity, I invite you to remember Matthew 6:21: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” May our generosity reveal hearts filled with gratitude for what God has given us, compassion for those around us, and hope for what God can still do through St. John’s.

Our story is still being written. And where we place our treasure will help determine where our hearts—and our ministry—go next.

Thank you for being part of the story. And thank you for all the ways you help St. John’s continue to Worship, Love, and Serve—No Matter What!

September

		1 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal Sanctuary 6:30pm Stewardship & Finance Committee	2 9:00am Verso Chat w 12:00pm Painting G 6:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Painting Gro 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm Mission Con 7:00pm SAA Recover
6 9:30am Welcome Back Sunday	7 OFFICE CLOSED - LABOR DAY	8 9:30am Staff Meeting 1:00pm Staff Meeting 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal Sanctuary 6:00pm Elders 6:30pm Stewardship and Finance 7:00pm Consistory	9 9:00am Verso Chat w 12:00pm Painting Gro 6:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Painting Gro 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recovery
13 NEWSLETTER DEADLINE 8:15am Friendship Class Room 201 9:30am Faith Formation Sunday 11:00am Reflections Fox Hall	14	15 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Elders 7:00pm Consistory	16 9:00am Verso Chat w 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recover
20 8:15am Friendship Class Room 201 9:30am Sunday Worship	21 6:00pm Fun-Raising Committee	22 9:00am Newsletter Collating 9:30am Staff Meeting 6:00pm Bell Rehearsal Sanctuary 6:30pm G.I.F.T. Information Session Room 201 7:00pm PEEPS	23 9:00am Verso Chat w 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recover
27 8:15am Friendship Class Room 201 9:30am Confirmation Sunday	28 9:00am Food Pantry 5:30pm Food Pantry	29 9:30am Staff Meeting	30 RAISERIGHT GIFT 9:00am Verso Chat w 12:00pm Painting 6:00pm Girl Scouts 6:00pm Painting G 6:30pm Zumba 7:00pm SAA Recover

ber 2026

2 with Pastor Steve Zoom Group Group Room 301 Committee Zoom Group Room 301	3 9:30am Visitation Committee 6:30pm Choir	4 5:00pm St. George School	5 8:30am Men's Breakfast Hamilton Family Restaurant 9:30am Zumba
9 with Pastor Steve Zoom Group Group Room 301 Group Room 301	10 6:30pm Choir	11 5:00pm St. George School	12 9:30am Zumba 6:00pm "Pastorword" Game Night and Potluck - Fox Hall
6 with Pastor Steve Zoom Group Group Room 301 Group Room 301	17 6:30pm Choir	18 5:00pm St. George School	19 9:00am Ecclesiastical Council
3 with Pastor Steve Zoom Group Group Room 301 Group Room 301	24 6:30pm Choir 6:30pm Property Committee	25 5:00pm St. George School	26 9:30am Zumba
0 CARDS DEADLINE with Pastor Steve Zoom Group Group Room 301 Group Room 301	31 6:30pm Choir		



St. John's Gift Card Bingo

COMING FRIDAY, OCTOBER 16TH

Come and enjoy an evening of fun and laughter. Tickets will be available in September. We are seeking donations of:

Tricky Tray items (value \$20 to \$30)

Game sponsors (\$50)

Perogie Casserole

Sodas (It is easier if we use all Coca Cola products)

Bottled water

Hamburger BarBQue

Your donations are appreciated to help make this evening a success. Please join us that evening. You may be lucky enough to win a \$50 gift card to a local restaurant or store. See you on the October 16th! Mark your calendar and add a note to invite someone to share your table! Costumes are encouraged!

Celebrating Ordination Anniversaries

We congratulate the following pastors celebrating the anniversaries of their ordinations in September:

Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith – 29th Anniversary of Ordination – 9/14/1997

Rev. George Eckstein – 54th Anniversary Ordination – 9/21/1972

Rev. David Quinn – 40th Anniversary Ordination – 9/25/1986

Rev. Dennis Schappell – 17th Anniversary Ordination – 9/26/2009

Rev. Matthew Seeds – 18th Anniversary Ordination – 9/28/2008

Rev. Becca Stephens – 34th Anniversary Ordination – 9/27/1992

Lehigh Valley Pride Celebration

Sunday, August 31, 1-7pm at the SteelStacks in Bethlehem

Our Pride Booth Volunteer Signup for the Mountain Valley Association UCC Open and Affirming churches is now live, and we'd love your help filling our volunteer slots. Please share the signup link with members of your family and social circles and encourage anyone who is interested to join us for this joyful and meaningful opportunity. We wanted to give our ONA congregation members the first opportunity to sign up before sharing it with the rest of the association and conference. As a volunteer there is no cost to enter, however we are encouraged to bring a canned food or non-perishable food item as your "ticket" to enter and experience PRIDE in the Lehigh Valley. Other attendees will be asked to contribute \$5.

Volunteer Sign-Up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0F4DA5A62BA4FDC70-64723968-lvpride>

Whether someone can serve for a half hour or stay for a longer shift, every volunteer helps us extend a message of welcome, inclusion, and God's love to our community. No matter their experience, everyone is welcome to participate. We will be welcoming people, sharing fun Pride trinkets, and how others can get more information about our congregations.

As part of our effort to show our welcome... during the months following PRIDE, the Open and Affirming banner the congregations have created will be made available for participating congregations to "host the banner" and add our signatures of welcome to the banner which will be shared at the next Keystone Conference Annual Meeting in June 2027. The ONA congregations want to let others see our intentional welcome to ALL!

Thank you for your enthusiasm, and commitment to making our Pride presence a welcoming and affirming witness. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Donations Needed Now For Our Bazaar!



Listed below are the types of items we are collecting:

Small Appliances	Glassware	Pots & Pans
Attic Treasures	Household Furnishings	Purses
Books	Jewelry	Puzzles
CDs	Kitchen Utensils	Seasonal Decor
Craft Supplies	Knick Knacks	Tools
Dishes	Linens	Toys & Games

If you have items that fit within these categories that you no longer want or need, please bring them in as soon as possible and drop them off in the office or Fox Hall. Items must be clean and in working order.

Deadline to receive items is October 31. All sales, except 10% for Mission, will go towards St. John's and meeting this year's budget.

Please note that we are not collecting the following: clothing, encyclopedias, furniture, magazines, records, bowling balls, computers, monitors, and printers.

In addition, we are looking for donations of homemade candy and baked goods. The kitchen will be open for you to have lunch or take something home for supper. Our crafters group "Keeping You in Stitches" will also have their handmade items available to sell.

If you would like more information on this event; have a question on what we are collecting; need items to be picked up; or would like to volunteer to help, please contact our Co-Chairs Amy Feidler and Carol Raszler. Amy can be reached at (835) 210-5944 or alfeidler@gmail.com and Carol at (610) 393-7572 or craszler@aol.com

Saturday, November 14, from 9m to 2pm in Fox Hall
Crafts, Treasures, Bake & Candy Sale, Food Available to Purchase



Convalescent & Homebound Residents

People who would welcome receiving a greeting card:

Phyllis Ambearle	Sally Gibson	Mary Jane Ott
Anita Beil	Tracey Glass	Helen Ryer
Frank Cszasz	Lucille Hicks	Bert Smith
Phyllis Cszasz	Geraldine Keim	Leona Snyder
Shirley Downing	Dale Millham	Nancy Weaver
Milton Focht	Karen Moyer	Bonnie Weikel

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

Tax-Advantaged Contributions

As we know, federal tax laws are complex. And, all too often, we are unaware of how we can make these laws work for us.

A past newsletter article highlighted the use of RMDs (required minimum distributions) from IRAs and 401k plans to make direct donations to St. John's or other charitable organizations--resulting in federal tax savings. (The example cited was of someone in a 20% tax bracket. A direct contribution of \$1,000 results in \$200 tax savings while the charity receives the full \$1,000.

But what if you don't have an IRA or 401k? There is another way to make a tax-advantaged donation.

If you own individual stocks and/or mutual funds that have increased in value over time with the appreciation, will be taxable as a capital gain when sold.

To avoid that capital gains tax, instead of selling such securities, you can donate appreciated securities directly to the church or other charity and avoid the capital gains tax.

For example, if the purchase price of a stock/mutual fund was \$1,000 and the current value is \$5,000, at the time of the sale there would be a taxable gain of \$4,000. If the security is transferred to a charity as a direct charitable gift, you would save \$600 in taxes (most capital gains on investments held for greater than a year are taxed at 15%).

Financial planning is something everyone should consider. The costs of not doing so can be significant.

Everyone's financial situation is different, so it is always recommended that one work with a financial advisor to assist with this or other financial issues.

30th Annual Road Rally

It's ROAD RALLY time! This event is scheduled for Sunday, October 4, starting at 1:30pm from the Grape Street parking lot. Fill your car up with gas, ditch the map, follow the directions provided, and come for a lovely autumn drive. But be aware! You need to look for clues to answer questions along the way. The end result?—a good time with family and friends at a place to eat with good food and perhaps a chance to win some prizes too.

Sign up as the driver of your car and include the number of people attending. Look for a poster in the church parlor at the end of August to participate. This is such a fun event that we hope to see you there! Contact DonnaLee Yeatts with any questions—except when we are eating, of course. That is for you to figure out.



What a Night for Baseball!

It was a hot and humid night at Coca Cola Park on August 11 when the Lehigh Valley IronPigs faced the first place Scranton/Wilkes-Barre RailRiders. As the bottom of the ninth inning approached, the score was 4 to 2, with the IronPigs never in the lead. Many people went home. But for those diehards, it was a night to remember. With IronPigs having 2 on base, a single sent in one homeroom. Then the unimaginable happened - a double to the outfield and two more came home with the IronPigs winning the game 5 to 4. The fans went wild as the ballplayers rushed to middle of the field to celebrate. It felt like a World Series ending.

St. John's had 64 fans attend out of a crowd of 8,497. Besides the game, it was "Tail Waggin' Tuesday," and the IronPigs temporarily became "Pitties" to raise dog rescue awareness for local dog shelters and agencies. On the park concourse, fans were given the opportunity to meet animals available for adoption. The crowd was entertained by pet owners and their dogs from Mutts Gone Nuts displaying a multitude of acrobatic tricks and catching frisbees. Casey the Bat Dog, a golden retriever known for retrieving bats on baseball fields, was also part of the activities. Fans were invited to bring their dogs that night to sit in the grassy area of the ballpark.

Patti Skvoretz, representing St. John's, threw out the First Pitch, which was televised on the ballpark's big screen. Kim Hillegass was the lucky winner of an IronPigs baseball hat in the raffle drawing. A good time was had by all, but it was an even better night with a stunning victory by the IronPigs.





Bosco's Shopping Pass "Friends Helping Friends"

Get ready for a great day of shopping while also supporting St. John's! Bosco's annual Friends Helping Friends event will take place on Wednesday, October 21, from 8am to 11pm.

For just \$5.00, you can purchase a special shopping pass from St. John's, and the best part is that the church gets to keep the entire \$5.00 donation. It's an easy way to help support our church while enjoying savings on items you may already be planning to purchase.

Your Friends Helping Friends pass entitles you to 25% off the lowest sales price on many purchases, both in-store and online. Simply present your pass at checkout to receive your discount. Please note that the pass cannot be combined with certain other discounts or promotions.

In addition to the shopping savings, your pass also gives you an opportunity to register for a chance to win a \$100 Bosco's gift card. Just scan the QR code printed on the shopping pass with your phone and follow the instructions to enter.

Whether you're shopping for fall clothing, household items, gifts, or even getting an early start on your Christmas shopping, this is a great opportunity to save while supporting St. John's at the same time.

To purchase your Friends Helping Friends shopping pass, please see Ginny Brokenshire before or after worship. You may also contact her at (610) 439-0443 or by email at ginny@posleader.com

Pick up your pass, plan your shopping list, and enjoy a day of savings at Bosco's while helping St. John's!



Game Night – “Pastorword” & Potluck Supper

Saturday, September 12 6pm to 8pm in Fox Hall

There’s nothing like meeting together for a fun night of playing “Pastorword” and eating a good meal. “Pastorword” is St. John’s version of the famous TV word-guessing game show Password.

Two teams of contestants try to guess a secret word, using only one single word clue at a time. One player gives a single word clue, and their partner tries to guess the secret password. The show premiered in October 1961 hosted by Allen Ludden and it’s still on TV today.

We ask every family to bring something to eat for our Potluck Supper—it could be an entrée, side dish or salad, dessert, or beverage. After the meal we will form teams and play several rounds of “Pastorword.” Your host for the night is, as the name suggests, our very own pastor, Rev. Steve Davis.

A signup sheet is on the bulletin board in the lounge area. If you have any questions, see Amy Feidler or Pastor Steve. Make plans to be there. You won’t want to miss the fun. Bring friends!



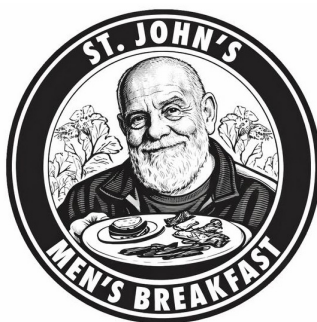
Lady PEEPS

Positive Extraordinary Encouraging Prayerful Sisters

The Lady PEEPS will meet on Tuesday, August 25th at 7pm. We will gather in Fox Hall. Our guest speaker will be Rev. Dr. Becky Beckwith, so you know good discussion and lots of laughter are a sure thing. The specific topic will be revealed closer to the meeting date. Mark your calendars, PEEPS!! Contact person is Regi Mohr (610-390-0872).



Men's Breakfast Group



The Men's Breakfast Group of St. John's normally meets on the first Saturday of the month at the Hamilton Family Restaurant located at 2027 Hamilton St. in Allentown. Our next meeting will be Saturday, September 5, at 8:30am. Pastor Steve will be the speaking to the group that day. We would be pleased to have you join us. If you would like to know more about this group, you can contact Pastor Steve. Gentlemen, please attend and bring someone!

Your Grocery Shopping Benefits St. John's

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

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

For every Redner's tape collected, the church receives 1% back from its Save-A-Tape Program. The Redner's tapes can be mailed to the church office or placed in a collection jar found on the table in the lounge area. Please do not roll the tapes or include tapes from other stores. See Karen Stoitsits if you have any questions. We recently received a check back from Redner's for \$53.94.

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

GIANT®



Gift Cards

REDNER'S
WAREHOUSE MARKETS

Receipts

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

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

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

**Save your Redner's
Tape**

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

Every receipt counts. Every grocery trip helps.

Take Home a Piece of St. John's History

Thanks to the woodworking talents of St. John's member Pete Mohr, pieces of our former sanctuary pews have been given new life as beautiful, palm-sized oak crosses.

Each cross is handcrafted from the original oak pews and comes in a small mesh pouch along with a tiny "Pocket Jesus." The cross can be displayed as is, or you can add a magnet or picture hanger to place it on your refrigerator or wall.

The Fun-Raising Committee is offering these special keepsakes for a minimum donation of \$10 per family. Proceeds will help support a future project at St. John's.

To see the crosses or take one home, visit Amy Feidler in the lounge before or after Sunday worship, or stop by the church office during the week.

It's a meaningful way to keep a small piece of St. John's history—and help support its future.



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

“Pastorword” Game Night & Potluck Supper – Saturday, Sept. 12 – 6 pm to 8 pm in Fox Hall. Teams to play St. John’s version of the game show Password. Bring a covered dish. Signup sheet is in the lounge or call the office. See Pastor Steve or Bill.

RaiseRight Gift Cards – Deadline for orders Wednesday, Sept. 30. Order forms available on the church’s website & in this newsletter. Gift cards to be distributed before Dec. 1. See Karen.

30th Annual Road Rally – Sunday, Oct. 4 – Meet at 1:30 pm at Grape St. parking lot. Follow the route and arrive at a restaurant for supper. See DonnaLee Yeatts or any committee member.

Halloween Gift Card Bingo – Friday, Oct. 16 – Doors open at 6:00 pm, games begin at 7:00 pm. Food available to purchase. Tricky Tray & 50/50. Entry fee is \$20 In advance or \$25 at the door. Tickets available soon. See Tom.

Boscov’s “Friends Helping Friends” – Wednesday, Oct. 21– 8:00 am to 11:00 pm. Purchase a \$5 pass (offering 25% in sales) and the church keeps the funds. Register for a chance to receive a \$100 Boscov’s gift card. See Ginny.

St. John’s Bazaar – Saturday, Nov. 14 – 9:00 am to 2:00 pm in Fox Hall. Start bringing in items now that you no longer need or want. Look for list of items we will accept in the newsletter or online. See Amy or Carol.

Pastie Sale – Pickup Thursday, Nov. 19 & Sunday, Nov. 22 – Order forms available at the end of September. Deadline for orders is Sunday, Oct. 25. See Carol.

Movie Night – Friday, Dec. 11 – 7:00 pm – Save the date. More information to follow. See Pastor Steve & Bill.

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

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

“Fun-Raising” Committee Contacts:

Amy Feidler, Chairperson (835) 210-5944

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



September Birthdays

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

9/1	Jackie Maxon	Robert Hoanzl
	Bill Castello	Donald Foellner
9/3	Patricia Molinaro	Andrew Deutsch
	Jill Williams	9/20 Rowan Rarich Lord
9/4	Bonnie Strauss	Betty Millham
9/6	Regina Hickman	9/22 Ruthann Hallman
	Kayleigh Fisher	Robert Lopez
9/7	Cathy Bachman	9/23 Craig Schutts
9/8	Samantha Schutts	Patrick Yoder
9/9	Lora Nailor	Thomas Hunsicker
	Gary Black	9/25 Leona Snyder
	William Fink	Sharon Foellner
9/11	Judith Rossanese	9/27 Roger Schneck
9/12	Evelyn Broad	Margaret Baatz
9/13	Robert Christman Jr	9/28 Cynthia Sommers
9/14	Jane Moyer	9/29 Tracy Fisher
9/18	Joyce Dumbach	Michael Thomas Gutekunst
	Virginia Brokenshire	9/30 Linda Powell
9/19	Nathan Powell	



September Wedding Anniversaries

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

9/1
Robert and Janet Boyd Stevens

9/3
Eleanor and Joe O'Donnell

9/10
Dale and Betty Millham

9/12
Barbara and Robert Menges

9/13
Paul and Carol Raszler

9/14
Jamie and Heather Santee

9/15
Gregg and Valerie Fisher

9/16
Barbara and Blaine Holden

9/16
Frank and Phyllis Cszasz

9/18
Thomas and Kristine Gersbach

9/18
Nathan and Danielle Powell

9/22
Craig and Nicole Headman

9/24
Larry and Cindy Martin

9/26
Andrew and Jamie Kulhamer

9/26
Mark and Denise Moll

9/26
Jeffrey and Lora Nailor

9/27
Diane and James Walter





Greater Allentown CROP Hunger Walk

No one in this world should be hungry. That's why the CROP Hunger Walk is more than just a yearly gathering. It's a movement that's 57 years strong, made up of compassionate people in more than 500 communities across the U.S.

The steps taken and the funds raised will provide lifesaving support, including emergency food and resources, along with the seeds, tools, and programs that will help families feed themselves in the future. In 2025, over \$27,600 was raised locally.

This year's CROP Hunger Walk is scheduled for Sunday, October 18, starting at 1:30 pm at St. Timothy's Lutheran Church located at 140 S. Ott Street in Allentown. Walkers are needed and church members can sponsor our walkers with your donations. There are two options for walkers: 10K Route or the "Golden Mile" Route through the Hamilton Park neighborhood. Our team of walkers who signed up to date are Cindy Reck and Amy Feidler; however, you can become a walker by contacting Cindy.

The CROP Hunger Walk supports the vital ministries of the Lehigh Church Conference Kitchen and the Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank with neighbors experiencing food insecurity in our area. The CROP Hunger Walk also supports the lifesaving work of Church World Service (CWS) with our neighbors who are struggling in the aftermath of floods, fires, drought, and other disasters throughout the United States and the world.

If you would like to make a contribution (cash or check) to the CROP Walk and sponsor one of our walkers, please see Cindy Reck before or after worship or mail your donation into the church. Checks are payable to CWS/CROP.



Whitehall Food Pantry

For the month of September, we're collecting jelly, pork and beans, and coffee. Any other non-perishable food items are always welcome. A shopping cart where you can place your donations can be found in the coatroom area by the sanctuary. Monetary contributions are always accepted and can be forwarded to the church office or made by online or text giving.

If you would like to volunteer at the food pantry on the third Monday of the month, please contact Gary Black at (484) 274-2405 or gary.t.black@outlook.com. The food pantry is located at St. Stephen's Episcopal Church, 3900 Mechanicsville Rd. in Whitehall.

Backpacks & School Supplies for Whitehall-Coplay School District

On Monday, August 3, the Mission Committee delivered six cartons of school supplies to the Whitehall-Coplay School District. Over 2,400 items were donated. Some of the items collected were 12 backpacks, 1 calculator, 1,885 sheets of loose-leaf paper, 42 boxes of crayons, 46 erasers, 57 glue sticks, 30 highlighters, 16 pencil sharpeners, 12 scissors, 18 spiral-bound notebooks, 196 pencils, 60 pocket folders, 18 sets of colored pencils, and 22 sets of colored markers.

Thanks to your generosity, children will receive the supplies they need to start off a brand-new school year.



Whitehall-Coplay Hunger Initiative

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

Date	Place	Address	Phone
Sunday, 9/6	Muslim Association of the Lehigh Valley	1988 Schadt Ave., Whitehall	(703) 346-8698
Tuesday, 9/15	Whitehall Bible Fellowship Church	3300 Seventh St., Whitehall	(610) 434-8661
Sunday, 10/4	Faith Evangelical Lutheran Church	3355 MacArthur Road, Whitehall	(610) 435-0451
Tuesday, 10/20	Shepherd of the Hills Lutheran Church	4331 Main St., Whitehall	(610) 730-3184

Other Outreach Updates

Thank you to everyone who donated to the “Love Your Neighborhood Churches” fundraiser for Medical Debt Relief. St. John’s, along with 13 other churches, have worked together to help erase medical debt in Lehigh and Northampton counties. For every \$10 donated, it relieves \$1,000 in medical debt.

As this newsletter goes to press, St. John’s has contributed \$535. This means that \$53,500 in medical debt has been erased. A community-wide picnic was held on Sunday, August 16, at Union UCC in Neffs to celebrate the achievements of this fundraiser. [See the full story on page 19.](#)

How did St. John’s Family do?

Recent Outreaches	July 2026	YTD 2026	YTD 2025	YTD 2024
Our Church’s Wider Mission	\$ 543.00	\$4,982.00	\$6,809.00	\$7,714.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$ 35.00	\$1,321.99	\$2,115.00	\$2,205.00
Mountain Valley Assoc.	\$ 60.00	\$ 630.00	N/A	N/A
Medical Debt Relief	\$ 535.00	\$ 535.00	N/A	N/A

Wrapping Our Community in God's Love

Our Prayer Shawl Ministry offers a tangible reminder of a simple but powerful truth: no one journeys alone. Each prayer shawl and prayer square is lovingly handcrafted, prayed over, and blessed by our congregation before being shared with someone experiencing illness, grief, or another season when a reminder of God's presence can bring comfort and hope.

Our ministry reaches beyond those connected to St. John's. As part of our School Supplies and Backpacks Drive, we include prayer squares so that students in our community can carry a small reminder with them to school that people are praying for their growth, learning, and safety.

We are especially grateful for the caring hands of Connie Viglione, Emilie Moyer, Nancy Weaver, and Donna Held, whose gifts and creativity help extend Christ's love one stitch at a time to people in hospitals and other settings, both near and far.

There is room for more caring hands! If you know someone who would be encouraged by a Prayer Shawl or Prayer Square, please contact the Church Office. And if you would like to join this ministry through knitting, crocheting, quilting, or simply learning, we would love to welcome you.

Together, stitch by stitch and prayer by prayer, we continue to wrap our community in God's love.



RaiseRight Gift Card Sales



RaiseRight™

It's nearly time for our annual RaiseRight (formerly Scrip) gift card sale. What better way to shop for those on your holiday gift list than with a RaiseRight gift card! It makes your shopping easy, and the gift cards cost so much less to send. While you're shopping, don't forget to add a few for yourself, too. They're great to keep on hand.

An order form is enclosed with this newsletter as well as on the [church website \(Forms\)](#), and on the table in the lounge area. Your order form and check (payable to St. John's UCC, Fullerton) can be mailed to the church office, put in the offering plate, or given to Karen Stoitsits.

Deadline for your order and payment is September 30. Gift cards will be available for pick-up on or after December 1.

If you have any questions, contact Karen Stoitsits at (610) 262-0746 or email littlekdr@yahoo.com Happy shopping!!

Friendship Bible Class Resumes

You are cordially invited to attend the Adult Faith Formation Class (Adult Sunday School) when classes resume on Sunday, September 6th. The class meets every Sunday at 8:30am in Room 201.

Different members teach each week and offer a variety of topics including: Bible stories, scripture, parables, Bible characters, family traditions, current events, and much more.

Stop in for a cup of coffee and refreshments and join in the discussion.

Pastie Sale Coming Soon

Our biannual Pastie Sale is just around the corner. Look for order forms and more information in the October newsletter. These traditional turnovers are made by hand at the Mr. Pastie bakery in Pen Argyll and come frozen. You can choose from 13 meat and vegetable pies (\$7.50 and \$8.50) and 3 fruit pies (\$4.50). Pickup dates will be Thursday, November 19 and Sunday, November 22. If you have any questions, contact Carol Raszler at (610) 393-7572 or craszler@aol.com



BUDGET UPDATE

St Johns UCC Fullerton - Statement of Finances

July 2026

Income	Electronic	7/5/2026	7/12/2026	7/19/2026	7/26/2026	Total
Offerings for Operating Expenses	\$5,805.35	\$2,947.81	\$2,779.00	\$2,998.00	\$1,002.00	\$15,532.16
Rental Income—Gross	\$1,335.50		\$1,073.00			\$2,408.50
Fundraising Income—Net of Exp		\$61.94		\$14.00	\$(650.00)	\$(574.06)
Endowment Interest	\$8,665.00					\$8,665.00
Flowers						\$0.00
Faith Formation	\$35.00					\$35.00
Special Gifts	\$400.00					\$400.00
Total	\$16,240.85	\$3,009.75	\$3,852.00	\$3,012.00	\$352.00	\$0.00
						\$26,466.60

Expense Summary	Actual	Budget	Difference
Pastoral Services	\$12,057.30	\$11,963.98	\$93.32
Staff Salaries & Expense	\$7,837.31	\$9,417.97	\$(1,580.66)
Building Services	\$3,347.71	\$3,031.25	\$316.46
Faith Formation	\$(104.78)	\$104.17	\$(208.95)
Parish Programs	\$1,037.56	\$2,085.42	\$(1,047.86)
Fundraising Tithe	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total	\$24,175.10	\$26,602.79	\$(2,427.69)

	Month	Year
Total Income	\$26,466.60	\$191,605.91
Total Expenses	\$24,175.10	\$194,360.14
Net INCOME (LOSS)	\$2,291.50	\$(2,754.23)

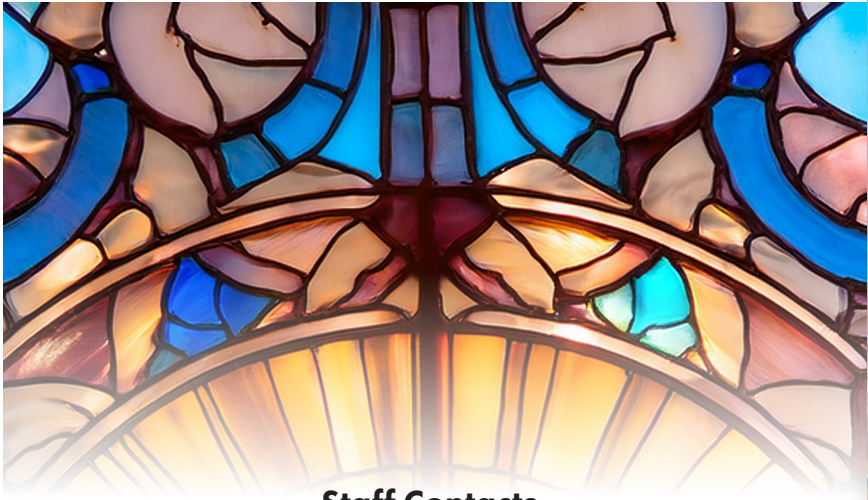
Mission Giving, July 2026

Our Churches Wider Mission	\$543.00
Mountain Valley Assoc	\$60.00
Medical Debt Relief	\$10.00
Whitehall Food Pantry	\$35.00
Total	\$648.00

St John's UCC Fullerton Account Balances For Month Ending, July 2026

Account	Jun-26	Jul-26	Difference
Checking Account	\$170,013.65	\$136,873.58	\$(33,140.07)
Giant Card Funds	\$1,657.00	\$2,657.00	\$1,000.00
Weis Card Funds	\$21.00	\$21.00	\$0.00
sub-total Checking	\$171,691.65	\$139,551.58	\$(32,140.07)
Restricted/Property Investments	\$240,786.00	\$241,225.00	\$439.00
sub-total Investments	\$240,786.00	\$241,225.00	\$439.00
Endowment Fund—Quadrant	\$1,040,325.00	\$1,021,823.00	\$(18,502.00)
TOTAL ASSETS	\$1,452,802.65	\$1,402,599.58	\$(50,203.07)
Cornerstone Pavilion Loan	\$(80,146.12)	\$(80,010.48)	\$135.64
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$(80,146.12)	\$(80,010.48)	\$135.64
NET FUND BALANCE	\$1,372,656.53	\$1,322,589.10	\$(50,067.43)





Staff Contacts

Rev. Steve Davis

Senior Pastor

srpastor@sjuccf.org

Patrick Sandt

Director of Music Ministry / Organist

music@sjuccf.org

Samara Bush

Office Administrator

officesecretary@sjuccf.org

Sue Weldner

Treasurer

sbweldner@gmail.com

Michelle Gutekunst

Financial Secretary

Coordinating Custodian

financialsecretary@sjuccf.org

custodians@sjuccf.org

Bill Castello

Worship Tech

Connections Newsletter Editor

stars@sjuccf.org

newsletter@sjuccf.org

Samantha Kistler

Ministerial Candidate

samanthamkistler@gmail.com

Christina Bach

Custodian

ironton1@verizon.net

Jazmin Smith

Director St. John's

Christian Early Learning Center

staff@stjohnslearningcenter.com

www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org

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



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