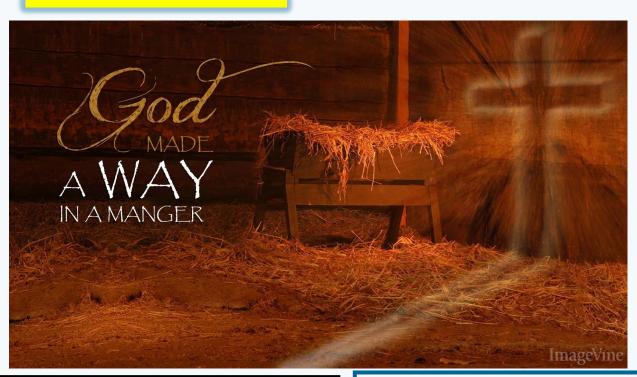


Monday-Thursday: 9:00 AM — 2PM

Friday: Closed

The Light Volume 2023, |ssue 12





The staff at St. John...

Reverend Richard Moore, Pastor:

pastor@saintjohnss.com

Deacon Diana Pelletier,

Director of Children and Youth Faith Formation:

deacondiana@saintjohnss.com

Arlene Moll, Director of Music Ministries

music@saintjohnss.com

Becky Ruth, Bell Choir Director

Lexie McLaughlin: Church Administrator

stjohnsec@saintjohnss.com

Jane McClellan-Renner, Finance Administrator:

finance@saintjohnss.com

Michele Brossman, Custodian

Kevin Brossman, Custodian

Barbi Connor-Genesis Preschool Administrative Director

Jen Kovalchick- Genesis Preschool Director of Education

genesispreschool@saintjohnss.com



Congregational Council:

President—Deb Dietrich Vice President - Tim Fox Secretary - Becky Ruth Treasurer—Gary Triviets

Care Team Liaison—Georgianne Jones Learn Team Liaison—Mason Sassaman Serve Team Liaison - Antonette Rosenmerkle Worship Team Liaison - George Balchunas

adership

Congregational Team Leaders:

Care Team - Deb Scheidt Learn Team - Danielle Hale Serve Team - Cole Luscombe Worship Team - Cleann Pauley

Flowers(\$54), Bulletins(\$20) & Newsletter (\$40)

Sponsorships are needed. Please fill out the form which is on the table at the front door, and put it in Lexie's mailbox. Thank you.

Flower and Bulletin Sponsors are needed!



Dear church friends,

Every Christmas Eve Isaiah 9:2-7 is our Old Testament reading. Whatever the original meaning of Isaiah's prophesy, and no matter

whose birth prompted the prophet's lyrical expressions of rejoicing and hope, on Christmas Eve the "child ... born for us" will always be the baby in the manger, and the "son given to us" will be God's very own.

But, even on Christmas Eve, parts of this text always seem to be mocked by current events. This year seems no exception. In some ways even more so than others. War looms prominently in our daily news. Violence, terrorist attacks, and the proliferation of the abuse of power are far too common to our daily experience. There is great darkness in our world.

And not just the darkness of the world, but also the darkness of our own lives: family quarrels, disease, suffering, aging parents, rebellious children, marriage problems, financial worries, addictions, fear and guilt, loneliness, bereavement. And for our church, the diminishing sense of relevance of our Lutheran traditions and beliefs. Darkness is no small part of our everyday life...even at Christmas!

I think that's what makes Isaiah' prophesy so remarkable. In verse two we hear, every Christmas Eve, that the darkness is precisely where the light of Christ is born into.

"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—on them the light has shined."

"Light" is a metaphor for the presence of God, the approach of God's grace, mercy, and peace. Isaiah refers to "a great light". The light of Christ, while "great" indeed for those who have seen and welcomed it, was not "great" at its coming, in the sense of being a blazing or blinding light, and is not "great" in that sense now. It was born to a humble Mary and Joseph in a manger. And even now this great and powerful light comes to us in a gentle,

TPastor Rich

humble, and modest gift of love that does not coerce or overwhelm. Yet, it is more than enough to disperse the darkness, even if for a moment, as if to remind us that "This, this is Christ the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing: Hast, haste to bring him laud, the babe, the Son of Mary!" He truly is the Prince of Peace for this world and the Wonderful Counselor for our daily lives.

May the light of Christ be born into the darkness where you are walking, and may it give you the grace and peace with which to be the light of Christ for someone else who walked in darkness.

Merry Christmas,

Isaiah 9:2-7

²The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness—

on them light has shined.

You have multiplied the nation, you have increased its joy; they rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest, as people exult when dividing plunder.

For the yoke of their burden, and the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor, you have broken as on the day of Midian.

⁵ For all the boots of the tramping warriors

and all the garments rolled in blood shall be burned as fuel for the fire.

⁶ For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

⁷ His authority shall grow continually, and there shall be endless peace for the throne of David and his king-

He will establish and uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time onward and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Contacts for Pastor Rich

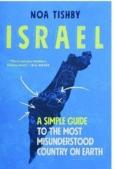
Mobile/Text Msg: 610-401-5602 Email: pastor@saintjohnss.com Find me on Facebook: Rich Moore Find me on Twitter: @LuthRevRich







Beginning December 5th, join Pastor Rich for a special 4-week Advent series to better understanding our Jewish neighbors' perspective of the war between Israel and Hamas. We will be reading together a book by Noa Tishby, titled Israel: A Simple Guide to the Most Misunderstood country on Earth.



To participate, email Pastor Rich pastor@saintjohnss.com and he will send you the Zoom Link to join the study.

I want to begin with a question: have you ever talked to yourself? If so, why? There is no one here to judge you, so go on... be honest.

I will admit that I have been known (mostly by me) to talk to myself on occasion. Some say talking to yourself is a sign of genius, so it actually makes sense that I would, right!?

Ok, in all seriousness, talking to yourself is neither good or bad, it is just a way

some people process what is going on in the world around them. According to Medical News Today, an online medical news outlet, "While children often talk to themselves, it should not be a cause for concern for parents or caregivers. It is a way of developing language, staying stimulated during a task, and improving performance while completing tasks. The habit of self-talk may continue into adulthood and is generally not a problem." So you see, talking to yourself can be a positive habit to get in to. I wonder if you have ever prayed? For some folks, praying can feel a lot like talking to yourself. While there are similarities like, you are the only one physically in the room OR you could look crazy if people are watching, there is one BIG difference. When you are talking to yourself YOU are the only one who will talk back. When you pray, if you allow some time and space, GOD can, and often does respond. After all, Prayer is really a Loving Conversation with God.

As we enter into the Advent season we are reminded, once again, that God came to the earth in HU-MAN form as a baby. God came as Jesus to live among us, to grow up among us, to understand what it is like to BE us, to be IN THE ROOM when we needed someone to talk to other than ourselves. Conversation is a two-way street. This advent I pray you are able to slow down, to gaze at the manger, to open



your ears and your heart, to listen to what God is saying. And, if you find yourself talking to the radio, the tv, or to yourself, invite God into the conversation, be present in the stillness, and listen. Really listen. You might be surprised to discover what God is saying to you.

> Happy Advent & Merry Christmas! peace, Diana

> > **Contacts for Deacon Diana** Mobile/Text Msg: 315-729-3454 Email: <u>DeaconDiana@saintjohnss.com</u>

COOKIES FOR VETERANS



Who: Middle & High School Youth

What: Making Christmas Cookies for Veterans

Where: Allegheny Lutheran Church

When: Dec 3rd 12-2pm

Why: Share God's Love with Neighbors

Please join us in sharing Christmas Cheer with some very special neighbors. We will meet at St. John's after Faith Formation and ride over to Allegheny together. Please plan for a ride home from

Allegheny at 2. Bring lunch!

Contact Diana with any questions 315-729-3454.

Confirmation Class of 23



Congratulations to our newest Confirmed Members:

- **♦ Evan Gajewski**
- > Piper Rosenmerkle
- Ashley Witkowski



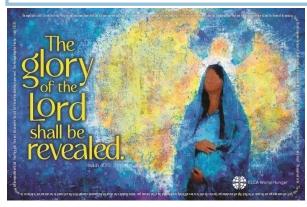
ALL Team Conversation

Are you interested in getting more involved in the ministries of St. John's? Do you have gifts and a bit of time to share? Do you have ideas about sharing God's love with our neighbors or community? Would you like to have your voice heard regarding activities we lead and participate in as a church community?

If you answered, "Yes" to any of the questions above PLEASE join the monthly ALL Team conversation envisioning the future of ministry at St. John's.

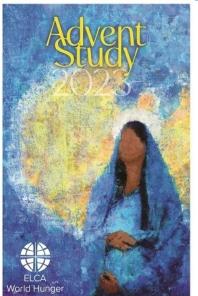
WHO: Everyone interested in the life and vitality of ministry at St. John's.

WHEN: December 5th, 6:30 pm WHERE: Faith Journeys Room



Celebrate the excitement, anticipation and wonder of the birth of Christ with this Advent calendar. Each day is a reminder of the reason for the season with hymns, prayers, Bible verses and information about how ELCA Good Gifts make a difference in the world.

Advent Calendars are available on the table outside the church office for you to use at home.



Our Faith Journeys Adult Faith Formation group will be using the ELCA World Hunger's 2023 Advent study guide during Advent. This study expands on the Advent readings for this year, and includes information about ELCA World Hunger at work in the world.

Please join the conversation Sunday mornings after worship in the room off the Fellowship Hall.

If you would like to do the Advent study on your own, please feel free to take a book from the table outside the church office.



Our middle and high school youth will gather in the youth room on Sunday, Dec 3rd to meet some military veterans and talk about life in, and after, serving.



Year to date

2023 budget

\$177,963

\$26,129

\$8,000

\$2,375

\$214,467

\$82,945 \$40,826

\$338,238

\$395

\$2,915

\$13,015

\$4,628

\$99,893

\$425

\$26,590

\$147,862

\$222,250

\$80,699

\$450,811

-\$112,573

Year to date Oct Year to date Oct

2022

\$165,569

\$28,907

\$13,716

\$23,699

\$231,891

\$68,488

\$16,303

\$316,682

2023

\$171,442

\$26,055

\$12,804

\$12,635

\$222,936

\$95,614

\$59,755

\$378,305

INCOME AND EXPENSES Month: October 2023

INCOME General Fund Giving Targeted Giving

Fundraising Other Income Subtotal Genesis Income

Bequests

TOTAL INCOME

EXPENSES

Care Team \$57 \$113 Learn Team \$2,431 \$2,495 Serve Team \$12,044 \$9,753 Worship Team \$5,766 \$5.517 Property Team \$70,482 \$74,939 Hospitality \$150 \$154 Office/Support Team \$34,714 \$27,652 \$125,644 Subtotal \$120,622 Staff \$219,651 \$214,576 Genesis Expense \$79,052 \$49,188 TOTAL EXPENSES \$424,347 \$384,386 UnBudgeted Expense \$42,306 \$18,123 Net Income

Unbudgeted Expense

Fellowship Hall Easter Egg Funds used Maintenance & Repair Pastor Discretionary Fund Speidel Bequest Use of Memorial Funds Youth vas Total

Forgiven Covid 19 Loan Change in Investment Value

-\$64,165	-\$110,01
\$0	\$40,355
\$0	\$0
\$0	\$0
\$2,524	\$1,018
\$0	\$0
640 500	ćo

\$10,500 \$0 \$4,151 \$363 \$948 \$570 \$18.123 \$42,306 Ś0

-\$98,287

Circle of Friends

\$2,538

Please join us 1pm, December 19 **Wyomissing Family Restaurant** 1245 Penn Ave, Wyomissing, PA 19610 3118 Pricetown Rd, Fleetwood, Pa 19522 Call Jeanette Minnich 610-678-1740 for questions.



Join Us for Breakfast with Santa

WHEN: Saturday, December 9, 2023. 8AM-10AM

WHERE: Fellowship Hall

DETAILS: Tickets are free, but reservations are required. Use the QR code or email the number of tickets needed to music@saintjohnss.com.

Each family attending is asked to bring a new, in-package toy, book, or game for a Moment of Magic, Items will be given to children in local hospitals

Comfy Corners in the Sanctuary

We have a soft space" in the back corner of the sanctuary with carpet, rocking chairs



and quiet toys. The other corner we have crayons and coloring pages. We are inviting families with infants, toddlers, children, or even adults that need to move around more freely, or who needs some extra space, to stay in worship more comfortably. Please check out these spaces and invite folks to use them.

Redner's Save-a-Tape program is simple:

Please put your receipts in your envelopes that you mail into the church or when you drop them off in the locked mailbox outside and also on the table inside the door. St. John will receive 1% of each bill. You need to use your Redner card in order for the church to Receive the 1% as shown on receipt...Thank you!

TOTAL for this year so far is \$950



SAVE-A-TAPE PROGRAM





We are still collecting for animals in need: blankets, towels, throw rugs, etc.

Thank you for your donations!



We are continuing to collect soda and soup can tabs to help support the Ronald McDonald House of Philadelphia.

Put them in the jar on the table outside the church office. you!

WILSON AREA FOOD PANTRY NEWS

On November 17 the Wilson Area Food Pantry served 130 families. The number of families translates to 520 individuals ranging in age from small children to senior citizens. It was our largest distribution since the end of the Covid shut down. We primarily serve the Wilson School District as well as the Wyomissing area.

Donations to the pantry are vital to the support that we can give to the families in need. Food donations such as peanut butter, spaghetti, pasta sauce, mac and cheese, canned fruit and vegetables, cereal, and canned tuna or chicken which is collected from the supporting churches on the Wednesday morning prior to the pantry distribution is provided to the families along with food provided by Helping Harvest. In December we will collect on Wednesday December 13 for a distribution on Friday December 15 (the third Friday of December). Our dependence on the donations from our supporting churches is even more important than ever as the need grows. Please fill our two grocery carts especially at this time of year when we emphasize giving to help those in need.

We are very grateful for all the support that Saint John's gives the pantry. That support is both food donations and financial donations which is used to buy food as well.

It is our mission to serve God by helping those in need.

We are also grateful for our volunteers. Especially Ashley Witkowski and the teenagers from the Hope for Humanity club. It was wonderful to see so many young people helping.



Pork and Sauerkraut dinner, January 1, 2024 from 11 AM to 1 PM. Take out only. Pricing to be determined closer to event. Help the day of and bakers are needed. For questions, contact Deb Scheidt at 610-468-5923.

News from Council

At the November 19th Congregational Meeting the congregation approved a 1st Quarter budget for 2024, which holds the line on all expenditures to 2023 levels while we consider ways to bring our expenses into alignment with income. Right now, our budgeted expenses for a year total \$500,000 and our stable income for a year is \$400,000. That is a \$100,000 or 20% deficit we need to close the gap on. We do have \$400,000 in savings accounts that we can lean on in transition and to cover capital improvements and repairs to our facilities. More than half of our budget is staff, which is where we will need to unfortunately consider cuts.

At their November 21, 2023 meeting your Congregational Council:

Continued their discussion of the book, Giving to God, considering whether we acquire, regard, manage and spend money in God-pleasing ways. They also discussed whether it is possible to subscribe to 100% stewardship, using all of our money as God would want.

Considered the Finance Committee's budget recommendations and discussed additional ideas for reducing our budgetary reliance on our investment funds.

Determined the discussion plan for the November 26, 2023, Congregational Conversation which will focus on our budget, continuing the conversations that began at the Congregational Meeting. We will be placing surveys on the table to solicit input regarding mission and budgeting as well as discussing ideas from the congregation.

Learned that the Care Team is still accepting donations for the care bags for Smiles We Miss to be assembled at the next Ministry Teams Meeting scheduled for December 5th.

Learned the fire and security safety system installation is progressing well and should be completed in early December.

Learned the Serve Team has decided to revise the monthly Mission giving foci. We will add a benefiting agency and add a separate quarterly giving envelope for the Pastor's Discretionary Fund.

YOUTH GROUP SERVICE EVENT



Join youth from East and West Berks Mission Districts for a morning of fun, fellowship, and service! Our event will take place on Saturday, January 13th from 12-3pm.

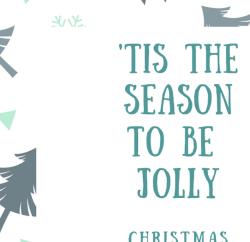
Join us at Good Shepherd, 4201Stoudts Ferry Rd. as we dive into Matthew 25:35 and create Hygiene kits. We will begin with lunch! Cost is \$5 per youth.



Saturday, December 2, 2023 9AM - 1PM

Come support local artists while fulfilling all of your holiday gift lists!

10% of vendor proceeds will support Genesis Preschool



CHRISTMAS ARTS & CRAFT SHOW

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH **4125 PENN AVENUE** SINKING SPRING, PA 19608

DECEMBER 2, 2023 /9AM - 1PM PROCEEDS BENEFIT GENESIS PRESCHOOL



Wilson Area Food Pantry

The Salvation Army got \$348.67 for the October month mission. December's mission is the Wilson Food Pantry.





KIDS AGES 3-7 CAN PLAY AND PARTICIPATE IN FUN ACTIVITIES WITH OUR TEENS. ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARY, PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO THEIR SUMMER MISSIONS TRIP TO ST. CROIX.



















October 29th saw our 4th Annual Trunk~or~Treat celebration here at St. Johns. We welcomed about 175 local children into our parking lot for some safe Halloween fun, tasty treats, & info about our upcoming ministries & events! They visited 16 cars (7 of which were decorated by neighbors!). We had hot dogs, chips, & drinks for sale and raised \$199.50 toward VBS 2024!

Thank you to EVERYONE who helped make this event a HUGE Success!















CHECK OUT OUR ONLINE CALENDAR

Saint John's has a newly updated online calendar. You can find this on our church website. Use the QR code on the right to check it out now. Check it to see what's happening, when is the newsletter deadline, or when Sunday's service includes Holy Communion.





While you're there...

Click 🖨 to print the calendar.

Click to add the calendar feed to your device.

Mark your Calendars

Dec 2 Genesis Craft Show 9am-1pm

Dec 3 Youth Group - Baking Christmas Cookies & Building Ginger

bread Houses

Dec 9 Breakfast with Santa 8am-10am

Dec 17 Christmas Cantata 2pm

Dec 19 Circle of Friends 1pm: Wyomissing Family Restaurant

Dec 24 Christmas Eve ~ morning & evening services Jan 13 WBMD Youth Service Event 12-3 - Hygiene Kits

Feb 17-18 Act 2Day 4Tomorrow Overnight



FREE PHILLY PRETZEL - NOW THROUGH DEC 13TH



PEANUT CLUSTERS

COCONUT CLUSTERS

PEPPERMINT BARK

ORDER FORMS ARE OUTSIDE THE OFFICE

> FINAL DAY TO ORDER: **DEC 3RD**







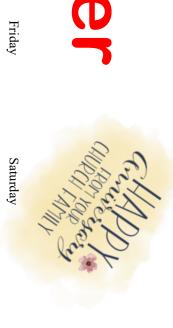




December

Wednesday

Thursday



31 bii		24	Gre day Jasc birtl	17		day Hal	D	10			,	သ	ļ	26
31 Jay Winkleman's birthday		4	Gretchen Karr's birthday Jason Schwambach's birthday	7		day Haley Fox's birthday	David Huyett's birth-)						5 5
	Heather Foreman's birthday Paul Covach's birthday	25	Eric Jones's birthday	18				day 11	birthday William Miller's birth-	Robert Ruth's birthday Rod Rentschler's	Kerry Hendel's birth-	4	ţ	27
		anniversary Thomas Wiest's birthday 26	Grittin Saar's birthday Hadley Weiler's birthday James Mensch's birthday Olivia Long's birthday Rod and Carol Rentschler's	day 19	day Sherrie Cook's birth-	day Evelyn Trexler's birth-	Dane Kragness's birth-	12		Kyle Drobeck's birthday Nathan Allbert's birthday Scott Brower's birthday	James Riegel's birthday Kathleen Miller's birthday	5	ţ	28
		27	Greg and Anne Klein's anniversary Sean Moyer III's birthday	20				13			,	6	ţ	29
	Kerry Pauley's birth- day	28		21		Sarah Riegel's birth- day	Nicole Kutz's birthday	14		Lily Cuccaro's birth- day	Darlene Hastings's hirthday	7	Ċ	30
	Dalton Bixler's birth- day Richard Bentz's birth- day	29		22		day	Valerie Miller's birth-	15		***	Aidan Hunter's birth-	8	Brian Gromis's birthday Caroline Riegel's birthday Daniel Witman's birthday Patrick Velekel's birthday	_
		30		23		Tiffany Bentz's birthday	Janice Jones's birthday	16	12		,	9	Joyce Aukamp's birthday birley Loy's birthday	2