



SERVE • CARE • WORSHIP • LEARN

ST. JOHN'S

Evangelical Lutheran Church

4125 Penn Avenue
Sinking Spring, PA 19608
610-678-1088



The Light

 Volume 2024, Issue 1

Church Office Hours
Monday-Thursday: 9:00 AM – 2PM
Friday: Closed



The staff at St. John...

Reverend Richard Moore, Pastor:
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Director of Children and Youth Faith Formation:
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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



Congregational Team Leaders:

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

Flowers(\$55) , Bulletins(\$20) & Newsletter (\$30)

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,

Do you ever think about why we celebrate New Year's Day? It's really just another day, so why is it so important to mark a date change on a calendar?

It's because a new year offers a new beginning, the chance to get a fresh start. There's a reason January is the most important month of the year for gyms and self-help programs, because it seems like a chance to start again, to improve ourselves. It seems like a natural time for beginning something, which is why lots of us will make New Year's resolutions (whether we stick to them or not is another story!).

The Christian life offers many opportunities for fresh starts, changing what we've been doing, or beginning to live differently. Each week in worship, we begin with a time of confession where we admit what we've done wrong. We admit to God and to each other that our lives are not perfect, that we're not living the way we ought to live, that we're doing things we ought not do and failing to do things we ought to do.

Then, immediately after confession, we hear God's response. We hear the good news that because of God's forgiveness, because God loves us, we all get a fresh start. Psalm 103:12 says God has taken our sins away from us "as far as the east is from the west." The slate is wiped clean. We don't need to carry the weight of our sins or guilt with us anymore. We are forgiven!

And then we run into the next week (or maybe just the next day...or the next couple of minutes!) and it doesn't take long before we sin again. It doesn't take long to forget what God has done for us. But we always have another opportunity to remember God's love. God never gets tired of forgiving us!

In The Small Catechism, Martin Luther said we ought to begin each day in this way: *"In the morning, as soon as you get out of bed, you are to make the sign of the holy cross and say: 'God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit watch over me. Amen.' Then, kneeling or standing, say the Apostle's Creed and the Lord's Prayer...After singing a hymn, or whatever else may serve your devotion, you are to go to your work joyfully."* You don't have to wait til January 1st of a new year to get a fresh start on life. Every day offers the opportunity to wake up and remember that you are a baptized child of God. You have been claimed, redeemed, and set free by Jesus Christ.

After hearing the promise of forgiveness and absolution in worship, we continue the only way we can, by together giving thanks to God in song and by hearing more about God's grace and love for us, and by receiving the means of grace in the Holy Communion.

So, every day is a fresh start in God's grace, by personally remembering our baptisms. Every Sunday is a fresh start for us when we worship together, and receive God's grace in the Word and the sacrament of Holy Communion. No need to wait for next January. See you in worship, where every Sunday is a new beginning.

I wish you a joyful and safe start to 2024.

Blessings,

T Pastor Rich

<p>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</p>



Who do you follow?

The question of, "Who do you follow?" used to be a much simpler question to answer. For instance, in the time of Jesus there were prophets, and trusted leaders and teachers that you knew you could trust. Even in the much more recent past, the world was so much smaller which meant there were less conflicting news reports and social messages circulating

through communities.

When the Magi saw the Star of Bethlehem rise in the East they did not question whether or not they should follow it's light, nor did they wonder where it would lead. They had faith in what the prophets had foretold and so they followed.

Our world today is exponentially more complicated! With the creation of the internet in 1983 and the dawning of the 24-hour news cycle in the mid-90's, it is much harder to focus in on what is truly important. It is so much more difficult to shut out the noise and to listen to where God is calling us to work and serve.



Social media sites use terms like, 'follow' and 'friend' to draw us in and to keep us wanting more. After all, who does not like the idea of having followers and large numbers of friends? These are, of course, ploys to draw us in to their platforms, to keep us interacting with their apps. Many of us can spend hours every day glued to our devices, trying to make sure we do not miss anything important. We can also spend extreme amounts of time documenting the big and small moments of our lives, trying to impress our followers and friends.

Sadly, at the end of the day, all of this following, scrolling, and documenting leaves us feeling no more fulfilled, and endlessly wanting more. Instead of counting our blessings, we compare ourselves to our friends and followers and often think we are not enough or do not have enough.

This Epiphany season, when we are once again visited by the Magi, may we look to them as an example to follow the light of God every day, to count our blessings, and to share all we have with our neighbors. May we readjust our compasses to point us toward the light so we can see where we are being called and to whom we are called to serve. The Magi followed the Star. They also brought the best gifts they could bring.

YOU are the gift God wants to share with the world! I invite you to put down your devices, for even a short while, and listen, wait, watch. God has AMAZING things in store for you when you follow...

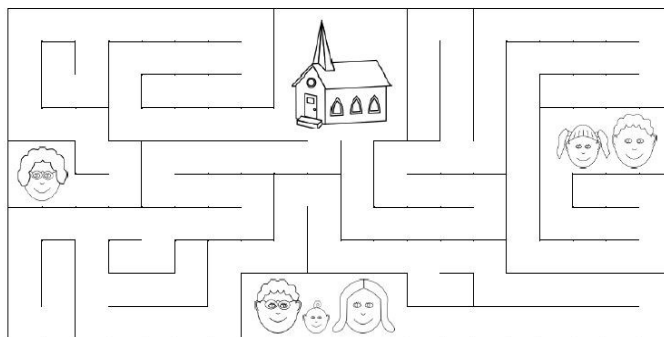


peace, Diana

FAITH IN ACTION

Our middle and high school youth will gather in the youth room on Sunday, Jan 14th to talk about Social Media & New Year's Resolutions.

Draw a path for each family to get to the church building.





Genesis Singers

Many thanks to our preschool families that shared their children with us on Dec 10th. Their songs, bell ringing, and dancing brought holiday cheer and blessings to so many!



STRONGER TOGETHER YOUTH GROUP



Our next Stronger Together adventure will be an experiential event focusing on hunger. We plan to stay overnight at Trinity Lutheran in Reading February 17-18th. We will experience what hunger feels like by eating very little and learning about hunger in our community and around the world. We will also be collecting money to help support ELCA World hunger.

More details to come. As always, friends are welcome!

YOUTH GROUP SERVICE EVENT - RESCHEDULED



Join youth from East and West Berks Mission Districts for an afternoon of fun, fellowship, and service! Our event will take place on

Saturday, January 13th from 12-3pm.

Join us at **Good Shepherd, 4201 Stoudts Ferry Rd.** as we dive into Matthew 25:35 and create Hygiene kits.

We will begin with lunch!

Cost is \$5 per youth.

Please RSVP to Diana by Jan 7th



As you may recall, during the congregational meeting held in June regarding the church budget, the decision was made to remove the purchase of the projector for the sanctuary from the annual budget and establish a Capital Campaign to fund the purchase. Following that meeting, the Worship Team agreed to lead the campaign for the projector. This campaign has been approved by the church council and is moving forward with raising the necessary funds. The Worship Team strongly believes that a projector in the sanctuary will provide us with a means to enhance worship in ways we are currently unable to do as well as have a positive economic and environmental impact by reducing the costs associated with the producing the bulletin in its current form. The overall cost of the projector and associated equipment will be +/- \$7500. Thanks to some generous donations and fundraising, \$2933.90 has already been added to the fund. Please consider targeting a donation toward the purchase of the projector. Also, look for fundraisers in the future to help us reach our target and add this additional piece of technology to our worship experience.

COOKIES FOR VETERANS

On Dec 3rd 15 youth from our Stronger Together Youth Group gathered at Allegheny Lutheran to make cookies for local veterans. We were visited by Kevin, Heather, and Gretta (Kevin's service dog) who told us about an Equine Therapeutic Program in Reinholds that helps veterans suffering from PTSD and other issues after serving in our military. Many thanks to Kevin, Heather, and Gretta for sharing their stories and to all the youth who shared God's love with our local vets!



Breakfast with Santa

What an amazing time everyone had at our 2nd Annual Breakfast with Santa on Dec 9th! So many thanks go out to all who volunteered and all who came to eat. The Love of God was shared with 204 breakfasts served!!! Everyone left with bellies full of food and hearts filled with Christmas cheer!

A SPECIAL THANKS goes out to **SANTA AND The GRINCH** for making time to be with us!!





INCOME AND EXPENSES
Month: November 2023

	Year to date Nov 2023	Year to date Nov 2022	Year to date 2023 budget
INCOME			
General Fund Giving	\$184,529	\$179,982	\$196,703
Targeted Giving	\$28,367	\$32,498	\$28,624
Fundraising	\$15,012	\$14,310	\$8,000
Other Income	\$13,084	\$24,129	\$2,500
Subtotal	\$240,992	\$250,919	\$235,827
Genesis Income	\$108,981	\$78,001	\$91,254
Bequests	\$59,755	\$27,003	\$54,435
TOTAL INCOME	\$409,728	\$355,923	\$381,516
EXPENSES			
Care Team	\$57	\$113	\$405
Learn Team	\$2,684	\$2,794	\$3,092
Serve Team	\$14,148	\$9,990	\$13,657
Worship Team	\$6,048	\$5,618	\$5,015
Property Team	\$75,322	\$81,974	\$108,272
Hospitality	\$166	\$154	\$500
Office/Support Team	\$36,378	\$29,540	\$29,129
Subtotal	\$134,802	\$130,184	\$160,070
Staff	\$238,563	\$234,192	\$244,385
Genesis Expense	\$91,284	\$56,237	\$89,079
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$464,649	\$420,612	\$493,535
UnBudgeted Expense	\$18,340	\$42,495	
Net Income	-\$73,261	-\$107,184	-\$112,018
Unbudgeted Expense			
Fellowship Hall	\$0	\$40,355	
Easter Egg Funds used		\$125	
Maintenance & Repair	\$0	\$0	
Pastor Discretionary Fund	\$2,674	\$1,082	
Speidel Bequest	\$0	\$0	
Use of Memorial Funds	\$10,500	\$0	
Youth	\$4,151	\$363	
VBS	\$1,015	\$570	
Total	\$18,340	\$42,495	

Forgive
Chang



Circle of Friends

Please join us 1pm, January 16, 2024 at 1pm
Calbria Italian Restaurant
6646 Penn Ave, Wernersville, PA 19565
Call Jeanette Minnich 610-678-1740
for questions

Comfy Corners in the Sanctuary

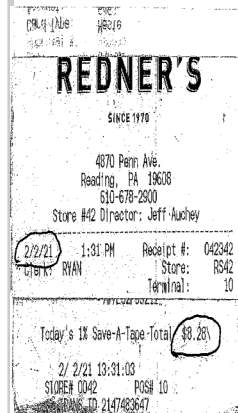


We have a 'soft space' in the back corner of the sanctuary with carpet, a rocking chair and quiet toys. The other corner has crayons and coloring pages. We are inviting families with infants, toddlers, children, or even adults that need to move around more freely, or who need some extra space, to stay 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 2023 \$949.84



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. Thank you!

Total income through the end of November is higher than last year and higher than what we anticipated. Keep in mind though that almost \$60,000 of it came via an IRS refund for the Employee Retention Credit and a payout from a life insurance policy.

Total expenses through the end of November are greater than last year but less than the budget.

The month of November alone shows our expenses exceeded our income by \$9096.00. Our expenses are higher than our income for the year through the end of November by \$73,261.00. Neither of those figures, naturally, are an indication of good financial health.

Our total cash reserves are at \$473,424. This includes all the money in our accounts at Fulton Bank, Raymond James, Riverfront Federal Credit Union, and the Endowment Fund.

The finance committee is working hard on putting things together to present to the church council and ultimately to you, the congregation. There are many very tough decisions to be made. We hope you keep us in your prayers so what is put forward will be the best we can hope for as our church tries to move forward in a positive manner.

Yours in faith, Gary Triviets, treasurer

News from Council

Your church Council met on December 19th. The following are highlights of the discussion and actions. At this meeting, Council:

- Discussed chapter 5 of Giving to God, which focused on faithful giving. We need to continue to share the message of stewardship. We will be asking the congregation for their opinion on a pledge campaign, perhaps using the word desire instead of pledge.
- Learned the Personnel Committee is working on meeting with staff to update job descriptions and further understand their ministry work.
- Determined the Church Administrative Assistant position will be budgeted for 20 hours per week beginning January 1st, maintaining current office hours.
- Learned the Wi-Fi extenders in the sanctuary and office level are malfunctioning and will need to be replaced to restore reliable internet connect ability.
- Approved the purchase of additional cameras to be placed at all facility doors to enhance security. The visitor log will be utilized during office hours only with the purpose of ensuring that visitors enter and exit at the office door.
- Determined we will be donating the couch that was removed from the room off the fellowship hall which has served as a health suite but is now used for candy fundraising. The parking lot stage will be dismantled and disposed of.
- Learned the Care Team assembled 18 care bags which will all be distributed by Christmas, with the help of the congregation.
- Heard that the Learn Team discussed ways to encourage preschool family engagement and also discussed the Deacon's position in support of their ministry work.
- Learned the Serve Team is going to be highlighting the monthly designated mission envelop recipient for more congregational visibility.
- Learned the Worship Team is assembling a small group to explore adding a worship service with an alternative format.
- Reviewed the most recent Budget Proposal from the Finance Committee and continued to discuss budget cutting options.

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.



CONNECT WITH OUR
zoom
BIBLE STUDIES

TUESDAYS: 5PM-6PM
Led by Pastor Rich
Register by emailing to:
pastor@saintjohnss.com



Altar Flowers

In October we learned that Stein's florist in Shillington would no longer be doing altar vases for churches. After making calls to many local florists, Royers has

the most economical prices for our needs. The price will be \$55, only a dollar more than we are currently paying Steins. If you are interested in sponsoring flowers, please fill out the form inserted in the newsletter. Extra forms can be found on the table outside of the office.



Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner
New Year's Day
11AM - 1PM

Take-Out ONLY

Slow-roasted pork, Sauerkraut, Mashed Potatoes, Rolls & Dessert
All the food is prepared and served with love by the members of the church.

\$12/meal
100% of proceeds go to help fund the work of the church.
Thank You, for your support!

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MEN'S BREAKFAST

Food | Fellowship | Faith
2nd and 4th Thursdays, 9 AM

 **Red Plate DINER**

Please RSVP to Pastor Rich By the prior Tuesday
pastor@saintjohnss.com
610-401-5602

A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS and Happy New Year!

FROM GENESIS PRESCHOOL



Thank you to all those who donated cookies! They were very delicious!





Mark your Calendars

- Jan 1** Pork & Kraut
- Jan 2** All Teams Meeting 6:30pm
- Jan 13** 12-3 WBMD Youth Service Event – Hygiene Kits
- Jan 14** Faith in Action
- Feb 6** All Teams Meeting 6:30pm
- Feb 14** Ash Wednesday
- Feb 17-18** Act 2Day 4Tomorrow Overnight
- March 30** Easter Egg Hunt
- March 31** Easter Sunday



WILSON AREA FOOD PANTRY NEWS

The Wilson Area Food Pantry distributed food to 113 families on December 15.

Donations to the pantry are vital to the support that we can give to the families in need. Food donations such as peanut butter, soup, spaghetti, pasta sauce, mac and cheese, canned fruit and vegetables, cereal, and canned tuna or chicken which will be collected January 17 will be combined with food provided by Helping Harvest and food purchased with the generous donations from our member congregations. Please fill our two grocery carts especially at this time of year when we emphasize giving to help those in need. Our next pantry distribution is January 19.

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.



January Happenings



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Church Office is closed Pork & Sauerkraut Dinner 11am-1pm	2 Bulletin announcements due by Noon Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 5:00pm Pastor Rich's Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm Team Meetings	3 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	4 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 7:00pm Choir Practice	5 Church Office is Closed Deacon Diana Day Off Pastor Rich Day Off	6
7 9:00am Worship Service with Holy Communion 8:00pm AA/Alanon Meeting	8 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	9 Bulletin announcements due by Noon Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 5:00pm Pastor Rich's Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm Executive Committee Meeting 6:30pm Spring Township Women's Club	10 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 6:30pm Property Committee Meeting	11 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 9:00am Men's Breakfast 7:00pm Choir Practice	12 Church Office is Closed Deacon Diana Day Off Pastor Rich Day Off	13
14 Arlene on Vacation 9:00am Worship Service with Holy Communion 8:00pm AA/Alanon Meeting	15 Church Office is closed	16 Annual Reports Due today. Thank you! Bulletin announcements due by Noon Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM Newsletter Articles Due Today 5:00pm Pastor Rich's Zoom Bible Study 6:30pm Church Council	17 Annual Reports Due today. Thank you! Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	18 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 12:30pm Food Pantry Setup 7:00pm Choir Practice	19 Church Office is Closed Deacon Diana Day Off Pastor Rich Day Off 10:00am Soup Kitchen 2:30pm Food Pantry Distribution	20
21 9:00am Visit from Pastor Bruce "Food for the Poor" 9:00am Worship Service with Holy Communion 10:00am Congregational Conversation 8:00pm AA/Alanon Meeting	22 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	23 Bulletin announcements due by Noon Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 5:00pm Pastor Rich's Zoom Bible Study	24 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM Newsletter Assembly	25 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 9:00am Men's Breakfast 7:00pm Choir Practice	26 Church Office is Closed Deacon Diana Day Off Pastor Rich Day Off	27
28 9:00am Worship Service 8:00pm AA/Alanon Meeting	29 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	30 Bulletin announcements due by Noon Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM 5:00pm Pastor Rich's Zoom Bible Study	31 Church Office Hours 9AM-2PM	1	2	3

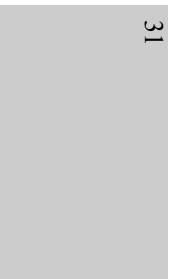


BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH

January



Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday



31

1 Patricia Burkhardt's birthday
Taylor Weyman's birthday

2 David Lehatto's birthday
Michael T Drobeck's birthday

3 Blanche Miller's birthday
Ted Kramer's birthday
Timothy Riegel's birthday

4 Graham Hudzik's birthday

5

12 Carol Spigelmyer's birthday
Jeffrey Bressler's birthday

6

13 Elizabeth Long's birthday

7

8 Caitlyn Miller's birthday
Lawrence Hensley's birthday
Michelle Kerchner's birthday
Neil and Lisa Drebusenko's anniversary
Vanessa Gajewski's birthday

9 Logan Bentz's birthday

10 Eric and Karen Peiffer's anniversary
Judith Smith's birthday

11 Karol Rockwood's birthday

12

13 Elizabeth Long's birthday

14 Jennifer Schwambach's birthday

15 Russell Lis's birthday

16 William Aukamp's birthday

17 Jennifer Weyman's birthday
Jeremy Shockey's birthday

18

19

20 Chase Steffey's birthday
Nicholas Drobeck's birthday

21

Alan Marquette's birthday
Alex Plant's birthday

22 James Lillist's birthday

23

24 Alex Peiffer's birthday
Gary Triviet's birthday

25

26 Melissa Miller's birthday

27

Heather Riegel's birthday

28

LeslieAnn Peers's birthday
Vicki Stauffer's birthday

29

30 Kristin Ruth's birthday
Susan Cooper's birthday

31

1

2

3