

The Circle



May Worship at St. John's

As this edition of The Circle is being written, we do not know when the COVID-19 quarantine will be lifted. Until it is, our worship services will be available on YouTube. The easiest way to find our current YouTube channel is to go to our website at <http://stjohnluthphoenixville.org/> and click on the YouTube icon at the top left side of the page. Please share this link with your friends and family via email and social media. Materials for at-home worship are being sent to parishioners without computer access. If you know someone without computer access who has not received these materials, please let Sonya Sowards know.

Living in hope and concern for the well-being our congregation and community, we hope to be able to be together by May 23/24, although perhaps a more realistic date is the beginning of June. We will be following the guidelines issued by the Governor of Pennsylvania. Dates and times for in-person worship are planned accordingly.

Fourth Weekend of Easter

Worship will be posted on YouTube
by Saturday, May 2nd at 3 p.m.

In our Gospel this weekend, we hear that Jesus is called the "gate" of the sheep. The risen Christ opens the way to abundant life. Our Good Shepherd knows our name and leads us safely through the valleys of death. If you don't already know Psalm 23 "by heart" pray it every day until it has a place in your memory.

Fifth Weekend of Easter

Worship will be posted on YouTube
by Saturday, May 9th at 3 p.m.

Our prayer of the day for worship this weekend is a pure gift that you are invited to pray every day of the week: Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Sixth Weekend of Easter

Worship will be posted on YouTube
by Saturday, May 16th at 3 p.m.

Jesus does not abandon us—even when we are isolated from one another and separated from the beautiful sanctuary of St. John's. In this weekend's Gospel we are told to keep Jesus's commandment of loving one another. What have you learned about the challenges and the gift of love since March 15th?

Seventh Weekend of Easter

Memorial Day Weekend/Start of Summer Worship Time

In hope: Saturday, May 23rd
Evening Light, 5 p.m.
Sunday, May 24th

Holy Communion, 9 a.m.

If we are physically back to our community of faith—note we are always spiritually connected through God's love and grace—we will hear how Jesus prays for us that we may experience eternal life, now and forever. *If we are under quarantine, worship will be posted on YouTube by Saturday, May 23rd at 3 p.m.*

Pentecost Weekend

In hope: Saturday, May 30th
Evening Light, 5 p.m.
Sunday, May 31st

Holy Communion, 9 a.m.

Our first reading from Acts 2 for this weekend begins: "When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place . . ." We don't know if we will be "together in one place," but we do know that if we are not, God is with us, blessing us and empowering us to share love with others. *If we are under quarantine worship will be posted on YouTube by Saturday, May 30th at 3 p.m.*



From the Pastor:

Love in the Time of Corona

I confess that I neither read the book nor saw the movie *Love in the Time of Cholera*. It was translated into English in 1988 and a movie adaptation of it was released in 2007. Between parenting and pastoring I already had enough on “my plate” without adding cholera to it. But now there is no choice in this time of Corona. It is here whether or not you or I want it to be. So, the question is, “How do you, how do I, how do we, now live?” This is deeper than wearing masks, washing hands and following the rules and regs that have been established by the authorities and are plain common sense.



As the Gospel of John tells the story of Jesus, especially of the night in which he was betrayed, the Apostle includes a long interlude of teaching and prayer that takes place after Judas has left the room and before Jesus goes to the garden where he will be betrayed. These four chapters draw us into the heart of God’s love. Jesus tells us not to be troubled, but to believe in God. He says, “I am the way, the truth, the life.” He promises that the “Advocate” will come, and he asks, “Do you now believe?” Then he ends in a prayer that concludes, “I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.”

In these four chapters there are four words that stand out—ABIDE IN MY LOVE! Live in Jesus’ love, who lives in God’s love. Jesus said, “As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you.” Love shared and shared and shared. Love is not something we muster up on our own, it is what’s been given to us, what we abide, we live in. And because it’s God’s love, Jesus’ love, the love shared by the Holy Spirit, the Advocate, there is more love than we can imagine. Let us live, abide, remain in this love in these days of Corona.

That is going to be different for each of us. For some it’s being parents, for others caring for parents. For some it’s generously giving, others graciously receiving. For all of us, at one time or another it’s both. And all of it is full of grace. But there’s more, because through it all Jesus promises joy. Yes, joy. Indeed, he promises complete joy. Oh my, oh my, oh my . . .

Pastor Cynthia Krommes

Virtual St. John’s

While we are physically separated from one another, though we are always connected to each other through Jesus Christ our Lord, we are using online communication to “be in community.” We are worshiping via our YouTube channel and have purchased Zoom-Pro, which allows classes, committees, and groups to be together virtually. So while our building is not a gathering place, we are meeting together online.

WORSHIP IS ONLINE

Just type in “YouTube St. John Lutheran Phoenixville” to find our YouTube channel. Worship for the weekend is available after 3 p.m. on Saturdays. Former services are also on the site. Please feel free to share our services with friends and family.

LEARNING IS ONLINE

Sunday school for children is available on our St. John’s Family and Friends Facebook group. Jen Wentworth provides a lesson every week that focuses upon the Gospel that can be used by families with their children. Mid-week, Jen also posts ideas for **crafts, puzzles and activities** for children. Note: this Facebook group is “closed” so that we can monitor who is on it while feeling safe in posting pictures of our children. Just send a request through Facebook to join the group and (if we know you) it will be approved!

Confirmation is online through Zoom. Meetings are normally on Sunday mornings. For more information, contact Pastor Krommes at c.krommes@verizon.net.

Sunday morning adult classes are online. **Sunday Morning Book Club** meets each Sunday at 10:00 a.m. via WebEx. Contact Aimee Hillegas at AHILLEGAS@comcast.net to get connected. **Faith Life** is also meeting via Zoom. To join that group, contact Jack Ertell at jertell@comcast.net.

Wednesday Evening Bible Study is online through Zoom and the telephone. Beginning at 7 p.m., this group explores the Gospel for the coming weekend, supports one another and prays together. Contact Pastor Krommes at c.krommes@verizon.net for the Zoom connection.

MEETINGS ARE ONLINE

Our Congregational Council and Committees are using Zoom to gather for meetings and to continue our ministry of living, growing and sharing in God’s love.

The 12-Step Groups are meeting online. For information about specific times, please connect with Maryanne Mara at (484) 995-6455.

From the Director of Music:

Music is well said to be the speech of angels

In these difficult days of social distancing and virtual worship we miss the joy of singing together. This poem by James Montgomery, 1771-1854, reminds us of music's role in the Christian story. "He was editor of the *Sheffield Iris* (1796-1827), a newspaper that sometimes espoused radical causes. Montgomery was imprisoned briefly when he printed a song that celebrated the fall of the Bastille and again when he described a riot in Sheffield that reflected unfavorably on a military commander. He also protested against slavery, the lot of boy chimney sweeps, and lotteries. Associated with Christians of various persuasions, Montgomery supported missions and the British Bible Society. Some critics judge his hymn texts to be equal in quality to those of Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley."

Bert Polman. Excerpted from Hymnary.com

Songs of praise the angels sang,
heaven with alleluias rang,
when creation was begun,
when God spoke and it was done.

Songs of praise awoke the morn
when the Prince of Peace was born;
songs of praise arose when he
captive led captivity.

Heaven and earth must pass away;
songs of praise shall crown that day:
God will make new heavens and earth;
songs of praise shall hail their birth.

And shall Christians fail to sing
Till on earth Christ come as King?
No; the Church delights to raise
Psalms and hymns and songs of praise.

Saints below, with heart and voice,
still in songs of praise rejoice;
learning here, by faith and love,
songs of praise to sing above.

Hymns of glory, songs of praise,
Father, unto thee we raise,
Jesu, glory unto thee,
with the Spirit, ever be.

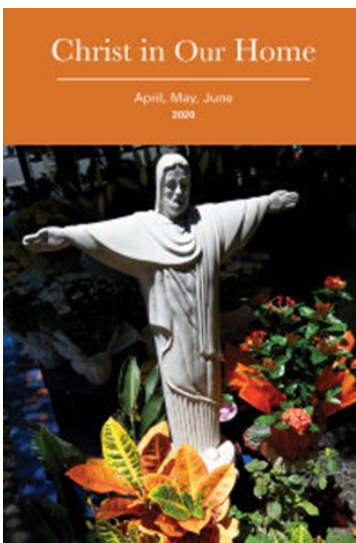


Looking forward to the day, coming soon, when we return to singing our praises in community.

Tom Snyder, Director of Music

Are You Missing "Christ in Our Home"?

Our spring daily devotional booklet arrived a few weeks before the quarantine began and many people were unable to pick them up at worship. If you would like one mailed to you, please contact Sonya Sowards, our Parish Administrator at (610) 933-3947 or office@stjohnphoenixville.org.



The Sunday Morning Book Club

is taking advantage of virtual meetings to check in with each other, share fellowship, and even talk about the books they are reading! We are meeting on WebEx on Sunday mornings from 10-11 a.m. We will be reading and discussing "The Clockmaker's Daughter" by Kate Morton during the month of May. Contact Jean at deherb@juno.com if you would like to join us so we can send you an invitation to the virtual event.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

If you **MUST** enter the building, please wipe down all surfaces with which you come in contact before leaving. Cleaning supplies are provided throughout the building. Thank you for keeping us all healthy!

From the Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries:

Spring is the season of hope for me. Hope that my allergies will not be so bad this year. The hopeful anticipation of summer sunshine and warmth. The hope that the strawberry bed will produce a bountiful supply of berry deliciousness. And this spring the hope of getting to worship together again soon.

Unfortunately, the hopeful anticipation of a return to Sunday School will not happen until next fall. With schools being closed to physical learning until the end of the academic year, so too shall be the children's Sunday School. I will continue to send out family Sunday School lessons through to the end of May.

The next big question on everyone's mind is VBS scheduled for June. At this time, we have not made a final decision regarding VBS. We are hoping to go on as planned, but like you are awaiting further information on the opening of essential businesses and the lifting of stay-at-home orders. For now, assume VBS will go on, and if that should change you will see it announced.

Your goal this month is to stay hopeful. Hopefully anticipate the time when can once again physically be together.

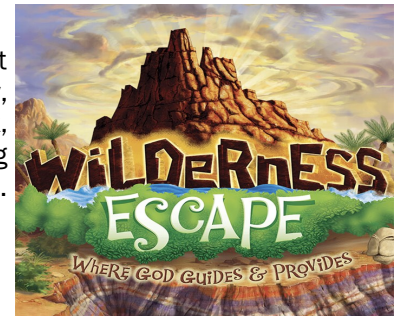
Don't forget to stay in touch with St. John's via the Facebook St. John's Family and Friends page. For those with Twitter: @MissJenDCYFM and on Instagram: missjendcyfm. All are set as private so please request to follow these accounts.

God Bless and Happy Easter,

Jen Wentworth

VBS: Wilderness Escape

As of this newsletter, we are still hoping to hold VBS in June. Please keep an eye out for future announcements about this program. Vacation Bible School begins Monday, June 15th at 9 a.m. through at 12 noon on Friday, June 19th. Forms are in the narthex, on the website, on top of the mailboxes in Kley Hall, or can be obtained by emailing office@stjohnphoenixville.org. Children aged 11 or older can sign up to be helpers. (They will need to fill out the form too.)



This year Vacation Bible School will have us journeying with Moses!

VBS Staff Helpers Needed!

If you have completed 5th grade we need your help at VBS! If you are an adult who has mornings free, we need your help! If you are in junior/senior high school or home from college, we need your help! Every year, we need about 60 staff volunteers to make our VBS the best it can be. Please consider giving your time to this important ministry for children as a VBS staff member. Please speak Jen Wentworth to apply. Applications are due ASAP for planning purposes.

Afternoon Adventures is back! Afternoon Adventures will take place June 15th-19th from 12 noon to 5:30 p.m. for children ages five and above. This day camp is designed to reach out to those children who, because of their childcare needs, have been unable to participate in VBS. We'll play, swim, learn a little, make crafts, and generally have a great time. If you are interested in this program for your child, complete that portion of the registration form and include the \$100 registration fee. Also, if your child is not a member of the Phoenixville YMCA, there will be an additional fee which pays for a week swim pass at the YMCA. You can use the VBS form to register for Afternoon Adventures.

The planning has begun for setting up a Moses' worthy oasis and we **need your help**.

~**To give:** We need **cereal boxes and shoe boxes** un-collapsed to turn into rocks. They can be put on the stage in Kley Hall.

~**To borrow:** During the VBS (June 15-19th), do you have **big wicker baskets, colorful blankets, throw rugs, fake trees and bushes, or large pieces of solid colored or white fabric/sheets** that we could borrow?

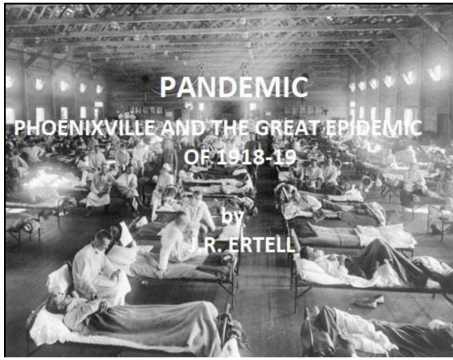
~**To donate your time:**

~Paper Mache Party- date and time to be determined

~**May 30th**- Help put together our decorations for VBS in Kley Hall. Be prepared to paint, create rocks, palm trees, and other oasis necessities. The work will start at 9 a.m. with the end time yet to be determined.

~**June 15th-19th**- adult helpers needed for games, snacks, and grade level groups

Please see Jen Wentworth or email her at wentworthj@stjohnphoenixville.org if you can help with any of these needs.



Phoenixville's Last Pandemic

Living through a pandemic is a first for most of us, but we are certainly not the first to do so. In March 2019 Jack Ertell wrote a timely article for the Historical Society of the Phoenixville Area about the 1918 influenza pandemic and how it affected our community. For a full copy of the article, contact Sonya Sowards at (610) 933-3947 or office@stjohnphoenixville.org.

Here's some excerpts:

"The great influenza pandemic began in the early spring of 1918 and took over a year to run its course. . . . '[T]he Great War' was to see the deaths of sixteen million people. In comparison, estimates of deaths from the influenza pandemic range from fifty to one hundred million people with perhaps a fifth of the world's population infected. . . . At the time, viruses had not been identified and the influenza was believed to be a bacterial infection. Viruses were not isolated until 1933, the first vaccine developed in the late 1930s and only first available to the public in 1946.

Board of Health Rulings

Public and private schools closed for another week.

Closed all churches until further notice.

Closed all soda water fountains.

No ice cream to be eaten in stores or ice cream parlors. Ice cream to be carried home.

The common drinking cup cannot be used in manufacturing establishments.

Bonfires forbidden, except between the hours of 4 and 5 p. m. each day.

The streets in the business section ordered flushed.

The Burgess requested to enforce the anti-spitting ordinance.

The Health Officer and Milk and Meat Inspector will assist the police in making arrests for spitting on the sidewalk.



To Prevent Influenza!

Do not take any person's breath. Keep the mouth and teeth clean. Avoid those that cough and sneeze. Don't visit poorly ventilated places. Keep warm, get fresh air and sunshine. Don't use common drinking cups, towels, etc. Cover your mouth when you cough and sneeze. Avoid Worry, Fear and Fatigue. Stay at home if you have a cold. Walk to your work or office. In sick rooms wear a gauze mask like in illustration.

Generally believed at the time to have started in Europe [its origin in Spain is still debated] . . . It reached around the globe through trade and commerce. In the United States, it was believed that crews of merchant and military vessels returning from Europe brought the disease . . .

Scholars believe that censorship by both sides during [World War I] sought to minimize the impact of the epidemic.

Approximately a third of the population of the United States was infected with about six hundred and seventy-five thousand deaths. The infection struck people of all ages and in all areas . . . although urban areas more heavily.

. . . . There were no known effective medicines against influenza. Magazines and newspapers published ads for all sorts of products purporting to help prevent contracting the flu. Some doctors prescribed heavy doses of aspirin, then considered a 'wonder drug,' to relieve the fever and muscle ache. Suggestions have been made that some infected persons died from the high doses of aspirin prescribed, often as high as thirty grams daily. Today the recommended daily limit for aspirin is four grams!

. . . . By October of 1918, cities and towns began to take action to discourage public gatherings. . . . Some communities were placed under quarantine. In Phoenixville, a meeting of the borough council on October 8 gave special powers to the local Board of Health to impose rules and regulations within the borough. . . . The major concern was how rapidly people were becoming infected and how easily the influenza spread. Public gatherings of all types were discouraged and in some cases prohibited. The local chapter of the Red Cross began making surgical masks for people to wear out in the public.



Making Surgical Masks

Phoenixville's Last Pandemic

continued from prior page

The Phoenixville Hospital, even with the help of local volunteers, became quickly overwhelmed. . . . By mid-October, Phoenixville's public schools were closed for a two-week period. . . . During the closure, a group of teachers at the high school on Nutt Road organized a nursery at the school to take care of the children whose parents were sick and hospitalized. . . . Communities like Phoenixville were often hampered during the worst of the epidemic as many had lost some of their physicians to military service. Almost thirty percent of the doctors in the United States had either been drafted or enlisted in the army or served in the navy. Additionally, many nurses had left the public health sector for military service during the war. . . .

The devastating influenza pandemic of 1918-19 became a footnote to the history of that era over the years. Despite having infected millions and producing incredible death statistics in the United States and around the world, the pandemic was largely forgotten until recent decades when new strains of influenza have aroused public concern. Although there have been very serious strains of the flu, none match that of 1918-19 in terms of loss of life. Medical science, preventative measures, and the resistance that people have inherited have worked to greatly reduce the impact. It was an event that should not be forgotten."

**INFLUENZA
GERM KILLER**
Disinfect Air Passages
WITH
Smoko
TOBACCOLESS
CIGARETTES

A few puffs and good-bye Grippe.
No Tobacco—No Dope.
The smoke you inhale carries a
healing and medicating disinfectant
which penetrates the air passages
that cannot be reached in any other
way.
At all druggists, 15c the box.

"Protection" Against Influenza

Support Our Suppliers



With nicer spring weather coming, thoughts often turn to flowers, plants, and gardening. After a quick trip to a greenhouse, we can then get busy in our yards. The following businesses supply the beautiful flowers and plants for St. John's. Please consider supporting them during and after this pandemic. All three businesses are also on Facebook—check their pages for timely updates.

Beth Ann's Flowers, 426 Main Street, Royersford, (610) 948-8999, www.bethannflowers.com, supplies fresh flower arrangements for our altar throughout the year. Although they are closed now to walk-in traffic, they are open and taking orders for no-contact local deliveries and curbside pick-ups. Call Beth Ann or Megan from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday-Friday.

Miller's Greenhouses, 806 Sanatoga Road, Pottstown, (610) 495-6682, www.millersgh.com, provides both Christmas poinsettias and Easter lilies for St. John's. Dave and April Miller are 5th generation owners, selling ornamental and seasonal plants, as well as vegetable plants. They are open 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., but for everyone to stay safer, please call ahead with your order and it will be delivered to you in your car when you come to pick it up.

Renninger's Farm, 924 Second Avenue, Royersford, (610) 948-3288, www.renningersfarm.com, supplies beautiful red geraniums for Pentecost. Farmers Jay and Carol are also observing social distancing practices, asking that only one adult per family visit at this time, that no children visit, and that the animals are off limits for now. They have flowers, herbs, succulents, and vegetable plants now and will have fresh fruits and vegetables later on in the season. They are open 10 a.m.-6 p.m. most days.

Changes in Pastor Krommes' Retirement Plans and Party Date

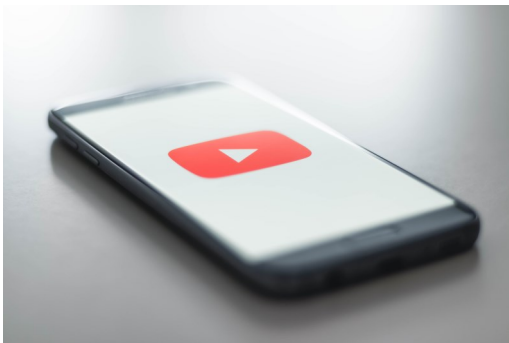
At the April 13th Church Council meeting, our Executive Committee recommended that the retirement of Pastor Cynthia Krommes be postponed from June until August due to the COVID-19 quarantine. The Council unanimously agreed with their recommendation. Pastor Krommes shared that having a good "good-bye" with the congregation is important to her, the people of St. John's and the process of transition. She is able and willing to serve. It is hoped that an interim pastor will be in place shortly after August 16th.

The Retirement Party that was scheduled for May 17th at Rivercrest will now take place on August 16th, again at Rivercrest. A letter will be sent to the congregation and everyone who received an invitation letting them know about the change. In the meantime, let us do all we can to prevent the spread of the virus in order to return to our normal routines as soon as possible

Our ASP team received information that for the first time in the 51-year of Appalachia Service Project their summer volunteer hosting will be suspended until August 1st. This means our St. John's group will not be able to on their planned mission trip in July. Everyone is disappointed, including our volunteers and especially the families and communities that would have benefited from their presence. While our team will not be able to be present, the mission of ASP continues and will include:

- Continuing home repair and new home construction in select counties where they can safely perform those tasks and have funding to support the work with existing staff and/or subcontractors.
- Donating thousands of face masks, latex gloves, disposable coveralls, first aid kits and cleaning products to local healthcare providers serving Tennessee and Virginia.
- Supporting the community contacts who distribute food as the economic impact of this crisis takes hold in Central Appalachia.
- Sharing any assets that ASP has available this summer with our regional partners and communities in need.

ASP has asked us to remain creative with them—to join them in thinking of new ways to be the hands and feet of Christ in Appalachia and in our own communities this summer. A trip is already being planned for 2021 and the monies raised from this year's fundraising will be used for the 2021 trip. Please continue to collect cans and to support our fundraising efforts. Thank you!



Worship at Home

The Worship & Music Committee met virtually on Zoom on March 31st and will meet again on May 5th. Although we can't worship together in person during the pandemic, the planning continues! We are so blessed to have staff members and volunteers who have adapted to filming our services in order for them to be put on YouTube. Pastor Krommes has learned to ignore the camera while giving meaningful sermons and presiding over the rest of the service, Tom Snyder and Jen Wentworth have ably led us in hymn singing, and John Quinn has adapted and changed his planned organ music to preludes, postludes, and accompaniments on the grand piano. Electronics Team member

Bill Schoellkopf has tweaked the audio portion of the recordings, making sure we hear everyone equally and Dale Herbranson has taken on the roles of videographer, director, and editor of the videos, learning more each week. Most of the adult choir keeps in touch by email, sending well wishes as well as jokes. Tom posts messages to the choirs—young and older—on Facebook. Everyone misses singing and ringing together, but we know that we will make beautiful music again once the crisis is over.

For those of you with computers or smart phones, we hope that you have taken advantage of watching and participating in the services on YouTube and have found them to be meaningful in your faith journey. (For those of you without computer access, please let Sonya Sowards know that you would like to receive at-home worship materials if you're not already receiving them.) We anxiously await the time we can physically worship together at St. John's. Pray. Be well. Stay safe.



For many of our children and youth at St. John's, Summer is just not Summer without a week at Bear Creek. Here is their latest communication on Summer 2020:

Our Continued Response to COVID-19

As our world goes through unprecedented times, we have been thinking about you and dreaming of welcoming your children and families to camp. Our year-round staff, summer staff, and board of directors have been praying- praying for our collective health, safety, and happiness; praying that this will resolve well and quickly so we can return together to our home away from home this summer.

As camp leadership, we have an obligation to prepare responsibly for the summer of 2020 and to communicate with you about those plans. While our plans are evolving and ever-changing, we want to share with you both where we stand today and some insight into our approach. While we are never able to know what the future holds, and this feels more apparent now than ever, we have always been committed to maintaining the mission of Bear Creek Camp of strengthening individuals and communities through experiences of exploration, celebration, and growth in God's creation.

One of the most helpful resources I've found during this time has been some tips from psychologist Doreen Marshall for taking care of personal mental health in the face of uncertainty:

- Separate what is in your control from what is not.
- Challenge yourself to stay in the present.
- Stay connected and reach out if you need more support.
- Get outside in nature.

I'd like to use the tips above to frame the following information about the summer.

Separate what is in your control from what is not.

Will Summer Camp at Bear Creek Camp happen this summer?

We certainly hope so! We hope for the best, and still we realize that we must simultaneously plan for a variety of scenarios. We're utilizing the best information we have from government sources, Lutheran Outdoor Ministries and the American Camp Association. At this point, we feel there are enough reasons to continue to plan for the summer together. If permitted to proceed, we know the summer of 2020 will be the most important camp season in our children's lives. New levels of stress, anxiety, and lack of social connections will necessitate the genuine face-to-face interactions, time in the outdoors, silly fun, and community that only camp can provide.

Challenge yourself to stay in the present.

One of the most important skills we learn and teach at Bear Creek Camp is the ability to think on our feet and plan for the unexpected. So while we continue to be present, we are also strategizing around a variety of possible outcomes for the summer.

- If we need to start late, we will make every effort to adjust.
- If we need to run a shorter season, we will make every effort to adjust.
- If we need to adapt specific programming (such as off-site trips), we will adjust.
- If camp must be canceled or we need to make changes to our summer program, we will work to rebuild BCC looking forward to the fall, winter, and spring retreat season and summer 2021.
- If public authorities permit us to hold camp at a time when regular life has resumed, but the virus is not completely contained, we will exhaust all efforts and resources to implement the best medical practices to keep our campers and families safe.

Stay connected and reach out if you need more support.

Cultivating community is one of the most cherished values of Bear Creek Camp. Having only been here a few months, I have seen for myself that while community is important during the time here at camp, these life-long friendships are even stronger beyond the camp gates. We are here for you and your family. Connect with us, share how we can support you and your family.

Thank you for your on-going partnership. We will continue to share more as we know more. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions.

Your opinions, thoughts, and ideas matter; please get in touch with whatever is on your mind. I hope you all have some opportunity to Get outside in nature and I look forward to when we can all do that together here at BCC.

In Christ,

Collin Grooms
Executive Director

Confirmation Retreat

The Cape May Confirmation retreat scheduled for May 2nd-4th was canceled and will not take place this year. Confirmation for our ninth graders which is scheduled for May 31st will most likely be postponed until August 9th at 9 a.m. St. John's is following recommendations from the Pennsylvania Governor.



Attention Parents of College and High School Seniors: We are gathering a list of seniors for publication in the newsletter and for commemoration during worship. Please let us know the student's name, where they are graduating from, and feel free to send a picture of the graduate as well. Please email this information to office@stjohnphoenixville.org or send a note to our Parish Administrator, Sonya Sowards.

People of God Involved in God's Work

May Schedule

Acolytes

All TBD

Altar Guild

- 24 Betty Hans & Elena Wallace
- 31 Jean Herbranson & Barbara Eng

Assisting Ministers

- 24 Sandra Zimmermann
- 31 Confirmands

Bread Baking

All TBD

Communion Assistants/Lectors

- 24 Nancy Cressman & Erica Lucas
- 31 Aimee Hillegas (L) & Pat Lucas or Confirmands

Counters

- 24 Jack Ertell, Lilly Khan, Imtiaz Khan Lawrence
- 31 Mary Heiser, Mike & Cathy Kahl

Greeters

- 24 Kelly LeMarbe, Denise Longbine
- 31 Mike & Cathy Kahl, Jennifer Drewes

Lock-Up

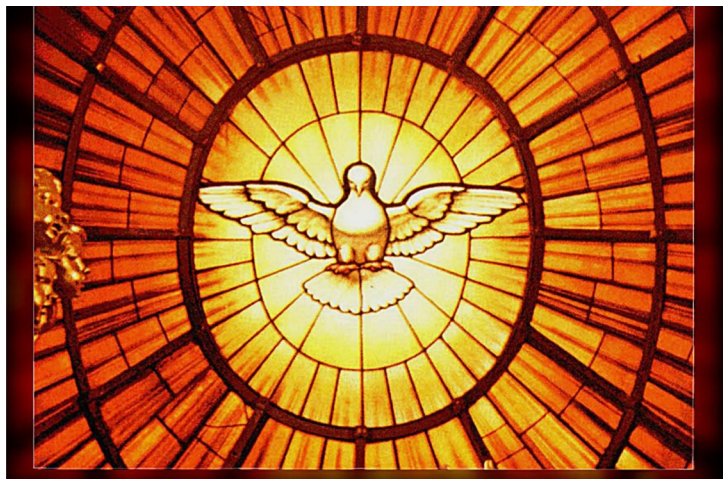
All TBD

Ushers

- 24 Donna Anderson, Paul Miller, Bev Rote, Luanne Bindschusz
- 31 Erica Lucas, John Westerman, Beth Williams, Debbe Welsh

Summary Report as of March 31, 2020

	Monthly		Year-to-Date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income:				
Envelope Giving	\$ 32,223	\$ 20,478	\$ 96,671	\$ 86,177
Other Income	3,987	3,832	11,960	21,971
Total Income	\$ 36,210	\$ 24,310	\$ 108,631	\$ 108,148
Expenses	\$ 37,235	\$ 32,307	\$ 111,706	\$ 102,876
Income (Deficit)	(1,025)	(7,997)	(3,075)	5,272



Dear St. John's Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your generous gift of \$150 to Evangelical Lutheran Church in America ministries through ELCA Good Gifts. This is a season of reflection and sacrifice, but it is also a season of hope. Your Good Gift is a very good gift indeed. With resources such as seedlings and seminary courses, vaccinations and vegetable gardens, Bibles and blankets, you're equipping God's people—around the world and around the corner—with what they need to live abundant lives. You are creating new beginnings. Thank you for sharing the hope of a new life and the fullness of Christ's joy.

In God's abundant grace,
Rachel Wind
Executive for Development
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Dear Dr. Krommes:

Thank you for expanding access to Orion's services! In 2019 we saw a 43% increase in neighbors requesting assistance to secure life's basic essentials of shelter, food, transportation and access to medical care. Your commitment makes it possible to provide critical services to 300+ households each month. We are honored to have your support and will use your gift of \$1,570 to assist our most vulnerable neighbors in their time of need.

With gratitude,
Kris Keller
Executive Director
Orion Communities

Dear Friends at St. John's:

You are changing lives! Thank you so much for your generous donation of \$500. Your contribution makes it possible for us to continue to provide free daycare and support for low-income, single parents who are pursuing their full-time education. Your kindness is greatly appreciated in these trying times.

With gratitude,
Wendy McKeon
Executive Director
Mom's House of Greater Philadelphia

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
March 9, 2020**

Attendees:							
Pastor Krommes	P	Sonya Sowards	P	Mitch Reading	P	Dale Herbranson	P
Stephen Drewes	P	Kelly Gallagher	P	Janet Gerner	P	Brian Greenwald	P
Dick Kunsch	E	Pam Naylor	E	Bobbi Riley	P	Donna Searchfield	P
Don Titus	E	Sandra Zimmermann	P				
Guests:							
Tom Snyder	P	Jen Wentworth	P				

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Mitch Reading and members shared highs and lows.

Meeting minutes from the February 10, 2020 Council Meeting (date correction) were reviewed.

**Motion by Stephen Drewes , Second by Donna Searchfield to accept the minutes as corrected;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Meeting minutes from the February 23, 2020 Congregational Meeting were reviewed.

**Motion by Donna Searchfield , Second by Sandra Zimmermann to accept the minutes;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Meeting minutes from the February 23, 2020 Council Organizational Meeting were reviewed.

**Motion by Sandra Zimmermann , Second by Dale Herbranson to accept the minutes;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Staff Reports

- T. Snyder's Report – No council action
- J. Quinn's Report - No council action
- J. Wentworth's Report – No council action
- Pastor's Report
 - Desserts are needed for the Community Lent Service at St. John's on March 12, 2020. Stephen Drewes will contribute. Tom Snyder will e-mail the Adult Choir to see if they can help. Also need clean-up help after the service.

**Motion by Dale Herbranson , Second by Sandra Zimmermann to accept the staff reports;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Finance Committee and Income & Expense Report

- Finance Committee met on February 25, 2020 but no minutes.
- No discussion on the Income & Expense Report.

**Motion by Stephen Drewes , Second by Donna Searchfield to accept the Income & Expense Report;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Stewardship Committee – No Meeting
- Electronics Committee from February 16, 2020
 - Looking into expanding Office 365 License
 - They are testing methods and technology needed to record sermons
- Christian Education and Youth and Family Committee from March 4, 2020
 - May investigate new name for combined committee
- Property Committee from March 2, 2020
 - **Motion by Mitch Reading, second by Stephen Drewes, to allow Property to repurpose the display cabinet in the hall outside the office for more current plaque and award items.
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

- Pastor McMullan's name misspelled on his picture in the Eisenhower Room. Bobbi Riley will get a corrected name plate.
- Tentative date for the presentation of the Property Condition Assessment Report to Council to be at the May 11, 2020 meeting.
- Worship and Music Committee from March 3, 2020
 - Correction: Easter Breakfast at 9:00am not 9:00pm
 - Easter Activities postcard to be created and distributed
- Welcome Team Committee from February 17, 2020
 - There will not be a spring "WAY". No brunch on April 26, 2020.
- Social Ministry Committee from Feb 12, 2020 and March 4, 2020
 - **Motion from committee to form a Team from representatives of Social Ministry, Fellowship and Property, to evaluate "compliance requirements" needed for our kitchen. Council passed the committee motion with no objections or abstentions.**
- Fellowship Committee – No Meeting
- Columbarium Committee.– No Meeting
- Executive Committee – No Meeting

**Motion by Dale Herbranson , Second by Sandra Zimmerman to accept committee reports;
Motion Passed with no objections or abstentions.**

Old Business

- Mitch Reading and Dick Kunsch met with Pastor McMullan to discuss the Interim Pastor process. We will need to put together a Transition Team of 5-7 people to oversee this step. Suggest we create the team in April. Need a Job Description for this team. Pastor McMullan asked for a copy of our Strategic Action Plan from last year. The Council was in favor of giving this to Pastor McMullan, but Mitch will first contact Kairos to be sure we have received their final report. A suggestion was made to include what current actions our church has taken to the SAP in the report we give to Pastor McMullan.

New Business

- Response to the Coronavirus Situation
 - Follow the recommendations issued by the Bishop's office.
 - Implement alternative forms of Passing-the-Peace; Sign Language, Chest Tap, etc.
 - Discontinue Communion Intinction at Early Light.
 - Communion Bread servers to wear gloves.
 - Easter Egg hunt and Pancake Breakfast still "on" for now.
 - Extra church cleaning requested.
- Unwanted trash and recyclable materials being left in the kitchen.
 - Reviewed our Recycle Responsibilities mandated by Schuylkill Township
 - Paper to the Retriever Bins
 - Comingled recyclables to the designated collection bin
 - Lawn and garden waste to the Borough or Township collection sites
 - Items left in the kitchen not specified for an upcoming event will be disposed of immediately.
 - PLEASE spread the message to help keep our kitchen neat.

Motion by Bobbi Riley , Second by Stephen Drewes, to adjourn; Motion passed.

The meeting ended at 8:30pm with the Lord's Prayer.
The next meeting will be April 20, 2020 beginning at 7:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Bobbi Riley

Jacobson Newsletter

April 2020

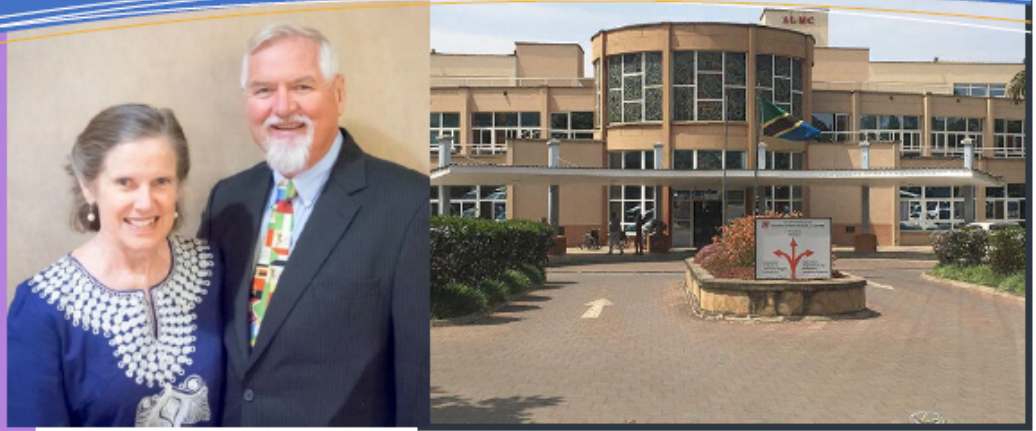
COVID19 at ALMC

Tanzania has 20 cases and 1 death as of today. ALMC is on alert and has instituted new measures for handwashing, reducing the flow of relatives in the hospital and being sure that staff are practicing protective measures.

Yet, we from the west, worry that there is not the same sense of urgency that we feel. More needs to be done! We realize that if the virus behaves like it has in the rest of the world, it will infect over half of the population and cause hundreds of thousands of deaths.

And yet, for many in the Tanzanian culture, there is often a sense of resignation. Perhaps it is a sense of resignation born from familiarity with disaster from genocide to famine to HIV to daily carnage on the roads.

As I contemplate the impact of COVID in Africa, I wonder if Africans might better survive this newest catastrophe better than we in the west. Their familiarity with not being in control has deepened their faith and reliance on God while the we in the west are being devastated, not only by a virus, but the realization that we are not in control of our own destinies.



Our Lives in the Times of COVID19

Well, physically, we are currently sheltering-in at our home in Minnesota. Our hearts are split apart between the pain and suffering in both our homes, Tanzania and Minnesota.

Our year has been hectic indeed and compounded now by this pandemic. We were in Tanzania for much of January to mid March. We were scheduled to return to Minnesota on Palm Sunday to do some speaking, volunteering, and getting ready for our daughter's wedding in May, which has now been postponed.

As the pandemic grew from isolation in China to become a true pandemic in March, our work and plans changed drastically in Tanzania. Plans for a fistula camp in our Lutheran work in Juba, South Sudan were cancelled. A long planned Pediatric conference being put on in Arusha was next to fall. Our Cancer Care Symposium at Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre soon followed. The countries surrounding Tanzania started closing borders and airlines were cancelling flights. So we move our departure up two weeks and caught one of the last flights out of Arusha for the US.

Back in Minnesota, we are like many of you, sheltering-in. But for us, it is particularly difficult as we want to be in solidarity with our team in Arusha and also feel we needed to be back in the US for family and health reasons. Our days are surprisingly full as Mark continues to be working with the team in Arusha as well as consulting with others working in Africa. Together, we are intentional about exercise, being kind to one another, and learning to be social through virtual gatherings and worship.

Our children are well. Sarah and Stéphane have postponed their wedding and working from home in cape town. Laura and James are working at home in New York City and Katherine with us here in Minnesota. All our daughters are in public health roles contributing to the struggle against COVID19.

Reconciliation Lutheran Primary Health Care Clinic

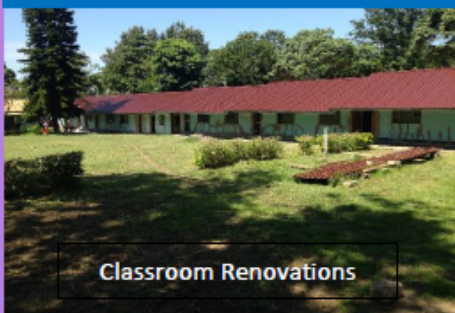
The RLPHCC is now gearing up to respond to the COVID pandemic. It is hard to imagine the impact to come upon the Referendum area where we serve, where the population is densely packed, and there are no government services for health, water, or electricity. How might we possibly respond as more and more people are infected and desperate for care? We alone have few resources to address an epidemic and the government is likely to be limited in its response. But yet we will try to serve.

We had planned for a week of fistula surgery the end of March which was sadly cancelled as the pandemic gradually shut down international travel.

We are still trying to complete the construction of a small maternity unit attached to the clinic. Before COVID, we had seen and are planning to respond to the needs of mothers needing to deliver safely at our clinic. Gratefully this continues for as long as permitted by the authorities in South Sudan. One day, we will indeed fully serve the women and children of Referendum.



Renovated Dining Hall



Classroom Renovations

"While optimism makes us live as if someday soon things will get better for us, hope frees us from the need to predict the future and allows us to live in the present with deep trust that God will never leave us alone." Henri Nouwen

Ministries, Construction, and Consults

For the half year BC (Before Covid), we were both engaged in many wonderful ministries and service in Tanzania and the US. Linda has been working on getting accredited as a sexual assault volunteer advocate to serve here in St. Paul. She's completed a rigorous course in preparation and now awaits the outcome of her background checks.

Mark's been busy at ALMC with work on long term expansion plans, the construction of the School of Nursing campus, and keeping the Hospice and Palliative Care Program alive and funded with wonderful partners mainly based in Denver. Consulting has taken him to Bangladesh with Lutheran Health Care Bangladesh, back to Juba a couple of times for our clinic there, and more recently to Rwanda to consult with Alight (formerly called American Refugee Committee) on introducing Emergency Medicine in an organized way into three camps as well as trying to establish palliative care in these camps in which the population has gradually aged and now are dying during the long sojourn of waiting to travel home.

COVID19

I think that Africans have much to teach those of us in the West about remaining hopeful and depending on God even as catastrophe seems to be about to overwhelm us.

Finding ourselves in this unprecedented threat to our common physical, mental, and economic health, we like you are staying home. For Mark, being able to help as a health advisor to Alight for their programs in Sudan and Somalia and to work with our Lutheran team in Juba, gives purpose and produces gratitude for the opportunity to be in the mix of making a difference.

All three of these countries are not only ill prepared for a pandemic like COVID19, but they are also very new and fragile governments which have limited responses to the epidemic at their command. Alight country teams provide some health care for a million and a half in Sudan and half a million in Somalia. Our Lutheran Clinic in Juba, while small, is nearest health facility for a couple hundred thousand people.

We as Christians, are called to be both voices of hope and servants in doing whatever we can possibly do to mitigate this coming tsunami and to work for resilience in recovery.

Blessings,
Mark and Linda

May 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 10:15am Holy Communion 11am Confirmation	27 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	28 5:30pm Stewardship	29 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study	30 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon	1	2
3 10:15am Holy Communion 11am Confirmation	4 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	5 10:15am Staff 7:30pm Worship & Music	6 3pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study 7pm Christian Education	7 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon	8	9
10 10:15am Holy Communion 11am Confirmation	11 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	12	13 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study 8pm Adult Choir	14 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon	15 St. Peter's lunch	16
17 9am Electronics 10:15am Holy Communion 11am Confirmation	18 Circle deadline 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Stephen Ministry 7pm Welcoming Team	19	20 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study 8pm Adult Choir	21 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon 8:15pm Naranon Support	22	23 5pm Evening Light
24 8:30am Children's Choir Rehearsal 9am Holy Communion 11am Confirmation 11:30am St. John's Crafty Folks	25 11am Alanon Family Group 6:30pm Kiwanis Board 7pm Finance Committee	26 10:30am WELCA 5:30pm Stewardship	27 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study 8pm Adult Choir	28 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon 7:15pm Adult Handbells	29	30 9am VBS decoration making 5pm Evening Light
31 Pentecost - Confirmation (alternate date August 9 th) 8:30am Children's Choir Rehearsal 9am Holy Communion 11:30am St. John's Crafty Folks	1 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	2 10:15am Staff 12:30pm PACA 4:30pm PACS Fundraising Committee 7:30pm Worship & Music	3 3pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon 7pm Bible Study 7pm Christian Education 8pm Adult Choir	4 10am Mom's Monthly Mingle 5:30pm Women's AA/Alanon 7pm Naranon 7:15pm Adult Handbells	5	6 5pm Evening Light



Give with your whole heart.

Did you know? Many employers offer the ability to have your donations deducted from your paycheck and then forward those donations on to us. Some, such as Vanguard, offer a generous match so that your donation has the potential of a nice increase. Contact your Human Resources Department to see if this is a possibility for you.

A hawthorn a moon beam
All in the month of May
Sweet is the blossom
Soft is the moon
May brings winter's chill to an end
Sweet May's smiling face
Welcomes one and all
See I bring hope joy
For sweet is the scent
Of the hawthorn
Bathed in moonlight's beam.

Margaret Walker

Donating Stock to St. John's

One of the many ways to financially support St. John's is through the donation of stock. Donating appreciated stock will benefit the church and provide a potential tax benefit to the donor. For stock that has been held for more than a year and has appreciated in value, one can take a charitable deduction based on the stock's fair market value on the day of donation. Additionally, making such a donation will avoid capital gains taxes on the increased value of the stock.

If interested in donating stock to St. John's, contact our Church Treasurer, Shirley Platzer, at (484) 938-7763.

May 2020 – Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 Beth Williams's birthday Carter Niness's birthday Randall Carr's birthday Richard and Michelle Bader's anniversary Samantha Schumacher's birthday	27 Brian Becker's birthday	28 Kay Mann's birthday Morgan Klotzbach's birthday	29 Jason and Tracy Stewart's anniversary Jason Mara's birthday Ramona Moreland's birthday	30 Jason Birdsell's birthday Joe Themens's birthday Stephen Drewes's birthday	1 Erin Schaible's birthday	2 Linda Landis's birthday Mario Walls's birthday
3 Donald Carr's birthday	4 Allan Moreland's birthday	5 Donna Thompson's birthday Madelyn Hicks's birthday	6 Allen and Beth Kramer's anniversary Jeanne Schanzenbach's birthday Nolan Blain's birthday Ryan Younker's birthday Scott Levan and Tammy Klotzbach-Levan's anniversary	7 Anna Gerner's birthday Charles and Paula Weiss's anniversary Joan Benne's birthday Rosa Gerner's birthday	8 Jeff Schanzenbach's birthday	9
10 Matthew and Jessica Cratty's anniversary	11 Donna Searchfield's birthday Emily Birdsell's birthday Max Strunk's birthday Sandra Zimmermann's birthday Todd Stong's birthday	12	13 Laura Geiger's birthday	14 John O'Connell and Andrea Hart's anniversary	15 Claudine Niness's birthday Mary Faddis's birthday Nancy Cressman's birthday Nancy Perchalski's birthday Stephanie Bearoff's birthday	16 Mark Blattner's birthday Rebecca Williams's birthday
17	18 Alex Brown's birthday Nicole Dalasio's birthday Robert and Barbara Rambo's anniversary	19 April Liedike's birthday David Frees's birthday Melissa Thompson's birthday Ron Williams's birthday Rosie LaRocca's birthday	20	21 Britta Pekofsky's birthday	22	23 Devon Mensch-Unruh's birthday Pat Lucas's birthday Randall and Karen Carr's anniversary Teddy Wimble's birthday Walt and Dana Deichmann's anniversary
24 Fred and RuthAnn Schell's anniversary Marc and Amber Herbranson's anniversary	25 Greg and Lisa Sandherr's anniversary	26 Emerson Carr's birthday Gavin Moreland's birthday Mark Woelflin's birthday Marti Steiner's birthday Nick Mara's birthday	27 Jim and Teresa Olsen's anniversary	28	29 Eli Smith-Kiser's birthday	30 Justin and Jodi O'Neill's anniversary Stephen and Kimberly DiGioia's anniversary
31 Donald Platzer's birthday Rich Latella and Richard Skoniczin's anniversary Susan Shirk's birthday	1 Dax Kunsch's birthday Dodi Strunk's birthday	2 Dirk Rimrott's birthday Elsa Lucas's birthday Jacob Ehrhart's birthday Paul Miller's birthday	3 Dan Free's birthday Ian Kramer's birthday Mark Wallace's birthday Tyler Speaker's birthday	4 Bill and Sue Starling's anniversary Margaret Yerger's birthday Mitch and Erica Reading's anniversary	5 Derek and Carlla Carr's anniversary	6 Austin Starling's birthday

St. John's Lutheran Church
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Phoenixville, PA 19460
(610) 933-3947

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 E-mail: office@stjohnphoenixville.org

CHURCH STAFF

Lead Pastor:
 The Rev. Dr. Cynthia L. Krommes
Pastoral Associate:
 The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer, Jr.
Director of Music:
 F. Thomas Snyder III
Organist & Pianist:
 John A. Quinn III
**Director of Children,
 Youth & Family Ministries:**
 Jennifer A. Wentworth
Parish Administrator:
 Sonya K. Sowards
Sexton:
 Mark Yanchek, Jr.
Nursery Coordinator:
 Arlene Hudak

CHURCH COUNCIL

President:
 Mitch Reading
Vice President:
 Dale Herbranson
Secretary:
 Bobbi Riley
Treasurer:
 Shirley Platzer
Assistant Treasurer:
 Rose Gatlos
Financial Recording Secretary:
 Mary Heiser
Fund 3 Secretary:
 Kevin Gallagher
Executive Committee:
 Dick Kunsch
 Stephen Drewes
 Bobbi Riley

Other Members of Church Council:
 Sandra Zimmermann
 Brian Greenwald
 Donna Searchfield
 Kelly Gallagher
 Janet Gerner
 Don Titus
 Pam Naylor

Stephen Ministry Leaders:
 Linda Landis — (610) 933-9544
 Lee Dalasio — (610) 454-9884

COMMITTEES

Christian Education:
 Mark Gerner & Teresa Olsen, Co-Chairs
 Kelly Gallagher & Sandra Zimmermann
 Council Reps.

Columbarium:
 Bill Starling, Chair
 Sandra Zimmermann, Council Rep.

Electronics:
 William Schoellkopf, Chair
 Dale Herbranson, Council Rep.

Executive:
 Dale Herbranson, Chair

Fellowship:
 Sandra Zimmermann, Chair
 Pam Naylor, Council Rep.

Finance:
 Jack Ertell, Chair
 Don Titus & Stephen Drewes
 Council Reps.

Property:
 Rick Kramer, Chair
 Bobbi Riley, Council Rep.

Social Ministry:
 Debbe Welsh, Chair
 Janet Gerner, Council Rep.

Stewardship:
 Mike Kahl, Chair
 Dick Kunsch, Council Rep.

Welcoming Team:
 Cathy Kahl, Chair
 Donna Searchfield, Council Rep.

Worship and Music:
 Jean Herbranson, Chair
 Brian Greenwald, Council Rep.

Office Assistants:
 June Henzie
 Beverly Ott Kay Mann
 Joan Carl Pat Renninger
 Dottie Doepping

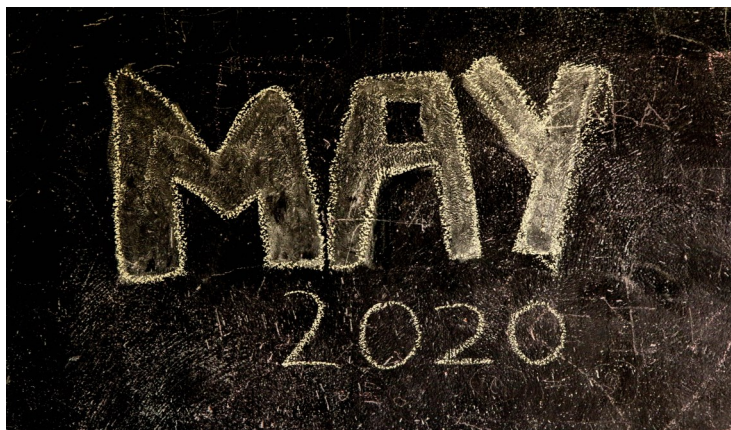
The Circle Editor:
 Sonya K. Sowards



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**St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
355 St. John's Circle
Phoenixville, PA 19460-2582**



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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office hours 9-3 M,T,Th & 9-12 W,F (*barring exceptions*)

please call for appointments with staff members

***A Caring, Sharing, Growing Congregation of the ELCA
Participating in Stephen Ministry***

Worship Schedule

Saturdays

5 p.m. Evening Light with Holy Communion

Sundays

10:15 a.m. Holy Communion
(fall, winter and spring)

9:00 a.m. Holy Communion
(Memorial Day through Labor Day)

THE CIRCLE

