

# The Circle

September 2023



## Master Calendar 2023-24

September 10	Rally Day—faith formation classes resume & Sunday morning service moves to 10:15
September 14	Adult & Children's Handbell rehearsals resume
September 24	10:15 a.m. First Bibles received; classes begin October 1
October 1	4 p.m. Amoroso Strings concert
October 15	9:00 a.m. Lutheran World Relief Backpacks; 5:00 p.m. Crock Pot Cook-Off
October 29	3:00 p.m. Trunk or Treat
October 29	4:00 p.m. Peter Richard Conte, organist, concert
November 3-4	Confirmation Lock-in
November 19	4 p.m. Providence Chamber Orchestra concert
December 3	4 p.m. Philadelphia Handbell Ensemble concert
December 17	10:15 a.m. Christmas pageant
December 24	Christmas Eve services at 4, 7 & 10 p.m.
December 31	No faith formation classes
February 14	7:30 p.m. Ash Wednesday service (ashes to go at 11 a.m.)
February 25	4 p.m. DOPPELFLÖTE concert
March 28	7:30 p.m. Maundy Thursday service
March 29	7:30 p.m. Good Friday service
March 31	Easter services at 8 and 10:15 a.m.; breakfast at 9 a.m.
April 7	4 p.m. Principally Harps concert
April 21	4 p.m. Providence Chamber Orchestra
May 5	ASP car wash; 7 p.m. St. John's Choir & Friends
May 19	Pentecost with confirmation; last faith formation classes
May 26	Sunday morning service time moves to 9 a.m.
June 2	Graduate Sunday
June 17	Vacation Bible School begins



## RALLY DAY!!

September 10<sup>th</sup> is Rally Day! **Our Sunday service moves to 10:15 and faith formation classes resume.** To celebrate being back together after summer travels, we would like to invite everyone to a "coffee hour" from 9:45-10:10 a.m. Faith formation classes will end a few minutes early to allow everyone to enjoy coffee, light snacks and fellowship hosted by our Council.

We are looking for other committees and groups to host on the second Sunday of each month. If you are interested, please contact Sonya.

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Hello! It is a pleasure to be here, and to be writing this article. My name is Pastor Russ Crouthamel, and I'm the newly called Lead Pastor at St. John's. I'd like to use this letter to introduce myself as we start this new chapter in our lives and ministry together as St. John's Lutheran Church.

I grew up in the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod, in Souderton. It took me a few years after I graduated high school to figure out what God was calling me to do, but I eventually got there. That process took me to central Pennsylvania for college, then to Ohio for my time in seminary, and to the Western Iowa Synod for my first pastoral call to a congregation. After my time in Iowa, my family and I moved back to Pennsylvania, but first to Western Pennsylvania before coming back to this synod. I'm happy to be back in this area, and I'm very excited to be a part of St. John's. In the few weeks that I've been here, I've been able to be a part of Vacation Bible School, and I've led worship, have visited a few members of the congregation (with more visits to come), and have begun attending the cycle of meetings in the congregation and the community that help to keep the ministries of St. John's running smoothly. Throughout all of those things, I've been impressed by the welcome that I've received from everyone. I've also been impressed by the way that people at St. John's are committed to serving God in worship and to serving our neighbors in a variety of ways.



I'd like to particularly thank the members of the Call Committee for their service to the congregation during this time of transition. The work that call committees do is always challenging, even at the best of times, and trying to discern God's call for a congregation and for a pastoral candidate during the confusion and upheaval of the COVID-19 pandemic was far from the best of times. The Call Committee did a lot of very good and very hard work during the pastoral transition process. I'm glad for the work that they did, and I'm hopeful that it's work the congregation won't need anyone else to do for quite some time. Members of the Call Committee, thank you for all the work you've done over the last few years.

As we begin this work together, a few people have asked if there's any help that I need, or anything that they can do. There are a few things that I'd ask for, that will help me to be able to be a more effective pastor, and for us to be able to work together. First and foremost, I'd ask that you please pray for me, and for all the staff members at St. John's. Prayer is important, and workers in the church need prayer just as much as everyone else. I've been praying for St. John's and its members, and I'll keep praying for us and our life together.

Another thing you can do, which will help me a lot as I begin, is to help me get to know you. A huge part of pastoral ministry is building relationships, and I'm looking forward to building relationships with the people of St. John's, and to becoming more of a part of this community. I'd be glad to meet you for coffee, or to come and visit you at home, especially if you or a family member needs prayer or would like to talk. I'd also love it if you'd stop by my office during my office hours or to chat before or after worship. (And possibly the simplest thing you can do, but a very important one, is please remind me of your name! I'm working on learning people's names as much and as quickly as I can, but there are a lot of names for me to put with faces.)

The last thing that I'd ask at the outset is this: I know that I will make mistakes in my work as pastor here. When I do make those mistakes, and if and when you have concerns about something that I've said or done, please come and talk with me about it. Direct, open communication is a hugely important part of addressing concerns and conflicts. It may not be an instantaneous ending to every issue that might arise, but open communication can help to resolve issues before they grow to be so big that they're difficult to address.

I know those things aren't always the easiest to do. They're things that are often challenging for me, as well. But even though they're challenging, they're very important things. I'm looking forward to doing that challenging work together with you, as we all work together to discern and to do the work that God is calling us to, in our congregation and in the world. I'm excited to be the pastor here, and I'm excited to see where God will take us!

In Peace,

Pastor Russ

## Amoroso Primo

4:00 p.m., Sunday October 1<sup>st</sup>

St. John's Lutheran Church

Amoroso da Capo (father, son duo) has been performing together for over 45 years in all kinds of venues—everything from churches to the Academy of Music in Philadelphia. Their repertoire includes sacred/worship music, classical music, as well as disco and pop music. Their intent is to give their testimony and speak to their relationship with God. Additionally, they want to share how God has shaped their musical relationship as well as the one they have with one another while sharing their musical gifts with audiences. Save the date now to attend this superb and inspirational concert presented by Philadelphia Orchestra musicians.



## Communion Bread

The Worship & Music Committee received a request to return to homemade communion bread rather than our current practice of using wafers. The committee



was in favor of doing that on festivals pending a discussion with Dr. Tim Babinchak, our resident epidemiologist. Dr. Tim's response was that there is no more concern using homemade bread now than there was before COVID-19. **SO . . . .**

## Bread Bakers Needed

Following a discussion with Dr. Tim we will return to homemade communion bread on Reformation weekend, October 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup>, and All Saints weekend, November 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. If you would like to bake bread for either of those weeks, or for a future service, please notify Parish Administrator Sonya Sowards at (610) 933-9347 ext. 2 or by email to [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org). Thanks in advance.

WELCA will meet from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. on Tuesday, September 26<sup>th</sup>.

Plan to attend and bring suggestions for speakers, activities, and fundraising.

We continue our collections for our sick and shut-ins, area facilities, and Silver Springs. Please continue to bring 2024 calendars, greeting cards, tablets, tote bags, toiletries, bookmarks, coasters, playing cards, toothbrushes, toothpaste, dental floss, and mouthwash, etc.

Keep collecting those Redner's tapes. They make a huge difference.

Without the support of the congregation it would limit our ability to reach out and minister to as many groups as we do.

Please mark your calendar and plan to join us for a morning of fun and fellowship.



## Mauí Wildfires

Lutheran Disaster Response is coordinating with the Pacifica Synod and other partners to assess the needs of people impacted by the wildfires. They will work to provide for immediate needs and long-term recovery amid the widespread destruction. Lutheran Disaster Response is committed to accompanying recovering communities in the years ahead. To donate, go to [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org).

## MUSIC MINISTRY AT ST. JOHN'S

"Lutherans are hymn-singing people. It's what we do. The hymn is one of the tools of the Spirit in calling, gathering, and equipping us to be people of God. The lyrics draw our voices together and impart the faith. The tunes bind our hearts together into one in the Spirit. The hymn rightly has a home in Lutheran worship and it always will."

Quoting from the Summer 2023 CROSSACCENT article by Clayton Faulkner "My Being Sings to You: Hymnody in Lutheran Worship.

St. John's recognizes the importance of music in its worship life. You are invited to join and be part of this joy-filled ministry and fellowship. **New members are welcomed in all groups.** Age groupings are guidelines.

Deacon Tom Snyder, Director of Music, [ftsiii@gmail.com](mailto:ftsiii@gmail.com)

### ADULT CHOIR

- Teens through adults
- Rehearses Wednesday, 7:30 – 9:00 PM
- Provides Sunday worship leadership, except the second Sunday of each month, September through May
- Rehearsals begin September 6

### CHRISTMAS CHOIR

- Provides leadership for 7:00 PM Christmas Eve worship and pre-service music beginning at 6:30 PM
- Rehearses Wednesday at the beginning of Adult Choir
- Rehearsals begin October 4

### CHILDREN'S HANDBELLS

- Grades 3 and above
- Rehearses Thursday, 6:45 – 7:30 PM
- Beginning ensemble
- Rehearsals begin September 14

### ADULT HANDBELLS

- Older teens through adults
- Rehearses Thursday, 7:30 - 8:30 PM
- Moderately advanced ensemble
- Rehearsals begin September 14

### SECOND SUNDAY SERIES

- Second Sunday of each month a guest musician (singer or instrumentalist) is invited to provide offertory music during worship

### ST. JOHN'S CHOIR & FRIENDS

- Community Choir which presents an annual concert
- In 2023, 45 singers from 20 area churches participated
- Rehearsals: Sunday 3/24, 4/7, 14, 21, 28 7 – 9:00 PM
- Performance date is Sunday, May 5, 7:00 PM



*Use what talents you possess; the woods would be very silent if no birds sang except those that sang best*

### 2023 - 2024 CONCERT SERIES

#### **Amoroso Strings**

October 1, 2023, 4 PM

Father and Son, Cello & Violin, Philadelphia Orchestra Musicians

Music To Lift the Soul



#### **Peter Richard Conte, Organist**

October 29, 2023, 4 PM

Grand Court Organist of the Wanamaker Organ in Macy's, Center City, Philadelphia

Marian Dorward Memorial Concert



#### **Providence Chamber Orchestra**

November 19, 2023, 4 PM

Selections by Holst, Mozart, Saint-Saëns, Schubert



#### **Philadelphia Handbell Ensemble**

December 3, 2023, 4 PM

Concert of Seasonal Favorites



#### **DOPPELFLÖTE**

February 25, 2024, 4 PM

Melissa Freilich, flute; Vincent M. Ryan, organ

Music for organ and flute including Orgelkids Build



#### **Principally Harps**

April 7, 2024, 4 PM

Harpists Janet Witman & Mindy Cutcher

Principal Harp – Kennett Symphony & Principal Harp – Pennsylvania Ballet



#### **Providence Chamber Orchestra**

April 21, 2024, 4 PM

Selections to be determined



#### **St. John's Choir & Friends**

May 5, 2024, 7 PM

Thirty-first annual concert with singers from the community  
Music of William Billings, America's first major composer & Patriotic Selections

Rehearsals 7-9 pm, 3/24, 4/7, 4/14, 4/21, 4/28

# School Kit Collection

## MATERIALS NEEDED

- Spiral notebooks
- 30-cm rulers (or double-sided)
- Blunt scissors w/ safety tips
- Pencils with erasers, pre-sharpened
- Black or blue ballpoint (no gel) pens
- 16 or 24-pack of crayons
- 2.5" erasers
- Drawstring bags

Accepting donations until Sunday, October 9th

## Lutheran World Relief School Kits—collecting until October 9th

While you hit the stores for the great back-to-school supplies deals now in progress, consider picking up some extras. You can help provide materials globally to students in need! Lutheran World Relief accepts donations of “school kits” which they distribute around the world to school-aged children. St. John’s children’s ministry will assemble LWR backpacks on Sunday, October 15, 2023. We hope to make another 100 bags this year. For instructions on what to buy, please go to <https://lwr.org/kits/school-kits/instructions>. New items only are needed with no patriotic or religious symbols on them. You can buy a lot or just a few items or make a monetary donation that will allow us to purchase anything necessary to complete our kits. Donations can be left in the designated bin in the narthex.



## Thrivent Members Needed

One major way to support our annual Lutheran World Relief School Kit collection drive is to host an Action Team! All Thrivent benefit and associate members are eligible to apply. Thrivent will supply a \$250 gift card that St. John’s can use toward purchasing extra school supplies. We will supply the information needed to report back to Thrivent. Call Molly at (610) 933-3947 ext. 4 or email [youthfamily@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:youthfamily@stjohnphoenixville.org) if this is a way that you can help.

## Green Team

At the recent Southeast Pennsylvania Assembly one of the informational booths offered information supporting our church-wide statement on the care of creation, part of which is found below:

Lutherans embrace the idea that the Reformation did not end in the 16th century and that it should be ongoing and continual. Sometimes changes are incremental. At other times they can be dramatic. The Church in each age is called to rise to the challenges posed by that era. In the 16th century, the chief issue that occupied Christians was the salvation of individuals. In our age, the most critical issue must surely be the fate of



the Earth—the challenge to protect and restore God’s creation from the devastations caused by human activities. Addressing this challenge requires a new reformation in our time.

For Christians, care of the Earth is not an “environmental cause.” Rather, it is central to our holy calling to treasure the Earth and to care for it as our common home, fully integrating creation-care into our love of God and neighbor. Without sacrificing the transformational effects of the 16th-century Reformation, we are called to embrace an eco-reformation that will re-examine and rethink how we read the Bible, how we can expand the scope of our theology, how we can reconfigure our personal vocation and our common ethic, how we worship, how we organize our church life together, and how we understand ourselves as creatures within creation as a whole.

St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Telford, has supported a Green Team for many years and their website proclaims this mission statement:

- To deepen our theological understanding and spiritual relationship toward creation and stewardship of our environment.
- To provide education about current environmental issues including recycling and more responsible use of our limited natural resources.
- To promote initiatives within our congregation and local community toward providing a healthy, responsible and sustainable future.

To that end Council is exploring the possible formation of St. John’s “Green Team” to pursue these efforts and is looking for members who share these concerns and would like to be involved.

Please call or email Parish Administrator Sonya Sowards, [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org), expressing your interest **by September 30th**. Thank you!

## Request for Sunday School Teachers

Calling all those who are caretakers, open-hearted, fun and love to learn: our Sunday school program is still in need of a 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade teacher and a 7<sup>th</sup> grade female confirmation guide for the 2023-2024 program year. Join our flexible program and get the chance to invest in the future of St. John’s! If you can’t commit to a full school year term, we also have plenty of spaces open for substitute teachers. Please email [youthfamily@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:youthfamily@stjohnphoenixville.org) if you are interested in learning more about either of these opportunities.



## Sunday Morning Book Club

The Sunday Morning Book Club is starting their 22<sup>nd</sup> year with "The Vanishing Half" by Brit Bennett, followed by "The House of the Spirits" by Isabel Allende in October. Books are suggested and then chosen by the group. Upcoming authors include Chris Bohjalian, Doris Kiernan, and Richard Osmon. Join us for one book or the whole program year! Contact Jean Herbranson ([deherb@juno.com](mailto:deherb@juno.com)) for book schedule details.

**SAVE  
THE DATE!**

Join us for an Intergenerational  
Crock-Pot Cookoff!

*All are Welcome*



**CROCK-POT  
COOK-OFF!**

**October 15, 2023 in Kley Hall**

Setup will begin at 4:30pm  
Eating and judging will begin at 5:00pm

**Bring an appetizer, main dish, side dish or a dessert  
\*COOKED IN A CROCK POT\*  
or join us to taste and vote for your favorite dish!**

Paper products, lemonade and water will be provided.

Sign up by emailing Sonya at [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org), clicking this link <https://forms.gle/Mmt4txRjrDiZXwM66>



## Guidelines for Submission of Articles for St. John's Communications

Submissions to the Parish Administrator for insertion in St. John's communications may include worship, faith formation, social justice, music and community events, and any items directly related to St. John's mission of "*Living, growing & sharing in God's love through Jesus Christ.*" Submissions received by Monday at 11:00 a.m. will be included in the following Sunday's bulletin. Later submissions will appear in the following week's bulletin. All submissions are also included in all other applicable forms of communication (email, social media, website, slides, etc.) as soon as possible after receipt.

Submissions for *The Circle* newsletter are due on the 18<sup>th</sup> of every month (except July). Submissions received after this deadline may appear in other applicable St. John's communications and in the following month's newsletter.

When submitting articles, please include complete information such as date, time, location, and how to sign up for events (including links and QR codes to forms). Images are welcome but should be photos taken around St. John's or posters created by the submitter—not stock images or any images downloaded from the Internet which St. John's is not licensed to use.

If you have any questions about St. John's communications, please contact our administrator, Sonya Sowards, at [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org) or (610) 933-3947 ext. 2.

## Save Your Cans

The St. John's youth are collecting aluminum beverage cans as a fundraiser to help with the costs of mission trips. Please bag your cans and drop them off in Kley Hall. Thank you!!



## 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.



## Back to School with Campus Ministry!

With fall approaching, our vibrant campus ministry communities are ready to launch their fall semester programming! If you know a student attending school in the fall, please go to <https://www.luminelca.org/refer-a-student/> to let our incredible pastors and leaders on campuses know they're coming. And if they're staying in the region, connect them to the

University Lutheran Church, the Lutheran Campus Ministry in Philadelphia!

## Stephen Ministries

Would you like to be Stephen Leader? Stephen Ministries is offering Bridge Leaders Training Courses (BLTC) to fully equip laypeople to serve as Stephen Leaders. The BLTC provides Stephen Leaders with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to successfully implement the Stephen Ministry System. BLTC is a live, interactive training experience that fully equips and inspires participants to serve as Stephen Leaders. The BLTC is now delivered over Zoom to cohorts of 20 people from across the United States, Canada and around the world. It consists of 10 sessions of 2<sup>1/2</sup> hours each, held twice weekly over five weeks or once weekly over ten weeks. Options include morning, afternoon, or evening cohorts. In order to grow our leadership team, we are hoping to train several additional people. Please prayerfully consider participating in a Bridge Leaders Training Course. For further information contact Linda Landis.





# September 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> 9am Holy Communion	<b>28</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> 7pm Alanon	<b>31</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>1</b> 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>2</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
<b>3</b> 9am Holy Communion	<b>4</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Stephen Ministry	<b>5</b> 7:30pm Worship & Music	<b>6</b> 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon 7pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	<b>7</b> 6:30pm Kiwanis 7pm Naranon	<b>8</b> 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>9</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
<b>10</b> Rally Day 9am Faith Formation 9:45am Fellowship Time 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal	<b>11</b> 10am MAEVE Moms Mingle 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	<b>14</b> 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	<b>15</b> St. Peter's lunch 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>16</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
<b>17</b> 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion	<b>18</b> Circle deadline 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Stephen Ministry	<b>19</b> 6:30pm Parent Grief Group	<b>20</b> 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	<b>21</b> 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal 8:15pm Naranon Support	<b>22</b> 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>23</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
<b>24</b> First Bibles received 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal	<b>25</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	<b>26</b> 10:30am WELCA 6:30pm Parent Grief Group 7:30pm Fellowship Committee	<b>27</b> 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	<b>29</b> 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>30</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
<b>1</b> 9am Faith Formation-First Bible 10:15am Holy Communion 4pm Amoroso Strings Concert	<b>2</b> 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	<b>3</b> 6:30pm Parent Grief Group 7:30pm Worship & Music	<b>4</b> 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon 7pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	<b>5</b> 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	<b>6</b> 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	<b>7</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)

Thank you, dear friends, for the birthday gift and happy wishes on my special day. The sweet little Bundt cake is a wonderful treat and so delicious. Your kindness, thoughtfulness and love are deeply appreciated.

Warmly,  
Sandy Momyer

Dear Fellowship Committee:

What a pleasant surprise I had on my birthday. A scrumptious chocolate cake with chocolate chips delivered to my door as well as a lovely birthday card. What a pleasant way to celebrate my birthday. Thanks so much to you, Sandy, for delivering my cake. Also, thank you and the Committee members for your thoughtfulness and kindness. I am so glad to be part of a loving, caring congregation.

Blessings & peace,

Mimi Woods



# September 2023—Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>27</b> Amy Becker's birthday James and Janet Reading's anniversary Jeff and Jeanne Schanzenbach's anniversary Joe and Sherri Muller's anniversary	<b>28</b> Chuck Blackledge's birthday Jessica Cratty's birthday William and Faye Donovan's anniversary	<b>29</b> Anderson McMahon's birthday Ashleigh Melton's birthday Nicholas Hollander's birthday	<b>30</b> Cindy Schubert's birthday	<b>31</b> Aditya Verma and Elizabeth Granacher's anniversary Hayley Riley's birthday Kent Brown's birthday Laura Caughlan's birthday Matthew and Courtney Quaglia's anniversary Tim and Beth Leong's anniversary	<b>1</b> John and Pam Westerman's anniversary	<b>2</b> Jack Ertell's birthday
<b>3</b> Justin Caple's birthday	<b>4</b> Barry Church's birthday Elizabeth Sitkowski's birthday Leslie Kern's birthday	<b>5</b> Cole O'Neill's birthday Jay Ritchie and Heather Bourdeau's anniversary	<b>6</b> Barbara Place's birthday Margaux VanDerveer's birthday Ryan Hadfield's birthday Travis and Alison Andrews's anniversary	<b>7</b> Chuck and April Liedike's anniversary	<b>8</b> Lori Jones's birthday	<b>9</b> Robb and Joan Cadigan's anniversary Ryan DesMarais's birthday
<b>10</b> Bobbi Riley's birthday Claire Gallagher's birthday Lindsey Snyder's birthday	<b>11</b> Danielle Blackledge's birthday Janet Sifford's birthday Joanne Karcher's birthday Katelyn Blattner's birthday Kyle and Joanna Oszeyczik's anniversary Mark Rutherford's birthday Tyler Pekofsky's birthday	<b>12</b> Kevin Rambo's birthday Robb and Lisa Frees's anniversary Robert and Dodi Strunk's anniversary Violet Liedike's birthday	<b>13</b> Addi Smith's birthday	<b>14</b> Andrew Carr's birthday Scott and Laura Geiger's anniversary	<b>15</b> Byron and Marlene Seyler's anniversary Eric Heinbaugh and Liz Cady's anniversary	<b>16</b> Amy Fox's birthday Avary Carr's birthday Eleanor Lundy's birthday Erica Reading's birthday Wyatt Barker's birthday
<b>17</b> Michelle Friday's birthday Peyton DeWolf's birthday	<b>18</b> Chuck and Danielle Blackledge's anniversary Michelle Bader's birthday	<b>19</b> Reese Thompson's birthday	<b>20</b> Chris and Melissa Perrotto's anniversary Grayson Reading's birthday Kristin McGregor's birthday	<b>21</b> Barbara Rambo's birthday Evelyn Liedike's birthday John Mangialardi and Lisa Wimble's anniversary	<b>22</b> Janet Gerner's birthday Myron Cratty's birthday	<b>23</b> Giovanna Brown's birthday Sarah Blattner's birthday
<b>24</b> Henry Duerr's birthday Robb Cadigan's birthday	<b>25</b> Courtney Quaglia's birthday P.J. Gadzicki's birthday Sandi Stotler's birthday	<b>26</b> Charles and Heather Thompson's anniversary Donald Bechtel's birthday Jennifer Brown's birthday Mitch Reading's birthday	<b>27</b> Aiden Abraham's birthday Brett Emery's birthday Sophia Seidel's birthday	<b>28</b> Heather Yonosh's birthday Nicholas VanDerveer's birthday Peter and Diane Sitkowski's anniversary	<b>29</b> Allyssa Andrews's birthday Courtney Morgan's birthday Julie Andrews's birthday Kent and Jennifer Brown's anniversary Megan Tribuno's birthday	<b>30</b> Brian and Amy Becker's anniversary
<b>1</b>	<b>2</b> Isaac Henderson's birthday Jim Taylor's birthday	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Garrett and Margit Grejdu's anniversary	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Karen Warren's birthday Sam Fryer's birthday	<b>7</b> Gabrielle Perrotto's birthday Jennifer Rutherford's birthday

**St. John's Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting Minutes  
June 12, 2023**

<b>Attendees:</b>							
Dick Kunsch	P	Mitch Reading	P	Dale Herbranson	P	Stephen Drewes	P
Kelly Gallagher	P	Janet Gerner	P	Sue Starling	P	Sandra Zimmermann	A
Aimee Hillegas	P	Elisa Kahn	P	Jeanne Schanzenbach	P	Mike Kahl	P
<b>Guests:</b>							
Sonya Sowards	P	Tom Snyder	P				

The meeting was called to order at 7:03 pm by Aimee; Aimee led with an opening prayer.

Prior Meeting Minutes

**Motion by Dick, Second by Dale to accept the minutes as presented; motion passed.**

Staff Reports

**Motion by Kelly, Second by Stephen to accept the May Staff Reports; motion passed.**

Committee Reports

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee from May 22 – accepted as written.
  - Mitch noted that he had made Shirley aware of the start date for Pastor Russ.
  - **Motion by Dale to accept the Finance report as written, second by Dick – motion passed.**
- Electronics Committee – did not meet.
- Faith Formation from May 10, 2023 – accepted as written.
- Property Committee from June 5, 2023 - accepted as written.
- Worship and Music Committee – did not meet.
- Social Ministry Committee from June 7, 2023 (minutes not yet submitted).
  - Social Ministry met last week and have a motion for Council approval. For background, a decision was made by Council, that Social Ministry would come to Council with a request for funding for additional donations in 2023. With Council approval, the Finance Committee would identify where to take the money from for the donations.

The motion was made and passed by vote by Social Ministry to give the following donations:

\$1,000 to World Central Kitchen  
 \$1,000 Doctors Without Borders  
 \$2,000 to be reserved for Good Gifts to be chosen by the Sunday School Classes at Christmas time

**Rationale:**

Social Ministry has given \$10,000 so far this year from the money we held over from 2022 to primarily local charities and Lutheran World Relief. Per our guiding principles, we also want to support international causes. We looked at organizations providing aid to those in Ukraine. We looked at the organization's ratings on "Charity Navigator" and chose these.

- The motion is now presented to Council for an approval vote. Motion carried.
- Fellowship Committee – did not meet

- Columbarium Committee – did not meet
- Executive Committee – did not meet
- Stewardship Committee – did not meet
- Welcome Team Committee - did not meet

**Motion by Mitch, Second by Dale to accept committee reports; motion passed.**

#### Old Business

- Church Collaboration Committee – met at St. Peter’s. Seems that Centennial and St. Peter’s may be looking to share a Pastor. Found out that St. Peter’s has a Wednesday evening informal communion service, open to all.
- Mitch affirmed with everyone that we should continue to share church events/happenings amongst all of these churches – many of these events can be shared. Kelly also confirmed Molly is sending youth group info to them as well.

#### New Business

- Scam emails – scammers continue to create fake email accounts using leader names (pastor names, council names, etc.) which are listed on our website. They frequently ask for gift cards, other usual scam attempts. We all agreed to take personal email addresses off of the website.
- Submission guidelines for communications – Sonya attended a webinar on congregational communication, which included a recommendation of publishing guidelines. Sonya has now documented those guidelines and will be publishing them in the Circle and the bulletin.
- Environmental topics
  - Solar for St. Johns – ELCA Creation Care contact
  - Meadow – <https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Conservation/Water/LawnConversion/Pages/default.aspx>
  - Should we start a “Green Team”? All agreed, the Property Committee is overloaded at this point, and we need a sub-committee to address this. The team could also look at other environmental opportunities like recycling, etc. Tom will write up a paragraph soliciting volunteers for the Green Team.
- Start date for Pastor Russ and Onboarding – start date has been established as July 31. He will be joining us for VBS next week as well.
  - Sonya has an onboarding checklist, and will talk to Pastor Russ at VBS to provide all of the material she can at that time. Sonya will not be available on July 31<sup>st</sup>, and Tom and Molly will just be coming back from ASP.
  - Sonya will also provide Dale’s email to him, so that they can connect regarding technology.
  - Will also ask Pastor Russ for his preference in terms of installation service as well.

**Motion by Mitch to adjourn the meeting at 8:12 pm; Second by Dale; meeting ended with the Lord’s Prayer. NO JULY MEETING. Next regularly scheduled meeting will be August 14, 2023.**

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Starling  
Church Council Secretary

## People of God Involved in God's Work

### September Worship Staff

#### Acolyte

- 3 TBD  
10 Jack Drewes  
17 Chloe Kunsch  
24 Nathaniel Becker

#### Altar Guild

- 3 Nancy Cressman & Janet Ertell  
10 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett  
17 Jean Herbranson  
24 Betty Hans & Jean Herbranson

#### Assisting Minister

- 3 Nancy Cressman  
10 Heather Yonosh  
17 Ron Stevens  
24 Annie Cummins

#### Communion Assistant/Lector

- 3 Lynn Titus  
10 Bill Starling  
17 Shelley Saeger  
24 Walt Deichmann

#### Counters

- 3 Jack & Janet Ertell, Donna Anderson  
10 Heather Yonosh, Jeanne Schanzenbach  
17 Mary Heiser, Mike & Cathy Kahl  
24 Stephen & Jen Drewes

#### Evening Light Assistant

- 2 Buzz Hadfield  
9 Rich Latella  
16 Toni Hadfield  
23 Sandy Momyer  
30 Shirley Platzer

#### Lock-Up

- 3 TBD  
10 Elisa Khan  
17 TBD  
24 Kelly Gallagher

#### Stream Team

- 3 Josh Romano, Paul Miller  
10 Aimee Hillegas, Dale Herbranson  
17 Dale Herbranson, TBD  
24 Josh Romano, Paul Miller

#### Ushers

- 3 Don Titus & Donna Anderson  
10 Sue Starling & Nancy Cressman  
17 Cathy & Mike Kahl  
24 Barry Church & Cathy Garrett

There is a meadow in hills of green  
Where grasses are soft beneath one's  
Feet trees offer shelter a meadow  
Where breezes caress yet no bird sings  
No rabbits play no joyous shorts of  
Children at play  
Look closely in the grass are  
Little mounds each has upon its  
Face a name of one who will not  
Play and run in joy who are  
These? These are the children  
Gunfire slew  
A meadow where no birds sing  
'Til children live not in fear  
Is that too much to ask?

Margaret Walker

Listen you will hear  
God's voice whispering  
In the gentle brook  
In warm breezes in the  
Rustle of grass hear  
Cooing of birds as  
They sing of God's  
Love summer  
Time a time to rejoice at God's  
Love warmth of  
Sun wondrously  
Given God's love  
To us

Margaret Walker

Simple pleasures of  
Life in our rush  
Have we forgotten  
To walk in meadows  
Sweet hear the song  
Of birds in joyous  
Song rustle of  
Breezes softly blowing  
Waves lapping upon the  
shore  
No time no time no time  
To see what wonders God  
Gave us  
A poor life this if we  
Cannot stop and listen  
To the pleasure God  
Gave us

Margaret Walker

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

**www.stjohnluthphoenixville.org**  
**E-mail: [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org)**

**CHURCH STAFF**

**Lead Pastor**

The Rev. K. Russell Crouthamel

**Pastoral Associate:**

The Rev. Thomas Kochenderfer, Jr.

**Director of Music:**

F. Thomas Snyder III

**Organist & Pianist:**

John A. Quinn III

**Director of Children's, Youth  
& Family Ministries**

Molly Oladunjoye

**Parish Administrator:**

Sonya K. Sowards

**Sexton:**

Mark Yancheck, Jr.

**Nursery Coordinator:**

Arlene Hudak

**CHURCH COUNCIL**

**President:**

Aimee Hillegas

**Vice President:**

Kelly Gallagher

**Secretary:**

Sue Starling

**Treasurer:**

Shirley Platzer

**Assistant Treasurer:**

Don Titus

**Financial Recording Secretary:**

Mary Heiser

**Fund 3 Secretary:**

Kevin Gallagher

**Executive Committee:**

Stephen Drewes

Mitch Reading

**Other Members of Church Council:**

Dale Herbranson

Sandra Zimmermann

Dick Kunsch

Janet Gerner

Mike Kahl

Elisa Khan

Jeanne Schanzenbach

**Stephen Ministry Leader:**

Linda Landis — (610) 933-9544

**COMMITTEES**

**Columbarium:**

Bill Starling, Chair

Sandra Zimmermann, Council Rep.

**Electronics:**

Bill Schoellkopf, Chair

Dale Herbranson, Council Rep.

**Executive:**

Mitch Reading, Chair

**Faith Formation:**

Erica Reading, Chair

Elisa Kahn, Council Rep.

**Fellowship:**

Sandra Zimmermann, Chair

Sue Starling, Council Rep.

**Finance:**

Jack Ertell, Chair

Stephen Drewes, Council Rep.

**Property:**

Bobbi Riley, Chair

Mike Kahl, Council Rep.

**Social Ministry:**

Janet Gerner, Chair & Council Rep.

**Stewardship:**

Cathy Kahl, Chair

Dick Kunsch, Council Rep.

**Worship and Music:**

Jean Herbranson, Chair

Aimee Hillegas, Council Rep.

**Office Assistants:**

June Henzie

Joan Carl

Pat Renninger

**The Circle Editor:**

Sonya K. Sowards

**Change in Contact Information**

Joan Benne

Heather Woods Retirement Community  
 3181 Horseshoe Pike, Apt. 120A  
 Honeybrook, PA 19344

Mark Wilkinson

19 Pawlings Circle  
 Phoenixville, PA 19460

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**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 weekend through Labor Day)

*Handicapped Accessible*

**THE CIRCLE**



**September 2023**