

The Circle

January 2024



Dear Friends in Christ,

At the end of this month, I'll have been the called pastor at St. John's Lutheran Church for six months, and what a six months it's been! In our Sunday readings for this year, the Gospel readings are mostly drawn from the Gospel of Mark. One of Mark's Gospel's key features is its author's use of the phrase "and immediately." Mark's narrative connects one scene after another, and everything happens immediately after the last thing. It feels that way in my life, too, as well as in the Gospel readings. In these last six months, I've met a lot of new people (although I have a lot more people to meet, too!), I've begun to meet with groups in the community and get to know Phoenixville, I've led worship and taught Sunday school, and I've celebrated Reformation Sunday, All Saints' Sunday, and Christmas with Saint John's. I've especially enjoyed being able to be part of Vacation Bible School and to see the Sunday school Christmas pageant, as well as being able to join together with the Phoenixville Area Clergy Association for the annual Thanksgiving Eve service. It's been an exciting time, and I've been blessed to share it with you!

It looks like the "and immediately" moments are going to keep going in the new year, as well! At the end of this month, on January 21st, we'll celebrate together and with guests from other churches as I'm officially installed as the pastor. Very shortly after that, February 14th is Ash Wednesday, and then Lent begins, and at the end of February is our annual congregational meeting. And of course, in between those big events, I'm looking forward to being able to continue to visit and meet people, to lead worship, to preach and teach and pray, and to do all of the other things that are part of the work of ministry.

One of the things that I hope I'll be able to do in order to connect with more people from St. John's in the new year is to devote more time to calling and visiting members of the congregation in order to better get to know more people. If you'd like to meet with me, or to have me come to visit you, I'd love to do that. Please let me know, and we can work out a time that will work. If you'd rather not have me visit you at home, I'd also be glad to meet for lunch or coffee, or to meet with you at the church or at another location.

I do have to ask for your help with one part of my visitation ministry: it's both part of my responsibility to visit members of the congregation who are sick or hospitalized, and also something that I'm deeply honored to be able to do. Because of medical privacy laws (which are very important and very good things), hospitals are very restricted in what information they can give out about patients. If you or a member of your family needs to go to the hospital, I'd ask that you please let the church know so that we can set up a visit if you'd like, and so we can be intentional about praying for you or your family member.

As we continue on together, I'm sure that there will be many more exciting events that happen in the congregation and in the community. I hope I'm able to continue to be your pastor for a long time to come, and that we can celebrate many more "and immediately" moments together!

In Christ,
Pastor Russ



YOU ARE INVITED

Please join us on **Sunday, January 21st** at **4 p.m.** as **Pastor K. Russell Crouthamel** is officially **installed** as our Lead Pastor! A reception will follow the service.



Pastor Russ grew up in Souderton and attended Susquehanna University and Trinity Lutheran Seminary. He served congregations in the Western Iowa Synod, the Northwestern Pennsylvania Synod, and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod before being called to St. John's. Pastor Russ lives in Perkasio, in Bucks County, with his spouse, the Rev. Sarah Aasheim, and their two children. When he's not at work, Pastor Russ enjoys riding his bike, reading, spending time with his family, and cheering for the Phillies.

Thank you to the individuals and families who lit the Advent wreath candles.

Thank you to John Dorward for providing the lovely blue spruce tree from his property that we were able to use for our Christmas Tree.

Thank you to Lynn Titus who made ALL of the new red bows for our iron candlestands and balcony garland, and to John Dorward for providing the funds to purchase the ribbon.

Thank you to EVERYONE who helped decorate for Christmas for either Part One on December 17th, Part Two on December 24th, or both dates. Decorating was a little more challenging this year, due to Christmas Eve falling on the evening of Advent 4, but it was made easier with the help of many who were eager to help with the transformation of the sanctuary.

Thank you to all who purchased poinsettias, which graced our chancel and added beautiful color to the space.



Have you seen the new refrigerator? It is absolutely beautiful.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. St. John's congregation is awesome.

And . . . Diane Sherman delivered a car full of items to Silver Springs Martin Luther School on our behalf.

We met just after Thanksgiving to sort Silver Springs items and to pack gift bags for our shut-ins and staff. It was a busy meeting, but we still had time to sing Christmas songs and carols.

Pastor Russ also participated and offered insights into what scripture really says about the nativity story we all love.

On to 2024. The January 23th meeting is our annual "humor" celebration. Start getting your jokes and funny stories ready. Please plan to join us from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon in the Eisenhower Room.

The WELCA retreat is scheduled for Saturday, April 6, 2024. Pastor Kris Peterson will be our leader that day. Mark your calendars now to refresh, relax, and be renewed through prayer.



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.

ACOLYTES NEEDED

Serving as an acolyte is a great way for young people to be a part of worship here at St. John's! All students who have completed their First Holy Communion are eligible to serve. Pastor Russ, Tom and Molly are always happy to train those who would like to learn. We need acolytes for 2024. Interested? You can sign up by emailing Molly at mollyo@stjohnphoenixville.org or by filling out our NEW sign-up form online.

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!!



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 18th 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 or (610) 933-3947 ext. 2.



Would you like to be Stephen Leader? Stephen Ministries offers 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 2½ 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.

People of God Involved in God's Work January Worship Staff

Acolyte

- 7 Brett Gallagher
- 14 TBD
- 21 TBD
- 28 TBD

Altar Guild

- 7 Nancy Cressman & Janet Ertell
- 14 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett
- 21 Jean Herbranson
- 28 Betty Hans & Jean Herbranson

Assisting Minister

- 7 Nancy Cressman
- 14 Tom Snyder
- 21 Ron Stevens
- 28 Heather Yonosh

Communion Assistant/Lector

- 7 Lynn Titus
- 14 Walt Deichmann
- 21 Mitch Reading
- 28 Bill Starling

Counters

- 7 Jack & Janet Ertell, Donna Anderson
- 14 Heather Yonosh & Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 21 Mike & Cathy Kahl, Mary Heiser
- 28 Stephen & Jen Drewes

Evening Light Assistant

- 6 Rich Latella
- 13 Sandy Momyer
- 20 Shirley Platzter
- 27 Rich Latella

Fellowship Time Host

- 11 Property Committee

Lock-Up

- 7 Janet Gerner
- 14 Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 21 Mike Kahl
- 28 Stephen Drewes

Stream Team

- 7 TBD
- 14 TBD
- 21 TBD
- 28 TBD

Ushers

- 7 Don Titus & Cathy Garrett
- 14 Nancy Cressman & Barry Church
- 21 Mike & Cathy Kahl
- 28 Sue Starling & Jen Drewes

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
November 13, 2023**

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

The meeting was called to order at 7:01 pm by Aimee; Dale led with an opening prayer.

Prior Meeting Minutes

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

Staff Reports

Motion by Sue, Second by Mike to accept the October Staff Reports; motion passed.

Committee Reports

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee from 10/23/23.
 - Motion made by Dale to approve the Finance report, second by Stephen; motion passed
- Electronics Committee – did not meet.
- Faith Formation – no minutes received.
 - Pageant work underway.
 - Still need Grade 5/6 Sunday school teacher.
- Property Committee from 10/02/23 and 11/06/23 - accepted as written.
- Worship and Music Committee from 11/07/23 - accepted as written.
- Social Ministry Committee - committee met, no report received.
 - Advent offering will go to Lutheran World Relief, focusing with Maui.
 - Schumachers/Derflingers will manage the Angel tree this year.
- Fellowship Committee – did not meet.
- Columbarium Committee – did not meet.
- Executive Committee – did not meet.
- Stewardship Committee – no report received; pledge cards will go out this week.
- Welcome Team Committee - did not meet.

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

Old Business

- Kitchen Renovation Project
 - Task Force members have been identified. Stephen Drewes will lead the task force.
 - Council all agreed that the Task Force will decide upon the scope of upgrades, and then develop a financing plan to fund the renovation.
- Church Collaboration Committee – no meeting.

New Business

- Staff annual reviews are all underway and should be done in time for next month's council meeting, with input for salary increase projections.

- Garden Club request – Kathy Tauber contacted Aimee regarding a recycle project. The thought was to recycle candy wrappers, returning them to manufacturers for recycling.
- New Council members – Dick and Sandy rolling off – need to be begin to consider other candidate names.

Aimee adjourned the meeting at 7:56; meeting ended with the Lord’s Prayer. Next regularly scheduled meeting will be December 11, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Starling
Church Council Secretary



January 2024 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Jodi O'Neill's birthday	1	2 Bruce and Elena Wallace's anniversary Craig Emery's birthday Ella Drewes's birthday	3 Jayden Carey's birthday	4 Ashley Westerman's birthday Debbe Welsh's birthday	5 Alison Andrews's birthday Janet Ertell's birthday	6 Elisa Khan's birthday
7 Jake New's birthday	8 Angela Bearoff's birthday Quinn Oszeyczik's birthday	9	10 David and Susan Schumacher's anniversary	11	12 Leah Carey's birthday Robert Gorman's birthday	13
14 Brynn Klotzbach's birthday Jack Kramer's birthday Katie Kramer's birthday	15	16	17 Cole Cummins's birthday Rachel Bearoff's birthday	18 Annalynne Grace Thompson's birthday Marie Snyder's birthday	19 Margaret Lane's birthday	20 Julius Sherrick's birthday Katie Miller's birthday Rose Gatlos's birthday
21 Kaleb McGregor's birthday Maggie McGregor's birthday Peyton Barker's birthday	22	23	24	25 Byron Seyler's birthday Susan Schumacher's birthday	26 Anna Schaible's birthday Ellie Schaible's birthday Hannah Kramer's birthday Kimberly Breidenbach's birthday Mary Scavello's birthday	27 Gary Campbell's birthday William Stotler's birthday
28 Daisy Custer's birthday Lily Stewart's birthday	29	30 Charles Soult's birthday Cindy Gadzicki's birthday	31 Stephanie Riley's birthday	1 Evan DesMarais's birthday Madison Muller's birthday	2 Chris Thompson's birthday Lhotse Durlfinger's birthday	3 David Wilkinson's birthday

January 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 10:15am Lessons & Carols - Holy Communion	1 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	2 7pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Worship & Music	3 4pm Social Ministry 6pm Girl Scouts #4308 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	4 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	5 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	6 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
7 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 11:30am Undecorating	8 10:15am Staff 10am MAEVE Moms Mingle 11am Alanon Family Group 5:30pm Junior/Cadette Girl Scouts #42024 7pm Church Council	9	10 4pm Daisy Girl Scouts #4863 6pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Cadette Girl Scouts #41982 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	11 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	12 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	13 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
14 9am Faith Formation- cradles to crayons 9:45am Fellowship Time 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal 2pm Westerman party 2:30pm Girl Scouts #41441	15 11am Alanon Family Group 5pm Stewardship Committee 7pm Stephen Ministry	16	17 6pm Girl Scouts #4308 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	18 Circle deadline 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal 8:15pm Naranon Support	19 St. Peter's lunch 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	20 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
21 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 4pm Pr. Russ Installation	22 10am Covered Bridge Garden Club 11am Alanon Family Group 5:30pm Junior/Cadette Girl Scouts #42024	23 10:30am WELCA 7:30pm Fellowship Committee	24 4pm Daisy Girl Scouts #4863 6pm Girl Scouts 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	25 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	26 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	27 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
28 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal 2:30pm Girl Scouts #41441	29 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	30	31 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	1 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	2 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	3 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)

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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:

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

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Pastoral Acts

Baptism

Benjamin Lewis Walls

December 10, 2023

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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

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January 2024