

The Circle

February 2024



Dear Friends in Christ,

Thank you all for celebrating with me as I was installed as Lead Pastor! I've been to a few services of installation of a pastor over the last several years, but St. John's celebration of my installation was by far my favorite! Everything—the music, the preaching, the installation celebration, and the dinner afterwards—all came together to glorify God, and to celebrate the official beginning of this new chapter in our ministry together. Thank you to everyone who played a part in making the installation so wonderful!

I enjoyed celebrating with the people of St. John's, and with friends and colleagues and guests from Phoenixville and beyond. I'm certainly looking forward to more celebrations in the future, but I'm also excited for the work of ministry that we have to do together. Being the Lead Pastor of St. John's Lutheran Church is a big responsibility to live up to. I'm honored to have that responsibility, and I'll do my best to live up to it, and (as Pastor David said in his sermon), to make sure that we—and everyone who comes to know St. John's Lutheran Church—can find Jesus here.

I'm thrilled to be able to be a part of St. John's Lutheran Church, and I'm looking forward to the work we'll do together, as we grow together in knowledge and understanding of God; as we gather in worship to celebrate the things that God has done for us; and as we work together to share God's love for us and the world with our neighbors. I'm excited for us to come to understand what God is calling us to do in the world, and how we can work together to do it!

In Christ,
Pastor Russ

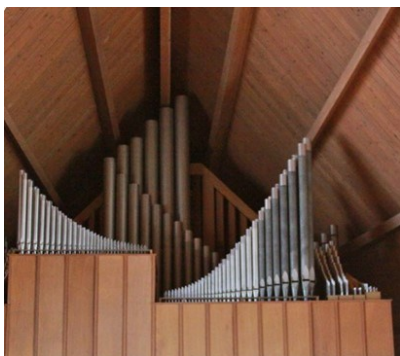


Children's Organ Encounter

February 11th, 9 a.m.

Pre-K through 6th grade classes are invited to join Mr. John and Mr. Tom in the choir loft for Opening Time on February 11th. We will be learning all about the ins and outs of our organ: how it works, what it looks like on the inside, what an organ pipe feels like, and more.

If you're an adult or confirmand thinking, "Wow, I would also like to see this," don't fret. Adult education and confirmation classes are invited for another demonstration on March 10th.



2023 Contribution Statements

Contribution statements for 2023 have been sent to all givers via email and mailed to those for whom we have no email address. If you would like to receive a paper statement, just let Sonya Sowards know at (610) 933-3947 ext. 2 or office@stjohnphoenixville.org. Thank you for your financial support for St. John's!



Doppelflöte

Music for Flute and Organ

Melissa Freilich, flute; Vincent M. Ryan, organ

Sunday, February 25th, 4:00 p.m.



Together, Melissa and Vince are “Doppelflöte,” specializing in flute and organ concerts that are not just heard, but are experienced. Since 1998 they have performed together in numerous communities in the Philadelphia region, and in 2022 made their international debut in both the Castle Church and Town Church of Wittenberg, Germany.

Part of the “experience” will be the opportunity, through Orgelkids USA, for kids in the audience to actually build a working pipe organ which will be played as part of the concert. “Orgelkids makes the King of Instruments accessible. What is accessible is then lovable. To ensure a vibrant future for the pipe organ, we should capture the interest of the next generation when they are young, and then they will always have a place in their heart for the organ.”



During Lent, students who are in 3rd grade or older who have completed their First Bible faith milestone are invited to sign up for this year's First Holy Communion class. Classes will take place 2/25, 3/3, and 3/10, concluding with a bread-baking workshop on 3/16 (10-11:30 a.m.) and a special worship service on 3/17.

Eligible students should keep an eye out for an invitation in the mail.

Please contact Molly at mollyo@stjohnphoenixville.org or (610) 933-3947 ext. 4 to sign up. The deadline for registration is Monday, February 19th.

Sunday School Spring Spirit Days February 18th and March 17th

St. John's CYFM will be hosting spring spirit days for Sunday school. During these days, students are invited to wear a themed outfit to church. We will also be doing a special collection of non-perishable food and hygiene items for PACS these days for the offering. Refer to PACS' hot list for guidance on what to bring.



February 18th—Wear Pink/Red/Hearts for Valentine's Day
March 17th—Dress As Your Favorite Book Character



Kid-Friendly Worship Resources

As a reminder to visitors and guests, we have children's **worship bags** available to use during services.

We also have **children's bulletins/activity sheets** available on the "triangle table."

The **nursery** is open on Sunday mornings during church for children who may need a break/extra care/etc.

Please **ask an usher** for help finding these resources! We welcome and celebrate all the ways children participate in our community.

Ash Wednesday—February 14th

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism.

St. John's provides two opportunities to receive ashes. Deacon Tom Snyder will administer ashes, drive-by in your car, on the Circle from 11:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. At 7:30 p.m. ashes will be administered as part of our Ash Wednesday service of Holy Communion.



Ash Wednesday

CYFM at _____
— St. John's
PHOENIXVILLE, PA

JANUARY—MARCH DATES

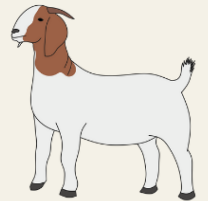
January

7 - First Day of Classes 2024

14 - MLK Day of Service Blessing Bags - ALL CLASSES - Kley Hall

21 - Opening Time Downstairs - Yellow Classroom

21 - Good Gifts



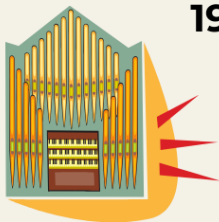
February

11 - Organ Demonstration (Pre-K - 6th) - Opening in Choir Loft

18 - Wear Pink/Red/Hearts for Valentine's Day + PACS
Collection

19 - Registration Deadline for First Holy Communion

25 - First Holy Communion (FHC) Classes Begin



March

3 - Bear Creek Visits

3, 10 - FHC Classes

16 - FHC Bread Baking Workshop

17 - FHC Sunday

17 - Dress as Your Favorite Book Character Day + PACS
Collection

30 - Egg Hunt - Outside - 9:30am

31 - No Christian Education - Easter Sunday





**** BE AWARE ****

Parishioners have reported receiving the following as a text message on their mobile phone:

'Hi XXXXX, I pray that you and your family are safe and well. Do you have a moment? I have a request that I need you to handle discreetly. I am currently going into a meeting now so no calls just reply to my text. - Pastor Russ Crouthamel.'

This is a confirmed scammer tactic, and the message may arrive as a text or an email. If you respond, scammers then typically ask you to purchase gift cards and send them a picture or the numbers of the gift card. We have had this same issue in the past with other pastors. Always check to see that any messages (from St. John's or elsewhere) are coming from a legitimate address before replying. If in doubt, confirm any requests for money with a member of the church staff or leadership.

WELCA met on January 23rd and enjoyed the company of Toni and Buzz Hadfield and their beautiful therapy dogs. It was good have the dogs love on all present. We shared jokes and stories too.

An update on our beautiful new refrigerator, which arrived with a few cosmetic dents and scratches: The company offered a refund, which we accepted. WELCA used those funds to purchase new tablecloths which are a beautiful cobalt blue. We have donated the tablecloths to St. John's and they arrived just in time for Pastor Russ' installation reception. Once again, this wouldn't have been possible without the fundraising support of our church family. Special thanks to Bobbie Riley for ordering and pressing them.

Please mark your calendars for the women's retreat on Saturday, April 6th from 9:30 to 3:00. Led by Pastor Kris Peterson, it will be a day to rest and refresh.

Next month Pastor Kochenderfer will join us with a friend from the past, and in March Jack Ertell will present another historical program.

Please continue to collect toiletries, sundries, cards, tote bags, etc. Just leave the items in the Narthex labeled WELCA. 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.

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!!



**St. John's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
December 11, 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	A
Aimee Hillegas	P	Elisa Kahn	P	Jeanne Schanzenbach	P	Mike Kahl	P
Pastor Crouthamel	P						
Guests:							
Sonya Sowards	P	Tom Snyder	P	Molly Oladunjoye	P		

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Kelly; Dick led with an opening prayer.

Prior Meeting Minutes

- Correction to prior minutes: Electronics Committee did meet, but minutes were not produced.

Motion by Mitch, Second by Mike to accept the minutes as presented; motion passed.

Staff Reports

Motion by Sue, Second by Dick to accept the November Staff Reports; motion passed.

Committee Reports

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Finance Committee met 11/27/23. Minutes will be provided for next meeting.
- Electronics Committee – did meet but no minutes.
- Faith Formation from 11/07/23 – accepted as written.
 - Still need Grade 5/6 Sunday school teacher.
- Property Committee meeting on 12/04 postponed, but a brief update was provided.
- Worship and Music Committee from 12/05/23 - accepted as written.
- Social Ministry Committee from 11/01/23 and 12/06/23 – accepted as written.
- Fellowship Committee – did not meet.
- Columbarium Committee – did not meet.
- Executive Committee – did not meet.
- Stewardship Committee from 11/20/23 – accepted as written.
- Welcome Team Committee - did not meet.
- Kitchen Task Force from 11/20/23 – accepted as written.
 - Clarification of \$60k is required

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

Old Business

- Kitchen Renovation Project
 - Task force had the initial meeting with detailed discussions on several components.
 - Prior to a design being finalized, a plan must be submitted to the county certification group. That may drive many design details.
 - Agreed that the initial approved \$60k was to be obtained from a separate ask, not from existing funds.
- Church Collaboration Committee – next meeting in January. There is discussion about sharing an Easter Egg hunt, and potentially other Easter activities.
- Staff Annual Reviews

New Business

- 2024 Budget
 - We carried over a \$22.9k surplus from 2022 to 2023.
 - We are currently at a \$10k deficit YTD 2023.
 - The 2024 working budget currently stands with a \$94k deficit.
 - Agreed we need additional communication to the congregation regarding our financial status, and how if each family/individual increased just a little bit it would go a long way toward resolving the deficit.
- New Council Members – Several potential names were proposed. Pastor, Tom and others will follow up. Annual meeting will be held February 25, 2024.
- Church Mutual Deductible Increase – property insurance for the church is going to increase from roughly \$10k to \$14k, and our deductible will increase substantially. Mitch conferred with Rob Freas, and Rob indicated that Church Mutual has historically been the best option and he confirmed that rates are increasing everywhere; he recommended that we stay with CM. All agreed that we should maintain that coverage.
- Request for St. John’s to be an emergency relocation center for Mom’s House, which is moving to First United Methodist after the first of the year. This would be for the day care, during the day only in the event of an emergency.
 - Dick made a motion that St. John’s be the emergency relocation center for Mom’s House; Janet seconded the motion; motion carried.

Kelly adjourned the meeting at 8:28; meeting ended with the Lord’s Prayer. Next regularly scheduled meeting will be January 8, 2023.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Starling
Church Council Secretary

February 2024 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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 Durlinger's birthday Marlene Holter's birthday	3 David Wilkinson's birthday
4	5 Derek Carr's birthday Sean Clark's birthday	6 David Reading's birthday Martin Emery's birthday	7	8	9 Erin McKenna's birthday Jason O'Neill's birthday	10 David Horvath's birthday Joel Zimmermann's birthday Kevin Beck's birthday Norah DiGioia's birthday
11 Beverly Rote's birthday Bill Schoellkopf's birthday Kim Birdsell's birthday Mark Wilkinson's birthday	12 Cole Church's birthday Mae Cratty's birthday	13	14 Benton Drewes's birthday Gary Barker's birthday Marlene Seyler's birthday	15 Kate Warren's birthday Rachel Kelly's birthday	16	17
18 Alexander Seidel's birthday	19 Aimee Hillegas's birthday Miles Church's birthday Sally Tomasco's birthday	20 Alicia Dewey's birthday	21 Chris Boyle's birthday John Dorward's birthday	22 Bill Wimple's birthday Cathy Kahl's birthday Shaun and Maura Lockett's anniversary	23 Addison Kunsch's birthday Carmen Murphy's birthday	24 Robin Emery's birthday
25 Chuck and Carol Cully's anniversary David Lacy's birthday	26 Lily Lane-Aharonian's birthday Scott Deichmann's birthday	27 Tyler Thompson's birthday	28 Carsen G. Veneziani's birthday Jocelyn Mowrer's birthday Sophia I. Veneziani's birthday	29	1 Andrea Hart's birthday Jimmy Moreland's birthday Karen Carr's birthday Sam and Beth Fryer's anniversary	2 Diane Blattner's birthday Kevin Yonosh's birthday

February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
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)
4 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 3pm National Charity League	5 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 5:30pm Junior/Cadette Girl Scouts #42024 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	6 6:30pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Worship & Music	7 4pm Social Ministry 6pm Girl Scouts #4308 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	8 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	9 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	10 12pm Marston Birthday party 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
11 9am Faith Formation-organ encounter for SS children 9:45am Fellowship Time 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal 2:30pm Girl Scouts #41441	12 10am MAEVE Moms Mingle 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	13 6:30pm Parent Grief Support Group	14 11am Ashes to Go 4pm Daisy Girl Scouts #4863 6pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Cadette Girl Scouts #41982 Ash Wednesday 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal (following Ash Wednesday service) 7:30pm Ash Wednesday	15 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal 8:15pm Naranon Support	16 St. Peter's lunch 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	17 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
18 Circle deadline 9am Faith Formation-Spirit Day 10:15am Holy Communion	19 11am Alanon Family Group 5pm Stewardship Committee 7pm Stephen Ministry	20	21 6pm Girl Scouts #4308 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	22 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	23 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	24 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)
25 9am Faith Formation-First Communion begins 10:15am Holy Communion 11:15am Annual Meeting 2pm PCO Rehearsal 2:30pm Girl Scouts #41441 4pm DOPPELFLÖTE concert	26 10am Covered Bridge Garden Club 11am Alanon Family Group 5:30pm Junior/Cadette Girl Scouts #42024 7pm Finance Committee	27 10:30am WELCA 7:30pm Fellowship Committee	28 4pm Daisy Girl Scouts #4863 6pm Girl Scouts 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	29 6:30pm Girl Scouts 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	1 8pm Narcotics Anonymous	2 5pm Evening Light (w/communion)

Annual Meeting

February 25th, 11:15 a.m.

St. John's annual meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 25, 2024, immediately following the service. All eligible voting members (those who are confirmed and have communed and contributed in 2023) are invited to attend.

Dear St. John's Lutheran Church:

Thank you for your generous gift of \$4,932 to the ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in American. With your gifts you are putting God's love into action—living faithfully, witnessing boldly, serving joyfully, and giving abundantly. The glory of God shines through you.

With gratitude,

Rachel Wind

Executive for Development, ELCA

**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.

**People of God Involved in God's Work
February Worship Staff**

Acolyte

- 4 Brett Gallagher
- 11 Grace Supplee
- 14 TBD
- 18 Henry Duerr
- 25 Ella Drewes

Altar Guild

- 4 Janet Ertell & Nancy Cressman
- 11 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett
- 14 Jean Herbranson
- 18 Jean Herbranson
- 25 Betty Hans & Jean Herbranson

February Worship Staff (continued)

Assisting Minister

- 4 Nancy Cressman
- 11 Ron Stevens
- 14 TBD
- 18 Annie Cummins
- 25 Bill Starling

Communion Assistant/Lector

- 4 Walt Deichmann
- 11 Nancy Cressman
- 14 TBD
- 18 Lynn Titus
- 25 Mitch Reading

Counters

- 4 Jack & Janet Ertell
- 11 Heather Yonosh & Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 18 Mary Heiser; Mike & Cathy Kahl
- 25 Stephen & Jen Drewes

Evening Light Assistant

- 3 Sandy Momyer
- 10 Shirley Platzter
- 17 Sandy Momyer
- 24 Rich Latella

Fellowship Time Host

- 11 Worship & Music

Lock-Up

- 4 Kelly Gallagher
- 11 Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 14 TBD
- 18 Elisa Khan
- 25 Mitch Reading/Stephen Drewes

Stream Team

- 4 Dale Herbranson, Paul Miller
- 11 Josh Romano, Paul Miller
- 14 Aimee Hillegas, Dale Herbranson
- 18 Dale Herbranson, Paul Miller
- 25 Josh Romano, Paul Miller

Ushers

- 4 Diane and Katelyn Blattner
- 11 Donna Anderson & Jen Drewes
- 14 Donna Anderson
- 18 Cathy & Mike Kahl
- 25 Dick Kunsch & Sue Starling



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

www.stjohnluthphoenixville.org
E-mail: 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:

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

Photos from iStock and Unsplash

Updated Contact Information

Chris & Shelley Saeger
1215 Ridge Road
Waukesha, WI 53186-1426

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

Thomas Ford Andrews

December 24, 2023

Avalee Christine Granacher-Bungay

January 14, 2024

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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

(610) 933-3947

www.stjohnluthphoenixville.org



E-mail: office@stjohnphoenixville.org

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



February 2024