

The Circle

January 2025



Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope you've all had a wonderful Christmas season! I'm looking forward to the coming year, and to the things that we'll do together as a community.

One of the things that I'm going to be doing this year is reading through the Bible, and inviting everyone at St. John's to read through it together with me. One of the marks of discipleship that we've been working on as a congregation is daily Bible reading, but even without the language of marks of discipleship, reading Scripture and praying daily is a significant part of Christians' lives of faith. Martin Luther described the Scriptures as "the manger that contains Christ." Reading the Bible is one of the ways that we encounter God, and there are some really fascinating stories in the Bible.

All you'll need to do it is a Bible, and ideally a couple of bookmarks, and about fifteen minutes a day. I have a couple of capital-O Opinions about Bibles, which I'll offer, but ultimately, the best Bible is the one that you're going to be comfortable reading, and that's going to be different for everyone, Pastor Russ' Opinions notwithstanding. =)

If you already have a Bible at home, certainly don't feel like you have to get a new one. But if you're in the market for a new Bible for daily Bible reading, here are some things to look for:

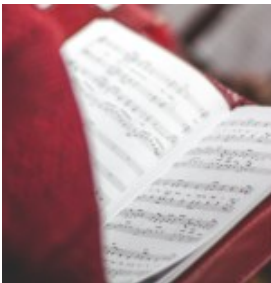
First, what translation are you going to use? Every English Bible is a translation from Hebrew (in the Old Testament) and Greek (in the New Testament), and the thing about translation is that they all reflect the viewpoints and biases of the translator, because there's a lot of interpretation in even the most literal, word-for-word translation. Some translations of the Bible more accurately reflect what the Greek and Hebrew say than others, for a variety of reasons. If you're in the market for a new Bible, I'd recommend either the New Revised Standard Version or the Common English Bible. Both are solid, accurate translations. NRSV is what we use in worship at St. John's, and CEB is another very good translation that's not quite as stilted-sounding as NRSV can be. NIV and NLT aren't bad, although they sometimes make some choices in their translation that I wouldn't have. (But they do have the advantage of being more common on bookstore shelves!)

The other thing to look at is the features of the Bible. I personally prefer a simpler, slimline Bible without additional commentaries or study notes, but I know some folks prefer those. Honestly, large print is one of the features I most want in a Bible nowadays! If you do get a Bible with study notes, pay attention to who is writing those notes, and what their theological perspective is; it might be very different from yours, which could be a good or bad thing. If you're looking for a study Bible, I'd recommend the Lutheran Study Bible, which can be found online at <https://www.augsburgfortress.org/store/product/9780806680606/Lutheran-Study-Bible-Paperback>. I'll probably be doing most of my daily reading either from the Common English Bible on my Kindle, or from a slimline CEB similar to the one at <https://www.commonenglishbible.com/bibles/itemDetails/id.9781791008147>.

Every month in the *Circle*, we'll publish the monthly reading plan, which has a reading from the New Testament, the Old Testament, Psalms, and Proverbs. I hope you'll join me in reading the Bible every day this coming year!

In Christ,

Pastor Russ



Lessons & Carols
will take place on the first Sunday of Christmas (also the fifth day of Christmas), December 29th, at 10:15 a.m. Come sing with us and continue the twelve-day celebration of our Savior's birth!



Bible In A Year Reading Plan

January

	Old Testament	New Testament	Psalms	Proverbs
<input type="checkbox"/> 01	Genesis 1:1-2:25	Matthew 1:1-2:12	Psalms 1:1-6	Proverbs 1:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/> 02	Genesis 3:1-4:26	Matthew 2:13-3:6	Psalms 2:1-12	Proverbs 1:7-9
<input type="checkbox"/> 03	Genesis 5:1-7:24	Matthew 3:7-4:11	Psalms 3:1-8	Proverbs 1:10-19
<input type="checkbox"/> 04	Genesis 8:1-10:32	Matthew 4:12-25	Psalms 4:1-8	Proverbs 1:20-23
<input type="checkbox"/> 05	Genesis 11:1-13:4	Matthew 5:1-26	Psalms 5:1-12	Proverbs 1:24-28
<input type="checkbox"/> 06	Genesis 13:5-15:21	Matthew 5:27-48	Psalms 6:1-10	Proverbs 1:29-33
<input type="checkbox"/> 07	Genesis 16:1-18:15	Matthew 6:1-24	Psalms 7:1-17	Proverbs 2:1-5
<input type="checkbox"/> 08	Genesis 18:16-19:38	Matthew 6:25-7:14	Psalms 8:1-9	Proverbs 2:6-15
<input type="checkbox"/> 09	Genesis 20:1-22:24	Matthew 7:15-29	Psalms 9:1-12	Proverbs 2:16-22
<input type="checkbox"/> 10	Genesis 23:1-24:51	Matthew 8:1-17	Psalms 9:13-20	Proverbs 3:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/> 11	Genesis 24:52-26:16	Matthew 8:18-34	Psalms 10:1-15	Proverbs 3:7-8
<input type="checkbox"/> 12	Genesis 26:17-27:46	Matthew 9:1-17	Psalms 10:16-18	Proverbs 3:9-10
<input type="checkbox"/> 13	Genesis 28:1-29:35	Matthew 9:18-38	Psalms 11:1-7	Proverbs 3:11-12
<input type="checkbox"/> 14	Genesis 30:1-31:16	Matthew 10:1-23	Psalms 12:1-8	Proverbs 3:13-15
<input type="checkbox"/> 15	Genesis 31:17-32:12	Matthew 10:24-11:6	Psalms 13:1-6	Proverbs 3:16-18
<input type="checkbox"/> 16	Genesis 32:13-34:31	Matthew 11:7-30	Psalms 14:1-7	Proverbs 3:19-20
<input type="checkbox"/> 17	Genesis 35:1-36:43	Matthew 12:1-21	Psalms 15:1-5	Proverbs 3:21-26
<input type="checkbox"/> 18	Genesis 37:1-38:30	Matthew 12:22-45	Psalms 16:1-11	Proverbs 3:27-32
<input type="checkbox"/> 19	Genesis 39:1-41:16	Matthew 12:46-13:23	Psalms 17:1-15	Proverbs 3:33-35
<input type="checkbox"/> 20	Genesis 41:17-42:17	Matthew 13:24-46	Psalms 18:1-15	Proverbs 4:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/> 21	Genesis 42:18-43:34	Matthew 13:47-14:12	Psalms 18:16-36	Proverbs 4:7-10
<input type="checkbox"/> 22	Genesis 44:1-45:28	Matthew 14:13-36	Psalms 18:37-50	Proverbs 4:11-13
<input type="checkbox"/> 23	Genesis 46:1-47:31	Matthew 15:1-28	Psalms 19:1-14	Proverbs 4:14-19
<input type="checkbox"/> 24	Genesis 48:1-49:33	Matthew 15:29-16:12	Psalms 20:1-9	Proverbs 4:20-27
<input type="checkbox"/> 25	Genesis 50:1 - Exodus 2:10	Matthew 16:13-17:9	Psalms 21:1-13	Proverbs 5:1-6
<input type="checkbox"/> 26	Exodus 2:11-3:22	Matthew 17:10-27	Psalms 22:1-18	Proverbs 5:7-14
<input type="checkbox"/> 27	Exodus 4:1-5:21	Matthew 18:1-20	Psalms 22:19-31	Proverbs 5:15-21
<input type="checkbox"/> 28	Exodus 5:22-7:25	Matthew 18:21-19:12	Psalms 23:1-6	Proverbs 5:22-23
<input type="checkbox"/> 29	Exodus 8:1-9:35	Matthew 19:13-30	Psalms 24:1-10	Proverbs 6:1-5
<input type="checkbox"/> 30	Exodus 10:1-12:13	Matthew 20:1-28	Psalms 25:1-15	Proverbs 6:6-11
<input type="checkbox"/> 31	Exodus 12:14-13:16	Matthew 20:29-21:22	Psalms 25:16-22	Proverbs 6:12-15

<https://bibleinayearonline.com>

The One Year® Bible Reading Plan. Copyright © 1985, 1986, 1987, 1989, 1991, 1996, 2004, Tyndale House Publishers. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers. All rights reserved.

Caring for Creation

The Unseen Crisis: Ocean Pollution and the Fight for Cleaner Seas What We Can Do at St. John's

Ocean pollution is one of the most pressing environmental issues of our time. It affects marine life, human health, and the overall health of our planet. Despite its vastness, the ocean is not immune to the impacts of human activities. The accumulation of plastic waste, chemical runoff, and other pollutants has created a crisis that demands immediate attention and action.

Ocean pollution has devastating effects on marine ecosystems. Thousands of marine animals, including fish, sea-birds, coral reefs, and marine mammals, die each year due to ingestion of or entanglement in plastic debris. Additionally, chemical pollutants can cause reproductive issues, developmental problems, and even death in marine organisms. Humans are not exempt from the impacts of ocean pollution. Contaminants can enter the food chain through bioaccumulation, posing serious health risks to those who consume seafood. Furthermore, pollutants in the ocean can affect water quality and recreational activities, leading to skin infections, respiratory issues, and other health problems. The economic consequences of ocean pollution are significant. The fishing and tourism industries, which are vital sources of income for many coastal communities, suffer greatly. The cost of cleaning up polluted beaches and restoring damaged ecosystems also places a financial burden on governments and organizations.

Plastic pollution is the most visible and pervasive form of ocean pollution. Single-use plastics, such as bottles, bags, and straws, make up a large portion of marine debris. These plastics break down into microplastics, which are nearly impossible to remove from the ocean and are ingested by marine life. Plastic bags take approximately 20 to 1000 years to decompose. Agricultural runoff, containing pesticides and fertilizers, enters waterways and eventually reaches the ocean. This runoff can cause harmful algal blooms, which deplete oxygen levels in the water and create dead zones where marine life cannot survive. Oil spills, whether from tanker accidents or drilling operations, have catastrophic effects on marine environments. Oil coats the feathers and fur of marine animals, impairing their ability to regulate temperature and leading to death.

Ocean pollution is a critical issue that requires immediate and sustained efforts from individuals, communities, governments, and organizations worldwide. By supporting initiatives that aim to clean up and protect our oceans, we can help ensure a healthier future for both marine life and humans. It is our collective responsibility to turn the tide on ocean pollution and preserve the beauty and biodiversity of our oceans for generations to come. Every action, no matter how small, contributes to the larger goal of cleaner, healthier oceans.

The fight against ocean pollution involves a multifaceted approach, including education, policy changes, and direct action. Numerous organizations and nonprofits are dedicated to addressing this issue and working towards cleaner oceans.

The Ocean Cleanup: Founded by Boyan Slat, The Ocean Cleanup is an ambitious project aimed at removing plastic from the ocean. The organization has developed advanced technologies to collect and remove plastic debris from the Great Pacific Garbage Patch and other areas. (<https://www.theoceancleanup.com/>)

Ocean Conservancy: Ocean Conservancy works to protect the ocean from today's greatest global challenges. Through science-based solutions and partnerships, they focus on tackling plastic pollution, promoting sustainable fisheries, and protecting marine wildlife. (<https://oceanconservancy.org/>)

Surfrider Foundation: The Surfrider Foundation is dedicated to the protection and enjoyment of the world's ocean, waves, and beaches. They focus on issues such as plastic pollution, water quality, and coastal preservation through activism, education, and community involvement. (<https://www.surfrider.org/>)

Sea Shepherd Conservation Society: Sea Shepherd is an international nonprofit focused on marine conservation. They engage in direct action campaigns to defend marine wildlife and habitats, including efforts to remove marine debris and combat illegal fishing. (<https://www.seashepherd.org/>)

While organizations play a crucial role in combating ocean pollution, individual actions are equally important. **Here are some steps members of St. John's can take to contribute to ocean cleanup:**

Reduce Plastic Use: Minimize your use of single-use plastics by opting for reusable items such as water bottles, bags or eco safe biodegradable bags, and straws. Supporting companies that use sustainable packaging can also make a difference.

Proper Waste Disposal: Ensure that your waste, especially plastics, is disposed of properly. Participate in local recycling programs and avoid littering.

Continued next page

Caring for Creation (continued)

Participate in Cleanups: Join local beach or river cleanups. These events not only help remove debris but also raise awareness about the impact of pollution.

Support Legislation: Advocate for and support policies aimed at reducing plastic production and improving waste management. Vote for leaders who prioritize environmental protection.

Educate and Advocate: Spread awareness about ocean pollution and its impacts. Educate friends and family about the importance of reducing plastic use and protecting marine environments.

Choose Sustainable Products: Purchase products made from sustainable materials and support companies committed to reducing their environmental footprint.

Meeting God in the Ordinary WELCA Retreat

March 22, 2025

When we look at Scripture, we see it is often in the midst of everyday life that one encounters God—on a trek up a mountain, pulling water from a well, on a boat waiting for fish to bite, on the road to Emmaus. Our own faith stories are full of “aha moments” that occur amidst the ordinary routines of life.

We often expect to experience God in life’s big memorable events—a graduation, wedding, anniversary, the birth of a baby, a milestone birthday. But most of our lives are filled with ordinary moments and routines: drinking morning coffee, reading a book, having lunch with a friend, washing the dishes, exercising at the Y, volunteering at church or in the community. It is there in the ordinary that we meet God. It’s just a matter of “seeing” . . .

In this year’s WELCA retreat, “Meeting God in the Ordinary,” we will look at our lives—the commonplace, the joyful, the heartbreaking events—and discover the presence of God, hidden in plain sight. The retreat will take place on Saturday, March 22nd. It begins with coffee and fellowship at 9 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. The cost is \$20. We welcome back Rev. Kris Peterson as our retreat leader. Call or email Sonya Sowards in the church office to register (office@stjohnphoenixville.org or (610) 933-3947 ext. 2). If you have any questions, please contact Linda Landis.

Please bring an ordinary object from a time when you experienced the presence of God—photograph, cell phone, hymnal, recipe, a letter/card, mug, a souvenir from a special place, a flower, a gift from a friend, an heirloom, etc.



WELCA met on December 3rd to pack bags for the shut ins and staff AND to box the MANY items collected for Silver Springs. What a haul!!!!

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

We even had time to sing carols and holiday songs.

We're looking forward to a visit from our favorite canine, Sadie, in January as well as sharing hugs and humor.

We meet at 10:30 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month so mark your calendar now.



APPALACHIA SERVICE PROJECT—This past summer a group of St. John's youth and adults worked with Appalachia Service Project in Wise County, Virginia, to help make homes safer, drier and warmer for residents. See the positive impact of our work on the next page. Thank you for your support of ASP!



IMPACT REPORT

Summer 2024



Wise County, VA

15
families served
(36 people in total)

70
repair projects completed

563
volunteers

19,705
hours of service

\$670K
in donated volunteer labor

families in **1** county were served with home repair (1 state)

ASP Service Area

232
families served
(576 people in total)

1,354
repair projects completed

7,837
volunteers

274,295
hours of service

\$9.2M
in donated volunteer labor

families in **17** counties were served with home repair (4 states)



PROJECT DESCRIPTION	WISE COUNTY, VA	ASP SERVICE AREA
Basic utilities repaired/replaced (plumbing, electrical, septic, well)	—	59
Ceilings/walls repaired	12	190
Doors/windows installed	—	108
Drainage ditches/retaining walls	1	22
Fascia/soffit/guttering	1	40
Floors repaired	14	257
Foundations repaired	—	16
Insulation installed	2	92
Interior/exterior paint	8	119
Porches/steps/ramps	20	250
Roofs repaired/installed	6	84
Room additions completed (bedroom or bathroom)	—	12
Siding repaired/installed	3	64
Underpinning installed	3	41
Total # projects completed	70	1,354



People of God Involved in God's Work

January Worship Staff

Acolytes

- 5 Adeline McCabe & TBD x 3
- 12 Lhötse Durflinger
- 19 Madelyn Hicks
- 26 Cece Leong

Altar Guild

- 5 Nancy Cressman & Janet Ertell
- 12 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett
- 19 Andrea Hart & Jean Herbranson
- 26 Betty Hans & Jean Herbranson

Assisting Minister

- 5 Ron Stevens
- 12 Tom Snyder
- 19 Walt Deichmann
- 26 Deb Ahola

Communion Assistant/Lector

- 5 Lynn Titus
- 12 Mitch Reading
- 19 Nancy Cressman
- 26 Lector: Annaliese Duerr
Communion Assistant: Mimi Woods

Counters

- 5 Jack & Janet Ertell; Donna Anderson
- 12 Heather Yonosh & Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 19 Mary Heiser; Mike & Cathy Kahl
- 26 Stephen & Jen Drewes

Evening Light Assistant

- 4 Sandy Momyer
- 11 Toni Hadfield
- 18 Rich Latella
- 25 Rich Latella

Fellowship Time

- 12 Thrivent

Lock-Up

- 5 Mitch Reading
- 12 Jeanne Schanzenbach
- 19 Kate Hicks
- 26 Stephen Drewes

Stream Team

- 5 Dale Herbranson
- 12 Josh Romano
- 19 Aimee Hillegas
- 26 Dale Herbranson

Ushers

- 5 Don Titus & Barry Church
- 12 Sue Starling & Nancy Cressman
- 19 Mike & Cathy Kahl
- 26 Donna Anderson & Jen Drewes

Faith Formation for Adults

Start the New Year with a friendly learning experience! Adults can choose from four different classes on Sunday mornings at 9 a.m. **Bible Study** meets in the Fireside Room and is led by Linda Landis. They will be learning about the "Woman with the Issue of Blood" and "Elizabeth: How to Win at the Waiting Game." **Faith Life** meets in Meeting Room 1 (to the left of the Kley Hall stage) and is coordinated by Jack Ertell. They discuss recent articles and current events. **Happy Hour** meets in the Eisenhower Room and is coordinated by Mitch Reading. This group of parents encourage each other while their children are in Sunday school. **Sunday Morning Book Club** meets in the Pastor's office and is coordinated by Jean Herbranson. The Book Club will be reading "Through the Veneer of Time" by Vera Bell.

Be a Confirmation Guide!

We're looking for a few members of the congregation to help serve as additional Confirmation Guides. Guides work with the confirmation class to help facilitate small-group discussions and conversations in class and may also help with occasional other confirmation activities. If you're interested in learning more, please contact Pastor Russ. Thanks!

Nominations for Congregation Council

The governing body of our congregation, the Congregation Council, is looking to fill three to four seats for our next congregational year. The congregational year starts in February 2025, at the close of our annual meeting. Members of the Council are asked to attend a monthly meeting (in person or via Zoom) and serve on a committee as part of their duties to the congregation. Questions and nominations of fellow members, or yourself, can be made to Aimee Hillegas (ahillegas@comcast.net), to Pastor Russ or to Sonya in the church office.

What is the wonder of God's love
The sun that warms us by day
A moon that lights our way
When darkness falls
He gave His son for all mankind
I am the lord of the mountain
I am with those who
Struggle in the valleys
For I shall lead my
People in valleys of peace
Where peace flows as
Gently as a lamb
Gambols beside my sheep
Of peace for this is the
Wonder of my peace

Margaret Walker

**St. John's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes
November 11, 2024**

Attendees:							
Kyle Oszeyczik	P	Mitch Reading	P	Dale Herbranson	P	Stephen Drewes	P
Kelly Gallagher	P	Janet Gerner	P	Sue Starling	P		
Aimee Hillegas	P	Kate Hicks	P	Jeanne Schanzenbach	P	Mike Kahl	P
Guests:							
Sonya Sowards	P	Tom Snyder	P	Molly Oladunjoye	P		

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Aimee. Dale will lead the devotion next month.

Prior Meeting Minutes

Motion by Kelly, second by Mitch to accept the minutes; motion passed.

Staff Reports

Motion by Kyle, second by Sue to accept Staff reports; motion passed.

Committee Reports

Finance Committee report from 11/04/24.

Motion by Mitch to approve the Finance report; Mike seconded; motion carried.

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Electronics Committee from 10/20/24 – accepted as written.
- Faith Formation from 11/05/24 – accepted as written.
- Property Committee from 11/04/24 - accepted as written.
- Worship and Music Committee from 11/05/24 – accepted as written.
 - Pastor Russ discussed the possibility of doing a pulpit exchange January 19th with other PACA churches. More to come after further discussion within PACA.
- Social Ministry Committee – from 11/05/24 – accepted as written.
- Fellowship Committee – from 9/24/24 accepted as written.
- Columbarium Committee – did not meet.
- Executive Committee – did not meet.
- Stewardship Committee – from 10/21/24 accepted as written.
- Welcome Team Committee from 10/08/24 accepted as written.
- Green Team from 10/21/24 accepted as written.

Motion by Sue, Second by Kelly to accept committee reports; motion carried.

Old Business

- Muhlenberg Parish – nothing to report.
- Vacant Council seat – names were discussed. Sonya to put a blurb in the bulletin for open nominations. Additionally Mitch, Tom, Pastor and Aimee to follow up with specific names.
- Coffee Hour
 - Sue Starling suggested that if a committee does not have a Food Safety Manager as a member, perhaps one of the newly certified managers can team up with them on their first coffee hour to demonstrate the new practices required to comply with food safety regulations. All agreed; Sonya will contact upcoming coffee hour committees.

New Business

- Hiring committee for Director of CYFM position – need an ad hoc task force. Kelly will reach out to multiple members of previous task force and get it rolling.
- Kitchen rental by external groups – we already have a policy that we do not rent to commercial enterprises. We may entertain external non-profit requests, Sonya would bring those cases to Property and then Council for approval.
- 2025 Budget –
 - Staff reviews and Exec recommendations – Aimee to communicate recommended salary increases from Exec to Finance.
- Path forward to review all existing church funds, including the Pastoral Housing Fund.
 - Agreed we need a subcommittee to analyze these designated funds and a recommended approach for each fund. Jeanne, Janet, Sue, Mitch and Mitch will ask Kevin Gallagher.
- Audit Committee is needed – may not be on Council, may not be a Financial Officer, must be a voting member and cannot serve more than two consecutive years. Jeanne and Mike will look at the current checklist, and see if it can be streamlined and made more effective.

Mitch made the motion to adjourn the meeting; Janet seconded; motion carried.

Next regular meeting is December 9th, 2024.

Respectfully submitted,

Sue Starling

Church Council Secretary

January 2025—birthdays and anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 Justin O'Neill's birthday Mark and Deborah Wallace's anniversary	30 Tom Snyder III's birthday	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 Eliisa Khan's birthday	7 Jake New's birthday	8 Angela Bearoff's birthday Quinn Osiecznik'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 Elise Staudenmaier's birthday 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 Schalbie's birthday Ellie Schalbie's birthday Hannah Kramer's birthday Kimberly Breidenbach's birthday Mary Scavello's birthday	27 Gary Campbell's birthday William Stotler's birthday	28 Lily Stewart's birthday	29	30 Charles Soull's birthday Cindy Gadzicki's birthday	31 Stephanie Riley's birthday	1 Evan DesMarais's birthday Madison Muller's birthday

January 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
29 10:15am Holy Communion w/Lessons & Carols	30 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	31	1 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon	2 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	3	4 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
5 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion	6 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 6pm Cadette Troop #42024 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	7 6pm Cadette Girl Scouts 6:30pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Worship & Music	8 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	9 6pm Brownie Troop #4094 6pm Girl Scouts #4432 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	10	11 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
12 9am Faith Formation 9:45am Fellowship Time 10:15am Holy Communion 2:30pm Girl Scouts 40441 and 4041 3pm Girl Scouts	13 10am MAEVE Moms Mingle 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	14 6:30pm Parent Grief Support Group 6:30pm Welcoming Team	15 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	16 6:30pm Kiwanis 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal 8:15pm Naranon Support	17 St. Peter's lunch 9am Orion - Bridges Out of Poverty Workshop	18 Circle deadline 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
19 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion	20 11am Alanon Family Group 5pm Stewardship Committee 6pm Cadette Troop #42024 7pm Green Team 7pm Stephen Ministry	21	22 6pm Girl Scouts #473 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	23 6pm Brownie Troop #4094 6pm Girl Scouts #4432 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	24	25 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
26 9am Faith Formation 10:15am Holy Communion 2pm PCO Rehearsal 3pm Girl Scouts 4pm Girl Scouts 40441 and 4041	27 10:30am Covered Bridge Garden Club 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	28 10am Mom's Mingle 10:30am WELCA 7pm Fellowship Committee	29 7pm Alanon 7:30pm Adult Choir Rehearsal	30 6:45pm Children's Handbells Rehearsal 7pm Naranon 7:30pm Adult Handbells Rehearsal	31	1 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous

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.

Kid-Friendly Worship Resources

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.

Communion Records and Prayer Requests

RECORD OF COMMUNION AND/OR PRAYER REQUEST

We took communion (date & time):
 5P
 10:15a
 9:00a (summer)
 other date & time: _____

I'm a visitor



Name(s): _____ Env. # _____

New or change in contact info? If so, print corrected information below:

Prayer request(s): _____

Please place this card in the offering plate or hand it in on the triangle kiosk in the narthex (lobby) when you leave. THANKS!

Our constitution defines members eligible to vote at regular meetings of the church as those who "shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record" in the calendar year. Your contribution is recorded when it includes your name and/or envelope number. To ensure that your communion is recorded, please fill out the "Record of Communion and/or Prayer Request" card at least once a year. Communion cards can be found in the pew racks at the end of each pew. The card may also be used for prayer requests, address changes, questions, or comments. If you are worshipping exclusively from home, please contact Sonya Sowards with prayer requests and worship dates.

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.

Summary Financial Report as of November 30, 2024

	Monthly		Year-to-Date	
	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual
Income:				
Envelope Giving	\$ 27,995	\$ 29,015	\$ 307,939	\$ 298,797
Other Income	3,791	3,709	41,709	37,960
	\$ 31,786	\$ 32,724	\$ 349,648	\$ 336,757
Expenses	\$ 39,745	\$ 38,903	\$ 437,195	\$ 408,600
Income (Deficit)	\$ (7,959)	\$ (6,179)	\$ (87,547)	\$ (71,843)

Two-Liter Soda Containers Needed

Please save straight-sided two-liter soda bottles and place in the marked box in the glass entryway. Altar Guild will cut them to size and add tape to cover the cut edge so they can be used as take-home containers for altar flowers. Thank you!

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:
 Dale Herbranson
 Jeanne Schanzenbach
Other Members of Council:
 Janet Gerner
 Mike Kahl
 Kate Hicks
 Kyle Oszeyczik
 Mitch Reading
 Stephen Drewes

Stephen Ministry Leader:
 Linda Landis — (610) 933-9544

COMMITTEES

Columbarium:
 Bill Starling, Chair
 Dale Herbranson, Council Rep.

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

Executive:
 Mitch Reading, Chair

Faith Formation:
 Erica Reading, Chair
 Kelly Gallagher & Kate Hicks
 Council Reps.

Fellowship:
 Sandra Zimmermann, Chair
 Sue Starling, Council Rep.

Finance:
 Jack Ertell, Chair
 Mitch Reading & Jeanne Schanzenbach
 Council Reps.

Mutual Ministry:
 Kyle Oszeyczik, Council Rep.

Property:
 Bobbi Riley, Chair
 Mike Kahl, Council Rep.

Social Ministry:
 Janet Gerner, Chair & Council Rep.

Stewardship:
 Stephen Drewes, Council Rep.

Welcoming Team:
 Kate Hicks, Council Rep.

Worship and Music:
 Jean Herbranson, Chair

Office Assistants:
 June Henzie
 Joan Carl
 Pat Renninger

The Circle Editor:
 Sonya K. Sowards

Photos from iStock, Lightstock,
 and Unsplash

Change in Contact Information

Tim Lockett
 580 S. Goddard Blvd., Apt. 6116
 King of Prussia, PA 19406-3398

Inside this issue:

Pastor's note / Lessons & Carols	1
January Bible reading	2
Caring for Creation	3
WELCA	4
Appalachia Service Project	4-6
Worship Assistants / Adult faith formation / Confirmation guide needed / Council members needed / poetry	7
Council minutes	8-9
Calendars	9-10
St. John's info	11-12
Staff / Updated contact info / poetry	cover

To touch to taste to hear
 To laugh wonders of God's love
 Jesus Son of God was born
 A humble man bore a light
 That we might see
 Still he calls come follow
 Me hear my words of love
 For angels sang praise be
 To God earth and sky come
 All sing out in joy to our
 Heavenly God of hosts

Hear laugh love
 God's love given that
 All shall know God is love
 In gentleness He guides
 By gentle brooks along
 Meadows gentle paths
 He walks beside us with
 Kindness doth carry our
 Souls that all His love
 Shall know as we walk
 In the pasture of His love

Poetry by Margaret Walker

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



January 2025