

# The Circle

Summer 2026



Dear Friends in Christ,

I hope everyone's summer is off to a good start! Last month, at the Synod Assembly, the voting members of the Southeastern Pennsylvania were tasked with voting on whether or not to adopt a resolution condemning Christian Nationalism. The resolution passed, which I'm personally glad for; I support the resolution. But Christian nationalism is one of those hot-button things right now; this isn't just academic, and it's also very local. In light of that, and as we prepare for celebrations of the United States' 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary, it's important to talk about Christian nationalism: what it is and isn't; why the resolution opposing it was important; and what we as Lutherans can do regarding it.

There are countless different definitions of Christian nationalism, with different shadings and nuances, but all of them, at their core, are an unhealthy fusion of Christian identity and civic pride. Christian nationalism is about the idea, spoken or not, that one kind of Christianity is not only superior to others, but that it's the only right way, not only to be Christian, but also the only right way to be American. And that idea runs counter to the spirit of both the First Amendment (which says that the U.S. government can't support or promote any religion over others) and the First Commandment (as Christian nationalism makes an idol of civic pride).

That doesn't mean that if you're Christian, you can't also be American, or that you can't have civic pride or participate in civic activities. Speaking just for myself, I'm an Eagle Scout and Cub Scout leader; when I was younger, I played Taps at Memorial Day services with the Souderton American Legion post; and I've been a part of civic observances as a pastor, including giving an invocation at veterans' breakfast hosted at Founding Forward a few years ago. I don't see any of those things as necessarily in conflict with my Christian faith. And I know that other St. John's members are involved in DAR, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other civic organizations; are veterans and family members of armed-service members; and several members serve their communities in local elected political offices—and those are just the people that I know about firsthand!

As Christians, we're called to love God and to love our neighbor, and being active and engaged in society is part of how we're called to do that. But Christian nationalism takes that engagement too far, saying that it's not enough to be Christian and to be American, but that you *have* to be Christian (and usually a specific kind of Christian) to be American, and vice-versa. Which leads to the idea that people who don't do Christianity (or American-ness) the same way aren't as-good Americans, or as-good Christians, or as-good people. And that flies in the face of the idea that humanity is made in God's image, and that all humanity (even people from other countries, or who practice their faith differently) share in that image of God.

The resolution itself draws on other statements that the Lutheran Church has published, and calls on the Southeastern PA Synod to do a bunch of things: to affirm "that Christ alone is the head of the church, and that no nation, ethnicity, or political ideology may claim divine authority," to share resources and studies on Christian identity and public life, and to call on leaders in the church "to speak clearly against instances when Christian language, symbols, or scripture are misused to justify exclusion, violence, or political supremacy and to engage others influenced by Christian nationalist narratives with pastoral sensitivity, curiosity, and invitation for dialogue." Essentially, it says (as several other statements from ELCA have done, going back to 1991) that the Church, and Christians, are part of American society and that we're called to participate responsibly in that society. And part of that responsibility as the Church and as Americans is to speak up when you see people using faith—or political engagement, or both—to hurt others.

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If you're interested in learning more about the intersection of faith and political life, there are a couple of resources I can point you to. The resolution from the Synod Assembly, and the social statements from the ELCA that it references, are all available online, at least as of the time of this writing. I'll link them below. In addition, Pastor Taylor from Zion Lutheran Church and Pastor Paisley from St. Peter's Lutheran Church will be hosting a study on Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his life and works later this year. If you have other questions or concerns about Christian nationalism, or about the intersection of faith and political engagement, I'm always glad to listen. As we each mark the 250th anniversary of the United States' founding in our own ways, may we all work to love and serve our neighbors, as Americans and as faithful Christians.

In Christ,  
Pastor Russ

Below are links to the resolution, and to the social statements that it draws from. If you're reading this electronically, you should be able to click or tap on the links to view the statements. If you'd prefer a printed copy, please let Pastor Russ know. Thanks!

SEPA Synod Assembly resolution: [https://www.sepa.org/files/ugd/16176b\\_c41772e1a46a41559f9c9ebc86b15240.pdf](https://www.sepa.org/files/ugd/16176b_c41772e1a46a41559f9c9ebc86b15240.pdf)



*The Church in Society: A Lutheran Perspective* ELCA Social Statement (1991): [https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Church\\_SocietySS.pdf](https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/Church_SocietySS.pdf)



*Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All* ELCA Social Statement (2025): [https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/F\\_and\\_CL\\_SWBA\\_as\\_adopted\\_CA25\\_05\\_21\\_not\\_copyedited\\_formatted.pdf](https://elcamediaresources.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/F_and_CL_SWBA_as_adopted_CA25_05_21_not_copyedited_formatted.pdf)



### Four Bones: A Premiere Trombone Quartet August 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 1 p.m.

Our 2026-2027 Concert Series kicks off at 1 p.m., Sunday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> featuring **Four Bones**, a premiere trombone quartet dedicating to highlighting the power, versatility, and artistry of the trombone. Combining technical mastery with dynamic stage presence, Four Bones delivers performances that captivate audiences and elevate the perception of brass chamber music.

Formed by four accomplished trombonists, Scott Cullen, Ron Evans, Jim Olson, and Will Shafer, all with a shared passion for innovation and excellence, Four Bones brings together a diverse repertoire that spans classical masterpieces, jazz standards, and contemporary works. Each performance is a celebration of the instrument's expressive range—from rich, resonant harmonies to dazzling virtuosic passages.

“Our mission is to push the boundaries of what a trombone ensemble can achieve,” said Will, founding member of Four Bones. “We want to connect with audiences through music that is both artistically profound and emotionally engaging.”

Four Bones will also be accompanying worship that morning by playing Prelude, Offering, and Postlude music in addition to helping accompany the hymns.

## Pancake Breakfast June 28<sup>th</sup> after church

Join us for a Pancake Breakfast on Sunday, June 28, 2026, immediately following the 9:00 a.m. church service, in support of the Eagle Scout project of Ben Blackledge. Ben's project will focus on renovating the fence surrounding the playground to help create a safer and more welcoming space for our children and families. We hope you will join us for good food and fellowship while supporting this worthwhile community project!



## End of Summer Tailgate Party

Please join us at our annual end-of-summer tailgate on Friday, August 21<sup>st</sup>, at 5:30 p.m. We look forward to a fun night of fellowship, fun, and food! Bring a snack to share and a yard game to play and we will assemble our cars for a tailgate-style hang-out in the side parking lot! St. John's will provide the pizza! Click [this link](#) or scan the QR code to RSVP and indicate any snacks or games that you can bring.



## Register for Children's Faith Formation



Please use [this link](#) or scan the QR code to register your child for Faith Formation classes for this upcoming school year! These classes are held at 9 a.m. on Sundays before worship and classes will begin with

"Rally Day" on Sunday, September 13<sup>th</sup>!



## Did You Know?

In addition to the **Prayer Lists** printed in the weekly bulletins, did you know that there are two other ways to learn about prayer needs? There is a **phone chain**, where you receive a call and then call someone else to continue the chain of prayers. There is also an **email chain**, where you receive an email about prayer needs and can start praying immediately. Prayer works and the more pray-ers there are, the better! Contact Linda Landis, at (610) 202-5737, or [songbirdlinnie@gmail.com](mailto:songbirdlinnie@gmail.com) to join either the phone prayer chain or the email prayer chain.



## Celebrating 10 Years of Ordination July 26<sup>th</sup> after worship

We will joyfully celebrate the 10th Anniversary of Pastor Russ Crouthamel's Ordination on Sunday, July 26<sup>th</sup> at a special coffee hour in Kley Hall. We thank God for a decade of his faithful service, spiritual leadership, and dedication to the church and community. Please come and share in this special occasion immediately following worship service in Kley Hall.

## Muhlenberg Parish Event August 30th

About 673 million people around the world are facing hunger. Rise Against Hunger works with Hunger Champions—like Muhlenberg Parish volunteers—to end hunger in remote, last-mile communities.



A Rise Against Hunger Experience event provides lasting, real-life impact as a group works together for a start-to-finish meal assembly experience to combine rice, soy, dehydrated vegetables and a packet of 18 vitamins and minerals into life-changing meal packages. The food stores easily, transports quickly and has a long shelf-life to help meet the immediate nutritional needs of people facing food insecurity, paving the way toward resilient and bright futures!

Muhlenberg Parish will:

- Raise money for the meals—our combined goal of \$6,100 will provide approximately 15,000 meals
- Host the meal-packing event—Centennial Lutheran will serve as the host, with Zion Lutheran serving as our host location
- Provide about 60 volunteers for the assembly-line packing of meals. Setup will begin at 10 a.m., packing will start at 11:30 a.m. and is expected to last around two hours.

Rise Against Hunger will provide:

- An event facilitator to help manage the event and provide hunger education
- All ingredients and supplies needed for the meals
- An announcement of our meals' destination once they are shipped

Visit [riseagainsthunger.org](http://riseagainsthunger.org) for more information and stay tuned for details on how to donate and/or volunteer! Contact Sue Starling at [rofostarling@gmail.com](mailto:rofostarling@gmail.com) for more information.



## St. John's Tanzania Connection

In September 2010, an adventurous group of St. John's members traveled to visit our mission partners in Tanzania. Upon their return, a new parament set (altar, lectern, & pulpit cloths) was created and sewn by former member Joanne Nolt using material from Tanzania. With the predominantly green background color, the Worship & Music Committee decided to use it again this year during the summer months of the Pentecost season. When viewed up close, ornamentation in the form of small charms can be seen on the altar cloth. Look for them before summer's end!



## Give to St. John's Via App

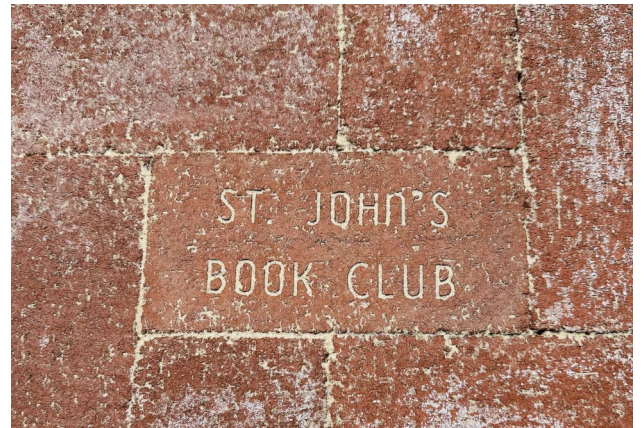
Vanco, our eGiving provider, has launched an updated mobile app called Vanco Mobile. You can download the Vanco Mobile app for free from the App Store or Google Play. From there, you can make a one-time donation or set up recurring giving right through the app. Just select your fund and amount, enter a payment method and complete the donation. If you have questions or need assistance, contact Dale Herbranson at [dale.herbranson@outlook.com](mailto:dale.herbranson@outlook.com).

Members and friends are invited to sponsor the **vigil candle, bulletins, and flowers** in memory of or in honor of loved ones. The cost is \$12 per month for the candle, \$20 per week for bulletins and \$50 per week for flowers. Sign up on the sheets on the hallway bulletin board or contact Sonya Sowards for available months and dates and to specify the occasion.



## Phoenix Wheel

As you visit Phoenixville's newest attraction, the 78-foot-high Phoenix Wheel, located next to the Borough Hall, be sure to look at all of the bricks on the surrounding walkways. Some bricks have been sponsored by St. John's members. Ladies of the Sunday Morning Book Club joined together to sponsor a brick, with



a dual purpose of promoting St. John's and our love of reading. Have you found it by the wheel? How many other St. John's names do you recognize?

### Life Line Screening Offered at St. John's August 17<sup>th</sup> 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. in Kley Hall



St. John's will be hosting Life Line Screening, a provider of stroke and cardiovascular disease risk screenings since 1993, on August 17<sup>th</sup>. The screenings can help identify your risk level for Carotid Artery Disease, Peripheral Arterial Disease, Abdominal Aortic Aneurysm, or Atrial Fibrillation. Life Line Screening is extending a discounted rate of \$129 to all St. John's members. If you would like to sign up, scan the QR code, go to <https://discover.lifelinescreening.com/habc/?sourcecd=HABC001> or call 800-324-9458 to sign up and use code HABC001.

### 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 when there is no newsletter). 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/or 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.

St. John's has a private Facebook group for members and friends who are approved to join the group. Because the group is private, it can include prayer requests, pictures of children, etc. and any member of the group may post. For outward facing posts (on our Facebook page and Instagram), we follow the guidelines below:

- No children's faces in outward facing socials except those whose parents have signed a release;
- Only positive posts which reflect ELCA Lutheran theology;
- No sharing sensitive or personal information; and
- We do not show pictures of adults or children who have asked that we not include them in our social media posts.

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.



Thank you for choosing me as a recipient for the 2026 St. John's Scholarship. St. John's has played a tremendous role in shaping the person I am today. Some of my favorite memories have been made possible because of Confirmation class, Vacation Bible School, and the Appalachia Service Project. I always look forward to serving others, and I could not be more grateful to have the opportunity to do so with the members of St. Johns. I would not be where I am today without our congregation. Thank you to everyone who makes this award possible, and for continuing to guide me as I enter the next stage of my life.

Trevor O'Neill

While I could not be in church the morning of the announcement, I wanted to thank the congregation for their continued support and the awarding of the St. John's Scholarship. I appreciate this generous gift towards my future education at Susquehanna University, and am very thankful to have grown up in this community, and for it to be a leading example for me.

Thank you again,

Lucas Becker

I would like to express my gratitude for being one of the recipients of this year's St. John's scholarship award. Thank you all for your unwavering belief and encouragement through the church—without it, I wouldn't have gotten where I am today.

I plan on attending the University of Pittsburgh this fall with a major in biological sciences. It is an ambitious challenge for sure, but thanks to your financial aid, I feel significantly more prepared to handle my expenses and enjoy university to the fullest. I hope to give back to the St. John's community as much as I can.

I deeply appreciate the congregation for their support.

Sincerely,  
Nathaniel Becker

Dear members of St. John's:

Everyone who works at PACS, whether staff, board members or volunteers, sincerely thanks you for your contribution of \$1,000 and your Advent offering contribution of \$1,592.25. Most importantly, we thank you on behalf of our neighbors who we are able to help through your generosity. St. John's support has always been a special partnership for PACS and it means so much to our mission and the neighbors we feed. We are so grateful for it!

With gratitude,  
Mary Fuller  
President

## Introducing the St. John's Safety Task Force

We are pleased to introduce the St. John's safety task force, a group formed to thoughtfully assess and strengthen the safety of our church community. The task force currently includes St. John's members Kristin McGregor, Kate Hicks, and Pastor Russ.

Our goal is to review existing safety policies and procedures, identify potential gaps or areas for improvement, and explore options that ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all who gather at St. John's.

We encourage members of the congregation to share any questions, concerns, or suggestions related to safety. Your input is essential as we work through this process together.

Over time the task force will evaluate various approaches and develop recommendations to enhance safety at our church. Please look for future announcements, including a survey that will allow us to gather broader feedback from the congregation

We appreciate your support and partnership as we work to care for our community.



**July 12-18, 2026**

Each year, volunteers from St. John's spend a week in service, faith, and fellowship helping families in need throughout Central Appalachia. The trip is open to all adults and youth who have completed 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Whether you're a first-timer or a seasoned volunteer, we'd love to have you join the team! Contact Jodi O'Neill for details or to express your interest. ([oneillsinvf@comcast.net](mailto:oneillsinvf@comcast.net)) or (610) 716-6644.

ASP (Appalachia Service Project) is a Christian, non-profit home repair organization that utilizes volunteers to perform free home repair and replacement for families living in sub-standard housing or families affected by a disaster in the Appalachian region. To find out more about Appalachia Service Project, please visit [www.asphome.org](http://www.asphome.org).



Vocal soloists, pianists, and instrumentalists young and old(er) are invited to share their talents (either up front or from the balcony) as part of our summer worship. Warm up those vocal chords, tickle the ivories, and dust off your instruments to praise the Lord! For more information or to schedule a date in June, July, or August contact Tom Snyder, Director of Music, [ftsiii@gmail.com](mailto:ftsiii@gmail.com).

There are two Sight and Sound Movie Sundays planned for July 12<sup>th</sup> (Samson) and August 2<sup>nd</sup> (Jesus). Movies will begin after worship around 10:15 a.m. in the Fireside Room.



Please continue to bring in those Redner's tapes as well as the other items on our ongoing list (greeting cards, pens, pencils, stickers, etc.) Our collections continue throughout the summer and fall and we are exploring more fundraising opportunities. Stay tuned for details. Thank you for your support!

## Summer Book Club

Sunday Morning Book Club may be over until September, but Summer Book Club goes on! We read *The Red Lotus* by Chris Bohjalian for the June discussion meeting on June 24<sup>th</sup>. The July meeting will be on Wednesday, July 15<sup>th</sup> and the book is *The Book Club for Troublesome Women* by Marie Bostwick. The August book will be *The Wedding People* by Alison Espach, date TBD. For places and times, contact Jean Herbranson, [deherb@juno.com](mailto:deherb@juno.com).

**St. John's Lutheran Church  
Council Meeting Minutes  
May 11, 2026**

<b>Council Member Name</b>	<b>Pres/Exc/ or Absent</b>	<b>Committee Assigned</b>	<b>Term 1/2</b>	<b>Term Ends</b>
John Dorward (President)	Present	Executive and Electronics	1	2/2028
Jeanne Schanzenbach (VP)	Excused	Executive and Finance	2	2/2029
Sue Starling (Secretary)	Present	Executive and Scholarship	2	2/2027
Jim Kelsh	Excused	Endowment	1	2/2029
Brian Greenwald	Present	Worship and Music	1	2/2029
Kate Hicks	Present	Faith Formation, Fellowship/Welcoming	1	2/2027
Aimee Hillegas	Present	Social Ministry and Green Team	2	2/2027
Mike Kahl	Present	Executive	2	2/2028
Kyle Oszeyczik	Present	Mutual Ministry and Property	1	2/2027
Marc Staudenmaier	Present	Stewardship	2	2/2029
Becky Stevens	Present	Executive and Columbarium	1	2/2028
Rachel Zimmermann	Excused		1	2/2028
Pastor Russ	Present	n/a		
<b>Guests:</b>				
Sonya Sowards	Present	n/a		
Tom Snyder	Present	n/a		

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by John.

Council devotional was led by Kyle.

Prior Meeting Minutes

04/13/26 Council Minutes:

**Motion by Mike, second by Marc to accept the minutes as written; motion carried.**

Staff Reports

**Motion by Marc, second by Sue to accept Staff reports as written; motion carried.**

Committee Reports

Finance Committee meeting minutes of 04/27/26 – accepted as written.

- Recommendation on removal of 'Undesignated gifts' from computation of funds owed to Outreach verbiage from constitution while amending. No issues.
- Regarding 'sexton duties for setup/takedown costs for building use (i.e. funerals, weddings) – should come from cleaning line item of budget when there is no volunteer support or opportunity to charge the user': would Council prefer 'misc' line item? Agreed this is not needed as it is rarely used; will revisit if need becomes more frequent.
- **Mike made a motion to accept Finance Committee minutes as presented, Marc seconded, motion carried.**

Council reviewed the following Committee Reports:

- Electronics Committee of 05/03/26 – accepted as written.
- Faith Formation of 04/14/26 – accepted as written.
- Property Committee of 05/04/26 – accepted as written.

- **Motion from Committee:** To rescind Council's acceptance on 10/13/25 of the proposal from Darrah Woodworking (Jonathan Stong) to complete sidewalk repairs, as that bid has expired and was not renewed. **Motion carried.**
  - **Motion from Committee:** To accept the proposal from Patterson Masonry to repair/replace sidewalk sections at the circle, the rear entrance, and by the Columbarium; remove a section of curb at the glass door entrance and install an ADA wheelchair-accessible sidewalk ramp for a total of \$14,000.00 plus ancillary costs (e.g. permits, inspections, tests, etc.) **Motion carried.**
- Worship and Music Committee of 04/14/23 and 05/05/26 – accepted as written.
  - Social Ministry Committee of 05/06/26 – accepted as written.
  - Fellowship and Welcoming Committee did not meet.
  - Columbarium Committee – did not meet.
  - Executive Committee – did not meet.
  - Stewardship Committee of 04/13/26 – accepted as written.
  - Green Team of 04/20/26 – accepted as written.
  - Circle of Life Endowment Committee – did not meet.

**Motion by Kyle, second by Becky to accept committee reports; motion carried.**

#### Old Business

- Lock-Up signup – covered.
- Muhlenberg Parish update – August 30th Rise Against Hunger event.
- RIC Update – ongoing.
- Peer Ministry Update – ongoing.
- DCYFM Position Update – Agreed to form a task force to address different options to attract candidates. Marc will lead the effort.
- Constitution Update – Mike walked through all of the Constitution updates, both those from the Synod and changes to St. John's specific bylaws and continuing resolutions.
- Safety Policy Update – ongoing.
- Revisit Offering Collection – addressed by Stewardship – resolved.
- Vendor List – committees should send Sonya additional information.

#### New Business

- 2026 Scholarships: One late scholarship application was received. **The Scholarship committee made a motion that a \$2000 scholarship be awarded to Giovanna Brown. Motion carried.**
- The following individuals have requested to become members of St. John's (children in brackets):
 

Ryan Bridge	Ken Siedlecki (Landen) and Hilary Cohen
Alissa Smethers (Madeline, Noah)	Margot Schellhas
Bob and Kim Trate (Peter, Vincent)	Amy Peruto

**Becky made a motion to approve the membership of the above applicants; Marc seconded; motion carried.**
- The following individuals have completed the requirements for confirmation:
 

Mark Blattner, Jr.	Zander Cummins	Annaliese Duerr	Grace Supplee
Claire Gallagher	Cecilia Leong	Addilynn Smith	

**Kyle made a motion to approve these confirmands as confirmed members of St. John's; Mike seconded; motion carried.**
- Organ refurbishment fundraiser – Becky will work with Tom; in process of gathering silent auction baskets now.

John adjourned the meeting by decree at 8:14.

Next regular meeting is June 8, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sue Starling

Church Council Secretary



## July 2026 Birthdays and Anniversaries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
	John Unruh and Devon Mensch-Unruh's anniversary Rachael Aaronson's birthday Sue Lisiewski's birthday	Rhett Grejdus's birthday	Adelaide Frangoulis's birthday Nancy Wilkinson's birthday Ric Kramer's birthday	Dylan Oszeyczik's birthday Robb Frees's birthday	Cindy Riley's birthday Gianna Bliss's birthday	Amanda Westerman's birthday Kurt Seidel's birthday Travis Brown's birthday
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Heather Thompson's birthday	Aaron Sifford's birthday	Allan Moreland's birthday	Dick Kunsch Sr's birthday Genevieve Gombarick's birthday Layla Murphy's birthday	Bill Starling's birthday David and Danielle Reading's anniversary	Greg and Annie Krueger's anniversary Ian and Val Kramer's anniversary Shirley Platzer's birthday	Ashley Onder's birthday
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Pat Renninger's birthday Trevor O'Neill's birthday	Leslie Aharonian's birthday	Ethan Walls's birthday	Margaret Walker's birthday		Dylan Grejdus's birthday Paul Deichmann's birthday	Donna Bergey's birthday
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
Julie Watkins's birthday Pamela Freehafer's birthday	Mea Borzumati's birthday	Dawn Platcek's birthday	Chloe Kunsch's birthday Sue Starling's birthday	Bryan Walters's birthday	Jeff and Jodi VanDerveer's anniversary Olesya Sitkowski's birthday Oliver Skiffington's birthday	Charlotte Reading's birthday
26	27	28	29	30	31	1
Elisa Snyder's birthday	Nathan Romano's birthday	Carol Kumar's birthday		Beth Leong's birthday Dale and Jean Herbranson's anniversary Joe and Kim Themens's anniversary	Bryce Aaronson's birthday John and Heather Yonosh's anniversary	Andrew Starling's birthday Jim and Marti Steiner's anniversary

# August 2026 Birthdays and Anniveraries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> Elisa Snyder's birthday	<b>27</b> Nathan Romano's birthday	<b>28</b> Carol Kumar's birthday	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b> Beth Leong's birthday Dale and Jean Herbranson's anniversary Joe and Kim Themens's anniversary	<b>31</b> Bryce Aaronson's birthday John and Heather Yonosh's anniversary	<b>1</b> Andrew Starling's birthday Jim and Marti Steiner's anniversary
<b>2</b> Anneleise Sifford's birthday Julia Gombarick's birthday Kurt Kunsch's birthday Laura Gombarick's birthday	<b>3</b> Brittney Walters's birthday Leilani Ash's birthday Tracy Stewart's birthday	<b>4</b> Kimberly DiGioia's birthday Mitchell Reading's birthday	<b>5</b> Bruce Wallace's birthday C.J. Bomberger's birthday Janet Onder's birthday Mo O'Neill's birthday	<b>6</b> Allie Platchek's birthday Detlev and Kathy Tauber's anniversary Rachael Aaronson and Jared Summers's anniversary	<b>7</b> Betty Hans's birthday Chuck Liedike's birthday Donald and Loretta Bechtel's anniversary	<b>8</b> Ava DeMutis's birthday Landon Themens's birthday
<b>9</b> Sydney Scavello's birthday	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Cheryl Kenyon's birthday	<b>12</b> Evie Hicks's birthday Ryan and Liz Spurlock's anniversary	<b>13</b> Alexander Walls's birthday Jesse Carey's birthday Joan Tulish's birthday Lynn Titus's birthday Paul and Cindy Gadzicki's anniversary	<b>14</b> Grace Supplee's birthday	<b>15</b> Kelly Gallagher's birthday
<b>16</b> Kevin Wimble's birthday	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> David Schumacher's birthday Pastor Russ Crouthamel's birthday	<b>19</b> Dick and Judy Wolstenholme's anniversary	<b>20</b> Caitlin Krueger's birthday Nabil Abraham's birthday Ray and Sue Lisiewski's anniversary	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Jantzen Hawkins's birthday Ryleigh Free's birthday
<b>23</b> Jenn Lowe's birthday	<b>24</b> Jason and Kim Birdsell's anniversary	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Mark and Carolyn Rutherford's anniversary	<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 Diane Sherman's birthday Jessica Cratty's birthday William and Faye Donovan's anniversary	<b>29</b> Anderson McMahon's birthday Ashleigh Melton's birthday Marc Staudenmaier'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 Cagle's birthday	<b>4</b> Barry Church's birthday Elizabeth Sitkowski's birthday Leslie Kem's birthday	<b>5</b> Cole O'Neill's birthday

# July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
28 9am Holy Communion 10am Pancake Breakfast	29 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	30	1 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon	2 7pm Naranon	3	4 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
5 9am Holy Communion	6 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Stephen Ministry	7 6:30pm Faith Formation Committee	8 7pm Alanon	9 7pm Naranon	10	11 9am Marston party 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
12 9am Holy Communion 10:15am Movie Sunday ASP	13 ASP 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	14 ASP 7pm Stewardship Committee	15 ASP Book Club 7pm Alanon	16 ASP 7pm Naranon 8:15pm Naranon Support	17 ASP St. Peter's lunch	18 ASP 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
19 9am Holy Communion 10:15am Worship & Music	20 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Stephen Ministry	21	22 7pm Alanon	23 7pm Naranon	24	25 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
26 9am Holy Communion 11am Pastor Russ celebration	27 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	28 7pm Fellowship Committee	29 7pm Alanon	30 7pm Naranon	31	1 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous

## Record of Communion and Contributions

In our congregation's constitution, "Voting Members" are defined as "**confirmed** members who during the current or preceding calendar year, [...] have **communed** in this congregation and [...] have made a **contribution** of record to this congregation." While all are welcome to be a part of our congregational meetings, only members who meet those criteria are able to vote. 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.



# August 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>26</b> 9am Holy Communion 11am Pastor Russ celebration	<b>27</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	<b>28</b> 7pm Fellowship Committee	<b>29</b> 7pm Alanon	<b>30</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>31</b>	<b>1</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>2</b> 9am Holy Communion 10:15am Movie Sunday 1pm Four Bones in Concert	<b>3</b> 10:15am Staff 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Property 7pm Stephen Ministry	<b>4</b> 6:30pm Faith Formation Committee	<b>5</b> 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon	<b>6</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>7</b> 5:30pm Parents Night Out	<b>8</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>9</b> 9am Holy Communion	<b>10</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Church Council	<b>11</b> 7pm Stewardship Committee	<b>12</b> 7pm Alanon	<b>13</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>16</b> 9am Holy Communion	<b>17</b> 8am Life Line Screening 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Green Team 7pm Stephen Ministry	<b>18</b> Circle deadline	<b>19</b> 7pm Alanon	<b>20</b> 7pm Naranon 8:15pm Naranon Support	<b>21</b> St. Peter's lunch 5:30pm End of Summer Tailgate Party	<b>22</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>23</b> 9am Holy Communion	<b>24</b> 11am Alanon Family Group	<b>25</b> 7pm Fellowship Committee	<b>26</b> 7pm Alanon	<b>27</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous
<b>30</b> 9am Holy Communion 10am Rise Against Hunger	<b>31</b> 11am Alanon Family Group 7pm Finance Committee	<b>1</b> 6:30pm Faith Formation Committee 7:30pm Worship & Music	<b>2</b> 4pm Social Ministry 7pm Alanon	<b>3</b> 7pm Naranon	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> 5pm Evening Light (w/communion) 7pm Alcoholics Anonymous

## Thrivent Action Team Grants

Thrivent members are eligible to apply for two Action Team Grants each year to benefit their church. St. John's members Mike & Cathy Kahl routinely obtain grants for the church and have provided a helpful step-by-step guide:

- 1) First, you must have a specific project in mind. You will also have to give an estimate of the number of people that might participate and when the project will be completed. The project should have something to do with bringing people into our organization or furthering our ministries.
- 2) Once you have the above information, log in to your account at [thrivent.com](http://thrivent.com).
- 3) Go to the bottom of the page to the Noah section. Click on Thrivent action teams.
- 4) Choose "apply now" on the first page and then "apply now" again.
- 5) On the next page, click "begin application." You have an option to get advertising materials and even T-shirts for your action team if you want them.
- 6) The money arrives fairly quickly in the form of a Visa card. Use this card for purchases related to your project.
- 7) When the project is finished, log in again and report that fact.

Special projects pop up from time to time at St. John's for which these cards could be used. If you'd like ideas for the use of your grant, contact our Administrator, Sonya Sowards, at [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org) or (610) 933-3947, ext. 2, or speak to a staff member, Committee chair, or Councilmember.

## July Worship Staff

### Acolyte

5 TBD  
12 TBD  
19 TBD  
26 TBD

### Altar Guild

5 Nancy Cressman & Janet Ertell  
12 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett  
19 Kathy Kelsh & Betty Hans  
26 Betty Hans & Nancy Cressman

### Assisting Minister

5 Ron Stevens  
12 Mimi Woods  
19 Tom Snyder  
26 Walt Deichmann

### Bread Bakers

4/5 TBD  
11/12 Rich Latella  
19 Rich Latella  
26 TBD

### Communion Assistant/Lector

5 Walt Deichmann  
12 Bill Starling  
19 Kristin McGregor  
26 Lynn Titus

### Counters

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

### Evening Light Assistant

4 TBD  
11 Rich Latella  
18 Sandra Momyer  
25 Buzz Hadfield

### Lock-up

5 Aimee Hillegas  
12 Brian Greenwald  
19 Mike Kahl & Jim Kelsh  
26 John Dorward

### Stream Team

5 Dale Herbranson & Josh Romano  
12 Nils Aho & Aimee Hillegas  
19 Aimee Hillegas & Dale Herbranson  
26 Josh Romano & Paul Miller

### Ushers

5 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett  
12 Nancy Cressman & Sue Starling  
19 Barry Church & Marc Staudenmaier  
26 Donna Anderson & Don Titus

## August Worship Staff

### Acolyte

2 TBD  
9 TBD  
16 TBD  
23 TBD  
30 TBD

### Altar Guild

2 Nancy Cressman & Janet Ertell  
9 Donna Anderson & Jean Herbranson  
16 Kathy Kelsh & Janet Ertell  
23 Betty Hans & Jean Herbranson  
30 Jean Herbranson

### Assisting Minister

2 Ron Stevens  
9 Tom Snyder  
16 Bill Starling  
23 Mimi Woods  
30 Bill Starling

### Bread Bakers

1/2 TBD  
8/9 TBD  
16 TBD  
22/23 TBD  
29/30 TBD

### Communion Assistant/Lector

2 Walt Deichmann  
9 Kristin McGregor  
16 Annaliese & Chris Duerr  
23 Lynn Titus  
30 Nancy Cressman

### Counters

2 Jack & Janet Ertell  
9 Heather Yonosh & Jeanne Schanzenbach  
16 Mary Heiser, Mike & Cathy Kahl  
23 Stephen & Jen Drewes  
30 Mary Heiser, Kevin Gallagher & Don Bechtel

### Evening Light Assistant

1 TBD  
8 Sandra Momyer  
15 Buzz Hadfield  
22 TBD  
29 Sandra Momyer

### Lock-up

2 Jim Kelsh  
9 Jeanne Schanzenbach  
16 TBD  
23 TBD  
30 TBD

### Stream Team

2 Nils Aho & Josh Romano  
9 Dale Herbranson & Aimee Hillegas  
16 Aimee Hillegas & Nils Aho  
23 Josh Romano & Paul Miller  
30 Dale Herbranson & Josh Romano

### Ushers

2 Donna Anderson & Cathy Garrett  
9 Dick Kunsch & Nancy Cressman  
16 Barry Church & Donna Anderson  
23 Don Titus & Cathy Garrett  
30 Sue Starling & Donna Anderson

## **Adult Classes**

Sunday school classes for adults are suspended for the summer. Join any of the classes (Bible Study, Faith Life, Happy Hour, or Sunday Morning Book Club) again in September every Sunday morning at 9:00 a.m. beginning September 13<sup>th</sup>.

**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

**Parish Administrator:**

Sonya K. Sowards

**Sexton:**

Mark Yanchek, Jr.

**Nursery Coordinator:**

Arlene Hudak

**CHURCH COUNCIL**

**President:**

John Dorward

**Vice President:**

Jeanne Schanzenbach

**Secretary:**

Sue Starling

**Treasurer:**

Shirley Platzer

**Assistant Treasurer:**

Don Titus

**Financial Recording Secretary:**

Mary Heiser

**Executive Committee:**

Mike Kahl

Becky Stevens

**Other Members of Council:**

Kyle Oszyczik

Aimee Hillegas

Kate Hicks

Rachel Zimmermann

Marc Staudenmaier

Jim Kelsh

Brian Greenwald

**Stephen Ministry Leader:**

Linda Landis — (610) 933-9544

**COMMITTEES**

**Columbarium:**

Bill Starling, Chair  
 Becky Stevens, Council Rep.

**Electronics:**

Bill Schoellkopf & Dale Herbranson  
 Co-Chairs

**Endowment:**

Jim Kelsh, Council Rep.

**Executive:**

Jeanne Schanzenbach, Chair

**Faith Formation:**

Danielle Reading & Val Kramer, Co-Chairs  
 Kate Hicks, Council Reps.

**Fellowship & Welcoming:**

Sandra Zimmermann, Fellowship Chair  
 Kate Hicks, Welcoming Chair  
 and Council Rep. for Welcoming & Fellowship

**Finance:**

Kevin Gallagher, Chair  
 Jeanne Schanzenbach  
 Council Rep.

**Green Team**

Aimee Hillegas, Council Rep.

**Mutual Ministry:**

Kyle Oszyczik, Council Rep.

**Property:**

Bobbi Riley, Chair  
 Kyle Oszyczik, Council Rep.

**Social Ministry:**

Janet Gerner, Chair  
 Aimee Hillegas, Council Rep.

**Stewardship:**

Marc Staudenmaier, Council Rep.

**Worship and Music:**

Jean Herbranson, Chair  
 Brian Greenwald, Council Rep.

**Office Assistants:**

Joan Carl  
 Pat Renninger

**The Circle Editor:**

Sonya K. Sowards

**Inside this issue:**

Pastor's Note	1-2
Four Bones Concert	2
Pancake Breakfast / Tailgate Party / Children's Faith Formation / Prayer / Pastor's Ordination Anniversary	3
Rise Against Hunger / Tanzania / Giving Options	4
Phoenix Wheel / Life Line Screenings / St. John's Communications	5
Thank You	6
Safety Task Force / ASP / Summer Music / WELCA / Summer Book Club	7
Council Minutes	8-10
Calendars	10-13
Communion & Contributions	12
Thrivent Action Team Grants	13
Summer Worship Assistants	14
Church Leaders / Credits	Inside

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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](http://www.stjohnluthphoenixville.org)



E-mail: [office@stjohnphoenixville.org](mailto:office@stjohnphoenixville.org)  
office hours 9-3 M,T,Th & 9-12 W,F *(with exceptions)*  
please call for appointments with staff members  
***A Caring, Sharing, Growing Congregation of the ELCA***

## **Worship Schedule**

### **Saturdays**

5 p.m. Evening Light with Holy Communion

### **Sundays**

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

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

## **THE CIRCLE**



## **Summer 2026**