November 2026

St. John Lutheran Church

St. John Lutheran Church
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Please call to ensure availability before coming to the office.



Mission Statement

St. John is a living witness to the love of God as shown in Jesus Christ.

We gather faithfully in God's name to ***worship*** *and praise God; and we go forth in peace to* ***share*** *the Good News and to* ***serve*** *the world around us.*

For several weeks, we have heard the stories of the impact the mission and ministry of St. John have had on individuals. These stories are of course just a very small picture of the ways God has touched people through the work of this congregation. I am sure that if you are reading this newsletter, there is some way that you have felt nourished in mind, body, and/or soul by the mission and ministry of St. John, so I invite you to take a few moments to reflect on this impact. What were you looking for when you first came to St. John? What were you looking for when you first became more involved in the work of St. John? What do you most appreciate about the ministry of our church? How did you find what you were looking for? And how has that changed your life?

In keeping with our Reformation Sunday reflections, we are a church that is continually looking back to move forward. Take a moment to think about the impact this congregation has had on you and your loved ones, then imagine your greatest hope for our church and those who will be calling this their church home in the future.

This is at the core of our stewardship campaign – appreciating the past so that we can lay the groundwork to grow our tomorrows. We have been given so much in our time, talents, and treasures. We have a rich history of service, learning, worship, and tradition. We are blessed with generous members who cheerfully give of themselves to the variety of opportunities to feed people in mind, body, and soul. It is your generosity that has brought to life and fruition God's work through our hands, our feet, and our voices. It is your generosity that has enabled St. John to be a vibrant part of the Mars community. It is your generosity that allows us to dream and imagine the ways we can grow in our mission and ministry, impacting even more people, inviting even more people to know God's love for them, nourishing more people in mind, body, and soul. For that I thank you. St. John would not be the church that it is and will be without your generous gifts of time, talents, and treasures. As Paul starts several of his letters to the early churches, "I thank my God every time I remember you. **4** In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy **5** because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, **6** being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus," (Philippians 1:3-6).

Peace,
Pastor Katie

Find Us on Social Media
Like us on **Facebook** (@stjohnchurchmars) or follow us on **Instagram** (@stjohnchurchmars)

Online Sunday Worship
Worship with us online! Service is livestreamed on our YouTube Channel at 9:00am on Sundays at http://youtube.com/@stjohnchurchmars/streams or through the church app.

Services are recorded and available throughout the week at youtube.com/@stjohnchurchmars

Worship Beyond Sunday Morning

YES Worship – Nov 1, Dec 6

Mark your calendars for a NEW way to worship! **YES Worship is specifically designed to be a fully-interactive worship service for families with younger children where we say YES to every request of "Can I help with that?".** Preparing the altar, lighting the candles, blessing the elements of communion, every moment of the worship is an opportunity for children to bring their minds, their hearts, and their bodies into worship participation. We begin our service by dressing the altar with kid-friendly supplies then move through **an abbreviated version of the Sunday liturgy where children are invited to bring their enthusiasm, their joy, and their curiosity to every element of worship**. We will meet for worship Sunday, November 1st at 4:00 pm in the sanctuary and will continue the first Sunday of every month at 4:00pm. The service will last approximately 30-45 minutes.



Messy Church – Nov 20

Our next Messy Church of the year will be Friday, November 20 at 6:00pm. At Messy Church, all ages come together in a creative, Christ-centered environment to hear God's Word and talk about how to apply it to our daily lives through crafts and activities**. We begin our service with a family-style dinner, then we move into a time of flexible, self-paced exploration, then we end together celebrating God's Good News for us.** All are welcome!

The story of Elijah and the widow reminds us that faith isn't always about having abundance—it's about trusting God with what we already hold in our hands. **Sometimes we face seasons where we feel stretched thin: our energy, our patience, our resources**. And yet, God often meets us in those moments with just enough strength, grace, or encouragement to make it through today. **The widow's courage shows that generosity isn't about how much we have—it's about trusting that God is in the giving**. And Elijah's presence reminds us that sometimes God's provision shows up through people around us, inviting us to trust and to hope. Invite a friend and we'll see you on Friday, November 20th!



Worship Notes

Young Worship Leaders

If you are unable to serve on your assigned week, please find a replacement and then notify the office of the switch.

	Acolyte	Offering	Offering	Young Reader
1-Nov	Carissa M	Josie W	Abby C	Carissa M
8-Nov	Josie W	Carissa M	Henry W	Josie W
15-Nov	Ava N	Josie W	Ella N	Abby C
22-Nov	**Youth Led Worship**			
29-Nov	Cate S	Lydia M	Anna K	Cate S
6-Dec	Abby C	Cate S	Josie W	Lydia M

Adult Worship Leaders

Individuals are welcome to sign up to help lead worship in a variety of roles using the online sign up board at https://signup.com/go/JPakfVA.
The online sign up sheet is also available through the new church app.

	Greeters	Usher	Assistant Minister	Bread Baker	Counters
1-Nov	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	David D John T
8-Nov	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	David D John T
15-Nov	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	David D John T
22-Nov	**Youth Led Worship**				David D John T
29-Nov	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	David D John T
6-Dec	Denise H	**VOLUNTEER**	**VOLUNTEER**	Denise H	Denise H Ruth Ann T

Prayer List Updates

We would like the list of names we lift in prayer as a community each Sunday to be as current as possible. We are therefore asking people to review the prayer list and let the office know whether the names you have placed on the prayer list should continue to remain on the weekly prayers or if the name can be removed.

All Saints Worship – November 1



Commemorating the saints of the church has been a practice since the 4th century. In the 8th century, the festival commemorating all saints was set on November 1st. Protestant churches (including Lutherans) believe that all Christian dead are saints, and there is no need for release from purgatory. During worship on November 1, we will be remembering loved ones who have died. **As we remember them, we recall the witness they gave through their lives, what they meant to us as fellow Christians, where they have led the way, and what they have left for us yet to accomplish.**

Celebration of Affirmation of Baptism – November 15

We are excited to support and encourage three of our young members as they affirm the promises made at their baptism during worship on November 15. After several years in confirmation class and lots of conversations about scripture and faith, these individuals will confirm their membership in the church as we welcome them as voting members of this congregation. **To continue our own promise to support and encourage them throughout their lives in faith, we will have Bibles available in the Greeting Area. These Bibles will be gifted to the young people affirming their baptism, so you are invited to make notes and/or highlight favorite verses for them.**

Joint Youth-Led Worship – November 22

Our Joint Kids Club and Youth Group with Mars United Presbyterian Church will help curate and lead worship on November 22 at 9:00am. **To celebrate this joint ministry, the members of Mars United Presbyterian Church will come to St. John and Pastor Brian will preach.** Youth participants are asked to arrive at the church at 8:00 am to get ready for the service.

Advent Begins – November 29



Advent is the **season of preparation** as we get ready for Christmas. Regardless of what day of the week Christmas is, Advent is always the **four Sundays leading up to Christmas**. Join us in worship as we wait for the coming Christ child and get ready for the gift of Christmas. Make sure your child gets their own **Advent calendar to count down** to Christmas during worship on November 22, the last Sunday of the church year. If you and/or your family would like to volunteer to participate in worship by **helping with lighting the Advent Wreath, please contact the office**!

Midweek Advent Prayer Services

Join us for Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm in Advent (Dec 1, Dec 8, Dec 15, Dec 22) for an evening of prayer and song as we reflect on the coming of Christ, Emmanuel, God with us.

The Advent Wreath

From our liturgical resources, Sundays and Seasons: “One of the best-known customs for the season is the Advent wreath. The wreath and winter candle-lighting in the midst of growing darkness **strengthen some of the Advent images** found in the Bible. The unbroken circle of greens offers **an image that evokes everlasting life**, a victory wreath, the crown of Christ, or the wheel of time itself as we use the season of Advent to celebrate how **Christ reaches into our time to lead us to everlasting life, victorious over death**. The four candles mark the progress of the four weeks of Advent. Sometimes the wreath is embellished with natural dried flowers or fruit. Its **evergreen branches lead to the evergreen Christmas tree**.”

Christmas Worship Schedule

As we near the end of the calendar year, we remember the new beginning we have in Christ and we come together to celebrate and reflect on Emmanuel, God with us. At Christmas we celebrate God coming among us in the baby Jesus. On **Monday, December 21, there is a Blue Christmas Service** held at Valencia United Presbyterian at 7pm for all those who are hurting during the holidays. On **Christmas Eve, December 24th, we celebrate the birth of Jesus with traditional candlelight services** at 3:00pm and 7:30pm. **On Christmas Day, December 25, we will gather for a relaxed and interactive retelling of the story** at 9:00am.

Flowers in Worship

If you would like to **provide flowers for our altar during worship**, please sign up in the Greeting Area by the elevator. Flowers offer a bright connection with God's creation in our worship space. Sponsors for flowers are responsible for ordering their own flowers. If you need assistance in contacting a florist that often works with the church, contact the office.

Christmas Flowers

Stay tuned! The Christmas flower order form will be out in November! All orders will be due by Dec. 6.

Adult Choir

For major festivals (like Christmas Eve!), there is **a choir of dedicated singers** who prepare and offer a song for worship. If you'd like to be a part of this group, contact our Music Director, Maizy.

Worship Volunteers Wanted



Lay leadership in worship is an important part of the Lutheran tradition. There are many ways that a person can utilize their gifts to offer leadership in worship. Read the descriptions of all the volunteer positions needed each Sunday and sign up online to offer your gifts in worship leadership. **Training is available** for any position. You are welcome to **sign up for just one week to give it a try or multiple weeks** to practice and get comfortable! Sign up to volunteer for an open slot using the sign-up sheets in the greeting area or at https://signup.com/go/JPakfVA

Around the Community

Thanksgiving Eve Service – November 25

Valencia Presbyterian Church (80 Sterrett Street; Valencia, PA 16059) will be hosting a Thanksgiving Eve Service on Wednesday, November 25 at 7:00 pm.

Mars Light Up Night – November 28



Mars Borough is once again hosting Light Up Night! This is a great community event to kick off the Holiday season! Light Up Night will include a **Holiday Market** on Pittsburgh Street from noon to 5:30pm, **Horse Drawn Carriage Rides** from 2:00-5:30 pm, **Pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus** from 3:00 to 5:30pm, **Tree Lighting** at the Saucer at 5:30 pm, and a **Parade** at 6:00 pm. Hope to see you there! For more information, visit https://www.lightupmars.com/

NEW this year! St. John will be participating at Light Up Night with free kids' crafts/activities. If you would like to help prepare for this event and/or help staff the booth and engage with community members, please contact Pastor Katie or Denise H.

Living Nativity – TBD

Mars United Presbyterian Church is once again hosting the Living Nativity and looking forward to the participation of St. John members! Stay tuned for the specific schedule. A rehearsal for participants will be scheduled ahead of time. To help all new participants better understand the performance, all participants are asked to attend the rehearsal. **If you would like to be involved, let Pastor Katie know and she will be sure you are of the first to know the confirmed date!**

Around the Synod

Weekly Synod Emails

The synod sends out weekly emails of upcoming programs and important news. Everyone is welcome to receive these emails. Sign up to receive them at https://www.swpasynod.org/wayfarer

Lutherlyn

Saturday Safari (Geology and the Rocks of Lutherlyn) – Nov 7



Hike to one of Lutherlyn's most unique places, Chapel Rock, and learn about the rock cycle. Weather permitting, we will climb Chapel Rock. We will also **learn about the geology of western PA as we hike through a beautiful stream valley**. There will also be time to stop by Tunnel Rock, Table Rock, and the Rock Shelter. Dress to be outside. **(Registration deadline: November 2)**
Learn more and register at Lutherlyn.com/safari

Woodland Quilt Show at Lutherlyn – Nov 7 and 8

Come and enjoy a weekend display of quilts and quilting in the autumn splendor at Lutherlyn! Admission is $7 with no registration required.

This show is comprised of entries from members of the Woodland Quilters and also happily accepts entries from the general public. We love the variety of entries we receive! **In addition to a wide variety of quilts and handmade items there are many opportunities to shop during the show.** The Woodland Quilters' flea market is always a popular spot, and dotted throughout the show are several quilt shops and local craftspeople with a variety of fabrics, patterns, tools, and finished goods for sale. **If you're looking for inspiration you may want to visit the "Make it & Take it" table**, where a few of the Woodland Quilters can guide you through creating a quick project to take home.



Learn more about the day and how you can enter a quilt at Lutherlyn.com/quilts

Advent Retreat – December 4-6

The Advent Retreat offers families an opportunity to spend time together celebrating the advent season for a weekend decorating cookies, singing carols and playing games with your family amidst the wonder of winter at Lutherlyn. The weekend registration fee includes lodging, meals, program, and the supplies for each activity.

Registration deadline is November 24, 2026.

Learn more and register at https://www.lutherlyn.com/programs/advent-retreat.html.

Worship at Lutherlyn – December 6

You are invited to worship in Lutherlyn's Baker Chapel. Worship begins at 3:30pm, so it is advised to arrive early to allow time to park and walk to worship. No RSVP is needed for worship.

Around the Church

Applefest Follow Up

The games and crafts were a hit with community children and youth and gave us a wonderful opportunity to engage with local families. The lamb stew, haluski and baked goods were hits too! We ran out of giveaways, crafts, haluski, and lamb stew well before the event ended. It was an incredibly, wonderfully busy day connecting with the community! **Thank you to everyone who made this community event a success!** We are always in need of more people to help us get ready on the day before and to help set up, serve, engage, and clean up on the day of. **So go ahead and mark your calendars and consider volunteering to help next year for the first Saturday of October!**

Veterans Appreciation Luncheon – November 7

All veterans and their families are warmly invited for a free luncheon with lots of food, fellowship, and heartfelt appreciation for their service on **Saturday, November 7 at 1:00pm**. We ask people to **please RSVP to the church office** so that we can prepare enough food, but walk-ins are also welcome if your schedule changes that day. **Please invite any veterans you may know to attend.**

Hospitality Hour Hosts

Being a faith community is so much more than just worshipping together. It's spending time in fellowship and learning together too! **To help us connect with this aspect of being a faith community, we are asking volunteers to host the hospitality hour. Hosts are asked to provide goodies for people to munch on while we play games together as a part of our faith formation hour.** In addition to providing goodies, hosts are asked to set up and clean up the goodie table. Goodies can be whatever is easy for you! If you are willing to help with the set up/clean up but need help with the financial burden of supplying goodies, contact Pastor Katie. If you would like to volunteer to host the hospitality hour (we have the games covered), contact Denise H or the office.

Church App



There's an app for that! The app has links for the calendar, podcasts, worship leadership, bulletins, prayer resources, and more! In the Google Play store or the iOS App Store, search for "Church App – Tithely". Download the app, then search for St. John Lutheran Church in Mars. Download the app at https://tithely.app.link/st-john-lutheran or use the QR code. See a tutorial for how to download the app and an introduction to its offerings at https://tinyurl.com/mtpdv6pz.

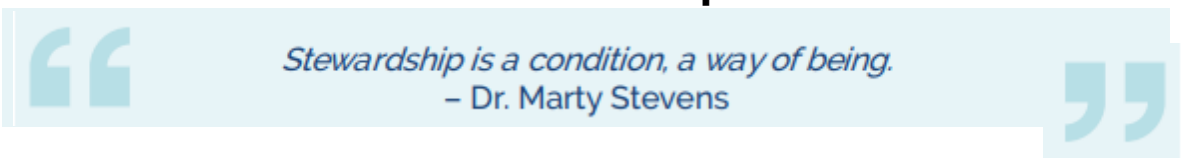
Serving on the Boards

St. John is run by three boards, the Deacons, the Elders, and the Trustees. We also have a Mission Endowment Fund Committee, an Audit Committee, a Nominating Committee, and a Mutual Ministry Committee. Each December we elect individuals to serve on each of the boards and committees (the Mutual Ministry Committee is filled by appointment). Though there is often some overlap, each board has its primary areas of responsibility. The **Deacons** are responsible for overseeing visiting the homebound, stewardship practices and events, and planning fellowship opportunities. The **Elders** are responsible for overseeing Christian education and faith formation, evangelism, and worship life within the congregation. The **Trustees** are responsible for overseeing the care of the physical property of the church and the finances and budget. The Mission Endowment Committee listens to the community and disburses funds collected as interest on an account set aside for mission support. **If you have interest in serving or know someone you think has gifts for serving in one of these areas, contact the office to be put in contact with a member of the nominating committee** (the committee in charge of preparing the ballot for election to the boards/committee).

Office Hours

Diane is currently in the office one day a week, on Thursday mornings, working other hours remotely or in the office on a flexible schedule. Holidays may impact this schedule, though. If you need access to the building or assistance with anything, please call ahead to assure availability. Pastor Katie can also provide assistance.

Stewardship



Stewardship Corner

Taken from https://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2025/10/we-are-not-alone-and-its-not-all-up-to-us/
By Deacon Timothy Siburg

"One of my favorite things about the Reformation is the opportunity it creates to wonder about how the Spirit might be moving, forming, and reforming God's people. Martin Luther is said to have nailed his *95 Theses* to the Wittenberg church doors and really started the debate which opened the doors for a reformation of the church. In our time, might the Spirit be inviting us to take stock, ponder, and imagine. What are the central claims as God's people that we need to be clear about today? What are the ways that we see and sense God at work? What are the ways we feel God is inviting us now to serve and respond as stewards of God's love? These questions might not lead to our own 95 theses, but they might make for fun and deep discernment for disciples and stewards in the faith community."

Reformation is celebrated in the congregation on the last Sunday in October in remembrance of the traditional date of Luther's posting of the 95 Theses on October 31, 1517.

Stewardship of Life is a ministry of stewardship resources based at the United Lutheran Seminary at Gettysburg, PA.

Growing Our Tomorrows

God's work in and through the ministry of St. John Lutheran Church has been impacting the lives of people of the community for over 125 years. After listening to stories of members of the congregation and those impacted by the mission and ministry of St. John, our strategic planning team summarized the identity of St. John as **a community of followers of Christ where all are nourished by faith in mind, body, and soul**. As we consider what comes next for St. John, we are excited to look to the future of this congregation and cultivate opportunities to deepen our commitment to building community, encouraging hospitality and inclusivity, feeding and caring for our neighbors in need, and bringing all-ages together in discipleship.

On November 8, we will hear from another member of the community as they look back on the impact of God's work in the mission and ministry of St. John that they have experienced. This story, like the other stories we have heard offers us an opportunity to not only look back, but also to **look forward and imagine what God might have in store for the future of this congregation**. If you are unable to be in worship, be sure to check out the YouTube channel to hear these stories and reflections.

On November 15, you will be invited to return an intent card during worship. These intent cards offer an opportunity to share your plan for generosity with the church in 2027.

We understand that circumstances change, but by offering the intent cards now, we can better anticipate the resources we will steward in 2027. This information will help the leadership of the congregation plan to maintain the ministry excellence of St. John while also growing our tomorrows as a congregation. Intent cards will be mailed out at the beginning of November.

Serving Others

4th Quarter Mission Emphasis: Center for Community Resources

Center for Community Resources is a private 501(c)(3) nonprofit, headquartered in Butler, Pennsylvania, **working to make a positive difference in everyday lives by connecting people to a network of supports and services essential for actively learning, working, and living in the community**. Since their founding in 2002, they have been a conflict-free point of contact for individuals and families seeking supports and services for their human service needs by coordinating supportive services for individual families through referrals and crisis care. Learn more about the Center for Community Resources at ccrinfo.org. To make an offering, label your gift with "Mission Emphasis."

St. John Food Pantry



Food insecurity can happen to anyone at any time. An illness, a sudden loss of employment, an unexpected major expense. Throughout scriptures, we are called to help our neighbors, to feed them, to help them live with dignity, to provide for their needs. Our little Food Pantry does just that. The larger outdoor food pantry allows more people to take what they need at a time that is convenient for them. The indoor pantry offers a greater variety of items from which people can select.

You can help support this ministry in several ways – bring in shelf-stable food items, paper products, or cleaning supplies, invite people to make use of the pantry, check items currently in the pantry and dispose of expired items. We are in particular need of food items right now – canned goods, box dinner mixes, vanilla instant breakfast, and pasta sauce are items that have been specifically requested by users of the pantry.

Items that may be sensitive to the heat are to be kept in the inside pantry. Access to the inside pantry is available during Thursday morning office hours and other times by appointment (or really whenever the church is unlocked!).

Holiday Meal Kits

For many people, holidays are not a source of joy but a source of stress as they wonder how to celebrate the season with little money for a special holiday meal. **Help us help local families in need celebrate Thanksgiving with a special meal by donating to our Holiday Meal Kits! We will also need five people to supply frozen turkeys to be delivered to the recipients.** Last year, we served 5 families for each holiday, offering holiday meal favorites and a gift card to fill their table with whatever traditional foods their family particularly loves. **Stay tuned for more information about when we will shop for these kits.** Our Sunday School, Kids Club, and Youth Group participants loved thinking through what makes their Thanksgiving table special and how they can use the money offered to do the same for other families. **If you know of a family who is in particular need this season, contact Denise H or Pastor Katie.** We will make more meal kits for Christmas.



Angel Tree

Stay tuned for more information about how you can participate in this opportunity **to brighten the holiday season for children and youth** served by **Glade Run Lutheran Services** by getting a gift for a child or family in need! Beyond the gifts under the tree, donated items received through Glade Run's annual drive provide joy, relief, and comfort all year long.

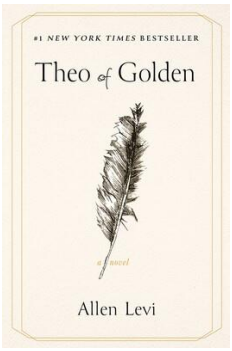
Faith Formation

Facets of Faith Podcast



Each week, we listen to several readings from scripture to inform our lives as Christians. But the Sunday morning worship service offers limited time to dig into the depths of context, challenge, and wonder of the texts. On Facets of Faith, David, Keith, and Pastor Katie gather regularly to discuss and wonder about the gospel reading for the upcoming Sunday. Listen to the podcast today at stjohnchurchmars.org/blog or wherever you get your favorite podcasts.

Book Discussion – November 4



There are many sources for inspiration to talk about faith and what God is up to in this world. **In the beginning of November, we will be gathering to explore the way a bestselling novel can help us connect with God, faith, and one another as the body of Christ.** What began as a self-published novel and has become "a word-of-mouth smash hit" according to The New York Times is "an unforgettable novel about the power of generosity, the importance of connection, and the quiet miracles that happen when we choose kindness and wonder."[1] **The book is Theo of Golden by Allen Levi.** You are invited to read this book and join the conversation **on Wednesday, November 4 at 6:30pm, an online option for participation will be available.** Register with Pastor Katie to receive the zoom link.

[1] https://www.simonandschuster.com/books/Theo-of-Golden/Allen-Levi/9781668236567

Kids Club/Youth Group – November 8 and 15

The Mars Area Youth Group (grades 6-12) and Kids' Club (grades 2-5) are joint ministries supported by Mars United Presbyterian and St. John Lutheran Church. Each group meets approximately twice per month, sometimes meeting in the church buildings (Youth Group at Mars United Presbyterian, Kids Club at St John), sometimes meeting together for joint social and service events. In November, we will meet on November 8 and 15 at the respective churches.

To sign up **to receive updates and the group's schedule, please fill out the form** at stjohnchurchmars.org/childrenyouth.

Advent Wreath Making – November 22

After worship on November 22, you are invited to make a wreath to celebrate the Advent season at home. **You may make a traditional wreath with candles or a wreath with jars to be used in the weekly devotional practice offered at the end of this newsletter**. If you have supplies that you think may be helpful to this project (candles, jars, a pine tree we can take trimmings from, ribbon, etc.), please contact Pastor Katie.

Bible Study – Psalms: The Little Bible

"The Psalms are a Little Bible, wherein everything contained in the entire Bible is beautifully and briefly comprehended." ~Martin Luther

The book of Psalms sits at the center of the Bible. **This collection of 150 songs offers a song for every season of life offering language of celebration and thanksgiving, lament, confession, and consolation.** Come explore the imagery, the language, and some context of a collection of Psalms as an introduction to this important, yet often overlooked book of the Bible.

Neither registration nor any materials are required. If you are not currently on the email list, but would like to be added, please contact Pastor Katie. Non-members are more than welcome to attend as well in person or via zoom. **We will meet Wednesdays at 7:00pm and Sundays at 6:30pm, beginning November 11 and 15 respectively.**

Confirmation Class

Generally, these classes are for students in 6th-8th grade, though older students are also welcome to attend and participate as **students explore what it means to affirm the promises made at their baptisms and to be an adult member** of the congregation. **Classes meet throughout the school year on the 3rd Saturday of each month.**

We will have our next class on Saturday, **November 21st at 9:30am.**

Sunday School for All Ages

We are constantly learning about scripture and the story of God's people and God's love for creation, and by engaging with people of different ages, we are brought into fresh perspectives and questions. **So this year, people of all ages are invited to participate in Sunday School together!** After the game at the beginning of the hospitality hour, we will have a brief prayer focusing our attention to the Bible story of the day. Sunday School participants will then be invited to join in an interactive telling of the story of the day before breaking into small groups to explore the story, wondering about how God's Good News for us is present in this story. To close our time together, we will all come together to reflect on our learning of the day, sing a song, and pray for the coming week. Students in middle and high school are still meeting in a separate space with Miss Ruth Ann to explore different facets of faith in daily life as a pre-teen and teenager.

November 1 – Ten Commandments
November 8 – Romans 3
November 15 – The Creed
November 22 – Youth Led Worship Celebration and Advent Preparation
November 29 – Advent 1

Worshiping with Children

Know that your children, and their wiggles, are most welcome in worship on Sunday mornings! While it may feel like worship is geared towards adults, children of all ages are invited to watch, listen, and learn about worship every single Sunday. **Children learn how to worship by being present, but also through the guidance of the adults with whom they sit.** You can help your children learn about the patterns and practices of worship by pointing out the typical order of the service, inviting them to join in on the creed, Lord's Prayer, or responses to the petitions of the prayers of intercession, encouraging enthusiastic "amens!" after prayers, dancing together during the music of the service, or working with them through the children's bulletins. Children's bulletins are designed to help our young worshipers **follow along with every element of the worship service using age-appropriate language and activities**. There are stickers to go along with each level of reader. Our visually inclined young worshipers are invited to make shapes out of pipe cleaners following the prompts in the bulletins. Our students who are still learning to read are invited to practice writing sight words related to the church season. And our young readers are offered opportunities to learn more about each element of worship with notes explaining what to do for our newest acolytes. **Grab a bulletin for your young worshiper in the Greeting Area next Sunday!** There are also worship bags that are filled with coloring books, fidgets, puzzles, and/or books that children are welcome to take into the sanctuary as needed. And if your child needs a break from the service, know that you are always welcome to use the playroom in the lower level by the elevator.

Did You Know?

The church website has an ongoing calendar! There is only so much room in the newsletter for upcoming events, but the website has all of them, including several months out! See the calendar at stjohnchurchmars.org/calendar.

An Advent Activity



Attention glue gun slingers and craft store fanatics, have I got a project for you!

Go find five tealight candles, five mason jars, a small box, some blue or purple paint, glue, and something to use as a base (think of the cardboard base of a frozen pizza).

Then paint four of the mason jars blue (or three purple and one pink), glue them onto the base, and put tea lights inside the jars. Then set the box in the center and put the Advent Centerpiece Wreath you've just made in a place of gathering in your home or a place you regularly spend time (i.e., a dining table).

Next to the Advent Centerpiece, place a stack of small papers and a pen to be used throughout the coming Advent season.

As many times as you'd like throughout the week, do as follows:

- Between **November 29th and December 5th** light one tealight, and consider the following question: "What has made me **hopeful** about the future this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you hope in your life.

- Between **December 6th and 12th** light two tealights, and consider the following question: "Where have I found **peace** this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you peace in your life.

- Between **December 13th and 19th** light three tealights, and consider the following question: "What has given me **joy** this week?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you joy in your life.

- Between **December 20th and 24th** light all four tealights, and consider the following question: "Where have I found **love**?" Write down or draw what you all come up with and put it into the box. As you put your paper in the box, pray for God to continue to offer you love in your life.

- Then, on Christmas morning or any of the **12 days of Christmas** before Epiphany on January 6th, remove the box, replace it with the 5th mason jar and tea light. **Light all five of the candles and read through all the hope, peace, joy, and love** accrued over the season of Advent and give thanks for the blessing of Advent coming to fruition in the coming of Christ at Christmas.

May the coming Christ bless you all!

*Please take these materials as a suggestion and have fun modifying it as makes sense for you!

Originally created by Pastor Chris Halverson (ELCA) in 2017.

November 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 All Saints Day Worship, 9a Sunday School, 10:15a YES Worship, 4:00p Adult Bible Study, 6:30p	2	3 Elders' Meeting, 7:00p Trustees' Meeting, 7:00p	4 Book Discussion, 6:30p	5	6	7 Soup Sale Pick-up Deacons' Meeting 10:00a Veterans Appreciation Luncheon, 1:00p
8 Worship, 9:00a Sunday School, 10:15a Kids Club/Youth Group, 4:00p	9	10	11 Bible Study, 7:00p	12	13	14
15 Worship w/ Confirmation, 9:00a Sunday School, 10:15a Sunday School Planning Mtg 11:30a Kids Club/Youth Group, 4:00p Adult Bible Study, 6:30p	16	17 Council Meeting 7:00p	18 Bible Study, 7:00p	19	20 Messy Church, 6:00 – 8:00p Newsletter Articles Due	21 Confirmation Class, 9:30a
22 Youth Led Worship, 9:00a Advent Wreath Making, 10:15a Adult Bible Study, 6:30p	23	24	25 (No Bible Study)	26 Thanksgiving	27	28 Light Up Night in Mars, 12:00p
29 Advent 1 Worship, 9:00a Anniversary/Birthday Celebration Sunday School, 10:15a (No Bible Study)	30	1	2 Bible Study, 7:00p	3 Worship Planners, 7:00p	4	5





11/01 Matthew & Jeannette Claus – 40 yrs.
11/03 Keith & Valerie Cardinal – 25 yrs.
11/05 Charles & Cheryl Davidson – 49 yrs.

11/02 Ariel “Buzz” Kelly
11/05 Tanya Nagel
11/07 Michael Sauers
11/07 David Knauff
11/07 Vern Miller
11/09 Mary Gross
11/17 Cheryl Davidson
11/17 Linda Sabbagh
11/23 Nancy McCormick
11/23 Dan Kramer
11/30 Tim Wach

November Newsletter

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