

August  
2024

# St. John Lutheran Church



## 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.*

St. John Lutheran Church  
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Pastor's cell #: 412-407-3166

The cookie table is a beloved Pittsburgh wedding tradition. Rumor has it that it started to help offset the cost of wedding cake. I love the tradition because it's an excuse to have an abundance of cookies! My family loves to bake cookies at Christmas. We make dozens upon dozens and then we show up with cookies to just about every holiday event. I have always loved the work of baking cookies, the science and art of it. And as much as I love eating the cookies, I love sharing them more. I love watching people enjoy something that I put time and energy and care into making. So as I was thinking about what a wedding reception would look like, the Pittsburgh cookie table was an assumption, not a question. I dreamed of all the cookies that I would make and share with the people who came to celebrate the wedding and the marriage. But as I mentioned the pending cookie table to friends and family, immediately bakers came out of the woodwork offering to bring cookies. I've lost track of who all offered to bring cookies, I just know that the Pittsburgh cookie table will be showing up in full force on Sept 28<sup>th</sup>! (Shameless plug for you to come celebrate and eat lots of cookies with us!)

In our summer book study, we've been reading James Hazelwood's book *Everyday Spirituality*, and as I think about all the people who will have a hand in our Pittsburgh cookie table, I'm realizing that a cookie table is a spiritual thing. I'm thinking about all the people who will generously put time and energy and resources into making cookies. I'm thinking about all the cookies coming together to create a mosaic of goodies made with love. I'm thinking about the air of celebration that will be created by people eating all the cookies. I'm thinking about the feeling of abundance and open-handed living as people fill boxes with cookies to take home. I'm thinking about how a table full of cookies in the church basement after a wedding ceremony is not really about the cookies after all. It's about the abundant display of love and life and generosity known in Christ and expressed at the cookie table. So when we dwell so deeply in this display, it really is a richly spiritual thing to have the traditional Pittsburgh cookie table.

Reading James Hazelwood's book *Everyday Spirituality* invites all to consider the ways that God's abiding presence, abundant grace, and steadfast love infuses every corner of our lives... even at the cookie table. Where do you see God infusing your life with the divine? Where do you see your spirituality influencing seemingly everyday moments? If you look, you might just be surprised just how pervasive God's presence is in your life!

Peace,  
Pastor Katie

## Worship Services on Zoom

Join Zoom for Worship: <https://zoom.us/j/5663185411> Meeting ID: 566 318 5411 PW: Luther  
Available on our YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC35PpgMPeMgDRNmKsXvQ>

## Worship Notes Young Worship Leaders

We love having our young worshippers helping with worship! If you are unable to be present for your scheduled service, please try to find someone to cover and tell the office of the change.

	<b>Acolyte</b>	<b>Offering</b>	<b>Offering</b>	<b>Young Reader</b>
<b>4-Aug</b>	Abby C	Luca K	Eva K	
<b>11-Aug</b>	Abby C	Luca K	Eva K	
<b>18-Aug</b>	Anna K	Jules K	Abby C	Abby C
<b>25-Aug</b>	Nathan K	Ava N	Ella N	
<b>1-Sept</b>	Ava N	Anna K	Nathan K	

## Adult Worship Leaders

	<b>Greeters</b>	<b>Usher</b>	<b>Assistant Minister</b>	<b>Bread Baker</b>	<b>Counters</b>
<b>4-Aug</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Denise H	Denise H	Denise H Sherry D
<b>11-Aug</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Denise H	Denise H Sherry D
<b>18-Aug</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Denise H	Denise H Sherry D
<b>25-Aug</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Denise H	Denise H Sherry D
<b>1-Sept</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	<b>VOLUNTEER</b>	Valerie C	Denise H	Valerie C Tanya N

## Worship Leaders

Worship is a communal experience. We worship as the body of Christ, with many parts making up the one body. **One of the ways we express this is the many opportunities for leadership and participation.** If you like to read in front of people, if you like to help facilitate the logistics of worship, if you like to welcome people and offer hospitality, if you like to bake (or buy) bread, if you like to help with our younger worshippers... we need you to help with worship leadership! **Please see the sign-up sheets in the gathering area to see what openings we are still seeking to fill. If you have any questions about what a given role is responsible for, contact Pastor Katie or one of the Elders.** If you have a gift that you would like to bring to worship but aren't sure how it could fit in, see Pastor Katie! There is a lot of space for creative involvement in worship!

**Worship Notes (continued)**  
**Campfire Worship – August 8**



**Thursday, August 8<sup>th</sup>**, join us outside around a campfire on the lawn for singing and an evening worship service! Worship will begin at 7:00pm. S'mores will be available after worship. Bring your own chair/blanket and come for this brief worship service including several camp favorite songs!

**College Sendoff – August 11**

For many of our college students, this Sunday will be their last Sunday in town for a while. Join us as **we bless their learning journey and wish them well!**

**Blessing of the Backpacks – August 18**

Before long folks will be heading back to school! Whether a teacher or a student, going back to school after summer vacation is a big transition! Bring your backpack, messenger bag, or book strap to worship on August 20<sup>th</sup>. **We will bless these symbols of learning and transformation as we get ready to head back to school!**



**Serving Others**

**Third Quarter Mission Emphasis Project**

Our third quarter (July, August, September) Mission Emphasis project will be the Adams Area Volunteer Fire Department. Please plan to join us on July 7<sup>th</sup> as we welcome a representative from the fire department to tell us about how our contributions support the work that they do. To contribute, **please mark your envelopes “Mission Emphasis”** so that we can be sure the funds are appropriately designated.

**God’s Work Our Hands Sunday (Sept. 8)**

Mark your calendars: we are going to be observing God’s Work Our Hands Sunday again this year! **On this Sunday we will restructure our worship to incorporate a service project as an integral part of how we worship.** This service reminds us that we worship not only with our words and our thoughts but also with our actions. This year we will begin to prepare for our Harvest Street Mission service day.



**St. John Food Pantry**

In the recent weather, the temperature in the outdoor pantry can get high. Unfortunately, not every shelf-stable item can be safely stored in these temperatures. Help us keep things in safe places. Check to see if there are any temperature notes on packaging. Help us to keep the things that need to stay inside in the indoor food pantry. But as you’ll notice, there are a lot of items that come and go through our little food pantry. So you can also help us by donating goods for others to make use of. Consider bringing in an extra can of chili beans (a request) or easy to prepare meals (another request) or paper products (another request) or any other shelf-stable item. **Please be sure any donated items have not yet expired.** And whenever you have a few moments, keep the pantry hospitable by **checking expiration dates and reshelving things to keep everything tidy.** Thank you for your continued generosity in providing care to our neighbors in need.

## **Serving Others (continued)** **Community Garden**

The garden is growing very well so far! There is a lot of work in maintaining the garden, so if you would like to help with any garden chores, let Pastor Katie know.

**Harvesting help is available on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9a-1p most weeks and Sundays after worship.** If you know of someone in need of some fresh produce, please invite them to come check out the garden!



## **Harvest Street Mission**

Save the date! **We will be serving some of the homeless and food insecure population of Pittsburgh on Sunday, September 29<sup>th</sup>. Preparing and packaging of the meals will happen on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.** We are collecting bottles of water to be included in the 100+ sack meals provided. Donations can be brought to the church to be stored until we package everything. Stay tuned for more details.

## **Around the Church**

### **Deacon's News**

By the time this is issued we will have had the congregational picnic at Adams Park/Pastor Katie's shower. Thanks to all who had a hand in the planning of it and who attended. The next project on the Deacon's agenda is the booth at Applefest. We **really** need people to help set up the day before, man the booth in 2-4 hour blocks during the day, and to help break everything down at the end of the day. Along with that we are asking for "anything apple" for the baked goods sale. Applefest is Oct. 5th so please mark your calendars. At Applefest we will be advertising for a Chili Cook-off at St. John on November 2nd. If we have any people within the congregation that believe their chili recipe can't be beat please see a deacon. We are hoping to draw cooks from other churches and in the community as well. More on that in the next newsletter!

### **Summer Hospitality Hour**

Throughout the summer, there will be a **hospitality hour after worship**. When the weather permits, we will be **on the lawn offering light snacks as people linger and mingle after worship**. If you would like to sponsor or host one of these weeks, please contact Denise Hager. Contact the office if you need her contact information.

### **Game Day – August 3**

Bring one of your favorite games or play one of ours! **From 3:00 – 7:00 pm on Saturday, August 3, we will be in the cool basement of the church playing board games, card games, table games, whatever games!** All are welcome! Donations are welcome to help defray the cost of snack and pizza. Snacks to share are also always welcome!

### **New Member Conversation – August 11**

When people want to officially become members of St. John, we invite them to a "New Member Conversation." **These conversations invite people to learn a little about the ELCA, a little about St. John and what membership means, and continue to intentionally develop relationships within the congregation.** We will be having a New Member Conversation on August 11<sup>th</sup>. Stay tuned for when we will welcome these individuals as members of the congregation!

## **Around the Church (continued)**

### **Applefest – October 5**

Fall is around the corner, and with it Applefest! **Applefest is a big deal in Mars, so this is a great opportunity to be an active presence in the community.** It takes a lot of hands to get ready for the event as well as to sit at the booth and talk with people. We will have kids activities, information about the congregation, and food for sale! It's a busy day, but many hands make light work. **Mark your calendars now** and talk to one of the Elders, Deacons, or Pastor Katie if you'd like to help prepare for the day!



## **Faith Formation**

### **Vacation Bible School – A Success!**

We had a fantastic week at Vacation Bible School! **With over 60 kids and over 50 volunteers, the church was busy with lots of fun and laughter and shining Jesus' light!** Thank you to all who make this week possible! There are dozens and dozens of people of all ages who look forward to this every year, and **it could not happen without your amazing support!**

### **Messy Church – Third Fridays (5:30-7:30pm)**

**This month we will continue the summer Olympic fun with our own Messy Church Olympics! All are welcome for this free, intergenerational, interactive worship.** We will have a picnic dinner! Feel free to bring a side dish or dessert to share!

Messy Church is an intentionally intergenerational place for people to meet and experience fun and messy ways to engage in faith and worship, including crafts and activities, celebration, and a shared meal no matter their connection to church. Messy Church is Friday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, 5:30-7:30 pm.



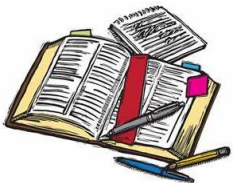
### **Rally Day – September 8**

On **September 8**, we will have our service worship day and while we are in the basement, we will **bless the space that will be used by students and teachers to explore their faith** during our Sunday School classes for all ages. After worship, we will **celebrate the kickoff of the academic year with good food and games at Rally Day!** Sunday School classes for all ages will start September 15<sup>th</sup> after worship, at 10:15 am. We will have a discussion-based adult Sunday School class during the faith formation hour on September 15<sup>th</sup> as well.



### **Adult Bible Study**

We will return to our weekly Bible study gatherings on Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup> (7:00 pm) and August 18<sup>th</sup> (6:30 pm). **We will engage in a six-week study on the book of Daniel.** The book of Daniel is not a common source for our Sunday morning readings, but many people have heard of Daniel and the Lion's Den, some may be familiar with the story of the fiery furnace. The book of Daniel includes this and so much more! It is a complex, often confusing, and always intriguing book of the Bible. **All are welcome to come and bring your curiosity as we explore together how the book of Daniel invites us to consider our calling as faithful disciples in difficult times.**



## Stewardship Corner

*From Living Lutheran, July 28, 2015 by Laurel Hensel "Helping kids learn stewardship":*

Sometimes the best way to learn is to teach what you want to know. If I wanted to be a role model for my children, I needed to improve my understanding of stewardship. Here's what I learned:

- Stewardship is about gratitude, not guilt. God is a generous God and has blessed us richly, beyond anything we deserve. God expects us to be generous, too, through gifts of our time, ourselves and our possessions. Trust God completely, even if you think you won't have enough. To be a good steward, you must practice giving. To be generous, you must practice generosity.

- Stewardship is a response, not a reaction. The Holy Spirit moves us to give – not so that we can get something back. Through baptism God has already promised us eternal life. This I believe: Giving is a spiritual act. When we follow God wholeheartedly, we experience God's grace and freedom to live generously.

- Stewardship is about mission, not about budget. We give as a response to God's love, not because our congregation needs money. Together we can do so much more than we can do alone to further God's work in the world. God is moved not by the amount of our giving but the trust and love that the gifts symbolize.

- Stewardship is an act of worship. One of my stewardship mentors wrote, "On the day of worship, set aside an offering. If we give when we worship, we will give regularly. We cannot give what we have not received, but we can withhold what we have received." ("Generous People," Eugene Grimm, Abingdon Press, 1992).

Nobody said this would be easy. To promise to support God's ministry with our financial resources may take a little courage. Whenever we feel challenged to stretch and grow, remember this from Ephesians 3:20: "Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine," Ask God to ease your fear of giving and give you the courage to act.

As we learn how to steward everything God has given us, my prayer is that we do so with a grateful heart and a joyful spirit. At 10 years old, my daughter showed that she had truly caught on. She insisted her offering envelope get to church even when she couldn't. When I asked her why this was so important to her, she said, "Because it makes me feel good."

## **From the Congregation** **You're Invited!**

Pastor Katie is getting married! **You are invited to come celebrate with her, her fiancé (Cody), and their families on Saturday, September 28<sup>th</sup>.** The ceremony will be held at St. Matthew's Evangelical Lutheran Church (45 East Steuben St, Crafton, PA) at 2:30 pm with prelude beginning at 2:15pm. The ceremony is open to all with a light cookie and cake reception following.

## **Thank you!**

A note from Pastor Katie and Cody:

Thank you! It was so much fun to celebrate our pending marriage with the congregation at the picnic.

Our families appreciated the opportunity to participate and visit with members of the congregation. **And we were blown away by the generosity shown to us through well wishes, gifts, and all the love that surrounded us during the shower. Thank you** to everyone who worked hard to make it happen and thank you to everyone for all the care and support. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you!

# August 2024

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b> Game Night 3:00 – 7:00 pm
<b>4</b> Worship: 9:00 am Trustees mtg. – 10:15am Mission Endowment Meeting – 10:15 am Hospitality Hour 10:15 am	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> Deacon's Meeting 7:00 pm Elder's Meeting 7:00 pm	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b> Campfire Worship 7:00 pm	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> Worship: 9:00 am College Student Sendoff New Member Conversation 10:15 am Hospitality Hour 10:15 Book Study–6:30-8:00pm	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Bible Study 7 pm	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Messy Church 5:30 pm	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> Worship: 9:00 am Blessing of the Backpacks Hospitality Hour 10:15 Bible Study 6:30 pm	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> Council Meeting 7:00 pm	<b>21</b> Bible Study 7 pm	<b>22</b> Worship Planners 7:00 pm	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> Worship: 9:00 am Birthday / Anniversary Coffee hour 10:15 am Bible Study 6:30 pm	<b>26</b> Communion @ Penn Mar 1:45 pm	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Bible Study 7 pm	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>



8/02 Emma Niklewicz  
8/05 Denise Hager  
8/08 Anne Olescyski  
8/08 Frederick Bielo  
8/14 Laura Greb  
8/14 Ava Niklewicz  
8/17 Todd Niklewicz  
8/17 Kayla Julio  
8/24 Beverly Crislip



8/25 – John & Susan Fritz – 45 yrs.

# August NEWSLETTER

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