

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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2025 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION

STATEMENT OF MISSION

**God's Purpose for St. John's is
to GROW in relationship with Christ
to GO share God's love and serve others.**

Guiding Principles

1. We believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior.
2. We gather weekly to praise and thank God and to be strengthened by God for the week ahead.
3. We serve others as an expression of God's love for all.
4. We invite all people to join us to learn about and to serve God.
5. We ask God to help us adapt to change because it is a constant in our lives.
6. We are family (with all that that entails).

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Emmaus, Pennsylvania

January 26, 2025

Meeting Attendance: 40

Welcome: Elise Spayd, Council President, welcomed everyone to St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting. Elise called the meeting to order at 11:04 a.m.

Devotions: There were no devotions, as Pastor Woody had led devotions at the meal that directly preceded the meeting...

The headcount of those members present was 47. This number constitutes a quorum under the constitution. (Quorum = 7% of voting members, CCC of 211 (those who communed and contributed) = 15 persons required). The meeting was held in-person, with a Zoom option as well.

Elise presented the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting held January 28, 2024, as printed on pages 1 – 2. There were no additions, deletions, or corrections. The minutes were approved as printed.

A motion was made to accept the Report of Interim Pastor Woody as printed on page 3 by Dave LaMotte and seconded by Bruce Buchman. The motion carried.

A motion was made to accept Tim Ginder's Report of Music Ministry Director as printed on page 4 by Kathy Mintzer and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: Report of Council President as printed on page 5, Report of Congregation Council Secretary as printed on page 6, Report of St. John's Membership for the year ending December 31, 2024 as printed on pages 7-8, Memorial Fund Receipts as printed on page 9, and Financial Reports as printed on pages F1 – F6 which include A Balance Sheet, An Investments Summary, The Statement of Income and Expenses for the Current / Property Fund, The Statement of Income and Expenses for the Endowment / Memorial Fund, The Statement of Income and Expense for the Preschool, and The Balances for Dedicated Funds. A motion to accept the reports was made by Dave LaMotte and seconded by Jane Harps. The motion carried. All financial reports will be accepted pending the annual audit.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: Worship and Music Committee as printed on page 10; Acolytes, Advent Wreath Readers and Lighters and Altar Guild as printed on page 11; Communion Assistants, Eucharistic Ministers, Flower Delivery, and Gift Presenters, as printed on page 12; Lectors and Prayer Chain as printed on page 13; Christian Education Committee as printed on page 14; Bear Creek Camp as reported on page 15; Property Committee as printed on page 16; GIFT / Parish Life Committee as printed on pages 17-18; People Over Fifty as printed on page 19; Stewardship as printed on page 20; Support the Troops as printed on page 21; Outreach Committee as printed on page 22; Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank Volunteers as printed on page 23; Knitting for Charity as printed on page 24; Finance Committee as printed on pages 25-26; and Audit Committee as printed on page 27. A

motion to accept the reports as printed was made by Sandy Farkas and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: St. John's Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery Association as printed on page 28 and St. John's Women of the ELCA as printed on page 29. A motion to accept the reports as printed was made by Dave LaMotte and seconded by Sandy Farkas. The motion carried.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

Nomination for Congregation Council: Elise Spays is the only outgoing member. The congregation thanked her for her service on Council. There were no preselected nominees for Congregation Council. Elise Spayd opened nominations from the floor. Jeff Reis was nominated by Cindy Reis. Dave LaMotte moved to accept Jeff as a nominee. Cheryl Kraemer seconded the motion. The motion carried. This constitutes a six-member Council.

Proposed Budget for the Work on Ministry in 2025: The proposed 2025 budget is presented by the Finance Chair Annette Roth, Treasurer Brad Albright and the Finance Committee members. The budget is presented on pages B1 – B5 of the Annual Report. Discussion was had about state of the finances. The budget for 2025 has a deficit of approximately \$31,202.

The Budget Proposal comes as a recommendation from the Congregation Council and therefore does not need a motion. The 2025 Budget is adopted as presented.

Good of the Church:

In appreciation of their faithful work of ministry in daily life and in the life and mission of St. John's Elise Spayd expressed gratitude to everyone who helped support her during her tenure as Council President and thanked the following people who have helped accomplish God's work at St. John's this past year: everyone who helped prepare and serve the meal for this year; the Staff, Congregation Council, Volunteers, Committee Chairs and Members, all the Members of St. John's.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 am with a closing benediction from Pastor Woody.

Respectfully Submitted,
Brad Albright
Council Secretary

Interim Pastor's Report for 2025

We have a congregation that continues to be strong and intentionally moving forward. New people are joining the congregation. Mission activities are the focus of much of our outreach work. Our Sunday School and Confirmation classes deliver bright and smiling faces. Worship attendance is strong and our worship services continue to deliver great organ and choir music. We are uplifted by our worship and go out into the world energized to do God's work. Even though we are under Interim status, our congregation has not slowed down or diminished in our dedication to being God's hands in Emmaus, our larger community and around the world.

Worship: Attendance at worship is strong and by the sound level, people like being in church together. We have maintained a good level of participation in singing and doing the Liturgies. On a Sunday in November, we had 112 in Worship. We have exceeded attendance expectations on Christmas and Easter. Tim continues to support and encourage the Choir and Bells as they provide good music for our Worship. I enjoy having the children come forward and doing a "Children's Sermon" with them. The candy is a real hit.

Christian Education: This year I did several sessions with the Confirmation Class taught by Jane Harps and Faith Drescher. Sunday School is active on Sunday Morning with happy children. We are doing better than a number of churches around us are able to do. Vacation Bible School went well with many neighborhood children in attendance.

Events: We were able to have the German Service in 2025. The service was well attended, and we are hoping the same will be true in 2026. Reformation and All Saints Sundays lifted our Spirits.

I continue to spend two days per week in the office taking care of administrative issues and hospital calls. As needed, I also visit shut ins and people requiring a visit. I mainly work with the Worship Committee, Confirmation and Council. My goal has been to make sure that there continues to be a pastoral presence at St. John Church. I have committed to being with you through September 2026. I am open to extending my time with you, if necessary. Looking at possibilities for the future, we are considering a variety of options for pastoral leadership. The Good News is that God never abandons us but always walks beside us in our journeys.

Pastoral Acts:

Hospital Visits	68
Shut in Visits	52
Meetings	198
Contacts	214
Baptisms	3
Weddings	1
Funerals	21

Pastor Woody Maxon

Director of Music Ministry

We have been blessed as a congregation to have yet another year in which to offer praise to God with music! With the support of the Worship and Music Committee, we all strive to keep the church music programs active and look forward to their continuance.

The hand bell and adult choirs both continue to remain active. Each choir is filled with dedicated and patient people who invest many hours of their time in rehearsals. The hand bell choir continues to use the additional bells bought by using donations from the memorial fund. This past season, many new choral pieces were purchased to keep the choir up to date on new music which is both interesting and shares a good message through the lyrics. Outside musicians have also been able to be a part of the services at St. John's in part to the generous donations to the music fund, a separate fund outside of the churches music budget.

The churches instruments are in good working order and have been maintained including a few repairs to the organ pipes, which has been minimal considering their age. The Sanctuary piano, purchased as a second-hand instrument, will need to be voiced in 2026. Jon Zeiner Jr. assessed the piano and reported it is in very good condition. At the year's end, both piano and organ were cleared of any flaws by the technicians. The organ pipes continue to adapt nicely in the two pipe chambers by allowing more air circulation into the two areas.

Thank you to all choir and hand bell choirs in their continued dedication to leading our church through music and song.

Timothy Ginder
Director of Music Ministries & Organist

Council Report

Even without a designated Council President this year, each member stepped up, shared responsibility, and worked collaboratively to keep our mission moving forward. The absence of a single point of leadership didn't slow us down—in many ways, it strengthened our teamwork. Together, we stayed focused, supported one another, and accomplished work for the good of the church.

There were 11 council meetings and several joint meetings with the call committee and synod to discuss the call process.

We are blessed to have had Pastor Woody and Linda continue to serve throughout 2025. We appreciate your guidance during this time and appreciate your work to set us up for success in the future.

Thank you to the committees whose work turned vision into reality and helped our church live out its mission with purpose and joy.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Albright

John Ashcraft

Peg Duelfer

Jane Harps

Cheryl Kraemer

Jeff Reis

Sharon Strouse

Congregation Council Secretary Report

Following is a list of all the regular monthly meetings of Congregation Council and the Annual Congregational Meeting held in 2025:

January 13, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
January 26, 2025	<u>Annual Congregational Meeting</u>
February 11, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
March 11, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
April 8, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
May 12, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
June 9, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
August 11, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
September 8, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
October 13, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
November 10, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
December 8, 2025	Regular Congregation Council Meeting

The minutes from all of the above meetings have been properly recorded and are incorporated as part of the permanent records of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Emmaus, and Pennsylvania, with the exception of the May meeting, for which I was not present.

Respectfully submitted,
Brad Albright, Congregation Council Secretary

**INFORMATION ABOUT ST. JOHN'S MEMBERSHIP
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2025**

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
1. Membership at the end of 2024	1,191	680
2. Members received during 2025		
a. By Baptism: (children 15 & younger)	3	--
b. By Baptism: (adults 16 & older)	--	--
c. By Affirmation of Faith	--	--
d. By Transfer from ELCA congregation	9	6
e. From other Lutheran congregations	1	1
f. From non-Lutheran congregations	2	1
g. From other sources & statistical adjustment	--	--
h. Total Members Received	15	8
3. Baptized youth who were confirmed in 2025		5
4. Total	1,206	693
5. Members removed during 2025		
a. By Death	15	15
b. By Transfer to other ELCA congregations	2	2
c. To other Lutheran congregations	--	--
d. To non-Lutheran congregations	--	--
e. For other reasons & statistical adjustment	1	1
e. Total Members Removed	18	18
6. Membership at the end of 2025	1,188	675
7. Number of Confirmed Members who Communed <u>and</u> Contributed during 2025 (197)		
8. Communing Members: Confirmed (223)		
9. Average Weekly Worship Attendance in 2025 (84)		

2025 BAPTISMS

Warren Willoughby
Callahan Parks
Harvey Parks

2025 CONFIRMATIONS

Olivia Becker
Lillian Kemmerer
Vincent Male
Cooper Rzonca
Erik Stufflet

2025 RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP

Nagy family: Jeanine Nagy, Justin Nagy, Liam Nagy, & Payton Nagy
Kishbach family: Melissa Kishbach, Shane Kishbach
Linda Pfiefly
Hammond family: Janet Hammond, Jim Hammond
Sands family: Jason Sands, Lauren Sands, Alex Sands, Cameron Sands
Russko family: Chris Russo, Becky Russo, Noah Russo

2025 TRANSFERRED/REQUESTED RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP

Linda Brown
Jeff Carstens
Sandra Eckroth

2025 DEATHS

Charlotte Albright
John Arndt
S. Ferne Druckenmiller
Gary Fillman
Charles Gaugler
Marlin Guigley
Donald Herb
James Homlish
Ray Leibensperger
Eleanor Long
George Niederberger Jr
David Renninger
Glen Salter
Jeanette Dolly Wieand
Margaret Peg Young

Memorial Funds Received in 2025

St. John's gratefully acknowledges receiving contributions to the Memorial Fund totaling \$7,525.00 in memory of the following individuals:

Charlotte Albright

S. Ferne Druckenmiller

Gary Fillman

Fred Foerster

Charles Gaugler

Donald Herb

Eleanor Long

Jeanette Dolly Wieand

Margaret Peg Young

We have also received bequests from the estates of: Eleanor Long, David Renninger, and Jeanette Dolly Wieand.

Worship and Music Committee

The Worship and Music Committee met regularly throughout the year. The members of the committee include Pastor Maxon, Faith Drescher, Annette Roth, Kathy Mintzer, Tim Ginder and Peg Duelfer. Thank you to the following people who serve as coordinators for the area of service noted: Acolytes and Gift Presenters; Faith Drescher; Altar Guild, Annette Roth; Communion Assistants, Kathy Mintzer Thank you, Dave LaMotte, for assisting with lectors and Rebecca for scheduling Eucharistic Ministers. Special thanks to Tim Ginder who leads our Music Ministry. He has done an amazing job of week to week behind the scenes work, choir rehearsal, bell choir rehearsal, and all the special music that he adds to make our Worship meaningful.

Pastor Maxon has been a true blessing to St. John's, and we thank him for his continued commitment to keep our church alive! Thank you to Linda Maxon for sharing her wonderful husband with us. Many thanks to Tim Ginder and Rebecca for all their work in completing the weekly tasks of preparing the bulletins. So many things can be accomplished when working as a team.

The Call Committee has now completed all tasks in the Call Process and is prayerfully waiting for any news from the Synod. In the meantime, Pastor Maxon has reached out to "form" an Ecumenical Community with surrounding churches. We will all help each other in keeping St. John's vibrant.

Last year's German Service was an amazing success. Over 125 people attended. The German Community could not have thanked us more for such an inspirational service. Yes, there were mistakes in the German language that we are working on for this year. And the cookie fellowship... need I say more. If you missed this year, please put us on the calendar for next year.

Submitted with Hope for a bright future,
Kathy Mintzer

Worship Volunteers

Acolytes

Thanks to those confirmation students who serve in worship as acolytes. We are blessed to have 6 post confirmation students who serve occasionally when asked and are available. The acolyte's specific duties continue to be lighting and extinguishing candles only – including those for All-Saints Day and pew candles for the Christmas Eve and German services. On Festival Days acolytes also may carry the processional cross and/or Bible and assist the Pastor by holding the Bible during the gospel reading and holding the Pastor's book during a Baptism. Acolytes are invited to sit with their families after lighting the candles until they become comfortable staying in their bench in the chancel for the entire service. Students who are not yet confirmation age but attend church and are interested, can and do acolyte with a parent or church adult friend and then sit with family.

We're still working on a photo board to be posted in the Sacristy for a quick reminder on a Sunday morning as to the order of candle-lighting and extinguishing. This is available in email form thanks to Jessica Becker, parent of 7th and 9th grade daughters Avery and Olivia, who also acolyte.

Thanks to the families of all the acolytes who provide the support and encouragement needed for these young people to be able to serve. In addition, thanks to everyone for your flexibility and understanding. Life demands and interests make it harder and harder to schedule.

Thanks also to Joe Harps who creates sign-up genius which hopefully has made it easier for families to select a date for their student to serve.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher - Coordinator

Advent Wreath Readers and Lighters

Thanks to all who continue to accept the call to serve as Advent wreath Readers and Lighters. This is an opportunity for families and friends to serve in worship. All that is needed is to commit to attend worship on one Sunday in Advent, come forward to lead the congregation in the short Advent Blessing, light the Advent Candle(s) and return to your seat.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher - coordinator

Altar Guild

Our small group of volunteers continues to be busy preparing for our weekly Sunday service. This year we tried “rolling out” the decorating of the church for Advent & Christmas so it would not be hectic decorating on the last Sunday of Advent. This procedure worked well in conjunction with the Church’s preparation of the birth of Christ.

If you are interested in joining, contact Annette Roth. There is no big commitment when you join, only a few Saturdays & Sundays during the year.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Roth – President

Communion Assistants

Are we all getting older? They say time flies when you get older, but I never imagined it would go this fast. Another year has passed and I would like to thank all the folks who volunteer their time to serve as communion assistants. We never realize how important a task is until we stand next to the Pastor and remind all what Jesus Christ has done for us. May his sacrifice continue to give us the strength to walk in his light and continue with the words.... Follow Me.

If by any chance you are interested in this vital part of the Service, please contact me or the Church Office.

Faithfully yours,
Kathy Mintzer
Communion Assistant Coordinator

Eucharistic Ministers

St. John's Eucharistic Ministers are lay people and one pastor, who have been trained to visit homebound members and share communion with them. These volunteers visit each person monthly on a rotating schedule to offer not only the sacrament, but in-person contact and fellowship as representatives of our congregation.

We are grateful for the Eucharistic Ministers- Faith Drescher, Deb and Dennis Herman, Sandy Kulp and Pastor Roger Timm continue to serve as ministers. Thank you for your time and dedication to this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebecca Williams, Eucharistic Ministry Coordinator

Flower Delivery

This year church members have been called on to volunteer to select the dates they are able to serve and to help prepare and deliver the altar flowers to our homebound and hospitalized members. Those who sponsor the flowers also have the option of taking their flowers with them after the service and even requesting who they would like them to be delivered to. This ministry, an extension of care and connection for folks who are unable to be present at worship, is valued and appreciated. The sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board near the Parish Hall. Please sign up when you can to support this shared ministry of care. Many thanks to our delivery folks.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher - Coordinator

Gift Presenters

I am always looking for volunteers to bring the elements forward; families, friends, and congregants can all share in this simple yet meaningful and important part of worship. If you attend worship, you can move to the back of the church toward the end of the Peace, then walk forward and then back to your seats - you are hired! There's no speaking or preparation involved.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher - coordinator

Lector

St. John's Lector's are a dedicated group of volunteers who read the lessons at weekly services as well as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and other special services. In 2025 two new folks became lectors – Rebeca Amidon and Tiffany Fenstermacher – welcome!

A sincere thank you to those faithful volunteers for their commitment of time and talent as well as Rebecca Williams, St. John's Office Administrator, for her help in getting the readings to assigned lectors each week.

If you are interested in becoming a lector, please contact me at mafreer@ptd.net or Rebecca at the Church office.

Respectfully submitted,
Maryann Freer
Lector Coordinator

Prayer Chain

This is a ministry to those who request prayer. Members are asked to check e-mail daily. Once a request is received, you include it in your daily prayers. Although these intercessory prayers are often for immediate and specific needs, we also offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving. I try to be as timely as possible. The last half of this year has been difficult for me to compose emails; not sure why. I certainly made sure prayers were passed on, probably far too informally, and that Rebecca was kept up to date for Care Notes. Much thanks to her for compiling the Care Notes for inclusion in the weekly bulletin insert so that all in the congregation can join in prayer.

Prayers are offered for anyone in need, not just church members. There is no limit to the number of people participating in this ministry of praying for others/intercessory prayer. Folks find comfort in knowing others are praying for and caring about them. We pray with confidence to our Lord that he listens to and answers our prayers. I John 5:14-15. Please do contact me if you would like to participate. All are welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher – coordinator

Christian Education Committee

Mission: To provide a lifelong program of Christian education that will enable members of all ages to learn the Scriptures and Lutheran teaching and apply them in their daily lives.

Members: Mary Bealer, Karen Brokate, Faith Drescher, Michelle Killino, and Elise Spayd
Here are some of the highlights of the past year.

- Sunday School students, ages 4 to fifth grade, met weekly to learn and grow in their faith. Students collected pet food for a local animal food bank. Third graders received their bibles in October.
- Confirmation class, a 3-year commitment for students in Grades 6-8, continued to meet weekly. This is a time for building relationships and continuing their faith journey, culminating with Confirmation at or around Pentecost at the end of the 3rd year. Five students were confirmed this year. We are fortunate that Pastor Woody has provided guidance and has continued to help with confirmation.
- Vacation Bible School, “Road Trip- On the Go with God,” was a big success. There were about 25 students and over 30 volunteers who were invited to remember “The Lord our God is with us wherever we go”. We were grateful to partner with Holy Spirit again to design, prepare and share decorations to transform our respective church spaces. Students and Staff brought in donations for Groceries Plus at Bethel Bible. Thank you to the congregation for your donations and support in making this another successful year.
- Confirmands, Sunday School students, and members of the congregation participated in CropWalk in October. The group of 24 walked through Emmaus during the Sunday School hour and raised over \$750 with support from the congregation.

Thank you to all the volunteers, teachers, helpers, committee members, and Thrivent representatives, who gave their time and talents to keeping the Christian Education ministries going at St. John's.

We are always looking to grow with new ideas and volunteers. Please reach out if you are interested in being a committee member or volunteer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Karen Brokate

Bear Creek Camp

Bear Creek Camp is an outdoor ministry of the Northeastern and Southeastern PA Synod of the ELCA, located on nearly 3,000 acres in the Pocono Mountains. The camp provides year-round experiences: Summer Residential Camp including Try Camp, Nature Day camp, Environmental Education programs, July Family Camp, Labor Day Family Camp, an Artist in Resident Camp for adults and outside group rentals. There are also weekend retreats during school breaks, especially at Christmas for Middle and High School students. We at St. John's are thankful for the Foerster- Bray Endowment fund that is available to assist families by providing a stipend of \$200 per camper for a week of summer camp. There are also select weeks for kids grades 1-3 to try camp for a partial week – Sunday -Wednesday. Other financial aid from Bear Creek is also available.

Please check the Bear Creek website and Facebook page at www.bearcreekcamp.org to sample some of that camp spirit. REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER CAMP BEGINS JANUARY 5, 2026.

If you have any questions, need more details and/or would like to hear some camp stories, contact Bear Creek Ambassador Marlea Landis.

Respectfully submitted,
Faith Drescher

Property Committee

The Property Committee is responsible for the care and maintenance of the church building and grounds. Here are some highlights of the committee's work in 2025:

- We have been involved with the rental property, which the church has, by having the items in the basement removed from there.
- We have been looking into getting a new projector for the Parish Hall, we have contacted a few vendors.
- We have been looking into removing the tree from the front of the church, we have contacted a few vendors.
- We have fixed issues with exhaust fans in lower bathrooms.

The committee also deferred some maintenance projects due to budget constraints. These projects included electrical repairs, repairs to shades in the Parish Hall, and others.

The committee also expresses thanks and gratitude to our custodian, Brian Dunton, for his tireless devotion to caring for our beautiful church building.

Matthew Berner
Committee Chair

GIFT Committee / Parish Life

Another year of fun events included Fellowship, which took place on the second Sunday of each month. Food has always brought people together and is good for the soul.

We celebrated a delightful German Christmas on 1/5/2025 with a well-attended service and a cookie fellowship afterward. Many parish bakers contributed, and some guests brought desserts to share. The East Penn press even covered the event.

On 2/22/25, we enjoyed a fun night with Potluck Bingo. Members of all ages came for food, games, and socializing.

Our night out at a Phantoms game on 2/26/25 was exciting. It was Melvin's birthday, and they won! Plus, a few members rode the Zamboni.

Our annual Egg Hunt took place on a chilly, sunny Palm Sunday morning, bringing smiles to our Sunday school children and neighborhood kids. We had about 1,000 eggs filled for the children to find.

We held our first-ever Community Yard Sale on the front lawn of the church. Shoppers showed up in great numbers, and our bake sale was a hit. Special thanks to our amazing bakers.

We returned to the Triangle in Emmaus for the Farewell To Summer day. Many visitors came to our tent for games, crafts, and prizes. We also had a great location this year.

Our spectacular Spaghetti Dinner on 9/27/25 was a success, with around 140-150 guests. The confirmation students did an excellent job serving and cleaning up.

We hosted our annual Halloween Parade Watch Party on 10/18/25. Potluck food was served, and we had great weather for watching the parade. I saw many familiar faces and smiles.

We will be at the Triangle in Emmaus for Old Fashion Christmas on 12/6/25. We'll have a tent with crafts and homemade Christmas cookies for sale. We hope for great weather and lots of fun.

Many bakers are lined up for the German Christmas on 1/4/26 to help with our cookie fellowship after the service.

We have several events coming up for 2026:

- ❖ 2nd Sunday Fellowship monthly
- ❖ German Christmas 1/4/26
- ❖ PPL Phantoms game
- ❖ Easter Egg hunt 3/29/26
- ❖ Iron Pigs game TBD
- ❖ 2 free Emmaus Yard sale dates

- ❖ Halloween Parade Watch Party 10/17/26
- ❖ Farewell to Summer Sept 2026
- ❖ Old Fashion Christmas Dec 2026
- ❖ Spaghetti Dinner TBD

I just want to say a huge thank you to this amazing committee for their time, ideas and dedication to our church community and youth.

Submitted respectfully,
Jennifer J. Anders 11/18/25

If you are interested in helping organize any event or if you have an idea for an event let us know. The more ideas for events and activities the better. All ideas are welcome please contact Jennifer Anders 610-554-2044 or email at janders@ptd.net

The mission statement that had been developed for the GIFT (Growing in Fellowship Together) committee is as follows:

GIFT's purpose is to plan and promote a variety of activities and events that build relationships among St. John's members, visitors, and guests to educate, excite, entertain and engage members in support of important causes. Events can be large or small and be held at St. John's or in our community. Gatherings can be designed to appeal to all ages or focus on one primary group. The GIFT team selects key events throughout the year but relies on St. John's members to assist in planning or volunteering at these events.

People Over Fifty (POF)

POF (People Over Fifty) met nine times in 2025 on the second Wednesday of the month at 11:30am in the Parish Hall for lunch and fellowship. January and February's meetings were canceled due to extreme cold/icy conditions. October was canceled due to a scheduling conflict.

Anyone over 50, or anyone accompanying someone over 50 is welcome. Attendees bring a canned good or small household item for the prize table and a donation of \$4 to cover the cost of lunch. Food bank donations are always welcome.

Attendance in 2025 ranged from 9-12 people. Highlight of the year was our annual Christmas gift exchange.

Call Sharon at 303-956-6289 at least a day before the meeting if you'd like to attend or have any questions.

Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Strouse
POF Coordinator

Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee had another eventful year this year. To continue with our theme in celebrating *A Century of Giving* our theme for 2025 was *“A Century of Giving and Beyond”*.

Our Newsletter articles this year were related to managing God’s gifts – time, talent and treasures – responsibly and with gratitude and using these gifts to serve and love God and others.

Thrivent Members can continue to have a say in Thrivent distributions to charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars to causes they care about. St. John’s received \$907 in Choice Dollars in 2025. Thrivent Team grants were used for fundraising events such as the Celebration Sunday luncheon, Spaghetti Dinner, KFC, Food Bank, and Vacation Bible School in 2025.

The Initial Offering Envelope reflected an \$8.00 cost this year. The total dollars received this year from the Initial Offering Envelopes was \$414.00.

A thank you note to those who give to St. John’s was prepared and mailed along with their statements. This was a nice way to say thank you to those who contributed.

Time & Talent update – The Time & Talent Response Sheets were handed out at our June Fellowship and during the Celebration Sunday luncheon, as well as, including a copy in the October newsletter asking members to complete and return so that we have up-to-date information.

Celebration Sunday is the Stewardship Committee’s way of thanking the congregation for a good year of time, talent and treasures. The fellowship gathering and great food makes it a festive time for everyone.

Our theme for 2026 is *“Helping Hands Make A Difference.”* This theme reflects love, hope, caring and helping through time, talent and treasures. The Bible emphasizes that it is more blessed to give than to receive and this is demonstrated through actions of love and service.

Thank you all for your time, talent and treasures and support of the Stewardship Committee. The committee consists of Susan Buchman, Bob Cleaver, Joan Gooch, Jane Harps, Judie Herb and Deb Herman. Without their hard work we would not be able to accomplish all that we do.

Also, a special thanks to Rebecca Williams, Brian Dunton, Anna Galante, and Pastor Woody. We are most grateful for their help and hard work.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Felegy
Stewardship Committee Chairperson

Support the Troops

The USO strengthens the well-being of the people serving in America's military and their families by keeping them connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to our nation. St John's members continue to generously support the Philadelphia airport USO, providing snacks for guests. The center moved into a new facility in October, providing guests with new accommodations to relax while traveling.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Kraemer

Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee listens, discusses, visions, initiates, and oversees St. John's efforts to reach out to the Emmaus community to help meet the needs in whatever way we as a church are able. You, the congregation continue to support the ministries we bring to you and are a vital part of this work.

On - going social ministry programs that St. John's continues to be involved in:

- ✓ Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank packing team and food collection.
- ✓ Produce Exchange - Congregation members bring in excess produce they have grown, and anyone can stop after services to select produce for a donation. The excess produce is taken to Groceries Plus, the food pantry at Bethel Bible Fellowship Church in Emmaus. The \$50 collected was split between the food pantry at Grace Lutheran Church and Behel Bible Fellowship Church.
- ✓ Groceries Plus at Bethel Bible Fellowship Church – Ongoing donations as requested.
- ✓ Bread for the World / Offering of Letters - BFTW is a nonpartisan Christian advocacy group that urges those who can make a difference, whether politically or personally, to maintain and hopefully increase funds to those in need here and abroad to help ensure food security. BFTW letter writing is done once or twice a year.
- ✓ Crop Walk - held October 26, 2025. Faith Dresher and the participants walked in Emmaus during the Sunday School hour. They raised a total of \$750.00 to help stop hunger.
- ✓ Angel Network - The Angel Network is a support system for families who reside in the East Penn School District. This fall we collected cans of tuna for their Thanksgiving food baskets.
- ✓ Lehigh Mission District Ingathering - scheduled for December 3, 2025, at our church. The Ingathering provides Christmas packages and gifts collected through the Lehigh Mission District Lutheran Churches to be given to institutions in the Lehigh Valley. The Outreach Committee coordinates and assists with the collection and distribution of gifts.
- ✓ Supporting the Military - The Outreach Committee has partnered with the Philadelphia Airport U.S.O. to collect items for use at their center. It is a welcome refuge from the stress of traveling, often to hostile areas. This is an ongoing project.
- ✓ St. Matthew's Clothes Closet - The Outreach Committee is asking the congregation to support this free and important service for our community. They accept gently used clothing items of any size and age on the first and third Saturday of the month from 10am to 1pm. If necessary, Outreach Committee members could assist with pick and drop off.
- ✓ The Conferences of Churches Back to School Drive – Items needed to start school were collected for children in need.

Current Outreach Committee members are Audra Berner, Debbie Yoder, Cheryl Kraemer, Faith Dresher, Pastor Timm and Martie Dech. We welcome anyone interested in helping on the Outreach Committee to join us on zoom the first Tuesday every three months at 7pm.

Respectively submitted,
Debbie Yoder
Outreach Committee

Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank (Outreach)

It has been a trying time for the Food Bank in 2025. Federal food distribution cuts have drastically reduced their food supply:

FOOD SUPPLY COMPARISON

Cereal - 75% decrease from 2024 to 2025
Cheese/Yogurt - 67% decrease from 2024 to 2025
Eggs - 41 % decrease from 2024 to 2025
USDA Foods - 36 % decrease from 2024 to 2025

Despite these deficits, the Food Bank, which is open 5 days a week, 52 weeks a year, serves 1,720 households and feeds 4,212 people monthly. They distribute almost one million pounds of food each year and provide 1.584 senior boxes annually.

THANK YOU to all the church members who donate goods to the Food Bank. The Food Bank would not exist without the help of the churches in the Lehigh Valley.

St. John's volunteers help at the Food Bank the third Monday and Tuesday of each month from 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM. If you are interested in seeing what we do, spend a morning with us! We provide transportation from the church. You can pick which day, Monday or Tuesday, that you want to volunteer. Call the church or Bob Cleaver at 610 533-8900 if interested.

Collection boxes for food donations are located in the church coat room.

Respectfully submitted,
Bob Cleaver

Knitting for Charity

Knitting for Charity (KFC) is a group of women from St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, as well as several friends in the community, who knit crochet, loom and sew hats, scarves, lap robes and prayer shawls that we pass on to anyone in need of these items for the upcoming winter months. We meet for 2 hours 8 times per year at the church, but the bulk of our work is done independently at home.

We operate without a budget but applied for and received a Thrivent Action Team Grant for \$250 this year. The money was used to purchase yarn for our crafting members.

This year 32 hats, 87 hat & scarf sets, 30 scarves, 4 prayer shawls, and 8 lap robes were distributed to 8 different organizations. They include: East Penn Angel Network at Jefferson Elementary School, St. Matthew's Clothes Closet, Turning Point, Children's Home in Easton, Chemo Bag, Loads of Blessing and the Allentown Rescue Mission.

After learning of the need for blankets for the homeless, our group donated 15 blankets to the Loads of Blessing organization in December.

We are always appreciative of donated washable yarn and will teach any person interested in learning any of our homemade crafts. We hope to be able to make similar donations to these same organizations in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,
Judith M. Herb

Finance Committee

The primary responsibility of the Finance Committee is to oversee the financial affairs of the church, including prompt payment of all obligations, monthly reporting of financial status to Church Council, preparation & presentation to Church Council of a proposed budget, & forwarding of all applicable monies to the Synod.

During 2025 we were able to complete several jobs which were previously placed aside due to the lack of both financial resources and people willing to commit to accomplish the work. But God was with us and brought forth individuals to assist with St. John's needs. Our average monthly income was \$17,250 & our average monthly expenses were \$19,400, which indicates regular giving did not increase as much as the normal expenses. But thanks to several generous members, we were able to pay our expenses, as well as complete much needed projects.

In October we finally began renting the vacant apartment after 18 months of no income. Many thanks to Dave Miller & Tim Ginder for providing free labor & donated materials to complete this project. The overall cost for the church was \$4,300. In October we also completed outside repairs to the apartment building at a cost of \$14,212. This amount included a discount & waived fees from the contractor. Many thanks to a church member who provided money to cover 100% of the cost.

In January 2025 we began to use \$1,000 per month as the start of paying back the roof loan of \$42,500. Thanks to all church members who have contributed to the roof fund. A total of \$34,402 was received between September 2024 – October 2025. At this time, we calculated the total monies we had & paid off the roof loan. In addition to the \$34,402 contributions received, we raised \$564 from the spaghetti dinner, used \$2,565 from the Dave Renninger bequest, & used \$5,000 of the budgeted monthly amount of \$1000.

St. John's was blessed with several people designating bequests to us upon their deaths. Amounts were \$3000, \$30,000 & \$129,000. The Finance Committee has recommended to keep \$33,000 in the current fund to assist with normal expenses and has invested the larger amount in a brokerage account for long-term growth.

Overall, it is our opinion that St. John's Church is in a very good financial position. In a time of need, the church family members respond generously. Last year we established a Dedicated Special Music Fund which received over \$1000. Without your donations, we would not have been able to enjoy the guest soloists/musicians who performed during the year. Each year we receive memorial contributions on behalf of deceased members. With these funds we were able to purchase items which were not considered in the past because people thought we did not have money to afford these items. Currently we are finalizing the purchase of a new projector & screen for the Parish Hall. We have already purchased new microphones for the choir loft and new computers for the church office.

In preparing the 2026 budget, the approach was taken that income would remain the same as 2025 & expenses would increase moderately. A raise was given to church staff upon the recommendation of Council & lawn maintenance will be higher since we have contracted with the provider to now include routine weeding & mulching with the service. In addition, we were able to reduce our insurance premium by \$6400 while receiving better coverage than last year. Again, thank you to all members of St. John's who continue to support our church as we move forward in our mission. Special thanks to Anna Galante & Rebecca Williams for their dedication in assisting with the financial records.

Respectfully submitted,
Annette Roth, Finance Chair

Audit Committee

The Audit Committee examined the records of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Emmaus and St. John's WELCA for the period ending December 31, 2024. All reports and statements were found to be accurate and properly recorded.

Thanks to the Audit Committee members: Robert Cleaver and Barbara LaMotte. Your service is much appreciated. Thank you, Anna Galante, for overseeing the audit in my absence.

Respectfully Submitted,
Annette Roth
Finance Chairman

Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery Association

St. John's Lutheran and St. John's UCC churches together in 1953 established St. John's Lutheran and Reformed Cemetery Association of Emmaus, Pennsylvania, as a not-for-profit corporation.

The Association Board includes one appointed non-voting member council member from each Cemetery congregation. The current voting Board members are:

President	Glenn Deischer	St. John's UCC
Vice President	John Ashcraft	St. John's Lutheran
Secretary/Treasurer	Annette Roth	St. John's Lutheran
Board Member	Thomas Gable	St. John's UCC

In 2025 the following transactions were completed: 12/01/2024 to 11/30/2025:

Regular Burials	12
Cremations	15
Graves sold	11

As of October 31, the cemetery had a checking account balance of \$7,235.41

Our sincere thanks to our superintendents, Robert & Deborah Kline, and also the volunteers for their help in maintaining and improving our cemeteries. Please direct your questions regarding the cemetery; such as removal of seasonal plants, policies, cost of lots, etc., to a Board Member or contact Deborah Kline at 610-657-6473. In lieu of flower memorials, please remember your cemetery.

Respectfully submitted,
L & R Cemetery Board

Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (WELCA)

Last year was the second year of WELCA at St. John's since Covid ended our meetings. We had a very successful year with an average of 22 people in attendance. Our September meeting was a Hawaiian Luau. We enjoyed Hawaiian decorations, food, and trivia. The following are the programs planned for 2025-2026:

- October 21, 2025: Turning Point of Lehigh Valley spoke about Domestic Violence.
- November 18, 2025: Nutritionist from Weis Market spoke about “Eating Well for Healthy Aging”.
- December 16, 2025: Annual Christmas party.
- January 20, 2026: Game Night
- February 17, 2026: EverTrue Lutheran Home at Topton
- March 17, 2026: Therapy Dog demonstration
- April 21, 2026: Lehigh Valley Outreach Depot
- May 19, 2026: Young Adults in Global Mission
- June 16, 2026: Picnic in Parish Hall with boom box bingo

An invitation is extended to all women, members, and friends of St. John's, to attend any or all of the programs we have planned. Our mission is to provide Growth, Community and Action for the women of our congregation. We meet on the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The programs and activities provide information and support to strengthen our daily ministries. Each meeting includes fellowship which fosters our community and friendships. If transportation is needed, please call the church office.

Thank you to our Officers:

President - Sandy Farkas
Secretary - Sandy Eckroth
Treasurer - Barbara Lamotte

Respectively submitted,
Vice-President Debbie Yoder

Endowment Funds Disbursement Committee

The committee is responsible for dispersing the earnings from the endowment investments. The purpose of the fund is to serve the church and to enhance the mission outreach beyond the annual operating budget of the congregation using the guidelines established.

During 2025 the committee received approval by the Congregational Council to disburse \$14,906.50. This amount represents earnings for years ended December 31, 2022, 2023, 2024. Following is the list of distributions:

St. John's Lutheran Church	
Property Funding	\$5,962.60

Local Community Outreach	
Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank	2,000.00
Allentown YMCA Warming Station	2,000.00
Groceries Plus Food Bank, Emmaus	1,962.60

ELCA Churchwide	
Two Family Farms-consisting of 1 cow, 2 goats, 2 pigs, 12 chicks, seeds, tools	1,430.00
ELCA Disaster Relief	1,551.30

Thanks to members of the committee for their efforts in this ministry. The members are Brad Albright, Annette Roth, Ron Schuler, Elise Spayd, Bill Springer, Connie Young.

Respectfully submitted,
Ron Schuler