

September



THE NEWSLETTER OF ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

MARK YOUR CALENDARS: HOMECOMING IS SEPTEMBER 21



Our Sunday School speakers are Wanda Casey and Jeannie Thornton from Atrium Hospice and Palliative Care Cabarrus. The Rev. Cassie Overcash, Assistant to the Bishop of the North Carolina Synod, will preach. Following worship, we will gather at the Fellowship Building for a covered dish meal.

Sunday School

Most people don't think about hospice care until they need it. Advance care planning is important for all families to consider. St. John's has been a longtime supporter of Hospice of Cabarrus through our local benevolence. We look forward

to hearing from Wanda & Jeannie as they share information about their care services. According to the Atrium website, the care focus is "around quality of life, as well as peace, comfort and dignity. Hospice care is available for those living at home, in nursing homes and assisted living centers, and at the Tucker Inpatient Unit."

Sunday Worship

The Rev. Cassie Overcash is a familiar face to many at St. John's. She served as a supply pastor to us numerous times prior to Pastor Matt's arrival and was the key Synod liaison to him in the Call Process. Pastor Cassie will preach and deliver greetings on behalf of the newly elected Synod Bishop, The Rev. Emily Hartner.

Covered Dish Meal

It's not homecoming at St. John's without a covered dish meal! We are eager to welcome back family and friends and celebrate with great food and fellowship.

Sunday School begins at 9am in the sanctuary, followed by worship at 10am. Following worship, we will head over to the Fellowship Building for lunch.

A NOTE FROM THE PASTOR

People of St. John's –

First and foremost, thank you so much for the wonderful taco meal and many cards and gifts welcoming me into the church parsonage. I am so grateful! By the way, a pizza oven is definitely getting ordered, so stay tuned for updates on that.

There is a great deal of excitement in the air at St. John's. Our August attendance numbers are strong, visitors are checking us out, new preschool students and teachers are joining the broader St. John's family, pickleball courts are being painted, our Greece trip participants are gearing up for October travel, and our new website project is nearing a soft launch. Sometimes, in the day-to-day work of ministry, it can be a challenge to step back and appreciate all that is taking place. But I am grateful for this opportunity, because it truly is an exciting time in the life of St. John's.

While excitement surrounds us, there are also numerous health concerns many of our members are facing. Whether it is an unexpected visit to the ER or a long-planned surgery with rehab, I know all these things can really disrupt daily life and peace of mind. Please know that my daily prayer list is long and it includes each of you.

I am exploring a partnership with area congregations to offer a community healing prayer service on a monthly basis. I have spoken to numerous individuals who find these services helpful in their discipleship as they encounter difficult times with health and wellness. I feel like this service would not just benefit our



congregation but others in our community. More to come!

I am grateful to all of you who have responded to the Sunday School survey and our Christian Education Committee is reviewing these responses and looking for opportunities to improve this vital ministry.

We have significant events to look forward to the entire month of September:

- **On September 7**, we will celebrate God's Work, Our Hands Day. During our Sending Rite, we will bless and send the entire congregation for service in the community.

- **On September 14**, we will celebrate Holy Cross Day. This festival day allows us to joyfully celebrate the power of the cross outside of the solemnness of Holy Week. Paraments will be red.
- **On September 21**, we will celebrate Homecoming. The Rev. Cassie Overcash is excited to return to St. John's for this special day.
- **On September 28**, we will begin a Confirmation cohort with St. John's and Mt. Olive. We will continue meeting monthly during the Sunday School hour at St. John's.
- **Also on September 28**, at 4pm, we will offer a Blessing of Animals at the church prayer labyrinth.

BACK TO BASICS: TEN WEEKS WITH THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

I am hoping you will join me in getting back to the basics this fall.

Beginning the first Sunday in October, I would like for each Sunday School class to begin studying the Ten Commandments – one commandment per week. You may have unrelated material already planned, but please set aside ten minutes as a group to discuss.

Additionally, in worship, we will incorporate the Commandment in our Confession & Forgiveness rite.

October is the tenth month of the year, and we will begin ten weeks exploring all Ten Commandments.

In 1529, Martin Luther published the Small Catechism so households could explain to their children in simple terms the basics of the faith: The Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the Sacraments, and simple prayers for daily living.

You may be surprised to learn that following these Commandments perfectly isn't as easy as you think. Martin Luther is a great guide in helping us realize this with his "What does this mean?" explanations for each section of the Small Catechism.

If you don't have a copy of the Catechism, we will begin distributing the pocket editions in the church Narthex over the next few weeks. To support this effort, consider a gift to the Christian Education fund. Additionally, the Small Catechism is found in the back of the ELW (red hymnal) and can be downloaded, in app form, for free: <https://catechism.augsburgfortress.org/>

You may know all this by heart, or you may be a little rusty. Regardless, I have a feeling this will be a very fruitful form of discipleship for each of us – whether you are 4 or 94.

As you can see, the Spirit is at work at St. John's. We are busy and blessed. I remain deeply joyful to be called as your pastor and for all our shared Gospel work.

May the peace of the Lord be always yours,

Matt +

CALL TO DUTY

In a few weeks, the **Nominating Committee** will be looking for volunteers to be placed on the ballot for new **Congregation Council** members.

Per the Constitution, the Nominating Committee will be looking for **8 church members** to be placed on the ballot in November, with 4 being elected for a 3-year term starting in December.

As mentioned previously from the pulpit, the existing council members wish and hope that each of our members will prayerfully consider to be a part of the church leadership team. St. John's has some new enthusiasm and excitement going after some very slow years with little active growth (and no full-time pastor). And the church can use some leaders that will continue to press on with the growth. The Congregation Council will present the Nominating Committee names to the congregation in September. They will be the ones to contact with interest as a volunteer. Otherwise, they will be on the phone asking for members to be on the ballot. Let's not make the phone calls necessary. Again, prayerfully consider stepping up and being one of the leaders of St. John's Lutheran Church as we continue to move forward.

Our Congregational Annual Meeting will be November 21, 2025.



COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS FROM AUGUST

Janet Lentz led the devotion and followed with prayer. The minutes for the June 17, 2025 council meeting were provided by email prior to the meeting. Janet Lentz made a motion to approve the minutes and Vera Drye seconded. The motion carried. Patti Fletcher presented the financials for May, June and July 2025. Janet Lentz motioned to approve the financials as presented and Carl Walker seconded. The motion carried.

Things are progressing as anticipated with the Tracy Brown Property. Closing on the property is scheduled for October. Council team working on updating bylaws and constitution of the congregation. Council approved a “Call to Duty” note to be published in the August Newsletter.

A motion was made by Janet Lentz to reduce the number of occupants to use the church bus for church related activities. Emily Harstell seconded to update the policy. The motion carried.

The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 16th at 6 PM. Larry Allman will lead devotions.

Full Congregation Council meeting minutes are available for viewing at the church office.

CONGREGATIONAL STEWARDSHIP

As the ELCA, we are a church that shares a living, daring confidence in God’s grace — our congregations are evangelical mission centers where courageous and wise stewards are grown. Congregational stewardship begins with a healthy understanding of gratitude and generosity. We have first received and therefore we give. Developing a culture of gratitude and generosity is the focus for growing stewards in many congregations. Through the study of Scripture, we develop a trust in God’s abundance and strive to be faithful disciples and stewards. The formation of these stewards is a lifelong journey, and one in which we accompany each other. **Pastor Tim Brown is the ELCA Director of Congregational Stewardship and is scheduled to preach and also do a stewardship-themed Sunday School on November 9th.**

Here is a **Winter** article Pastor Tim Brown wrote, “Where Your Heart Is”

“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:21).

What is at the center of your activity in these increasingly shadowy days?

In the summer months many of us find ourselves occupied with outdoor sports, yardwork or leisure activities to take advantage of the warmer weather. But as the weather cools, even if just so slightly, what takes up space in our lives?

Our ancient forebears saw two centers of light in their lives: the sun and the hearth. The sun took center stage in the warmer months of the year, but as the sun started to turn in earlier, the other warm center, the hearth, came more into focus as outdoor competitions were replaced by quiet hobbies and as leisure in the sun was traded for lounging by the fire.

And it was around that hearth, that fire — what they called the “heart of the home” — that stories were shared, especially in these colder months. These stories were meant to shape not only the hearer but also the teller, keeping alive the history of the family and the importance of community, and reminding everyone of what their common purpose was.

Around the hearth they would open their hearts and stories of life would pour forth.

While most of our society is singing “It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas,” those of us in the stewardship world are singing “It’s beginning to look a lot like year-end appeal letters.” As well we should! This is the time of year to imagine how you’re going to set your mission up with strength to start next year’s work!

But instead of simply asking for year-end gifts, let’s take a page from the ancient wisdom of our ancestors and tell a story or two of how these gifts have changed lives this year, by God. Get to the heart of the matter, as if you were sharing these stories by that ancient heart of the home: the hearth.

It is not too late to invite people to be generous in their year-end intentions, but invite them to do so through story and imagination, not just as a response to shortfalls or unmatched expectations.

God has invited your community to do wonderful and purposeful things in this world! Share how you’re doing them and why you’re being called to do them next year too.

That life-changing work is, after all, the heart of the matter.

A question from Pastor Matt: *What has inspired you lately at St. John’s? Are you willing to share? If so, let me know. I would love for these stories to be told to the wider community in a way comfortable to you.*

SUPPORTING SONSHINE BACKPACKS FOR GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS SUNDAY

On September 7, following Sunday worship, we will gather at the Fellowship Building on God's Work Our Hands Sunday for a congregation-wide service project supporting the Sonshine Backpack Program or another service ministry to which you feel called.



KAIROS PRISON MINISTRY

We are preparing for Weekend #26 at Foothills Correctional Institution in Morganton. **The dates will be November 6-9, 2025.** We invite you to consider a step outside of your comfort zone to serve on the team in this Kairos Ministry. You will be a blessing to many, and you will feel the blessings as well. See Jim or Gerald if you are interested.

We will be glad to answer any questions and provide more information about how we prepare for the Weekend.

PHOTOGRAPHER ON SITE FOR CONGREGATION SNAPSHOTS

As we work to launch our church's new website, we will capture new and vivid photos of congregational life to showcase our community. **Mahoney Fotos will be on site on September 2 and also join us for Homecoming to snap pictures** of the Heritage Center, Preschool, and Congregation to be used on our new website.

KENTUCKY MISSION DELIVERY

Catherine will have a truck at the Church on **Saturday, September 20 from 10 am – Noon** to be loaded with the items donated by congregation members for the people in Kentucky. She will be leaving immediately following Worship on Sunday, September 21st to deliver them. Please get your items to the church or contact Catherine if your items are large to ensure that we have a truck that will hold everything.

A NEW YEAR OF PRESCHOOL

The halls of St. John's will soon be filled with joy. **The children will start on September 2nd and we begin with a record enrollment of 102**

After adding an additional 2-year-old class, we now have 31 two-year-olds registered.

We have 33 three-year-olds and 38 four-year-olds.

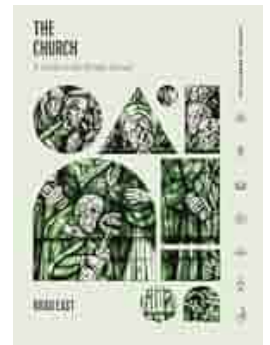
Open House was held on August 27th and 28th.



NEW BIBLE STUDY BOOK & LUTHERAN STUDY BIBLES

The Church by Brad East is our new Monday night Bible study book. We will begin diving into this book on September 15th at 6:30pm. Books are \$7.

Lutheran Study Bibles are also available in the church office at a cost of \$37.00.



WE SING OUR FAITH

Beginning this month, and with assistance from Catherine, we will begin telling how we *sing our faith* through selected hymns and anthems used in Sunday worship. Here's how we are doing this in September.

You may not know it, but we are currently using Holy Communion Setting 8 from the ELW each Sunday. Setting 8 is a contemporary and rhythmically rich setting of the Holy Communion service, featuring new melodies by various composers that give life to the original texts. The setting includes flexible instrumental parts for a variety of instruments and is known for its newer musical elements and upbeat style.



Beginning in September we will be using “*We Give Thee But Thine Own*” as our Offering Song. This is a hymn about stewardship, about bringing our gifts to be used for the church's ministry of word and deed to a world in need. Like Psalm 50 and Isaiah 1, this text declares that everything in creation already belongs to God and that what we give and what we keep are all to be used gratefully in God's service. This hymn was written by Bishop William Walsham How in 1858.

“*God's Work, Our Hands*” was written by Wayne Wold, it was selected as the winning entry in the ELCA's “God's work, Our hands” Sunday hymn contest in 2019. More than 120 entries were submitted to be considered as a hymn for the ELCA's annual dedicated day of service. It is being sung by ELCA congregations throughout America today. This hymn can be found in *All Creation Sings* (ACS).

The Servant Song, written by Australian composer Richard Gillard, is based on Matthew 20:26-28. The lyrics will hopefully encourage each of us to mirror Jesus's example of humility and selfless love as we experience both joys and sorrows that we share during life's journey.

If you have a favorite hymn/anthem that you would like some background on, please let the church office know.

BIRTHDAYS

2 - Catherine Carriker

2 - Hampton Trexler

3 - Asher Ensley

12 - Louis Suther

14 - Sheryl Garfolo

15 - Tammy DeVitto

16 - Susan Shuping

16 - Davis Dorton

18 - Bonnie Shoaf

21 - Ted Ritchie

23 - Meredith Mills

25 - Josh Thomas

26 - Larry Cline

28 - Steve Drye

28 - Nathan Moose

29 - Ethan Ensley

30 - Kevin Edwards

ANNIVERSARIES

8 - Stan & Jody Parnell

8 - Adam & Whitney Bost

20 - Darin & Beth Yates

25 - Bob & Gloria Casper

Daily Lectionary Readings

Monday, September 01, 2025:

Psalm 58; Jeremiah 2:23-37; Hebrews 13:7-21;

Tuesday, September 02, 2025:

Psalm 58; Jeremiah 3:1-14; Titus 1:1-9;

Wednesday, September 03, 2025:

Psalm 58; Jeremiah 3:15-25; Luke 14:15-24;

Thursday, September 04, 2025:

Psalm 1; Genesis 39:1-23; Philippians 2:25-30;

Friday, September 05, 2025:

Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 7:12-26; Colossians 4:7-17;

Saturday, September 06, 2025:

Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 29:2-20; Matthew 10:34-42;

Sunday, September 07, 2025:

Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Philemon 1-21

Monday, September 08, 2025:

Psalm 101; 2 Kings 17:24-41; 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5;

Tuesday, September 09, 2025:

Psalm 101; 2 Kings 18:9-18; 1 Timothy 4:6-16;

Wednesday, September 10, 2025:

Psalm 101; 2 Kings 18:19-25; 19:1-7; Luke 18:18-30;

Thursday, September 11, 2025:

Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 1:1-11;

Friday, September 12, 2025:

Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 7:6-10; 8:1-5; 2 Peter 2:1-10a;

Saturday, September 13, 2025:

Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 8:20-9:7; John 10:11-21;

Sunday, September 14, 2025: Holy Cross

Psalm 98: 1-4; Numbers 21:4b-9; 1 Corinthians 1:18-24

Monday, September 15, 2025:

Psalm 73; Amos 7:1-6; 1 Timothy 1:18-20;

Tuesday, September 16, 2025:

Psalm 73; Jonah 3:1-10; 2 Peter 3:8-13;

Wednesday, September 17, 2025:

Psalm 73; Job 40:6-14; 42:1-6; Luke 22:31-33, 54-62;

Thursday, September 18, 2025:

Psalm 113; Exodus 23:1-9; Romans 3:1-8;

Friday, September 19, 2025:

Psalm 113; Ezekiel 22:17-31; Romans 8:31-39;

Saturday, September 20, 2025:

Psalm 113; Isaiah 5:8-23; Mark 12:41-44;

Sunday, September 21, 2025:

Psalm 113; Amos 8:4-7; 1 Timothy 2:1-7

Monday, September 22, 2025:

Psalm 12; Proverbs 14:12-31; Acts 4:1-12;

Tuesday, September 23, 2025:

Psalm 12; Proverbs 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23;

Wednesday, September 24, 2025:

Psalm 12; Proverbs 21:10-16; Luke 20:45-21:4;

Thursday, September 25, 2025:

Psalm 146; Proverbs 22:2-16; 2 Corinthians 8:8-15;

Friday, September 26, 2025:

Psalm 146; Proverbs 28:3-10; Ephesians 2:1-10;

Saturday, September 27, 2025:

Psalm 146; Proverbs 28:11-28; Luke 9:43b-48;

Sunday, September 28, 2025:

Psalm 146; Amos 6:1s,4-7; 1 Timothy 6:6-19

Monday, September 29, 2025:

Psalm 62; Amos 6:8-14; Revelation 3:14-22;

Tuesday, September 30, 2025:

Psalm 62; Hosea 10:9-15; James 5:1-6;

SEPTEMBER 2025

<i>Sunday</i>	<i>Monday</i>	<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>Friday</i>	<i>Saturday</i>
	1 Labor Day – Office Closed No Bible Study	2 6:30 Shell Gardner Cir. 7 Frances Goins Cir.	3	4 Knotters	5	6
7 10 am Worship GOD'S WORK, OUR HANDS SUNDAY	8	9	10	11	12	13
14 10 am Worship HOLY CROSS DAY	15 6:30 pm Bible Study	16 6 pm Council Mtg.	17	18 Knotters	19	20
21 10 am Worship HOMECOMING	22 6:30 pm Bible Study	23 10 am Heritage Communion	24	25	26	27
28 8:45am Confirmation 10 am Worship 5 pm BLESSING OF ANIMALS	29 6:30 pm Bible Study	30				

SERVING THIS MONTH

Worship Reader – 7th Deane Moorehead; 14th & 21st Ellen Goodman; 28th Patti Fletcher ||

Communion Assistants – David Johnson, Jim Thinnes, Bonita Rowland || **Ushers** – John Hartsell, David Ritchie, Jacob Sigler, Eddie Walters || **Teller** – Larry Allman || **Altar Guild** – Etta & Bonita Rowland ||

Nursery Attendants – 7th Emily, Raegan, Ryleigh Hartsell; 14th – Open; 21st – Patti & Hailey Fletcher; 28th – Jimmy & Janet Lentz