

# St. John's Messenger

OURISHING  
SERVING  
FAITH

Volume 105, Issue 1

January 15, 2025

## Office Hours

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday  
8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.

## Church Staff

Pastor Karla Leiby

[pastorkarla@stjohnslutherannorry.org](mailto:pastorkarla@stjohnslutherannorry.org)

570-854-3919

William Jacavage  
Director of Music

Sue Billman  
Office Manager  
[sjlc300@ptd.net](mailto:sjlc300@ptd.net)

Tina Pontius  
Treasurer

Joyce Shearer  
Payroll Treasurer

Barb Moyer  
Restricted Fund Treasurer

## Congregation Officers

Mile Erdley, President  
Holly Bedisky, Vice President  
Eric Shearer, Secretary

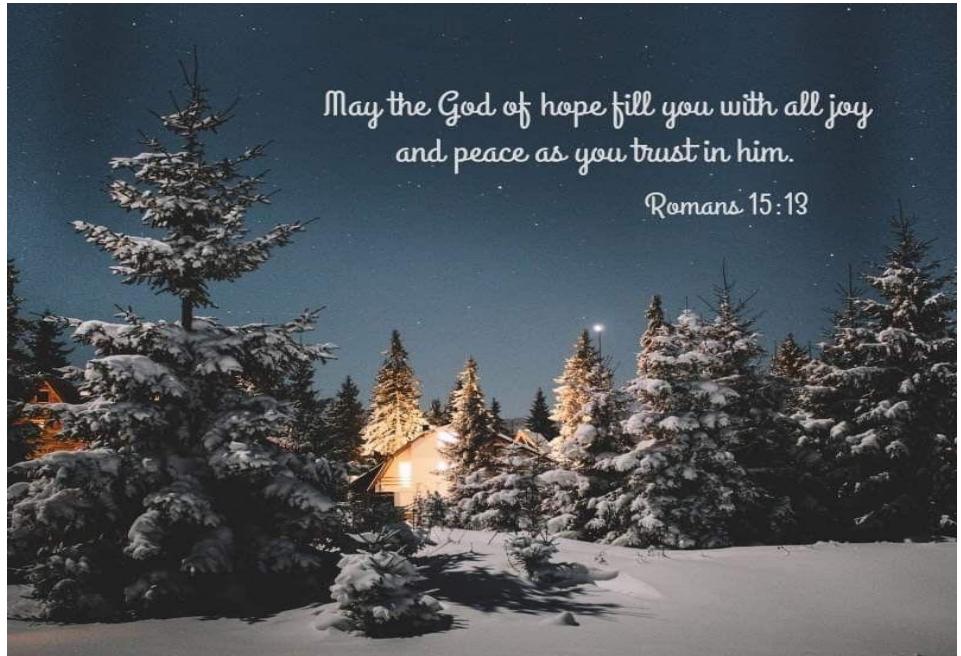
## Congregation Council

Kanen Bucher  
Judy Dunkelberger  
Mike McWilliams  
Steve Mertz  
Craig Treacher

**Church phone:** 570-473-3770

**Email:** [sjlc300@ptd.net](mailto:sjlc300@ptd.net)

**Website:**  
<https://stjohnslutherannorry.org>



*May the God of hope fill you with all joy  
and peace as you trust in him.*

*Romans 15:13*

***"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord  
Jesus Christ!" (1Cor 1:3)***

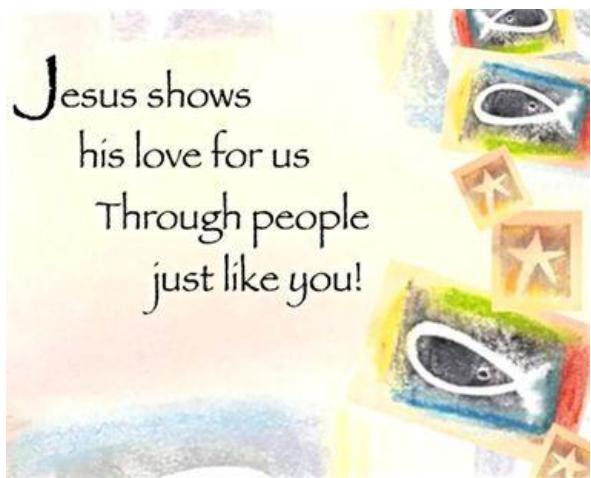
We have entered the season of Epiphany, the season we celebrate the light that has come into the world, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I have recently been exploring the concept of "wintering." This concept takes its root in the nature of the seasons that God has created and looks at the seasons of our lives that call us to slow down, to rest, to renew, and to look to God for our source of strength. Although a season of "wintering" can show up in our lives at any time, it speaks to me especially in this actual season of winter. When the busyness and spiritual height of the Christmas season has passed and cold bitter days draw us indoors, I take solace in longer periods of darkness that give us more time to reflect on this gift of life that we've been given. The concept of wintering is giving yourself permission to go at a slower pace, to ignore the outside world that says we must run at a faster pace, and to allow ourselves to not have a booked calendar of events and "to do's." Instead, seek out the God who loves us and cares for us with the presence of the light of Christ even through the wintering.

As we venture through the season of Epiphany, we begin with the reminder of our baptism and our new life in Christ Jesus, what a perfect start for our journey. God's glory through the revelation of Jesus will continue in the visit of the magi, the proclamation of Simeon, the teachings of Jesus himself, and a variety of miraculous holy events. In this season of rest and renewal, let us consider how we are living into our own baptism and new life in Christ Jesus.

May God fill us all with courage, strength and wisdom as we venture together into this new year seeking to follow Christ in all things.

Blessings,

*Pastor Karla*



Thank you to my St. John's family for your very generous Christmas Gift. I am so blessed to do God's work alongside all of you!

In gratitude and love,

*Pastor Karla*

## Annual Meeting & Council Nominees

Sunday, February 16, 2025 we will hold our annual meeting. Purpose of the meeting will be to review 2024 and vote on council nominees.

**Please plan to attend.**

The following persons have been nominated:

Holly Bedisky (1st full term)  
Kanen Bucher (1st full term)  
Mike McWilliams (2nd term)  
Craig Treacher (2nd term)  
Pam Miller (1st term)  
Randy Stine (1st term)  
Teresa Meisinger (1st term)

## Attention Committee Members & Council

End of the year reports for 2024 need to be in the church office by January 31st. You may email your report or submit a hard copy.

## ELCA Disaster Response

Social Ministry is collecting monetary donations for the California wildfires. The collection will continue through February 9<sup>th</sup>. All monies collected will be given to the ELCA Disaster Response.

Lutheran Disaster Response is the disaster ministry of the ELCA. They stay in the community long after the disaster strikes, working to help make them stronger than before. 100% of the designated gifts to a specific disaster goes towards helping survivors and communities.

Donations may be mailed to or dropped off in the church office, or in the special envelope on Sunday mornings. Please make checks payable to St. John's.

# Notes From the Director of Music



## The Back Pew Conundrum: A Lighthearted Look at Lutheran Seating Habits

If you've ever attended a Lutheran service, you might have noticed a curious phenomenon: the tendency of Lutherans to gravitate toward the back pews of the church. This behavior has become somewhat of a running joke within the congregation, often eliciting a chuckle from the pastor as he surveys the familiar sight of faithful congregants nestled at the rear. But what's behind this quirky seating preference? Let's explore the reasons, with a sprinkle of humor, of course!

### The Tradition of the Back Pew

Historically, many churches were designed with a particular seating arrangement that favored those who arrived early or held a certain status in the community. In Lutheran congregations, there's a long-standing tradition of humility and modesty. Sitting in the back pew can be seen as a way to avoid drawing attention to oneself, aligning with the Lutheran emphasis on community over individual prominence. After all, who wants to be the center of attention when there's a perfectly good back pew available?

### The Comfort Factor

Let's face it: sitting in the back can be quite practical. For many, the back pew offers a sense of comfort and safety. It allows for easy exits during moments of, let's say, less-than-exciting sermons or those particularly lengthy prayers. Plus, there's the added perk of being able to sneak in a quick snack—after all, who hasn't discreetly munched on a granola bar during the sermon?

### The “Late Arrivals” Club

Another reason for this back-row congregation is simply that many Lutherans have perfected the art of arriving fashionably late. The good news is that those who stroll in after the service has begun can comfortably slide into a back pew without disrupting the entire congregation. “Look, honey! We’re not late; we’re just avoiding the front row!” It’s all about perspective, right?

### The Pastor’s Perspective

Pastors often have a humorous take on this phenomenon. A common quip might be, “If you want to find the Lutherans, just follow the sound of the coffee pot brewing in the fellowship hall—it’s always located near the back!” This playful jab highlights the communal spirit of Lutherans, who are often more interested in fellowship (and snacks) than in occupying the spotlight.

### The Mystery of the “Back Pew Society”

Some might argue that there exists an unspoken “Back Pew Society,” where members gather to share knowing glances during the sermon, perhaps even engaging in a bit of discreet whispering or giggling. It’s a place where camaraderie flourishes, and the spirit of friendly banter can thrive without the scrutiny of the front rows. After all, who wouldn’t want to belong to a club that meets weekly to celebrate faith and fellowship, all while enjoying the comfort of the back pew?

*continued*

## Conclusion: Embracing the Back Pew Life

*continued*

In the end, Lutherans sitting in the back pews is a charming quirk that reflects the values of humility, comfort, and community that are at the heart of Lutheran tradition. So, the next time you find yourself in a Lutheran service, don't be surprised if the back rows are filled to the brim. Embrace the back pew life—it's where the laughter, camaraderie, and, yes, perhaps a few secret snacks can be found. As our pastor often reminds us with a grin, "There's plenty of room in the back for all our good Lutherans!"

### Address Change

Shirley Gautsch has a new mailing address if you would like to send a card or letter.

Shirley Gautsch  
Elite Memory Care  
7702 E, Davenport Drive  
Scottsdale, AZ 85260

*Thank you* for all the gifts, cards, and well wishes from members and Council given to us for Christmas. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated.

*Sue Billman & Bill Jacavage*

We would like to thank Social Ministry for the Christmas and worship supply bag for Christmas Eve. We very much appreciated it.

*Mike & Bernadette Payne*

Thank you to Social Ministry for the Christmas "goody" bag. It's so nice to be remembered by my church family.

*June Diehl*

Thank you for the Christmas bag from Social Ministry and all the cards, calls and prayers I received. I truly appreciate each and every one of them.

*Mary Rogers*

## NEWS FROM KATE'S KUPBOARD

Kate's Kupboard was open on **December 21 2024**.

We helped **538** people by distributing **173** household/personal care bags, **140** produce boxes, **150** packs of meat and **288** bags of groceries. We helped **64** babies and provided adult care products to **20** people. Free hair cuts were given to **2** children.

The total cost was **\$4,899.86**.

Thank you to **ALL** the volunteers who helped with this Kate's Kupboard in any way.

We continue to help people through NEIGHBORLYPA. Com. Between our November and December distributions we helped **3** families (**13** people) by distributing **7** bags of groceries, **4** food boxes and **5** household bags. We also helped **1** baby.

# Pink Envelope Collection

Thank you for your continued support of our 2024 special monthly Pink Envelope and Quiet Cash/Noisy Coin collection. Your donations are important to the missions of St. John's. Below are the recipients and amounts.

## Pink Envelope

January – Global Health Ministry - \$60  
February – Mobile Mission of Bethesda - \$120  
March – ELCA Disaster Response - \$60  
April – Shikellamy Backpack Food Program \$370  
May – Camp Mt. Luther - \$70  
June – Camp Dost - \$260  
July – Haven Ministries - \$70  
August – Evangelical Hospice - \$50  
September – ELCA Good Gifts - \$60  
October – Fire Department - \$250  
November – PA Veterans of Northumberland County - \$320  
December – Birthright - \$290

\*\*\*ELCA Disaster Response – special collection for southeast hurricanes (Helene & Milton) - \$2200

## Quiet Cash

January-March – Friends of the Priestley Library - \$35.78  
April-June – K9 Hero Haven - Rehoming of former service dogs - \$71.35



**Sponsored by St. John's Cub Scouts**

Dine In or Take Out  
Free will offering

**Wednesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>**  
**5:00 p.m. until sold out**

Includes spaghetti, roll,  
applesauce and dessert



Church Services – If the Borough of Northumberland declares a State of Emergency due to inclement weather, services will be cancelled.

Determination in case of other questionable inclement weather for Church services will be made in consultation between the Vice President of the Council, Chairperson of Worship & Music and the Pastor. Notification will be made through WKOK and WQKX radio stations.

The Church Office will follow the Shikellamy School District's weather delays and closings. Office hours will be adjusted if the Shikellamy School District has:

- has a one hour delay
- has a two hour delay
- early dismissal or,
- cancels school - we will also be closed

# Sunday Worship Supplies

The following dates and items available to sponsor are listed below. If you would like to sponsor any of the items or check on other available dates, please contact the church office.

Price – altar flowers - \$25

bulletins - \$15

candles - \$6

January 26 – flowers, bulletins, candles

February 2 – flowers, bulletins, candles

February 9 – flowers, bulletins, candles

February 23 – bulletins

March 2 – bulletins, candles

March 5 – bulletins, candles – ASH WEDNESDAY

March 16 – bulletins, candles

March 30 – bulletins

April 6 – flowers, bulletins, candles

April 13 – palms, altar flowers, bulletins, candles – PALM SUNDAY

April 17 – bulletins, candles – MAUNDY THURSDAY

April 18 – bulletins – GOOD FRIDAY

April 20 – flowers – EASTER SUNDAY

April 27 – flowers, bulletins, candles



**PRAYERS:** Charles Barnes; Harold Billman; Jason Gulden; Jane Ramer; Carey Hoffman; Jon Scullin; Pastor Craig Lantz; Marti Row; Jim Seitzer; Melanie Brown; Karen Treacher; Chuck Allison; Kathy Spangler

**HOMEBOUND** Doug Manning; June Diehl; Mary Rogers; Mike Payne; Nevin Brungard; Elaine Kohl; Dolly Naginey; Nancy Hendricks; William Wagner; Phyllis Gordon; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David Bartholomew; Shirley Gautsch

I am a pencil  
in the  
hand of  
God.



Faith is taking the  
first step even  
when you don't  
see the whole  
staircase

# SOUP SALE



Social Ministry will be making and selling homemade Vegetable Beef and Chicken Corn Soup. Proceeds benefit Social Ministry projects.  
**Orders and money are due January 26<sup>th</sup> .**

**Pick up will be available Sunday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>  
following church service and regular office hours the following week.**

**Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone number** \_\_\_\_\_

Vegetable Beef \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$8.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Chicken Corn \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$8.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Total amount \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date Paid \_\_\_\_\_

check # \_\_\_\_\_ cash \_\_\_\_\_

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
<b>2 Scout Sunday</b> Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m.	3	4 AA 7:00 p.m.	5 Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	6 Girl Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Al Anon 7:00 p.m.	7	8 <b>FH reserved</b>
<b>9</b> Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m. Catechism 10:15 a.m.	10 Finance Committee 7:00 p.m.	11 AA 7:00 p.m.	12 Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.  	13 Messenger deadline 2:30 p.m. Girl Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Al Anon 7:00 p.m. Scout District Comm. 7:00 p.m.	14 	15 Kate's Kupboard 9-11:00 a.m.
<b>16 Annual Meeting</b> Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m.	17 <b>FH reserved</b>	18 AA 7:00 p.m.	19 Messenger folding 9:00 a.m. Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	20 Girl Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Al Anon 7:00 p.m. Scout Roundtable 7:00 p.m.	21	22
<b>23</b> Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m. Catechism 10:15 a.m.  Installation of Council Members	24	25 AA 7:00 p.m.	26 Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	27 Girl Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Al Anon 7:00 p.m. District Activities 7:00 p.m.	28	<b>March 1</b> 
<b>2</b> Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:15 a.m.	3	4 AA 7:00 p.m.	<b>5 Ash Wednesday</b> Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m. <b>Ash Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.</b>	<b>6</b> Girl Scouts 6:00 p.m. Bell Choir 6:30 p.m. Al Anon 7:00 p.m. Scout District Comm. 7:00 p.m.	7	8

