

St. John's Messenger

OURISHING
SERVING
FAITH

Volume 105, Issue 12

December 17, 2025

Office Hours

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

Church Staff

Pastor Karla Leiby

pastorkarla@stjohnslutherannorry.org

570-854-3919

William Jacavage
Director of Music

Sue Billman
Office Manager
sjlc300@ptd.net

Tina Pontius
Treasurer

Joyce Shearer
Payroll Treasurer

Barb Moyer
Restricted Fund Treasurer

Congregation Officers

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

Congregation Council

Judy Dunkelberger
Mike McWilliams
Steve Mertz
Teresa Meisinger
Pam Miller
Randy Stine
Craig Treacher

Church phone: 570-473-3770

Email: sjlc300@ptd.net

Website:
<https://stjohnslutherannorry.org>



The long awaited story is about to come alive once more. The story of Emmanuel, God with us. We have spent the Advent season exploring the stories of how God shows up "Out of the Blue" and shows us the marvelous wonders of love. As we approach the celebration of the age old story of God's love made flesh, God's love came down, and God's love in the unexpected form of a newborn child, we cherish once again the glory that can only belong to God.

This story is an unending story, as God's love still comes to us, remains with us, and gives us hope. And continues to surprise us as Christ shows up in our daily lives in the most surprising ways, showering us with not only love, but also mercy, forgiveness, hope, and peace. Christ calls us to participate in this amazing story, to tell it where ever we go and to whomever we meet. Christ pleads with us to teach it to our children and grandchildren. And beckons us to live it out not just with words, but in our actions. Actions that embody the commandments of Christ to love God and love one another. This story telling with both our words and actions is to be in perpetual motion, not just at Christmas time, but all throughout the year.

One way to tell the story during Christmas is the greeting "Merry Christmas." But not in a way that is a simple greeting, but in a way that shares the story that grounds us in our faith, that identifies us as Christ's people, and shows the world what it means to be Christian. I hope for each of us the time we spend this season tells the Christmas story in way that illuminates with "Glory to God on high" and reflects the love, joy, peace, and hope of Christ Jesus.

May the light of Christ Jesus fill you with hope, peace, joy, and love this Christmas and always. And may you use that light to share the Christmas story with all you meet.

Peace in Christ Jesus,

Pastor Karla



Notes From the Director of Music



"Joy to the World"

This carol, with its uplifting melody and powerful lyrics, has become a hymn (or carol) in our worship services and a symbol of the hope and joy that the Christmas season brings.

The Origin of "Joy to the World"

Written by Isaac Watts in 1719, "Joy to the World" is based on Psalm 98, celebrating the arrival of God's kingdom and the joy that it brings to the world. Interestingly, Watts originally intended the hymn to be a celebration of Christ's second coming, rather than a traditional Christmas carol. Its message of joy and triumph resonates deeply with the themes of Advent, making it fitting for our worship during this season of preparation.

Why is this a carol that can be sung on the Fourth Sunday of Advent?

"Joy to the World" is sometimes sung on the Fourth Sunday of Advent as a way to bridge the anticipation of Christ's birth with the joy that His arrival brings. This Sunday is often characterized by a heightened sense of expectancy, as we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Christmas.

The lyrics remind us that the coming of Christ is not just an event in history but a transformative moment that brings hope and joy to all believers. By singing "Joy to the World," we express our eagerness for the fulfillment of God's promise, celebrating the light that breaks through the darkness of our world.

I encourage each of you to embrace the spirit of this hymn and the other traditional hymns and carols during our worship services. Let it be a reminder of the joy that accompanies our faith and the hope we have in Christ. Whether you sing it with gusto on a Sunday morning, Christmas Eve or a day to reflect on its message during your personal devotion, may "Joy to the World" inspire you to share that joy with others.

Let us come together in worship, lifting our voices in praise and anticipation as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior. May the joy of this season fill your hearts and homes, and may we all look forward to the blessings ahead.

Wishing you a blessed and a joyful Christmas,

William J. Jacavage (Bill)

Director of Music

St. John's Lutheran Church

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Lessons and Carols
Sunday, December 28
9:00 a.m.

Pastor
Karla

Sue

Bill



Wednesday, December 24th

**Festive Music begins at
6:30 p.m.**

**Worship Service with
Holy Communion
at 7:00 p.m.**

Reminder that **Birthright gifts** may be brought to the Christmas Eve service. Children will bring them forward during the offering. Please have them wrapped in white tissue paper.

The Church Office will be closed
December 19-January 5.

The office will reopen on Tuesday,
January 6, 2026.

*A very Blessed Christmas
and
Happy New Year to
everyone.*

*From the St. John's Staff
& their Families*

⁴*Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.* ⁵*Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near.* (Philippians 4:4-5 NRSVUE)

As I watched the evening news last week, I was struck by one uplifting story. It was about an eventful day at a junior / senior high school, a camera and microphone were placed in a hallway with a placard that asked students to share their "good news" for the day. It was heartwarming to say the least! Some students spoke of test results, sports success, or even that special person who said, "Yes!", to a first date request. But two of the declarations really stood out to me, one was a student who said, "There's a lot of crazy stuff happening in the world and I don't understand half of it, but when I woke up this morning the sun was shining, the day was beautiful and I believe that together we can make the world a better place for everyone.", and the second, "Someone new came to school today and they looked like they needed help so, I showed them to all of their classes and you know what? I think I made a new friend!" These two wonderful teenagers immediately brought these wonderful verses from Philippians to mind. So how about it, as we approach the Advent season, Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say rejoice! Let your gentleness be known to everyone! The Lord is near.

Doug Manning

Soup Sale

Social Ministry will be making and selling homemade Vegetable Beef, Chicken Corn Soup and Ham & Bean Soup. Proceeds benefit Social Ministry projects. **Orders and money are due January 25th.**

Pick up will be available Sunday, February 8th following church service and regular office hours during the following week.

Name _____

Phone number _____



Vegetable Beef _____ @ \$8.00 _____

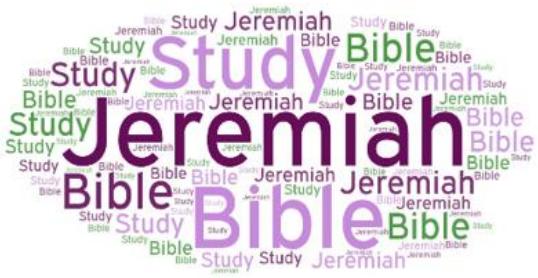
Chicken Corn _____ @ \$8.00 _____

Ham & Bean _____ @ \$8.00 _____

Total amount \$ _____

Date Paid _____

check # _____ cash _____



Join us to study the book of Jeremiah and the message it has for our lives and world today.

Thursdays 10am-11:30 am

January 8th through February 12th

St. John's Library

RSVP to Pastor Karla so we can get a book count
570-854-3919 or pastorkarla@stjohnslutherannorry.org



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



Music filled Fellowship Hall on December 15th when the Sunbury City Band treated us to a variety of holiday music. There was even an opportunity to join in and sing.

As we approach the end of the year, please be reminded that if you want your **financial contributions** to be recorded on your "Statement of Giving for calendar year 2025, they **must be received by Sunday, December 28th.** Any contributions received after this date will be credits in 2026.

Ah, tis that time again!

Committee chairpersons are reminded to have their 2025 reports for the annual congregation meeting in the office by January 18th.

Thank You

Thank you to everyone who donated Christmas gifts for our Mitten Tree families. Your generosity was greatly appreciated this holiday season.

Thank You

WELCA would like to thank everyone that helped set up, worked the bazaar, and helped clean up. We appreciate all the donated items, food and baked goods. And we especially appreciate those that came out and supported the bazaar with purchases. Together we raised more than \$2400.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the Roy. H. Moyer Jr. & Carol J. Moyer Community Trust Fund for the recent donation of \$500.00 to Kate's Kupboard. The support of this trust is greatly appreciated as we continue to help people in our community. This donation will help us to replenish our shelves.

Thank You

The Sunbury Discretionary Fund of the Community Giving Foundation recently gave Kate's Kupboard a \$2,000.00 donation. We are so thankful for this donation as we restock our shelves after an extremely busy November.

NEWS FROM KATE'S KUPBOARD

Kate's Kupboard was open on **November 15, 2025**.

We helped **833** people by distributing **245** household/personal care bags, **180** produce boxes, **245** packs of meat and **434** bags of groceries. We helped **138** babies and provided adult care products to **36** people.

The total cost was **\$9,240.15**

We helped 2 families between our October and November Kate's Kupboard by providing 4 bags of groceries, 7 packs of meat and 2 household bags. We also helped one baby and gave adult care products to one individual. We continue to help people through Neighborlypa.com

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

DIAPER DASH

The Susquehanna Valley United Way recently held a diaper dash. Kate's Kupboard was blessed to be the recipient of numerous boxes of diapers and packs of baby wipes from this event. We appreciate the United Way remembering Kate's Kupboard as they shared all the diapers and wipes that they collected.

Matthew 6:26

They say all good things come to those who wait, but the best things come to those who pray. God has perfect timing. Never early. Never late. It takes a little patience. It takes a whole lot of Faith. But it is worth the wait.

Angels Among Us

"When God wants to speak and deal with us," said Martin Luther, "he does not avail himself of an angel but of parents, or the pastor, or of our neighbor." Never underestimate how powerfully God can use you in the life of a child, a church member, a friend or a stranger.

The Hebrew word for *angel* also means "messenger." You may be specially chosen to deliver to someone the message of God's love or guidance. Listen intently for what God would have you share with others, then do so faithfully and caringly.

Luther's Lending Library

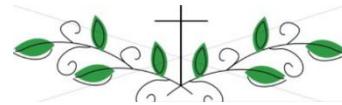
When the weather outside is frightful, curl up by the fire that is delightful with a good book. Luther's Lending Library across from the church office has a wide variety of books of all genres. Stop by during regular office hours and check it out !



Memorials Received

In memory of
Loved Ones
By
Barb Moyer

In memory of
Rev. A.J. Shearer
By
The Shearer Family



2025

BUDGET

ACTUAL

Nov. Income:	\$ 20,129.71	\$ 21,209.76
Year to Date Income:	\$219,511.12	\$236,057.36
Nov. Expenses:	\$ 17,588.41	\$ 20,193.57
Year to Date Expenses:	\$ 215,932.34	\$ 235,628.19
Income Less Expense –	Nov.	\$2,541.30
	Year to Date	\$3,578.78



PRAYERS: Pat Propst; Judy Dunkelberger; Elias Allshouse

CONTINUED PRAYERS & HOMEBOUND Jason Gulden; Mike Payne; Doug Manning; Kathryn Lebo; Jason Gulden; Helen Snyder; June Diehl; Mary Rogers; Nevin Brungard; Elaine Kohl; Nancy Hendricks; William Wagner; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David Bartholomew; Marti Row; Jeremy Hoffman

THE MEANING OF EPIPHANY

Epiphany, which comes from the Greek word *epiphaneia*, means “an appearance” or “a revealing.” Centuries ago, the church set aside January 6, the 12th day after Christmas, to mark the revealing of Jesus as Christ to the wise men, who were Gentiles. Jesus’ first followers were Jewish, so the revelation of the divine Christ to the non-Jewish magi reminds us that Jesus came to earth to save the whole world.

Symbols of Epiphany include light, a star, a crown (or three crowns) and a globe or stylized portrayal of the world. The color of Epiphany is green to symbolize life, growth, hope and eternity.

On the church calendar, the Epiphany season lasts until Ash Wednesday, which is determined by the date of Easter.



Epiphany

2026 Worship Supply Sponsorships

Interested in sponsoring altar flowers, bulletins or candles in memory of, in honor of, or in celebration of for the upcoming year? Contact the church office for available 2026 dates. Also available are special arrangements starting at \$30 and single roses in a vase for \$10.

Prices are – Altar flowers, \$45.00
Bulletins, \$15
Candles, \$6.00



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 	2	3
4 Worship w/Comm. Sunday School Crew 2307 9:00 a.m. 10:15 a.m. 6-8:00 p.m.	5 	6 Troop AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	7 Cub Scouts MomCo 6:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	8 Girl Scouts Bell Choir Scout District Comm Al anon 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	9	10
11 Worship w/Comm. Sunday School Catechism 9:00 a.m. 10:15 a.m. 10:25-12:15	12 Finance 7:00 p.m.	13 Troop AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	14 Blood Drive Cub Scouts Council Meeting 1-6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	15 Girl Scouts Bell Choir Scout Roundtable Al anon 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	16	17 Kate's Kupboard 9-11:00 a.m.
18 Worship w/Comm. Sunday School 9:00 a.m. 10:15 a.m. ANNUAL REPORTS DUE	19	20 Troop AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	21 Messenger Folding Cub Scouts MomCo 9:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. 6:00 p.m.	22 Girl Scouts Bell Choir Al anon 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	23	24 
25 Worship w/Comm. Breakfast & Intergenerational Sunday School 9:00 a.m. 10:15 a.m. Soup orders due	26 	27 Troop AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	28 Cub Scouts 6:30 p.m.	29 Girl Scouts Bell Choir Al anon 6:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	30	31 Fellowship Hall reserved Noon-8:00 p.m.