

## Office Hours

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

## Church Staff

Pastor Karla Leiby

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William Jacavage  
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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

Mike McWilliams  
Teresa Meisinger  
Pam Miller  
Teresa Miller  
Tom Propst  
Karen Smeltz  
Randy Stine  
Craig Treacher

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*"Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow"*

On Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, many gathered from around our synod along with invited guests for the 39<sup>th</sup> Annual Assembly of the Upper Susquehanna Synod. The theme of "Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow" rang true throughout the day from the voices lifted in song, the words of hope preached, and across the space in fellowship and companionship on this journey of faith.

The message of the day given by Pastor Jim Vitale, Associate Director for Camp Mount Luther, urged us to consider the vices of anger and envy. He pointed out the ways that these two vices draw us away from God and one another. He directed us to look to Psalm 37 for our hope, "wait for the Lord" (vs. 37), because it is only God that can save us. My favorite thing he had to say was, "what we once were is passing away and what we are becoming has not yet been revealed." And therefore we wait on the Lord. We don't remain passive, but we pay attention, listening closely for God. To do this we have to clear away the noise of all the other voices of the world that don't serve us. He spoke of dying and resurrection taking time, and that the only faithful thing for us to do is let go of our anger and our envy and wait for the Lord.

This message was so important to hear in our morning worship as if one had read the various reports like I had prior to coming to the assembly, they were filled with some dispairing facts: too few pastors, many dying/closing congregations, a synod whose finances will run out by 2030, and a budget report with yet another large deficit. Yet as we gathered the mood was not solemn, but Spirit filled. The conversations were about ministry, mission, and fellowship. What I saw was faithful, dedicated, and loving people willing to be present and rely on God's great faithfulness.

The afternoon brought a continued message of strength and hope from our keynote speaker, Rev. Amy E. Reuman, Sr. Director for Witness in Society, ELCA. Amy spoke of strength as coming from God to us not as an end, but as a means for it to then be shared to the world through us. She said this type of strength multiplies when given away and does not diminish. Holding hope she claimed is

not a denial or escape from our suffering, but instead hope is holding on for something else and the strength to endure. Even in hope, our eyes remain wide open to the suffering, for hope sees the truth of it, but it looks beyond the suffering onto something greater. Just like when we look at the cross, seeing beyond the suffering and toward the resurrection.

All of this left me with a renewed strength and hope for the church I so dearly love. The church that is in dire need of renewal and resurrection. But we know from scripture that before that can happen, there must be some degree of death first. And so we wait, we wait for the Lord. As we know that it is only God that can save us, from our own self destructive ways, from a society that says the church is irrelevant, and from our own egos that tell us we can save the church ourselves. And while we wait, we listen intently, we allow hope to let us see with our eyes wide open, and we continue to serve God and neighbor!

May God whose faithfulness is great, grant us all strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow!

Blessings,

*Pastor Karla*



## Notes From the Director of Music



### "He Who Sings Prays Twice"

If you have spent any time in choir rehearsals or chatting about church music, you have likely heard the famous phrase: "**He who sings prays twice.**" It is a beautiful sentiment, often attributed to St. Augustine, that perfectly captures why music is so vital to our worship. But what does it actually mean? Is God grading our prayers on a curve if we add a melody? Not quite!

When we unpack this expression, we find a profound truth about how God created us to worship. Singing "doubles" our prayer in a few beautiful ways:

- **It Engages the Whole Body:** When we pray silently or spoken, we use our minds and our voices. But when we sing, prayer becomes a physical, whole-body experience. We must control our breath, engage our posture, and feel the literal vibration of the words in our chests. Singing takes the abstract thoughts of our hearts and embodies them.
- **It Magnifies the Word:** Music has a unique ability to unlock the emotional depth of Scripture. Singing a prayer allows us to feel the sorrow of a lament, the quiet peace of a pastoral psalm, or the explosive joy of an *Alleluia* in a way that spoken words alone sometimes cannot. The melody carries the text deeper into our souls.
- **It Unites the Body of Christ:** This is perhaps the most Lutheran aspect of singing. When we sing together as a congregation, we are doing something miraculous. We are breathing together. We are blending our diverse voices into one unified chord. In that moment, our individual prayers join together, echoing the communion of saints.

Martin Luther himself was famously passionate about music, second only to theology. He noted that music "makes people milder and gentler, more moral and wiser."

So, when you open your hymnal this Sunday, remember that you aren't just performing a ritual or filling time between readings. You are engaging in a rich, multi-layered form of prayer. Whether you think you sound like an angel or can barely carry a tune, your voice is a vital part of our collective prayer. Keep a song in your heart, and keep praying twice!

In Christ,

*William Jacavage* (Bill)

Director of Music



the  
**Pastor**  
will be



Pastor Karla will be on vacation June 22-28<sup>th</sup>. Pastor Ann Zimmerman will be providing emergency pastoral care.

Pastor Karla will be at Camp Mount Luther July 5-10<sup>th</sup>. She will be available for emergencies



## Sunbury City Band Summer Concert

Join us on  
**Monday, July 13**  
7:00 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Take a break from the summer heat, come relax and enjoy some great music.

## Attention All Ladies of St. John's

**You are invited !!!! Come join us !!!**



## Picnic

WELCA will be having their annual summer picnic on Monday, June 22<sup>nd</sup>, in Fellowship Hall due to road construction and traffic. We will meet at 6:00 p.m. for a meal and time of fellowship and friendship.

Hamburg BBQ will be provided. Contact Brenda Herbert and let her know if you are planning to attend in order to plan bbq amount. Please bring a dish to share.

We hope to see you there !



**Wednesday, July 15**  
1-6:00 p.m.

Please give blood to those in need of blood and blood products.

## Vacation Bible School

**Sunday, July 19- Thursday July 23**  
5:30-7:30 p.m.  
Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendars for this year's VBS - **Exploring the Nature of God**. Step through the mist into Rainforest Falls. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They will explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms.



Registration form is in this issue of The Messenger or can be picked up in the church office or back of the sanctuary.

If you are available and would like to help – one day, two days...or all five – please contact Pam Miller or the church office. All help is greatly appreciated.

Whatever tomorrow brings, God will walk with us through it.

# Thank You

Many thanks to the Garden Crew who plant, weed and maintain all of our church's gardens.

Your dedication in being good stewards of God's earth is greatly appreciated.



# Luther's Lending Library

Relax and unwind this summer. Pick your favorite reading nook – a comfy chair or under a shade tree.

Like a good who-done-it/suspense book or a romantic novel, history or just feel good book? Stop by Luther's Lending Library where you will find a wide variety of genre books and authors.

Stop by during regular office hours.



# Blessing Shed



The community Blessing Shed has been moved to St. John's due to the closure of Christ United Methodist Church, where it was formerly located. The Blessing Shed is open 24/7 for anyone in need and offers canned and boxed non-perishables, on occasion fresh fruits and vegetables, personal care items and there is even a small library.

The role of Social Ministry at St. John's according to our by-laws:

*The Committee on **Social Ministry**. The purpose of this committee shall be to extend Christian compassion and helpfulness to the ill, the aged, the orphaned, the underprivileged, the imprisoned and, in general, to persons of all ages in need of aid in body and soul. It shall strive to enlist in these efforts as many as possible of the individual members and organizations of the congregation.*

Social Ministry will collect items for the Blessing Shed the first full week of each month. We ask for your support. When you do your weekly grocery shopping, if possible, grab an extra can or two, boxed item, or personal care item for the shed. **Give what you can, when you can.** Please no expired, opened or rotting food. Drop them off on Sunday morning or at the church office during the collection week. The following are the dates for the remainder of this year:

**July 5-12**  
**August 2-9**  
**September 6-13**  
**October 4-11**  
**November 1-8**  
**December 6-13**

## NEWS FROM KATE'S KUPBOARD

Kate's Kupboard was open on **May 16, 2026**.

We helped **550** people by distributing **185** household/personal care bags, **185** produce boxes, **370** packs of meat, and **297** bags of groceries. We helped **56** babies and provided adult care products to **18** people.

The total cost was **\$4,188.24**

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

We did not help anyone between our April and May Kate's Kupboard but we will continue to help people through NEIGHBORLYPA. Com.

## THANK YOU

Kate's Kupboard would like to thank Christ United Methodist Church for the many cleaning supplies that they donated. The people coming to Kate's Kupboard in June will be pleased to receive these additional items. We appreciate Christ United Methodist Church thinking of Kate's as they get ready to close their doors.




The Lay Ministry Institute (LMI) is sponsoring a workshop on July 18, 2026, at Faith Lutheran Church, 2349 Old Turnpike Rd, Lewisburg. Bishop Craig A. Miller will present "**The Heart of the Matter**" - a workshop about Lutheran Theology, which is open to anyone who is interested in learning more or refreshing their knowledge about the foundational teachings of Lutheranism. Sign-in and networking begin at 9 am. The workshop is scheduled from 9:30 am to 3:00 pm with a break for lunch, which will be provided. Please contact Brenda at the Upper Susquehanna Synod Office at 570-524-9778 to register. There is a \$10.00 fee to participate.

## VACATION TIME

Summer is when many people go on vacation. Maybe you visit friends or relatives that you have not seen for some time. You might go to the beach, the mountains, or someplace where you can get some R&R. However, the church does not take a vacation. **Each month we need \$13,000-\$17,000 to cover our expenses.** Please remember your church as you enjoy your summer vacation. You can mail your contributions to the church or go online to the church website [www.stjohnslutherannorry.org](http://www.stjohnslutherannorry.org) to Give to make contributions.


2026	ACTUAL	BUDGET
2026	ACTUAL	BUDGET
May Income:	\$ 20,176.47	\$ 21,584.83
Year to Date Income:	\$105,985.33	\$ 115,745.15
May Expenses:	\$ 19,674.13	\$ 20,556.15
Year to Date Expenses:	\$ 120,393.85	\$ 119,308.65
	Income Less Expense – May	\$ 502.34
	Year to Date	<b>-\$14,408.52</b>



**PRAYERS:** Pastor Gary Schaffer; Betty Strawser, Marty Rafter, Becky Weller; Len Zboray

**HOMEBOUND and CONTINUED PRAYERS:** Jason Gulden; Helen Snyder; June Diehl; Bill Wagner; Nevin Brungard; Barb Eisely; Elaine Kohl; Nancy Hendricks; Betty Yerg; Jane Ressler; David Bartholomew; Marti Row

## *Memorials Received*



In Memory of

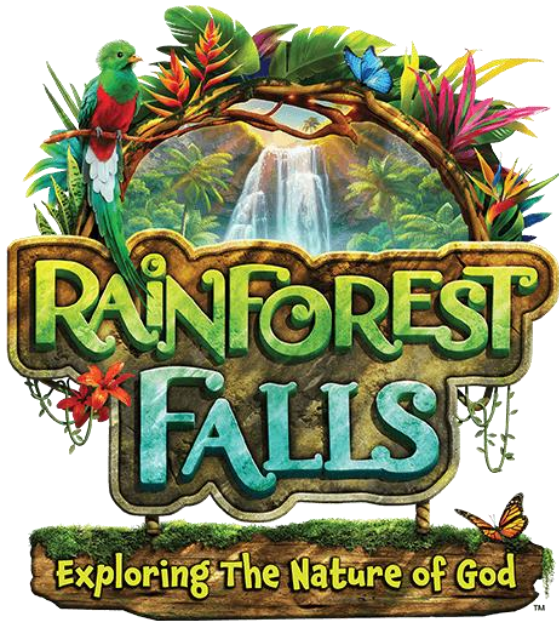
**Mary Rogers**  
By  
Emily Mertz and Family  
Judy Dunkelberger  
Patric and Janet Geiser  
Barb Moyer  
Point Township Garden Club

In Memory of  
**Shirley Leiby**  
By  
Gary Kurtz

### **Vacation Bible School Supplies**

Food items for snacks and craft supply items are needed for VBS. The lists are located on the table in the rear of the sanctuary and in the church office.

If you would like to donate any item, please call the church office, so we do not duplicate items. Monetary donations would also be appreciated to help purchase items. Mark your envelope # and write VBS in order to get credit for your contribution. Donations should be at the church by July 5<sup>th</sup>.



# St. John's Lutheran Church

300 Queen Street, Northumberland  
Vacation Bible School

**Sunday, July 19-Thursday, July 23**  
**5:30-7:30 p.m.**  
**Fellowship Hall**



**Ages Preschool -5<sup>th</sup> Grade**

Join us as we step through the mist into Rainforest Falls. Beneath a canopy of chattering birds and howling monkeys, kids plunge into a lifelong adventure of discovering the nature of God. They will explore what it means to be rooted in relationship with God, their creator, a safe place in life's storms. Along the way we will meet new friends – Tango the Quetzal, Seymour the Frog, Dottie the Ocelot, Tia the Anteater and Howie the Howling Monkey!



## Vacation Bible School Registration Card

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Birth Date \_\_\_\_\_ Last Grade Completed \_\_\_\_\_

Known Allergies or Medical Concerns: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Emergency Contact & Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Phone# \_\_\_\_\_  
(if parents cannot be contacted)

Brothers and Sisters (names and ages) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Would your child/children be able to participate on Sunday, July 26 VBS Program at 9:00 a.m. worship?

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 Alanon 7:00 p.m.	3	4 
5 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m. Crew 2307 6-8:00 p.m.	6 Finance Committee 7:00 p.m.	7 Troop 325 AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	8 Council Meeting 7:00 p.m.	9 Alanon 7:00 p.m. Scout District Committee 6:30 p.m.	10	11
Pastor Karla at Camp Mount Luther						
12 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	13 Sunbury City Band Concert Fellowship Hall 7:00 p.m. 	14 Troop 325 AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	15 Blood Drive 1-6:00 p.m.	16 Alanon 7:00 p.m. Scout Roundtable 6:30p.m.	17 	18 Kate's Kupboard 9-11:00 a.m.
19 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	20	21 Troop 325 AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	22 Messenger folding 9:00 a.m.	23 Alanon 7:00 p.m.	24	25 
Vacation Bible School 5:30-7:30 p.m. Fellowship Hall						
26 Worship w/Comm. 9:00 a.m.	27	28 Troop 325 AA 6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.	29 	30 Alanon 7:00 p.m.	August 1	2