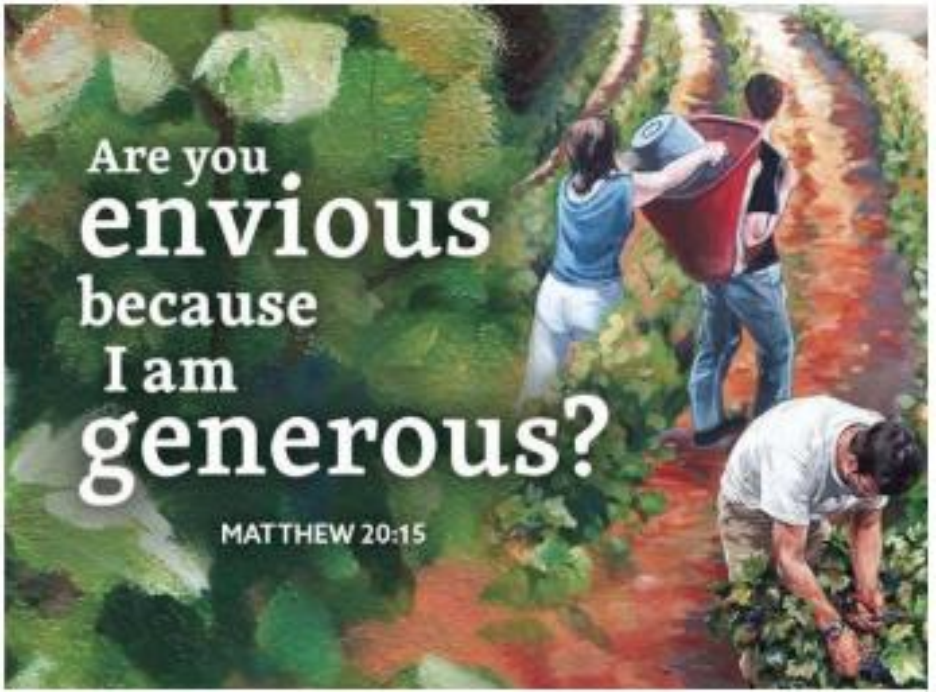
Welcome to
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

By God's example, St. John's invites and welcomes everyone to be ignited by the Spirit and to grow in God's love. May all those seeking love, acceptance and support find it here.

17th Sunday after Pentecost • September 20, 2026 • 10:15 AM Worship



Matthew narrates one of Jesus' controversial parables in which Jesus says that the reign of God is like that of a landowner who pays his workers the same wage no matter what time of day they began to work. When God changes God's mind about punishing Nineveh for their evil ways, Jonah is angry. Yet God is gracious and merciful, abounding in steadfast love. In baptism we receive the grace of God that is freely given to all. As Martin Luther wrote, in the presence of God's mercy we are all beggars.

Our Mission:
Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love

We strive to be a community that is open to the Spirit of God that moves, changes and inspires us to connect with God and one another, everyday, everywhere.

WELCOME
We are so glad you are here with us this morning. We pray that you will meet God in worship and that your faith will be strengthened as you prepare to go out into the world in the coming week. If you are a guest with us this morning, welcome to the family! We would love to share information with you about St. John's - fill out a pew card and place it in the offering plate or sign the guest book in the narthex so we can reach out!

PRAYER LIST
Please continue to keep the following people connected to our congregation in your prayers: Leonard Gibeon, David Mounts, Renee Fels, Rebecca Jellen, Richard Ditzler, Alyson Harvey, Marie Wolfe, Mary Eberle, Brandon Blanchard, Elizabeth Brossett and family, Paige Seasock, Will Morgan, Barry Long, Jim Martin, Mike Wolf, Bob Schanely, Michael Svanson, Marilyn Little-Logan, Ed Bowlin, Josephine D'Amico, Bob Ernst, Bill Hutt, Gordie Moser, Serena Sellers, Sal Aleide and Brian Bealer.

Names are kept on the prayer list for three weeks unless specifically requested by the family or for those struggling through long-term illness or treatment. If you would like to add a name to the prayer list, please contact the church office at 215-234-4888 or stj.stown@verizon.net.

+ GATHERING +

The congregation is invited to observe the prelude time as one of reverent silence.

PRELUDE Ubi Caritas et Amor - Gerald Near

WELCOME

LIGHTING OF THE TRINITY CANDLE
St. John's is a community of faith that is
Ignited by Spirit, Growing in Love.
We begin our worship in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS
Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God, who pours love into our hearts and healing upon the earth. **Amen.**

Confident that God justifies us by grace through faith, let us confess our sin.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,
we confess that we struggle to embody your goodness in the world and in our own hearts. Creation groans from overuse. Jealousy and bitterness strain our relationships. Indifference keeps us from seeking justice. Divisions disrupt your call to show genuine love to others. Turn our hearts back to you. Restore our world and reconcile us to one another. Renew us to live as your holy people, following the way of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Hear this good news: We have peace with God through Jesus Christ, in whom there is no condemnation, but only forgiveness and the promise of eternal life. Receive freely this healing gift of grace. **Amen.**

OPENING HYMN ELW 876 Let the Whole Creation Cry

GREETING
The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

KYRIE


Refrain
Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, on our world and on our way.
Ky - ri - e e - lei - son, ev-'ry day.
1 For peace in the world, for the health of the church, for the
2 That we may live out your im - passioned re - sponse to the
3 For peace in our hearts, . . . for peace in our homes, . . for
4 For your Spir - it to guide; that you cen - ter our lives in the
u - ni - ty of all; for
hun - gry and the poor; that
friends and fam - i - ly; for
wa - ter and the word; that you
this ho - ly house, for all who wor-ship and praise,
we may live out . . . . . truth and jus - tice and grace,
life and for love, ... for our work and our play,
nour-ish our souls . . . with your bod - y and blood,
Refrain
let us pray to the Lord, let us pray to the Lord.

OPENING PRAYER
Almighty and eternal God, you show perpetual lovingkindness to us your servants. Because we cannot rely on our own abilities, grant us your merciful judgment, and train us to embody the generosity of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

+ WORD +

FIRST LESSON: Jonah 3:10-4:11

At the conclusion of the reading:
The Word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

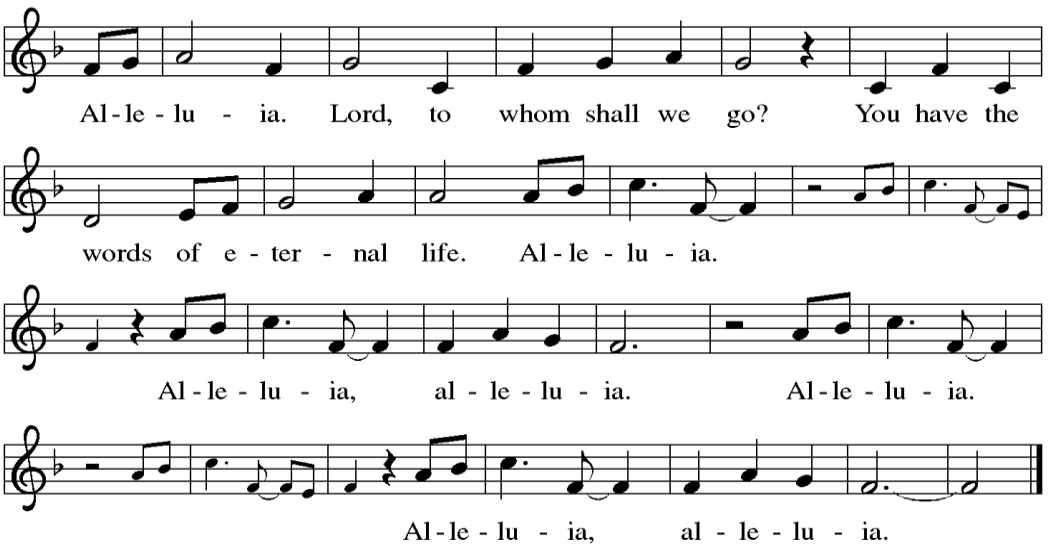
PSALM: Psalm 145:1-8



1 I will exalt you, my God and king,
and bless your name forever and ever.
2 **Every day will I bless you**
and praise your name forever and ever.
3 Great is the LORD and greatly to be praised!
There is no end to your greatness.
4 **One generation shall praise your works to another**
and shall declare your power.
5 I will speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty
and all your marvelous works.
6 **They shall tell of the might of your wondrous acts,**
and I will recount your greatness.
7 They shall publish the remembrance of your great goodness;
they shall sing joyfully of your righteousness.
8 **The LORD is gracious and full of compassion,**
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

The Word of the Lord**.**
Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



GOSPEL LESSON: Matthew 20:1-16

At the beginning of the reading:
The Holy Gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

At the conclusion of the reading:
This is the Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

CHILDREN'S MESSAGE

SERMON Pastor Becky Schanely

HYMN OF THE DAY ELW 358 Great God, Your Love Has Called Us Here

APOSTLE'S CREED

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended into hell. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE

Each prayer petition will end with the phrase:
Hear us, O God.
Your mercy is great.

The prayers conclude:
Grant the prayers we have offered, what we have forgotten to ask, and whatever else you see that we need. We ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen.

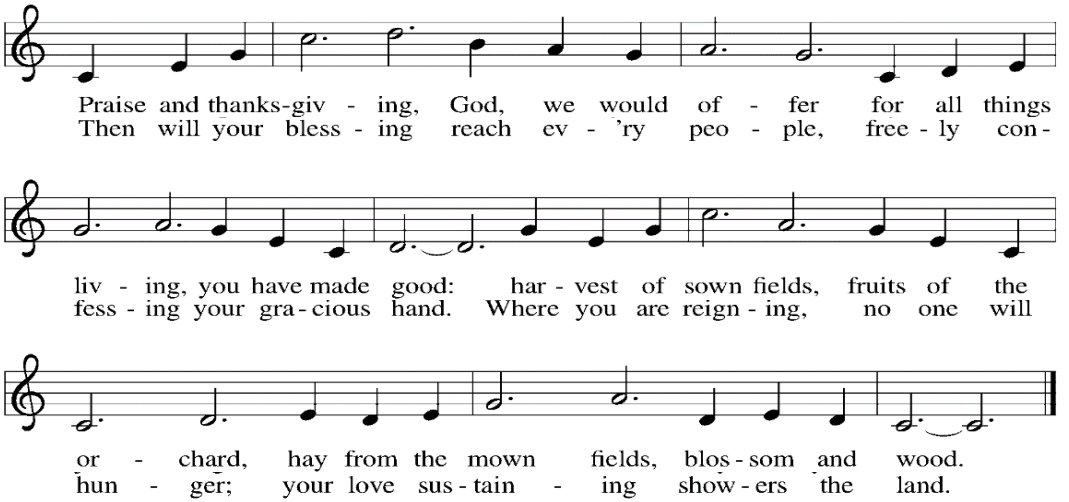
+ THE MEAL +

OFFERING

MUSICAL OFFERING I've Got Peace Like a River – African American Spiritual, Arr. Page Handbell Quartet

Please rise in body or spirit.

OFFERTORY



OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly. All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have. Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

THE GREAT THANKSGIVING

The Lord be with you.
And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.
We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.
It is right to give God thanks and praise.

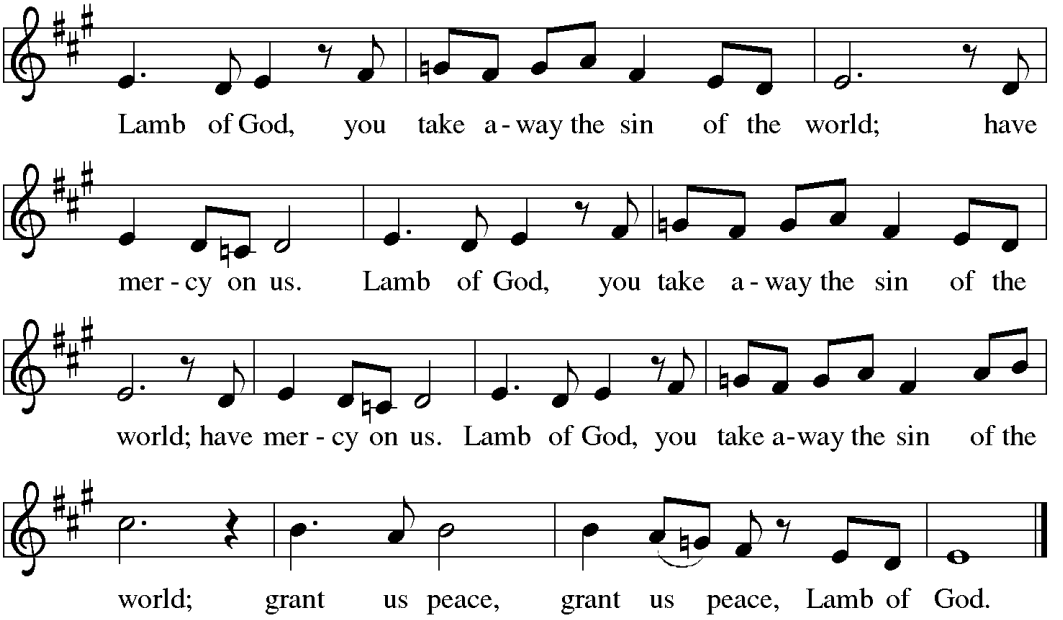
WORDS OF INSTITUTION

LORD'S PRAYER

As Jesus taught us, we are bold to pray,
Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us

our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

LAMB OF GOD



INVITATION TO THE TABLE
These are the gifts of God for the people of God.
Thanks be to God.

SHARING OF COMMUNION
Communion will be shared continuously. Please come forward down the center aisle and return to your seat by the side aisle. You will receive the bread from the pastor and then be invited to take a pre-filled cup from the tray held by the communion assistant. Wine is in the clear cups and grape juice is in the purple cups. Empty cups can be placed in the bowls at the end of the first pew as you return to your seat. All are welcome!

MUSIC DURING COMMUNION ELW 658 O Jesus, Joy of Loving Hearts

TABLE BLESSING

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION
Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray.
Amen.

+ SENDING +

ANNOUNCEMENTS

BLESSING
The God of love
draw you into full accord and one mind,
in the body of Christ Jesus.
Amen.

The God of hope
grant you strength and joy in all circumstances
through the interceding of the Spirit.
Amen.

The God of grace
bless you now and forever.
Amen.

SENDING HYMN ELW 842 Oh, Worship the King

DISMISSAL
Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE Trumpet Voluntary - Gordon Young

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OUR RESPONSE TO GOD'S LOVE		
Worship Attendance 09/06/2026 – 9:00 am 57 at St Mark's and 10:30 am 200 at NGUCC park 09/13/2026 – 9:30 am 70, Zoom - 6		
	Total received between 08/30/2026 – 09/13/2026 $9,648	Amount Needed per 2 weeks in 2026 $11,656
Weekly average is based on the 2026 budget. The above numbers include electronic giving. Mint duty is being done every other week.		

Mark Your Calendar

Sunday, September 20	Sunday School 9:00 am Worship 10:15 am, Zoom available
Wednesday, September 23	Octoberfest, food truck event 5-8 pm hosted by the Reformation Sister Churches

Welcome to worship this morning. If you are visiting with us today, please fill out a visitor card located in the pew rack and drop it into the offering plate.

Today is the Sunday school kick-off day! We are so happy to welcome all our youth back for a fun-filled school year!

The Open Link food donations: Food donation collection day is the first Saturday of each month from 9 to 11 am. If you are not able to stop by on the scheduled day and time, donations can be left in the church gym. Please visit The Open Link website for the updated needs list.

Card Club is collecting birthday card donations. If you'd like to contribute, please place your cards on the kitchen serving window counter. Thank you for your support!

American Red Cross thank you to all those who came out and donated blood on Friday, September 18th. The need is so great, your generosity is greatly appreciated.

Family Bathroom The family bathroom project has made significant progress. Drywall and spackling are completed. Fixtures and door have been installed. Stop by and check out the progress of the project you have made possible with your donations! We are not done yet. Donations can be given by an envelope; write on "Family Bathroom"
OR made online through St. John's website! Thank you!

Worship Assistance and Counters- As our worship life returns to a two services schedule this fall and scheduling of assistants to support worship begins, we are in need of additional volunteers to serve as ushers, readers and communion assistants
Also, since the pandemic, the responsibility of counting and reconciling the weekly offering has fallen on the shoulders of two members of the church and we are looking to support them by adding additional counting teams. In order to serve as a counter, you need to be an active member of St. John's who is willing to submit to a criminal record check. Individuals will be paired up on teams of two and scheduled to serve as a team. The weekly task takes approximately 30 minutes to complete. The schedule is on a rotation basis. All you need is a willingness to try something new.
If you are willing to step into one of these roles, please contact Denise Fox in the church office (215-234-4888 or stj.stown@verizon.net) and we will get you on the schedule and trained to serve!

The Gospel of Mark Bible Study
Looking for a daytime option for Bible study? Here you go! The Reformation Sister congregations are hosting a weekly Bible study digging into the Gospel of Mark. The book we're using is available for purchase in the church office for $12. The Bible study will meet at 1:30-3:00 PM at St. Mark's Lutheran Church in Pennsburg and will be led by the pastors of the churches, beginning Thursday, October 1 thru November 5.

Fall Soup and Study
Soup and Study returns this fall as we dig into the book It All Counts: Finding God Everywhere They Told You Not to Look by Natalia Terfa. Books are available for purchase in the church office for $16. Soup and study will begin on Monday, September 28 at 5:30 PM and continues thru November 2nd. Soup and Study is a shared ministry event with Friedens UCC and takes place in the Fellowship Hall here at St. John's.

Oktoberfest Food Truck Event Wednesday, September 23 5:00-8:00 PM
The Reformation Sister Churches of the Upper Perkiomen Valley are excited to host an evening of food, fellowship and time together!

Church Library is re-opened for business!
Take a short walk or the elevator to the first floor, 3rd door on the left side of the Sunday school classroom hallway. *Come check it out!*

October 4 – Outdoor Worship at 10:15 AM
Worship this week will focus in on the season of creation and gift of all that God made. We will worship outdoor and the service will include a blessing of pets so bring your beloved animals for worship and a special blessing.



Ignited by Spirit
Growing in Love

SERVING THIS SUNDAY

Dean Heller, Reader
Erika Haldeman & Susan McNeill, Ushers
Jeff & Kristie Faust Communion
Joyce Foesig & Shannon Renninger

COUNCIL MEMBERS

David Ramil, Council President
Shannon Renninger, Council Vice-President
Robyn Schramm, Council Secretary
Mike Herm, Council Treasurer
Tony Aleide, Finance
Brandon Bolton, Property
Joyce Foesig, Staff
Sheila Hercek, Outreach
Travis Hobson, Marketing and Communications
John Hovanec, Faith Formation
Nate Schramm, Youth Representative
Mike Wolf, Worship and Music

STAFF

Rev. Rebecca L. Schanely, Pastor
(pastorbecky74@gmail.com)

Denise Fox, Office Admin (stj.stown@verizon.net)
Ben Modica, Director of Music (ben@patriciakeith.com)
Michele Peart, Bookkeeper
Jamie Nonkovic, Coordinator of Children's Faith Formation
Bob Ernst, Facilities Manager
Michael Herm, Treasurer

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