



St. John's United Church of Christ
500 West Main Street, Lansdale Pa. 19446

Enlightener

October, 2020 Vol. XL, No. 07

Journeying in Faith – Through Thick and Thin

When we think of the word journey, we generally equate it with the word trip and the act of traveling from one place to another, but is that what journeying in faith is? At St. John's we often hear the phrase "we are on this journey together." However, we did not all start our journey of faith in the same place or at the same time. Some of us took turns in the path that others did not, or maybe left the path altogether only to return at another time. Yet here we are, together at St. John's, each of us bringing different experiences, different ways of looking at things, different talents, interests and energies. So why does this "Journeying in Faith – Through Thick and Thin" work? It works because we all share the same God as our guide: a God who is always present, who loves us as we are, whose teachings we learn together as we listen and ask questions, and who shows us that we are not alone. We are on this journey with one another and we share common goals.

In order to accomplish the goals set forth by the leadership of St. John's, it is critical that we stay fully committed to traveling together on this journey of faith. Through our monetary donations, by taking turns in leadership roles, by participating in the life of the church when called upon to lend a hand, the work and worship of our church continues – in the best of times and in the worst of times, through thick and thin.

During the current COVID-19 pandemic, the commitment of the St. John's family to keep the journey going at full strength has been remarkable. Through the ingenuity of our dedicated staff, worship is held every week via services on our web site and on Facebook, creating a sense of togetherness even though we are apart. With abundant thanks for the generosity and commitment of our congregation, the church finances are strong, the hands-on work done by so many of maintaining our building is visible to all, and the continued outreach to those in need within the church and throughout the community continues.

Attached to this edition of *The Enlightener* is your Covenant Commitment Card for 2021. Because in-person worship in our Sanctuary is not our primary way of connecting with one another at this point in time, we ask that you prayerfully consider your financial commitment to St. John's for the coming year, fill out the card, and either mail it to the church or drop it in the mailbox at church when you are there. Together, we are a motley crew on a journey of faith that feeds and sustains each one of us so that we can better navigate our own journeys, through thick and thin. Thanks be to God!

St. John's Stewardship Committee

Baron Methlie, Chair
Sandy Taylor
Bob Taylor

Sumiko Boorcom
Judy Mayo
Sally Jarinko

Stephen D. Butz
Rev. Sue



Chancel Flower Donations

October 4

In memory of my husband Victor's October 6th birthday and daughter Vicki's October 28th birthday from Doris Latta

In memory of Madeline Bruen from her son, Mark, and Grace, Ben, and Allison Bruen



October 11

In memory of Richard Drissel's October 16th birthday from S. Ronald and Joyce Erb

In memory of Bob, Evelyn, and Harry Summers from Dan and Joan Summers Gallagher and the Cindy Dimmig and Mitchell Miller families

In memory of George Ruth from Chriss Ruth Bodde and family

In memory of Stewart and Louise Wells from Kathleen Wells and family

October 18

In memory of parents from Mr. Roger Wardlow

October 25

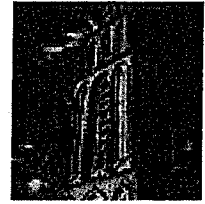
A heartfelt thank-you for the many cards and phone calls received for my recent birthday. I have never received so many birthday greetings and it was delightful! I will treasure this always.

Also, a sincere thank-you to John Hendricks for the role he played in spreading the word about my birthday. Thank you to St. John's staff, members, friends and volunteers for all you do to keep everyone connected during these unusual times.

Once we are able to fellowship again after worship, I will schedule a Yum Yum Party!
Cliff Kneipp

Were You There?

Thirty Years Ago: The Reverend Dr. Paul H Sherry, president of the United Church of Christ, offered prayers for all individuals affected by the deployment of American combat forces to the Middle East in response to Iraq's military invasion of Kuwait.



Twenty-five Years Ago: A new sidewalk was installed leading from the front of the church to the porch in the courtyard.

Twenty Years Ago: Sunday, October 15, was designated as Planting Day for our 125th Anniversary Garden. Thanks to the generosity of our congregation, more than 175 bulbs were ordered.

Fifteen Years Ago: Rev. Ryan Henderson and the Youth Group sponsored a Spud Lunch following the 10:15 service on October 23, with proceeds from the free-will offering going to Gulf hurricane relief.

Ten Years Ago: In keeping with St. John's hospitality, the Stewardship Committee designated Sunday, October 24, Bring a Friend to Church Sunday, to share with others what the congregants of St. John's experience each week when we gather in a beautiful sanctuary filled with welcoming people and inspiring words and music.

Five Years Ago: St. John's Health Ministry sponsored a Flu Shot Clinic on Sunday, October 11.

One Year Ago: Barb and Robin MacMullen addressed St. John's theme "Strength for Today—Bright Hope for Tomorrow" on October 20 by sharing how being a part of St. John's gives them strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

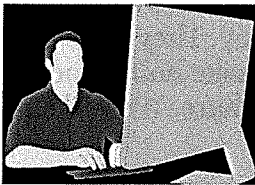
**ARTICLES DUE FOR NOVEMBER ISSUE
DEADLINE: OCTOBER 11**

Leaders: Please provide articles for these coming events for the next *Enlightener* issue:

- ◊ All Saints Sunday
- ◊ Stewardship Sunday
- ◊ First Sunday of Advent

All submissions must include your name and phone number and be typed or printed. Submissions can be placed in the *Enlightener* bin in the Church Office (bottom bin) or emailed to erickinsey46@gmail.com. If you have questions, please call Eric Kinsey at 215.513.2237.

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What's Up In Church Council?

Financial Report: Sandy and Bob Taylor, Cotreasurers:

August was another poor month for St. John's financially. Including the transfer from investments, our regular August income of \$36,717 fell short of our expenses of \$42,584. Expenses were within budget but our income was less than we had planned in our budget. But some perspective is needed. We have been somewhat behind at the end of August each of the past six years. Given the uniquely stressful time we all face this year, perhaps our shortfall is to be expected. But together we can rebound (we always do). Please keep getting your contributions in via mail or into the secure box at the rear of the church. And, if you can give a bit extra, it would be helpful.

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Our 2020 commitment to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) is \$46,460, or about \$3,872 a month. August contributions totaled \$3,374. Year-to-date we are about 9% behind our pledged giving to OCWM. While catching up by yearend is good (and we typically do), the money is needed and spent throughout the year. Please continue to support this work; its importance is increased by the pandemic.

Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with our Cotreasurers, Sandy and Bob Taylor.

Staff Reports:

Rev. Dr. Sue Bertolette, Senior Pastor:

Plans are being made for the Fall Bible Study, which will make use of the Zoom format and will begin on Wednesday, October 14, at 7:30 PM. The book we will be focusing on for five weeks is *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse*, by Charlie Mackesy. We will be looking closely at the simple truths the book shares, linking them with teachings found in the pages of Scripture and examining how they speak directly to us as people of faith.

A training session will be scheduled within the next few weeks to prepare folks on the newly forming Hospitality Team for what will need to be done each Sunday when we resume in-person worship.

On World Communion Sunday, October 4, we will once again encourage those listening to our recorded worship service to have communion elements (bread and grape juice or wine) within reach so that we might share communion together, even though we are apart.

The annual Covenant Commitment Campaign is highlighted on the front page of this *Enlightener*, and members will be invited to return their covenant commitment cards to the church via mail or by dropping them off at church during the week. This year's theme—*Journeying in Faith Through Thick and Thin*—will also be lifted up by the Educators on Celebration Sunday, September 20.

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Rev. Addie Stong, Associate Pastor: Sunday School for the entire 2020/2021 program year will be a “take-home” program. I, along with Rev. Dr. Kim Stryjak, have developed the “Carry-Out Connection” program. Each month, kids and youth will pick up a box of supplies for weekly activities that will help them to connect with each week’s children’s sermon. The 50 October boxes will be distributed at Celebration Sunday. We will then begin writing, developing, purchasing, and assembling our November box. Since the supplies for monthly boxes will likely cost more than a whole year’s worth of curriculum, we may be looking for financial support from our members to help offset the cost of this important ministry.

I have assembled 50 children’s goodie bags and 50 adult goodie bags for Celebration Sunday. Each includes a special blessing, a pen bearing this year’s theme, and a mask made by Judy Johnston (thank you, Judy!).

With the help of Bonnie Weber and Mary Billy, we will assemble and send fall goodie boxes to our college students, both those at home and on campus. This will be a great way of connecting and cheering them on in these interesting circumstances.

We are planning to creatively confirm our two wonderful 2020 confirmands on October 25.

We continue to stay in touch and in tune with our church folk by providing meaningful weekly worship and In-Touch Tuesday messages and following up individually with phone calls, emails, messages, and distanced visits.

Thank you to everyone for your ongoing support and “in this together” attitude. It continues to be a source of inspiration as we seek to provide you with messages of hope.

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music: September has brought about a flurry of musical activity, both in person and virtually!

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St. John’s United Ringers have been safely rehearsing in the sanctuary (with gloves, masks, social distancing, and no sharing of gloves) and St. John’s Chancel Choir has been rehearsing via Zoom, with their first anthem of the season being presented in worship on Celebration Sunday. Conversations are ongoing as to how other ensembles will be safely meeting as time goes on. Worship continues with a variety of anthems, both prerecorded and live, along with hymns led safely by St. John’s.

The first concert in the 2020–2021 St. John’s Artist Series. The concert will be a virtual presentation of solo music for organ and piano by Andrew Paulson.

Video of Chancel Choir is on Facebook for all to hear and see.

Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth:

I am making bags for the children’s choir for pickup on Celebration Sunday. They will include music, contents to make homemade instruments, and snacks to share. We will start Zoom rehearsals soon.

Lisa Delp, Office Administrator:

Donations collected in honor of David Furniss will be presented to him on September 20.

This *Enlightener* includes a Neighbors in Need offering envelope and covenant commitment form prepared by the Stewardship Committee.

Board Reports:

Elders

Elders have nothing new to report since last meeting.

Educators

Educators will be available to assist with drive-by pickup of “Take-Out Connection” handouts (similar to our VBS program) on Celebration Sunday, September 20, from 11:30 AM to 1:30 PM.

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An information letter will be sent to our students and families via email, Facebook, website, and E-Herald.

There will be no in-person Sunday School, Nursery, Jr. Church, or Acolytes when the church first opens for worship.

Deacons

Basket raffle is going well thanks to volunteers to set up tables, tent, and 27 baskets.

Trustees

After approval by Council, we have given the go-ahead for the paver walks and regrading of the lawn at Anchor House Lot to Green Acres. Montessori has replaced the sinks in the school building with no-touch faucets and sinks.

Old Business:

Church building reopening

The COVID Planning Group met on September 23 to try to identify a target date for in-person gathering for worship. The recording will still occur so those members who wish to listen on a Sunday will be able to do so.

Celebration Sunday plans

Celebration Sunday will include an opportunity to meet Andrew for those who do not know him. He will be at a table with hymnals so members can sign them out to take home and sing along during worship services.

New Business:

ANAM (Agape National Academy of Music)

Sue gave background information on Samson Tarpeh and ANAM in Liberia. Samson sends updates to St. John's and has been featured in an Artist Series at St. John's. He is requesting monetary donations to keep the school open. A total of \$6,300 is needed, which will pay for six months' rent and salaries. Due by October 15 is \$4,500 so they will not be evicted. The remaining \$1,800 is for teachers' salaries.

The GEM account balance is \$8,600. Funds from GEM are designated for Fairmount Fire Company and Lansdale Police. Contributions may also come from additional sources.

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A motion was approved by Council consensus to make a \$2,000 contribution from the GEM Fund to ANAM to assist Samson Tarpeh with rent payment.

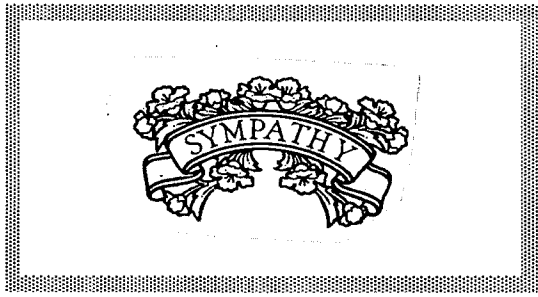
Abbie thought musical ensembles may be interested in contributing toward the goal. Samson's letter to St. John's will be forwarded to choir members.



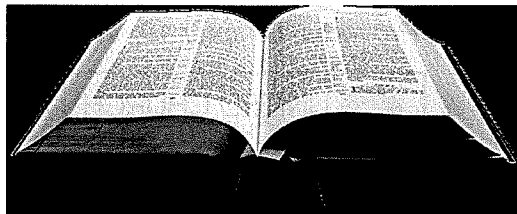
Fall is right around the corner, and with it comes the NGA ingathering. The Lansdale Branch of the National Giving Alliance (formerly known as the Needlework Guild of America) is holding their ingathering on November 9. We ask for donations of NEW items, which we then distribute to 12 local agencies. Due to the pandemic their needs are greater than ever. We accept items of clothing (infant-adult), toiletries, diapers, blankets, sheets, or towels. If shopping is worrisome for you at this time, we also accept monetary donations. If you would like to donate to NGA, reach out to Sally Atkiss (basketsal@yahoo.com) or Suzanne Franks (suziesrose@aol.com). *Mercy to the needy is a loan to God and God pays back those loans in full: Proverbs, Chapter 19, Verse 17.*



Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry. Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct-service projects through grants. NIN grants are awarded to UCC churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. This year, special consideration will be given to projects focusing on serving our immigrant neighbors and communities.



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of St. John's who passed away recently: Margery Righter; Shirley Fink, mother of Wayne Fink; Vern Hunsberger's sister Arlene; Nan Kulish, aunt of Andy Faga; Steve Krisko; Edward Shearer Sr, father of Ed Shearer Jr; Rick Gilbert, father of Ricky Gilbert, father-in-law of Jen Gilbert; Ruth Strasbaugh; Jean Hagenlocher, mother of Janice Sands; and Romana Deratzian, mother of David Deratzian, mother-in-law of Allison.



Fall Bible Study will take place via Zoom, beginning on Wednesday evening, October 14, at 7:30 PM and on the four Wednesday evenings following, concluding on November 11. We will be focusing on Charlie Mackesy's book, *The Boy, the Mole, the fox and the Horse*, the book Barnes and Noble has identified as its "Book of the Year." Do not be fooled by its simplicity and do not write it off because of its few pages and sparse words. We will be looking closely at the simple truths the book shares, linking them with teachings found in the pages of Scripture and examining how they speak to us as people of faith. All are welcome. Details regarding connecting to Zoom via your tablet, computer, or smartphone will be provided as we get closer to October 14.



While the pews of St. John's remain empty, for the most part, that does not mean nothing is happening in the beautiful building many of you have not darkened the doors of since March, when the pandemic brought so many things to a grinding halt. This little church mouse has been busy keeping an eye on things in your absence, and in recent days the Sanctuary has been filled with beautiful music.

If you have not yet met St. John's new Minister of Music, Andrew Paulson, I encourage you to find a way to connect with him. Some of you have crossed paths with him at the noon chimes concerts on Wednesdays, and others of you met him on Celebration Sunday, as he offered hymnals to folks who would like to borrow them in order to sing along with the hymns during our recorded worship services.

Safely distanced handbell rehearsals have resumed on Tuesday evenings in the Sanctuary, with ringers spread apart and responding to Andrew, who is positioned in the center aisle and directing from afar.

When the weekly worship services are recorded, four singers are positioned at separate microphones, singing out into an empty Sanctuary, making it much easier for listeners of the recorded services to sing along when they worship. Andrew accompanies our singers and directs them from the organ. I listen from a safe distance, perched in the balcony.

What I am enjoying most, though, is listening to Andrew play the organ and piano throughout the week as he prepares for the weekly chime concerts and for worship. I love to curl up in my favorite pew near the front on the lectern side, close my eyes, and just take it all in. Rest assured, the day will come when you will be able to hear him in person as well, but all in good time.

Something else I am looking forward to is the Confirmation of the two boys who made up this year's Confirmation Class. Caiden Gilbert and Cameron Albano will be confirmed on Sunday, October 25, with their families and a few church leaders present. Weather permitting, it will most likely take place in the Meditation Garden near the labyrinth. These two boys have been real troopers in every respect, and even when the pandemic ended their year of learning sooner than expected, they and their families worked with Pastor Addie and Pastor Sue to figure out a way to make sure no important material was overlooked as they prepared to be confirmed. A summer afternoon retreat allowed them to complete their preparation, and their time together was capped off with a walk to the local ice-cream store for a refreshing treat. This little church mouse ventured along with them because—you know me—I never miss an opportunity to enjoy a sweet snack!

As we look forward to better days ahead, this little church mouse is praying for each of you and eagerly anticipating the day when we will be able to share the pews once again, even if it is safely distanced from one another.

AMOS

FINANCES		
Summary of August and Year-to-Date Income and Expense	August 2020	January–August 2020
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Counters Discrepancies	0.00	0.00
Current Tithes/Offerings	28,830.00	249,993.44
Event Income/Fundraisers	0.00	936.00
Flowers	65.00	1,505.00
Investment Income	0.00	5,890.00
Rental Income	0.00	16,200.00
Use of Building Income	0.00	1,238.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	4.00	818.26
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	0.94	18.80
Total Income	28,899.94	276,599.50
Gross Income	28,899.94	276,599.50
Expense		
Salaries and Benefits	34,869.52	277,079.06
Elders Expenses	0.00	1,955.95
Deacons Expenses	0.00	2,218.13
Educators Expenses	272.22	706.51
Trustees/Building Expenses	627.44	9,495.22
Building Operation Expenses	3,524.32	33,618.41
Operating Expenses	3,240.17	34,243.36
Miscellaneous Expenses	50.50	924.66
Total Expense	42,584.17	360,241.30
Net Ordinary Income	-13,684.23	-83,641.80
Budgeted Transfers From Investments	7,817.33	56,648.64
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	-5,866.90	-26,993.16
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	0.00	790.00
Benevolence Offerings	3,953.00	36,311.02
Special Accounts	3,676.00	47,399.68
Soup Sales	0.00	1,298.00
Total Other Income	7,629.00	85,798.70
Other Expense		
Benevolence Disbursements	2,991.00	43,840.92
Special Fund Expenditures	6,111.65	25,330.82
Alternative Gift Market	0.00	44.47
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	0.00	650.00
Immediate-Needs Expense	8,000.00	15,095.00
Total Other Expense	17,102.65	84,961.21
Net Other Income	-9,473.65	837.49
Net Income	-23,157.88	82,804.31
Net Income Plus Transfers	-15,340.55	-26,155.67

ST. JOHN'S
Artist Series

**2020-2021
Our 33rd Season**

Join us for the first concert of the fall!

**Do Not Fear, For I Am With You
Music of Hope and Assurance
Andrew Paulson, organ and piano**

October 25th, 2020

4pm

St. John's Public Facebook Page

Join us from the comfort of your own home for an afternoon of uplifting music from Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music at St. John's. The concert will premiere as a Facebook Watch Party on our public Facebook page and remain on our public Facebook page after the event to be viewed at any time.

Stay tuned for details regarding our Christmas Concert at 4pm on December 13th, 2020!

While the concert series may be virtual, your support is still needed! Please consider becoming a patron of the St. John's Artist Series at any of the following levels:

Benefactor (\$200+) Sponsor (\$100-199) Donor (\$50-99) Friend (\$25-49)

Name as you would like it to appear in the Artist Series Programs _____