



Enlightener

November 2023 Vol. XLIII, No. 09

St. John's Search and Call - November Update from the Visioning Team!

St. John's Visioning team has met with the congregation using our four quadrants of Visioning (**Worship Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation, Fellowship and Care, Outreach, and Music**) and gathered input from many groups to answer these 3 key questions:

Who are we? Who is our neighbor? What is God calling us to be?

Update on Visioning Sessions:

We have completed congregational visioning sessions on the Music, Fellowship and Care, Worship, Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation and Outreach quadrants. We have also met with staff, young families, and the church council boards to get their input. Significant input and ideas have been collected for our use in defining our path forward.

Visioning Process Observations and Findings:

The Visioning Team is analyzing the responses and information from our Visioning sessions and is completing the analysis phase. We are currently reviewing the data we collected and are looking for common threads and themes among them. Some of the themes that are emerging:

- **Worship Service Themes** - Our staff collaborates well to create a worship service that is cohesive, from the hymns and chosen anthems to the relatable message. This is something important to us, and we want to make sure it continues.
- **Community Involvement** - St John's has a past reputation of helping in the community with the creation and support of Manna on Main St. It is important that we continue in this way, looking for ways to connect with and provide support to local agencies and the communities they support. We are identifying and exploring more ways to reach out into our local community.
- **Youth and Young Families** - How do we attract young families to St. John's? Do we need an alternative worship service, either an alternate day or a contemporary format? Many ideas for potential social activities were shared. How can we become involved with community activities such as First Fridays, Lansdale Days, etc.? As a response to this, we have initiated Wednesday Night Live as a way to invite more of the community into our church and provide an alternate day for people to gather and celebrate with one another.
- **Cross Church Collaboration** - Much of what we want to do can be accomplished more efficiently if we work with other churches and faiths in the area. By combining our resources, we can make a larger impact in the community, while also providing opportunities to learn about other faiths.
- **Communication** - How do we get our message out to the community about what St. John's has to offer, and how do we best learn what the community needs? Also, there is clearly a need for better communication within our community, so everyone is kept aware of opportunities to participate.

Visioning/Transition Timeline Overview:

We will use insights generated to shape our Vision for St. John's which will guide us in the creation of our church profile. All of this is in support of our ultimate goal: Calling a settled Senior Pastor who is called by God to help us achieve our Vision.

- **Visioning (6-8 months):** Initiated in March and 7 1/2 months have elapsed, includes Visioning sessions inclusive of insight generation and analysis.
- **Church Profile (1-3 months):** Currently forming the Profile Committee, Translating our Vision into the Church Profile.
- **Search for Settled Pastor (6-12 months):** Expected to start early 2024.

We want your engagement!

- Attend the Congregational Meeting, November 5th with the congregational dinner after church.
- Please provide any comments and ideas for our future vision to members of the visioning team.
- Send any comments to Exec email address: exec@st-johns-ucc.org Include 'Visioning' or 'Profile' in the subject line of your email.
- Check out our bulletin board in the Elevator Lobby for status and more information.
- We will arrange meetings to discuss the detailed visioning findings and the church profile.

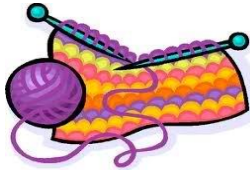
Thank you all for your support and engagement as we carefully and prayerfully shape our future Vision for St. John's and continue the Search and Call process. Please contact me or any of the Visioning team members if you have any questions or comments.

Yours in Christ,
Mark Bruen, Visioning Team Leader

Thankful

November 2023

PRAYER
SHAWL
SUNDAY
NOVEMBER 19



The Praying Hands Stitchers will be having a Prayer Shawl Sunday on November 19 following the 10:15 worship service. Shawls can be used as a comfort after a loss or in times of stress, during bereavement, for prayer and meditation, nursing a baby— anyone is welcome to select a prayer shawl for themselves or to take to a friend, an acquaintance, or a family member.

ST. JOHN'S PRAYING HANDS STITCHERS
FALL/WINTER SCHEDULE 2023-2024
THE FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH
NOVEMBER-FEBRUARY FROM 9-10 AM

All knitters and crocheters are welcome, whether you're just beginning, want to learn, or you've been knitting and crocheting for many years.
Meet us in the Church Library



We will be decorating the church for the Advent season on Saturday, December 2, at 12:30 (after the Christmas Tea). Please plan to join us in making the church festive for the holidays.



St. John's United Church of Christ
17th Annual
Women's Christmas Tea

Saturday, December 2, 2023
in the Assembly Hall 10 AM to noon

Come and enjoy delicious tea sandwiches, desserts, a variety of teas, Christmas Carols, wonderful fellowship, and information about "Women in Training," founded by two young teenage girls to help alleviate period poverty for young American women.



Donations will be accepted to offset costs and to benefit Women in Training.

If you would like to bring a food item to share, contact Janet Morton: mortfam116@gmail.com
Gluten-free items will be available.

Please RSVP by
Wednesday, November 22.
Call Sally Jarinko at
215.256.8289, text
215.421.6678 or email to
sjarinko@comcast.net
(Space is limited!)





Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Alan Johnston, who passed away recently.

Were You There?

Thirty Years Ago:

The Elders and pastors initiated a support program to explore issues including grief, separation and divorce, single parents, and others. Rev. Gene Jerge provided some of the leadership.



Twenty-five Years Ago: The Trustees requested from the congregation a wish list of maintenance and improvement items they felt were needed in the church building and grounds.

Twenty Years Ago: During the Sunday School hour the Parish Nurses (now Health Ministry) led a discussion on “Understanding Living Wills, Advance Directives, and Organ Donation.”

Fifteen Years Ago: During the month of November the Youth Group had a bake sale at the Harleysville Walmart, took a trip to Eastern Penitentiary, and attended the Mardi Gras Parade.

Ten Years Ago: The PSEC Fall Youth Event, **Despicable Me—Love Can Save**, was held November 15 to 17 at High Point Camp, 200 Chapel Road, Birdsboro, Pennsylvania.

Five Years Ago: A Spud Lunch was offered on Sunday, November 11, during social hour after church. A free-will offering assisted St. John’s Youth in participating in the National Youth Event in July 2020 at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana.

One Year Ago: Rev. Dale Davis explained the function of an interim Pastor.

Notes From Church Council



Volunteer Opportunity: Wrapping Presence (Candi Young)

wrappingpresence.org

Candi Young presented the volunteer opportunity to assist seniors in local nursing homes at Christmas. Bill Cagney brought Wrapping Presence to the attention of St. John’s.

Wrapping Presence began 28 years ago as an opportunity for seniors in nursing homes to be able to “buy” gifts for visiting family members. Residents can shop and have gifts wrapped. They receive a door decoration, cookies, and a Santa visit. Residents can shop for as many gifts as they need.

All gifts are donated, there is no money exchanged. It is staffed by all volunteers. The organization will visit a total of 18 nursing homes between Thanksgiving and the second week of December. St. John’s would volunteer at Elm Terrace and Harborview, both in Lansdale. There are about 20 volunteers per site. Decorating gift bags could be a WNL activity. Bags would be decorated before Thanksgiving in preparation for the event. More information to follow on dates.

Financial Report: Matt Carson, Treasurer

In September we had income of \$39,334.50 (including the budgeted transfer of \$10,696.83) against expenses of \$48,389.97, a difference of \$9,055.47.

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While income did fall short of expenses for the month, we received 28,637.67 in income (not including the transfer), which was a shortfall of budgeted income by \$1,204.33. Lower than expected income is due to lower than expected tithes and offering.

At this point in the year we have gross income (not including the transfer) of \$308,563.48, and have budgeted to receive \$319,803.00, meaning we are short \$11,239.52 from where we expected to be in terms of income YTD. Total expenses year to date are \$442,838.11 against budgeted expenses of \$450,822.86, meaning we have spent about 1.8% less than we expected to spend.

Donations received for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) for September were \$2,566; \$28,943.25 for 2023 YTD. Knowing that giving to OCWM is also stronger in the last quarter of the year, we would expect to have \$34,507 to date. We are behind our projection by \$5,564.

Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with Matt Carson, Treasurer.

Staff Reports:

Ministerial Staff (Andrew Paulson)

- The first Artist Series on October 22 will feature the Washington, DC, duo Seipp/Sheets on organ and trumpet.

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Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth

- "Connect³", the Sunday education/music time for children is underway. The "3" stands for faith, fellowship, community. This fall, the focus is on learning about a mission in Malawi and the people of faith there.
- Several families have taken part in the WNL family music time. We are working on learning anthems, playing instruments, and making a joyful noise!

Lisa Delp, Office Administrator

- Lisa noted there is a change in the Activity calendar. The White Gift service will be Sunday, December 3, not December 10. This change will be communicated with the congregation. This may affect the congregational budget vote.

Board Reports:

Deacons: (Scott Vanderburg)

- Fall Congregational meeting and ham dinner will be held Sunday, November 5th.

Educators: (Mary Billy)

- The last day for donating to goodie boxes will be Sunday, October 22.
- October is Library month, with an open house scheduled for Sunday, October 29. Come meet Lizzy and enjoy refreshments. Thanks go to Sarah Hogan.

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Elders: (Deb Hendricks)

- If you are delivering flowers, please remember to record the name of the person(s) receiving the flowers.
- We are still in need of people to visit with the homebound. See Chriss Bodde if you are interested.

September Attendance			
Sunday		WNL	
9/3	78	9/6	48
9/10	94	9/13	26
9/17	122	9/20	30
9/24	100	9/27	21
Total=394		Total=125	
Average=96		Average=31	

Trustees: (Dan Panachyada)

- A motion was made to allow Trustees to have the authority to release funds for exterior restoration and to use funds for the designated purpose. This eliminates the need for Council approval for each phase. Dan stated the Executive Committee will be kept informed on funds disbursement.

New Business:

2024 Budget considerations/preview (Liz Rivett/Mark Bruen)

The next meeting will be in person and held at St. John's on Monday, November 13. The Communications role, cleaning, and cash flow will be presented.

Old Business:

Charitable Gift Market (Mary Billy)

Volunteers are needed for setup. In the event of rain it will be set up on Saturday in the Assembly Hall.

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New Council Members (Mark Bruen)

Recruitment has begun for open positions for 2024. Term will begin at the end of January. Boards are encouraged to send names of potential candidates to Liz Rivett or Mark Bruen. Other committees are also in need of replacements.

Visioning Team Update (Mark Bruen)

A subcommittee will be formed to write the profile for settled pastor.

Project Priorities (Liz Rivett)

A summary will be presented to the congregation at the Congregational Dinner on November 5.

Articles Due for December Issue
Deadline: November 12

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

- ☆ Advent
- ☆ White Gift Sunday
- ☆ Christmas Services

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 (top bin) or emailed to erickinsey46@gmail.com. If you have questions, please call Eric Kinsey at 267.886.5326.

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"What lies behind you and what lies in front of you, pales in comparison to what lies inside of you."
— Ralph Waldo Emerson

Exterior Restoration
Project Update

We are continuing on the Exterior Restoration.

Thanks to the generosity of St. John’s members over the last couple of months the fund has grown significantly.



Special thanks to Don & Barb Fretz for taking the lead and for their contribution and veggies in encouraging us on this endeavor.

We look forward to all of your continued support over the next few months as we try to fund the next phases.

As of September 25 we have received \$23,323 in donations toward the project. It should be noted that the phases, while alphabetical, are not in chronological order of importance.

Phase F: Front courtyard entrance wall above arch has been scheduled to be completed between October 2 and October 14 for a total of \$10,720. This leaves a balance of \$12,603 toward the next priority portion, which is:

Repair of Main Street and front courtyard arches for \$27,983. Additional funding of \$15,380 will be needed to complete this phase.

Unfortunately, it was recently brought to our attention that due to a software error from Disciple Masonry, a figure of \$19,282 for Phase C (rear wall of the education/office building) was incorrect. The figure should have been \$59,653, or a difference of an additional \$40,371, for a total of \$403,648 for the project.

Since Phase A has been completed and paid for in the amount of \$76,568 and Phase F for \$10,720 the remaining balance is now \$316,560 for the entire project.

We thank you for your donations and patience through this long, costly, but necessary project, and we will do our best to see that it is done in a professional and timely manner.

Dan Panachyda
Chair, Board of Trustees

Summary of September and YTD Income and Expense	Sep 2023	Jan–Sep 2023
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Current Tithes/Offerings	23,861.27	273,082.37
Event Income/Fundraisers	900.00	4,583.00
Flowers	105.00	2,630.00
Investment Income	0.00	800.00
Rental Income	3,250.00	22,150.00
Use-of-Building Income	150.00	3,200.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	7.00	1,624.95
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	364.40	493.16
Total Income	28,637.67	308,563.48
Gross Income	28,637.67	308,563.48
Expense		
Salaries and Benefits	36,004.32	321,645.02
Elders Expenses	0.00	1,017.02
Deacons Expenses	432.47	5,563.28
Educators Expenses	0.00	793.52
Trustees/Building Expenses	2,683.26	14,899.85
Building Operation Expenses	4,868.70	44,088.14
Operating Expenses	4,236.97	53,980.26
Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	677.77
Interest Expense	173.25	173.25
Total Expense	48,389.97	442,838.11
Net Ordinary Income	–19,752.30	–134,274.63
Budgeted Transfers From Investments	10,696.83	10,696.83
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	9,055.47	123,577.80
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	4,949.00	25,347.00
Benevolence Offerings	2,836.00	40,168.59
Special Accounts	3,045.00	60,451.42
Total Other Income	10,830.00	125,967.01
Other Expense		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	414.43	21,023.35
Benevolence Disbursements	2,972.00	46,536.09
Special-Fund Expenditures	2,500.00	110,787.33
Soup Sale Expenditures	0.00	5,629.92
Rummage Sale Expenditures	0.00	4,995.93
Total Other Expense	6,886.43	188,972.62
Net Other Income	4,943.57	–63,005.61
Net Income	–14,808.73	–197,280.24
Net Income Plus Transfers	–4,111.90	–186,583.41



Chancel Flower Ministry

Thank you for being a part of this important ministry. Many lives have been touched by your efforts. Flowers should be delivered after the 10:15 AM church service or on Monday. Feel free to deliver the flowers to whomever you want—anyone who is celebrating a birthday or an anniversary, people who are ill, people who are in the hospital, people who need a little extra care. The people you deliver to do not need to be members of St. John's. They can be your friends, loved ones, and neighbors. The flower ministry is part of our outreach.

The flower room is through the door on the left side of the chancel—the side where the pastor preaches. All the supplies you will need are in this room: plastic vases, St. John's Address Directory, and cards. Please take the flowers out of the brass vases and put them in the plastic floral containers located on the shelves in the flower room.

Return the green liners to the brass vases, they belong to the florist. Include a card for each bouquet. Also, write in the signup book who the flowers were delivered to on your assigned Sunday; this will help us avoid replicating recipients.

Please include a card for each bouquet. There will be a copy of these instructions in the flower room. If you are out of town on your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone. Again, many thanks for being a part of St. John's flower ministry.

November 5	Sarah Hogan
November 12	Lisa Thim
November 19	Sue & Bill Morris
November 26	Sarah Hogan

Below and at the right you will find the chancel flower donation list for November 2023. Please review this list and contact the church office if you would like to remove, add, or update any information on the list.



Reminder: The requested donation for the chancel flower listing is \$35. Thank you!

November 5 **ALL SAINTS' SUNDAY**

In honor of Kelsey Weber's birthday from her parents, Walt and Bonnie

In memory of Nancy and Bob Schultz and Harry and Juliet and Minnie Schultz from Merle Anne Morcom and Walter Hawkins

In memory of Charles R. Trout's November 8th birthday from his family

November 12 **STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**

In memory of their parents, Anna and Dante Roman, from Carol Ann Ferrero and Donna Lynn Ruder

November 19

In memory of William Fritz's November 19th birthday from his daughters, Connie May, Judy Koenig and family, and son Robert and Jeane Fritz and family

In memory of L. Louella Trout's November 23rd birthday from her family

In memory of Phil Richart Jr. from Holly and Ken Fisher and Kim and John Milliron

November 26

In memory of George A. Filson Jr.'s November 26th birthday from his family

In memory of Catharine L. Kinter's November 26th birthday from her children and grandchildren

In memory of Laura Burkholder's November 27th birthday from her daughter, Judy Johnston, and family

In memory of Eric Kirk's November 29th birthday from his mother, Barbara Kirk

In honor of Raelyn McAfee's birthday on December 2nd from her mother, Bonnie, and Pop Pop Jack McAfee



St. John's Gardens have received an award from the Norristown Garden Club for "Best Public Garden" for 2023. The Norristown Garden Club is the largest Garden Club in the state. The award was given at their October 11 meeting.

Some of their members attended the Lansdale Open Garden Day program in June and were drawn to our gardens. Of course, the Labyrinth Garden was the highlight. They also liked the fact that we have an educational component to our gardens, with the butterfly identification sign in the Driveway Garden, along with the labels identifying plants in the Rose Garden and the Labyrinth Garden so that visitors can find those plants in a nursery if they want them. They also were in awe of the beautiful planters we have around the church. They thought it was great that we have such a peaceful place to meditate in downtown Lansdale (as Reverend Sue had envisioned).

This is quite an honor for all of the St. John's gardeners who work to keep our gardens looking great all year round. We have 21 dedicated gardeners who help with our gardens, ranging from planting and mulching in the spring to signing up for weeks to water the gardens, particularly the beautiful planters. Thanks to everyone for your help!





Presents

IN THE STILLNESS
THE 2023 CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL

4pm, Sunday, December 10, 2023

Join us for our annual holiday tradition! Musicians from North Penn High School and St. John's come together for an afternoon of organ, choir, and brass. Classic carol settings and nostalgic brass arrangements will provide a respite to the busy holiday season – a chance to be “In the Stillness”. After the concert, don't forget to join us for a festive reception. It's not the Christmas season without the St. John's Artist Series Christmas Festival!

This concert includes a freewill donation to support Manna on Main Street and the St. John's Artist Series.

THANK YOU TO OUR PATRONS

\$1000+

Bob Bertollette & Emilie Truscott • Grace & Mark Bruen
Suzanne & Don Franks • Bonnie & Ken Hales • Dan & Lillian Panachyda

\$500-\$749

Marie Carota • Ruth Kinsey • Judy & Bill Leslie

\$250-\$499

A Friend • Susan Clemens • David Furniss • Phil & Wendy Hunt • Sally & Steve Jarinko • Liz Rivett

\$100-\$249

Lorene Ahrens • Sally & Don Atkiss • Amy & Andy Faga • Jennifer & Charles Favata
Nicole & Donald Groff • John & Susan Hendricks • Leroy Horst • Ron & Joyce Huisenga
Alan Kerbaugh • Judy Koenig • Connie May • Barbara MacMullen
Mark & Karen Methlie • Cynthia Overwise • Susan Popjoy • Marcia Stacy

Up to \$99

Thank you to our generous patrons in this category!

All attempts are made to display an accurate patron list. Please notify us of any errors.

BECOME A PATRON TODAY

Complete the form below and return it to the church office or donate online at www.stjohnsartistseries.org.

Donation amount: _____ Name as it will appear in publications: _____

Please make checks payable to St. John's UCC and indicate Artist Series Donation in the memo line.

AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS – PHILADELPHIA CHAPTER

Presents

TUESDAY NOON RECITALS

November 7, 14, 21, and 28 at St. John's United Church of Christ

Join us for a free noontime organ recital from a local organist every Tuesday in November!

November 7: Michael Krentz, Christ Lutheran, Allentown

November 14: Doppelflöte – Vincent M. Ryan and Melissa Freilich, Advent Lutheran, Harleysville

November 21: Meghan Meloy Ness, Swarthmore Presbyterian, Swarthmore

November 28: Andrew Paulson, St. John's United Church of Christ, Lansdale