

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

# *Enlightener*

*February 2024 Vol. XLIV, No. 02*

## **St. John's Church Profile – Update**

We're excited to share the outcomes of our 9-month group visioning process that ended in Oct 2023. We had meaningful conversations, shared aspirations, and stayed committed to achieving our goal. The unity and enthusiasm of our congregation during this journey is a true testament to its success.

Completed in October 2023, the findings were documented answering the 3 questions needed for the Church Profile:

- Who Are We?
- Who is Our Neighbor?
- Who is God Calling Us to Become?

Documents were forwarded to the Profile Team for use in creating the profile. Also created a "Top 10" findings document for their use.

**Profile Team:** A new team was formed to write the Church Profile. New members joined to ensure we had a broad perspective of the congregation. The profile team members are:

Jess Carson – team content lead  
Liz Rivett – current Council President  
Mark Bruen – Profile logistics, current VP

Deborah Dayton  
Marge Jewel  
Pat Reiker  
Scott Vanderburg

**Profile Contents:** The team has been meeting weekly since October 2023, starting with a "Local Church Profile" template provided by the UCC Conference. The document contains sections that address the following:

- Introduction to St. John's
- Requirements for new Settled Senior Pastor
- Who Is God Calling Us to Become?
- Who Are We now?
- Who Is Our Neighbor?

The draft document is almost complete and is currently under review by our local Conference Search and Call support Minister and their staff. It will also be reviewed by the Elders and presented to the new church council. All reviews are scheduled to be completed by early/mid February, after which the profile will be posted on the Conference search site by the end of February.

**Next Steps** will be to form the Search and Call team, led by Elders in line with By-laws. This team will define the process for search and call, with Conference input. It will include a search and interview process of accepting applications, phone and in person interviews, and narrowing down the candidates. After follow-up interviews to select a candidate, the selected candidate will have the opportunity to preach to the congregation, with an eventual vote to call our new Senior Pastor.

**Questions?** Reach out us if you have any questions:

Mark Bruen – Incoming President \* Deborah Dayton – Incoming VP \* Jess Carson – Profile Team Lead



## St. John's Covenant Cards

### What Your Covenant Cards Revealed

Thanks again to those of you who completed and returned your Covenant Cards. While the financial information is important, the answers to the two questions resulted in an interesting picture about what is important to St. John's members.

The answers to the first question, **"I give to St. John's because..."** are especially revealing. As expected, being God-centered is important "to do God's work in a variety of ways." The service planning and presentation "provides meaningful worship for our relationship with God." And to get down to basics, "for the love of God." But a personal relationship with God is also complemented with a strong belief in outreach to the wider community: "I believe in the church and what it can do for the community and the world." In doing so "all donations are used wisely to help others." However, outreach is not simply a Christian requirement, but also that he/she "love(s) giving back to something meaningful to me and others."

Another reason to give is to "want our church to grow," and even in this era when church is not a focal point for many people, for the church "to survive." And this wish is not just for personal reasons. One member proclaims, "I love my church to see it prosper and grow for future generations."

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Many share the love for St. John's because it is like home and family. "It is my second home" because "it provides a caring church family."

Being raised at St. John's and that it is a "tradition of my family to be at St. John's" is also a reason for feeling like St. John's is home.

St. John's is a welcoming and inclusive congregation. One person said St. John's is "welcoming, relaxed, not pushy, and draws the circle wide." More specifically, a parent said, "raising my children in an open and affirming church is important to me." And another proclaimed that "I believe what St. John's stands for in support of my spiritual and inclusion beliefs."

To sum up: our members "believe in St. John's" since "St. John's gives to me."

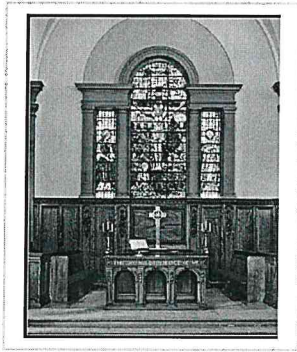
The answers to **my gifts I have to share with St. John's and the community** are more straightforward. Several learned the lesson well and stated "the three T's: time, talent and tithe." Gifts include leadership skills, musical talent, donating to special funds, and "helping the local community." Various volunteer jobs within St. John's were also mentioned. From "supporting fellowship with Wednesday Night Live" to "volunteering in the church office," "being kind and greeting people," and helping "keep St. John's beautiful." Many hands do indeed make light work; it also makes a stronger congregation.

The Stewardship Committee appreciates your comments. Even with the small sampling, it tells a lot about our congregation. Additional comments are welcomed. Feel free to email me, speak with other Stewardship members. or place a note in the offering or church-office door slot. Karen Methlie [kpmethlie1@verizon.net](mailto:kpmethlie1@verizon.net)



## Were You There?

**Thirty Years Ago:** Two new support groups were formed, both facilitated by Rev. Gene Jerge. They were *Second Chances: A Support Group for Separated and Divorced Persons*, and *Just for Men*.



**Twenty-five Years Ago:** From the February 1999 *Enlightener*. Jewish and Christian parochial school students were asked to write about the Bible. Some responses were:

In the first Book of the Bible, Guinness, God got tired of creating work, so he took the Sabbath off. Noah's wife was called Joan of Ark.

Lot's wife was a pillar of salt by day, but a ball of fire by night.

Samson slayed the Philistines with the axe of apostles.

The fifth Commandment is Honor thy mother and father.

The seventh Commandment is Thou shall not admit adultery.

Joshua led the Hebrews in the Battle of Geritol.

David was a Hebrew king skilled at playing the liar.

King David fought with the Finkelsteins, a race of people who lived in Biblical times.

Solomon, one of David's sons, has 300 wives and 700 porcupines.

When Mary heard that she was the Mother of Jesus, she sang the Magna Carta.

When the three wise guys from the East Side arrived, they found Jesus in the manger.

Jesus was born because Mary had an emasculate contraption.

The people who followed the Lord were called the 12 decibels.

The epistles were the wives of the apostles.

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**Twenty Years Ago:** The Board of Elders decided a Pastoral Relations Committee should be formed.

**Fifteen Years Ago:** A collection was taken throughout the month of February to support the maintenance of our Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

**Ten Years Ago:** A family snow tubing event was enjoyed at Spring Mount.

**Five Years Ago:** A task force composed of five staff and 15 church members was formed to respond in the event of an emergency, active shooter, or other traumatic incident.

**One Year Ago:** A literature box was installed outside the ramp door with a flyer inside containing information on what organizations can provide help for the community. St. John's works with the organizations listed.



## The New Year in Church Council

### Financial Report: Matt Carson, Treasurer

In December, tithes and offerings were significantly less than expected, resulting in an increase in our deficit. While we did have a positive income in December when accounting for the budget transfer it was not sufficient to cover our yearend deficit of \$37,849.

We are ending the year with gross income of \$552,930.00, of which \$374,152.05 is tithes and offerings. Our goal for 2023 for tithes and offerings was \$420,000.00. Total expenses for the year were \$590,778.00.

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Donations received for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) for December were \$6,103.21, made up of \$4,300.50 from the congregation and the portion of the Christmas offering that was allocated to OCWM (\$1,802.71). The total amount given for the year 2023 was \$42,377.96, \$2,622.04 short of our annual goal of \$45,000.00.

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

#### **Staff Reports:**

##### **Ministerial Staff (Dale Davis, Addie Stong, Andrew Paulson)**

- Pastor Dale stated Ash Wednesday in the season of Lent is February 14. There will be a worship service at 7 PM with a meal between 5 and 7 PM. Lenten theme will be "Follow Me."
- The five-week Lenten book study will focus on grief with the book *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss* by Jerry Sittser.
- The January worship theme is "Shine the Light."
- Andrew said the combined choirs of St. John's and Trinity Lutheran will present the anthem on Sunday, January 28. Choirs will be at Trinity for their 8:30 AM service and at St. John's for the 10:15 AM service.
- Andrew mentioned the second annual Artist Series Gala will be held on Friday, February 9, at PineCrest Country Club. The last day to register is Wednesday, January 31. Last year 66 people attended. The goal is 100 this year. Signup for the Gala on the Artist Series website: [stjohnsartistseries.org](http://stjohnsartistseries.org).

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##### **Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth**

- Connect3 meets every Sunday morning. The number of participants is between four and nine children each week.
- The family choir will sing the first week in February.

##### **Lisa Delp, Office Administrator**

- Plains Mennonite Church has been contacted for a date for the June picnic.

#### **Board Reports:**

##### Trustees: (Bob Bertolette)

- The wood floor in the Fireplace Room has been replaced with tile at a cost of approximately \$1,700.
- It is anticipated repairs to leaking window wells will cost \$6,000.
- One Trustee is needed for the Board.

##### Deacons: (Scott Vanderburg)

- Congregational Dinner will be held February 4.

##### Educators: (Mary Billy)

- Goodie Boxes will go out in March.
- One Educator is needed for the Board.

##### Elders: (Deb Hendricks)

- December attendance average was 134 for six services.
- WNL December average was 33, including the Longest Night service.

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### New Business:

By-Laws: An addendum to the By-Laws was presented. Written copies will be made available to the congregation. The proposed changes will be voted upon at the February 4 congregational meeting.

### Communications Role Posting (Liz Vanderburg/Marge Jewell)

Liz Vanderburg stated the job description is ready. The goal is to hire someone in the first quarter. The hope is to hire someone outside of St. John's for a more honest perspective.

Mark Bruen stated he would like to have a regular table at Social Hour more frequently to facilitate communications with the congregation. It would be a good way to provide information and keep lines of communication open.

### Old Business:

#### Code of Conduct/Decision

#### Making/Communication (Liz Rivett)

#### Code of Conduct:

The congregation needs to embrace, support, and empower those who make decisions. Communication of decisions to the congregation will improve.

#### Profile Team Update (Mark Bruen)

The profile team met with Rev. Kevin McLemore from the Conference for suggestions and advice. The team is making progress on the draft, which it is hoped will be shared with Council by the end of January.

### Articles Due for February Issue Deadline: February 12

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

- ☆ One Great Hour of Sharing
- ☆ Palm Sunday
- ☆ Maundy Thursday
- ☆ Prayer Vigil
- ☆ Good Friday
- ☆ Holy Saturday
- ☆ Easter

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](mailto:erickinsey46@gmail.com). If you have questions, please call Eric Kinsey at 267.886.5326.

The *Enlightener* is published monthly except for July and August by St. John's United Church of Christ 500 West Main Street, Lansdale, PA 19446. Eric Kinsey, Editor: [erickinsey46@gmail.com](mailto:erickinsey46@gmail.com)



Join us beginning Wednesday, February 21, at 6:00 PM in the St. John's Library (and on Zoom) when we begin this year's Lenten book conversation. This year's book is titled, *A Grace Disguised: How the Soul Grows Through Loss* by Jerry Sittser. Everyone experiences loss, some of it tragic and unexpected, sometimes predictable. Regardless of the kind of loss we experience, Jerry Sittser suggests our souls have the opportunity to grow. We will host this study for five consecutive Wednesdays, concluding on Wednesday, March 20. The book is available on Amazon and there are two editions, a revised and expanded version, along with a January 1, 1996, version (if you scroll down) which is much less expensive, especially if buying it "used."



Below you will find the chancel flower donation list for February 2024. Please review this list and contact the church office if you would like to remove/add/update any information on the list.

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

#### February 4

In memory of Albert C. Munzinger's February 6th birthday from his daughter and grandson, Kay and Tony Fiala

In memory of Bud Moyer from his wife, Ruth, and family

In memory of Dick Yocum's February 9th birthday from his family

In memory of Barbara Wenner's February 10th birthday from her husband, Bill, and Shelly and Marissa Longcoy

#### February 11

In memory of David T. Evans's birthday from his daughter, Jeane, and Bob and Beth Fritz

In memory of Jean's Parents, Mr. and Mrs. Mark Moyer, from Jean and Tom Beggs

#### February 25

In memory of James "David" Krail's February 26th birthday from Debbie Krail and family



### 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 or in the hospital or who need a little extra care. The folks 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.

Lisa

#### 2024

February 4	Mary Billy
February 11	Tracey & Mark O'Neill
February 18	Barb & Robin MacMullen
February 25	Sarah Hogan



Summary of November and YTD Income and Expense	Dec 2023	Jan-Dec 2023
<b>Ordinary Income/Expense</b>		
Income		
Current Tithes/Offerings	40,806.51	374,152.05
Event Income/Fundraisers	1,045.00	8,020.00
Flowers	565.00	3,550.00
Investment Income	0.00	1,348.13
Rental Income	3,250.00	31,900.00
Use of Building Income	151.00	3,451.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	152.00	2,965.93
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	18.11	546.81
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>45,987.62</b>	<b>425,933.92</b>
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>45,987.62</b>	<b>425,933.92</b>
Expense		
Salaries and Benefits	36,015.29	429,453.07
Elders Expenses	710.07	1,954.45
Deacons Expenses	2,373.37	12,396.27
Educators Expenses	39.39	833.51
Trustees/Building Expenses	2,081.27	21,310.72
Building Operation Expenses	3,921.37	55,294.65
Operating Expenses	3,870.70	68,568.98
Miscellaneous Expenses	16.85	923.34
Interest Expense	0.00	173.25
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>49,028.91</b>	<b>590,908.24</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income</b>	<b>-3,041.29</b>	<b>-164,974.32</b>
Budgeted Transfers from Investments	10,696.83	128,361.96
<b>Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers</b>	<b>7,655.54</b>	<b>-36,612.36</b>
<b>Other Income/Expense</b>		
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	614.00	28,011.00
Benevolence Offerings	14,768.34	64,476.43
Special Accounts	5,501.68	76,730.09
Charitable Gift Market—Miscellaneous	0.00	7,821.00
Soup/Cookies Sales	722.00	722.00
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>21,606.02</b>	<b>177,760.52</b>
Other Expense		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	591.00	25,591.95
Benevolence Disbursements	4,516.00	59,365.59
Special Fund Expenditures	12,247.95	138,097.77
CGM	0.00	7,489.44
Soup Sale Expenditures	722.00	6,520.91
Rummage Sale Expenditures	0.00	4,995.93
<b>Total Other Expense</b>	<b>18,076.95</b>	<b>242,061.59</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>3,529.07</b>	<b>-64,301.07</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>487.78</b>	<b>-229,275.39</b>
<b>Net Income Plus Transfers</b>	<b>11,184.61</b>	<b>-100,913.43</b>



## ROSE PRUNING DEMONSTRATION, MARCH 16, 10:00 AM

The Creation Stewards will conduct a rose-pruning workshop on Saturday, March 16, from 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM at the church. We will start with a short video presentation in the library, then move outdoors to have a hands-on demonstration on the proper pruning techniques for roses. We will cover Hybrid Tea, Floribunda, and Knockout roses—all from St. John's Gardens. This event is open to the public, so invite your friends. Please email Don Atkiss at [datkiss@comcast.net](mailto:datkiss@comcast.net) if you plan on attending.

Bring pruners, gloves, and Spring Fever with you!

## GARDENING IN A WAR ZONE

Gardening in a War Zone (available on [youtube.com/watch?v=jn6sMZCKAHY](https://youtube.com/watch?v=jn6sMZCKAHY)) is a powerful and moving documentary about cultivating hope and the beauty of nature even as your world is falling to pieces. Alla Olkhovska is a gardener in Kharkiv, Ukraine. Shortly after the war began, without funds to leave the country and as the sole provider for her extended family, Alla began selling seeds from her garden. One by one she hand-gathers ripe seeds from her carefully tended collection of specialty plants.

This is a short (33 minutes) film that is quite compelling and worthwhile. We may organize a seed sale in the spring to sell some of her seeds.



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Jean McKinstry-Rogers; Sumiko Booraem's father; Aimee Giampa, sister-in-law of Stefanie Giampa; and Pete Scrivano, friend of Becky Gordon, who passed away recently.



December 11, 2023

St. John's United Church of Christ  
500 West Main Street  
Lansdale, Pennsylvania 19446-2010

Dear Friends,

They kept arriving...all morning.

Mini-vans. SUV's. Compact cars. All filled with gifts for the UrbanPromise Christmas Store—basketballs, winter coats, bikes, models, dolls.... The variety of gifts was absolutely spectacular.

"The generosity of our partners is just extraordinary," gushed Troyana Pearson, our Christmas Promise Store coordinator. "Everyone who brought gifts today has such joy. I've even seen a few of our donors cry—tears of happiness."

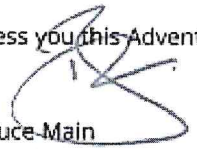
As many of you know, the UrbanPromise Christmas store is set up each year to help our parents choose gifts for their children. The store gives our parents a chance to provide for their own children and experience a sense of agency and pride. Allowing parents to pick their own gifts is empowering.

"This is such a blessing for me," shared one single mother. "Christmas is a little overwhelming with all the expectations of providing for my children. UrbanPromise's store is nothing shy of a miracle."

Your gifts each month are miracles, too. You keep our lights on, our teachers teaching, and our Trekkers trekking.

As I reflect on this season of the year, I am overwhelmed with the generosity I witness through the broader UrbanPromise community. Our community is made up of friends, like you, who believe and love our mission. For this I am grateful.

Bless you this Advent and Christmas season—



Bruce Main  
President & Founder





Presents

## THE MIDWINTER GALA A CELEBRATION OF THE ST. JOHN'S ARTIST SERIES

6pm, Friday, February 9, 2024  
PineCrest Country Club

Come and support the St. John's Artist Series with dinner, drinks, entertainment, and a silent auction. All proceeds from the Midwinter Gala support the St. John's Artist Series! **Tickets are \$100 per person** and include an open beer/wine/soda bar, a delicious buffet dinner with dessert and appetizers, a special program featuring the **North Penn High School Navy Jazz Combo**, and access to the **Silent Auction**. Mark your calendars and register today by visiting: [www.stjohnsartistseries.org/midwinter-gala](http://www.stjohnsartistseries.org/midwinter-gala) or by scanning the QR code below.



The final day to register is January 31!

### SILENT AUCTION INFORMATION

Our silent auction promises to showcase one-of-a-kind items and experiences. While we won't share all of the items with you today, we are excited to tell you about the following:

Tickets, merchandise, and memorabilia from the Philadelphia Eagles, Philadelphia Union, Philadelphia Flyers, Philadelphia 76ers and the Philadelphia Phillies, including an *autographed Dallas Goedert football* and an *autographed Travis Konecny jersey*!

Items and experiences from WIP-FM, Philadelphia Zoo, Ambler Theater, Jarrettown Hotel, Montgomery Theater, and other Philadelphia and North Penn Valley area businesses and individuals!

*The St. John's Artist Series would like to thank all of our donors, businesses, Philadelphia sports teams, and their affiliates for their participation.*

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### 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 • Anne & Eric Kinsey • Ruth Kinsey • Judy & Bill Leslie

#### \$250-\$499

A Friend • Susan Clemens • David Furniss • Phil & Wendy Hunt  
Sally & Steve Jarinko • Mark & Karen Methlie • Liz Rivett • Scott & Liz Vanderburg

#### \$100-\$249

Lorene Ahrens • Sally & Don Atkiss

Mary Billy (in memory of Linda Horst, Wendy Hunt, Edna McGinley, Jim Stevenson, & Jerry Umstead)  
Amy & Andy Faga • Jennifer & Charles Favata • Nicole & Donald Groff • John & Susan Hendricks  
Leroy Horst • Ron & Joyce Huisenga • Alan Kerbaugh • Judy Koenig • Carol Luehrs • Barbara MacMullen  
Connie May • Ruth Moyer • Rick & Wendy O'Connor • 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.*

