



St. John's Transitioning During a Year of Change

It has been a challenging couple of years since Reverend Sue left us and we began our search for new ministerial leadership at St. John's. Adjusting to these changes has been tough, with discomfort and concerns about letting go of old ways and adapting to new practices. It has been a trying time.

The council, executive board, and staff at St. John's are working diligently to navigate this transitional period and shape our future. We have made significant progress in setting our vision and searching for a Senior Pastor, but there's still much to be done.

Reverend Addie, who has been a cherished member of St. John's for over 10 years, began her ministerial journey with us straight out of school and has grown alongside us through our changes. Below is a heartfelt message Rev. Addie shared with leadership last week, and she shares it now with our full support and blessing. Please read and hear her message as we consider our path forward.

August 12, 2024

Beloved members and friends of St. John's,

After much prayerful consideration and fully trusting in the Holy Spirit's guidance, I have made the decision to resign as Pastor of St. John's United Church of Christ. Please know that this decision is truly a bittersweet one. Bitter, because I am leaving behind the beloved congregation who nurtured me for over a decade. Sweet, because our still-speaking God has opened a new door and presented a new opportunity for me and my future. I have accepted the position of Bereavement Services Coordinator for the Hospice/Visiting Nurses Association of St. Luke's University Health Network. This position is one that will allow me to explore grief-work more deeply and to focus on the ways in which God has equipped me to walk with people through seasons of loss. It is important that you know that it is from the deep loss we have felt and navigated together here at St. John's that this passion was sparked in me. You have played a pivotal role in my life and ministry, and I will carry all that we have seen and experienced together close to my heart as I enter this next chapter.

I know that St. John's is in a time of tremendous transition, and I also know that my leaving adds yet another layer to that. I know that this may not be the news that many of you are expecting or hoping for and it may cause you to feel a sense of sadness, disappointment, panic, and even anger. I hear you and hold those very real feelings with you. And still, God's call remains and persists, both for me and for you as a congregation, and I know in my heart that this is where God is calling me.

Together, over the last ten years, we have laughed, cried, struggled, rejoiced, and laughed some more. We have worshiped, learned, grown, grieved, changed, made mistakes, and held on to one another through many twists and turns. Most importantly, we have sought to find God in the midst of it all and to live differently in this world because of the love, hope, joy, and peace we experience through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. I do not for one second take for granted the time we have had together and all the

wisdom I have gleaned from our journey. Thank you, from the bottom of my heart, for trusting me, for allowing me to lead you, for inviting me into your hearts and homes, for offering me grace upon grace, for teaching me, and for loving me so well. It has been a privilege to be your pastor.

My final Sunday with you will be October 6, which also happens to be World Communion Sunday. On that day, we will gather around Christ's table and give thanks for a sacred connection with God and with one another that no amount of distance will ever erase. We will celebrate the ways God has woven us together for the years we've had, and the ways God will carry us forward in the years ahead, each on our respective journeys. I hope you will be able to join us for worship on that very difficult, but very special day.

I wish I could sit down for a cup of coffee with each of you to share this news with you individually, but obviously that is just not possible (and I really shouldn't have that much coffee 😊). I do want to make sure that this news reaches all of you, so in addition to this email, my letter will be shared on our private Facebook page and will be included as the front page of the September Enlightener, which will be mailed out in the weeks ahead.

It may not sound polished or "professional", but what I want to say to all of you is this: I will miss you and you will be okay. Please know that our extremely capable leaders are working closely with our Conference staff to ensure that St. John's has the pastoral support it needs in the months after my departure. You also have an incredibly dedicated and gifted staff who will continue to faithfully do the work they have been called to do. Please offer your prayers, your support, and your grace as everyone comes together to do their very best to make this transition, in addition to all the others, as smooth as possible. I trust all the hands, hearts, and minds doing the work of this church, and I trust the Holy Spirit.

You, dear friends, are never far from my heart and my prayers. I truly believe that what God calls us to, God will walk us through. I hope you will join me in clinging to that promise and I pray that we can be a source of grace and love to one another in our remaining time together. "Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow..."

With deep love and gratitude,
Rev. Addie

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Addie Stong". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long, sweeping tail on the letter "g".

Council Leadership and St. John's Staff stand by Rev. Addie in her decision. We appreciate all that she has done for St. John's. Please join us in supporting and uplifting Rev. Addie in this time of transition, and I know that you, as our congregation, will show her the love, appreciation, and support she deserves in these next two months.

Yours in Christ,
Mark Bruen
St. John's Council President

**September
2024**



**Articles Due for October Issue
Deadline: September 8**

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

- ☆ World Communion Sunday
- ☆ Neighbors in Need Offering

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.

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

Below and to the right you will find the chancel flower donation list for September 2024. 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 listing is \$40.

September 1
In honor of the Rev. Frank and Beatrice Pehrson's September 5 wedding anniversary from their daughter, Karen, and Mark Methlie

September 8
In honor of Sandy and Bob Taylor's September 11th wedding anniversary
In memory of Ruth Ekberg from her daughter, Sandy, and Scott Brown
In loving memory of Charles "Uncle Jim Jim" Snyder for his 31st birthday on September 8. Love Mom, Dad, Jackie, James, and the boys

September 22
In memory of Bob Kinsey's September 22nd birthday from his wife, Ruth

September 29 Gold Star Mother's Day
In honor of Gold Star Mother's Day from Jean Roshong
In memory of son Ted Smith's October 1st birthday from Judy Baumgartner
In memory of John Burkholder's October 2nd birthday from his daughter, Judy Johnston, and family
In memory of Julia G. Kriebel's October 3rd birthday from her family

**Council Minutes
from Monday,
June 10, 2024**



Financial Report: Matt Carson, Financial Chair
Total income for May was \$43,548.89 (including the budget transfer of \$11,599.58 and an additional planned transfer of \$1,356.25 for Communication Director expenses) against expenses of \$55,655.54, a difference of \$10,750.40. Expenses were high in May due to increased building and operating expenses, and additional salary expenses as Pastor Tom started while Pastor Dale was still here.

St. John's received a generous donation from the Estate of Judith Reitz this year which will be used for capital projects and the exterior restoration funds. This kind donation is greatly appreciated!

We have received income year to date of \$268,104.27 against expenses of \$275,912.86, giving us a net income YTD of -\$7,808.59. Given our slow start to date, we are currently projecting to end the year behind by \$18,064.

Donations for Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) for the year were \$19,648.21 against a projection of \$19,147, meaning we are \$531 ahead of our projection.

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

Staff and Contractor Reports:

Ministerial Staff (Addie Stong, Tom Adil, Andrew Paulson):

Pastor Tom continues to work on the visitation list. He attended the Keystone conference in June. Tom stated the Keystone conference is a focus on cooperative ministry in upcoming years for Pennsylvania's four regional conferences. He is planning presentations in community and PSEC on church and ministry.

Andrew stated since ensembles are not rehearsing during the summer, the ministerial staff is planning Labor Day to Memorial Day for the upcoming season.

Abbie Lampe, Minister of Music for Children and Youth:

No report at this time.

Kay Peebles, Office Administrator:

Paper costs have been reduced by switching to Staples.

The Enlightener addresses are color coded for ease of distribution, saving time for the volunteers.

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Grace Marchione, Communications Director:

Grace has access to the social media accounts, website, email, and YouTube account.

To reach Grace Marchione use communications@st-johns-ucc.org

Board Reports:

Trustees: (Bob Bertollette)

A building-use policy committee will begin meeting shortly.

Proceeding with the window well covers project. There are five along Richardson Avenue that are leaking. An estimate is being sought before Council approval.

New hallway lighting was installed by Jim Lederach, who donated his time and materials.

Deacons: (Rick Fanciulacci)

Deacons thanked Judy Johnston for her help with the basket raffle. Approximately \$2500 was raised.

Social hosts are needed. Anyone willing to help should contact the Deacons.

WNL ended for spring.

Educators: (Marge Jewell)

Game night at WNL was successful. This will continue in the fall.

Connect3 end-of-year picnic/party was held. Children's choir created their own song for the church picnic.

Elders: (Susan Fitzpatrick)

Search and Call detailed update was given at the congregational meeting. Eight profiles have been received to date. Three more interviews are planned.

Council Focus Topic: Breakout Session Results (Mark Bruen):

Mark reviewed results of the May breakout Council Zoom session. The Executive Council focus areas and brainstorming ideas from the Council retreat were shared.

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Council members were asked to note whether an item was priority #1 or #2. Ideas would be tallied to see which were identified as important to Council members.

Current Business: Priority Initiatives

Priority #1: Hire Senior Pastor

Search and Call Process (Sue Fitzpatrick)

See Elders minutes.

Priority #2: Communications, Internal and External

Kickoff of St. John’s Communications Task Force (Mark Hogan and Mark Bruen)

A preliminary meeting was held including the Personnel committee and Grace Marchione. A first general meeting will be scheduled to help define direction and priorities for communication.

Outreach Mission beyond St. John’s (Don Atkiss/Mark Bruen)

Monthly events with the community are being planned. Don Atkiss has lead role in this outreach. The objective is to bring visibility to the local community and St. John’s as a neighbor.

St. John’s Reach Out to Members Initiative (Deb Dayton)

Ongoing project to reach out to members not seen in a while. Contact will be made by phone and with postcards.

New Business:

Building Use Procedures (Mark Bruen)

A process will be put into place on criteria to handle requests. Decisions are needed on pending requests.

Old Business:

Report on Congregational Meeting June 9, 2024

A meeting was held after worship to communicate with the congregation on current events at St. John’s.

Summary Of July And YTD Income And Expense	July 2024	January–July 2024
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Current Tithes/Offerings	32,024.34	242,335.64
Event Income/Fundraisers	75.00	7,557.00
Flowers	30.00	3,727.00
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	1.62	270.28
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	18.00	164.00
Rental Income	0.00	19,500.00
Use of Building Income	850.00	2,500.00
Total Income	32,998.96	276,053.92
Gross Income	32,998.96	276,053.92
Expenses		
Building Operation Expenses	4,094.97	42,077.83
Deacons Expenses	425.00	9,370.05
Elders Expenses	0.00	729.00
Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	787.53
Operating Expenses	7,055.97	46,266.46
Salaries and Benefits	34,958.16	259,384.72
Trustees/Building Expenses	1,501.08	13,921.92
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	0.00	0.00
Total Expenses	48,035.18	372,537.60
Net Operating Income	-15,036.22	-96,483.68
Budgeted Transfers From Investments	13,857.08	38,236.68
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	-1,179.14	-58,247.00
Other Income		
Artist Series Income—Special	8,700.00	32,522.00
Benevolence Offerings	11,172.00	45,455.63
Soup/Cookies Sales	0.00	1,734.00
Special Accounts	72,023.00	126,224.21
Total Other Income	91,895.00	205,935.84
Other Expenses		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	2,031.49	31,088.74
Benevolence Disbursements	3,474.00	48,614.97
Soup Sale Expenditures	0.00	1,126.00
Special Fund Expenditures	5,785.58	66,859.13
Total Other Expenses	11,291.07	147,688.84
Net Other Income	80,603.93	58,247.00
Net Income	65,567.71	-38,236.68
Net Income Plus Transfers	4,596.28	96,999.56

**Council Minutes
from Monday,
August 12, 2024**



Financial Report: Matt Carson, Financial Chair

In July, income of \$32,024.34 was tithes and offerings, exceeding our budgeted goal of \$25,945.00, a positive amount of \$6,079.89. Expenses were \$48,035.18 for July, less than the budgeted amount of \$54,512 by \$6,476.47. Year to date St. John's has received total income of \$276,053.92, against a budgeted amount of \$281,226.65, a difference of \$5,172.73. We have had total expenses of \$372,537.60 against a budgeted amount of \$377,158.99, meaning we are below expenses by \$4,621.39. Total income with the investment transfer of \$87,260.81 is \$363,314.73, meaning we are \$10,428.32 short year to date.

Donations to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) for July were \$11,082.00 and are \$33,719.21 year to date, against a budgeted amount of \$25,550.00, putting us a healthy \$8,169.21 ahead of budget.

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

**Staff and Contractor Reports:
Ministerial Staff (Addie Stong, Tom Adil,
Andrew Paulson):**

Addie stated she has accepted a position as Bereavement Services Coordinator for the Hospice/Visiting Nurses Association of St. Luke's University Health Network. Addie's last Sunday is October 6. The conference will provide recommendations for our consideration.

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Kay Peebles, Office Administrator:

Storage closets are being addressed per the Fire Marshall's safety recommendations.

Grace Marchione, Communications Director

See report under Communications.

Board Reports:

Trustees: (Bob Bertolette)

Leroy Horst submitted his resignation for retirement. A celebration will be held September 8. Trustees are working with Personnel on the replacement process. Exterior work on the backyard wall has begun. A generous donation was received from Jim and Judy Lederach. The ramp will be closed for one Sunday to complete work. The front entrance and elevator will be used that Sunday.

Two more phases are needed to complete stonework restoration. The back wall/office cost is approximately \$60,000. The side wall next to the playground is approximately \$140,000. Members are encouraged to donate toward the campaign to complete this task.

Deacons: (Scott Vanderburg)

Congregational Dinner on October 20 will have a fall harvest theme.

Scott thanked Judy Johnston for working on the social host listing. Only a few weeks are open for social hosts through the end of the year.

Educators: (Mary Billy)

Celebration Sunday is September 8. Malawi book collection items will be shipped in September.

There is mandated reporting for involvement with children and clearances. Educators are working with Jess Carson for an in-person training program.

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We are looking to reopen the Nursery. A survey will be shared with the congregation and known visitors to identify the need.

Elders: (Susan Fitzpatrick)

Elders discussed the possibility of resuming the 8 AM service. It was decided to wait until a settled pastor is in place before resuming two services on Sunday. Search and Call discussion later.

Council Focus Topic: Breakout Session Results (Mark Bruen)

End of 2024 Council Priorities (Executive Governance Team)

Document shared with members regarding highest priority items.

Reflection on input received from Outreach Breakout

Outreach brainstorming document shared with Council.

The Founder's Day Stained Glass tour will not be held this year. The Fall Garden Tour was canceled.

Current Business: Priority Initiatives

Hire Senior Pastor: Search and Call Process (Sue Fitzpatrick)

Three strong candidates have been invited back for a second interview. The team will meet to make decisions on candidates and who may be invited for an in-person interview with staff.

Revised Superintendent Job description: Personnel (Marge Jewell)

Personnel has been examining the two job descriptions for Superintendent and Custodian. These have been combined into one job. It was noted by combining the two jobs with benefits, the cost would be 4.36% less than paying two people and still within budget. The new job title is Facilities Manager of Building and Grounds.

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Communications: Internal and External Kickoff of St. John's Communications Task Force (Mark Hogan / Mark Bruen)

Grace Marchione stated many tasks and projects are in process, including:

general notifications
special services
archive work with John Hendricks
rebranding the Artist Series
creating an outreach postcard
working with the Charitable Gift Market
creating WNL promotional work
redesigning the St. John's brand to create a fresh look both internally and externally
updating the website along with Mark Hogan. It is anticipated to have an updated website live by the holiday season.
reestablish St. John's in the community

Communications Sessions during Social Hour (Deb Dayton)

Monthly sessions will continue. Members from the congregation have been engaged in the sessions.

New Business:

Third Quarter contribution to St. Vincent de Paul

The quarterly giving of \$2,500 has been working well. Council approved the contribution for third quarter.

Worship start time

Regular hours will resume on Sunday, September 8. The service will begin at 10:15 AM.

WNL Update (Andrew Paulson/Mary Billy)

Andrew discussed the updated schedule for WNL. Times were adjusted based on feedback. The worship service is a sung setting of the traditional *Vespers* (evening prayer) service. Andrew will host educational sessions for the congregation about *Holden Evening Prayer* before WNL on September 11.

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The service can also be accessed at:
[youtube.com/watch?v=BUaV2cSEsI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BUaV2cSEsI)

Mary Billy discussed the community meal. Lighter fare will be served. A 5-week rotation of hosts has been set up. Contact Mary if you are interested in becoming a meal host.

See the new time schedule below:

- 5:45–6:45: Community Meal
- 6:15–6:45: Adult Education, United Ringers Rehearsal, Children's Music
- 7:00–7:20: Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service
- 7:30–9:00: Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Old Business:

Building Use Procedures (Mark Bruen)

A committee has been formed and a draft of procedure has been started.

Were You There?



Thirty Years Ago:

The Board of Educators invited parents to attend a 12-week video discussion series on Christian parenting.

Twenty-five Years Ago: The Parish Nurse Ministry held their first annual Health and Wellness Fair.

Twenty Years Ago: Participants in worship were those whose lives had been impacted by the lay ministry of Herman Ahrens.

Fifteen Years Ago: Kim Bergey was named Coordinator of Youth Empowerment.

Ten Years Ago: Books for children and young adults were moved to Pastor Addie's Office. This new section of the library was to be open on Sunday mornings as well as during the week.

Five Years Ago: Bethany Children's Home asked for help. Our response helped provide children from Central America with necessities as they waited to join family in this country.

One Year Ago: Staff introduced WNL.



Chancel Flower Ministry

Thank you for being part of this amazing ministry! The flower room is through the door on the left side of the Chancel—the side where the pastor preaches. All the

supplies you need will be in this room.

- Plastic and Glass Floral Containers
- St. John's Address Directory
- Chancel Flower Cards
- Bouquet Wrap
- Rubber Bands, Ribbon, and Address Stickers
- Paper and Writing Utensils

If you cannot make your assigned Sunday, please switch with someone and let me know! Remove the flowers from the brass vases and green liners. Put the flowers into the plastic containers located on the shelf, the donated glass containers beneath the rolling cart, or wrap them in the foil on the shelf. Return the green liners to the brass vases. These belong to the florist.

Separate the flowers into as many bouquets or vases as you wish. Please keep in mind that the containers need to last for a month.

Include a card for each bouquet. There are rubber bands or ribbon to secure them to the container.

Write a personalized letter if you wish! Be creative! You bring something to this ministry that only YOU can bring. Let that shine!

In the sign-up book note who the flowers were delivered to.

Thank you so much for being part of this life-changing ministry! Many lives have been touched by your efforts.

Kay Peebles, Office Administrator

September 1	Jen & Matt Harp
September 8	Karen & Mark Methlie
September 15	Anne & Eric Kinsey
September 22	Ruth Kinsey
September 29	Marcia Stacy

Child Sponsorship Update

It's been a while since St. John's Outreach Team has shared an update about our sponsored children. The COVID pandemic hampered our communication with some of our children around the world and, as time has passed, several of our sponsored children have aged out of the program.

We still sponsor one child overseas through Global Ministries of the UCC. Alyanna is 15 years-old and lives in Dumaguete City, Philippines. She attends Kalauman Center, a community-based center, which is a partner of Global Ministries. Our financial support of Alyanna through Global Ministries is used for education expenses, medical assistance, cultural activities, and establishing a college or trade-school savings fund for Alyanna.

During the pandemic, we became aware that Alyanna needed a computer to complete her assignments at home. St. John's member Dan Panachyda generously purchased a laptop for Alyanna, and our congregation purchases internet time for Alyanna annually. Alyanna is an active and conscientious high-school student. In her most recent letter, she described her excitement in attending her school's prom.

In addition to our support for Alyanna, St. John's also provides funding for two students to attend the "Safe Spaces" after-school program at Urban Promise in Camden, New Jersey. The program offers academic support, social engagement, physical activity, and new experiences for kids in grades 1 through 8.

The Outreach Team will receive a *Change for the Children* offering later this fall. Save your loose change and help us fill our buckets to help our sponsored kids. Watch for a date and details in The Herald.



Alyanna uses her computer to complete school assignments at Kalauman Center.

FALL 2024 AT ST. JOHN'S

Inspiring worship on Sundays, community building and fellowship on Wednesdays,
and joyful music making throughout – St. John's has something for everyone!

Check out what's happening at St. John's as we enter into this new season. We can't wait to see you this fall!

Sunday Worship

Join us at 10:15am Sunday worship for our fall theme: *Tough Love from a Loving God*, Sundays September 8-November 24. This fall, we will follow the lectionary, focusing on difficult truths heard throughout the Bible. Come to worship and learn that while being a follower of Christ often comes with tough love, it always comes from a loving God.

Important Upcoming Sundays

September 8: Celebration Sunday, Fall Worship Theme Begins, Worship Time Changes to 10:15am

October 6: Rev. Addie Stong's Final Sunday, World Communion Sunday

October 20: Combined Trinity and Chancel Choir, Congregational Meeting/Dinner after Worship

November 3: All Saint's Sunday

November 10: Stewardship Sunday - Giving Our All

November 17: Charitable Gift Market after Worship

December 1: First Sunday of Advent, Love Gift Sunday

Wednesday Night Live

It's the second year of Wednesday Night Live! Enjoy a community meal, engage in education and music ensemble rehearsals, and experience Holden Evening Prayer in the sanctuary. Our new schedule makes this special evening even more accessible for all. See you at Wednesday Night Live!

Wednesday Night Live Schedule, Beginning September 11

5:45pm-6:45pm: Community Meal

6:15pm-6:45pm: Adult Education, United Ringers Rehearsal, Children's Choir Rehearsal

7pm-7:20pm: Holden Evening Prayer Worship Service (Now in the Sanctuary)

7:30pm-9pm: Chancel Choir Rehearsal

Music Ensembles

Sing to the Lord a new song in our music ensembles! All ages and music abilities are welcome. Please contact Minister of Music Andrew Paulson at andrew@st-johns-ucc.org for additional information on how to serve St. John's through music.

Chancel Choir (Adult Choir) leads worship and offers an anthem weekly in Sunday worship and holiday services. Rehearsals are 7:30pm-9pm on Wednesdays, beginning September 4.

Children's Choir offers an anthem in Sunday worship every 4-6 weeks and at holiday services. Rehearsals are 6:15pm-6:45pm on Wednesdays, beginning September 11.

United Ringers (Handbell Ensemble) offers an anthem in Sunday worship on a monthly basis and holiday services. Rehearsals are 6:15pm-6:45pm on Wednesdays, beginning September 11.

Wind Ensemble (Concert Band) leads worship and offers an anthem on November 10, February 2, and March 23. Rehearsals are 6pm-6:45pm on the Wednesday prior to leading worship.

For additional information, scan the QR code below to visit our website: www.st-johns-ucc.org.

