



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

## *Enlightener*

February 2025 Vol. XLV, No. 2

Dear Members and Friends of St. John's,

Ordinarily, one might say it was bad form to brag too much about things at church – pride goeth before a fall, and all that! But as an outsider to St. John's, I think I may be afforded that privilege, so here goes:

You have an amazingly dedicated group of people who keep St. John's and its ministry's best interests deeply planted in their hearts. I have earned so much in the past 9 months from walking alongside the people of this congregation – both its leaders and those who simply “show up” for worship -- that I would not be able to list all the experiences that I have cherished in this letter.

I am so grateful to work at a place that allows the staff to try out new things. You demonstrate a willingness to try new things that is both admirable and holds up a mirror to a God who daily “makes all things new.” This is no small feat given all the changes you have been through in the past several years – well done!

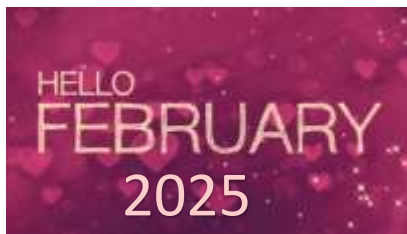
I have never experienced a place that continually reinvents itself so ably. Wednesday Night Live (WNL) is a prime example. St. John's has made a brilliant space for this new offering and it has the potential to be a powerhouse for evangelizing new members and feeding our current members. As Dr. Hilary once described the experience: “It gets inside you” and you can feel the power of the Holden Prayer Service throughout the week until you come back.”

The adult education class that I have been teaching looks to be a fun and engaging way for us to expand our own faith. We are currently reading a book by Amanda Held Opert (her focus in the book is on grief written after losing her sister and other things she writes about, just as Covid hit, which made this process extra complicated). The class both instructs about the roots of this universal human experience and teaches us how to live with our grief (large and small) while at the same time providing the opportunity for some doodling and conversation that just seems fun!

The view from the Acting Lead Bridge Pastor these days is towards a pathway that is opening wide! As you also know, St. John's is about to be joined with a highly capable leader in the person of Rev. Linda Noonan. It is an exciting time to be in ministry in Lansdale!

Peace,

Pastor Tom



Covenant Campaign Thanks

A big thank-you for those who submitted their Covenant Card for the past campaign.

It is a way for each of us to decide what our contribution to St. John's for the next year will be. Everyone's financial situation is different, and it can vary from year to year. Of course, if you have the ability to increase your giving, that is great, as many budget items can increase yearly.

Unfortunately, the number who participated has declined greatly in the last two years. Any suggestions to improve participation would be appreciated. What do you like about the approach that is used? What don't you like? Send me an email (kpmethlie1@verizon.net) or give me a call (610.584.1901) about your thoughts. Thank you.

Karen Methlie  
Stewardship Chair



Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Don Luehrs, brother of Carol Luehrs, who passed away recently.

## Were You There?

**Thirty Years Ago:** St. John's commemorated the contributions of women to the Church at large and at St. John's on Sunday, February 12.



**Twenty-five Years Ago:** On Sunday, February 27, at 4 PM there was a service in the sanctuary for all persons wishing to seek wholeness and healing for themselves or for others.

**Twenty Years Ago:** The congregation was invited to join the confirmation class when they were the worship leaders at the Wyncote Church Home on Sunday, February 6, at 3 PM.

**Fifteen Years Ago:** On February 7th during the 10:15 AM worship service the Boy Scouts of Troop 62 participated as ushers and greeters.

**Ten Years Ago:** On February 1 following both church services a member of the St. John's Health Ministry collected donations to help defray the cost of the annual maintenance of our automated external defibrillator (AED).

**Five Years Ago:** From the last page of the February 2020 *Enlightener*: *Our struggle is not against enemies of blood and flesh, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers of this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.* ~ (Ephesians 6:12)

**One Year Ago:** Cited in the February 2024 *Enlightener*: **Gardening in a War Zone** ([youtube.com/watch?v=jn6sMZCkAHY](https://www.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. 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 film that is quite compelling and worthwhile.

## The New Year in Church Council



### Financial Report: Matt Carson, Treasurer

#### 1. Income vs. Budget:

- December income was \$62,035.46. Of this total, \$46,698.21 came from tithes and offerings, falling short of the \$56,433.00 budgeted goal by \$9,734.79.

#### 2. Expenses:

- December expenses were \$43,662.05, which is \$9,154.01 lower than the budgeted amount of \$52,816.06.

#### 3. Overall Impact:

- Offering for December was well below expectations but expenses were lower than expected. While our income exceeded our expenses for the month, it was not enough to meet expenses annually.

### Year-to-Date Financial Summary:

#### 1. Income:

- Total year-to-date income is \$442,167.82, compared to a budgeted amount of \$480,200.00, creating a shortfall of \$38,032.18.
- Including the investment transfer of \$157,105.78, total income stands at \$599,273.60.

#### 2. Expenses:

- Total year-to-date expenses are \$617,183.16, which is \$4,576.44 under the budgeted amount of \$621,759.60.

#### 3. Overall Financial Status:

- With the investment transfer included, the year-to-date deficit is \$17,910.00. Less-than-expected offering drove low income over the year.
- Earlier in the year the Immediate Needs account was designated to be used to offset any losses at the end of this year as a buffer against the possibility of income being less than expected.

*[continued on next page]*

- Immediate needs had a balance of \$23,146.90 reserved for this purpose, which means we have a buffer of \$5,236.90 going into the new year. Going forward in 2025 it will be much more difficult to weather lower-than-budgeted income and still pay our bills on time without additional transfers from other income sources, such as investments.

### OCWM:

- Donations to Our Church's Wider Mission for December were \$3,334.29. Year-to-date donations total \$45,711.71, exceeding our annual goal of \$41,500.00 by 4,211.71.

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

### Staff and Contractor Reports:

#### Ministerial Staff (Tom Adil, Hilary Barrett, Andrew Paulson)

- Seekers class will begin on Sunday after worship with lay leaders.
- Confirmation class of four students are holding regular meetings.
- Collaborating with Educators to update Youth Safety Policy for mentors.
- Marge Jewell resigned as Personnel chair and from her position on Educators.

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

- The eight boxes of books for the Malawi book project have been delivered and are in their library.
- Family Choir will sing at the Easter Sunrise service.

#### Kay Peebles, Office Manager

- Andrew Jay, new Facilities manager, has St. John's email.

#### Grace Marchione, Communications Coordinator

##### Updated website live!

- Deb Dayton is planning a meeting with the Communications Task Force to discuss the progress in 2024 and help plan and set priorities for 2025.

#### Board Reports:

##### Trustees: (Alan Malachowski)

- Andy Jay has started and will work with Trustees.

*[continued at right]*

- The masonry on the stairway at Richardson Avenue has been repaired.
- Thank-you notes were mailed for the donation of the sink sprayer in the kitchen. This donation was erroneously attributed to Don Fretz and his son in the January Enlightener. The donation was actually made by Don and Barb Fretz and their daughter and son-in-law, Susan and Tom Paperella.
- The December gas heating bill was large. Trustees are working on less swing in temperature variation for organ, unoccupied space, and Sunday morning.

Deacons: (Scott Vanderburg)

- Congregational dinner is February 2, 2025. Scott and Rick Fanciulacci will assist current/new Deacons. People are encouraged to volunteer, even if not on Board of Deacons.

Educators: (Mary Billy)

- Family Game Night is Thursday, January 16 from 6:30 to 8:30 in the Assembly Hall.
- Two open positions on the Board remain.
- Spring Goodie Boxes addresses due Feb 23.

Elders: (Susan Fitzpatrick)

- Seekers class is for all members and those wishing to join St. John's.
- Looking at storage options for name tags. It is anticipated these will be available for everyone before Rev. Noonan arrives.
- Dinner before Ash Wednesday service has been planned.
- Attendance for December: WNL average=17; Sunday average=241
- Christmas Eve: 4 PM=158; 11 PM=149

**Council Focus Topic: Transition to new Council**

Deb Dayton stated the nominating committee is formed in the fall. To date, open positions remain.

Mark Bruen presented the nominations for Executive Team for 2025:  
 Deb Dayton, President; Dan Panachyda, Vice-President; De'Jon Salmon, Secretary; Susan Donahue, Treasurer.

Personnel committee membership changes: Sandy Brown resigned; Liz Rivett accepted at-large position for three years. Marge Jewell resigned as Personnel Chair.

*[continued on next page]*

**Current Business: Priority Initiatives**

New Senior Pastor (Sue Fitzpatrick)

Rev. Linda Noonan will begin March 3, 2025. Information will be made available to the congregation,

Facilities/Superintendent Position, Custodian Position (Mark Bruen)

Council approved Bill Bergey as custodian with a start date of January 16, 2025.

Council approved Andrew Jay as Facilities Manager with a start date of January 6, 2025.

By-Laws Review and Interpretation (Matt Carson, Liz Vanderburg, Bill Leslie)

The team reviewed the term limits for Personnel Committee. According to the by-laws, members of the Personnel Committee shall be elected for a term of three (3) years and may serve a maximum of two (2) consecutive terms, for a total of six (6) years.

**New Business:**

Distribution of Christmas Benevolence from GEM Fund (Grace Bruen)

The November Council meeting approved a funds distribution change to the Christmas envelopes included with the December Enlightener. The Christmas envelopes were not distributed; therefore, no benevolence was collected and distributed. The three funds to receive donations were: Bethany Children's Home, Veterans of the Cross, and St. Vincent de Paul.

A motion was made and approved to donate \$1,825 to each of the three funds from the GEM Fund.

Tech Committee (Grace Bruen)

Tech Committee (Griff Francis, Matt Rivett, Scott Cunningham, and Kay Peebles)  
 Sharepoint access and email issues were discussed. Continuing to work on security.

Congregational Meeting/Winter Congregational Dinner

February 2, 2025: congregational vote on new Council members  
 February 9, 2025: installation of new members



## 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.

Kay

### 2025

February 2	Sarah Baker & Bob Keim
February 9	Tracey & Mark O’Neill
February 16	Mary Billy
February 23	Barb & Robin MacMullen

Summary of December and YTD Income and Expense	December 2024	January–December 2024
<b>Income</b>		
Counters’ Discrepancies	0.00	0.00
Current Tithes/Offerings	47,338.17	390,557.57
Event Income/Fundraisers	537.00	10,100.00
Flowers	525.00	4,682.00
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	1.53	277.74
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	42.00	742.00
Rental Income	3,350.00	32,900.00
Unapplied Cash Payment Income	0.00	3,445.00
Use of Building Income	0.00	3,550.00
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>51,793.70</b>	<b>446,254.31</b>
<b>Gross Income</b>	<b>51,793.70</b>	<b>446,254.31</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Building Operation Expenses	5,787.10	64,758.21
Deacons Expenses	-1,100.52	14,707.92
Educators Expenses	0.00	1,680.67
Elders Expenses	77.90	2,904.70
Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	1,891.16
Operating Expenses	3,870.70	68,568.98
Salaries and Benefits	29,266.40	414,854.74
Trustees/Building Expenses	2,698.75	33,373.03
Unapplied Cash Bill Payment Expense	0.00	3,445.00
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>43,662.05</b>	<b>620,739.34</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>8,131.65</b>	<b>-174,485.03</b>
Budgeted Transfers from Investments	10,883.25	157,105.78
<b>Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers</b>	<b>19,014.90</b>	<b>-18,379.25</b>
<b>Other Income</b>		
Artist Series Income—Special	1,385.00	58,972.00
Benevolence Offerings	6,170.00	62,375.80
Charitable Gift Market—Miscellaneous	2,312.28	7,945.28
Soup/Cookies Sales	571.00	3,028.00
Special Accounts	6,350.00	139,978.21
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>16,788.28</b>	<b>272,299.29</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	160.00	36,567.40
Benevolence Disbursements	2,889.50	70,626.47
Charitable Gift Market	8,156.28	8,156.28
Petty Cash Decreases/Spending	19.94	19.94
Soup Sale Expenditures	2,571.00	4,420.00
Special Fund Expenditures	18,872.76	142,809.33
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>32,669.48</b>	<b>262,599.42</b>
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>-15,881.20</b>	<b>9,699.87</b>
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>-7,749.55</b>	<b>-164,785.16</b>
<b>Net Income Plus Transfers</b>	<b>3,133.70</b>	<b>-7,679.46</b>



Our 20th Charitable Gift Market, (formerly known as Alternative Gift Market) was held on Sunday, November 17, 2024. Our CGM team of **Deb Ahrens, Lorene Ahrens, Sue Clemens, Pete Conner, Suzanne Franks, and Nicole Groff** welcomed two new charities to our market of seventeen nonprofits.



**Victim Services Center** and **Best Buddies PA** both sent a representative to speak to our congregation about their missions, and they raised the two highest totals of the entire market!

We offered custom gift cards at just \$2 each, beautifully handmade by **Jo-Ann Sine and Marge Jewell**. Each card was carefully designed to reflect the work of each charity. Our St. John's Stampers generously donated \$1 per card to a charity. This year, we donated that gift-card money (\$131) to **Doctors Without Borders**, in memory of **George Kaufman**. George and his wife, **Pat**, supported the work of DWB, working faithfully at that table year after year.

While our two new charities received the largest donations this year, some charities didn't get as much as we'd hoped for. We asked our Church Council if a donation could be made from the GEM Fund ("Going the Extra Mile") to make up a few shortfalls. The answer was yes! Happy to say that no charity will receive less than \$400 from our CGM. Thank you, Council!

We also earmarked some of the donations given to our team for "CGM Expenses," as we had a few expenses to cover. We feel good about putting this money toward the work of our charities!

Many thanks to **Kay Peebles** for her administrative support and good bulletin-board and logistical ideas! We were delighted with our new colors and fresh logo designed by **Grace Marchione**. As always, our "Angel," **Mary Billy**, flew around finding us children to work at Alex's Lemonade Stand, creating table signs, and helping wherever needed. **Susan Donahue** and **Barbara Macintosh** kept every dime straight and accounted for, in easy-to-read spreadsheets. Barbara mailed all checks to all charities before the end of 2024. YAY!

**Kay Fiala and Susan Donahue** were cashiers who kept their cool while managing shopping lists, checks, cash, and our first-ever QR code. (Thank you, **Grace Bruen**, for that electronic option!)

Thank you to **Fran Morris and the Girl Scouts** who worked at our Malala Fund table, and the enthusiastic **Rivett and Salmon families** who poured and smiled at Alex's Lemonade stand. A final grateful shoutout to the "muscles" who set up/put away the tables and chairs: **Todd Clemens, Rick Fanciulacci, Andy Faga, and Don Groff**.

Our 2024 CGM grand total is **\$7,956.28**. Our twenty-year grand total, including 2024, is **\$155,054.79!** We can be proud of St. John's and all our friends for supporting these local, national, and international nonprofits.

Thank you to everyone who donated money and/or worked behind the scenes to bring the AGM/CGM to life for 20 years! We had challenges but we persevered. I'm going to step down as Chair now, after 15 years, with gratitude for everyone's time and talent. And WOW! Look what we accomplished by working together!

**Amy Ryan Faga**

**Articles Due for March Issue of the *Enlightener*. Deadline February 9**

Church Leaders: Please provide articles for any coming events in the life of the church in March 2025. All submissions must include your name and phone number or email and be typed or printed. Submissions can be placed in the *Enlightener* bin in the Church Office or emailed to [erickinsey46@gmail.com](mailto:erickinsey46@gmail.com). If you have questions, please call Eric Kinsey at 267.886.5326.

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Here are the two winners of the coloring contest held in October. First place in grade 2 or 3 was Katie Hogan, first place in grade 4 or 5 was Gwen Rivett.

This was a contest sponsored by the VFW in Pennsylvania, locally run by post 32 in Lansdale. First place winners received \$15 each and were forwarded to the state VFW for a possible \$50 prize.

Article by Rickie Sands, Adjutant and Committee Chair for this program.



Thank you all for your generous donations to help provide a Christmas to many deserving children.



Thank you to Bonnie and Walt Weber for delivering our Love Gift Sunday gifts to Urban promise.



Below you will find the chancel flower donation list for February 2025. 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 \$40. Thank you!



**February 2**

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 (February 8th birthdate)

**February 9**

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

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 23**

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



## LET'S WELCOME REV. LINDA NOONAN TO OUR ST. JOHN'S FAMILY!

**Mark your calendars for Sunday March 9, 2025!**



Our newly appointed Senior Pastor, Rev. Linda Noonan, will preach for the first time at St. John's on **SUNDAY MARCH 9th**. The Search and Call Team would like to invite you to join us in attending the 10:15 worship service that day so we can give Rev. Noonan a huge St. John's welcome!

We are grateful to God for bringing Rev. Noonan to us and we look forward to her leadership at St. John's and all the ways the Lord will work through her.

As we look forward to a faithful and spiritually inspiring future here at St. John's, the Search and Call Team feel that Rev. Linda has the skills and experience to lead us now and into **Who We Want to Become**. Her education and vocational background speak to the skills and experience needed to lead a congregation of the size, diversity, and interests at St. John's, now and into the future. Her Community & Wider Church Involvement speak not only to leadership but to her interests and heart, which align with St. John's profile and vision.

With Peace and Gratitude:

The Search and Call Team of St. John's UCC

Search and Call Chair: Susan Fitzpatrick  
Sally Atkiss, Chriss Bodde, Steve Butz, Bill Cagney, Anne Kinsey, Janet Morton, Emilie Truscott, and Liz Vanderburg

Ex Officio Members: Mark Bruen and Deb Dayton

Personnel Chair: Marge Jewel

*Additional bio information for Rev. Linda Noonan is on the Senior Pastor bulletin board outside of the St. John's Library.*

Here are two pictures of the books we sent to the children in Malawi. They are very excited to have them, as they did not have any books for children before. We hope to have more pictures soon. We sent eight packing crates of children's books (and solar-powered flashlights) so the children could have books and read them at home where there is no electricity. Thanks to everyone who participated in this project! ~ Abbie Lampe





# Family Game Night—Valentine Theme

Join Us for our **NEW**

**Monthly Community Event**

# Family Game Night at St. John's UCC

**Thursday, February 20th**

**Time: 6:30-8:30 pm**

*Join the Board of Educators for  
Family Game night!*

*All are welcome.*

*There will be a selection of games available. Feel free to bring some of your favorites to share. Meet some new friends  
★ and enjoy a fun night of gaming!*

*Beverages will be provided.*

*Bring a snack to share.*

*St. John's UCC*

*in the Assembly Hall*

**Please RSVP via our Facebook Event Page, the sign-up sheets in the elevator lobby or Narthex OR by contacting the church office so we have enough tables available.**

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FB: St John's UCC Lansdale, PA  
<https://st-johns-ucc.org>



THE  
*Artist Series*  
AT ST. JOHN'S

## Riverview Early Music

4pm • Sunday, March 9

Bucks County based Riverview Early Music will present late medieval, renaissance, and early baroque music played on period instruments. Come and embrace early music as a source of enjoyment and inspiration. Scan the QR code below to learn more!



## The Artist Series Gala

7pm-10pm • Friday, March 14

Register for a night filled with dinner, dancing, entertainment from the North Penn Jazz Band, a top shelf open bar, and a silent auction filled with one-of-a-kind items. It's an evening like no other supporting *The Artist Series at St. John's*. Scan the QR code below learn more!



### Thank you to our 2024-2025 Sponsors and Patrons!

#### Sponsors

*Gold: \$5000+*

Dan and Lillian Panachyda

*Silver: \$3500-\$4999*

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J.L. Freed & Sons, Inc.

*Bronze: \$2000-\$3499*

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Sally and Don Atkiss

Lynne Bartholomew

JoAnn Claussen

Susan Clemens

Adam and Becky Gordon

Donald and Nicole Groff

John and Susan Hendricks

Leroy Horst

Ron and Joyce Huisenga

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Cynthia and John Overwise

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Susan Popjoy

Marcia Stacy

*Up to \$99*

Thank you for your support