



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

Enlightener

September 2025 Vol. XLV, No. 7

“For we are God’s handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works.”

Ephesians 2:10.

What an honor to witness the handiwork and good works happening at St. John’s! In September, we begin our 8:00 am worship service. Over the course of the month, we’ll be blessing everything from water (Sept. 7), to backpacks, students, and educators (Sept. 14), to canines, cats, and creepy-crawlies! (Blessings of the Animals at 2 pm on Sept. 28). On Tuesday, Sept. 9, we’re flinging open the doors to share the music and message of Bobby Jo Valentine with the community on Sept. 9 as a prelude to our 10th Anniversary of being an Open and Affirming community.

We have created a corner of the sanctuary for our “soft worship space” where both kids and adults can engage their bodies in ways that allow them to be more present in worship. Our Boards and committees and volunteers and staff are doing what they do best, and are doing it well.

On Sunday, September 21 at 3:00 pm, we will be holding an “installation.” An installation takes place after a church has called a settled pastor. After five months, I am starting to feel a little more “settled” and our North Penn Association and the Penn Southeast Conference of the UCC have said it is time for me to be installed at St. John’s.

Even though all ministry is temporary and transitional (as Pastor Tom is now, sadly, reminding us), an installation is a way of marking a moment in which a congregation and pastor have chosen one another for their next chapter of ministry together. It is a way of affirming the movement of the Spirit that has called a particular leader and a congregation to be the best version of themselves possible for this time, in this place, trusting God’s grace along the way.

I’m thrilled that someone who is a close friend, holy troublemaker, fierce prophet, and national faith leader, Bishop Dwayne Royster, will be the preacher on this day. Bishop Royster is an ordained UCC minister and the Executive Director of Faith in Action. A native Philadelphian with family in the area, he knows St. John’s well and is eager to be with us. We will also receive greetings from a number of community and faith partners.

The installation is an opportunity for us to celebrate the rich history and the pastoral lineage of St. John’s UCC as we stand on the cusp of our 150th anniversary. We are rooted and rising in love! It is an invitation to let our gifts shine, call our friends and colleagues to celebrate and encourage us, and give thanks for God’s continued faithfulness on this journey.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pastor Linda'.

Pastor Linda

Dear Friends at St. John's,

When I was afforded the honor of joining you 16 months ago, my simple intent was to travel alongside you as a pastor and servant-leader for whatever season God had in mind. I am now writing to say I have discerned that around the end of the year, it will be time for me to end our time of shared ministry.

"Discernment" is a funny thing, and I know some of you are more familiar with this term than others. To me, discernment is a spiritual practice that allows us to better listen to God. In that process, however, as we hear God speak to us, it does not always mean—strictly speaking—that we are obliged to do whatever God asks us to do.

I believe that in times of discernment, it is more often a dialogue that's happening. It is an ongoing conversation with God who is both offering us opportunities, and asking us what it is that we want to do. The best outcomes, I believe, are when we know ourselves well enough to hit that sweet spot between what God is offering and what we want to do in our lives. I pray that my departure will be both pleasing in God's eyes, and that it will allow a new helper to be in ministry at St. John's with you all and with Pastor Linda.

My heart is still very much devoted to the people and the ministry of St. John's. I could not ask for better partners than in Pastor Linda and Andrew, and I have found much joy in the work of visiting the sick, deepening our faith and experiencing rich worship together. The whole St. John's team is an amazing, not-so-motley group! I foresee that the leadership of St. John's and the faith of its many members will allow this church to serve God in exciting new ways—ways that only the Spirit will reveal...and soon, I believe.

Throughout the many unexpected changes at St. John's over the past year, it has been clear to me that God has been in the midst of these changing times ("Behold, I make all things anew" – Isaiah 43:19). Despite the fact that change is almost always never easy, you have managed so much well and with God's grace. My ongoing prayer will be for you to recall the verse in scripture that goes something like this: "I can do all things through Christ Jesus who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13) as you face the ongoing challenges to come.

At St. John's, this past year has shown me that you are strong in heart and in the Spirit. Remember now, and always, that you are truly strongest when you are living not just for your own purposes, but living to enrich and support one another, to build a greater community, and lead lives that draw others to Christ and reflect the glory of God.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Pastor Tom". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Pastor Tom Adil

September
2025



The St. John's 2026 Printed Calendar

Over the summer, I have been working hard to bring to life a request that I got a lot over my first year—a printed calendar of St. John's events with pictures from the previous year! After pitching it to Staff and Council, we can project that we will have these ready in time for All Saint's Sunday, November 1. All of the calendars will be full color and free to the congregation and visitors.



I would like to thank John Hendricks, Grace Marchione, Rev. Linda Noonan, Mary Billy, Sarah Hogan, and all others who agreed to let me use their photos as options for our sponsors.

See you in the pews!
Kay Peebles



Save the Date!
Christmas Tea
Saturday
December 6, 2025



Beginning September 14

8:00 am & 10:15 am

We are excited to share that starting this fall, we will be offering two Sunday services: 8 am and 10:15 am. While the services will be very similar in format and style of worship, you can expect a quieter, more contemplative atmosphere at 8 am.

We look forward to sharing more worship and programming updates soon. In the meantime, please make note of the schedule transition below. Enjoy the rest of your summer!

☞ **Now through August 31:**

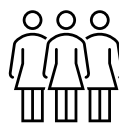
One service at 9:30 am

☞ **Sunday, September 7**

(Celebration & Water Sunday):

One service at 10:15 am to welcome everyone back from summer travels!

☞ **Every Sunday starting September 14:** 8:00 am and 10:15 am



Women's Retreat

Saturday, September 13

9:30 AM St. John's Library

The presenter will be the Rev. Dr. Linda Noonan whose topic will be "Ask Pastor Linda Anything." Light refreshments will be served.

All women are welcome!

Dear Members of St Johns UCC, Council, Boards, and Pastors,



Thank you for the privilege of acting as your Financial Administrator for the past 2½ plus years.

It was such a pleasure interacting with and getting to know so many of you. I sincerely appreciate the opportunity to work with such a warm and welcoming congregation and wish you all the best!

Gratefully yours,
Barbara MacIntosh

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

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Summary of Council Minutes from Monday, June 9, 2025



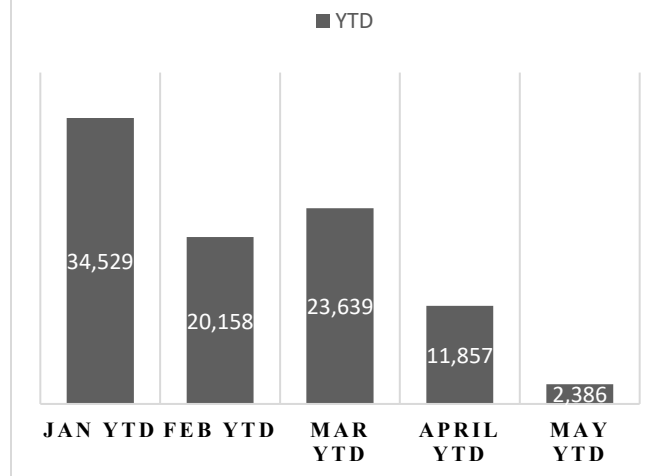
Financial Report, Susan Donahue:

Although year-to-date net income is less than budgeted, overall net expenses are in line with projections.

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Income higher than budgeted from tithes and offerings earlier in the year helped the overall impact of the recent decline in giving.

OPERATING ACTUAL INCOME - EXPENSE YTD 2025



Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with Susan Donahue, Treasurer.

Staff Reports:

Andrew Paulson: Gathered in God's Name, Community Choir Hymn Festival was held here, Sunday, July 6. This is the third year cohosting music camp with Trinity.

Abbie Lampe: Connect 3 will continue through the summer. Planning fun outings as well.

Rev. Linda Noonan: I met with the youth group. They expressed that they like the way they feel at church, and they want to share their gifts with the church and serve.

We have been on a listening and discernment journey to better hear from everyone at church, so when decisions are made it will be the best representation of everyone at St. John's UCC. We will explore an external listening process once we have our own house in order—listening to our neighbors, our partners, our community.
[continued on next page]

Rev. Tom Adil: Planning a staff retreat for the coming year. Listening sessions will be inspiring.

Kay Peebles, Office Manager: Going forward with the 2026 St. John's UCC Calendar, which will be free to the congregation.

Grace Marchione, Communications Coordinator: Tech ambassadors (different from tech committee) are working together concerning accessibility. The tech ambassadors are in the very beginning stages of visioning conversations to make St. John's comfortable and accessible to everyone from all walks of life and all backgrounds.

Board Reports:

Trustees, Steve Hendricks and Bob Bertolette: Cost for repair of the church steps will be close to \$200,000. We are meeting with roofers to repair a leak. Working on restoring the spotlights in the sanctuary. Looking for people to be part of the group that opens and closes the church.

Deacons, Judy Leslie: Church picnic was a great time, with about 85 in attendance. We raised about \$600 on Saturday; total earnings, \$1,600.

Educators, Mary Billy: VBS, "Building on the Rock" will be a one-day family program on August 23 at 9 AM.

Elders, Bill Cagney: The pastors have requested we set up a soft worship space/children's cozy corner. New members dinner was a great success.

Current Business:

Sally Jarinko: Pennsylvania comprises four UCC conferences: Pennsylvania Southeast, Penn Northeast, Penn Central, and Penn West. In November 2024 the four conferences voted overwhelmingly to combine into the Keystone Conference.

Bill Leslie: Planning discussions begin concerning a new full-time facilities manager.

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Summary of Council Minutes from Monday, July 28, 2025

VP Stepping Down

As per the bylaws, as VP Alan will be an *ex officio* member of all the boards.

Dan does not give consent to be president and does not believe he would be a good fit to keep up with the pace at St. John's very positive but very rapid pace. He feels he will be lagging behind.

Deb asked for a motion to accept Dan's resignation and Alan Malachowski's acceptance of VP role starting September 1. Motion was passed and seconded. Alan thanked Dan for his faith and confidence in him to take the role.

Facilities Manager Position

Anthony Ottaviano has been hired as full-time Facilities Manager, with an August 15th start date. Foulkeways gave him a wonderful reference. We are hoping to have him as a primary point of contact for Montessori.

Church Council August 2025



Financial Report, Susan Donahue:

Income vs. Budget:

Income during June and July was \$135,789, including \$11,690 representing one month of the second quarter budgeted transfer. Of the income, \$48,877 came from tithes and offerings and \$65,252 was received from insurance toward the step repair.

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Expenses:

Total year-to-date operating expenses are, without the step repair, \$371,479, which is just below budget.

OCWM:

Donations to Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) year-to-date total of \$29,910 is higher by \$2,716 than our year-to-date goal.

Please feel free to share your questions or concerns with Susan Donahue, Treasurer.

Staff Reports:

Rev. Noonan: Wednesday evenings are reenvisioned for a variety of possibilities, including book studies and adult faith formation opportunities. Linda is excited to celebrate our 10-year anniversary in October as an open and affirming church. A Service Outreach & Witness Team is organizing. There is an opportunity for people to add blessings to the time capsule that will be put under the front steps during repair.

Rev. Tom: Tom made the bittersweet announcement of his plan to retire from his role as support minister at St Johns at the end of 2025.

Andrew Paulson, Minister of Music:

Tuesday, September 9, there is a free Bobby Jo Valentine (folk singer/songwriter) concert open to the community to kick off our 10-year anniversary as an open and affirming church.

Abbie Lampe, Connect3 Director: We had fun this summer doing a VBS program called True North.

Kay Peebles, Office Manager: No Report.

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Grace Marchione, Communications

Coordinator: We have increased St. John's visibility in the community (Lansdale Day, First Fridays) and we are keeping all members informed about what is happening in the church. We have print brochures, website updates, and are building good relationships with the local media to promote upcoming events. We will be joining the Montgomery County LGBT Business Council. Our anticipated branding project should come to fruition this fall.

Board Reports:

Trustees, Alan Malachowski and Bob

Bertolette: Our new Facilities Manager starts on Friday, August 15.

There was a reminder to keep the fire doors closed throughout the building.

Deacons, Judy Leslie: Working on finding social hosts for fourth quarter. Confirming the fall congregational dinner date with the church office.

Educators, Mary Billy: We are continuing family game nights: September 18, 6:30 to 8:30 PM.

Vacation Bible School is on August 23 from 9 to 12 AM for families. There are 23 people registered.

Celebration Sunday/Water Sunday, September 7: "Come & See, Go & Tell."

Elders, Chriss Bodde: Average Sunday morning attendance was 117 in June and 108 in July. We discussed plans for children's ministry and reviewed details on the Soft Worship Space; Montessori is donating some tables and chairs for this.

Rev. Linda's Installation is September 21, at 3 PM.

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The Elders and Staff of St. John's, following a thorough review of feedback, have determined to allocate Wednesday nights to "Church Night" and retire the formal Wednesday Night Live program. We fondly recall two years of meaningful fellowship, programming, and worship and will build upon those foundations in the future. The Adult Choirs, Bells, and other Ensembles will continue in their Wednesday night rehearsals, and we invite you to stay informed about forthcoming opportunities for worship, fellowship, and programming. We express our sincere gratitude to the St. John's Family for their dedication to our multifaceted programs throughout the year.

Peace and Grace

St. John's Elders:

Chriss Bodde - Chair, Bill Cagney - Logistics Chair, Anne Kinsey - Secretary, Emilie Truscott, Sue Clemens, and Charles Sisian

Current Business:

Anniversary Plan Update – January 25, 2026, kickoff Sunday to May 31, 2026. John Hendricks chairing this Team. Music, events, archive photos during social hour, etc.

Saturday May 30, 2026, Community Day
Sunday May 31, 2026, Music Celebration Sunday

New Business:

Discernment/Visioning Process Plan and Update: Rev. Linda: Who are we as a church and what are our values and commitments? Our goal is to identify 3 to 5 priorities to keep us on track and determine how we implement those priorities.

Dan thanked everyone for the privilege of being VP as he finishes serving on Sept 1.

Lizzie's Library News

Library

A warm and welcoming September to you all!

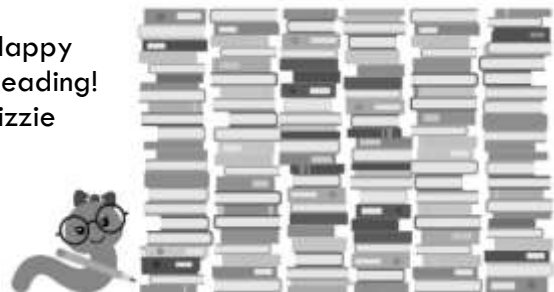
We hope you've all had a fun and fulfilling summer! Over the summer, the librarian and I were super busy going through, and cataloguing, a huge slew of donated books. There are a lot of super great ones that have been donated by our own congregation, Pastor Hillary, and various others. Thank you to all who contributed and have added to the value of our collection! As we wind down our summer months, we look toward autumn and all the abundance that it has to offer. Mark your calendars for September 14th, when we will be providing some "rummage" tables of books that need good homes. Look for them in Assembly Hall during our Fellowship time together. All books will be FREE. (In-kind donations are welcome and the funds will be used to further improve your library experience at St. John's). The books will remain available for a few weeks, and the remaining titles will be donated to area used-book shops.

Also, be sure to keep checking The Herald, Sunday bulletins, and social media for a Fall Open House! The librarian and I had one a few years back and would love to invite you again.

As we enter into this season of cooler and cozier weather, please come and visit the library at St. John's for the perfect reading companion. There are some great selections in a vast assortment of genres!

As always, feel free to reach out to us with any questions or suggestions! The librarian and I can be reached at library@st-johns-ucc.org.

Happy
Reading!
Lizzie





Welcome New Members!

Marie B. Carota

Marie grew up in Wilmington, Delaware, where she attended a Presbyterian Church that looked very much like St. John's, and where she loved singing hymns with great pipe organ.

After receiving her degree in ornamental horticulture at The University of Delaware and working as a student at Longwood Gardens, she moved to Southeastern Pennsylvania and worked as a freelance horticulturist designing and maintaining gardens for 45 years. During part of that time she attended a Reformed Church where she was instrumental in building a pipe organ with the members of the church and running an organ concert series for 10 years.

She moved to Doylestown in 2010. While searching for a church with a good choir she was reminded by an 'organist' friend of ...as the friend put it... "David's church." Bingo! This was a no brainer, as she is Bob Bertollette's cousin, and was already a friend of David's.

She has been blessed to be singing with our choir for 13 years, where she has made some great friends, and continues to be inspired by Andrew.

Impressed by the warmth, joy, and fortitude of the "Motley Crew" through the many recent changes, she has decided to commit to membership to formally be part of St. John's wonderful Motley Crew.

Roger Scott

Roger Scott and his wife, Jackie, live in Lansdale. They have three adult children and five grandchildren. Roger is a retired IT Director. He and Jackie enjoy time with family, summer at the seashore, and making improvements to their home.

Bob and Karen Bausman

Bob and Karen belonged to Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, Preston Hollow Presbyterian Church in Dallas, and Chestnut Hill Presbyterian Church. Bob went to First Presbyterian Summer Camp in Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Bob has been an usher, and he and Karen taught Sunday school in their former churches. Bob is a pilot, enjoys downhill skiing, and is a scuba diver. Karen loves to cook. Bob says she is a gourmet chef! They both enjoy walking their dog each day. They are retired, have traveled to see the world, and enjoy spending time at their beach house.

September Worship Assistants

Hospitality:



September	
7	Team 3: Methlie
14	Team 4: Bruen
21	Team 1: MacMullen
28	Team 2: Leslie

Social Hosts

September	
7	Deacons
14	Karen & Mark Methlie
21	Amy Faga
28	Susan Fitzpatrick & Michael Formica

St. John's United
Church of Christ
Congregational
Meeting
Sunday, June 1, 2025



Attendees:

Deb Dayton, Council President
Dan Panachyda, Council Vice-President

Deb Dayton called the meeting to order at 10:37 AM and opened with prayer. Deb introduced Alan Malachowski, Chair of Trustees.

Alan stated the front steps of St. John's were destroyed on March 15, 2025. All parties involved in the accident were released from the hospital within a day.

St. John's has been working with their insurance company to secure three (3) bids. Additional information for restoration of the railing and landscaping and adjustments to center doors is included. Two (2) engineering studies have been completed and repair protocol developed with architectural drawings. The Trustees are ready to award the project to a local masonry firm. The front steps should be completed by Labor Day.

St. John's has been informed they may need to pay the \$25,000 deductible. St. John's insurance company will enter in a subrogation process with the driver's insurance company. There is no guarantee St. John's will recoup the \$25,000 deductible. An insurance attorney has been consulted. Grant money may be available for historic preservation.

The congregation is required by the Constitution and By-Laws to approve this expenditure since it was not part of the budget process. Trustees are requesting release of the funds for payment of deductible, if it becomes necessary.

Deb Dayton presented the recommendation by Grace Bruen, Finance Chair, for congregational approval for release of funds from the Unrestricted Investments Account.

Motion:

Liz Vanderburg moved to approve the recommendation by the Finance Committee and the Trustees for release of \$25,000 from the Unrestricted Investments Account. Andy Faga seconded the motion.

Question:

Would any insurance money received be returned to the Unrestricted Investments account?

Alan M: Insurance companies will determine what the amount will be. If funds are recouped through the subrogation process, then funds will go back to the unrestricted fund.

Question:

How did Trustees determine which bidder to use out of the three (3) bids received?

Alan M: The steps are made from limestone, which requires a qualified mason. The Trustees are recommending the local company from Telford. The three bids were from:

- 1) Disciple Masonry, who has been repointing the church building.
- 2) A recommendation by the insurance adjustor of a company located in Telford with knowledge of historical work.
- 3) A company with little knowledge of working with limestone.

Question:

What is the total cost of the job?

Alan M: The cost is changing due to initial estimates not including additional work being identified. Proposals are being revised. The masonry work alone is approximately \$130,000. The railing, landscaping, and doors need repair. Worst case scenario is \$25,000 for St. John's.

Question:

Are there extenuating circumstances the driver's insurance may not cover?

Alan M: Coverage for the driver is unknown. PA law requires property damage of \$15,000.

Question:

Has fundraising from St. John's and the community for expenses/landscaping been considered?

Alan M: Total cost for repairs is unknown. Grant funds are being pursued through local state representative Steve Malagari.

The congregational vote passed 86 YES, 0 NO. The meeting was adjourned at 10:57 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Wendy O'Connor

Summary Of July And YTD Income And Expense	July 2025	January—July 2025
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Current Tithes/Offerings	20,125.40	237,945.48
Event Income/Fundraisers	675.00	4,696.00
Flowers	100.00	2,531.00
Interest Income, Savings Accounts	0.00	9.01
Investment Income	0.00	3,330.00
Miscellaneous Unrestricted Income	8.00	65,436.76
Rental Income	0.00	20,100.00
Use of Building Income	0.00	2,250.00
Youth Group	25.00	25.00
Total Income	20,933.40	336,323.25
Gross Income	20,933.40	336,323.25
Expenses		
Building Operation Expenses	4,576.71	49,304.67
Deacons Expenses	390.00	6,708.91
Educators Expenses	0.00	644.18
Elders Expenses	745.59	2,746.34
Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	184.20
Operating Expenses	7,892.53	57,318.70
Salaries and Benefits	30,265.43	237,798.21
Trustees/Building Expenses	40,000.00	56,773.60
Total Expenses	83,870.26	411,478.81
Net Operating Income	-62,936.86	-75,155.56
Budgeted Transfers From Investments	590.00	80,132.00
Net Ordinary Income Plus Transfers	-62,346.86	-4,976.44
Artist Series Income—Special	10,100.00	36,599.00
Benevolence Offerings	2,713.00	37,095.50
Soup/Cookies Sales	0.00	1,557.00
Special Accounts	2,608.00	55,405.00
Total Other Income	91,895.00	205,935.84
Other Expenses		
Artist Series Fund Expenditures	3,197.38	50,243.60
Benevolence Disbursements	3,771.50	40,560.17
Charitable Giving Market	0.00	0.00
Petty Cash, Decreases/Spending	0.00	14.60
Soup Sale Expenditures	0.00	1,580.07
Special Fund Expenditures	3,104.24	21,565.84
Total Other Expenses	10,073.12	113,964.28
Net Other Income	5,347.88	16,692.22
Net Income	-57,588.98	-58,463.34
Net Income Plus Transfers	-56,599.98	21,668.66

Our thoughts and prayers are with the family and friends of Lynn Richardson, the daughter of Phyllis and the late George Richardson; Nancy Fanciulacci, wife of Rick; Robert Johnston, Alan's brother, Judy Johnston's brother-in-law; Pastor



Dale Davis's mother; and the father-in-law of Michaela Gilbert, who passed away recently

Below you will find the chancel flower donation list for September 2025. 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 7

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

September 21

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

September 28 Gold Star Mother's Day

In honor of Gold Star Mother's Day from Jean Roshong
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



Acknowledgements June & July 2025



In Memory of Dr. Herman C. Ahrens Jr's June 12 birthdate
To the Music Ministry Fund
from his loving family



In Honor of the 75th wedding anniversary of our parents, Lorenz and the late Herman Ahrens, on June 18th
To the Music Ministry Fund
From their loving family



In Memory of James E. Stevenson III
To Current Expenses
From Lois E. Stevenson



In Honor of Carolyn Rivett's Confirmation
To the Exterior Restoration Fund
From Matt and Liz Rivett



In Honor of the kindness of Susan and Bill Volp
To Current Expenses
From Ray McCloud

"Their continued generosity toward me and many others is a reflection of their values and their admiration of St. John's and its influence and presence!"

If you wish to donate to a fund in honor or memory of someone, please include the dedication with your offering. It will be recognized in the Enlightener, weekly bulletins, and Herald.



<u>Graduates</u>	<u>Family</u>
Jonathan Fernando	Luchi Luzares & Armin Fernando
Max Kinsey	Anne & Eric Kinsey
Eli Panachyda	Lillian & Dan Panachyda
Charlie Sisian	Jo Ann & Charles Sisian
Katherine Upham	Wendy & Rick O'Connor

Jonathan Fernando

- Graduated from North Penn High School
- Will be attending Temple University School of Pharmacy

Max Kinsey

- Graduated from Perkiomen Valley High School
- Will be attending West Chester University
- Plans to major in Business

Eli Panachyda

- Graduated from North Penn High School
- Will be attending UMass
- Will swim for the University
- Plans to study Biology

Charlie Sisian

- Graduated cum laude from Boston College
- Accounting degree
- Employed at KPMG starting this fall

Katherine Upham

- Graduated from Dallastown Area High School
- Will live in Evian-les-Bains, France, for one year
- Will work as an au pair for three children before college

Were You There?



Thirty Years Ago: The New Century hymnals were used for the first time in a service of worship and dedication on September 17, 1995.

Twenty-five Years Ago: St. John's celebrated our German Reformed heritage with a special congregational dinner of traditional Pennsylvania Dutch foods.

Twenty Years Ago: The Deacons sponsored a kitchen-cleaning party with many volunteers.

Fifteen Years Ago: From the 2010 September *Enlightener*: The best vitamin for a Christian is "B1."

Ten Years Ago: With profits from our annual Rummage Sale, we were able to reupholster 304 chairs at a cost of \$8,553.

Five Years Ago: Thanks to the efforts and commitment of Brian Hutchinson, fairly traded coffee, tea, and chocolate will continue to be available for purchase each month. Even though we are not meeting in person due to the pandemic, Brian invites you to email him or send him a message via Facebook to let him know what you would like to purchase.

One Year Ago: It was in the September *Enlightener* last year that Rev. Addie announced her resignation as pastor at St. John's to accept the position of Bereavement Services Coordinator for St. Luke's University Health Network. She characterized the transition as "bittersweet" because she was somewhat heartsick about leaving our congregation but excited to experience this new opportunity.



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 signup 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 7	Jen & Matt Harp
September 14	Karen & Mark Methlie
September 21	Anne & Eric Kinsey
September 28	Ruth Kinsey

Introducing a New Feature in The *Enlightener* and St. John's Website

In this month's *Enlightener* and on our website, we are introducing a new series of articles titled "Inside the Red Doors—Stories from the St. John's Archives." As we approach St. John's 150th anniversary in 2026, we are digging deep into the church archives to connect with the stories that shaped us. John Hendricks, our Photographer and Archivist, has worked faithfully for 15 years to maintain and share important pieces of our history. Leaning on his extensive knowledge and storytelling ability, we are excited to share these artifacts and anecdotes as a way to honor the past and imagine what the next 150 years could bring.

Stories from St. John's Celebration Sunday!

On September 7th we will observe "Celebration Sunday." This is traditionally the day we return to our full calendar of activities after summer break and vacations. Did you know this tradition goes back over 100 years at St. John's?

At St. John's and most churches, starting in the 1920s, this was known as "Rally Day," a Sunday to come together after summer and build excitement for the Sunday School's upcoming year. A standout Rally Day was in September 1923 (see Reporter article on our website for full page), when 2,110 people from every church Sunday School in the borough marched together in a Rally Day parade in downtown Lansdale on a Saturday afternoon, described by The Reporter as Lansdale's "Greatest Religious Event." The parade marched to Memorial Park where there was singing (led by St. John's choir leader, M. Ellen Geller) and speeches. The next day each church held its own Rally Day, and The Reporter headline read "Reformed Show Largest Attendance," with 470 persons attending at St. John's!

Rally Day continued at St. John's for another 60+ years. One of the long-held traditions, before we became aware as "creation stewards," was a colorful "balloon release" on the front lawn following worship. The balloons had tags attached and many were returned from all over the area. When we became aware of the environmental consequences to animals and waterways after the balloons landed, this tradition purposely ended.

Looking for a new identification, in 1987 the name of the event was changed to "Celebration Sunday." (See photos on next page.) The Sunday School students were joined by congregants arriving for worship in the front courtyard. The Associate Pastor led the ceremony and the Children's Choir director would lead the crowd in singing. In 2013, the gathering moved to the new back courtyard, with crowds filling the courtyard, the ramp, and into the parking lot! Each person received a token gift reminding us of our new theme for the year.

As with many traditions, the pandemic brought changes to Celebration Sunday. In 2020, a "spread-out" event took place in our various parking lots. Since there was no return to classes or activities, Celebration Sunday was not 'celebrated' for a few years. Now we are rebuilding a full schedule of worship and activities for 2025 and beyond, with new hopes and new leadership. Come and be part of St. John's history on September 7th at 10:15 AM!





**Rally Day Headline in
The Reporter**



**St. John's Celebration Sunday
1983**



**St. John's Celebration Sunday
2000**



**St. John's Celebration Sunday
2012**

Join Us for our NEW

Monthly Community Event

Family Game Night

at St. John's UCC

Thursday, September 18th

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 old or new 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.

500 West Main St.
Lansdale, PA 19446

215-855-5489
office@st-johns-ucc.org

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





Are You Ready for the Sesquicentennial?

St. John's is ready to celebrate in 2026! It was Sunday, January 30, 1876, when a congregational meeting took place to adopt the constitution and bylaws of the church and hold the first election of officers. This date has been celebrated since as the official start of St. John's church. The first celebration took place in January 1926 for the 50th anniversary, and we have held special celebrations every 25 years since! Some of you will remember our celebrations in 2001, 1976, or even 1951!

A committee consisting of staff, church officers, council members, and other volunteers started planning for this celebration in February. More volunteers will be needed to help with the special events we have planned. The celebration will begin on Sunday, January 25, 2026, with a special worship service followed by our winter congregational dinner. We plan to invite special guests and make this a very special event! Please save the date and pray for good weather!

From February through May, we plan many special Sundays, with historical themes and fun displays during Fellowship after worship. You will be invited to participate. We will celebrate our 150-year history, our current church groups and activities, and plan and wish for the future! We want everyone to be part of the celebration!

You will also want to save the dates (and pray for good weather) for Saturday, May 30 and Sunday, May 31, 2026! That Saturday we are planning a special "Community Day" on the St. John's grounds! We are planning on having food and fun activities for children and adults and inviting the whole community to come to St. John's and join us! On Sunday, we will wrap up our special 150th celebration with a special worship service, which will include honoring our 150 years of providing music for our congregation and the community.

If you would like to volunteer to help prepare for events during the celebration, or have ideas for our celebration, please let me know. You may send me an email at archivist@st-johns-ucc.org or leave a comment in my church mailbox. Thank you, as we prepare to celebrate!

John Hendricks
St. John's 150th Anniversary Chair
St. John's Photographer and Archivist

September 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Closed for Labor Day	2	3	4	5 6 PM Lansdale First Friday	6
7 Water & Celebration Sunday 9 AM Stitchers 10:15 AM Worship	8 7 PM Council (Zoom)	9 7 PM Bobby Jo Valentine Concert	10	11 1 PM Stampers	12	13 9:30 AM Women's Retreat
14 8 AM & 10:15 AM Worship <i>Blessing of Backpacks</i>	15	16	17	18 6:30 PM Game Night	19	20
21 8 AM & 10:15 AM Worship 3 PM Rev. Linda Installation	22	23	24	25 9:30 AM <i>Enlightener</i> Folding	26	27 9 AM – 12 Mandated Reporter Training
28 8 AM & 10:15 AM Worship 2 PM Blessing of the Animals	29	30				

The Due Date for the next *Enlightener* is September 14.

St. John's Youth Group at Freddy Hill by Kay Peebles

At approximately 5:30 pm on Wednesday June 18, I get home from work. Mike, a 16-year-old I refer to as “The Teenager” in my phone, my anecdotes, and to my colleagues and friends and family, but who internally I refer to as “little brother,” is lying on his bed with an arm behind his head and his phone in his hand. This, I’ve surmised, is one of The Teenager’s four main states of being (at the gym with headphones, on the couch with Xbox controller, on a bike with friends, and in bed with phone). I announce that today, he said he would go mini golfing with the new youth group at my job. This, of course, is news to The Teenager (if you have one, you likely must remind them several times of things). This is because the average Teenager must juggle a million details that are only vaguely related to one another and it is easy to drop one or two with 999,998 more in the air, and prioritizing comes only with experience.

I sidestep his confusion and hesitation with more enticing details—free mini golf, fun with other teens, and free ice cream—and rush to get changed from work clothes to mini golf-appropriate clothes. When I return, The Teenager is standing, now in a black T-shirt that happens to match mine, his phone in his hand, and a peculiar look on his face. I recognize this look, these nerves, and try to get ahead of them with a timeworn babysitting solution: immediate and efficient distraction.

“You can bring anyone you want, as many as you want,” I say. “How about...” I list off some teens I have driven to Wawa or Wendy’s, teens whose smiles, yelling, and laughter I recognize from the pickup line at North Penn High School, the parking lots of apartment complexes, the sidewalks and back roads of Lansdale. Then I offer a trump card – a friend whose parents I am sure will say yes to a church event.

Did I mention I will drive them? I’ll go get those friends and we’ll go to Freddy Hill together, and then I’ll drive him home. Mention that Freddy Hill Farms is closing and if we don’t go now, who knows if we ever can again. Mention that it’s right now. Right, right now. That we will be on our way the second his parents say yes and there in under ten minutes. Make sure he asks his parents. What did they say? See? I told you so. Come on, let’s go, let’s go.

I have one eye on the clock. It is 6:45 and the meet-up is at 7 pm. The Teenager, his friend, and I get to Freddy Hill Farms almost fifteen minutes late. I tell them to run because Teenagers like running, but also because it helps my nerves. I am still, for now, the Cool Older Sibling. This is a title that took an entire year and a half of investment and kept promises and overzealous support and listening without judging and trying as hard as I can to understand why things are cool. I want to remain the Cool Older Sibling for my entire life and maybe have it put on my headstone or have some sort of plaque about it. Despite proof otherwise, I am certain that a single bad experience will rip my title from me like a Band-Aid. I want The Teenager and his friend to have fun. I want them to relax and be safe and make a million friends. I know I cannot force any of these things and instead just try to have fun and extend the fun I’m having to them.

The clouds are rolling and it’s hot and humid. My T-shirt sticks to my back, and I am not any good at mini golf. Luckily, no one is the Tiger Woods of Mini Golf. Mini Golf, I explain to The Teenager and his friend, is possibly one of the hardest sports ever known to humankind, but it’s a little silly, so that makes up for it. We don’t even keep score. It’s just fun.

We move through hilariously complex courses and lose balls to water, bushes, tall grass, and more water, we laugh at our failures and at each other. We watch the other teens ahead of us and the unrelated family behind us. We cheer for others and cheat just a little when we think Rev. Linda isn't looking. There are more smiles and laughter than I've seen in The Teenager for the last three months.

After we fail to get a free game at the last hole of the course, we trudge in a parade of teenagers and St. John's adults from the mini golf course to the ice cream shop. We prioritize cooling off with water as we wait in line and try to figure out the best combination of flavors, weigh the pros and cons of gummy bears vs Reece's Pieces. We talk about whether it's sprinkles or jimmies, how much chocolate is too much chocolate, waffle cone vs sugar cone.

We sit at a table with the others, and I proudly introduce The Teenager as "my little brother, Mike," to the President of Council, to Abbie and everyone, and it is not brought up that he looks nothing like me. I have never introduced him as my little brother before, but I am so so proud of him I have to. We take a group photo and we smile and wave and it feels like a wonderful beginning.

We have just left the parking lot when The Teenager turns to me and says *thank you*. "Thank you for making me do this. It was fun. So much fun. Thank you."

"Of course," I say, definitely not tearing up and absolutely holding the steering wheel like a normal, not emotional person. "I'm glad you came. Told you so." And then, as I put on the turn signal and focus on driving safely, I ask, tentatively "...so, you had fun?"

The rest of the ride is them telling me their favorite parts, about details I had seen and fretted over, about how hilarious it was losing golf balls and leaning over the water, and how good the ice cream was. How it was unbelievably hot, but the ice cream after was perfect.

For the first St. John's Youth Group Hangout, we provided a space that allowed The Teenager and his friend, fresh out of their first year of high school, to relax without thinking about drama and relationships—to just be teenagers. We were able to provide a fun break from everything going on in their busy and overwhelmingly eventful lives.

As he leaves the car, his friend makes me promise I'll invite him to the next one.





BOBBY JO VALENTINE

*Award-Winning, Heart-Opening
Queer Folk Music for Everyone*

September 9 at 7:00 pm

FREE ADMISSION!

**ST. JOHN'S UNITED
CHURCH OF CHRIST**

500 W Main St. | Lansdale, PA

.....
*"Bobby Jo has both the spirit and
songs that bring us back to believing.
Whatever our faith, he has the humor,
compassion, words, and music to
help us believe again."*

— Dar Williams

