



ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE MESSENGER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

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St. John's Website:

<https://www.stjohnsnaz.org>

Facebook Page:

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsnaz>

Worship With Us

**On the following Sundays we
will worship at 9:15 only:
December 13, 20 & 27**

Christmas Eve Worship Times

Family Service at 5:00pm

Evening Service at 7:30pm

Vigil Service at 11:00pm

Church Office Hours

THANKSGIVING

Closed Thursday, November 26

Closed Friday, November 27

CHRISTMAS

Closing early Thursday, December 24 at 12pm

Closed Friday, December 25

NEW YEAR'S

Closing early Thursday, December 31 at 12pm

Closed Friday, January 1

Normal Weekend Worship Times

Saturday:

5:30pm

Sunday:

8:00am worship

9:15am Sunday School

10:30am worship

Go to [St. John's Facebook page](#) and [YouTube channel](#) for our live stream at 10:30am every **Sunday**.

Rooted in Faith: Soul-filling Reflections

A Few Notes from Our Deacon

*"I am the church!
You are the church!
We are the church together!
All who follow Jesus, all around the world,
Yes, we're the church together!"*



As you read these words, are you hearing or singing the tune that goes with it? It's the refrain of a very well-known Sunday School and Bible School song.

The prolific creators of over 150 songs and anthems for the church, the duo Richard K. Avery and Donald S. Marsh wrote the words and tune, which was published in 1972.

*"The church is not a building;
The church is not a steeple;
The church is not a resting place;
The church is a people."*

How often do we look at our building and remark, "This is my church!"? Rather, the song asks you to think of this differently: look at the people seated around you on a Saturday night or Sunday morning and say, "**This** is my church!" And then, think beyond the familiar faces you see regularly to envision the more than 2.3 billion Christians worldwide and declare "**THIS** is my church!"

*"We're many kinds of people,
With many kinds of faces,
all colours and all ages, too
From all times and places."*

Perhaps by the time you read this, All Hallows' Eve (Halloween) will be past, and we will have remembered Saints who have gone before us. On Golden Age Weekend, we will honor those who have obtained the biblically significant age of 70 years. Thanksgiving will then be soon here and right after that will begin the season of Advent, during which we prepare once again for the coming of Love and Light into the darkened world.

Avery and Marsh also wrote one of my very favorite choir anthems, "Mary, Mary." Repeatedly, the refrain asks: "Mary, Mary, what you gonna name that baby? What you gonna call that holy baby?" In the anthem, slaves, looking for a master suggest, "Let's all call him Lord!" Tenders of sheep, needing someone to guide them say, "Let's all call him Shepherd!" The hungry and poor, in need of being saved, shout, "Let's all call him Savior!" And, in the last verse, the kings of the world say they need someone to rule them: "Let's all call him King!"

Jesus, Name above all Names, calls us once again, every day, to be **Christ's** church, **Christ's** church on **earth... his** hands and feet, **his** voice, **his** heart.

"The church is not a building..." It's US! It's YOU and ME and all the other "YOUs and MEs" of this beautiful, yet chaotic and complex world.

So, sing with me... *"I am the church, You are the church, We are the church TOGETHER!"*
Sing it each day in every season.

Your Partner in the Ministry of Music,

Patrice 



God's work. Our hands.



God's work. Our hands.



Surviving the Holidays

The holidays are challenging when you're grieving a loss.

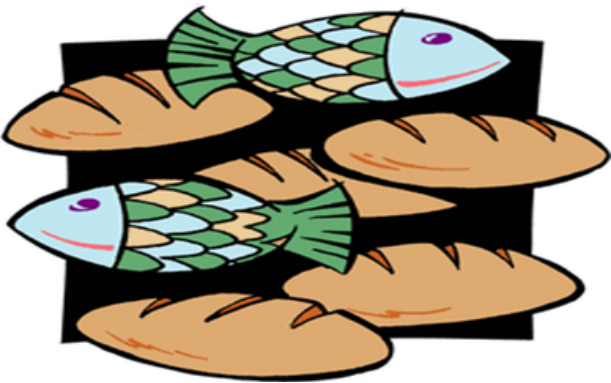
Surviving
the Holidays

provides encouragement, support, and
valuable tools to navigate the season.

Join us for this special **GriefShare Surviving the Holidays Seminar** on **Thursday, November 19 from 1:00–2:30pm** in the **Shepherd's Room**.

RSVP to the church office by calling (610) 759-3090 or email office@stjohnsnaz.org.

M.A.D. Camp



Potluck Dinner Theatre M.A.D. Camp Musical Saturday, November 7, 6:30 p.m.

Join us for St. John's own Potluck Dinner Theatre on Saturday evening, November 7, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. It's going to be an early traditional Thanksgiving dinner with turkey and gravy provided, so bring your favorite side dish or dessert to add to the table.

After the meal, we'll sit back and relax as our own St. John's talented young actors and actresses take the stage for the Music, Art, and Drama Camp production of "A Table for Five...Thousand." The musical is an amusing and delightful retelling of the story of Jesus feeding the multitude. Filled with humor, upbeat songs, and a meaningful message, the musical is bound to provide an evening of fun and entertainment. If you can't make it to opening night, join us for a repeat performance during Sunday School the next morning.

It's not too late to sign up! **RSVP due on Thursday, November 4th.**

Sign-up for St. John's POTLUCK DINNER THEATRE

Saturday, November 7, 6:30 p.m.

Name: _____

of adults: _____ # of children: _____

Return to the church office or call (610) 759-3090 to save your spot!

Grief Support Group

Wednesdays 1-3PM, Parlor
Through November 18, 2026
Contact Bonnie Jablonski, Nancy Carhart,
Pastor Scott or Pastor Jennifer



A welcoming group that provides help and encouragement after the death of a loved one.

At a GriefShare group, you'll find understanding, guidance, relief and a safe place to navigate the challenges of grief.
Come join us!

griefshare.org

Congregational Meeting for Council Elections

In accordance with the church constitution and bylaws, a Congregational Meeting will be held **following all worship services on the weekend of November 21-22, 2026** for the purpose of electing Church Council representatives for terms beginning in the year 2027. Bios of the nominees will be posted in the Shepherd's Room and copies made available in the back of the Sanctuary the week prior to the meeting.

Weekly Bible Study

Wednesday 6:15pm Bible Study
Class meets on November 11 & 18,
December 2 & 16
Images of God in Song

One of our pastors will lead this class as we encounter the expansive images for God which abound in the church's songs. We will discuss both contemporary and historic hymn texts and images, where those images appear in scripture and Christian tradition, and how these images may influence our faith. We might even sing a song or two together!

Wednesday 11:30am Bible Study
Midweek Renewal with Wednesday in The Word.

Our 2026/2027 Bible Study Season continues in November with **Forgiveness: The Cycle of Grace**. Bring a friend and your questions. If there is something about the Bible that you have always wondered about, it could be the topic of our next study! All are invited to join us at 11:30 every Wednesday in Fellowship Hall. Last year's studies included: *I Have Called You "Friends;" Breath, Wind, & Fire: Feeling the Holy Spirit; and God's Creation: His Glory. Our Duty*. See you next **Wednesday!**

Seeking Volunteers!

Each year on the Friday after Thanksgiving, a small group of people get together to put up the giant Christmas tree and hang wreaths around the church. Our current team of volunteers is getting older and therefore seeking some assistance! **Are you an able-bodied person that can serve for a few hours on Friday, November 27 to help with these projects?** If so, please reach out to Dave Kremer (Head Sexton) or talk to Pastor Scott or Janice Butz. A similar group of able-bodied people will be needed to take down all of the decorations in the new year.

Sunday Morning Forums

On **Sunday, November 22 @ 9:15am**, representatives from three local animal rescue organizations will join us to share information about animal rescue and the many ways people can help animals in need. We will hear from **The Center for Animal Health & Welfare, Brindle Buddies, and Foxy's Cradle**. Whether or not you are able to **adopt or foster**, there are many other ways to support the important work these organizations do in our community. Come and learn about volunteering at a rescue location or how to help with events and other rescue work.

On **Sunday, December 6, Melissa Hahn Davis**, owner of **Yoga Adventures LLC**, will join us to share more about **yoga and mindfulness**. As a certified yoga instructor, Melissa provides gentle yoga for all ages and experience levels, incorporating mindfulness, sound therapy, aromatherapy, and modified yoga poses for individuals and families. Benefits can include improved mental and physical well-being, increased focus, stress reduction, and emotional regulation.

Yoga Adventures has worked with groups including Women of the ELCA, Nazareth Area School District Blue Eagle Swim Teams, Lehigh Valley Zoo, Scouting America, families with dogs, and regional corporations. You can also find Yoga Adventures on Facebook and Instagram. Join us on **December 6 @ 9:15am** to learn more about yoga and mindfulness.

WELCA



Women's Ministries at St. John's are for all ages and offer friendship, fellowship and support (and snacks). At St. John's, we currently have two Women's Bible Study Circles – the Rebekah Circle and the Ruth Circle.

Rebekah Circle meets the first Monday of each month in the Shepherd's Room at 7:00pm. Upcoming dates are:
November 2nd
December 7th

Ruth Circle meets the first Wednesday of each month at the Lois Morris Household at 9:30am (409 S. Main St, Nazareth). Upcoming dates are:
November 4th
December 2nd

Please know, you are always invited, always welcome!

We invite you to join us for a Bible study – just to meet some amazing women, receive a little balm for your soul, or partake in some delicious snacks. Come once or come all the time, you are always welcome!



Card Shower for Anna Meck

Help us celebrate **Anna Meck's 101st birthday** on **November 16** with a card shower! Members of the congregation are invited to send Anna a birthday card and help fill her special day with warm wishes from her St. John's family.

Cards may be sent to:

Anna Meck
1488 Upstream Farm Rd #93
Bethlehem, PA 18040



Homebound Birthdays

Let's spread some joy to our homebound friends who are celebrating birthdays in the coming months.

November 03

Roy Roth

4323 Chetwin Ter
Easton, PA 18045

November 25

Ernest Hahn

427 Bank St
Nazareth, PA 18064

December 10

Joe Grim

183 Milton Ln
Saylorsburg, PA 18353

December 26

Connie

Lichtenwalner

5526 Grace Ave
Bethlehem, PA 18017

G.R.O.W. Together!

Gathered families Reflecting on the Wonder of God

Sunday, November 15

9:15 AM

Fellowship Hall

Sunday School is GROWing, and we're growing together! Join us for G.R.O.W., a special Sunday School experience where children and families come together to share food, fellowship, fun, and faith!

Parents and families have the opportunity to join their children for a chance to experience Sunday School together, explore the wonder of God, and discover new ways to grow in faith as a family. It's a chance to learn, laugh, and make memories together!

All Sunday School children and their families are encouraged to attend!

Come G.R.O.W. with us!

Ladies Society to be Honored

After more than 100 years, the Ladies Aid Society has decided to conclude this ministry. Over the century, they have met to quilt tops that have been provided for them and made entire quilts. Charging a fee for each foot of thread to complete the quilt, the Ladies Aid Society raised funds to provide for special needs of the church. They have provided items such as paraments, linens used at the altar, pulpit Bibles, and lectionary books for use in worship.

On Sunday, December 6, at the 10:30am service we will celebrate this ministry and the women (and some men from time to time) who did this faithful work.

Worship Services



December 5-6: Second Sunday in Advent weekend
December 12-13: Lessons and Carols weekend (Sunday 9:15am only)
December 19: Blue Christmas Worship, 5:30pm
December 20: Sunday School Christmas Program (9:15am only)
December 24: Christmas Eve Worship services at 5:00pm, 7:30pm, and 11:00pm
December 26-27: First Sunday after Christmas weekend (Sunday 9:15am only)

Seasonal Decorations Dedications

*If you would like to contribute to the cost of Seasonal Decorations, including Poinsettias in the nave for the Christmas season, please complete this form and place it in the offering plate or return it to the Church Office. The cost is **\$12.00 per dedication**. Money must accompany the sponsor form. Make checks payable to St. John's Lutheran Church and please put "Seasonal Decorations" in the memo line.*

Please print clearly, One donation per \$12 dedication

Your Name: _____

Phone: _____

Number of Dedications (at **\$12.00 each**) _____ Total Amount Enclosed _____

*Dedications must be received in the Church Office **no later than Friday, December 4, 2026.***

Check In Honor	One In Memory	DEDICATED TO <i>(Please PRINT the dedication as you want it to appear in the bulletin)</i>	DEDICATED BY (FROM)

***After the expense of the decorations are covered, the excess funds are given to ELCA World Hunger and St. John's Memorial Fund.**

Children, Youth & Family Ministries

St. John's Family & Youth Events for November/December!

Join us for faith, fun, and friendship all winter long!

November 7-8: This year's M.A.D. Camp musical will be performed by the hardworking children and youth on November 7 and 8. See announcement for more details. Don't miss it!

November 15: Join us for G.R.O.W., a special Sunday School experience where children and families come together to share food, fellowship, fun, and faith! (See page 7 for more information.)

November 18: Christmas Gift Making: The Confirmation and SHYG students will be making gifts for our homebound parishioners on Wednesday night at 6:15 pm.

December 19: Sunday School's Christmas Program rehearsal: All students - 8:30 am - 10:30 am in the Sanctuary.

December 19: Christmas Extravaganza: Immediately following the Sunday School Christmas Program rehearsal, **children 3 and up are invited to enjoy a Christmas Extravaganza** from 10:30 am - 1:00 pm in the Fellowship Hall (children under the age of 3 are welcome to attend with a parent). There will be elves, games, crafts, food, treats, gifts, and a **very special guest...** all the way from the North Pole! **Parents, feel free to use this time to get your last minute Christmas shopping done!** For more information and to register, go to this link and fill out the form by December 13: bit.ly/4y3zrNv

December 20: Sunday School's Christmas Worship Program 9:15 am in the Sanctuary.

A Look Ahead...

January 8-10: Bear Creek Winter Camp CONNECT for 4-12 graders. Check out bearcreekcamp.org/winter-camp for more info.

January 10: The Three Kings will be making a visit at all church services and during Sunday School for Epiphany.

January 29-30: Lock In: The annual youth lock in will take place from Friday, January 29 - Saturday, January 30. This is an overnight event for anyone in 7-12 grades that will begin on Friday at 6:30 pm and end after breakfast on Saturday at 9:00 am. Cost is \$5/person. Bring friends!

Oh, the Places Flat SJ Goes!

Flat SJ has been busy! He visited **Elsie Frey** with Jim Frey and others, traveled to **Ontario, Canada** with Rev. David and Deacon Patrice, made it all the way to the **Vatican** with Terry & Andy Herbster, and hit the trails at **Mt. Tammany in the Delaware Water Gap** with Benjamin and Abigail Vail. Mark and Cindy Aloise also took Flat SJ along on a special **40th anniversary trip to Massachusetts**, including stops in South Weymouth and Salem.



Congregation Wide Potluck & Holiday Trivia

Wednesday, December 9 @ 6:00pm in the Fellowship Hall

Join us for an evening of fellowship, food, Christmas music, and multi-generational trivia! We'll gather with our confirmation students to share stories, laughter, and a little friendly competition with some fun, brain-teasing holiday trivia. Families of all shapes and sizes are invited to attend!

A main dish will be provided by the church, along with tableware and drinks including tea, water, and lemonade. Please bring a dish to share. There is no need to sign up - just come, eat, enjoy some Christmas conversation, sing a few carols and hymns, and test your holiday knowledge!

Questions about the trivia? Contact Linda Kasmakites at 484-707-5180.

Blue Christmas Service

Saturday, December 19, 5:30pm

For some people, the Christmas Season can trigger feelings of sadness, depression and loneliness as they are reminded of the losses they have suffered. We will reach out to those in our community who are hurting by holding what is called the Blue Christmas Service in place of our Saturday evening service on **December 19**. We will read and listen to Scripture, join together in prayer, light the candles on the Advent Wreath and have quiet time for reflection and contemplation.

As we invite others in the Nazareth area to join us for this service, we encourage you to invite anyone who may find comfort joining with others to help them through the season or who may be looking for a meaningful way to prepare for Christmas through prayer and reflection.

Christmas Eve Services

All three evening services include Christmas carols, candlelight, holy communion and the sanctuary decorated in all its grandeur. Come to the worship service that is right for you and your family.

The Family Christmas Eve Service at 5:00pm is designed for families with children. The service includes a prelude by an Instrumental Ensemble, the reading of the Christmas story, anthems by the Creation, Celebration, and Chalice Choirs, and the children's Christmas message.

The Evening Christmas Eve Service at 7:30pm is preceded by 30 minutes of special music. The Philethia Choir provides the choral music. The Handbell Choir and brass ensemble will also play.

The Vigil Christmas Eve Service at 11:00pm keeps vigil as we await the birth of Jesus Christ our Lord. The Chancel Choir, harp, violin, and brass provide the inspirational music 30 minutes before the service and during the service as well.

ADDITIONAL PARKING FOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

Arrangements have been made for parking during Christmas Eve services at Brian's Professional Cleaning Services parking lot on Broad Street, Visionistas parking lot at the corner of Spruce and Walnut Streets, and Main Street Garage parking on Main and Prospect Streets.

Annual Christmas Ingathering

The Annual Christmas Ingathering of the Northern Lehigh Valley Mission District (collaboration with 12 other churches) will be held at **Union Lutheran Church, Schnecksville on Thursday, December 3, 2026 at 10:00am.** Which means now is the time to begin our collection in hopes of providing a gift of love for people in our area.

The institutions to receive gifts for Christmas 2026 are as follows: Gracedale Nursing Home, Sayre Child Center, KidsPeace, Allentown Rescue Mission, Ripple Community Center, YMCA Warming Center in Allentown, and Moms of Military Program (**collecting for care packages for veterans in nursing homes**) in partnership with the Lehigh Valley Military Affairs Council.

Your monetary gifts given through the November "Special Offering" envelope will be used to purchase items for Kids Peace. This includes the four gifts our church will give to specific children who are residents, as well as Rice Krispie Treats and Chapstick that will be placed in the 200 gift bags provided for the children.

Below you will find the collection list for the people served by these institutions. **Donation boxes will be available from November 1st through December 2nd in the Fellowship Hall.**

We sincerely thank you for your generosity in helping to create a joyous Christmas for these people in need of our ministry!

Ingathering Wish Lists

Children:

Bibs, colored pencils, construction paper, coloring books, washable markers, toddler size forks & spoons, puzzle books, drawing paper, crayons, brushes and combs, squish mallows, deodorant, flavored chapstick, LEGO sets/bricks.

Women:

Shampoo, shower gel, brushes, combs, deodorant, lotion, change purses/wallets, travel size deodorant, crew socks (black), low ankle socks, conditioner, hand cream, shaving cream.

Men:

Individually wrapped combs, disposable razors, shaving cream, shower gel (no bar soap), deodorant, travel size deodorant, double tough crew socks (white), shampoo, tag-free cotton briefs (M-XL).

All ages:

Scarfs, hats, mittens or gloves, large print puzzle books (no crosswords or sudoku), toothpaste, adult coloring books, pens, crayons, writing paper, toothbrushes (adult).

Misc:

Toilet paper, paper towels, tissues, trash bags (45 or 55 gal), batteries (AA, AAA, D), flash lights with batteries, ChapStick, wrapping paper, paint and paint brushes, sketch pads, gift cards (supermarkets, Target, Walmart, iTunes), wash clothes, handwarmers, all purpose cleaner.

Foods:

Tea bags, hot chocolate packets, canned chicken, canned tuna, granola and cereal bars, coffee, coffee mate creamer, disposable 12 oz coffee cups with lids & sleeves, hard candies, salad dressing, instant oatmeal packets, individually wrapped cookies, ramen noodle cups, and mac and cheese.

Travel Size:

Soap, shaving cream, toothpaste, hair spray, tissues, baby powder, Q-tips, cottonballs, shampoo, conditioner, hand cream.

Winter Camp



Have a blast at Bear Creek Camp in the Winter! Come together with camp friends to experience unique activities we can only do when the temperatures drop (and hope the snow falls!)

Winter Camp is January 8 -10, 2027 (Friday Evening - Sunday Lunch) for those in **4th Grade - 12th Grade**.

Whether you are a long-time BCC summer camper or want to get your first overnight experience at camp, this is an amazing weekend for fun, friendship, and faith connections.

Bear Creek Camp college-aged summer staff return to camp to lead activities and supervise campers throughout the weekend.

Winter Connect campers will reside in the Retreat Center (4th – 8th grades) and our East Site Cabins (9th – 12th grades). The Retreat Center has a bathroom facility located inside each cabin. East Site has a nearby bathroom facility in the Program Building.

Weekend pricing is \$160/per person for a 2-night stay, 5 meals (Saturday breakfast through Sunday lunch), and programming. **St. John's offers financial assistance.** For the discount code and registration questions, contact St. John's BCC Ambassador Michele Seaton at kmskd@verizon.net.

Register [HERE](https://bearcreekcamp.org/winter-camp) by December 23, 2026
<https://bearcreekcamp.org/winter-camp>



Well Done Church!

Thank you for your support of Pastor Vilmer Paul and his wife Sarah from Heavenly Brightness Ministries in Cap-Haitien, Haiti. Pastor Vilmer preached at St. John's the weekend of August 15-16. Many of you were moved to share of your generosity, which resulted in \$829 sent to Resource Haiti to support the ministry of Pastor Vilmer's school. An Additional \$1,000 was provided from our YEO Endowment!



Thank You

Card of Thanks to St. John's congregation from Melissa and Larry Jones:

We so appreciate all who supported both of us during Melissa's heart surgery and extended recovery. Our heartfelt thanks go out to everyone for their many prayers, cards, phone conversations, meals, and visits. The continual encouragement provided a solid grounding that enabled both of us to move through difficult days and nights with the confidence that better days were ahead. It is a blessing to be part of such a caring church community. Thanks be to God!



Dear St. John's,
Thank you for your gift of \$792.93 to ELCA World Hunger. Your gifts to the ministries of the ELCA help people around the world feel the power and hope that flow from God's full, boundless love. Your generosity is providing access to clean water, health care, agriculture, livestock and education, and it advances peace and justice for all people. Thank you for your gracious gifts. You make God's love real!

With gratitude,
The Rev. Daniel Rift
Director, Congregational Generosity

Dear Pastor Hall & St. John's,
We thank you, the Vacation Bible School friends, and the entire congregation for collecting and assembling over 200 Birthday kits for our clients! Birthday kits are given out to celebrate the Food Bank's "birthday" every September, and they are a wonderful and fun extra treat for our clients to celebrate the birthday of someone in their family. The additional \$896 from the congregation and the Endowment Trustees is especially generous and helps us continue to provide our clients with much needed nonperishable food and household essentials each month. We truly appreciate the outreach and compassion of your congregation.

Our Food Bank functions entirely by the efforts of our dedicated volunteers, and we rely on the kindness of churches like yours to assist us in our mission to feed the hungry families here in the Nazareth area. The need for our services continues and we truly appreciate your ongoing support. We consider every gift from you among the Food Bank's many blessings.

Nancy Madara
President



College Planning Help

College planning can be hard and confusing. We are very lucky to have a member, Dennis Kelly (husband of Susan Kelly), who is knowledgeable in this field and is offering his services to help.

Dennis M. Kelly is a nationally recognized higher education consultant who specializes in recruitment and retention best practices among universities and colleges. He has presented nationally on topics that include affordability, accessibility, scholarship, and persistence to graduation. Dennis has received numerous awards, which include commendations from the White House and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Dennis has volunteered to speak with any St. John's families who have students planning to attend college directly after high school, transfer to another college, are or have served in the military, or anyone who desires to start as an adult learner.

Interested families can schedule to speak to Dennis by emailing him directly at 2018oc@gmail.com. Please include your cell phone number in your email.

Meet Eric Harding

Hello, St. John's! My name is **Eric Harding**, and I recently joined the **St. John's staff as Administrative Assistant**. I'm excited to be here and have enjoyed beginning to learn more about the congregation, the many ministries of St. John's, and the people who make them possible.

My wife, Amanda, and I have five children, so life at home is rarely quiet! Outside of work, I enjoy technology, photography, 3D printing, and spending time with my family. I'm also very involved in Scouting and enjoy volunteering in our local community.

My professional background includes administration, technology, communications, and problem-solving; which means I'm usually happiest when there is something to organize, create, fix, or figure out.

I'm grateful for the warm welcome I've already received and look forward to getting to know more of you in the weeks and months ahead. **If you're in the building, please stop by the office and say hello!**



Nazareth Area Food Bank

Suggested food items for November & December are:

- tissues
- toilet paper
- paper towels

Peanut butter and jelly are always welcome.

Please note that the NAFB receives many food donations from **Scouting for Food** in November, so be looking for their flyers to participate!



Donations can be dropped off in the fellowship hall. The last day for accepting donations is **December 20, 2026** until the spring of 2027. During the winter months the NAFB distributes only gift cards to clients. Checks should be made payable to: **The Nazareth Area Food Bank** and mailed to: PO Box 178, Nazareth, PA 18064.



Thank you for your continued support of the NAFB!

Love-A-Lot Preschool

We had our first day of school for both classes in September and they were amazing. The PreK kids came back and fell right into routine – it's kind of like they never left! We spent the first days of school playing and talking about what we did over the summer. All the children brought in an "All About Me" page that we are making into a class book. It's one of our favorite projects of the whole year because the children love to look at their family and tell us about them, plus parents get to see how their children have changed over the course of a year (or two).

October is jam packed full of fun activities. We look forward to meeting our local firefighters, playing in our Firefighter dramatic play area, taking our annual trip to Juniperdale Farms, and having Pumpkin Carving night with a special guy in our lives! We are rockin' the new school year and will continue to do so, because, as Pete the Cat would say – "It's alllll good!"

If you are interested in enrolling your child in our Preschool or Pre-K program, please contact us directly for more information. We have spots open for the current school year, and registration is open for the 2027-2028 school year! For more information, please contact the school by phone (484-293-0720) or email (lovealotnazareth@gmail.com)

St. John's Daycare

The 2026-2027 school year has been amazing so far! We had fun learning about our new friends in September, and the 4 different seasons in October. In November, we will be talking about our 5 senses, and in December we will be learning about the Holidays. We are looking forward to our Thanksgiving Friendship parties, and our Christmas Pageant and Art Show in December. Do not forget, if you would like more information about the daycare center, please reach out via email to nazareth.stjohns@gmail.com

With Gratitude

We give thanks for the many volunteers who generously gave their time to help keep the church office running smoothly during the transition in our Administrative Assistant staff position. Your willingness to step in, answer phones, assist visitors, handle office tasks, and simply be present when needed was a tremendous help. We are deeply grateful for your time, flexibility, and service to St. John's.

A special thank you to **Annie Bickert, Louise Kroboth, Sharon Werner, Joyce Wallace, Joanne Wagner, Karlene Kipp, Adrienne Grier, Lynn Gilmore, and Scott Himler**, who served in the office during this transition.

We also thank those who volunteered and were scheduled to help but whose assistance was ultimately not needed: **Terri Herbster, Sharon Wasmer, Sue Roth, Beth Miller, Mary Hillenbrenner, Cindy Pauckovitch, Bonnie Jablonski, and Jackie Wolf**. We have all your names in the list and will call upon you in the future!

Pastoral Acts

Baptisms

We rejoice with those who have been welcomed into the body of Christ through Holy Baptism:

KENNEDY RUTH BYDELEY

Daughter of Nathan & Meaghan ByDeLey

Born: February 19, 2026

Baptized: September 20, 2026

JOHN MICHAEL WYCKOFF

Son of John & Rachel Wyckoff

Born: March 13, 2026

Baptized: October 3, 2026

Confirmands

We give thanks for the 9th graders that were confirmed on Sunday, October 25th:

2026 Confirmands

Brynlee ViEve Fox

Mason James Newton

Jameson Ash Reuter

Lynzie Paige Schneck

Cassidy Sage Shoup

Lucas Grayson Smith

Rylee Nicole Smith

Natalie Taylor Stoudt

With Sympathy

Our heartfelt Christian sympathy goes out to the families and friends of the following members and friends of St. John's who passed into eternal life:

KAREN ELIZABETH MILLER-THOMAS

August 7, 2026

DIANA WASEM

August 15, 2026

JUNE A. HILBERT

August 31, 2026

MICHAEL "MIKE" TRIPP

September 4, 2026

New Members

We extended a warm welcome to the following new members received on September 26.

RYAN & MAKAYLA TRITTENBACH

(JOSIE & GRADY)

BOB & TERRY WESTING

Memorial Gifts

JUNE HILBERT

Karen Curtis

Dorothy & Louann Danner

Krista & William Hontz

David & Michele Ifkovits

Linda Michael

Roy & Gloria Roth

DORIS PIZZUTO

Patricia & Stan Keleman

Roy & Gloria Roth

St. John's Chancel Choir

Weddings

ASHLEY FAITH BREault

&

MEKHAIEL "MIKE" TATARSKY

August 22, 2026

Income & Expenses

Current Expenses and Benevolence Income & Expenses through September 2026

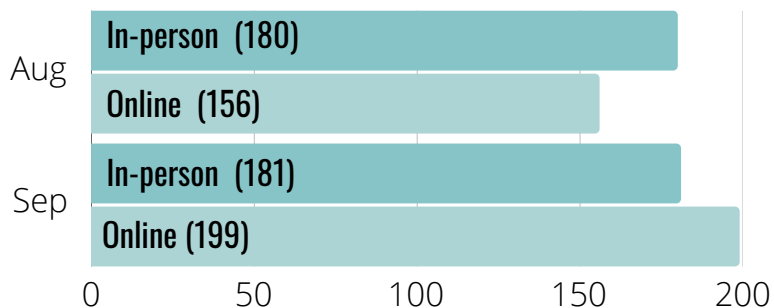
Income	Year to Date	Prior YTD	Budget YTD
Contributions	\$503,011	\$377,299	\$493,150
Apt. Rent & Interest	\$32,829	\$32,671	\$32,790
Total	\$535,840	\$409,970	\$525,940
Expenses			
Staff	\$383,694	\$373,607	\$393,902
Buildings/Programs	\$151,797	\$119,103	\$130,653
Total	\$535,491	\$492,710	\$524,555
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$349	(\$82,740)	\$1,385

We have a modest surplus! This is only because a family remembered the church in their will and left us a generous bequest. Have you remembered the church in your will?

The chart above shows that contributions have exceeded expenses leaving a **surplus of \$349** through September of 2026. **We are relying on your contributions for the rest of the year to end with a surplus.**

Current Expenses and Benevolence, funded through your tithes and offerings, are used for staff salaries and benefits and day-to-day operations. The benevolence (budgeted at \$20,000 for the year) is the money sent to the Northeastern PA Synod of the ELCA. Other funds held by the church such as our endowment, improvement and memorial funds are restricted by bylaws and cannot be used for Current Expenses and Benevolence. **Let's support our valued staff who are leading us in vitality and growth!**

Average Worship Attendance



Special Offering



NOVEMBER:
INGATHERING

DECEMBER:
CHRISTMAS

Scan the QR code to donate online.

Church Council Minutes & Highlights

Below you will find some highlights from the most recent meeting(s) of the church council. Please click [here](#) (or request a copy from the church office) for a complete copy of the approved minutes from the meeting in August, 2026.

- The Eucharistic Ministry Team is updating their homebound list and hoping to visit members once/month. If you have someone you would like to add to the homebound visitation list, please contact Pastor Scott or Jackie Wolf.
- All Committee Night and the Fall Kick-off Ministry Fair were great opportunities to dive deeper into our core values and share the work we do as God's hands and feet in the community.
- An Emergency Action Plan has been drafted and is under review by the council. This is a preparedness plan in case of a fire, medical emergency or active killer. More information will be made available to the congregation in the coming months.
- The Personnel Committee has been interviewing candidates for the Administrative Assistant position.
- Several property projects have been completed around the building: repair and painting the fellowship hall ceiling, outdoor conduit installed for the split AC system for choir room/upper room, excess items cleaned up and removed, and new carpet area in infant daycare room.
- Council approved 9:15am services for December 13, 20 & 27.
- Council approved all evening Lenten and Holy Week worship services to begin at 7:00pm. This includes Ash Wednesday, mid-week Lenten services, Maundy Thursday, and Good Friday.
- Council affirmed an Eagle Scout Project for Troy Smith to brighten up and provide cubbies for the Love-a-Lot lobby area.
- Council affirmed the pastors moving forward to apply for a Clergy Renewal Program (sabbatical) Grant to take place in the summer of 2028. This is a Lilly Endowment grant that supports funds for both the sabbatical and the congregation's expenses for pulpit supply and pastoral care. More information will be presented to the congregation at a January Round Table Discussion as well as at the Annual Meeting.
- The church did not receive a Bell Tower grant for the repair project. We will still move forward with the work as it is fully funded through the Capital Campaign funds (account has about \$300,000, the project will cost around \$275,000).
- A water bottle initiative will begin soon. We seek to stop purchasing single-use plastic water bottles for events at the church. An anonymous donor is supporting the installation of a water bottle station to replace the water fountain in the bathroom hallway.
- Council discussed and decided against robing as members assist with communion distribution.

Do You Still Need Offering Envelopes?

If you are giving to the church electronically through St. John's giving portal or your bank and no longer need offering envelopes, please contact Bonnie Mertz at 610-759-3090 ext. 102 or finance@stjohnsnaz.org.

- You can give through your bank by using your online banking bill pay feature. This avoids any fees being charged to the church.
- You can also give through our online giving portal at stjohnsnaz.org/donate. Please elect to cover the fee when donating through our portal.

Thank you for your continued faithful stewardship!

St. John's Staff

Contact Us

200 S. Broad Street, Nazareth PA

Church Office: 610-759-3090 (See church extensions below)

Fax: 610-759-3719 **Email:** Office@stjohnsnaz.org **Website:** www.stjohnsnaz.org

Church Staff	Email Address	Telephone	Church EXT.
Pastor of Stewardship: Rev. Scott A. Hall	prhall@stjohnsnaz.org	412-656-6436	103
Pastor of Discipleship: Rev. Jennifer Hall	prjennhall@stjohnsnaz.org	512-626-8238	101
Minister of Music: Rev. Janice I. Butz	jbutz@stjohnsnaz.org	610-759-3090	105
Director of Children, Youth & Family Ministries: Jaime L. Taylor	jtaylor@stjohnsnaz.org	610-759-3090	107
Assist. Organist/Choir Director: Deacon Patrice A. Kidd	pakidd58@gmail.com	610-349-0506	104
Parish Administrative Assistant: Eric Harding	office@stjohnsnaz.org	610-759-3090	100
Parish Financial Secretary: Bonnie Mertz	finance@stjohnsnaz.org	610-759-3090	102
Property Manager: Dave Kremer Sextons: Raymond Fogel, Bruce Knecht	sextons@stjohnsnaz.org	610-759-3090	N/A
Love-A-Lot Director: Andrea Miller	LoveALotNurserySchool@yahoo.com	484-293-0720	N/A
St. John's Daycare Director: Carly Fantauzzi-Quinones	nazareth.stjohns@gmail.com	610-759-4999	N/A

Church Office Hours

Monday through Friday, 9:00am - 2:00pm

- If you have had a change of mailing address, email address, and/or phone number, please notify the church office at **office@stjohnsnaz.org** or **610-759-3090 ext. 100**. Please help us keep you informed and avoid charges from the post office for returned mail.
- **The deadline for all submissions for the 2027 January/February issue of The Messenger is December 3, 2026.** Please email your article or announcements to **office@stjohnsnaz.org**. Thank you!