

# ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

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## 2023 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CONGREGATION

### STATEMENT OF MISSION

**God's Purpose for St. John's is**  
to GROW in relationship with Christ  
to GO share God's love and serve others.

#### Guiding Principles

1. We believe that Jesus is Lord and Savior.
2. We gather weekly to praise and thank God and to be strengthened by God for the week ahead.
3. We serve others as an expression of God's love for all.
4. We invite all people to join us to learn about and to serve God.
5. We ask God to help us adapt to change because it is a constant in our lives.
6. We are family (with all that that entails).

2023

**ST. JOHN’S LUTHERAN CHURCH**  
501 Chestnut Street • Emmaus, PA  
**ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
January 28, 2024 11:45 am

2023

**CHURCH STAFF**

Pastor..... The Rev. William Maxon  
Music Ministry Director..... Timothy M. Ginder  
Preschool Director..... Denise Mill  
Preschool Teacher Assistant..... Terri Allender  
Office Administrator ..... Rebecca Williams  
Bookkeeper ..... Anna Galante  
Custodian..... Brian P. Dunton  
Pastor Emeritus ..... The Rev. Fred S. Foerster

**2023 OFFICERS OF THE CONGREGATION**

President..... Elise Spayd  
Vice President..... William Lake  
Secretary..... Brad Albright  
Treasurer..... James Rotherham

**2023 CONGREGATION COUNCIL**

Member Term expires in January of

Sandra Farkas.....2024  
Jane Harps.....2024  
Cheryl Kraemer.....2024  
Myron Yoder.....,2024

John Ashcraft.....2025  
Stacy Kemmerer.....2025  
William Lake.....2025  
Elise Spayd.....2025\*

Brad Albright.....2026\*  
Peg Duelfer.....2026\*

Rebecca Crilley.....2027  
Kevin Schmidt.....2027

# ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Emmaus, Pennsylvania

January 29, 2023

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Meeting Attendance: 58

Welcome: Elise Spayd, Council President, welcomed everyone to St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting. Elise called the meeting to order at 11:48 a.m.

Devotions: Pastor Jeff led the opening devotion.

The headcount of those members present was 58. This number constitutes a quorum under the constitution. (Quorum = 7% of voting members, CCC of 200 (those who communed and contributed) = 14 persons required). The meeting was held in-person, with a Zoom option as well.

Elise presented the minutes of the Annual Congregational Meeting held January 30, 2022 as printed on pages 1 – 3. There were no additions, deletions, or corrections. The minutes were approved as printed.

A motion was made to accept the Reports of Pastor Jeff as printed on page 4 – 5 by Kathy Mintzer and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried.

A motion was made to accept the Tim Ginder's Report of Music Ministry Director as printed on page 6 by Elise Spayd and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: Report of Council President as printed on pages 7 – 8, Report of Congregation Council Secretary as printed on page 9, Report of St. John's Membership for the year ending December 31, 2022 as printed on pages 10 – 12, Memorial Fund Receipts as printed on page 13, and Financial Reports as printed on pages F1 – F6 which include A Balance Sheet, An Investments Summary, The Statement of Income and Expenses for the Current / Property Fund, The Statement of Income and Expenses for the Endowment / Memorial Fund, The Statement of Income and Expense for the Preschool, and The Balances for Dedicated Funds. A motion to accept the reports was made by Kathy Mintzer and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried. All financial reports will be accepted pending the annual audit.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: Worship and Music Committee as printed on page 14; Acolytes, Advent Wreath Readers and Lighters and Altar Guild as printed on page 15; Communion Assistants, Eucharistic Ministers, Gift Presenters, and Lectors as reported on page 16; Prayer Chain as reported on page 17; Christian Education Committee as reported on pages 18-19; Bear Creek Camp as reported on page 20; Preschool Committee as reported on page 21; Property Committee as reported on page 22; Organ Committee as reported on page 23; Mutual Ministry Committee as reported on page 24; GIFT / Parish Life Committee as reported on page 25; People Over Fifty as reported on page 26; Stewardship as reported on page 27; Support the Troops as reported on page 28; Outreach Committee on pages 29-30; Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank Volunteers and Knitting for Charity as reported on page 31; Finance Committee as reported on page 32; Audit Committee as reported on page 32;

Endowment Funds Disbursement Committee as reported on page 33; and St. John's Christian Preschool Director on page 34. A motion to accept the reports as printed was made by Kathy Mintzer and seconded by Dave LaMotte. The motion carried.

The following reports were presented and acted upon as a block: St. John's Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery Association as printed on page 35. A motion to accept the reports as printed was made by Dave LaMotte and seconded by Kathy Mintzer. The motion carried.

Unfinished Business: None

New Business:

**Nomination for Congregation Council:** Marlea McAdoo is the outgoing member. Elise thanked her for her service on Council. There were no preselected nominees for Congregation Council. Elise Spayd opened nominations from the floor. Alanna Kemmerer (youth representative) and Rebecca Crilley were nominated by Cheryl Kraemer. Kevin Schmidt was nominated by Bill Lake. Elise Spayd moved to close nominations. Cheryl Kraemer seconded the motion. The motion carried. Elise Spayd moved to accept the additional nominations, and Kathy Mintzer seconded the motion. The slate of nominees passed. The slate of council members was declared elected. They will serve a three-year term. This constitutes a fourteen-member Council.

**Proposed Budget for the Work on Ministry in 2023:** The proposed 2023 budget is presented by the Finance Chairman Annette Roth, Treasurer Jim Rotherham and the Finance Committee members. The budget is presented on pages B1 – B5 of the Annual Report. Discussion was had about state of the finances. The budget for 2023 has a deficit of approximately \$33,632.00.

The Budget Proposal comes as a recommendation from the Congregation Council and therefore does not need a motion. The 2023 Budget is adopted as presented.

Good of the Church:

In appreciation of their faithful work of ministry in daily life and in the life and mission of St. John's Elise Spayd thanked the following people who have helped accomplish God's work at St. John's this past year: everyone who helped prepare and serve the meal for this year; Ron Schuler, Brian Dunton and Eric Serfass for their work on the boiler; the Staff, Congregation Council, Volunteers, Committee Chairs and Members, all the Members of St. John's.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:13 am with a closing benediction from Pastor Jeff.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brad Albright  
Council Secretary

## Pastor Jeffrey S. Carstens

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I compose this letter for St. John's 2023 Annual Report, the year is just over halfway through. It is summertime, and vacations, summer camps, and Vacation Bible School are all in full swing. It seems an unusual time to look back and reflect on the year.

And yet, reflecting back on the first half of 2023, I am filled with a sense of peace and joy over the ministry we have accomplished and the Lord's work we've done together. As of this writing, it has been my privilege to be able to perform the following pastoral acts:

### Confirmations

Maya Ann Crilley  
Tessa Lynn Kemmerer  
Joelle Grace Killino  
Ryland Noah Means  
Madison Nicole Rzonca  
Robert John Snyder

### First Communion

Avery Becker  
Avery Berner  
Izabella Reiss

### Funerals

Sally Kohl  
Shirley Clauser  
Sharon Ruben  
Keith Sterner  
Ann Pickin  
Daniel Long  
Peyton Hyman  
Tom Baker  
Nancy Reimert  
Itsu Bitting  
Rita Blyler

As my time at St. John's draws to a close, I pray the presence of God's Holy Spirit will continue to lead and guide, sustain and inspire the congregation as you continue to serve Christ by serving our neighbors.

Your servant in Christ,

Pastor Jeff

## **Interim Pastor's Report** **Pastor Woody Maxon**

I was very pleased that I was able to return to St. John Church after 15 years to again do ministry with you in Emmaus. I am sad that some of the familiar faces I looked forward to seeing were no longer among us. I am encouraged that there are new faces and children who are now adults still connected to our congregation. As we explore together what next steps God has in store for us, I look forward to the journey that we will share. In February, Rev. Jan Huber will meet with the Council to begin the process of determining what kind of pastoral leadership can happen here.

As parttime Interim, I spend time in the office two days per week taking care of administrative issues and hospital calls. As needed, I also visit shut ins and people in need. I work with the Worship Committee and Council. Sunday mornings, I often spend time with the Confirmation class. My goal has been to make sure that there continues to be a pastoral presence at St. John.

I have committed to being with you through September 2024. As we assess where we are in the process, I am open to extending my time with you. Looking at possibilities for the future is both scary and exciting. For the people of God, new challenges and opportunities await around every corner. The Good News is that God never sends us to a dead-end street. There are always new directions for us to travel in our journey of faith.

Let us always live in faith and in a Spirit of hope.  
Pastor Woody Maxon

Pastoral Acts	September-December
Hospital Visits	25
Shut in Visits	13
Meetings	52
Baptisms	4
Weddings	0
Funerals	3

## **Director of Music Ministry**

We have been blessed as a congregation to have yet another year in which to offer praise to God with music!

The hand bell and adult choirs both continue to remain active. Each choir is filled with dedicated and patient people who invest many hours of their time in rehearsals. The hand bell choir continues to be the largest hand bell choir St. Johns has ever had utilizing three octaves of bells and hand chimes. The adult choir has been blessed with new members this season and continues to grow musically as a group. Additional supplies to be purchased for each choir including new tablecloths, additional music risers, extra music copies in addition to copies the church already had and two additional bell tables.

The church's instruments are in good working order and have been maintained, including a few unexpected organ repairs to the pipes. Something to remember is although the organ is new to St. Johns as the current instrument, some of the pipes are over 100 years old; while the pipes are in good condition, they require a little extra care because their age.

The adult choir has resumed using the choir room for Sunday rehearsals and a long worktop was added this past year which functions for multiple purposes and is convenient for each choir member's music binder.

The new church staff have been an added blessing to the church's music programs. Rebecca, the new office administrator and Pastor Woody, the interim pastor both have been very supportive of the music program.

Humbly,  
Timothy Ginder  
Director of Music Ministries

## Council President

2023 was a crazy year, where do I even start? Looking back on my report from last year I see the I wrote “Hopefully, 2023 brings exciting new opportunities to St John’s.” Well, we got some exciting new opportunities.

During 2023 the Congregational Council held 11 regular meetings, one joint meeting with the Worship and Music committee and one meeting with Synod representatives to conduct Pastor Jeff’s exit interview.

This report would not be complete without thanking Ron Schuler for his continued work on the boiler project, I think we’re almost there. I also want to thank Faye for her patience with this project.

We are so blessed to have Pastor Woody at St. John’s as our interim pastor, the fact that Linda came with him made it even better. I’m so happy that you are both here. Your sense of humor and down to earth presence is greatly appreciated. Your sermons are thoughtful, enjoyable and relatable.

As always, the staff in the office at St. John’s is amazing! Anna Galante, our Bookkeeper, is still fantastic at her job, as always. We were so lucky to have Rebecca Williams come aboard as Office Administrator when Barbara Walck retired in September. Rebecca is an excellent addition to St. John’s office staff. I always look forward to seeing you both. Brian Dunton, St. John’s Custodian, I am so glad to have you back taking care of our church. I so appreciate seeing your smiling face on Sunday mornings. Thank you to Tim Ginder, Music Ministry Director, for all the time, effort and planning you put into every service. Your musical gifts enrich all our worship services. Thank you to the Preschool staff: Denise Mill, Director and lead teacher and Terri Allender, Assistant Teacher and Mary Racek, who retired last year. You are all so dedicated to the preschool program, thank you for everything you do.

Thank you to all the members of Council, you are all truly wonderful people to work with. I’d also like to thank Kathy Mintzer for taking over the custodial duties when we needed help this year. Thank you to Sandy Farkas and the Mutual Ministry Committee for their work on the staff contracts and everything else they handled this past year.

There are so many people who work for the good of this church, there’s not enough space to thank you all personally. Thank you all for everything that you do!

Respectfully submitted,

Elise Spayd

Council President



## **Congregation Council Secretary Report**

Following is a list of all the regular monthly meetings of Congregation Council, special meetings of Congregation Council and the Annual Congregational Meeting held in 2023:

January 10, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
January 29, 2023	<u>Annual Congregational Meeting</u>
February 14, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
March 14, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
April 11, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
May 9, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
June 13, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
July 11, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
August 8, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
August 20, 2023	Joint Meeting with Worship & Music Committee
September 12, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
October 10, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
November 7, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting
December 12, 2023	Regular Congregation Council Meeting

The minutes from all of the above meetings have been properly recorded and are incorporated as part of the permanent records of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Emmaus, and Pennsylvania.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Albright, Congregation Council Secretary

**INFORMATION ABOUT ST. JOHN'S MEMBERSHIP  
FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31, 2023**

	<u>Baptized</u>	<u>Confirmed</u>
1. Membership at the end of 2022	1,183	673
2. Members received during 2023		
a. By Baptism: (children 15 & younger)	4	--
b. By Baptism: (adults 16 & older)	--	--
c. By Affirmation of Faith	--	--
d. By Transfer from ELCA congregation	--	--
e. From other Lutheran congregations	--	--
f. From non-Lutheran congregations	--	--
g. From other sources & statistical adjustment	--	--
h. Total Members Received . . . . .	4	0
3. Baptized youth who were confirmed in 2023		6
4. Total	1,187	679
5. Members removed during 2023		
a. By Death	8	8
b. By Transfer to other ELCA congregations	1	1
c. To other Lutheran congregations	--	--
d. To non-Lutheran congregations	--	--
e. For other reasons & statistical adjustment		
e. Total Members Removed . . . . .	9	9
6. Membership at the end of 2023 . . . . .	1,178	670
7. Number of Confirmed Members who Communed <u>and</u> Contributed during 2023	(190)	
8. Communing Members: Confirmed	(265)	
9. Average Weekly Worship Attendance in 2023	(86)	

## **2023 BAPTISMS**

November 5    Aubriella Rose Marie Lovell  
November 26   William Grayson Gerber  
                    Cora Jade Koch  
December 17   Thaddeus Jeremy Parks

## **2023 CONFIRMATIONS**

June 4            Maya Ann Crilley  
                    Tessa Lynn Kemmerer  
                    Joelle Grace Killino  
                    Ryland Noah Means  
                    Madison Nicole Rzonca  
                    Robert John Snyder

## **2023 RECEIVED INTO MEMBERSHIP**

There were no new members added in 2023.

## **2023 TRANSFERRED/REQUESTED RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP**

February 21    Kimberly Baer

## **2023 DEATHS**

January 1	Shirley Clauser
March 15	Kenneth F. Knauss
April 15	Daniel E. Long
May 9	Peyton E. Hyndman
June 6	Thomas B. Baker
July 5	Nancy B. Reimert
July 23	Itsu K. Bitting
July 25	Rita H. Blyler
August 30	Dean H. Weber
September 8	Florence F. Eisentraut
December 17	Catherine B. Renninger
December 20	Ronald E. Gerhart

## **Memorial Funds Received in 2024**

St. John's gratefully acknowledges receiving contributions to the Memorial Fund totaling \$10,515.00 in memory of the following individuals:

Dorothy Ashcraft  
Tom Baker  
Nadine Bauer  
Stella Baumer  
Itsu Bitting  
Rita Blyler  
Shirley Clauser  
Florence Eisentraut  
Ron Gerhart  
Cora Mae Hunsicker  
Maggie Julo  
Sally Kohl  
Kenneth Knauss  
Samuel Landis  
Daniel Long  
Roy Miller  
Dennis Moatz  
Ann Pickin  
Nancy Reimert  
Catherine Renninger  
Sally Stair  
Dean Weber

## **Worship and Music Committee**

The Worship and Music Committee met on a regular basis this year. And in person! The members of the committee include: Faith Drescher, Ginny Himler, Annette Roth, Kathy Mintzer, Tim Ginder and Peg Duelfer. If you are interested in joining Worship and Music, please see Ginny Himler or notify the church office.

This year we maintained a resumed the Lenten Evening Prayer with Soup Suppers. Pastor once again had an Ash Wednesday ashes time in front of the church. Blue Christmas has been cancelled due to lack of resources and attendance. On Christmas Eve there will be only one service at 8:00 pm. It will include a portion devoted to the children. There is still no German Service, partly because of lack of resources. We are hoping to resume it next year.

Due to problems with sound and, once again, lack of resources, we stopped live streaming when Pastor Jeff retired. Many thanks need to be given to Pastor Jeff, and Tim Ginder for all the work they put into the services we have had this year. Annette Roth has been faithful in getting the church ready for whatever service we were having. When Pastor Jeff retired, we were blessed that Pastor Woody Maxon stepped in as our interim pastor. We are grateful for his services and his guidance.

This past summer we decided to have only one service in the summer. There was much discussion about this decision. Then, with the retirement of Pastor Jeff and the uncertainty of supply pastors, we met with Council and decided to continue with one service for the present year. We will revisit the issue in June of 2024.

We were finally able to dedicate our new organ in the spring. It was a lovely service, and everyone enjoyed hearing what our new instrument could do.

Thank you to the following persons who serve as coordinators for the area of service noted: Acolytes, Faith Drescher; Altar Guild, Annette Roth; Communion Assistants, Kathy Mintzer; Gift Presenters, Faith Drescher. We still have no Usher coordinator and Dave LaMotte has helped out. Our office administrator has been scheduling Eucharistic Ministry. We are grateful to them all. The biggest problem we have is lack of volunteers for many of these ministries. The same few people are doing everything, and this is not sustainable.

I, personally, want to thank all the committee members, Pastor Jeff, Tim and Pastor Woody who have made sure this committee continued its work. We are meeting more often to try to do our best for the church.

Respectfully submitted,

Ginny Himler, Chairperson

## **Worship Volunteers**

### **Acolytes**

Thanks to those confirmation students who serve in worship as acolytes. We are blessed to have four post confirmation students and occasionally two twenty somethings serve as they are able. The acolyte's specific duties continue to be lighting and extinguishing candles only – including those for All-Saints Day and pew candles for the Christmas Eve service. On Festival Days acolytes also may carry the processional cross and/or Bible and also assist the Pastor holding the Bible during the gospel reading and help hold the Pastor's book during a Baptism. Acolytes can now sit with their families after lighting the candles until they become comfortable staying on their bench in the chancel for the entire service. Students who are not yet confirmation age but attend church and are interested, can acolyte with a parent or church adult friend and then sit with family.

Acolyte training began during one class period in October. This at least one additional training needed. Thanks to Jessica Becker, parent of seventh grade acolyte Olivia Becker, who is working with me to coordinate a training video as a refresher and also a photo board to be posted in the Sacristy for a quick reminder on a Sunday morning as to the order of candle-lighting and extinguishing.

Thanks to the families of all the acolytes who provide the support and encouragement needed for these young people to be able to serve. In addition, thanks to everyone for your flexibility and understanding. Life demands and interests make it harder and harder to schedule.

Thanks also to Joe Harps who creates sign-up genius which hopefully has made it easier for families to select a date for their student to serve.

Respectfully submitted, Faith Drescher - Coordinator

### **Advent Wreath Readers and Lighters**

Thanks to all who continued to accept the call to serve as Advent wreath readers and lighters. We are blessed that those in our church family are willing to serve in this capacity: Rebecca Amidon and Mary Ann Aten, Audra, Avery and Matt Berner, Heidi and Elyse Stuffleet.

Respectfully submitted, Faith Drescher – Coordinator

### **Altar Guild**

Nine members of St. John's have volunteered to prepare the church for Sunday services. The time required to perform our duties has decreased slightly since we began having one service on a Sunday. As a result, there is usually one individual who is assigned a weekend every other month. Thank you to Faye & Ron Schuler who retired from serving on this committee. A big THANK YOU to the remaining members who continue to be a viable part of the Sunday service: Elyse Spayd, Jane Harps, Joan Dougherty, Carol Baus, Judy Herb, Pat Fegley, Susan & Bruce Buchman.

Respectfully submitted,  
Annette Roth – President

### **Communion Assistants**

Another year has gone by, and we are submitting our reports for the annual meeting. Many changes occurred this year and we are still a strong St. John's family. With the change to one service, it has made my job much easier. No more struggling to find communion assistants to help at both services. But, if you know me, I like a challenge and it was always a pleasure to do my task. We can always add more to the roster if you are interested in joining the group.

Thank you to all the Communion Assistants who have served this year. Special thanks as well go to all who have helped visiting pastors in our procedures for Communion.

Faithfully yours,  
Kathy Mintzer  
Communion Assistant Coordinator

### **Eucharistic Ministers**

St. John's Eucharistic Ministers are lay people and one pastor, who have been trained to visit homebound members and share communion with them. These volunteers visit each person monthly on a rotating schedule to offer not only the sacrament, but in-person contact and fellowship as representatives of our congregation.

We send our appreciation to the Eucharistic Ministers. Mary Bealer, Faith Drescher, Deb and Dennis Herman, Sandy Kulp and Pastor Roger Timm continue to serve as ministers. Thanks to all of you for your time and dedication to this ministry.

Respectfully submitted,  
Rebecca Williams, Eucharistic Ministry Coordinator

### **Gift Presenters**

I am always looking for volunteers to bring the elements forward; families, friends, and congregants can all share in this simple yet meaningful and important part of worship. If you attend worship and can get to the altar and back, you're hired!

Respectfully submitted,  
Faith Drescher - coordinator

### **Lectors**

St. John's Lector's are a dedicated group of volunteers who read the lessons at weekly services as well as Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and other special services.

A sincere thank you to those faithful volunteers for their commitment of time and talent as well as Rebecca Williams, St. John's Office Administrator, for her help in getting the readings to assigned lectors each week.

If you are interested in becoming a lector, please contact me at [mafrees@ptd.net](mailto:mafrees@ptd.net) or Rebecca at the Church office.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maryann Freer, Lector Coordinator

## **Prayer Chain**

This is a ministry to those who request prayer. Members are asked to check e-mail or phone messages daily. Once a request is received, you just include it in your daily prayers. Although these intercessory prayers are often for immediate and specific needs, we also offer prayers of praise and thanksgiving. Thanks to Mary Ann Aten for starting the phone chain and Ruth Kemmerer for letting me know the prayer requests have been completed. Many prefer notification by e-mail which I send once the request is received. I try to be as timely as possible. The prayer chain is confidential. Since some folks prefer to be only on the Prayer Chain and not in the Care Notes, Rebecca and I work together for that inclusion. Prayers are offered for anyone in need, not just church members. There is no limit to the number of people participating in this ministry of praying for others/intercessory prayer. Folks find comfort in knowing others are praying for and caring about them. We pray with confidence to our Lord that he hears our prayers.- 1 John 5:14-15

Respectfully submitted,  
Faith Drescher – coordinator



## Christian Education Committee

Mission: To provide a lifelong program of Christian education that will enable members of all ages to learn the Scriptures and Lutheran teaching and apply them in their daily lives.

Members: Mary Bealer, Karen Brokate, Faith Drescher, Rebecca Crilley, Michelle Killino, and Elise Spayd

Here are some of the highlights of the past year.

- Beginning in September, Sunday School, Confirmation, and Adult classes are meeting 8:30-9:15 due to the change in worship time.
- Sunday School students, ages 4 to fifth grade, met weekly to learn and grow in their faith. They raised money to buy animals for families in need through the ELCA program God's Global Barnyard. Three students baked the communion bread and received their first communion at the Maundy Thursday service. Two third graders received their bibles in October. During Advent, students collected items for The Animal Food Bank of the Lehigh Valley. This organization provides food for pets of owners that have financial needs.
- Confirmation class, a 3-year commitment for students in Grades 6-8, continued to meet weekly. This is a time for building relationships and continuing their faith journey, culminating with Confirmation at or around Pentecost at the end of the 3rd year. In June, six students were confirmed. Pastor Jeff headed up the class until he left. We are fortunate that Pastor Woody has provided guidance since September.
- Adult Sunday School continues to meet at 8:30 on Sunday mornings in the parish hall. Join them for fellowship and discussions.
- Vacation Bible School, "Food Truck Party," was a big success. There were about 40 students and over 30 volunteers who were invited to pray as Jesus teaches us in Matthew 6:11, "Give us this day our daily bread." These words serve as a reminder that everything we have comes from God – and that by turning to God in prayer all of our daily needs are provided for. We were grateful to partner with Holy Spirit again to design, prepare and share decorations to transform our respective church spaces. Students and Staff brought in donations for Groceries Plus at Bethel Bible Fellowship Church. Thank you to the congregation for your donations and support in making this another successful year. Mark your calendars now for VBS 2024 -July 14-18.
- 29 people including confirmands, Sunday School students, and members of the congregation participated in Crop Walk on October 15th. The group walked through Emmaus during the Sunday School hour and raised about \$1,500 with support from the congregation.

Thank you to all the volunteers, teachers, helpers, committee members, and Thrivent representatives, who gave their time and talents to keeping the Christian Education ministries going at St. John's.

We are always looking to grow with new ideas and volunteers. We meet every other month on a Monday at 6:00 PM. Please reach out if you are interested in being a committee member or volunteer.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Karen Brokate

## **Bear Creek Camp**

Bear Creek Camp is an outdoor ministry of the Northeastern and Southeastern PA Synod of the ELCA, located on nearly 3,000 acres in the Pocono Mountains. The camp provides year-round experiences: Summer Residential Camp including Try Camp, Nature Day Camp, environmental education programs, July Family Camp, Labor Day Family Camp, an Artist in Residence Camp for adults and outside group rentals. There are also weekend retreats during school breaks, especially at Christmas for middle and high school students.

We at St. John's are thankful for the Foerster-Bray Endowment Fund that is available to assist families by providing a stipend of \$200 per camper for a week of summer camp. Other financial aid from Bear Creek is also available.

Please check the Bear Creek website and Facebook page at [www.bearcreekcamp.org](http://www.bearcreekcamp.org) to sample some of that camp spirit. REGISTRATION FOR SUMMER CAMP BEGINS JANUARY 3, 2024.

If you have any questions, need more details and/or would like to hear some camp stories, contact our Bear Creek Ambassadors Dave and Marlea McAdoo.

Respectfully submitted,

Faith Drescher

## Preschool Committee

The Preschool Committee met in 2023 to fulfill its mission of assisting and supporting St. John's Christian Preschool. The mission of St. John's Christian Preschool is to prepare young children for academic and spiritual success by providing them with the tools they will need for a well-rounded life and a personal, loving relationship with God.

Terri Allender joined the Preschool staff as assistant teacher. The committee worked closely with director, Denise Mill, and teachers, Mary Racek and Terri Allender, to meet the needs of the Preschool program. For the 2023-2024 school year, there are 8 children attending the Preschool. In the Fall, Preschool Committee members set up a giving tree in the church to collect supplies from Congregation members for the 2023-2024 school year.

In an effort to recruit new students, the members of the Preschool Committee attended two events with the members of the GIFT Committee of St. John's. Preschool Committee members attended the Farewell to Summer Festival on the Emmaus Triangle on September 16 (providing crafts and boxes of crayons for children) and the Tree Lighting on the Emmaus Triangle on December 2 (selling candy and cookies as a fundraiser for the Preschool). Since Dan Schantz announced it is closing, the Preschool annual fundraiser of selling flower cards can no longer continue. The committee decided to hold a Pancake Breakfast fundraiser on Saturday, January 20 with a snow date of Saturday, February 3.

Members of the committee include Audra Berner, Stacy Kemmerer (on leave from the Committee for 2023-2024), Martie Dech, Carmen Garrison, Denise Mill, Mary Racek and Terri Allender. In Stacey's absence, the Committee has greatly appreciated Elise Spayd attending meetings as our Council liaison.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Audra Berner  
Chair

## Property Committee

The Property Committee is responsible for the care and maintenance of the church building and grounds. Here are some highlights of the committee's work in 2023:

- We completed the church boiler work.
- We completed replacing speaker in the Parish Hall.
- We fixed the projector which malfunctioned during Vacation Bible School.

The committee also deferred some maintenance projects due to budget constraints. These projects included electrical repairs, repairs to shades in the Parish Hall, and others. Committee will be looking into removing/ replacing the trees in front of the church as well.

The committee also expresses thanks and gratitude to our custodian, Brian Dunton, for his tireless devotion to caring for our beautiful church building.

Matthew Berner  
Acting Committee Chair

## **Mutual Ministry Committee**

The Mutual Ministry Committee is comprised of Pastor Maxon, Sandra Farkas, Myron Yoder and Carmen Garrison. Our purpose is to: listen to the needs, complaints and desires of both the staff and congregation; act as a sounding board; take initiative for staff needs when required; and to affirm our staff.

By opening communication, we hope to address issues before they become problems. We are credited to work closely with the Pastor, and have his ear. Of course, confidentiality is a must. We take the temperature of the congregation and staff, and look to enhance and strengthen our mission. This committee is scheduled to meet quarterly, but does meet whenever a need arises.

Some of our responsibilities include completing performance evaluations and making recommendations for raises. We strive to uplift our staff and ensure they know they are valued. In 2023 we celebrated our staff through Administrative Professional's Day, Pastor Appreciation Month with a fellowship hour and celebrated birthdays. 2023 was a year of changes at St. John's. We said goodbye to our Office Administrator Barbara Walck and hired Rebecca Williams, and said goodbye to Pastor Jeff Carstens and welcomed Pastor Woody Maxon.

We are open to new ideas and suggestions. We are here if anyone needs to bring an issue to our attention, and conversely to offer positive feedback!

## **GIFT / Parish Life Ministry Report**

We had a good year of fresh restarts of many beloved activities. We reinstated our monthly fellowship the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month this year. We had other committees jump in to want to host on this Sundays. We are happy for the help and time to gather and chat with delicious goods provided. Social time is good for the soul with friends and family.

We had a Potluck/Bingo event in February (2/25/23) put together by Kathy Mintzer. Was well attended with many choices of food and desserts. We had simple candy prize bingo call by Roy Anders.

We had a Friday night booked for the Phantoms game this year (3/17/23), booked by Faith Drescher. We had decent weather and about 25 tickets were sold. We look forward to arranging this event for next year as well. We had great weather and children turn out for our annual Easter Egg Hunt on Palm Sunday (4/2/23). Children of all ages 1-12 came from friends and family visiting as well as neighborhood children. Our members of the church did an amazing job of providing eggs stuffed with prizes for them to find. We had a small fellowship as well this day.

We had an Iron Pigs outing in July (7/14/23) organized by Faith. It was a bit rainy but no rain delay the fireworks were spectacular and a plus the Pigs won. We had about 32 attendees.

Our Farewell to Summer event was a bit different then we initially thought. We were down at the downtown triangle instead of at the church. We made bags of popcorn for to-go snacks but not many took them. We had bubbles and sidewalk chalk for the children to do there, but the biggest hit was the bookmark craft that was available. We will make adjustments to have another fun activity shall we do this event again. Many thanks to Audra, Kathy, Karen, and our preschool team for all your help.

Our annual Halloween Parade Watch Party (10/21/23), organized by Audra Berner, was attended by about 30 people who brought along potluck items to share. We had hot dogs and cocoa provided as well. We have plenty of sidewalk footage to line up chairs plus the stairs to watch the parade go by. We had great weather to go along with the parade as well.

We were finally able to bring back our fantastic Spaghetti Dinner this November (11/4/23) organized by Annette Roth. We had many helpers in the kitchen to help prep the meatballs and sauce ahead of time. We are blessed with many helpers and bakers the day of our dinner. There were 105 dinners served this night by our outstanding Sunday school youth, a BIG shout out to them and Faith. We brought in \$800 plus the \$250 Thrivent grant minus expenses we have \$560 to be donated to Groceries Plus at Bethel Bible Church in Emmaus. Many thanks to our cooks everything was delicious.

There are a few more activities coming up in December. We have another fellowship (12/10/23) with more dates for next year on the 2024 calendar. We have our first run at doing Old Fashioned Christmas with a craft planned as a take home option. We have all supplies needed for our Rudolph Reindeer craft. We have a tent, lanterns, battery operated candles, table, and chairs with our tablecloth. We will be purchasing soft pretzels to sell any profit will be donated.

We did make a purchase this year to get a printed tablecloth for our outside events.

**We have several events planned for 2024:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month Fellowship

Potluck/Bingo February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 4p-7p

Phantoms game March 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024

Iron Pigs Game July 12,2024

Halloween Parade Watch Party October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Spaghetti Dinner November 2024

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Anders on 11/9/23

If you are interested in helping organize any event or if you have an idea for an event let us know. The more ideas for events and activities the better. All ideas are welcome please contact Jennifer Anders 610-554-2044 or email at [janders@ptd.net](mailto:janders@ptd.net)

The mission statement that had been developed for the GIFT (Growing In Fellowship Together) committee is as follows: GIFT's purpose is to plan and promote a variety of activities and events that build relationships among St. John's members, visitors, and guests to educate, excite, entertain and engage members in support of important causes. Events can be large or small and be held at St. John's or in our community. Gatherings can be designed to appeal to all ages or focus on one primary group. The GIFT team selects key events throughout the year but relies on St. John's members to assist in planning or volunteering at these events.

## **People Over Fifty (POF)**

POF (People Over Fifty) met 11 times in 2023. The group has met the second Wednesday of the month at 11am in the Parish Hall for lunch and fellowship. Highlights of the year were a covered dish luncheon, a luau, Halloween costumes and a Christmas gift exchange.

Anyone over 50, or anyone accompanying someone over 50 is welcome. Attendees bring a canned good or small household item for our prize table and a donation of \$2-4 to cover the cost of lunch. Food bank donations are always welcome.

Call Sharon at 303-956-6289 at least a day before the meeting if you plan to attend.

Sharon Strouse  
POF Coordinator



## Stewardship Committee

The Stewardship Committee was very busy this year. Our theme was “Stewardship is for Children too” We offered children Stewardship articles in the monthly newsletter and tried to encourage children and youth to be good stewards.

We use newsletter articles and quotes in the bulletin to share what being a steward really is.

The Amazon Smile program ended this year and over the years that St. John’s participated we received \$247.04 by just shopping and designating St. John’s as the beneficiary of their giving.

Thrivent members were active as their Choice Dollars given to St. John’s for 2023 was a total of \$1832.00. This was up from \$1000.00 in 2022. Thrivent members always have a say in Thrivent distributions to charitable funding by directing Choice Dollars to causes they care about.

Thrivent is also very charitable to St. John’s in the way of grants for our causes. We received a \$250.00 grant (grants do not get paid back) for each of the following causes: Celebration Sunday, Super Bowl of Caring, Spaghetti Supper, Crop Walk and Vacation Bible School. That’s a total of \$1250.00 in grants. Each Thrivent member can get 2 grants per year for such causes. If you have a cause and would like to see if a grant can be obtained for it, please see Bob Cleaver.

Offering Envelopes: Stewardship looked into saving money on offering envelopes, which is 99% of our budget, and could not find a better price. Therefore, we are asking each person in the congregation to please give \$8.00 towards the initial envelope offering to offset this cost.

We held a Volunteer Sunday Service and Fellowship where we thanked all the volunteers in our congregation, which is everyone. Special invitations were sent to all the Sunday School children and youth to attend and participate in the Fellowship. At our fellowship we handed out Thank You Cards with seed packets enclosed.

It was 5 years ago that we did a Time and Talent sheet. We revamped the form and sent it out to everyone in the September Newsletter. The children and youth were also sent a time and talent sheet. Volunteers are very important for our church as there is so much being done by the volunteers behind the scenes. If you have not completed your Time and Talent Survey, please do so. The more hands doing the work the more we can accomplish.

Celebration Sunday is the Stewardship Committee’s way of thanking our congregation for a good year of time, talent and treasures. The fellowship gathering and great food makes it a festive time for everyone.

As we close out the year and look to 2024 our theme will be “A Century in Giving” as our church building turns 100 years old.

Thank you all for your time, talent, treasures and support of the Stewardship Committee. The committee consists of Jane Harps, Susan Buchman, Deb Herman, Judie Herb, Bob Cleaver, Joan Gooch. Without their hard work we would not be able to accomplish all we do.

Special Thanks to Barbara Walck, Rebecca Williams, Brian Dunton, Anna Galante, Joe Harps, Kathy Minster, Annette Roth, Elise Spade, Pastor Jeff and Pastor Woody as their help does not go unnoticed.

Respectfully submitted,

Diane Felegy, Stewardship Committee Chairperson

## **Support the Troops**

The USO strengthens America's military service members by keeping them connected to family, home and country, throughout their service to the nation. The USO also welcomes the military of our allies. St John's members have generously donated snacks, food storage and cleaning supplies to the Philadelphia airport USO, which serves approximately 40,000 guests annually.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Kraemer, Support the Troops Coordinator

## Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee listens, discusses, visions, initiates, and oversees St. John's efforts to reach out to the Emmaus community to help meet the needs in whatever way we as a church are able. You, the congregation, continue to support the ministries we bring to you and are a vital part of this work.

Ongoing social ministry programs that St. John's continues to be involved in:

- Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank packing team and food collection.
- Produce Exchange - Congregation members bring in excess produce they have grown and anyone can stop after services to select produce for a donation. The proceeds and excess produce is taken to Groceries Plus, the food pantry at Bethel Bible Fellowship Church in Emmaus.
- Bread for the World / Offering of Letters - BFTW is a nonpartisan Christian advocacy group that urges those who can make a difference, whether politically or personally, to maintain and hopefully increase funds to those in need here and abroad become food secure. BFTW Letter Writing was held September 10, 2023 here at St. John's.
- Crop Walk - held October 15, 2023. Faith Dresher and the participants walked in Emmaus during the Sunday School hour. Their goal was \$1,300 and they raised a total of \$1,360.89 to help stop hunger.
- Afghan Refugee Resettlement / Ibrahim Family - After our 6 month commitment to assist the Ibrahim family was completed, we asked Church Council if we could use the remaining money collected for the Ibrahim family for rent support. They gave their approval, and the remaining funds were sent to their property manager for rent assistance.
- Angel Network - The Angel Network is a support system for families who reside in the East Penn School District. This fall we collected cans of tuna for their Thanksgiving food baskets.
- Lehigh Mission District Ingathering - scheduled for December 6, 2023 at our church. The Ingathering provides Christmas packages and gifts collected through the Lehigh Mission District Lutheran Churches to be given to institutions in the Lehigh Valley. The Outreach Committee coordinates and assists with the collection and distribution of gifts.
- Supporting the Military - The Outreach Committee has partnered with the Philadelphia Airport U.S.O. to collect items for use at their center. It is a welcome refuge from the stress of traveling, often to hostile areas. This is an ongoing project.
- St. Matthew's Clothes Closet - The Outreach Committee is asking the congregation to support this free and important service for our community. They accept gently used clothing items of any size and age on the first and third Saturday of the month from 10am to 1pm. If necessary, Outreach Committee members could assist with pick and drop off.

Current Outreach Committee members are Audra Berner, Debbie Yoder, Cheryl Kraemer, Faith Dresher, Pastor Timm, Mary Bealer and Martie Dech. We welcome anyone interested in helping on the Outreach Committee to join us on zoom the first Tuesday of the month at 7pm.

Respectively submitted,  
Debbie Yoder  
Outreach Committee

## **Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank (Outreach)**

Front page headline in the November 20th USA TODAY newspaper: "Food Banks see worst rate of hunger in years".

Data released this fall from the U.S. Department of Agriculture showed food insecurity increased in 2022 for the first time in more than a decade.

Since 1978, the AAEFB has been fulfilling their mission of providing relief (DAILY) to those in Lehigh County suffering with hunger and food insecurity. They have distributed over a million pounds of food this year, with 50% going to adults, 36% to children, and 14% going to seniors.

Thank you to all the St. John's volunteers who help at the food bank. Thank you also to all the church members who donate goods to the food bank. The food bank would not exist without the help of the churches in Lehigh County.

We are always looking for members who are willing to help at the food bank. We volunteer the 3rd Monday and Tuesday of each month, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 AM. If you're interested in seeing what we do, spend a morning with us! We provide transportation from the church. You can pick which day, Monday or Tuesday, that you want to volunteer. Call Bob Cleaver at 610 533-8900.

Collection boxes for food donations are located in the church coat room.

Respectfully submitted,  
Bob Cleaver

## **Knitting for Charity (Outreach)**

Knitting for Charity or KFC is a group of women from St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church as well as several friends in the community who knit, crochet, loom and sew hats, scarves, mittens and lap robes that we pass on to anyone in need of these items for the upcoming winter months. We meet for 2 hours 8 times a year at the church, but the bulk of our work is done independently at home. This year 150 hats, 23 hat and scarf sets and 10 lap robes were distributed to 7 different organizations in November. They include: East Penn Angel Network at Jefferson Elementary School, Sixth Street Shelter, Matthew's Clothes Closet, Turning Point and Lehigh Valley Health Network. This year we added the Allentown Rescue Mission and the Children's Home in Easton to our list of recipients.

We are always appreciative of donated washable yarn and will teach any person interested in learning any of our homemade crafts. We hope to be able to make similar donations to these same organizations and to other groups who may be in need in the coming year.

Respectfully submitted,  
Judie Herb

## **Finance Committee**

The Finance Committee oversees the financial affairs of the church, including prompt payment of all obligations, monthly reporting of financial status to the Church Council, preparation & presentation of a proposed budget, & sending all applicable monies to the Synod.

In 2023 there was an average monthly deficit of \$3,800. Monthly income decreased during the year while expenses continued to rise. We paid the final installment for the new boiler (furnace) in January, but discovered additional problems within the old water pipes. This unexpected issue was finally addressed & the appropriate repairs were started. Another large expense was the insurance coverage for St. John's Church & its buildings. We were notified by the current insurance company that they would not be renewing our policies for 2024 because of large prior claims. The finance committee searched for another insurance company, but it was difficult. We expect our premiums to double or triple from the 2023 expense of \$10,500.

The Committee met in May to discuss the expense of live streaming the Sunday services & to approve the yearly disbursement amount from the Endowment Fund to be disbursed by the Endowment Committee at a later date. We met again in October to discuss the current financial situation of the Church. \$7500 was transferred from an unused dedicated account into the checking account to help with current expenses. We decided to decrease the monthly percentage of tithing to the Synod beginning January 1, 2024 as a way of decreasing expenses.

In November, the Committee met to prepare the 2024 budget. The 2024 Expense Budget will be presented to the Council in December and presented for approval at the annual meeting. The budget will show a smaller deficit than in the past since we do not have the expense of a full-time pastor.

James Rotherham has retired from the treasurer's position affective January 2024. We thank him for his many years of service to St. John's. Brad Albright will assume this position. Special thanks to Anna Galante, Rebecca Williams, Barbara Walck, Brad Albright and Peg Duelfer for their dedication in maintaining the financial records.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Annette Roth  
Finance Chairman

## **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee examined the records of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Emmaus and St. John's WELCA for the period ending December 31, 2022. All reports and statements were found to be accurate and properly recorded.

Thanks to the Audit Committee members: Robert Cleaver and Barbara LaMotte Your service is much appreciated. Thanks to Anna Galante for assisting the committee members and presiding in place of the finance chairperson.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Annette Roth, Finance Chairman

## **St. John's Christian Preschool Director**

St. John's Christian Preschool currently has 8 children enrolled. 5 children in the Four-Year-Old Program and 3 children in the Three-Year-Old Program. This school year we are offering a combined 3-4 Year Old Program which runs 9:00am – 11:30am. The 3-year-olds attend class 2 days a week, on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The 4-year-olds attend 3 days a week on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays.

With the decline in enrollment, Denise and Terri have been attending events in the Emmaus Triangle, along with the help of the preschool committee, flyers and yard signs were hung throughout Emmaus area. Along with using the web to get the word out.

The preschool is having a Pancake Fundraiser planned for January and sold candy at the Christmas event in the Triangle.

Denise Mill has remained on as the Preschool Director and Lead Teacher and Terri Allender will be the Assistant Teacher. Due to health issues, Mary Racek has resigned.

The children are engaged through out their day in various activities that will help them develop mathematical concepts such as number, shape, colors and pattern recognition. Literacy activities such as tracing, letter recognition/writing and story time are incorporated into the daily routine. Other objectives such as “classroom etiquette” and “listening skills” are part of our program that will allow children to excel as lifelong learners.

Chapel is also part of our curriculum. At this time Denise and Mary are encouraging spiritual development and a personal relationship with God.

The preschool children and their families have also shown support for those in need in our community by collecting canned foods for the Local Food Bank .

The Preschool cannot thank the St. John's Lutheran Church families enough for their generous donations to the preschool.

The staff at St. John's Christian Preschool is anticipating the second half of the school year to be as wonderful and rewarding as the first! We are extremely grateful for the support of the St. John's Lutheran Church community.

Respectfully submitted,

Denise I. Mill

Director



## **Lutheran & Reformed Cemetery Association**

St. John's Lutheran and St. John's UCC churches together in 1953 established St. John's Lutheran and Reformed Cemetery Association of Emmaus, Pennsylvania, as a not-for-profit corporation.

The Association Board includes one appointed non-voting member council member from each Cemetery congregation. The current voting Board members are:

President	Glenn Deischer	St. John's UCC
Vice President	John Ashcraft	St. John's Lutheran
Secretary/Treasurer	Annette Roth	St. John's Lutheran
Board Member	Thomas Gable	St. John's UCC

In 2022 the following transactions were completed: 1/01/23 to 11/30/23:

Regular Burials	22
Cremations	19
Graves sold	22

As of August 31, 2023 the cemetery had a checking account balance of \$12,808.50.

Our sincere thanks to our superintendents, Robert & Deborah Kline, and also the volunteers for all their help in maintaining and improving our cemeteries. Please direct your questions regarding the cemetery, such as removal of seasonal plants, policies, cost of lots, etc., to a Board Member or contact Deborah Kline at 610-657-6473. In lieu of flower memorials, please remember your cemetery.

Respectfully submitted,

L & R Cemetery Board

## **St. John's Women of the ELCA (WELCA)**

WELCA meetings at St. John's Lutheran Church had not resumed since Covid 19. After we were able to obtain officers, who had several planning meetings over the summer, St. John's WELCA was able to restart this past September, 2023. Our first meeting, an English Tea Party, was a great success with the women wearing hats, sharing stories, and enjoying refreshments. Following are the programs planned for 2023-2024.

- October 2023 - Bill Lake, a retired Allentown detective, talked about how a case is solved.
- November 2023 - Dusty Springer and her dog Tess demonstrated dog training techniques.
- December 19, 2023 at 6pm - Annual Christmas party in the Parish Hall.
- January 16, 2024 - Game Night
- February 20, 2024 - Myron Yoder will present leather stamping and carving.
- March 19, 2024 - Mande's Lunchbox - gift cards for cancer patients. Mande's mother, Angela Faidley, will talk about this nonprofit in loving memory of her daughter, Amanda Faidley Layton.
- April 16, 2024 - Adventures in Egypt by Mary Bealer.
- May 21, 2024 - Program to be determined.
- June 18, 2024 - Picnic in the Parish Hall with Boom Box Bingo.

An invitation is extended to all women, members and friends of St. John's, to attend any or all of the programs we have planned. Our mission is to provide Growth, Community and Action for the women of our congregation. We meet the third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. in the Parish Hall. The programs and activities provide information and support to strengthen our daily ministries. Each meeting includes fellowship which fosters our community and friendships. If transportation is needed, please call the church office.

Thank you to our Officers:

Vice President - Sandy Farkas

Secretary - Sandy Eckroth

Treasurer - Barbara Lamotte

Respectively submitted,  
President Debbie Yoder