

**St. John  
Lutheran  
Church**

**Dec. 2018-Jan. 2019**

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# The Revelations



*As our days get shorter, we are reminded that the Light of Christ shines around us and through us to light the path for others.*

This December and January,  
we hope to see you and your loved ones at St. John.  
We have special worship services celebrating the season,  
as well as many opportunities  
to share conversations or serve others.

The greatest gift we received was the gift of Christ.  
“The Word became flesh and lived among us.”  
Christ brought hope and light to the world,  
and today our world needs the gift of Christ more than ever.

If you haven't been to church in a while, come.  
If you have loved ones who have not been to church,  
welcome them to join you.  
If you have burdens, worries, or struggles,  
come and hear the good news of Christ.

All are welcome here. In fact, you are missed.

*May God's peace and love surround you this holiday season!*

## Thoughts from Pastor Sarah

It's Thanksgiving as I write this, and I am not sure where the time has flown. It seems like yesterday it was September, and Advent and Christmas were far away. Now, the holidays are on my doorstep and in boxes all around my house. As you may know, I *festoon* for the Christmas holiday, and Pete and I will be busy the next few days. Or weeks.

You noticed, I am sure, that we missed a Revelations this Fall. The Church Office has been very busy, and it simply didn't get done. My apologies for that. Susan Flanagan, our Office Assistant, resigned when she found a job that was more suited to her gifts—and the staff and I wished her well at her next adventure. Since then, we have been interviewing, and it is my hope to make an offer to someone in the next few weeks. We also have been interviewing for the Youth & Family director staff position that Council approved in July—I have been serving as superintendent for the Sunday School this Fall as we attempt to find someone to fill the new position. We believe we may have progress there, as well.

So things are happening, sometimes all at once. But with lots of prayer, it will all be as God wills it to be. I believe that, and I ask for your prayers for the church and its staff, too. Marcie, Barry, and Larry work very hard to make our experience here at St. John meaningful for our members. Each one brings their skills and gifts to our community, and we should give thanks and praise for all they do. In December, we will be passing out special envelopes for a Christmas Offering to the Staff. Please consider giving to the staff this year as a sign of your appreciation. Thank you!

I hope to see you this December-January season. Do not be a stranger; you are missed if you have not been here in a long time. We also hope that our “regulars” will continue to come and invite others to join them! St. John is a wonderful place to celebrate the gift of Christ this season.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you and your loves ones, Pastor Sarah

*During the transition with the church office, the best way to stay on top of church happenings is by reading your weekly eNewsletter. At this point, less than 60% of our members open the email we send—so please stay in touch and read the eNews!*



*We give thanks to Troop 98 and Sanjit Shelukar, Eagle Scout-to-be, who completed Sanjit's beautification project for the church. They redid the frame around our street sign and added perennials in front of the 2 houses.*

## Council Update

Dear St. John Family,

There is a lot going on here at St. John. I encourage you to take the opportunity to join in some of the activities coming up. And, as always, if you have any suggestion on things you'd us to consider, feel free to pass them along to me or any of the members of your council.

***Don't forget—our Annual Business Meeting will be Sunday, Dec. 9 at 9:30 a.m. in the sanctuary. We approve the budget for 2019 and elect our newest Council members.***

### ***Are you a Thrivent Member?***

*If you are, please let Pastor Sarah know. Thrivent offers small grants to members to use at their churches for service projects. Potentially, St. John could use one for each event!*

Thank you to all those who work to make St. John a warm and welcoming house of God. And, remember, St. John is fast approaching our 250th anniversary year. We should be proud of everything our congregation has done over the years to spread the word of Christ in the Center Square/Blue Bell community. Let us continue to spread the Gospel in our community and the wider world by reaching out in love and respect to all people.

Warmly,

Kathy Erdman  
Council President

## Finance Announcements

Our Generosity Team, aka Stewardship Committee, sent out a letter in early November to all member households regarding the building of the 2019 budget and also shared our needs for the future mission and ministry of St. John. Commitment cards were also with the letter—please return the cards by December 1 if possible.

**Giving through the plates is up this year by 2.6%**, and we give thanks for our members for this year's response. For 2019, we ask that our members prayerfully consider upping their offering each week just \$3-5 more, or \$12-15 a month, or \$150-250 a year. The costs of doing "church" just like the cost of "living" has gone up, and we are ever mindful that we need to provide well of our church's future. Thank you for your gifts of time, talent and treasures to St. John.

*Thank  
you*



## Third Quarter Report from the Treasurer

Pastor, and Church Council would like to thank all the members of St John for their continued generosity in 2018. Giving is up this year by 2.6% over 2017. However, we are a minus 3.5% behind our 2018 budget goals.

### Current Fund

Your response in giving has allowed us to reduce our draw on the Endowment to cover current operating expenses. Last year we needed to take \$60,000 from the endowment to cover our operating expenses. At the end of 2018 it appears we will need \$56,000. It is important we continue to reduce this reliance on the Endowment to pay our current bills.

#### Current Fund Thru

9/30/2018

Account	Budget Thru 9/30	%	Actual Thru 9/30	%	Difference
<b>Total Current Fund Income</b>	<b>\$221,535.02</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$216,273.09</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$(5,261.93)</b>
<b>Congregational Giving</b>	<b>\$150,125.02</b>	<b>68%</b>	<b>\$144,991.89</b>	<b>67%</b>	<b>\$(5,133.13)</b>
Weekly Current Envelopes	\$138,750.02		\$133,884.21		\$(4,865.81)
Plate Offerings - Current	\$3,375.00		\$3,045.18		\$(329.82)
Non-weekly Envelopes	\$5,500.00		\$5,591.00		\$91.00
Bulletins/Flowers	\$2,500.00		\$2,471.50		\$(28.50)
<b>Third Party Income</b>	<b>\$33,910.00</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>\$34,206.20</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>\$296.20</b>
Nursery School	\$13,950.00		\$16,432.00		\$2,482.00
Room Rental	\$1,350.00		\$1,195.00		\$(155.00)
Visual Arts Program	\$11,410.00		\$11,405.00		\$(5.00)
1810 House Rentals	<b>\$7,200.00</b>		\$5,174.20		\$(2,025.80)
<b>Endowment Funds</b>	<b>\$37,500.00</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>\$37,075.00</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>\$(425.00)</b>
Endowment Funds Needed	\$37,500.00		\$37,075.00		

As you can see the three sources of church funding are clearly outlined with the percentage of total funding each source contributes. We need your continued generous support to help reduce our current \$5,133 budget shortfall in **Congregational Giving**. Most of the shortfall is in Weekly Current Envelopes. Please keep those weekly envelopes coming even when you have to miss a Sunday service. Most of our expenses are fairly fixed and we need your support throughout the year.

**Third Party Income** is on target. This year the Nursery School contribution reflects a larger allocation to cover their share of insurance cost. This increase has made up for the loss income from the **1810 house**. Our seminary family graduated, and despite a lot of effort we have yet to find a new seminarian renter.

### Endowment

Year to date our Endowment has seen weak financial performance. After expenses we have only earned about 1% return on our investments, well below our average 6% to 8% return. However our need for endowment funds to pay part of our current expenses and critical capital repairs remains. Through September we have taken \$64,350 from the Endowment. The St John Endowment is down -4.25% from the beginning of the year and the Cemetery Fund up 1% (we have not needed to take funds for Cemetery needs).

<b><u>Q3 2018 Investment Summary</u></b>			
-	<b><u>9/30/18</u></b>	<b><u>9/30/18</u></b>	<b><u>9/30/18</u></b>
<b><u>Account Summary:</u></b>	<b>Cemetery Fund</b>	<b>St John Fund</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>1/1/18 Market Value:</b>	<b>\$120,687.29</b>	<b>\$1,220,282.69</b>	<b>\$1,340,969.98</b>
<b>INCOME</b>			
Interest Income	\$639.96	\$6,478.66	\$7,118.62
Dividends	\$1,471.29	\$14,784.31	\$16,255.60
<b>Total Cash Reinvested</b>	<b>\$2,111.26</b>	<b>\$21,262.96</b>	<b>\$23,374.22</b>
<b>INVESTMENT GAIN</b>			
<b>Growth in Investments</b>	<b>\$81.42</b>	<b>\$824.30</b>	<b>\$905.72</b>
<b>Gain/(Loss) on Investment</b>	<b>\$2,192.68</b>	<b>\$22,087.26</b>	<b>\$24,279.94</b>
	<b>1.82%</b>	<b>1.81%</b>	<b>1.81%</b>
<b>LESS</b>			
Administrative Expenses	-\$942.64	-\$9,542.74	-\$10,485.38
<b>Net Funds Available</b>	<b>\$1,250.05</b>	<b>\$12,544.51</b>	<b>\$13,794.56</b>
<b>Return on Investment</b>	<b>1.04%</b>	<b>1.03%</b>	<b>1.03%</b>

<b>DISBURSEMENTS (Thru 9/30)</b>			
Cemetery Fund	\$0.00		\$0.00
St John - Current expenses		-\$37,200.00	-\$37,200.00
Building - Capital Expense		-\$16,750.00	-\$16,750.00
Music Fund		-\$4,500.00	-\$4,500.00
Mission/ Youth Group Trip		-\$5,400.00	-\$5,400.00
Evangelism		-\$500.00	-\$500.00
<b>DISBURSEMENTS - Total</b>	<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>-\$64,350.00</b>	<b>-\$64,350.00</b>
<b>6/30/18</b>			
<b>Total Ending Market Value</b>	<b>\$121,937.34</b>	<b>\$1,168,477.20</b>	<b>\$1,290,414.54</b>
<b>Percentage Change</b>	<b>1.04%</b>	<b>-4.25%</b>	<b>-3.77%</b>

## Children and Youth News



**Sunday School meets almost every Sunday at 9:15 a.m.  
for all children and youth.**

We will not meet on Dec. 23 or 30, we start again on Jan. 6.

**Our now Annual Children's Christmas Service  
will be Wednesday, Dec. 19 at 6:30 p.m.**

We will have songs, stories, live animals and a birthday cake for Jesus.

The animals will be outside from 6 to 6:30 p.m.

The rest of the event will be inside from 6:30 to 7:15.

**Our Annual Cookie Walk Youth Fundraiser  
will be Sunday, Dec. 16 between services.**

Cookie donations are happily accepted for the event!  
You may drop them off Dec. 13, 14, or early on the 16!





## Adult News



***Pastor's Morning Bible Study meets on Tuesdays at 10:30 a.m.*** We gather in the large classroom downstairs, and often have coffee and treats to share.

Our group is currently reading through books of the Old Testament. We will meet in December on 4, 11, and 18. We will resume our studies in January on the 8<sup>th</sup>.

***Sunday Morning also offers a Bible Study for Adults at 9:15.*** Led by Andrea Greyson, no preparation is needed—and newcomers are welcome!



***Pastor Sarah invites all 21 through 50 year olds to join her for a night of dinner, drinks and discussion, otherwise called Pub Theology.***

Our next gathering is Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m. at the parsonage. Please RSVP to Pastor Sarah by Dec. 15. We snack on appetizers, we share a drink, and discuss a topic as a group. We will resume meeting in January on the 15<sup>th</sup> at a local pub!



***St. John Book Club*** had a wonderful year of reading books with a variety of topics and genres. We anticipate another great year beginning this 2019. If you are interested in learning more about our group, please connect with Linda Carpenter or call the Church Office. At the time of publication, our next meeting and book was not chosen. Please watch your weekly bulletin, eNews, or website for the most current details!

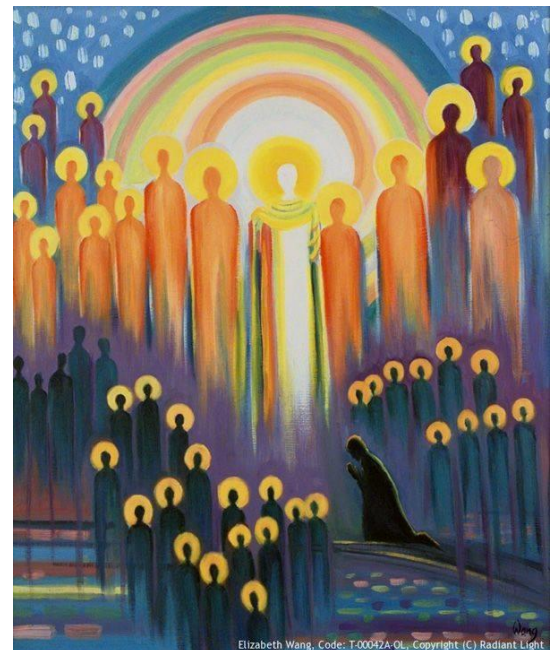
***We offer many ways to remember our loved ones here at St. John.***

*We have a Memorial Brick Program for our cemetery walk-way.*

*We have members sponsor the Sunday Altar Flowers and Bulletins.*

*We also have opportunities to sponsor poinsettias and Easter flowers.*

*Remember your loved ones this year  
by making an offering to St. John.*



Elizabeth Wang, Code: T-00042A-OL, Copyright (C) Radiant Light

## Connecting with Others



**Join us for *Paint Along with Ann*** will meet on Tuesday, Jan. 22 from 7 to 9 p.m. The next seasonal paint along is scheduled for Tuesday, January 22 from 7 – 9. Cost is \$25.00 and all materials are included. The ACTUAL painting can viewed in the church Great Room.

It is a winter scene with cardinals. “When cardinals appear loved ones are near.”



**Our Visual Arts Program continues!** Ann Brennan, our instructor, will begin a new session of art classes at St. John the week after we usher the New Year in, or January 9, 10 and 11. Students have a choice of 3 different days and 2 different time slots, Wednesday and Thursday evening from 6:30 until 8:30 and Thursday and Friday Mornings from 10:30 -12:30. Classes run for 10 weeks and cost only \$80 for the session. Students of all levels are encouraged to attend. Classes are run like a one room schoolhouse where lessons are individualized and everyone learns from one another. This session will feature lessons on how to paint glass, metal and reflections.

Potential students are welcome to stop by anytime and see how the class is run and ask questions.

To register, please contact Ann Brennan at [annlb609@gmail.com](mailto:annlb609@gmail.com) This class does have a limit to participants, so registration is necessary.



**Our popular yoga class continues on Thursdays at 2 p.m.** Sessions are ongoing, drop-ins are welcome. Our instructor, Kellie Burnette LMT, CYT, AHC, will guide us through gentle moves, poses, and breath. All levels of skill are welcome; Kellie is quick to assist you. The cost for the 8 week session is \$40, or you may drop in for \$8 a session. No pre-registration is necessary. Please bring a mat or towel to use. Questions? Please connect with the Church Office. For a full description of our yoga classes, please visit our website. ***With the holidays, the schedule may change—so please contact the church office before you come.***



**Our next Flower Arranging Class will be on Tuesday, Dec. 18 at 7:30 p.m.**

The cost remains \$20, and all proceeds benefit our Mortgage Fund. Please RSVP now since space is limited. You may do so by calling the Church Office and leaving a message. We need your full name and email address—there are items you need to bring with you to attend! Thank you!



## Advocacy at St. John

### From ELCA Advocacy:

As members of the ELCA, we believe that we are freed in Christ to serve and love our neighbor. God uses our hands, through our direct service work and our voices, through our advocacy efforts, to restore and reconcile our world. Through faithful advocacy, the ELCA lives out our Lutheran belief that governments can help advance the common good.

ELCA advocacy works for change in public policy based on the experience of Lutheran ministries, programs and projects around the world and in communities across the United States. We work through political channels on behalf of the following biblical values: peacemaking, hospitality to strangers, care for creation, and concern for people living in poverty and struggling with hunger and disease.

### Advocacy at St. John

We are in the process of forming a committee and plans to help keep members of our congregation up-to-date on the Advocacy efforts of our churchwide ELCA. If you are interested in serving on our Advocacy team to help inform the congregation and develop programs, please speak to Linda Carpenter or Pastor Sarah. Individually, you can learn more about the Advocacy work of our church by visiting the [ELCA.org/Advocacy](http://ELCA.org/Advocacy). Info also available on Twitter and Facebook. There you will find ways to take action to personally impact the policy decisions about poverty, food security, education, the environment, racial equality, criminal justice, immigration, child trafficking, veterans, social safety net programs (medicare, social security, etc.), issues of peace around the world. Pick a topic that interests, or touches, you and get involved. Let your Lutheran voice be heard!



*If you haven't visited the [ELCA.org](http://ELCA.org) website, we invite you to do so!*

*There is a lot of information on the site that you don't want to miss.*

## Serving God Together



*We continue to collect non-perishable food for the students at the local Lutheran Seminary in Philadelphia.* The students have their own food bank at the seminary, and many of them use it due to the rising costs of seminary, housing, and materials. Our gifts are greatly appreciated. Also, we need someone to drive the food every month to the seminary.

There is a clipboard to sign up hanging above the food boxes in the Great Room coat area. There are instructions and a map for drivers. We will collect food all summer, and deliver it in late August. Thank you for your support!



*Our collection of toiletries is also on-going for the local foster care program, Being Beautiful Foundation.*

Our offerings help the foster home save money on providing healthy environments to girls in foster care. Our collection bin is in the coat closet in the Great Room.

Please note: we cannot take clothes, bedding or razors/sharp objects. Towels are permitted!



**Our First Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service will be  
Monday, Jan. 21 from 11:30 to 1 p.m.**

A new tradition has grown to honor this day with providing service to the community you live in.

At St. John, we are organizing an assortment of projects that children, youth and adults can complete together during this time.

Lunch will also be provided.

Watch the bulletin for more details and how you can volunteer.

We welcome the community of Blue Bell to join us, too!



*We offer the sacrament of Holy Communion at every worship service.  
All baptized Christians are welcome to the table.*

Join us for Worship this December and January!

Sundays in Advent – Dec. 2, 9, 16, and 23

Services at 8:15 and 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Services

5 p.m. and 9 p.m.

(at 9 p.m., we have special music begin our service)

*Please note that we will not have a Christmas Day service this year.*

First Sunday of Christmas

Dec. 30 at 9:30 a.m.

*We resume our two worship services on Jan. 6.*

*Poinsettias will be available for sponsorship to beautify our sanctuary this holiday season.*

*Envelopes will be out beginning Dec. 9.*

## Contact Us

St. John Lutheran  
Church  
1802 Skippack Pike  
Blue Bell, PA 19422  
610-277-1086  
Office Email:  
stjohn1802@gmail.com

Website:  
Stjohnbluebell.org

Facebook:  
@stjohnbluebell

Twitter:  
@stjohnbluebell

Nursery School Info:  
610-272-7163

Website:  
stjohnsns.com

School visits are  
available by  
appointment only.

## Staff Listing

Rev. Sarah Stobie, Pastor	<a href="mailto:pastorsarahstobie@gmail.com">pastorsarahstobie@gmail.com</a>
Lawrence Baker, Director of Music	<a href="mailto:lawrencebaker22@gmail.com">lawrencebaker22@gmail.com</a>
Barry Stock, Facilities Coordinator	<a href="mailto:stock825@comcast.net">stock825@comcast.net</a>
Carrie Engel, Nursery School Director	<a href="mailto:carrie@stjohnsns.com">carrie@stjohnsns.com</a>
Katie Myers, Website	<a href="mailto:stjohnbluebell@gmail.com">stjohnbluebell@gmail.com</a>
Ann Brennan, Visual Arts Program Coordinator	<a href="mailto:annlb609@gmail.com">annlb609@gmail.com</a>
Marcie Godby, Bookkeeper	<a href="mailto:stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com">stjohn1802bookkeeper@gmail.com</a>



**Evangelical Lutheran  
Church in America**

God's work. Our hands.



We wish you and your loved ones a holiday season  
filled with peace, love and joy!

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!