



ST. JOHN'S EPISTLE

December 2017 / January 2018

Volume 22 *To sing the Praises of God, to Live the Grace of Jesus, to Share the Gift of the Spirit.* Issue 10

A message from Pastor Kristin



A Quick Look ...

Christmas Party
Sunshine Circle & Adult Bible Class—Bring a covered dish!
Wednesday, 12/6
6:30 p.m., Fellowship Hall

Sunday School Program
“Just A Little Christmas”
Sunday, 12/17
9:15 a.m., Sanctuary

Christmas Eve
Sunday, 12/24
10:30 a.m., 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, and 10:30 p.m.

New Year's Eve
Sunday, 12/31
Christmas Lessons and Carols
8:00 a.m. & 10:30 a.m.
Worship Service (no Sunday School)

“Come Now, O Prince of peace, make us one body. Come, O Lord Jesus, reconcile your people.” (ELW 247)

I love this hymn as it lifts up the prayer I have for Advent, that peace might come among us, we be reconciled and made one. What is your prayer this Advent? What is it that is helping you to mark the days until Christmas? Is it a daily devotion time or prayer? Is it an Advent calendar or reflection? What will you do in this waiting and preparing time called Advent?

In the midst of all that is going on in our lives and the life of the world, let us pray for peace and reconciliation and that we be made one.

Join us on Sundays December 3, 10, 17 for traditional Advent worship.

“Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and everywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!” (ELW 290)

After we've waited and prayed for Jesus' presence to come into our lives and in the life of the world, we hear the good news of Jesus' birth and the news the lowly shepherds received in the fields. We hear the good news that Jesus came for you and for me and for all people.

We share the good news and we “go tell it...” to our family, friends, and neighbors. We invite others to experience God's love and grace in their lives.

Share the news and invite others to join us on Sunday, December 24, Christmas Eve. We will have Christmas Eve worship at 10:30am (no 8:00am service and no Sunday School) 3:00pm, 5:00pm, 7:00pm, and 10:30pm.

May you share and experience God's loving presence this Advent and Christmas Season!

God's Peace -

Pastor Kristin Dubsky
Pastor Kristin Dubsky

Sunday, December 24 Christmas Eve Worship

10:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.
Christmas “Unwrapped” Carols,
Christmas Story,
Sermon & Communion

All services below are with
Candlelight and Holy Communion.

5:00 p.m.

Festival Family Service with
Children's Message and Special Music

7:00 p.m.

Family Service with Children's Message and Special Music

10:30 p.m.

Festival Service with the Adult Choir and Handbell Choir

Pre-service music will begin 15 minutes before.

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CHRISTMAS AT ST. JOHNS!

Celebrate!

Christmas Eve Worship

Invite your family, your friends, your neighbors, and everyone you meet to join us for Christmas Eve!

5:00, 7:00 & 10:30 services are with Candlelight and Holy Communion.

10:30 a.m. & 3:00 p.m.

5:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m.

Christmas "Unwrapped"
Carols, Christmas Story,
Sermon & Communion

Festive Family Service with
Children's Message
and Special Music

Festive Service with
Children's Message and
Special Music

10:30 p.m.

Festive Service with the Adult Choir
and Handbell Choir

Pre-service music will begin 15 minutes before.

New Year's Eve, December 31

8:00 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Worship of
Christmas Lessons and Carols

(no Sunday School)



The Sunshine Circle and Adult Bible Class will hold their combined Christmas Party on December 6 at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. It will be a covered dish dinner, with drinks, rolls and dessert provided. The Sunshine Circle is in charge of devotions and the program, and The Adult Bible Class is the hostess. This is open to friends and family members. Please call Audrey Byrd at 410-848-1995 with questions.

The next meeting for the Sunshine Circle will be Thursday, March 1.



A Christmas celebration for the Christian Singles Group will be held on Friday, December 15, at 6:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall beginning with a covered dish dinner. Each person is asked to bring a covered dish, a wrapped gift (\$10) and a food item for Carroll County Food Sunday. All adult Singles are invited to attend for an evening of fun and fellowship.

Members of the Christian Singles Group are invited to Nancy Dean's house to celebrate the beginning of a "New Year" on Friday, January 19, at 6:30 p.m.



Pastoral Acts:

Funerals

Peggy Reed (Carroll Lutheran Village) - October 27, 2017

Grover Conrad - November 20, 2017

Death

Catherine Jane Zincon (wife of Charles Zincon) - November 17, 2017

YOUTH



On the Road to Houston 2018!

6 youth and 4 adults are headed to Houston in June for the 2018 ELCA Youth Gathering – where they will be joining with 30,000 youth and adults from around the country to grow as disciples, worship, serve and learn together!

We ask for your prayer support. Please pray for the people of Houston, all who are planning the Gathering and for all who will be attending the Gathering.

We ask for your financial support. We will be having a number of fundraisers to help us get there. Please support us financially. You do not need to support each fundraiser, but choose the ones that you are interested in. Thank you for your prayer and financial support.

Upcoming Fundraisers:

Buy A Mile Fundraiser – It is 1244 miles to Houston. **Help our group get to Houston as you “buy a mile”** (or a few miles). Cost: \$10/mile. We will have displays in the narthex and in the fellowship hall showing you how we are doing in raising the money we need to get to Houston. (This fundraiser will take the place of our **“stock” fundraiser that normally begins at Easter.**) This fundraiser will run from Mid-January – May.

Saturday, January 13- Possible pancake breakfast at church – Please watch the bulletin and e-hello for the details.

January 26-February 12 – Gertrude Hawk Chocolate Sale – Orders will arrive the week of March 5 (so they are here in plenty of time before Easter)




MEMBERS OF ST. JOHN’S:
George & Theo Amoss, Jacob Armacost, Dave & Loretta Basler, Dot Bean, Lily Blubaugh, John & Betty Boone, Charles & Zadie Brehm, Pat Brehm, The Family of Grover Conrad, Mittie Coppersmith, Della Dell, Ron & Beverly Dutterer, Donald & Pat Heath, Jack & Jeanne Joiner, Nancy Jones, Betty Knisley, Edith Linthicum, Pat Lipscomb, Yvonne Mathias, Bonnie Null, Claire Null, the Family of Peggy Reed, Muriel Sabo, Tracey Sanford, Ken Seitz, Adelaide Sies, Richard Smith, Tom Tracey, Emily Van Horn, The West Family, Lorrie Wilson and The Zincon Family.

FRIENDS OF ST. JOHN’S: Rita Bauhof, Dawn Bitzel, The Bordenski Family, Beth Anne Basler Busch, Amber Blubaugh, Ronald Boone, Joann Bradich, Andy Cashman, Scott Cronkite, Jerry Day, Ella Edwards, Christian Filipov, Morley Frado, Ginni Gordon, Laurel Greeley, Pat and Jerry Grotfelty, Natalie Halpin, Elwood Hawes, Sr., Eila Howe, Linda Basler Holland and Ken Holland, Cathy Jones, Gabriel Knepp, Don & Charlotte Ludwig, Joe McLaughlin, Pastor Richard Michael and Eva Michael, Wyatt Miller, Jeanne Mueller, Erin Murphy & Haitian Timoun Foundation, Kay Murphy, Harold Nelson, Pauline Nelson, Leann R., Beverly & Jack Rose, Ms. Wilda Simpson, David & Debbie Smith, Aileen Stroebel, Courtney Topolski, Wendy Steil, Elizabeth Watson, Laura Welty.

THOSE SERVING IN THE MILITARY: Keith Blizzard, Marshall Brown, Barry Durm, Michael & Lucia Gaffney, Katie & Brian Fenstermaker.

This prayer list was updated on November 28, 2017.

Please help keep this list current and accurate. Contact the office at 410-848-6402 or office@stjohnswestminster.org with changes (changes include updates, corrections, deletions, new names).



The Giving Tree. Through Sunday, December 17, the **Christian Outreach Committee** will hold a collection drive of new underwear and socks for adult men and women going through a difficult time. A “Giving Tree” is set up in the rear of the church. Your donations can be placed in the basket in the Narthex or in the Caring Corner in the Fellowship Hall. See Roxanne Malbrough or Pam Goodson for more information.

HAPPENING AROUND THE CHURCH

St. John's Soup Kitchen Committee will work The Shepherd's Table on Friday, January 12, 2018, at 10:30 a.m. If you can spare two or three hours to help God's People in need, please contact Lisa Gavin 410-857-1499 or Jackie Leister 410-857-0505. Let us remember those less fortunate.

The Shepherd's Staff Newsletter Team will assemble the winter edition of The Shepherd's Staff's newsletter on Monday, Dec. 11, 9:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m., Tuesday, Dec. 12, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00, with newsletter being picked up Thursday, 9:00 a.m. Lunch will be provided. For more information contact Linda Sterner 410-596-3921 or sternerlm@outlook.com.

CONTINUE TO SUPPORT BIKILTU!

On **December 3, 2017** and **January 7, 2018**, containers will be available in the church for loose change to be used for the Sunshine Circle's "Adopt a Child" program. **Thank you for helping change this young girl's life!** We will continue to share information on Bikiltu. - *Audrey Byrd*



Sunday, December 10, is the last day to order poinsettias and animal shares for Christmas Eve.

St. John's Sunday School Christmas Program!

"Just A Little Christmas", with a few Special Guests and Christmas Carols, will be held on Sunday, December 17 at 9:15am in the sanctuary followed by fellowship in the narthex. Please join us for this festive Christmas celebration with all ages. All are welcome.

MEN OF THE CONGREGATION

News from the Men of the Congregation (December and January)

PAST NEWS

November 11: The regularly scheduled breakfast meeting was held on Saturday, November 11 at the Meadow Branch Church of the Brethren. Topics for the day included Veteran's Day, the first Thanksgiving, reformers before the Reformation, and Outreach giving church-wide.

UPCOMING EVENTS (Dec. 2017 thru Feb. 2018)

December 9: The regularly scheduled breakfast meeting will be held on Saturday, December 9, 8:00 AM, at the Meadow Branch Church of the Brethren.

January 13: Regular meeting will be held on this date. Details will be in the bulletin and provided online

February 10: Regular meeting will on Saturday, February 10, at 8:00 AM. Details of the meeting will be printed in the bulletin and placed online.

February 13: Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper.

THANKS THANKS THANKS THANKS

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Jacob Armacost fundraiser on Saturday, November 18, 2017.

To: Audrey Byrd for lining up the donations.
All those who baked cakes, pies, cookies and brownies for the event.
Carol Blubaugh, Paul Leduc and Sarah Leduc for cutting and packing all the desserts for transport.
To all those who came to the fire hall to serve food and help out: Carol Blubaugh, David, Lisa and Emily Ogg, Heather and Ray Snyder, Dale Miller, Ken and Jean Seitz, Joan Phillips, Carole Brothers
There was a large crowd that attended the event and the servers got the line thru in just over an hour! Great Job!!! It was a very successful evening! Thank you everyone!

Karen Siegman

Thank you to Nancy Dean and members of the Fellowship Committee who helped to prepare food for the Thanksgiving Dinner along with all those who brought salads and desserts to share last Sunday evening. 66 people attended the event. Thank you to Nancy Dean for also doing the program for the event. We are a BLESSED congregation who shares their TALENTS. Karen Siegman

THANK YOU

Dave and I feel so blessed to be members of St. John's. We feel the love and **warmth all the time. This week we had visitors Barbara and Richard "Whitey" Smith** from Evangelism. They are wonderful people. We felt so great after their visit we didn't want them to leave! They tried to convince us what a loving and caring congregation it was! Of course, we didn't need any convincing at all! Thank you St. John's for showing God's love and care in many ways! May God continue to bless you all! Loretta & Dave Basler

Dear St. John's Westminster,

On behalf of seafarers from around the world, many thanks for the 29 Christmas boxes delivered Tuesday. This is the hardest time of year for seafarers, and tangible signs that someone cares are very important to their well-being. We know that it's also a demanding time of year for congregations, so we're very grateful for the generous gift of your time and financial resources toward this project.

I hope these emailed thanks will be easy to share with all concerned. God bless and happy Thanksgiving.

Gratefully,

Mary

The Rev. Mary Davisson, Director
Baltimore International Seafarers' Center

Thank you from the Members of the Adult Bible Class:

A BIG thank you to everyone who helped to make the Rummage Sale a huge success. From unloading the shed, donating items, putting items out to sell, pricing items, making sandwiches, cutting vegetables, baking items for the bake table, selling food, selling treasures and helping to clean up on Saturday afternoon (there were at least 20 people who turned out to help clean up - many hands makes for a faster clean up on the final day of this big event!) - THANK YOU EVERYONE!!! As always, we are blessed to have many dedicated people who give **their "time, talent and manual labor" to help with this event.** So far, our profit is \$4,000.00. THANK YOU!!! SEE YOU IN THE SPRING OF 2018!!!

Karen Siegman

2018 Council Members

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Pastor Kristin Dubsky

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2018 Committee Chairs

Cemetery	Ken Seitz
Christian Education &	
Youth.....	Julia Wolfe
Evangelism.....	Loretta Basler
Fellowship.....	Karen Siegman
Stewardship.....	Carl Rebert
Property.....	
Worship & Music.....	Dennis Kniss
Christian Outreach.....	Roxanne Malbrough
Finance.....	Janet Gross
	John Bucacink

THANK YOU



WE MADE A DIFFERENCE!!

THANK YOU! We want to thank everyone who has helped, or donated materials for our Quilt Mission. This includes material, thread, batting, mattress covers, sewing machines, money and most importantly TIME, to make the quilts and rolled bandages that are needed.

This past year we have made 33 Mission Quilts, 22 Fleece Quilts and rolled 2,819 bandages. This is super!! Without YOU, this would not be possible. The cost of making these quilts would make it impossible for us to do this project. To make a fleece quilt it costs us \$30/quilt – and that is considering sale prices on the fleece. For the mission quilts it costs us approximately \$15 for the batting (the material and thread are all donated).

So... you do the math for the number of quilts that we assembled.

These quilts are taken to New Windsor to Lutheran World Relief. They were very happy to see us when we made the delivery. With all the tragedies that have happened, here and abroad, the quilts were in great demand.

Thanks again to all the people and groups that donated money, the Action Team money from Thrivent members, and the donation of materials from so many of you. Without you the cost would be prohibitive and we would not be able to continue this project. Gloria Kniss



Thanks to all who helped to make our blood drive a success. We obtained 31 units which will help to save possibly 93 people. Also thanks to Dale Miller for opening the church and setting up and Barb and Whitey Smith for managing the canteen. See you in the spring. Audrey Byrd.

Thank you for the flowers. We will always remember your kindness and sympathy.

The family of Peggy Reed: Art, Keith Sr., Keith Jr., and Cinda Reed

I want to thank the Evangelism Committee for the Thanksgiving card and bag of "goodies" and surprises you sent me. The ladies of St. John's really do make good cookies!

Sincerely, Yvonne Mathias

Thank you for your donation of \$760.00 to the Shepherd's Staff.

Your donation helped with our Back-To-School program. Over 1000 students from Head Start through High School received new backpacks, school materials, clothes and a shoe voucher for a new pair of shoes. A wonderful way to start the new school year!

We greatly appreciate your extreme generosity, thoughtfulness and continued support of our efforts to help Carroll County Families.

The Shepherd's Staff—Brenda Meadows, Executive Director



Be A Santa's Helper! Sandi and Matthew West are collecting money through Sunday, December 3, to donate stuffed animals to the children at Sinai and John Hopkins

Pediatric Oncology wards, in hopes of making Christmas brighter for over 500 children. Please be a Santa's Helper this year. Your monetary donation will allow us to send enough Teddy Bears to these hospitals so every child will have a brighter Christmas. Call or e-mail us today with your donation - Sandi & Matthew West, Camelot West Family Services, 410-848-4414/ 443-929-2105, camelotwest@comcast.net.



Advent Family Gathering
Sunday, December 3 1-4 pm

Bring your family and friends and start a new tradition! Enjoy the warmth of our woodstoves and campfires, create some holiday crafts for your home, make a beautiful wreath with greens from the property and fellowship over a delicious meal in Agape Hall.

\$7/adult - \$3/youth ages 3-11 -

Children under 3 are free

Please RSVP by December 1:

mlr@mar-lu-ridge.org 800.238.9974

Note: Please bring your own wire and wire wreath frames, all other supplies included in the cost.

EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

Evangelism Committee met to prepare for approximately 20 visitations for homebound congregational members under the leadership of Audrey Byrd. They baked homemade cookies to be included in the surprise bags and signed cards for our visits. Next, committee members selected the folks they would deliver the filled surprise bags to! Along with them, they took hugs, prayers, and stories to share about St. John's Church! Both the givers and receivers were blessed by these meetings. God is good! God's love feels warm. Everyone invoked gets positive vibes from this experience!

Our eyeglass collection will end Dec. 3, 2017. Place the used eyewear in the plastic box in the Caring Corner. Together we can reach our goal! We have been collecting used eyewear since 2006, and this year we will reach over 2,000 pairs! Emily Ogg will turn the glasses in for us!!

Our next meeting date to prepare for homebound visitations will be Sat. Feb 3 at 10 am.



Sub Time. During January our committee will call you to order your sub! We will make the subs on Saturday Feb. 3 in the fellowship Hall to benefit Jacob Armacost and 2018 Youth Gathering in Houston. Choices for subs include turkey or cold cuts at \$5.00 each, both kind are offered with or without onions. Please put our subs on your Super Bowl menu. We will also accept cash donations! Thank you in advance for your support. Questions? Call David Ogg or Loretta Basler.

We sent greeting cards to our military folks and thanked them for what they do for keeping this great nation as safe as possible.

Senior Profile. We are looking for seniors 75 plus to add to our history book for St. John's members.

Please call the church secretary if you no longer use your land line phone, or have changed cell numbers or changed addresses! We need to keep our directory information up to date! Call the church office today with your information 410-848--6402.

May the peace of the Lord abide in your heart, thoughts and lives. May The Lord be revealed In all that you think, say and do in this joyous season
Loretta Basler 443-289-8938.

Church Building and Campus Stewardship: An Important Mission

Stewardship is an important aspect of Christian life. It is important that we as a congregation care for the possessions that have been supplied for us over the last 170 plus years. We have a wonderful House of Worship and campus that have been cared for by many volunteers in that time.

Recent improvements have been made by volunteers to extend the life of the facility and enhance the quality of the facilities. A new roof was placed on the storage building. A large pile of rock and soil was removed from the area around the well cap. Then grading and seeding took place to restore the area. The Chapel in the Woods has been updated and maintained. Minor remodeling was completed to provide some storage space. Outdated carpet was removed from the church office. The kitchen stove and several water leaks were fixed. A new propane supplier was obtained. The pavilion roof was painted, unwanted and unneeded items were disposed of, and light bulbs were changed. Other projects are being planned.

Much has been accomplished by volunteer workers and dedicated committee members, the backbone of our physical plant stewardship for decades. We thank them for their continued service to the congregation. Many helping hands make the work easier and allows for other use of our offerings and funds. As upcoming projects are planned and advertised, please consider volunteering your time for **God's Kingdom.** **Dennis Kniss**



REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR
Each day you add an item to the box and on Christmas Eve you donate the contents to a foodbank.

How about a different spin on Advent this year? Rather than adding more and more stuff - what if each day in Advent

1) you found something to be given away (a piece of clothing, pair of shoes, etc.) and put it in a box or
2) you put a non-perishable food item or hygiene item and put that in a box—at the end of Advent you gave your items to Carroll Food Sunday or NESAP or The Shepherd's Staff or another local agency. Each day you would think of sharing what you have with others, rather than accumulating more things.

Bishop Gohl's 2017 Christmas Message

Down in a lonely manger, the humble Christ was born; and God sent us salvation that blessed Christmas morn!

My beloved, all:

Christmas is a time of joyous surprise as we receive God's gift of hope yet again. The darkness, though threatening, has not overwhelmed us. In bread and cup, body and blood, the gift of Christ comes given and shed for you, for me and for all. In a simple, almost hidden way, hope breaks into our hearts, our lives and our world anew.

The joy of such a simple, subtle surprise stands in stark contrast to the let-down **experienced by so many of us. Gail Ramshaw once put it succinctly: "Santa Claus promised us perpetual happiness, a mythic family gathering, mounds of toys, all of our heart's desires. But it didn't happen. Heaven didn't establish itself in my living room this year. We got sick on the eggnog..."**

Because Christmas is for so many a painful time, a season of disappointment and **loneliness, it is important for the church's celebrations and holy day observances to be** different.

Let this season of hope be a time of telling the truth in love. Let it be a time to center our lives in prayer, the Word made flesh, a holy communion with God and neighbor. Let us remind one another, that though the wrong seems oft so strong, God is born among us, still the ruler yet. Let us receive the gift; and be in Christ, gift to one another and the world.

Praying with you that our days and our deeds in this Christmas season and throughout 2018 will be marked with peace. I am grateful for the privilege of serving Christ with the Pastors, Deacons and Lay Leaders of our Delaware-Maryland Synod; may we witness faithfully to the love of God in Jesus Christ, our Emmanuel.

...Go tell it on the mountain, over the hills and ev'rywhere; go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

The Rev. William (Bill) Gohl, Jr., Bishop
Delaware-Maryland Synod, ELCA

“God’s Global Barnyard”

Matthew 25:35

“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.”

This Christmas Season, you can choose to purchase poinsettias to help adorn the church & / or you can purchase animal shares that will help purchase animals from “God’s Global Barnyard” a “good gift” program of the ELCA World Hunger program for families around the world. (check out elca.org/goodgifts for more information)

Due: Sunday, December 10

Cost per share: \$10.50

Make check payable to: St. John’s Lutheran Church (please write “animal shares” in the memo portion of the check

Please place in the offering plates.

Your name: _____

Phone Number: _____
(you will be contacted if there are questions about the information listed below)

Total animal shares: _____ x \$10.50 = _____

My animal shares are given:
_____ in memory of _____

_____ in honor of _____

_____ to the glory of God.

By: _____



We are continuing the tradition of decorating the sanctuary with beautiful red poinsettias for Christmas Eve. We invite you to remember or honor a loved one by ordering a poinsettia! THANKS!

Deadline for ordering: Sunday, December 10, 2017

Cost per plant: \$10.50

Make check payable to: St. John’s Lutheran Church (please write “Poinsettias” in memo portion of check)

Envelopes & pens will be available on the table in the Narthex.
PLACE ORDERS, ALONG WITH YOUR PAYMENT (CASH OR CHECK), IN AN ENVELOPE MARKED “POINSETTIAS” AND PLACE THE ENVELOPE IN THE OFFERING PLATE.

Total poinsettias plants: _____ x \$10.50 = _____

Your Name: _____

Phone Number: _____ (You will be contacted at this number if there are any questions about the information below.)

IMPORTANT: The information you fill in below is what will appear in the special Poinsettia Bulletin on Christmas Eve. **Please PRINT clearly.** “Sections” 1 and 2 must be filled out!

1) The Poinsettia(s) is (are) given:

_____ in memory of _____

_____ in honor of _____

_____ to the glory of God

2) By:

Feel free to retrieve your purchased poinsettia(s) after Christmas Eve service. All poinsettias left may be given to a shut-in. Call the office at 410-848-6402 with questions.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Our 2017 budget projected a deficit of \$21,570. As of the end of September the deficit was \$28,700. A substantial amount of our offerings are received in the fourth quarter of each year. Even with this we still are projecting that the deficit will be at least \$20,000. Our expenses will come in very close to budget. The proposed 2018 budget has expenses \$1285 less than 2017. The income is being projected at a lower therefore, we have a projected deficit for 2018 of \$29,785. Before we vote on the 2018 proposed spending plan I would like to take a few minutes to look at some trends over the past few years and the future. I have attached a graph that shows our budgeted and actual expenses for 2013 through 2016. It also shows the actual income for the same years.

Our actual expenses have been less than the budgeted amount each year, but I want to emphasize that much of this was because during part of 2014, all of 2015 and part of 2016 we were without an organist. Therefore, much of the savings in expenses was because we did not have a full staff. Since part way through 2016 we have a full staff and we hope this continues. Therefore, we anticipate that our expenses will be closer to the budgeted amounts. Also, if you look at the bar for budgeted expenses you will see that between 2013 and 2018 we have only increased the expenses by about \$3500. This is only about a 1.5% increase in six years. Our actual income for the period of 2013 through 2016 has actually decreased by about 8%. I hope this graph highlights that we have worked hard to keep expenses in check but unfortunately our offerings have not met these expenses and have decreased. Our committees have cut their budgets wherever possible. Unfortunately, some of our major expenses are the upkeep of the building and those expenses are very difficult to reduce.

My point in showing this is to emphasize that I feel we must be serious about looking at our deficits and ways to remedy this. At the level of deficits that we have currently we have enough funds for about five years. I want to emphasize that a church should not concentrate on just bringing in offerings. We must focus on our ministry and I truly believe that if we are successful with that ministry then the financial part will follow. Saying that, I also think that each of us need to prayerfully consider if we are doing what we are called to do to support this ministry. I believe that we all can think of times that our church community has held us up when we needed help. This community is important to so many of us and we should consider if we can do more to support it.

We are all called to give of our first fruits to the church. Our church has always done this also. The church's support and outreach to the greater church and community in 2016 included:

Carroll Lutheran School \$500

NESAP \$500

Mar-Lu-Ridge \$500

Shepherd's Staff \$500

Soup Kitchen both money and volunteer time

Lenten Offerings \$3,680

Other Special Offerings \$1,821

Donations from our Rummage Sales each year

Collections of clothing items at Christmas

Collections to support Carroll Food Sunday

Designated funds from Thrivent that help with our fundraisers or go directly to our church

\$14,139 designated by members to go to our Synod. Please remember that a portion of this is used by the Del/MD

Synod and the remainder goes to the greater church. This money is used for not only administrative expenses but also for worldwide ministries.

I am sure that I have missed some items here, but my point is that even with our church have some of its own challenges we are still committed to following our calling to help others from our first fruits.

I also want to take a few minutes to make sure that everyone understands how our envelope system works and what the different funds are used for. On our envelopes you can allocate your offering to Current, Improvement, Benevolence or Thankoffering. If you do not designate any amounts all the amount in the envelope will go to Current.

The current fund is what is used to pay our normal operating expenses and supports our ministry. The major categories of expenses are salaries, property, Christian outreach, Christian education and youth ministry, fellowship and office expenses.

The Improvement fund is used to pay for repairs and improvements to our equipment and property.

Benevolence is the amount that is sent to the Del/MD Synod.

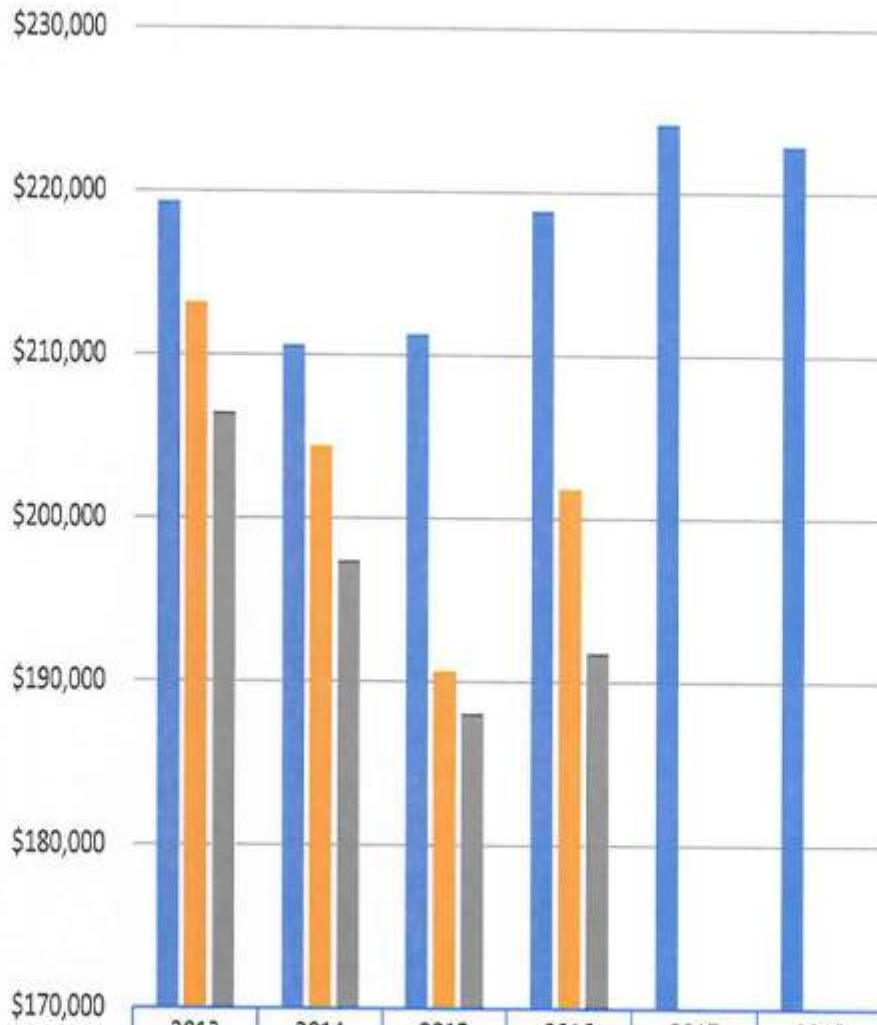
The Thankoffering Fund has a goal of building funds that can be used at the discretion of the church council to pay for needs such as new ministries or meet current expenses. At this time if there is a deficit at the end of the year 10% of the amount in the fund is transferred to current fund to help offset the deficit.

Please also remember that you can also sign up for direct deposit for your offerings. This can be done on a weekly or monthly basis to meet your budget needs. This is a way to help the church ensure a more regular cash flow. Information is available on the church website, in the newsletter or you can contact John Bucacink for help. We will be offering additional brochures and opportunities to sign up in the near future.

I know this presentation is longer than normal, but I wanted the congregation to understand our current situation and, I wanted to help remind/educate members on the finances. I hope I have done this. I want to conclude by saying that I think we all need to look at how we can help to further and enhance our ministry here at St John's. Yes, our church has challenges but we need to remember all the good that is done at this church and if we concentrate on the positives and on what we are called to do as Christians we will resolve many of the other issues.

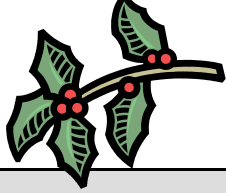
Janet Gross (Report from November 12, 2017, Special Congregational Meeting)

INCOME/EXPENSES

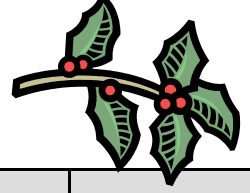


	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$219,337	\$210,607	\$211,273	\$218,881	\$224,170	\$222,885
ACTUAL EXPENSES	\$213,174	\$204,412	\$190,624	\$201,836		
ACTUAL INCOME	\$206,483	\$197,412	\$188,110	\$191,815		

■ BUDGETED EXPENSES
 ■ ACTUAL EXPENSES
 ■ ACTUAL INCOME



December



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 ALL DAY Scrapbooking
3 <i>Advent 1</i> 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Altar Flowers: Mark Howard</i>	4 6:30 p.m. 4-H	5 6:15 p.m. Handbells 7:30 p.m. Council	6 6:30 p.m. Sunshine Circle / Adult Bible Class Christmas Party 7:30 p.m. Choir	7 3:00 p.m. Christian Outreach	8	9 8:00 a.m. Men's breakfast at Meadow Branch Church of the Brethren
10 <i>Advent 2</i> 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Education Hour 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Altar Flowers: Audrey Byrd</i> 1:00—7:00 p.m. Moklak Family Dinner-Fellowship Hall	11 9:30-2:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m. Coin Club Banquet	12 Shepherd's Staff folding, Fellowship Hall in use 9:00-2:00 p.m. 6:15 p.m. Handbells	13 7:30 p.m. Choir	14 9:00 a.m. SS Newsletter Pickup	15 6:30 p.m. Christian Singles	16
17 <i>Advent 3</i> 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Christmas Program 10:30 a.m. Worship <i>Altar Flowers: Stanley Parks</i>	18	19 6:15 p.m. Handbells	20 7:30 p.m. Choir	21 11:00 a.m. Christmas Bulletins Folding Party & Luncheon	22	23
24 <i>CHRISTMAS Eve</i> 10:30 a.m. 3:00 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m. 10:30 p.m. <i>Altar Flowers: Andrea Cosentini</i>	25 ←	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27	28	29	30 →
31 <i>New Year's Eve</i> 8:00 a.m. Worship 10:30 a.m. Worship (no Sunday School) <i>Altar Flowers: Frances DeBruyn</i>						



Happy Birthday!

Jennifer Nevin 12/05	Nancy Dean 12/10	Gregory Dell 12/16	Christopher Short 12/21
Petrina Gillman 12/06	Ian Bucacink 12/11	Braiden Sabo 12/16	Christine Brehm 12/23
Allison Sabo 12/06	Douglas Goodson 12/11	Lynn Habicht 12/17	Carol Blubaugh 12/25
Hannah Sisler 12/06	David Bollinger 12/12	Carl Rebert 12/17	Avery Dull 12/27
Kelly Cox 12/07	Elizabeth Kriel 12/12	Joan Phillips 12/18	Leslie Seitz 12/29
Elizabeth Short 12/08	Robert Blauvelt 12/13	Jean Seitz 12/18	Sandi West 12/29
Keith Siegman 12/08	James Dodge, Jr. 12/14	Kenneth Williams 12/18	
Robin Weisse 12/08	George Fleming 12/14	Kayla Hunt 12/19	

Is there an omission? A change needed? **PLEASE** contact the church office at 410-848-6402!



January



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1	2 7:30 p.m. Council	3 7:30 p.m. Choir	4	5	6 Epiphany Day
7 Epiphany Sunday 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship Altar Flowers: Dale Miller	8 February News- letter Input Due	9 6:30 p.m. Christian Ed	10 7:30 p.m. Choir	11	12 10:30 a.m. Soup Kitchen	13 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast ALL DAY Scrapbooking
14 Baptism of Our Lord 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship Altar Flowers: Genny Resch	15	16	17 7:30 p.m. Choir	18	19 6:30 p.m. Christian Singles New Year's Celebration	20
21 3rd Sunday after Epiphany 8:00 a.m. Traditional Worship 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. LET IT RISE! Con- temporary Worship Altar Flowers: Barbara & Richard Smith	22	23	24 7:30 p.m. Choir	25 10:00 a.m. February Newsletter Assembly	26	27
28 4th Sunday after Epiphany 8:00 a.m. Worship 9:15 a.m. Sunday School 10:30 a.m. Worship Altar Flowers: Audrey Byrd	29	30	31			

	Nancy Boone 01/01	Regina Resch 01/06	Matthew Resch 01/15	Hannah Seitz 01/27
	Debbie Miller 01/01	Mary Blauvelt 01/09	Karen Siegman 01/16	Nicole Yeager 01/27
	Sue Shaffer 01/02	Marlyn Leister 01/09	William Tasker 01/17	Donna Armacost 01/28
	Darrin Peregoy 01/02	Nancy Tracey 01/09	Megan Martindale 01/19	Barbara Williams 01/29
	Elizabeth Knisley 01/03	Karen Monroe 01/10	Gloria Kniss 01/21	John Brehm 01/30
	Ronald Menchey Sr. 01/03	Muriel Sabo 01/12	Naomi Mathias 01/21	Betty Hoff 01/30
Shelly Brehm 01/04	Lindsay Dodge 01/15	Kristin Dubsy 01/23		
Megan Resch 01/05	Genny Resch 01/15	Jessica Seymer 01/24		

 * **There are several spaces available on the 2018 flower calendar.** *
 * **Flowers can be purchased for \$45.00.** *

DECEMBER 2017 WORSHIP LEADER CALENDAR

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER	LECTOR	ACOLYTE (10:30)	GREETERS	USHERS/ OFFERING (10:30)	COUNT TEAM
8:00 a.m. —12/03—	Jack Joiner	Jack Joiner		Lois & Larry Bankert		Stewart Sterner Drew Dean Audrey Byrd
10:30 a.m.	Pat Heath	Sarah LeDuc	Lara Findeisen	The Findeisen Family	Pat & Donald Heath	
8:00 a.m. —12/10—	Carl Rebert	Carl Rebert		Audrey Byrd		Dale Miller Deb Schaefer Michael Schaefer
10:30 a.m.	Doris Zepp	Pam Goodson	Spencer Goodson	Jean Seitz & Joan Phillips	Barbara & Richard Smith	
8:00 a.m. —12/17—	Maggie Langdon	Maggie Langdon		George Nelson		Sarah LeDuc Paul LeDuc Dave Bollinger
10:30 a.m.	Carl Rebert	Steve Findeisen	Olivia Leister	Nancy Dean & Stephanie Dean	The Brian Leister Family	
—12/24— 10:30 a.m.	John Bucacink	Lori Bucacink	TBD	The West Family	Gloria Kniss	TBD
3:00 p.m.			↓			
5:00 p.m.						
7:00 p.m.						
10:30 p.m.			↓			
8:00 a.m. —12/31—	Dennis Kniss	Dennis Kniss		Lois & Phil Short		TBD
10:30 a.m.	Julia Wolfe	Dolly Long	TBD	Dolly & Dan Long	Nancy & Bill Squires	

*For the month of December the Altar Guild is Lois Bankert & Dale Miller (8:00 a.m.) and Carol Blubaugh (10:30 a.m.).
Christmas Eve: 10:30 a.m.: 3:00 p.m.: TBD 5:00 p.m.: 7:00 p.m.: 10:30 p.m.:*

JANUARY 2018 WORSHIP LEADER CALENDAR

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER	LECTOR	ACOLYTE	GREETERS	USHERS/ OFFERING (10:30)	COUNT TEAM
8:00 a.m. —1/07—	Jack Joiner	Jack Joiner		Wanda Little		TBD
10:30 a.m.	John Bucacink	Pam Goodson	Spencer Goodson	Melanie Martindale	Barbara & Richard Smith	
8:00 a.m. —1/14—	Tracey Sanford	Tracey Sanford		Stanley Parks		Pat Heath Donald Heath Genny Resch
10:30 a.m.	Carl Rebert	Stephanie Dean	Tate Gavin	Nancy & Bill Squires	The Brian Leister Family	
8:00 a.m. —1/21—	Maggie Langdon	Maggie Langdon		Audrey Byrd		Maggie Langdon Muriel Sabo Carl Rebert
10:30 a.m.	Julia Wolfe	Austin Leister	Ashley Leister	Jean Seitz & Joan Phillips	Genny Resch	
8:00 a.m. —1/28—	Dennis Kniss	Dennis Kniss		Mark Howard		Teresa McCulloh Donna Yeager Bryan Yeager
10:30 a.m.	Donna Yeager	Spencer Goodson	Mary West	Dolly & Dan Long	Pat & Donald Heath	

For the month of January, the Altar Guild is Lois Bankert & Dale Miller (8:00 a.m.) and Gloria Kniss & Sharon Minor (10:30 a.m.).

THANK OFFERING FUND

Our Thank Offering Fund has had a great kick-off. On behalf of St. John's we are very happy and thankful for the congregation's response and offerings to this date. We all hope this fund can help our church mission go forward without many of the financial problems and needs that confront other congregations. Remember the creation of this fund is being used in the future to help balance a yearly budget or for other missions of the church that the Finance Committee and Church Council approve.

Below are several ways that a member can make a donation to the fund. This can be done before the end of 2015 or any time in the future. This will be an ongoing fund that a member can contribute to at any time writing their request through church envelopes, E-giving or any of the other options suggested.

In the future there will be updates in the newsletter as to the growth of the fund. If anyone has questions please contact the church treasurer.

Ways that you can contribute to the ongoing spirit of Christ in our church!

Donation Cash or Check; Appreciated Securities; Real Estate; Bequests (Wills & Trusts); Life Insurance; Qualified Retirement Plans.

FINANCIAL NEWS/COUNCIL LIST/UPDATE

Keeping You Current

We would like to keep everyone current on our Spending Plan. Every Sunday in the bulletin, we publish the prior week's offering. Here is the update of the progress of our Spending Plan.

The average weekly current offerings needed to meet our 2016 Spending Plan are \$3,950 per week and the average weekly benevolence offering needs to be \$380.00.



JANUARY - OCTOBER 2017	
Total Income	\$144,540
Total Expense	\$179,103
Net Income (Deficit)	\$(34,563)
Improvement Fund Income	\$4,799
Improvement Fund Expenses	\$5,395
Benevolence Income	\$11,708
Thankoffering	\$3,056

Pick up your 2018 Giving Envelopes in the Narthex.

Reminder for 2018: Electronic Giving is Easy!

As a way to automate your weekly or one-time offerings, Electronic Giving offers convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation. Electronic Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account. This can be done in one of two ways: 1) Fill out an Authorization Form (found outside the church office) and send it to the church office, or 2) Go to the church website (www.stjohnswestminster.org) and click the green "Online Giving" button at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

827 Leister's Church Road Westminster, MD 21157 ~ 410-848-6402 ~ www.stjohnswestminster.org

St. John's Epistle is published each month by St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Westminster, Maryland.

St. John's is a congregation of the Delaware-Maryland Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Articles for the February newsletter should be submitted no later than Monday, January 8, 2018! Please send the articles to Frances, the church Office Manager, at office@stjohnswestminster.org or place them in her mailbox.

Thanks!

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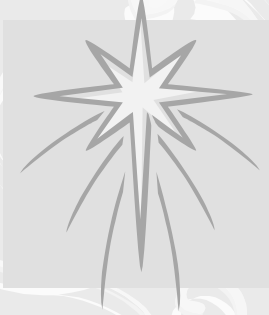
Pastor: The Rev. Kristin Dubsy • pastor@stjohnswestminster.org

Office Manager: Frances DeBruyn • office@stjohnswestminster.org

Director of Music: Wayne Grauel • music@stjohnswestminster.org—410-804-8407

Office Hours:

Tuesday - Friday, 9:00-3:00



Worship Schedule

8:00 am Holy Communion Worship Service

9:15 am Education Hour (All are Welcome)

10:30 am Holy Communion Worship Service

Please contact the church office....

... if you move to a new address or your telephone number or email address changes.

... if you or a member of your family is admitted to the hospital so the pastor may schedule a hospital visit.

... when a member of your family leaves home for college.

... when your committee or group plans a meeting or an activity—the date needs to be cleared and the church calendar noted.

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