St. John's Lutheran Church
of Highland
311 Cumberland Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15237

Information as of
MARCH 2025

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"Making Christ Known"

Volume 6, Number 3

Email - sjlutheran@verizon.net

phone - 412-364-1606

Saturday Worship:
5:30 p.m. - *Traditional*

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:15 a.m. - *Traditional with Livestream*
9:30 - 10:30 - *Christian Education*
10:45 a.m. - *Contemporary with Livestream*

www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Pastor Kari Smail
Pastor Beth Clementson

MARCH 2025

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

Through God All Things Are Possible

"Making Christ Known"

MARCH 2025 EDITION

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Current Church Council Members

PRESIDENT - CHRISTIAN ED.	STEVE GOTTSCHALK
VICE PRESIDENT - CEMETERY	SAM SESTI
TREASURER - FINANCE	JESSICA GAMACHÉ
SECRETARY - EVANGELISM	WENDY WEST HICKEY
SENIOR PASTOR	PASTOR SMAIL
ASSOCIATE PASTOR	PASTOR CLEMENTSON
MUTUAL MINISTRY	MATTHEW GALBRAITH
YOUTH MINISTRY	JAY CAULKINS
STEWARDSHIP	MARCIE EMORY
SOCIAL MINISTRY	TONY GOOD
WORSHIP & MUSIC	MARSHA LOGAN
PRESCHOOL	JODY REMOVCHIK
FELLOWSHIP	SANDY ALLEN
PROPERTY	LLOYD WHITE

St. John's Current Staff

SENIOR PASTOR	KARI SMAIL
ASSOCIATE PASTOR	BETH CLEMENTSON
DIR. OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC	RON BALING
ORGANIST & DIR. OF CHOIRS	JOSEPH TUTTLE
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR	MARY LYNNE MARTIN
OFFICE ASSISTANT	ANDREA MILLER
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE CLERK	RICH VOLPE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER	LAURA COOMBS
DIR. OF ST. JOHN'S PRESCHOOL	JENNIFER BOLINDA
YOUTH MINISTRY COORDINATOR	LINDA MEYERDIERKS
BUILDING USAGE COORDINATOR	MIKE SHELEHEDA
CUSTODIAN	GEORGE TUNNEY

St. John's Lutheran Church
"Making Christ Known"

Current Information as of March 2025
Vol. 6 Issue 3

A Note from Pastor Kari

Dear Friends in Christ,

March is here, and with it comes the Lenten season. There is so much that will be happening this month, so many opportunities to gather together to remember our need for a savior and to journey with Christ to the cross. During the first week of March we will gather for Ash Wednesday services when we will begin the Lenten season by recalling how we are dust and to dust we shall return. Our lives only go as far as the graves on our own and so we need a savior to bring us to new life.

On the subsequent Wednesdays in March we will gather around lunch and dinner as a community of faith. We will worship together, eat together, and study God's Word together. These moments will remind us of God's love for us in Christ, who was willing to give his life for us so that we might have life. They will help us to ponder how we might respond to this great gift of love through service in Christ's name. These times will also remind us of our role in the family of faith as we break bread together.

While we know that Easter will come soon, and we are grateful for Jesus' resurrection because it is where we find our hope, it is important to spend time in contemplation during the Lenten season so that we can better appreciate why we needed Jesus to come and the amazing grace that we know in the passion and resurrection of Christ. I invite you to journey with our church family during this most important time of the church year!

Soli Deo Gloria!
(To God Alone be the Glory!)
Pastor Kari Smail

Our Worship Opportunities

Saturdays

5:30p.m. ~ Traditional service

Sundays

8:15a.m. ~ Traditional service
10:45a.m. ~ Contemporary service
All Sunday services are now Livestreamed

www.stjohnswww.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Christian Education

We offer Sunday School options for the entire family on Sunday mornings from
9:30a.m. - 10:30a.m.

~Communion~

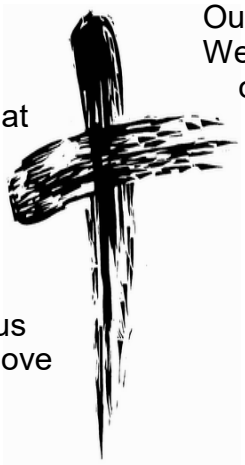
We offer a hybrid style of receiving our Lord's Supper. Those attending services in person may choose to come up to the Altar to receive bread and wine, or remain in their seat and participate with our current no touch method.

For those who are more comfortable still worshiping at home, consecrated cups are available for pickup in the vestibule at the main entrance of the church office area 9a.m. Friday – Sunday morning to be used while participating with the Sunday Livestream worship.

Ash Wednesday

will take place on March 5th.

We will have two worship services that day - one at **noon** and the other at **7:00 pm.** We invite you to join us as we begin the Lenten season remembering that we are dust and to dust we shall return.
It gives us perspective and reminds us that Christ journeyed to the cross in love for us because we needed a Savior.



Our **Lenten midweek gatherings** will take place on Wednesdays from March 12th until April 9th. We will once again have two times each week to gather.

There will be a service at **11:00 am** followed by a lunch in Highland Hall.
There will also be a supper offered at 6:00 pm followed by a study at **6:45** pm by Matt Rawle entitled, "The Final Days: A Lenten Journey Through the Gospels," and concluding with a Taizé worship service at **7:30 pm**.

We hope you can join us for any or all of these gatherings!

Better Together Reflections

April: Looking Outward

While our understanding of church is greatly influenced by our experience at St. John's of Highland, the church extends well beyond our walls to all over the world. Some of the people in the larger church we know, whether that is because we have shared ministries together, such as our North Hills Refugee Ministry, or because of partners in ministry like Lutherlyn or Lutheran SeniorLife. Others we have never met, like the children we support through our program "A Need for Joy" in Tanzania so that they can go to school and flourish, but we have heard about them and feel a connection to them. We also are connected to the families of some of our members who live abroad - we have met them and we are grateful for our connection to them as they serve the church around the globe. We have had staff and faculty from United Lutheran Seminary visit us as well as our synod staff. Our mission support not only goes to our local expression of the church but to our national expression in the ELCA and beyond to such ministries as Lutheran World Relief, to whom we send quilts each year.

The work that we do at St. John's of Highland connects us to the church at large and the communion of saints, as we all have been called to the same mission to love God and love our neighbors. We have been blessed to continue a legacy that began with St. Paul and the other apostles as they traveled the world sharing the Good News. In Philippians 4:16 we hear of how he was supported by the church in Philippi, who took up collections to help him in his ministry, where it says, *"when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me help for my needs more than once."* Our giving allows us to not only support our brothers and sisters who are with us in our community, but it also allows us to support those who have been called to minister in communities around the globe. What a wonderful privilege we have to make a difference all around the world.

It is another reminder of how we are **"Better Together."**

Christian Education News

Undie Sunday - The Christian Education Committee is bringing back two Lenten benevolence opportunities. We are asking that you bring **NEW** Underwear to donate to the North Hills Community Outreach. Underwear is desperately needed and least donated item. Men's, women's and kid's underwear are all needed. Please don't forget the little ones, as diapers in all sizes are also need. We will place a well labeled box in Highland Hall for your donations.

Knock your Socks Off - We are asking that you bring **NEW** socks to donate to the Northside Common Ministries. Socks are also needed and infrequently donated. Warm, thick socks are best. Men's, women's and kid's socks are needed. We will place a well labeled box for socks in Highland Hall for your donations as well.

Donation Boxes will be in Highland Hall from 3/9 – 4/20.

Lenten Devotional Activity ~~~~~ Breaking the Chains ~~~~~

We are also planning a fun family project activity to complete during this Lenten Season. It is called "Breaking the Chains". Each family can pick up a paper chain on Sunday March 2nd, or after. Each chain contains links for each day of Lent. Starting on Ash Wednesday, break a link in the paper chain (*purple links for the 40 days of Lent, and white links for the 7 Sundays*) and practice resurrection. Take part in God's Chain~breaking, art-making, world-changing grace - all the way to the joyful freedom of Easter morning! Each day's link includes a hands-on, accessible practice for individuals and/or families of all shapes and sizes to engage the season. To tell the truth about ourselves and our world, to change our hearts and our ways, and to participate in God's work of breaking chains of injustice, apathy, violence, despair - even the chains of death itself!

Easter is April 20th

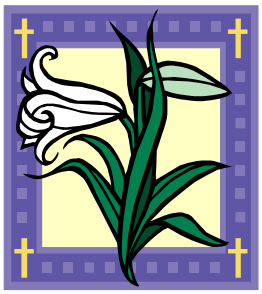
Easter Sunday Breakfast!
Mark you calendars for our
Easter Brunch between services
on April 20th.
More details will be in the
Saturday emails.
Save the date for delicious food
and fun fellowship!

The Altar Guild will decorate the church with flowers for Easter Sunday and the Vigil.

These flowers are **donated** to **honor** or **memorialize** loved ones and will be listed in our Easter weekend bulletins. The suggested donation is **$20.00/plant** and you may take your flower*(s)* home following the 10:45a.m. Easter Worship Service.

Please return the tear-off to the office with a separate check.

EASTER FLOWERS (*please return by Friday, April 11th*)



Your Name :_____

In honor of _____

In memory of _____

Amount Enclosed $_____

St. John's Says Farewell to Historic Tree

If you missed the short service we held to say goodbye to our historic tree, you can watch a short video with highlights and some comments from Pastor Kari on St. John's YouTube channel! Just find us on YouTube, and please subscribe. You'll find all our livestreamed services there, and if you click the "Videos" tab, you'll see the tree service video, along with a few music videos, our church welcome video, and more.

We were able to harvest a good amount of usable wood from the tree, which is now being professionally dried. Once it is finished, ideas for use of the wood include a table, an altar piece, a cross, and small ornaments for the congregation.

Special thanks to Tony and Nena Ruffalo for producing the video, which includes music by Nancy Galbraith.

Ministry Highlights

PLEASANT VALLEY MEN'S SHELTER

On the 4th Wednesday of each month members of our congregation provide a dinner to those men staying at the Pleasant Valley Shelter. Thank you to **our Christian Education Committee members** for providing the February shelter meal. If you'd like to be involved in this Ministry outreach project please contact **Emily Bovan** 724-757-7815 or **Jean Martz** 412-364-2894.

Women of the ELCA

St. John's WELCA will meet on Tuesday, March 18th, at 7:00 pm in Highland Hall.

Devotions and dessert will be provided by Judy Steenson.

All women of St. John's are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Saintly Sewers

meet every Tuesday afternoon in Highland Hall from 12:30—3:00.

Please come and help us continue to make quilts for those in need.

No sewing skills necessary!

A Need for Joy

You may not be aware of this valuable opportunity to help support 7 deserving students in Tanzania.

It all began over 8 years ago when our congregation began to support two impoverished girls in Tanzania. Under the watchful eye of Judith Bukambu these girls were provided with a chance for an education through boarding school and tuition for school. Since then the program has expanded to help 7 students. The students are pursuing different paths with some attending boarding school, local schools, courses in carpentry, tailoring, and one young woman is studying to be a preschool teacher.

Our financial donations provide uniforms, tuition, basic needs, and equipment for training purposes. It is amazing how a relatively small amount of money to us can be lifechanging for these children and young adults. When St John's members donate funds, Judith Bukambu (mother of Janice, a St John's member) makes sure that the money goes directly for the student's needs. She oversees the program in Tanzania. If you would to support this ministry, please designate your funds to:

A NEED for JOY

It is truly life changing for these students!

BETHLEHEM HAVEN

The Social Ministry committee is looking for volunteers to help feed the women at Bethlehem Haven one evening a month. On the first Monday of each month, groups from our congregation will make and take a meal for 45 women. The meal can be dropped off (prior to 4:30pm) or you may stay to help serve.

If you are interested in being a part of this ministry, August and October of 2025 and all of 2026 still need volunteers. If you would like work in a group, please contact Joumana Driscoll to be connected with others. There is a stipend provided to each group each month to cover some, or all the cost of groceries.

To sign up or for more information, please notify
Joumana Driscoll at joumana.driscoll@gmail.com or
Jean Martz at 412-327-5459 or the church office.

Share some LOVE with our neighbor's this month!

Backyard Angels is an organization at St. Marks in Brookline that provides free clothing to anyone from newborn to adult. St. John's has been partnering with them to provide clothing for this mission. Clothing is collected and placed on tables in Highland Hall marked for Backyard Angels. Items are transported approximately once a month. They are currently accepting winter clothing. Please continue to bring your donations as our church is one of their best donors! **https://stmarkbrookline.wixsite.com/smlc/our-ministries**

There is an extra need for boy pants sizes 7-10 and girls size 3T clothes.

St. John's Community Pantry

Our **Free** Community Pantry in the rear parking lot provides personal care items to those in need. It has been a blessing to many in our community however, the shelves empty quickly. Please help us restock!

Useful items that are always needed:

toilet paper	paper towels	soaps/shampoos
toothpaste	toothbrushes	dental floss
deodorants	feminine products	General cleaning products

First Aid items (*band-aides, ointments, disinfectant wipes, tissues, etc*)

You may also make a monetary donation to our ***Family Emergency Fund.***

The only **RESTRICTIONS** to our pantry are *food* items, medicines, used and/or open packaged items or things that can melt or freeze in outdoor weather conditions.

Partners in Ministry

"I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." ~Matthew 25: 35

The **North Hill Refugee Ministry** continues to stay involved with helping our Syrian family in addition to supporting other families who arrived this past fall and have no sponsors to help them navigate the complexities of starting new lives here in Pittsburgh. The Jewish Federation of Community Services has asked for help with these families. With the remainder of the Ethyl L. Verney grant money from the SWPA Synod we have been able to pay for February rent and utilities for several of these families. We have reapplied for the grant again this year and will find out soon if we will have these funds again this year. We ask for your prayerful support of the millions of people here and around the globe who have fled homes because of war, discrimination, famine and natural disasters.

How else can you help?

Here are two Amazon websites with wish lists of items needed by the refugee families. The first are requests for winter apparel.
https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/1QZAV5GVQ0Y7Y
This second link are requests for ongoing general use.
https://www.amazon.com/registries/gl/guest-view/253GWW1TP7U7F

Lutherlyn
Accepted. Challenged. Sent.

For seventy-seven years Lutherlyn has been combining the love of God, fun, friends, swimming, playing in the woods, adventure challenges, Bible study, worship, cookouts, campfires, discoveries in nature, games, and a few surprises into an unforgettable experience!

https://www.lutherlyn.com/programs/summercamp/summer_registration.html

Now Accepting Registrations for Summer Camp 2025

Lutherlyn extends the ministry and mission of Jesus Christ, by inviting all people to engage the Word of God, one another and themselves in an intentional, challenging, exciting, and fun outdoor Christian community centered in the grace of God and the goodness of earth and life.

SUMMER STAFF 2025

Lutherlyn is looking for the next **incredible team of leaders** to serve this summer's campers! If YOU or know anyone who would make a great staff member at Lutherlyn, please encourage them to check out: www.lutherlyn.com/summeremployment
Applications are being accepted NOW for the 2025 Summer Staff!

Activities

The St. John's Stampers

will have already had our March 1st fun by the time you see this but we will be "Thinking Spring" on April 12th. Anyone who is interested is welcome to join us. We meet in Fellowship Hall from 9 AM until Noon. We have 5 greeting cards prepped and ask that you bring your own adhesive/glue.
There is a $5/person fee to help cover the cost of materials. If you plan to come please contact Betsy Fackler by Wednesday, April 9th pdfeaf@zoominternet.net or text (412) 427-2045

SAVE THE DATE:

SPRING FLING

A POTLUCK DINNER & CHORAL CONCERT

WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA FEATURING

SING BOLDLY

BEACON ON THE HILL PRODUCTIONS

AND

St. John's Bell Choir

April 5, 2025

HIGHLAND HALL

Having Fun Staying Young!

is an exercise group that meets on

Mondays and Thursdays at 10:00a.m.

Friends gather at 9:30am to talk, visit and have a cup of coffee together before class. We end by sharing each others names and any prayer concerns that we might have.

It is a wonderful group and they are friendly and supportive. Our class has men and women of all ability levels.

Come and join our group of active friends!

CPR TRAINING

Amy Kennedy and **Tony Good** will offer 2 opportunities to renew or refresh your current CPR Certificate on

March 16th at **Noon – 1:30pm**
or **2:00pm – 3:30pm**

cpr training

For those who **have never had CPR training**, or if your current card is **expired**, they will offer a class on **March 23rd** from **Noon – 3:30/4:00pm**.

If you are interested in attending either of these instructional courses, there is a sign-up sheet in the church office area. If you have any questions, please email either Tony (goodhalter@verizon.net) or Amy (rn.amy321@gmail.com)

2025 Operating Budget

2025 Operating Budget

YTD Income vs. Budget -	**January 2025**
YTD Income Budgeted	$ 59,708.33
YTD Income Received	$ 46,900.87
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 12,807.46)**

YTD Expenses vs Budget – January 2025	
YTD Expenses Budgeted	$ 59,708.33
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 54,524.34
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 5,183.99)**
YTD Income Received	$ 46,900.87
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 54,524.34
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 7,623.47)**

We accept credit payments for a variety of missions. **Scan the QR code,** indicate the amount you would like to donate then click the dropdown arrow and choose the specific fund you would like to direct your contribution to.

If you have any questions, please contact the church office.

Please note: If you currently choose to have your monthly contribution automatically withdrawn from your checking account, this method of contributing does not replace the ACH-Auto Debit

WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE CONGREGATION FOR THEIR SUPPORT BECAUSE WE ARE BETTER TOGETHER!

Youth News

Cumberland Kids

an afterschool program for ***ALL*** 1st through 8th graders
Wednesdays from 3:45-5:45 p.m. There is no C.K. on March 26th

Registration required. Please drop off completed registration form to St. John's office, or email to smailk@stjohnslutheranchurch.com .

ALL ARE WELCOME AND ENCOURAGED TO COME!

MIDDLE SCHOOL/HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH SUNDAY GATHERINGS

Calling all Middle and High School Students! We are beginning a new youth program **just for you**! Starting on March 9th, we will be gathering in the evening of every 2nd and 4th Sunday of the month. Put it on your calendar and stay tuned for more details!

Mark your calendar:
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL!
July 7th - July 11th
True North -Trusting Jesus in a Wild World

BOARD GAMES & ICE CREAM SUNDAES

March 16th from 11:45a.m.—1:45 p.m.
(you can bring your favorite board/card game)

All Youth (1st - 8th grade) & Friends are invited!

We will play all sorts of board/card games in Highland Hall following the 10:45a.m service. Please bring a bag lunch. We will provide ice cream sundaes for dessert! So come join us! Any questions or concerns please contact Linda Meyerdierks
Email: lmmeyers@zoominternet.net or Call/text: 724-612-7745

FAT TUESDAY PANCAKE DINNER

Tuesday, March 4th

The Pancake Dinner will be in Highland Hall starting at **4:30p.m. and ending at 7:00p.m.**

Dinner includes: **Pancakes (plain, blueberry, chocolate chip & Gluten Free) sausage, fruit, coffee, tea, juice and Ice cream sundaes for dessert.**

Cost is $10.00 for adults, $6 for children (5 & younger) children under 2 eat free.

Pancake Dinner RSVP– March 4th ($10.00 for adults, $6 for children 5 & younger).

Name:_____

# of adults:_____ **# of children 5 & younger:**_____ **#of kids under 2** _____

Amount enclosed:_____

Return the tear off to the church office by February 23rd.