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

Information as of
AUGUST 2025

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"Making Christ Known"

Volume 7, Number 8

Email - sjlutheran@verizon.net

phone - 412-364-1606

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

SUMMER
Sunday Morning Worship:
8:30 a.m. - *Traditional*
with Livestream
10:00 a.m. - *Contemporary*
with Livestream

www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Pastor Kari Smail
Pastor Beth Clementson

AUGUST 2025

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

Through God All Things Are Possible

"Making Christ Known"

AUGUST 2025 EDITION

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	Anna Marie Christian
Building Usage Coordinator	Mike Sheleheda
Custodian	George Tunney

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

Current Information for August 2025
Vol. 7 Issue 8

A Note from Pastor Kari

Happy Summer everyone! I want to take a moment to update you on our summer opportunities!

We had a small but good group participate in our summer Bible study as we looked at "half truth" sayings that people think are Biblical but don't always reflect the Biblical canon. We cleaned out a bunch of unwanted items from the building as we had a dumpster to refurbish a preschool/Sunday School classroom this season. We had about 30 kids participate in another fun and meaningful week of Vacation Bible School!

We celebrated the faithful ministry of Linda Meyerdierks, who served as our ministry youth coordinator for 15 years. Thank you Linda!

We did a fundraising appeal for our ministry, "A Need for Joy" where we sponsor youth and young adults in Tanzania. Our congregation took envelopes that had amounts for tuition, housing, meals, transportation, books, and supplies for six individuals, as well as a few additional envelopes for general gifts, and I am happy to report that all the envelopes were taken and we raised over $3000 to cover all the needs that were shared with us! Thank you for your generosity and for making a positive impact in the lives of our siblings in Christ!

We are currently collecting school supplies to fill the backpacks that our Saintly Sewers have made this year for Lutheran World Relief. We already have a great start to this drive, and our confirmation youth are always happy to help pack the bags at the start of the program year. Thanks for making a difference in the lives of more youth in this way as well!

Our church picnic will once again take place August 24th at Lutherlyn! Please RSVP to the church office if you plan on attending. If you go to the picnic you can check off a box on the summer bingo challenge card too! There is still time to join in the fun of engaging in church events and faith building activities for your own edification and as a bonus you can win a fun prize as well!

Thank you for all the ways that you make us "Better Together!"

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

Our Summer Worship Opportunities

Saturdays

5:30p.m. ~ in our sanctuary
We will rotate between Traditional & Contemporary styles of service

Sundays

8:30a.m. ~ Traditional service
10:00a.m. ~ Contemporary service
All Sunday services are now Livestreamed
www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

~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.

Animal Blessing Service

Please join us Wednesday, August 27th as we gather in **North Park's Beveridge Grove** at **7:00pm** *(weather permitting).*

We will gather at the Beveridge Pavilion (*located near Pie Traynor Field in the North Park pool area*). This area is a popular path for dog walkers and we hope that passers-by will be encouraged to join us in celebrating our pets.

Directions from your location to the grove are available through Google Maps by typing in "Beveridge Grove". Parking is across the street from the pavilion. A park restroom building is a walkable distance nearby.

Please bring your lawn chairs. Refreshments will be provided. Tell your friends and neighbors. Even if you don't have a pet, this is a fun event to attend. Hope to see you there as we give thanks for all of God's creatures!

Better Together Reflections ~ August: Journey with our Shepherd

As we journey through these summer months, we long for perfect summer days where the sun is shining with a few clouds in the sky to give some shade, and a light breeze is blowing. The temperature is 75 and the humidity is low. On those days it is even better if we are able to sit by the water in the midst of a beautiful landscape and take in the beauty of creation.

This idyllic scene is reflected in Psalm 23 where we hear about the Lord shepherding us to green pastures and still waters and restoring our souls. Yet we know that most of life is not that idyllic, and sadly our weather is usually not idyllic either. The psalm also reflects this reality as it acknowledges that we sometimes walk through dark valleys and our enemies are near. The psalmist however brings comfort into the midst of those trying times, reminding the reader that the Lord is with us, comforting us, and that we do not need to fear because we have a good shepherd that will provide for us and let us know goodness and mercy all the days of our life, and at the last bring us to our heavenly home.

Psalm 23 is a reminder that we need God in the good times as well as the bad times and everything in between. God is the giver of all good things. God is also the one who shepherds us through the times that we struggle, helping us come to a place of goodness and mercy. It is also important to recall that we are a part of a flock - that we journey together with others. As we celebrate the fact that we are "Better Together" in mission and ministry this year, we do so knowing that it is Christ our good shepherd who leads our way. Thanks be to God!

Come join us for our **Annual Church Picnic** at **Lutherlyn**!
Worship will be held at **11:00 a.m.**
at the Upper Lake Outdoor Chapel
(*weather permitting*).
on **Sunday, August 24th**!
Remember, we will still have the 8:30a.m. service at church that day.

Following outdoor worship, **we are heading to Dogwood Pavilion in the main camp in Lutherlyn.** (*the same location as last year for the picnic portion of the day*).
If it is inclement weather, we will do both worship and lunch at the Dogwood Pavilion. Please RSVP with the church office. If you can help defray the cost, the suggested donation is $10/person and children age 3 and younger eat for free!

Folks can shift from worship to the Dogwood Pavilion in two ways. You can either walk over or caravan over. If there is rain during worship, look for the ushers who will help you get to the main camp.

If you are planning on attending please make a reservation with the church office **by August 17th**, so that we know how much food to order. You can complete and return the **RSVP** below or pick up a slip at either entrance to our sanctuary or in our vestibule.

We look forward to another fun gathering at Lutherlyn!

St. John's Annual Picnic
Sunday, Aug. 24th

11:00am

R.S.V.P. *Return to office by August 17th*

Name: _____

# of Adults: _____ **# of Children under 3:** _____
($ 10/person) **(free)**

Total donation enclosed: $_____

Some Ministry Highlights

St. John's Community Pantry

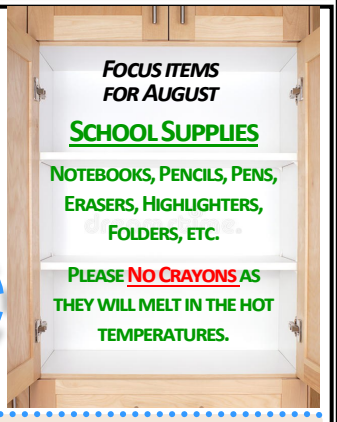
Our **Free** Community Pantry in the rear parking lot provides personal care items to those in need.
It has been a blessing to many in our community however, the shelves empty quickly.
Please help us restock!

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.

St. Marks in Brookline is the home of **Backyard Angels**. They collect donations of clothing for all ages, and it is **free to all who come**. Clothing should be clean and in good condition. They are especially in need of clothes for children. Students will be going back to school soon and clothing is needed. Please bring clothing for all ages to the tables located in Highland Hall. It is amazing how quickly those tables are filled! Thanks to Rich Volpe for transporting these items to St Marks. *Since January we have donated at least 5 truckloads of clothing!!*

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 the **Ruffalo family** for providing the July 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.

Bethlehem Women's Shelter

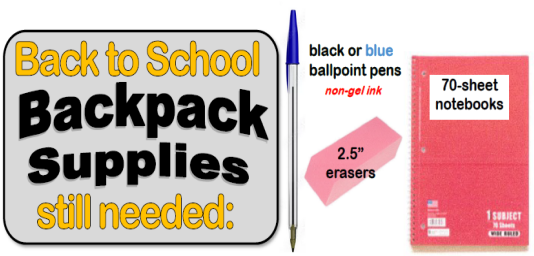
On the first Monday of each month, members of our congregation provide a meal for 45 women. The meal can be dropped off (prior to 4:30pm) or you may stay to help serve. Thank you to **Diane Barbin and friends** for serving the July meal.

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

Saintly Sewers

Our group meets every Tuesday at 12:30 in Highland Hall and our goal is to complete 100 quilts by the end of September. No sewing or quilting knowledge is needed! If you can tie a knot we need your help! Our ladies cut fabric and batting, lay out a top design of squares, pin layers together, and tie the layers all while enjoying conversation, laughs and friendship. Please consider joining us any Tuesday for any amount of time you can give. Even our young friend, Hannah Bosco, has learned to fold and pin bindings! Be sure to check out our **Quilt of the Week,** displayed in Highland Hall.

It's that time of year again! With back-to-school sales starting the Saintly Sewers are again making and filling school kits for children in need to be distributed through Lutheran World Relief. All kits must contain the identical items and this is where you can help. Donations of any of the following items are greatly appreciated and can be left in the bin or on the table in the donation area of Highland Hall marked for School Kits. Still needed at this time are: 70-page subject notebooks, 2.5" erasers, and blue or black (non-gel ink) ballpoint pens. Thank you!



Partners in Ministry

North Hills Refugee Ministry

The NHRM continues to work with the Jewish Federation of Community Services to identify refugee families in our area who need our help with transitioning into their new communities. We are currently working with a small family who settled into the Pittsburgh family last fall. We still remain in contact with and occasionally help our family from Syria. But the more volunteers we have, the more new families we can help. Please consider joining us. Contact Pastor Beth (beth@sjhighland.com) or Sam Baling (sbaling@gmail.com) for more information. Because we have been awarded a generous grant from Ethyl L. Verney Endowment Fund by the Southwest PA Synod, we are not in need of financial support at this time. However, Global Refuge (formerly Lutheran Immigration & Refugee Services) is in DIRE need of funding. They, like JFCS, have families who arrived in the US last fall with a promise of support for resettlement here, but have no funds to keep those promises. Their website is GlobalRefuge.org.

"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

Activities

Having Fun Staying Young!

We are 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!***

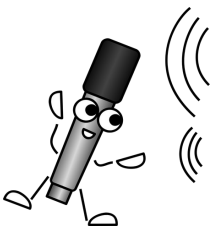
After a couple months off the **St. John's Stampers** are ready to get back on track with our card making workshops! Fall always presents us with many subjects for our cards and we'll be trying to touch on all of them.
We will be meeting on Saturday, September 6th from 9am until noon. All are welcome to join us. We just ask that you bring your own double sided adhesive or glue and there is a $5/person fee to help cover the cost of materials.

If you plan to join us please let Betsy Fackler know by **Tuesday, September 2nd**.
Pdfeaf@zoominternet.net
or text 412-427-2045

All are welcome.
Happy Fall, Y'all!

St. John's Council Listens……

Have an idea? Have a question? Have a concern? Please share your thoughts with:



Sandy Allen
Jay Caulkins
Marcy Emory
Marsha Logan

Jody Removchik
Matthew Galbraith
Emily Bovan
Matt McCormack

Renee Gottschalk
Sam Sesti
Lloyd White
Bob David

Pastor Kari
& Pastor Beth

You can email the Congregation Council at
listeningconcerns@stjohnslutheranchurch.com.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND & BEACON ON THE HILL PRODUCTIONS

Proudly Presents

INTO THE WOODS

Music & Lyrics by:
Stephen Sondheim
Originally Directed on Broadway by:
James Lapine
Orchestrations by:
Jonathan Tunick
Book by:
James Lapine

INTO THE WOODS
Is presented through special arrangement with
Music Theatre International (MTI).
All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI.
www.mtishows.com

November 21 & 22 at 7:30 PM

November 22 & 23 at 2:00 PM

CAST AUDITIONS:

AUGUST 17th 6:00 PM.

HIGHLAND HALL
St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland
311 Cumberland Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237

ALL ARE WELCOME

Cast Requirements:
- Must be at least 14 years old.
- Must be able to attend rehearsals at St. John's. Most Sundays from 6:00-9:00 PM and Tuesdays from 7:00-9:30 PM. Rehearsals start August 19th.
- Must attend Mandatory Dress Rehearsals: November 18, 19, & 20
- Must be able to perform in all 4 show times/dates.
- The Audition will involve singing a short song or verse of a song (unaccompanied) in front of those auditioning and the Directors. Please choose any song that you wish to sing.

If anyone has questions, please contact Bryan Abbott at 412-337-7115.

2025 Operating Budget

2025 Operating Budget

YTD Income vs. Budget –	June 2025
YTD Income Budgeted	$ 358,250.00
YTD Income Received	$ 343,537.51
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 14,712.49)**

YTD Expenses vs Budget –	June 2025
YTD Expenses Budgeted	$ 358,250.00
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 398,654.28
Over (Under) Budgeted	**$ 40,404.28**

YTD Income Received	$ 343.537.51
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 398,654.28
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 55,116.77)***

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

* Includes $1,108 for computer and $20,248 parts and labor to control the zone heating, $1,120 new electrical outlets for drapes and $14,087 for classroom renovation for a total of $36,563 out of the surplus fund for 2025 and the $10,000 donation under World Mission for the SW Synod.

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

Youth News

Meet our new Youth Coordinator!

Hi! My name is Anna-Marie Christian and I am so excited to officially join the St. Johns staff as our Youth Coordinator! My husband, Nick, and I have been members of St. Johns since 2008, when we relocated to Pittsburgh from Austin Texas. Over the years, I've had the pleasure of serving on the Social Ministry committee, Church Council, teaching Sunday School to our youngest members, volunteering with the youth groups, Vacation Bible School, and working as an assistant teacher in our Preschool.

I am so grateful that you've trusted me with the coordination of our Youth Ministry program. Youth Ministry was an important part of my life when I was younger. Some of my fondest high school memories are Sunday Night Youth Group, helping with the 3-year-old Sunday School class, and hand bell choir. Going into my senior year of high school I had the privilege of attending the St. Louis ELCA National Youth Gathering. The music, messages, and size of the larger church have stayed with me over the years. I still have the official convention music, "Dancing at the Crossroads", CD. The theme song is something I sing in my head when life gets overwhelming, it's a helpful reminder that we are all God's people and not alone. I look forward to supporting our youth and working with them to create their own lasting core memories.

When I'm not at St. John, you can find me enjoying my family. Nick and I have two boys James and Adam as well as an Australian Shepard, Captain. In my free time, I like to be outside hiking in the warm sun with my family or the library trying to find the next new read to escape into.

Middle & Highschool Youth Group
(6th - 12th Grade)
Sunday August 24th
Corn Hole Golf @
Mars Bethel Golf (6pm - 8:30/9:00pm)
Cost $10

A twist on two classic games - cornhole and mini golf! Come hang out as we join in some laughs over throwing bean bags around Mars themed obstacles and eat some delicious ice cream. Friends are welcome! We will meet at the church at 6pm and return to the church between 8:30 and 9:00.

Please RSVP by August 22nd to
Anna-Marie Christian amsxian@gmail.com or
Pastor Beth beth@sjhighland.com;
(*please let us know if you have any financial concerns*).

Live close to Mars-Bethel Golf and want to meet us there- let us know when you RSVP

Service Opportunity

Wednesday August 27th
(5:45pm - 9:00pm)

St. John's is one of many churches that supports the North Side's **Pleasant Valley Men's Shelter**. The Shelter provides homeless men with a safe, secure sleeping quarters, a hot shower, and a warm evening meal.

Any youth and or parent Interested in serving the evening meal, should contact:

Anna-Marie Christian
amsxian@gmail.com
or **Pastor Beth**
beth@sjhighland.com

and please **RSVP by Friday August 22nd**

THANK YOU to all the volunteers that helped with this year's Vacation Bible School - TRUE NORTH - Trusting Jesus in a Wild World - July 11th - 11th!!!
A great time was had by all! We had **34 volunteers** for the week and **29 youth** who participated each night. A **Special Thank You** to all who contributed snack items for out Tundra Treats Station. We knocked it out of the park with this year's treats!

Thank you all again for your service and dedication to our youth!

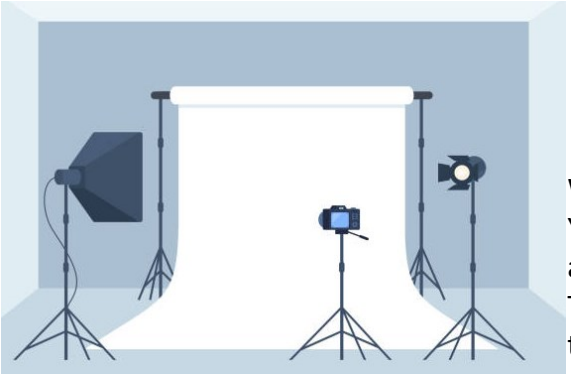
God Bless,

Linda Meyerdierks, *VBS Coordinator*

HELP NEEDED

If you enjoy working in the garden, we would love your help! We need volunteers to help pull weeds and edge the gardens on our church property. Any time you can give is greatly appreciated! Please contact Kim Gettemy dagardenermom@comcast.net, or Pastor Kari kari@sjhighland.com if you are able to offer some assistance.

PHOTO DIRECTORY: We are updating our St. John's Church Directory! Tony Ruffolo will be taking photos of those members who would like to be included in our Conference Room. There is a date/time sign-up sheet located in the office area. Each photo session will be scheduled in 15-minute intervals on the following dates:



Sunday, **August 3** from **11:00am – 2:00pm**
Thursday, **August 7** from **11:00am – 1:00pm** and **6:00pm – 8:00pm**
Sunday, **August 10** from **11:00am – 2:00pm**

We would love to get everyone's photo for our new Church Directory, You may also call the church office (412-364-1606) to check appointment availability. If you have any questions, please see Pastor Kari, Tony Ruffolo, or Karen Bauer. If you are unable to get your photo taken this summer, we plan to schedule additional dates sometime in October.

WITH APPRECIATION.....

Meals on Wheels

Thanks to all who baked in the month of June providing desserts for Meals on wheels! Your contributions are so appreciated! When Eric drops the baked goods off early on a Monday morning their volunteers are very thankful for St. John's bakers. We had a couple new bakers this time and we are so glad for their eagerness to help.

MEALS ON WHEELS

We bake again in October.

THANK YOU DONORS! Clementine is thriving... thanks to her new donor cells! Her family would like to show her gratitude by replenishing the supply for others in need.

If you missed the drive this July you can go to Vitalint.org or another drive donating blood or blood marrow in Clementine Blackham's name.

The infusions she routinely receives are made from donated blood. Many patients, like Clementine, rely on blood donations and bone marrow transplants from strangers to survive. By donating blood and/or joining the registry, you could give someone a second chance at life.

The Richards Family *would like to thank*

- ~ **Pastor Kari** *and* **Pastor Beth** *for their visits during David's last months,*
- ~ **Joe Tuttle** *for his gift of music,*
- ~ *the* **Ladies of the Luncheon Committee** *for the lunch provided after David's Memorial Service,*
- ~ **Rich Volpe** *and* **Nick Ross** *for making the live streaming of David's service possible, and*
- ~ *our* **St. John's Family** *for the cards and expressions of condolences when David passed.*

LOOKING AHEAD.....SEPTEMBER

WE RETURN TO THE **NORMAL PROGRAM SCHEDULE** IN SEPTEMBER. **RALLY DAY** (*SUNDAY SCHOOL KICK OFF*) ON THE **7TH** AND **YOUTH GROUP** EVENING ACTIVITIES ON THE **14TH** AND **28TH.**