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

Information as of
SEPTEMBER 2025

DATED MATERIAL
Please deliver by AUGUST 29, 2025

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Pittsburgh, PA
Permit 125

"Making Christ Known"
Volume 8, Number 9

Email - sjlutheran@verizon.net
phone - 412-364-1606

Saturday Worship:
5:30 pm - *Traditional*

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:15 am - *Traditional*
with Livestream

Christian Education:
9:30 am - 10:30 am

10:45 am - *Contemporary*
with Livestream

www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Pastor Kari Smail
Pastor Beth Clementson

SEPTEMBER 2025

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

Through God All Things Are Possible

"Making Christ Known"

SEPTEMBER 2025 EDITION

St. John's Current Staff

Kari Smail ~ Senior Pastor
Beth Clementson ~ Associate Pastor
Ron Baling ~ Dir. Of Contemporary Music
Joseph Tuttle ~ Organist & Dir. of Choirs
Mary Lynne Martin ~ Office Administrator
Andrea Miller ~ Office Assistant
Rich Volpe ~ Accounts Payable Clerk
Laura Coombs ~ Chief Financial Officer
Jennifer Bolinda ~ Dir. of St. John's Preschool
Anna-Marie Christian ~ Youth Ministry Coordinator
Mike Sheleheda ~ Building Usage Coordinator
George Tunney ~ Custodian

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

A Note from Pastor Beth

Worship Schedules
- Rally Day & Regular Worship Times
- St. John's Bell Choir
- Thanks for Summer Music

Better Together Reflections
- Stewardship Tip

Some Ministry Highlights
- WELCA
- Saintly Sewers
- Blood Drive Results
- Bethlehem Haven Meals
- Pleasant Valley Men's Shelter Meals
- Community Pantry

Partners in Ministry
- North Hills Refuge Ministry
- Backyard Angels
- A Need for Joy

Youth News
- Rally Day Campfire
- Youth Group Gatherings

Operating Budget

St. John's Listens
- 2025/2026 Council Members Officers & Committee Liaisons

Activities at St. John's
- Having Fun Staying Young
- Into the Woods

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

Current Information for September 2025
Vol. 8 Issue 9

A Note from Pastor Beth

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Lately I've been hearing a lot of people talk about how exhausted they feel. It may just be the season, but there seems to be something extra trying about our political climate, the constancy of news about problems in the world, and the busyness of our culture. I have most certainly felt the fatigue in my own body and spirit recently and have been reminded I need to take regular, intentional time for sabbath.

We talk about "sabbath rest" and then we're inclined to think it's about taking naps or binge-watching shows. But really, it's better understood as "sabbath restoration". Sabbath is meant to be a gift in our lives, **each week.** It's less about the prohibition on work and more about the gift of being filled and restored for what comes next.

A colleague of mine suggested that we should ask ourselves the question, "What would help me feel restored?" Generally, while they're nice, a nap isn't the answer. We need to fill our souls, not just stop our bodies.

I have a list of things that qualify for myself: Spending time with my parents, video calls with my friends from seminary, learning to cook a new recipe, taking my dog for a long walk around my neighborhood, reading, coffee or dinner with a friend. Some of those might work for you, others might just feel like work. Whatever the case, especially if you're feeling exhausted or overwhelmed by life, I encourage you to set apart a chunk of time (even if you can only start with an hour or two) and ask yourself, "What would help me feel restored?"

Peace,
Pastor Beth

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.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.

RALLY DAY!

We kick off our
2025/2026 Regular Program Year
on **Sunday, September 7, 2025!**

Our Sunday Services will return to 8:15am (Traditional) and 10:45am (Contemporary)

Our Christian Education classes will take place between 9:30am - 10:30am. See page 5 for detailed Youth opportunities.
Our adult Sunday School will be held in the Conference Room.

All ages are invited to learn more about Jesus!

St. John's Bell Choir

This September begins our 2025 fall handbell season.

This year we invite all potential ringers (*people who love music and can attend regular practices*) including the young at heart and youth entering grade 5 through age 100!

We begin our practices Thursday September 4th and will meet at our ordinary time on Thursdays from 6:15pm -7:15pm in the sanctuary. If you are interested, but have questions, please reach out to Erik Roth at erikjroth@gmail.com.

Thank you

to all of our special musicians who helped to heighten our summer worship with their gifts -

Bev Tamburino ***Sarah Mount-Elewononi***
Sam Sesti ***Joe Moreno***
Matt Galbraith ***Ron & Sam Baling***
Renee Rabenold ***Denise Rudar***
Nancy Galbraith ***Phillip Campbell***
Bryan Abbott ***Joe Tuttle***
Sandy Allen ***Lloyd & Kathy White***
Emily Bovan ***Erik Roth***
Nancy Galbraith ***Cynthia Plazek***
Matt & Carrie McCormack

AND to those who **sing from the congregation**. While the formal choirs may not rehearse in the summer, you help us know that music at St. John's is alive and thriving the whole year.

Better Together ~ September: Raising Kids, Raising Leaders

Every September we gather for Rally Day, which serves as the start of the program year. It is the first day of Sunday School and kids from 2 to 102 gather together in our sanctuary to start another good year of learning, growth, and fun. Our youth choir practices resume, as do our youth events. We are truly blessed at St. John's of Highland with an abundance of wonderful children. It warms the heart to see the kids gather for children's sermons and to acolyte and to sing and to usher and to make music in worship. They are not just the future of the church, they are the church today as well.

Isaiah 11:6 shares the Biblical vision known as the Peaceable Kingdom as it states, "The wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them." We know that Jesus came as a little child and went on to lead us in the way of peace. As we celebrate being "Better Together" we celebrate all of God's children of every age that make up our congregation and are partners in ministry together. Thank you for your generous giving which helps us to create a space for all of us to gather in worship and work as we join our gifts in **"Making Christ Known."**

Stewardship Tip

A helpful stewardship tip for seniors with IRA's to consider…
Looking to save on taxes and increase your giving? A Qualified Charitable Deduction allows you to give more or supplement your current pledge.

How does it work?

Once you reach age 70.5, you can gift from your qualified accounts without paying taxes if it is sent directly to a charity. If you are over age 73, it will also help meet your Required Minimum Distribution for the calendar year.

What are some rules for donating?

Age: You must be 70½ or older to donate a QCD. Contribution limit: The most an individual can donate in a calendar year, across all charities, is $108,000. If you file taxes jointly, your spouse can donate up to $108,000 from their IRA as well. Eligible accounts: QCDs can be made from most IRAs, including: Traditional IRAs, Rollover IRAs, Inherited IRAs, SEP IRAs (inactive plans only*), and SIMPLE IRAs (inactive plans only*). Thank you to everyone of all ages for the many ways that you support the ministry of our congregation through your time, talents, and treasures. We are "Better Together!"

MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

St John's WELCA meets monthly the **THIRD TUESDAY** of every month at **7:00 pm** in **Highland Hall**.

Our purposes are fellowship, prayer, learning and service. This year our Bible study will introduce us to "***Daring Women of the Bible***." This month's presenter will be Margaret Cenci and our hostess will be Margie Miller.

We hope you will join us on **Tuesday, September 16th at 7:00 pm!**

Saintly Sewers

The Saintly Sewers are very busy completing our quilts and school bags for this year. Sometime in late September or early October we will be ready to have our quilts blessed at church before delivering them to a church in Zelienople. The boxed quilts will then travel to Baltimore before they ship out! We have a goal of 100 quilts and 50 school bags this year. We are getting close but could use help tying the quilts to finish each one.

It's easy to do and there is lots of good conversation also! No sewing knowledge is needed. We have about 20 to tie right now and we meet Tuesdays at 12:30 in Highland Hall. If you'd like to take one home to tie we can instruct you also.

We need your help to cover shipping costs for our quilts and school bags. When we display our quilts for the Blessing we will attach envelopes to each one. We are asking for donations to help cover the costs. Last year we sent $500 to LWR quilts and kits. Please consider placing a donation in the envelopes attached to the quilts on Blessing Weekend.

We hope you are enjoying our quilt of the week which is displaced in Highland Hall.

Vitalant's **Blood Drive for Clementine** in July collected 42 units of Whole Blood, **6 units of Dbl Red**, and **2 units of Plasma**. 43 scheduled appointments were made in advance and another 63 donors registered the day of the drive!

We want to thank **Janet Schmitt**, **George Tunney**, and **members of our Church Council** for their help during the entire drive!

BETHLEHEM HAVEN WOMAN'S SHELTER

Thank you to **Wendy Trischler** (***July***) and **Diane Barbin & friends** (***August***) for providing the meals taken to the women at Bethlehem Haven.

For more information about this opportunity to help, contact: **Joumana Driscoll** at joumana.driscoll@gmail.com or **Jean Martz** at **412-327-5459.**

Coming up soon…….

The Social Ministry Committee will be hosting a

FALL FOOD DRIVE

Look for a start date in September's Saturday emails or in the announcements before our worship services..

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 **Anna-Marie Christian, Jay Caulkins, Linda Meyerdierks, and St. John's Youth** for providing the August 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**.

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. lease help us restock!

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

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*)

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

North Hills Refugee Ministry — Continuing into the next chapter

"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 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.

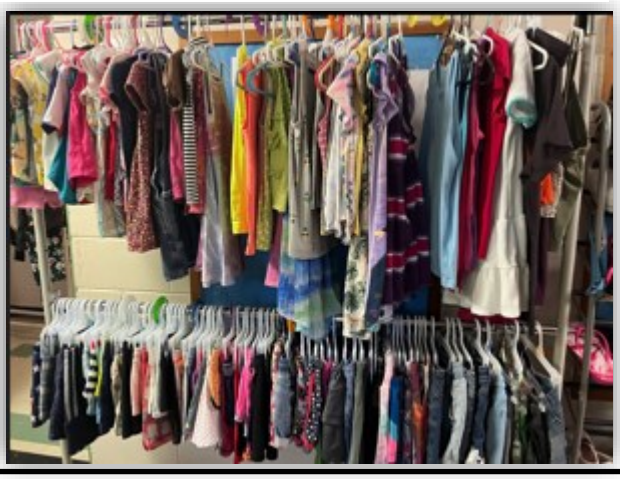
We are currently working with a small family who settled into the Pittsburgh family last fall. We still remain in contact with and occasionally help our family from Syria. But the more volunteers we have, the more new families we can help. And not all tasks require all the clearances and not all tasks require a lot of your time. But ALL tasks will be rewarding! 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 very little funds to keep those promises. (GlobalRefuge.org) or consider a donation to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America. There are a variety of choices to donate on their website. You can specify disaster relief, world hunger crisis, and refugee support. This group is known for their quick response and presence in areas of most need and they represent us across the globe. (ELCA.org)

Prayerful support is no small thing and always welcome.

Thanks to Eric & Kathy Kofmehl, another large car full of donated clothing was delivered to **Backyard Angels**

As you clean out your closets please keep in mind that fall and winter items will be needed as we head into this next season.



Need for Joy

As our local children go back to school we are very thankful for our St John's donors who make it possible for 7 students in Tanzania to continue their education also.

What a blessing it has been for each of them to have our support. In most of their cases education would not be possible if it wasn't for your financial donations. Thank you to everyone who have so generously donated recently.

It is truly life changing for these students!

Youth News

Rally Day

September brings us to a new program year.
Sunday School returns on September 7th
Meet in Highland Hall at 9:30am to kick off the new program year!

With the start of the new year, please make sure we have your youth's correct contact information and consent to provide transportation to and from our events. Click this link to fill out the form.

ELEMENTARY YOUTH GROUP (Kindergarten - 5th Grade)

September 7th - Camp Fire fun
11:45am - 1:45pm

Following the late service, continue making new friends and enjoy hotdogs, s'mores and music. You are also welcome to bring friends from outside the church. Parents pick up is 1:45pm from the back of the church. **RSVP: September 3rd** to Anna-Marie Christian annamarie@sjhighland.com, Pastor Beth beth@sjhighland.com, or the **Band App**

6TH - 12TH GRADE YOUTH GROUP

September sees us returning to meeting twice a month, in the evenings on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the Month.

This month, September 14th and 28th

On the 14th gather in the **Youth Room** at **6:30pm** for some more fun and plan our meeting for the 28th.

RSVP: September 12 (for the September 14th Meeting**):**

Anna-Marie Christian annamarie@sjhighland.com,
Pastor Beth beth@sjhighland.com, or the **Band App**

2025 Operating Budget

2025 Operating Budget

YTD Income vs. Budget –	**July 2025**
YTD Income Budgeted	$ 417,958.33
YTD Income Received	$ 412,585.69
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 5,372.64)**

YTD Expenses vs Budget –	**July 2025**
YTD Expenses Budgeted	$ 417,958.33
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 455,050.83
Over (Under) Budgeted	**$ 37,092.50**

YTD Income Received	$ 412,585.69
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 455,050.83
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 42,465.14)***

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 412-364-1606.

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 $16,570 for classroom renovation for a total of $39,046 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!

St. John's Council Listens…….

2025/2026

Current Church Council Members	Committee Liaisons
President: Sam Sesti	Cemetery
Vice President: Jody Removchik	Mutual Ministry / Preschool
Treasurer: Lloyd White	Finance
Secretary: Emily Bovan	Social Ministry
Jay Caulkins	Youth Ministry / Security
Marcie Emory	Stewardship
Matt McCormack	Worship & Music
Sandy Allen	Evangelism / Fellowship
Marsha Logan	Property
Matthew Galbraith	Staff Support
Bob David	Technology
Renee Gottschalk	Christian Education
Pastors: Kari Smail and Beth Clementson	

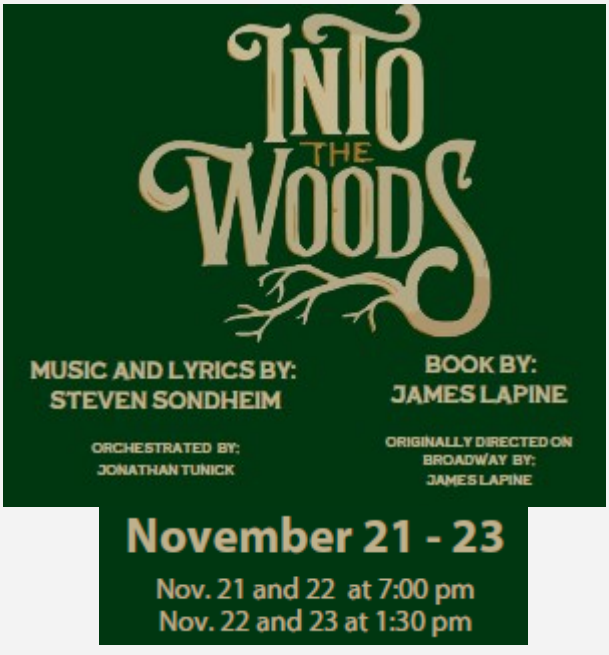
You can email the Congregation Council at listeningconcerns@stjohnslutheranchurch.com.

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!***



INTO THE WOODS – HELP NEEDED

We need your help in the following areas:

- Set Construction: Builders and painters are needed. Work is available most Saturday and Sunday afternoons in October and early November.
- Costumes and Props: Sewers and crafters needed. Work is available most weekdays, evenings, and some weekends.
- Stage Crew: Needed for Dress Rehearsals and performances.
- Ushers: Needed for performances.
- Box Office Staff: Needed for ticket tables after church services in late October and November. Also needed for performances.
- Refreshment Stand: Needed for performances

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

INTO THE WOODS

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY: STEVEN SONDHEIM

ORCHESTRATED BY: JONATHAN TUNICK

BOOK BY: JAMES LAPINE

ORIGINALLY DIRECTED ON BROADWAY BY: JAMES LAPINE

November 21 - 23

Nov. 21 and 22 at 7:00 pm
Nov. 22 and 23 at 1:30 pm

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

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

WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT
for our production of *Into the Woods* at St. John's.

In order to fund our productions, we ask for donations in the form of sponsorships and ads for our program book. Our tickets are free, but we make sure that those who donate have the first opportunity to order them. Please help by reaching out to your family, friends and business contacts for their support so that they can get advance tickets before we "sell out" which will happen very quickly.

Sponsor names and ads will be printed in our program book, reaching 1,000 potential customers.

Tickets for the show will become available to the public on October 13 and orders will be filled on a first come basis. But sponsors and advertisers can **ORDER FREE TICKETS NOW*** by completing the following:

# of Tickets Requested
(General Admission Seating): _____

Performance Date and Time: _____

*To ensure that all donors are able to enjoy the show, the below ticket limits will be in place:

Bronze: 4	Gold: 8	1/4 Page: 10	Full Page: 20
Silver: 6	Diamond: 10	1/2 Page: 14	

Please make checks out to **St. John's of Highland** and return this form with payment to:
St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland
311 Cumberland Rd. Pittsburgh, PA 15237

For more information, contact us at beaconnonthehillproductions@gmail.com or 412-228-9003.

Please choose either a sponsor name listing or an ad.

TYPE OF SPONSOR:

Bronze	10 Font	$10 - $19 Donation
Silver	12 Font	$20 - $49 Donation
Gold	14 Font	$50 - $99 Donation
Diamond	16 Font	$100 + Donation

TYPE OF AD:

¼ Page black & white ad (2½" x 4¼")	$75 Donation
½ Page black & white ad (5¼" x 4¼")	$150 Donation
Full page black & white ad (5¼" x 8¼")	$300 Donation
Full page color cover ad (5¼" x 8¼")	$500 Donation

Inside or outside cover. Limited availability

Send your print ready ad art to Phillip Campbell at beaconnonthehillproductions@gmail.com or contact us for complimentary ad design.

Please print clearly:

Name _____

Contact Name (For Company or Business) _____

Email _____

Phone _____

$ Amount Enclosed _____

Type of Sponsor OR Size of Ad _____

Sponsorship forms and ads MUST be returned before OCT. 31.