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

Information as of
OCTOBER 2025

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"Making Christ Known"
Volume 6, Number 10

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

OCTOBER 2025

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

Through God All Things Are Possible

"Making Christ Known"

OCTOBER 2025 EDITION

Current Church Council Members

President - Cemetery	Sam Sesti
Vice President - MutualMinistry	Jody Removchik
Treasurer - Finance	Lloyd White
Secretary - Social Ministry	Emily Bovan
Senior Pastor	Pastor Smail
Associate Pastor	Pastor Clementson
Youth Ministry&Security	Jay Caulkins
Stewardship	Marcie Emory
Worship & Music	Matt McCormack
Preschool	Jody Removchik
Evangelism & Fellowship	Sandy Allen
Property	Marsha Logan
Staff Support	Matthew Galbraith
Technology	Bob David
Christian Education	Renee Gottschalk

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 October 2025
Vol. 6 Issue 10

A Note from Pastor Kari

Greetings from St. John's of Highland! October is here and we have so much to celebrate this month!

- We are beginning our stewardship emphasis for 2026 and will learn about how we are "Blessed to be a Blessing!"
- We are resuming our Cumberland Kids group - an after school program for 1st through 8th graders on Wednesdays. Contact the church office today for more information and to register!
- We are welcoming new members into our congregation on the weekend of October 18th and 19th. If you would like to become an official member of the church if you are not so already, please let the church office know! We make it easy to join through a short piece of liturgy during worship and we feed you lunch after the late service on Sunday. :)

We are celebrating Reformation Sunday on October 26th when we will also dedicate our new red banners and have fun with our kids with a Halloween party followed by our Trunk or Treat event. Wear red for worship in the morning and bring treats to share in the afternoon!

There is always so much going on at St. John's of Highland. We are blessed with a multi-generational and vibrant community of faith that seeks to share its blessings with others. We are "Better Together!"

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.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.

Better Together ~ October: The Blessing of Partnerships

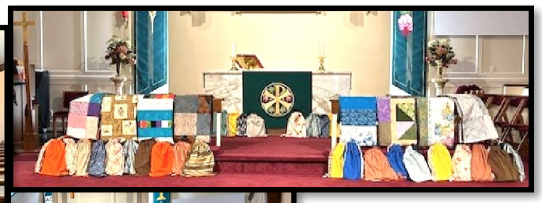
Almost every church or ministry organization has a mission statement. Our mission statement declares that: *"St. John's Lutheran Church of Highland is a Christ-centered, multi-generational community; welcoming and uniting diverse individuals; helping each to find their place; growing and strengthening one another's faith; supporting each other in times of need; and energizing all for service, witness, and benevolence in our congregation, our community, the greater church, and the world at large."* Or in short, at St. John's of Highland we are committed to *"Making Christ Known"*. This gives us focus for our ministry and reflects the gifts of our congregation.

While every church or ministry organization hopefully promotes loving God and loving neighbors, how this is done at each place varies depending on the needs that arise and the gifts of the people. We have many ministries that show love for God and neighbor in our own walls, such as meaningful worship, a multi-age Sunday School, a vibrant preschool, an amazing music program, a dedicated quilting group, to name a few. We have also been blessed to partner with people in our community who have good ministries established *that* reflect their gifts and passions and needs that we are able to support as an extension of our own ministry, such as Blessed Bundles which helps young families in need, Northside Common Ministries which assists people in Pittsburgh with food and housing, Backyard Angels which provides free clothing, and North Hills Community Outreach who helps our neighbors in a multitude of ways. These partnerships are another reminder of how we are **"Better Together!"**

Ministry Highlights

The Saintly Sewers

Our goal was to create 100 quilts - we completed **103 quilts!** They will be blessed at church on the weekend of September 27th & 28th. We will then deliver them to a gathering place in Zelienople as they make their way to deserving recipients.



WAY TO GO SEWERS!

We also have **50 school bags stuffed with supplies** donated by the congregation and filled by the Confirmation class on Rally Day. Thanks to all!

We were pleased to get the help of several other workers with tying the remainder of the quilts. Everyone did a little extra work to reach our goal!

We start all over now to create more quilts. If anyone has fabric to donate we can always use it. Come and be part of our group. We meet on Tuesdays in Highland Hall at 12:30pm. No sewing experience is needed.

Women of the ELCA

St. John's WELCA group will be meeting on **Tuesday, October 21st** at **7:00pm** in the **conference room** near the arena.

Our Bible study leader will be Elaine Hatfield and Linda Falck will be our hostess. We will be assembling new socks filled with winter treats for the men's shelter. Hope you can join us!

Social Ministry will be hosting a Food Drive from

October 25th — November 9th.

Brown paper bags will be available at the church the weekend of October 25th/26th for your food donations!

Meals on Wheels

MEALS ON WHEELS

We are supplying Meals on Wheels with baked goods during the month of **October**. Each Monday Eric Kofmehl delivers these tasty treats to the appreciative workers at MOW! They know St John's always provides great desserts.

If you are on our list, you will get a postcard assigning you one of the weekends to bake.

If you would like to join our baking team, please contact **Eric Kofmehl** at **412-860-1585.**

You can drop these goodies in the Highland Hall kitchen by Sunday as we deliver Monday mornings.

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 Social Ministry Committee** for providing the September 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.

2025 Operating Budget

YTD Income vs. Budget – August 2025

YTD Income Budgeted	$477,666.67
YTD Income Received	$477,613.08
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 53.59)**

YTD Expenses vs Budget – August 2025

YTD Expenses Budgeted	$477,666.67
YTD Expenses Incurred	$508,025.69
Over (Under) Budgeted	**$ 30,359.02**

YTD Income Received	$477,613.08
YTD Expenses Incurred	$508,025.69
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 30,412.61)***

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 to control the zone heating and $1,120 new electrical outlets for drapes for a total of $2,228 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!

Stewardship Tips

Some Stewardship Tips from our Stewardship Chairs…

As we continue to ponder how we are "Better Together," we know that all of us make a difference to the ministry of our congregation through the sharing of our time, our talents, and our resources as we seek to "Make Christ Known" together.

What you may not know is that depending on your circumstance, there may be ways to financially support the church while also having a personal tax benefit. In the coming months we would like to share these ideas with you in case it is helpful as you ponder how you want to steward your resources.

There are several strategies when it comes to charitable giving other than writing a check. By exploring more tax-efficient methods, such as donating appreciated assets or bunching contributions, you can dramatically increase the value of your gift and your deduction, and potentially avoid capital gains taxes all together.

This month we would like to tell you about how can…….Donate Appreciated Stock. Here is how that works…. You have $50,000 of stock originally purchased for $20,000 (cost basis). This total amount could be donated. You can claim the full $50,000 as a charitable deduction and completely avoid the capital gains tax owed on the $30,000 profit, which could save $4,500-$6,000 in taxes. Time Your Donations: Look at your income for the year. It will make the most sense to concentrate large charitable gifts in high-income years when your tax bracket is higher, making the deduction more valuable.

YOUTH MINISTRY GIVING ENVELOPES:

Support our Youth Ministry program by picking up a colorful envelope from the bulletin boards in the narthex! There are 100 envelopes to choose from! Simply take an envelope and return it with the amount on the front of the envelope. Think about teaming up with your friends to fill some of the higher numbered envelopes!

Thank you in advance for investing in our youth!

Youth News

RISE - Real. Included. Serving. Empowered.

RISE is a welcoming community for grades 6-12 where every young person is accepted, loved, and encouraged to be their true self. Together, we'll share laughter at activities at the church and various outings, deepen our faith through service projects, and discover how God empowers us to make a difference in the world.

Come and see what it means to **RISE** together!

Oct. 11th - 12th Church Lock-In

Time: 6:30pm - 7:30am
Location: Youth Room and Library

Activity: Over-night Lock-In! Pizza, Games, Movies, and Youth Gathering discussions All Night Long!

RSVP by Oct 9th

Oct. 26th: Service Project

Time: 1:00pm - 4:00pm
Location: Meet in Fellowship Hall, Pick Up Back Parking Lot

Activity: The Trunk or Treat needs our help! We will be running the fire pit, hosting games for the trick or treaters, and decorating a trunk

RSVP by Oct 24th

Elementary Youth

(Kindergarten -5th Grade)

October 26th Halloween Party

Time: 11:45am - 3pm
Location: Meet in Fellowship Hall, Pick up back of church

Activity: Lunch and Halloween Fun till 2pm
2-3pm we will venture to the back parking lot and participate in the Church's Trunk or Treat (parents are encouraged to meet their kids for the Trunk or Treat)

RSVP by October 24th

Activities

Happy Fall from the St. John's Stampers!

We stamper/card makers are getting back in the groove! We will be meeting on **Saturday, October 4th** from **9am-noon** in the Fellowship Hall (that's downstairs). With all the holidays on the horizon, we will have no difficulty with choosing some appropriate cards!

As usual, there will be 5 cards prepped and there is a fee of $5/person to help cover the cost of materials. If you plan to join us, please bring your own glue or double-sided adhesive, and let Betsy know that you plan to be there by end of day Tuesday, September 30th so there is time to get enough of everything ready!

You can do that by emailing Betsy Fackler at pdfeaf@zoominternet.net or texting her at 412 427-2045.

We have a **NEW DOOR CODE** if you need it, please contact Betsy.

Future sessions will move to the 2nd Saturday of the month, so…..
November 8th and **December 13th**.

CHECK US OUT ONLINE

Do you visit the St. John's website? The web working group part of the Technology Committee, continues to make updates and improvements to our site.

Here are some new things to take a look at:

→An updated **Our Ministries** section under the What We Do tab. Learn more about how you can get involved at St. John's!

→Our growing St. John's **Photo Gallery**. We continue to collect photos. Please upload your best shots to www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com/sendphotos

→Have you watched our **Welcome Video**? It's linked from the main Welcome banner on the home page.

→Music videos, too! Find links to our church musicians on YouTube via the **Worship and Music** page under Our Church.

→Updates on **events**! Please use our media request form, linked from the Events page, to make sure **your** church event is included.

Questions? Ideas? Help with uploading pictures?

Please contact any of our committee members:

Pastor Beth
Emily Bovan
Debbie Brown
Jay Caulkins
Matt Galbraith
John Miller
Nick Ross
Erik Roth
Wendy West Hickey

CUMBERLAND KIDS is starting up again on **OCTOBER 1ST**!

It is an after-school program for 1st through 8th graders which takes place from **3:45pm** to **5:45pm** each week. The program includes a snack during homework time, a craft or service project, time in our gym, and dinner. The suggested donation is $5/week. Church and community youth are welcome to attend. For more details, and to register, please contact Pastor Kari at our church office at 412-364-1606 or at **kari@sjhighland.com**.

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

INTO THE WOODS

MUSIC AND LYRICS BY: STEVEN SONDHEIM

BOOK BY: JAMES LAPINE

ORCHESTRATED BY: JONATHAN TUNICK

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 beaconontheHillproductions@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 beaconontheHillproductions@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.

BEACON ON THE HILL PRODUCTIONS

We need your help in the following areas:

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

- **Set Construction:** Builders and painters are needed. Work is available most Saturday and Sunday afternoons in October and early November.
- **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 need for performances.
- **Refreshment Stand:** Needed for performances.
- **Costumes:** Sewers (by machine or hand) needed to help with costumes.

COME AND BE!

When you drive into St. John's parking lot, you'll notice a simple welcoming statement on our front sign: Come and Be! So, a few of us were wondering – come and be what? We decided to ask you.

Over a couple of weekends in October (the 11th & 12th and the 18th & 19th), we'd like you to share your thoughts about St. John's and how you'd answer this question. What word would you use to invite someone to St. John's? Come and be welcomed? Come and be uplifted? Come and be yourself? What you find at St. John's is different for everyone, and we want to know about your experience here.

You'll have the opportunity to write your Come and Be answer on a piece of vinyl ribbon; we'll post all the responses on flag stands for Reformation Sunday. Then we'll keep going with the fun, creating a Word Cloud with the responses, using the answers on tee shirts, post cards and other cool stuff, and looking forward to 2026 when we'll highlight and celebrate a different response each month. Questions? Ask someone on your friendly **St. John's Evangelism committee**: Pastor Beth, Debbie Beleski Brown, Jennifer Mance, Nancy Swanhart, Wendy West Hickey, and Marilyn Whitten.

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

We still remain in contact with and help our family from Syria. We have also added a mother and her daughter from Africa. One of the members is helping her to learn English, navigate emails, and help her father make appointments for medical visits.

We continually seek more volunteers to help in this mission. Not all tasks or families 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 Bob David (bpbdavidpa@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 now 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.