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

Information as of
APRIL 2026

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"Making Christ Known"

Volume 7, Number 4

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

Saturday Worship:
5:30 p.m.

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:15 a.m. - *Traditional with Livestream*

Christian Education
9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

10:45 a.m. - *Contemporary with Livestream*

www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Pastor Kari Smail
Pastor Beth Clementson

APRIL 2026

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

Through God All Things Are Possible

"Making Christ Known"

APRIL 2026 EDITION

Current Church Council Members

President - Cemetery	Sam Sesti
Vice President - Mutual Ministry	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

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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 Accounts Receivable Clerk	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

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

Current Information as of April 2026
Vol. 7 Issue 4

A Note from Pastor Kari

Happy Easter everyone! Did you know that we don't just celebrate Easter on Easter Sunday, but for a whole season that lasts 50 days? The Easter season is essentially a week of weeks. It begins with the resurrection of Christ, it includes the time Jesus spent going around allowing his followers to see that he was risen in bodily form, it continues with Jesus' ascension into heaven 40 days after the resurrection, and it concludes when we celebrate Pentecost Sunday, which is the birthday of the church where God sent the Holy Spirit to be our guide.

We talk about being Easter people because we live in light of the good news of Christ's resurrection. We are freed from having to worry about our salvation so that we can instead care for others and the world God made. Easter is so important to us that we gather every week to celebrate the Good News, and it is said that every Sunday is like another Easter celebration.

During this month I hope that you can be intentional about living as Easter people so that once we are past this month you have created a mindset on which to look at the rest of the year. We always have something to celebrate and give thanks for because of Christ. Thanks be to God!

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

Worship Opportunities

Saturdays
5:30p.m. ~ Traditional Service

Sundays
8:15a.m. ~ Traditional service
9:30a.m. ~ Christian Education
10:45a.m. ~ Contemporary service

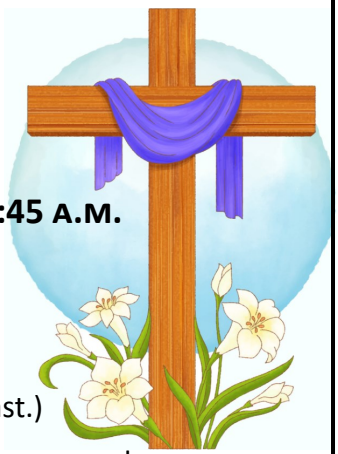
All Sunday services are now Livestreamed

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.

Holy Week Worship at St. John's

April 2nd	Maundy Thursday Services	Noon *and* 7:00 p.m.
April 3rd	Good Friday Youth Program	9:30 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
	Good Friday Service with the Passion	Noon
	Good Friday Stations of the Cross	7:00 p.m.
April 4th	Saturday Easter Vigil	5:30 p.m.
April 5th	Easter Morning	8:15 a.m. *and* 10:45 a.m.



Easter Breakfast Buffet will be served from **9:15 a.m. - 10:30a.m.**
A variety of egg casseroles, pastries, fruit, and beverages will be served.
There will be some gluten free options available. Contributions to a free will offering are greatly appreciated. (Please note: There is no Sunday School on Easter due to the breakfast.)

We hope that you can journey with us this year during our Holy Week worship as we remember
ALL CHRIST HAS DONE FOR US!

Worship Opportunities

Easter is a time of great rejoicing for the Christian church.

Come and Be... joyful

After the contemplation and darkness of Lent, the light peeks through as we experience the joy and truth of the Resurrection.

There are many ways to express and experience joy.

The Evangelism committee's Open Door Team hopes that we will try just one way to celebrate it together on April 18-19.

"*For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."* Isaiah 55:12 (ESV)

Blessed to be a Blessing Reflection for April.....

As we continue to ponder this year how we are "Blessed to be a Blessing," what better time to see this than Holy Week and the season of Easter!

On Maundy Thursday we are blessed with the gift of communion as Jesus tells the disciples at the Last Supper to "Do this in remembrance of me." Jesus is present with us in the bread and the wine, his body and blood. It is a reminder that Christ is with us wherever we go. The blessing of these gifts in communion nourish us for our lives of faith as we are called to be the Body of Christ in the world.

Then on Good Friday we recall how Jesus died for us on the cross in order to free us from our sins. This blessing frees us to no longer worry about our salvation so that we can instead focus on being a blessing to others.

And finally on Easter we know the joy of the risen Christ – the greatest blessing of all! We are able to live as Easter people – just as Christ has been raised from the dead, so we too have the promise of new life in Christ. This blessing inspires us to share the blessing of the Good News with others.

Blessings abound during Holy Week, Easter, and all year long! May we use these blessings to be a blessing to others so that they too might know the joy, peace, and hope we have in Christ Jesus!

Thank you! *from* Christian Education & Social Ministries

knock your socks off

THANK YOU to everyone who donated new socks and undies during our Lenten Journey! The week after Easter, John Miller will load his car with all the donations and deliver them to the North Hills Community Outreach. These essential items will help so many who are struggling to make ends meet.

The Social Ministry Committee wants to say....

We are **VERY GRATEFUL** to everyone who donated through the Lenten Coin box collection this year! If you haven't returned your box yet, you can still place it in the weekly offering plates or drop it in the black metal mailbox in the church office.

All that is collected will be given to the North Hills Community Outreach to help those in need.

THANK YOU!

It is truly a 'Blessing to bless others'

Some Ministry Highlights

Our **Saintly Sewers** meet on **Tuesdays at 12:30pm** in Highland Hall.

The Saintly Sewers have been working hard to produce many quilts. So far we have over 70 in the process of being completed! We have had many donations of fabrics to construct beautiful tops and still serviceable sheets to use for backings.

Please join us! No sewing necessary. We are in need of people to tie the quilts as we have a stack to complete.

Our biggest expense is batting. This is the filling between the quilt top and backing. We recently purchased a very large roll of batting and cut it all to the appropriate size for each quilt. Special thanks to a recent generous donor who is helping finance this!

We continue displaying a "Quilt of the Week" in Highland Hall. Stop by to admire our newly completed quilts. Included is a map and chart showing where the quilts are distributed across the globe.

Women of the ELCA

St. John's WELCA will be meeting at 7:00 pm on Tuesday, **April 21st** in Highland Hall. We will continue our Bible study on "Daring Women of the Bible," and our hostess will be Margaret Cenci. Hope you can join us!

PLEASANT VALLEY MEN'S SHELTER and BETHLEHEM WOMEN'S SHELTER

St. John's members, or organizations of our congregation, provide a meal to the clients of the shelters in our area on the 4th Wednesday evening of the month. Thank you to **Linda Meyerdierks and the Confirmation Class** for providing **March's meal** to the **Pleasant Valley Men's shelter** and to **the Ward Family** for providing the meal to **Bethlehem Haven.**

In **April**, the **Kofmehl/Harlan Families** will provide a meal for the **Pleasant Valley Men's shelter** and members of our **Social Ministry Committee** will prepare the meal for the women at **Bethlehem Haven**.

If you'd like to be involved in either of these outreach Ministries please contact:

Emily Bovan (724) 757-7812
or **Marjorie Mills** (412)266-8210

Partners in Ministry

Wow!

The tables in Highland Hall, designated for Backyard Angels, are overflowing once again.

They provide clothing to the community with no charge.

Backyard Angels

Eric Kofmehl and Rich Volpe just delivered another truckload of clothing and accessories to St Marks in Brookline.

Backyard Angels is now accepting clothing suitable for Spring and Summer wear.

All sizes are appreciated from baby to adult.

Thank you for all of the donations!

ACTIVITIES AT ST. JOHN'S

The sun is shining and lots of green is popping up from the earth!

What does this mean?
It's time to think about gardening; specifically taking good care of our church flower beds and property.

We had an outstanding crew of helpers last year, with new shrubs, trees and perennials being planted and weeding and edging adding to the beauty.

We hope to gather old friends and new to our gardening group.

If you have any interest in contributing, even an hour a week, to the effort, please contact **Kim Gettemy**, **Drew Leister** or **Margie Miller** for more info.

St. John's Stampers

April showers will not keep the St. John's Stampers from getting together and making some great "Special Occasion" cards. We'll be meeting in Fellowship Hall on **Saturday, April 11** from **9am-noon**.

All are welcome!

There is a fee of $5/person and we ask that you bring you own double sided adhesive or glue. If you plan to join us, please let Betsy Fackler know by end of day Tuesday, April 7th. You can email her at pdfeaf@zoominternet.net or text 412 427-2045.

Amy Kennedy and **Tony Good** are offering 2 opportunities to renew or refresh your current CPR Certificate.

Sunday, **April 12th** or Sunday, **April 26th.**
Both sessions will be held in **Highland Hall** from **Noon - 3:00pm.**

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)

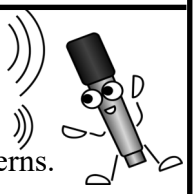
Having Fun Staying Young!

A Silver Sneakers sponsored exercise group that meets on **Mondays and Thursdays at 10:15a.m.** in Highland Hall.

Having Fun Staying young is growing in numbers each week. Why don't you come and join us? This is a friendly group that comes to exercise and helps each other and we continue to have fun while trying to stay fit. We meet at 9:30 for coffee and our class has men and women of all ability levels.

Come and join this fun group!

ST. JOHN'S LISTENS!



St. John's Congregation Council members are available to hear your feedback and concerns.

Please share your thoughts with:

Sandra Allen	**Renee Gotschalk**
Emily Bovan	**Marsha Logan**
Jay Caulkins	**Matthew McCormack**
Bob David	**Jody Removchik**
Marcie Emory	**Sam Sesti**
Matthew Galbraith	**Lloyd White**
Pastor Kari	**Pastor Beth**

You can **email** the Congregation Council at

listeningconcerns@stjohnslutheranchurch.com.

YOUTH NEWS

Elementary Youth

April 19th Time: 11:45am - 1:30 pm Location: Meet and Pick-up **Fellowship hall**

Activity: Eat lunch (food provided) play an active Lorax themed game where we save the planet, and get a little dirty planting flowers and decorating flower pots for our homes.

RSVP: Anna-Marie Christian, annamarie@sjhighland.com (919-280-2515), or the **Band App**

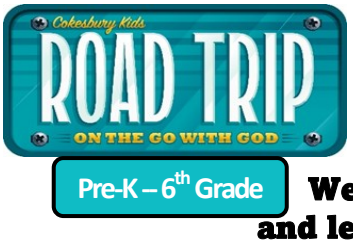
RISE Youth

April 26th Time: 6:30pm - 8:00pm Location: Youth Room

Activity: We will plan what activities will round out our end of year events in May as well. *(One on site event and one off-site event).*

RSVP: Anna-Marie Christian, annamarie@sjhighland.com (919-280-2515), or the **Band App**

Only one meeting this month due to Spring Break! Have Fun with your families and friends



Vacation Bible School

Join us for a fun week of Vacation Bible School

July 13 - 17th from 5:30 - 8:00pm.

We will be joining Scout, an energetic and curious dog, and learn how God is with us in whatever situations we face.

To register or sign up to volunteer please use the following site:
https://st-john-s-lutheran-church-of-highland.mycokesburyvbs.com/
Any, questions please reach out to Anna-Marie Christian at AnnaMarie@sjhighland.com

Coming Up .....

ALL MUSICIANS WELCOME
WITH A PART FOR EVERYONE!

On **Sunday May 31**, in celebration of **Trinity Sunday**, we welcome instrumentalists to join together in the prelude of the 10:45 AM service. That prelude will be a simple arrangement of the hymn tune "Holy Manna" (often known with the words "Brethren We Are Met To Worship").

At a single practice on May 27th at 7:00 PM, instrumentalists are invited to join for a big group practice.

To participate as an instrumentalist, please see Erik Roth or reach out to erikjroth@gmail.com
- Sheet music will be available for all instruments starting in May.

To participate as an "everyone", just show up to church on Sunday.

Summary:
5/27 7:00 PM for big group practice
5/31 10:45 AM play the prelude
(we'll meet at 10:30 AM to make sure everyone is properly setup)

2026 Operating Budget

2026 Operating Budget

YTD Income vs. Budget – February 2026

YTD Income Budgeted	$ 121,121.17
YTD Income Received	$ 95,361.89
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 25,759.28)**

YTD Expenses vs Budget – February 2026

YTD Expenses Budgeted	$ 122,454.50
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 107,238.38
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 15,216.12)**

YTD Income Received	$ 95,361.89
YTD Expenses Incurred	$ 107,238.38
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 11,876.49)**

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 it directed 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

Some Stewardship Tips from our Stewardship Chairs

Now that Spring is upon us, let's take a minute to look at some tax law changes and how it could impact your Stewardship planning for 2026 and beyond. If one thing is certain, it's change. Here are several (there are many more) of the important changes to pay attention to…..

Key Takeaways and Provisions:

- **Standard Deduction**: Increases to $32,200 for married filing jointly, $24,150 for heads of household, and $16,100 for single filers.
- **Child Tax Credit (CTC)**: Increases to $2,200 per qualifying child.
- **SALT Deduction Cap**: The deduction for State and Local Taxes (SALT) is raised to $40,000.
- **Senior Deduction**: Taxpayers 65+ can claim an additional $6,000 deduction (subject to income phaseouts).
- **Tax-Free Income**: Up to $25,000 in tips and $12,500 in overtime pay may be tax-free for qualifying taxpayers.
- **Auto Loan Interest**: A new deduction for interest paid on qualified U.S.-assembled personal vehicles.
- **Trump Accounts**: Parents can establish these accounts starting July 4, 2026, with a $1,000 federal contribution for eligible children.
- **Digital Assets**: New Form 1099-DA will be used to report transactions from brokers.
- **Charitable Deductions for Non-Itemizers**: New charitable deduction of $1,000/$2000 for UM/MFJ for filers who do not itemize.
- **HSA Limits**: Health Savings Account contributions rise to $4,400 for individuals and $8,750 for families, with additional amounts for those over 55.

Always make sure to consult your advisors and tax professionals to make sure are taking advantage of current tax codes and legislation.

It is important for us to be thoughtful about how we steward our resources, knowing that we have been "Blessed to be a Blessing." We hope these examples can serve as a "spring" board for you as you contemplate good stewardship this season!

Just for fun...

EASTER RESURRECTION

BIBLE WORD SEARCH

S	R	H	O	S	M	I	B	F	P	C	G	L	J	G
B	H	O	S	Y	A	P	X	E	A	X	S	M	L	O
F	O	P	O	M	W	V	L	B	L	I	E	Q	K	S
G	C	E	A	R	A	C	I	M	O	I	T	R	C	P
J	W	R	P	R	A	Y	K	O	X	Z	E	H	I	E
S	E	B	O	L	A	M	B	T	R	V	U	V	U	L
A	L	S	B	S	X	R	S	Y	R	R	A	T	E	K
L	E	E	U	F	S	I	Z	E	C	Y	K	L	W	S
V	A	A	T	S	R	S	N	H	A	S	L	U	P	Z
A	O	S	O	H	Y	E	F	K	L	M	T	R	H	D
T	T	T	C	W	W	N	I	E	A	L	I	V	E	I
I	Y	E	O	A	I	L	G	U	P	N	J	X	O	B
O	G	R	L	L	V	N	H	L	G	T	V	L	N	Z
N	K	U	J	Q	A	O	N	W	F	W	R	T	A	Z
V	R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	I	O	N	L	X

WORD LIST

ALIVE
ANGEL
BELIEVE
CHRIST
CHURCH
CROSS
EASTER
FAITH
GOSPEL
HOPE
JESUS
LAMB
PRAY
RENEWAL
RESURRECTION
RISEN
SALVATION
SAVIOR
SPRING
TOMB