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

Information as of
AUGUST 2026

DATED MATERIAL
Please deliver by July 31 2026

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"On Eagle's Wings"

Email **-** sjlutheran@verizon.net

phone - 412-364-1606

Saturday Worship:
5:30 p.m.

Sunday Morning Worship:
8:30 a.m. - ***Traditional with Livestream***

10:15 a.m. - ***Contemporary with Livestream***
www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

Pastor Kari Smail
Pastor Beth Clementson

ST. JOHN'S
LUTHERAN CHURCH OF HIGHLAND

On Eagle's Wings

AUGUST 2026

S t. John's Curren t Staff

SENIOR PASTOR	- KARI SMAIL
ASSOCIATE PASTOR	- BETH CLEMENTSON
DIR. OF CONTEMPORARY MUSIC	- RON BALING
ORGANIST & DIR. OF CHOIRS	- JOSEPH TUTTLE
OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR/ACCTS. RECV 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
CUSTODIAN	- CARLETTA NICHOLS

Current Church Council Members

SAM SESTI, III	- PRESIDENT (CEMETERY)
JAY CAULKINS	- VICE PRESIDENT (YOUTH MIN. & SECURITY)
MARSHA LOGAN	- TREASURER (FINANCE)
EMILY BOVAN	- SECRETARY (SOCIAL MINISTRY)
KARI SMAIL	- SENIOR PASTOR
BETH CLEMENTSON	- ASSOICATE PASTOR
BOB DAVID	- STEWARDSHIP & TECHNOLOGY
MATT MCCORMACK	- WORSHIP & MUSIC
KAREN BAUER	- PRESCHOOL
SANDY ALLEN	- EVANGELISM & FELLOWSHIP
MIKE BERGEN	- PROPERTY
DAVID GETTEMY	- STAFF SUPPORT
RENEE GOTTSCHALK	- CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
AMY KENNEDY	- MUTUAL MINISTRY

ST. JOHN'S LISTENS

Share your ideas, visions, concerns, or appreciations with our Council Members:
listeningconcerns@stjohnslutheranchurch.com

This is the first edition created in a new software program (which I am still learning). Improvements will be forthcoming with each new month.

"On Eagle's Wings"

Information for August 2026

www.stjohnslutheranchurch.com

A note from our Pastor...

This month we have the opportunity to gather for our annual church picnic on Sunday, August 16th at Lutherlyn. We have been doing this for several years now, and it is a joy to not only gather together in an outdoor setting to worship, but it is also meaningful to come together for a delicious picnic as well as a fun time of fellowship.

The day is a reminder of so many of God's blessings. We are blessed with a wonderful community of faith. We are reminded that our encounters with God are not limited to our church building but can happen anywhere. We experience the beauty of God's creation and are cognizant of our need to care for it. We have the opportunity to support a partner in ministry as we utilize their facility. This partnership also reminds us that we are a part of the larger church and we are joined together in Christ.

Summer is a time where many people and places switch things up for a season. It can be helpful to step out of our routines so that we can not only appreciate our normal routines, but also appreciate other ways of being and how God works through it all.

May you have a wonderful summer where you see God at work all around you!

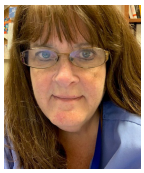
Soli Deo Gloria! (*To God Alone be the Glory!*)
Pastor Kari Smail

Welcome New Church Council Members

Karen Bauer

Mike Bergen

David Gettemy



Amy Kennedy

Please join us on Sunday, August 9th, following our 10:15am worship service, as we celebrate the leadership and guidance of the Rev. Pastor Kari Smail for the past 20 years here at St. John's!

AUGUST SPECIAL EVENTS

9 - 20th Anniversary Celebration of Pastor Kari, 11:30am

16 - Worship at Lutherlyn, 11am
Picnic at Lutherlyn, noon

25 - Pet Blessing at North Park, 7pm

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

- **Mondays & Thursdays**
  Having Fun Staying Young (Silver Sneakers) 10am
- **Tuesdays**
  Saintly Sewers, 12:30pm
  Men's Bible Study 6pm
- **Wednesdays**
  Weekly Staff Mtg., 9am

AUGUST ACTIVITIES

11 - Church Council Mtg., 7pm

18 - Evangelism Comm. Mtg., 6pm

23 - R.I.S.E. Youth Project, 5pm

25 - Social Ministry Mtg., 6:30pm

30 - Bethlehem Auditions, 5pm

IMPORTANT SEPTEMBER DATES

3 - Bell Choir Rehearsals begin, 6:15pm

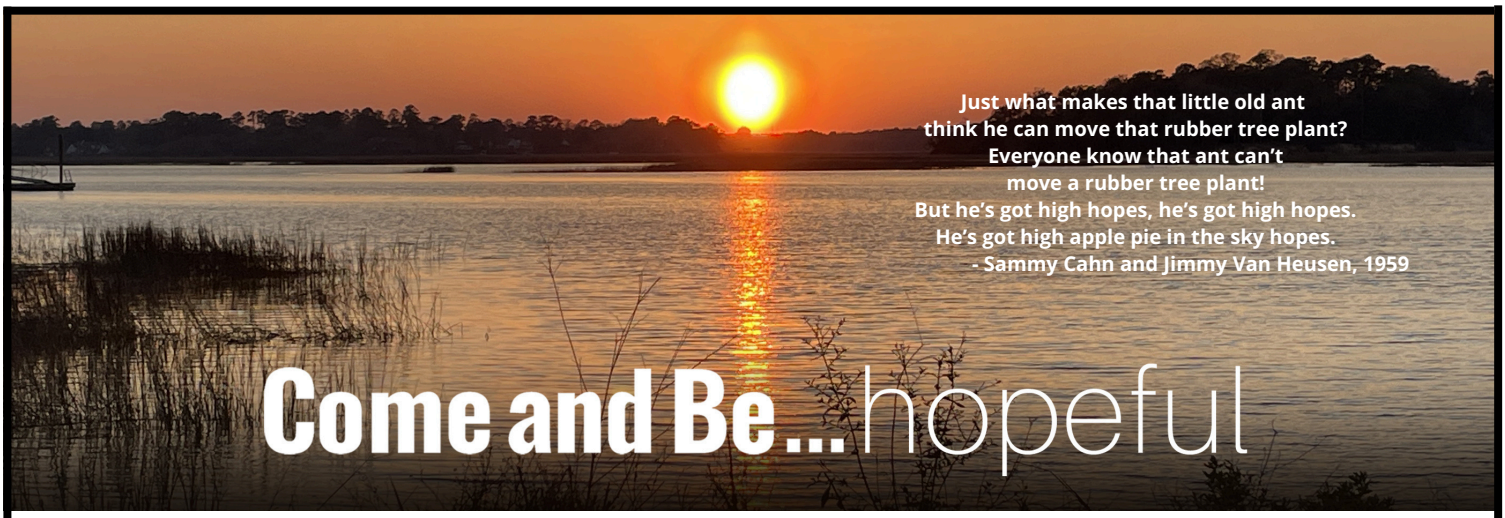
7 - Labor Day - Office Closed

12/13 - Resume Plan Year Worship Times

13 - Rally Day, 9:30am

Bethlehem Rehearsals begin
Adults - 6 to 9pm
Youth, 5:30 to 6:30pm

20 - Christian Education begins



Come and Be...hopeful

In contrast to the above song made popular by Frank Sinatra, hope in Jesus is not a "wish" or a "dream." Instead, it is a "confident expectation" and assured certainty in God's promises. It involves actively trusting in God's character rather than predicting positive outcomes based on "pie in the sky" circumstances or ideas.

In Paul's letter to the Romans (15:13), he puts it this way: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. We express this Christian hope when we sing the familiar hymn Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful, written by John W. Arthur:

Gather the hopes and dreams of all;
Unite them with the prayers we offer now.

St. John's is a place of hope for our congregation and for many in our community. We look forward to launching another activity in August to help us all observe this feeling. We "hope" you like it!

I recently bought a cheery crocheted flower from Hallmark. I saw it after I had checked out at the register and I liked it so much that I went back to purchase it. As you can see from the picture, it is multicolored and there is a smiley face in the center of the flower as well as on the flower pot. It has a card which labels it as an "Emotional Support Plant." It states that "**Life can be tough sometimes, but remember, so are you!**"

The little happy flower serves as a reminder that we have been blessed with strength to navigate life. The little happy flower also serves as a reminder that we all need other people to encourage us and support us along life's way when we do not feel strong. In those moments, sometimes other people are strong for us and we give thanks that they are connected to us to help us in our times of need.

During this season of summer we are surrounded by little happy flowers. We are also surrounded by our church community. May we be mindful of our call to use the strength we have been given both individually and collectively to bless others with encouragement and support when they do not feel strong. And may we be willing to receive blessing from others when we need "Emotional Support" people in our journey. We have been "Blessed to be a Blessing" and that is a happy thought indeed!

Church Picnic at Lutherlyn Aug. 16

Join us for worship at Chapel Hill and then enjoy food and fellowship at the Dogwood Pavilion. Please R.S.V.P. to the church office by Sunday, Aug. 9th, so we can plan how much we need to order. A donation of $10/person helps to defray the cost of the food..

Annual Pet Blessing

Tuesday, Aug. 25
7:00 pm

Bring your favorite furry companions to Beveridge Pavilion in North Park (near the pool area) for a Pet Blessing and enjoy some fellowship time with fellow pet owners and curious passers-by. Treats will be provided for both humans and pets!

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!

Thank you St. John's for showing up with such generous hearts and willing hands at Vacation Bible School. Your time, energy, and kindness made a real difference—whether you donated items, lead a crew, set up and cleaned up, served snacks, helped with crafts, guided games, taught songs and dance moves, or simply offered a steady, welcoming presence. Our kids felt seen, safe, and loved, and our church family was blessed by the joy VBS helped create.

We are excited to present a re-imagined version of "A Visit to Bethlehem" as an original stage production called Bethlehem the Musical. Our new vision will include all of your favorite characters, scenes, and sets as they will return to the stage.

The hour-long production will take guests through the town with musical numbers between street scenes. The script will be familiar with only a few tweaks made to bring the story to the stage. We need your help to be a part of the experience. See the Bethlehem table in Highland Hall to get involved.

Basic Time:

Aug. 30: Auditions
Sept. 13: Rehearsals begin for Musical Numbers.
Rehearsals will be Sundays late afternoons/early evenings.
Oct. 3: Stage Work Begins in Highland Hall.
Set work happens almost every weekend.
Oct. 3: Rehearsals continue through November for all cast on Sundays late afternoons/early evenings
Oct. 10-11: Unpacking the Bethlehem Closet and organizing props and sets. *We need a lot of people to help.*
Nov. 30: Full Run Through Rehearsals in the Evening.
Dec. 1 -2: Full Dress Rehearsals in the Evenings.
Dec. 5: Performances at 10 AM, Noon, 2 PM and 4 PM
Dec. 6: Performances at 1 PM, 3 PM, and 5 PM.

Saintly Sewers

We have just two months left to complete our year of quilt production! In early October we will be boxing and shipping quilts to their final destinations around the world. We have a need for people to come and tie knots to complete each quilt. We have at least 25 quilts to be completed. No sewing required and we have some pros to provide instruction. .

You can make a donation by scanning this QR code

Chose where you'd like your contribution to go, using the pull-down menu:

Offering Envelopes
Special Offering
Youth Ministry
Church Picnic
Church Musical/Concert
Altar Flowers/Sanctuary Candle
Major Maintenance
Building Use Fee
Preschool Tuition

STEWARDSHIP NOTE

As we approach the start of another school year, let's take a look at some 529 planning ideas for those who are able to financially contribute support for a young person's future. The earlier you start planning for a beneficiary's education, the easier and less stress you will have when that time comes! Here are some key points for 529 planning.

- **Superfund Your Contributions: Take advantage of super funding rules, which allow you to invest up to 5 times the annual federal gift-tax exclusion limit (up to $90,000 per individual or $180,000 for married couples) into a 529 in a single year without triggering gift-tax reporting.**
- **Cover K-12 & Trade Schools: In addition to university tuition, 529 funds can be used for qualified private K-12 tuition, licensed tutoring, standardized testing fees, and accredited vocational schools or apprenticeships.**
- **Shift the Beneficiary: If your oldest child receives a scholarship or chooses a non-collegiate path, you can easily change the account beneficiary to a sibling, cousin, or even yourself. This can be done once per year.**
- **Roth IRA Rollovers: SECURE 2.0 legislation allows up to $35,000 in lifetime, unused 529 funds to be rolled over into a beneficiary-owned Roth IRA without taxes or penalties. The 529 account must be open for at least 15 years to qualify.**
- **Set Up a Gifting Page: Make it easy for relatives to contribute to your child's education for birthdays or the holidays by setting up custom gifting pages through state-sponsored portals.**
- **Tax Savings: Pennsylvania taxpayers can deduct up to $19,000 per beneficiary per year from their state taxable income for 529 plan contributions. Married couples can deduct up to $38,000 (if each spouse has at least $19,000 in earnings). Since Pennsylvania has a flat state income tax rate of 3.07%, a $10,000 contribution saves you $307 on your state taxes.**
- **Eligible Plans: For Pennsylvania residents, you can use a PA 529 plan or an out-of-state plan to qualify for the deduction.**
- **Federal Rules: 529 contributions are not tax-deductible at the federal level, but all earnings grow federally tax-free.**

2026 OPERATING BUDGET

YTD Income vs. Budget - June 2026

YTD Income Budgeted	$363,363.50
YTD Income Received	$346,599.21
Over (Under) Budgeted	**($ 16,764.29)**

YTD Expenses vs. Budget - June 2026

YTD Expenses Budgeted	$367,363.50
YTD Expenses Incurred	$372,092.59
Over (Under) Budgeted	**$ 4,729.09**

YTD Income Received	$346,599.21
YTD Expenses Incurred	$372,092.59
YTD Surplus (Deficit)	**($ 25,493.38)**

The total 2026 YTD Expenses of $372,093 includes $1,560 for breaker box for Church Musicals, $1,424 to update Security locks on doors and $14,275 to replace an old electrical panel, for a total of $17,259 that came out of the surplus fund.

We give thanks for all the different ways that we can help our young people as they grow, including spiritually, emotionally, financially, and with our caring presence. Each of us have different gifts to nurture our youth, and in the service of baptism we are reminded of our call to support and pray for them in their journey. We are blessed to be a blessing!