

The Disciple

The Good News of St. John soars like an eagle!

St. John's United Church of Christ
Allentown, Pennsylvania

Volume 15, Issue 9

November 17, 2015



*The virgin will be with
child and will give
birth to a son,
and will call him
Immanuel.
Isaiah 7:14*

Have you noticed that every year the Christmas decorations in the mall are being put up earlier and earlier and the Hallmark channel is already running new Christmas shows on weekends? It feels like we jump from Halloween to Christmas, with barely a mention of Thanksgiving. Only the cooking shows are focusing on Thanksgiving and they are talking about the meal.

How do you prepare yourself for Christmas? What is your favorite tradition? Is there something that you must do or it doesn't feel like Christmas to you? Maybe you bake cookies or go shopping the day after Thanksgiving or play Christmas music. Perhaps it doesn't feel like Christmas until you have watched "Rudolph" or "It's a Wonderful Life" or the tree is up, lit and decorated. Could it be that Christmas for you is when you have all the figures of the Nativity set placed perfectly in the stable?

For many of you it wouldn't be Christmas if you weren't worshipping by candlelight, singing, "Silent Night" on Christmas Eve or attending the children's pageant or singing the "First Nowell".

All of these traditions evoke memories, but they are not the reason we celebrate Christmas. It is a cliché, but Jesus is the reason for the season. If Jesus hadn't been born and acclaimed as the Messiah, we would probably be celebrating the winter solstice.

As Christians, Christmas is the time we rejoice in the birth of our Savior, who showed us what it means to be fully human. We remember the difficult journey made by Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem, and we thank God for this precious gift who incarnates love, peace, joy and hope for all.

Advent is the four weeks leading up to Christmas. This year make time in your preparations to remember the reason for the season. Focus on Jesus as being born anew in your life.

Add these events to your holiday traditions: the Advent Breakfast and Workshop on November 29, 9:30-10:30, lighting the Advent Wreath, attending the Christmas Pageant on December 20, going Christmas caroling the same day and watching the light fill the sanctuary on Christmas Eve.

After all the word *holiday* means holy day.
May all your days be holy days.

Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Wishing you Hope, Peace, Joy and Love,

Pastor Karen



December 6–2nd Sunday of Advent–Malachi 3: 1-4; Luke 1: 68-79; Philemon 1: 3-11; Luke 3: 1-6
December 13–3rd Sunday of Advent–Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12: 2-6; Philemon 4: 4-7; Luke 3: 7-18
December 20–4th Sunday of Advent–Micah 5: 2-5a; Psalm 80: 1-7; Hebrews 10: 5-10; Luke 1: 39-45, (46-55)
December 27–1st Sunday after Christmas–1 Samuel 2: 18-20, 26; Psalm 148; Colossians 3: 12-17; Luke 2: 41-52

Holiday Schedule

- Nov. 29—Advent Breakfast and Workshop , 9:30am
Dec. 18—Annual Reports Due
Dec. 20— Christmas Pageant during the service
Dec. 20— Christmas Caroling, 12-3pm
Dec. 24—7:30pm, Christmas Eve Service
Dec. 25—**Christ is born!**
Dec. 27—Worship 11am; **No Chapel or Sunday School**

Looking Ahead to 2016

- Jan. 3— The Magi come to visit during worship.
Jan. 17—Annual Congregational Lunch and Meeting following worship

Adult Forum

Join us each Sunday morning for challenging and informative programs in Adult Forum. We gather in the Trinity Room for coffee and fellowship at 9:30am. We share joys and concerns around 9:45am and begin the program shortly thereafter. **COME JOIN US!**

- Dec. 6**— Bill Falla will lead an Advent Bible study for us.
Dec. 13— We will view the Fifth Bart Ehrman New Testament DVD.
Dec. 20— Pastor Karen will lead an Advent / Christmas Bible study for us.
Dec. 27—No Sunday School or Adult Forum.

Christmas Pageant

It's that time of year again and the Sunday School children have been working diligently to prepare another memorable Christmas Pageant. Picture this, the Christmas story retold from a heavenly perspective. You won't want to miss the shining faces that will make this all possible.

So please mark your calendars for Sunday, December 20, 2015, at 11am so you don't miss this angelic presentation by St. John's very own little angels. You won't regret setting this time aside to remember the reason for the season.

Messages from
the



Advent Breakfast and Workshop

“Are we there yet?” is the frequent cry of the passengers on a road trip. This is the theme for our Advent program. Discover the journey through Advent to Christ's birth and see if we're there yet. Come to the Social Hall November 29, 9:30-10:30 am.

Advent Wreath

Volunteers are needed to light the Advent wreath candles and read a brief liturgy during worship each of the four Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve. We need one family, group or individual to participate in each service. A script is provided for the reading. Please sign up on the sheet in the Great Hall or contact Pastor Karen.

Christmas Caroling

If you like to put a smile on a person's face or enjoy singing Christmas carols or both, come Christmas caroling to our home-bound members on Sunday, December 20, noon-3pm. Bring a bag lunch to eat before we set out.

Annual Reports Due

Please submit all annual reports to Sue in the church office by December 18 so she can prepare the reports for the congregational meeting on January 17, 2016. All chairs of boards and committees are to submit a report. These reports form our history.

Christmas Eve Service

Worship the Christ Child, Thursday, December 24 at 7:30pm. Come early to hear the extended organ prelude and worship during the Christmas Candlelight Service. Listen to the story of the first Christmas from the Gospel of Luke and enjoy singing carols. Invite your friends and bring your family.

Pastor Karen on Vacation

Pastor Karen will be on vacation December 26-January 2. Rev. Richard Guhl will be supply preaching on December 27. Contact the church office if you have a pastoral emergency.



ANNUAL ADVENT OFFERING: NEIGHBORS IN NEED

Every year during the season of Advent, St. John's receives the Neighbors in Need offering, which supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of local and national justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects (ucc.org/justice). Working with members of the UCC Justice and Peace Action Network (a network of thousands of UCC justice and peace advocates), Justice and Witness continues its strong policy advocacy work on issues such as the federal budget, voting rights, immigration, health care, hate crimes, civil liberties and environmental justice.

Neighbors in Need also supports our American Indian neighbors in the UCC. One-third of the offering supports the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministries (CAIM). Today there are twenty UCC congregations on reservations and one urban, multi-tribal UCC congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. These churches and their pastors are supported by CAIM, which is an invaluable resource for more than 1,000 individuals from dozens of other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations in the U.S.

Neighbors in Need helps make another world possible. It needs our support. Please use the enclosed envelope for your offering. **You can put it in the collection plate any Sunday during Advent.**

Christmas Card Project

St. John's is once again participating in the Christmas Card Project with the help of our missionary, Rev. Jeffrey Mensendiek, sending cards to our sister churches in the Fukushima area of Japan. We will have cards available to be signed in the Great Hall, at the Advent Breakfast and at Fellowship Hour. We are also asked to pray for the churches, and information on these congregations and their prayer concerns will be posted in the Great Hall.

If anyone has a few left-over Christmas cards, please give to Trudi Egan for this project.

Buy Your Christmas Greens at Dan Schantz

Think DAN SCHANTZ when decorating for Christmas while, at the same time, helping raise funds for St. John's! The tickets will be good to use through December 24.



Youth Fundraiser

The youth have an ongoing **clothesline fundraiser** to help raise money for their National Youth Event trip in July, 2016. If you wish to participate, take an envelope off the bulletin board in the great hall, fill out the tickets inside and place the amount of money that matches the number on the envelope, and the completed tickets, back in the envelope. Then return the envelope either in the offering plate or place it in the manila envelope attached to the bulletin board. On November 30, **three winners will be chosen from the raffle tickets** and the winners will receive dinner...cooked by, served by, and eaten with the youth.



Altar Flowers for December

December 6—"In Memory of my brother, Gerald 'Tink' Egan", given by Trudi Egan.

December 13—"In Memory of my parents, Frederick and Isabella Kramer", given by Nancy Kramer-Moyer.

December 20—Poinsettias given in honor and memory of many.

December 27—"In Memory of my Grammy, Lorraine Beltz", given by Sonya Middleton.

We thank all who have graced our altar with flower tributes!

Safe Child Policy Update

Pennsylvania law now requires all church volunteers working with children 18 years and under to complete the following clearances:

PA State Policy Criminal Background Check (no cost for volunteers) <https://epatch.state.pa.us>
PA Child Abuse History Clearance (no cost for volunteers)

<https://www.compass.state.pa.us/CWIS>

In addition, volunteers are required to receive educational information describing how to report suspected child abuse incidents by telephone: 1-800-932-0313 or online at:

www.compass.state.pa.us/cwis

A helpful FAQ sheet is available at: <http://keepkidssafe/pa.gov>

Judy Garrigan is our Safe Child Coordinator.



The time is here to order poinsettia plants to be placed in the church for the Christmas Eve Service. Order forms are available in the Great Hall.

You can fill out the form below to order your poinsettias and bring it or mail it to Sue Lyons at the church (36 S. Sixth St., Allentown, PA 18101) before **December 6**. It is preferred that you bring or mail the form, but if you call the office, please be prepared to give all the information on the form to Sue. This will help assure accurate listing in the bulletin.

Please submit this form with the exact wording you want printed in the Christmas bulletin.

Please **do not write "Same as last year"** and please print.

Poinsettia or Poinsettias to be placed.....

In Memory of: _____

or

In Honor of: _____

Placed by: _____

Number of Plants you wish to buy: _____

Please indicate with a check mark or number:

For Pick-Up _____ For Shut-Ins _____

Price: \$7.00 (**Orders must be in by December 6, 2015**)

If placing payment in an envelope on the offering plate, whether it be cash or check, please include this slip and indicate "Paid" on this slip. If writing a check, please write out to "St. John's United Church of Christ" and mark the memo line "for poinsettia."

You may fill this order blank out and pay later if you wish. Thank you.

Pledge/Covenant Cards Returned

Thank you to the folks that have returned the pledge/covenant cards to help us plan for 2016! We encourage those who have not to please do so. The covenant to support St. John's both by participation and financial support is very important to the church. Every pledge is important.

Thank you from the Stewardship Committee.

(note: This list is up to date as of November 14.)

Nancy Adams
 Cassidy Bell
 Priscilla Bowersox
 Eric Bronfenbrenner
 James & Rebecca Bronfenbrenner
 Stacey Clifton
 Byron and Janet Cook
 Bruce and Dolly DeLong, Sr.
 Bill and Bonnie Falla
 Megan Fegley
 Robert and Susan Fegley
 Emily Ferrol
 Jasmine Ferrol
 Linda Dreisbach Ferrol
 Ken and Yvonne Fillman
 Courtney Fillman
 Marion Freyman
 Norman Gehman
 Joseph Hein
 William Hein
 Esther Heinze
 Glenn and Gretchen Kent
 Richard and Sterna Klingborg

Howard Klopp
 Bud and Felicia Knerr
 Judy Krapf
 Allan and Nancy Kramer-Moyer
 Keith and Linda Lenhart
 Preston and Joanne McLaughlin
 Karen Moeschberger
 Joan Miller Moran
 Jay and Karline Mosebach
 Keith Nash
 Tom Raub
 Jeff and Nancy Rissell
 Alice Roth
 Emma J. Saylor
 Todd Saylor and Edward Gildea
 Dick and Jeanette Schmoyer
 Sandra Schwoyer
 Barbara Silfies
 Ralph and Doris Todd
 Wendy Williams
 George Yoder
 Bill and Nancy Zeky

October	Year to date				Avg. Worship Attendance for Month
	Current	Benevolence	Property	Totals	
<u>2015</u>					46
Member's Giving:	\$45,150	\$17,655	\$0	\$62,805	
Endowment Used:	\$51,149	\$3,200	\$73,305	\$127,654	
<u>2014</u>					47
Member's Giving:	\$49,352	\$17,808	\$0	\$67,160	
Endowment Used:	\$42,989	\$3,600	\$57,499	\$104,088	

Our Sheep Were Fed

Thanks to all who contributed to the Feed Our Sheep program. Packages that said "We Care" were sent to five of our Youth:

Tyler DeLong (Bruce and Dolly's grandson) at Temple University, Philadelphia
Emily Ferrol in Orlando, Florida
Taylor Fillman at Hill Air Force Base in Utah
Telisa Gardner at Concordia College in New York
Kelly Garrigan at St. Joseph's in Philadelphia

The boxes contained snacks and treats, small toys, some school supplies and assorted drugstore items. Many thanks to the Fillman family who contributed most of the snacks. The kids are always so grateful for

We Get Thank You^s

Good Morning St. John's,
I have just received my sheep package this morning. I wanted to take a minute to thank you for all that you do for the ones that are away. This gift reminds me of home, even though I am away from home 365 days a year. I am very happy out here in Salt Lake City and have gotten to experience so much in the last year and a half! I am hoping to visit home soon!

V/R
Taylor Fillman, A1C, USAF
388 MXG/MXOS
Plans, Scheduling, and Documentation
DSN 777-0089

Dear Friends at St. John's,
Thank you so much for the Feed Our Sheep package! I was so excited to get a box of my favorite treats from some of my favorite people. My mom and I miss you all very much and hope to see you soon. Thank you again for the package!
Love, **Emily Ferrol**

Allentown Area Ecumenical Food Bank

The food bank is in need of the items listed below. The items most needed are written in capital letters. Please keep this list in mind when you are writing your shopping list:

Peanut butter, macaroni & cheese, tuna, jelly, and canned fruit, Jell-O, pudding, any kind of canned or dried beans (baked, white, kidney, garbanzo, etc.), soups, canned meats, vegetables and pasta. Monetary donations are also welcome. Your monetary donations enable the Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank to purchase food from the Second Harvest Food Bank.

Pathways Donations Needed

Toiletries and personal-care items like shampoo, conditioners, soaps, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shaving cream, disposable razors, etc. Sample sizes and the types you find in hotels and motels are fine.

BikeWorks

Bike Works is often in need of toilet paper, paper towels, and disposable plastic gloves.

Please Give to the Curtis Fund

This Fund has been helping members of our St. John's family for decades. It assists members in need when they have financial emergencies. It is supported by contributions from us, the members of St. John's, and has been an extremely important source of emergency funds for years. Place your donations in the beautifully handmade church in the narthex on Sundays. We need to grow this fund so we can continue to help our family members!

More church parking in the lot off Walnut Street across from the parking deck to the west of St. John's.

Our Ministry with Central Elementary

THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU for filling our big Central box to overflowing with non-perishable Thanksgiving food items for the month of October. Because of you, many families of Central Elementary will be able to enjoy a Thanksgiving dinner.

The generosity of St. John's is overwhelming and is greatly appreciated!!

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FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER, WE ARE COLLECTING WINTER JACKETS, GLOVES AND HATS, CHILDREN'S SIZES 6-16.

Please bring these items to worship for our children to collect during the offering. If you prefer, you may put cash or a check made out to St. John's in an envelope marked "Central".

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Coming up in December – chapstick and tissues.

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We're doing ministry in the heart of the city.

Central's principal, Rebecca Bodnar, has asked St. John's for help with a bake sale the Monday and Tuesday of their Parent/Teacher Conference week, November 23 and 24. She asked if we could help with both baking and selling. The staff will be working on it, but most of the staff are teachers doing conferences, so they could really use our help. The bake sale is from 8am–12 noon on both Monday and Tuesday. If you are willing and able to help, there are sign-up sheets in the Great Hall for both baking and selling.

The money from all Central fundraisers goes to their "special activities" fund. The money is then used to try to provide a field trip for each grade level each year. The school district pays for the transportation, but not for the activities.

You may still sign up Sunday, November 22, on the yellow sign-up sheets in the Great Hall, or talk with Wendy at church, or give her a call, or send an email/text this week.

If you can bake - great!! Either drop off your baked goods in the church office this Sunday, or at Central Monday or Tuesday from 8 – 10am.

If you take what you make to church on Sunday and it needs to be refrigerated, please put it in the refrigerator downstairs in the kitchen marked CENTRAL and tell Wendy it's there.

If you take your baked goods to Central, go to the red door with the big number 2 on it, down Lumber Street to the right of the school, and press the buzzer.

If you can help at the bake sale, you only need to help for two hours, 8-10 or 10-12 either Monday or Tuesday. Please sign up or let Wendy know.

STILL WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

- + **Breakfast Buddies** – one-half hour Friday mornings
- + **Classroom Readers** - once a month, flexible schedule
- + **Student Mentors and Tutors** – once or twice a week, one hour per visit, flexible schedule

Interested in volunteering at Central? Any questions?? Contact Wendy Williams at 484-225-6708 or windwend1@gmail.com.

150th



St. John's United Church of Christ
Allentown, PA
Sesquicentennial Celebrations 2016

Mark your calendars!!

April 3, Recognition of former and current pastors, Christian educators, choir directors, organists, secretaries, sextons, housekeepers and chimers.

May 1, Recognition of members and all who have participated in the rites and sacraments of the church—those baptized, confirmed, married, buried and a celebration of the sacraments of baptism and Holy Communion.

June 5, A celebration of our musicians and music ministries, a combined choir of current and former choir members; recognition of children and youth choirs, bell choir, chancel choir, special music and our carillon. A quintet from the Allentown band will provide music during the service. Following a light luncheon, the Allentown Band will present a concert in the sanctuary at 1pm.

September 11, Rally Day and recognition of our benevolences, missions, and faith formation. (Christian education ministries, teachers, Sunday school superintendents, nursery care providers, students, chapel leaders and community benevolence grants.)

Saturday, October 1, One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary Dinner, Social Hall, sharing memories.

October 2, World Communion Sunday, recognition of Zion UCC, Christ UCC and Trinity UCC, PNEC Conference staff and UCC national staff person present.

(A luncheon follows each service with the exception of October 2)

Please RSVP to the church office one month in advance of each luncheon (610-433-0146). Thank you.



Anniversaries in the coming month are listed on the calendar. But we want to highlight those who are celebrating special wedding anniversaries.

Verna and John Klingaman will celebrate their seventieth anniversary on December 23.

Congratulations and may God be with you as you celebrate this and the anniversaries still to come.

The deadline for next month's newsletter articles are due on Monday, December 7.

In search of...

.....folks willing to host the "fellowship time" after a Sunday service. You do not need to purchase the refreshments. Speak with Trudi Egan if you have any questions about hosting. Please use the appropriate sign-up sheet in the Great Hall if you are willing to help.

.....folks willing to sponsor the **Worship Bulletin**. You can dedicate a weekly bulletin in memory of someone, or in honor of a person or group of people or in recognition of an event. The cost is \$15. Your sponsorship will help defray the annual cost of the weekly bulletins!!! Please see Bruce DeLong or Jeff Rissell if you would like to sponsor a week or two.

December 2015

	 <p>Dec. 5– Louise & Matthew Gutt Dec. 23–Verna & John Klingaman Dec. 24– Felicia & Bud Knerr</p>		1	2	3	4	5	
<u>December Birthdays</u> 2 – Esther Heinze Marian Strapak 4 – Dolores Rehrig Melissa Gillenwater 5– Christina Brensinger Nancy Gardner Sophia Steinberg 6 – Kyle Smith 11 – Erica Morris 12 – Linda Scavo 13 – Christopher Kulp 15 – Carla Solt 18 – Nancy Adams Nicole Saylor 19 – Lewis Lang 21 – Lillian Sablich 22 – Jennifer Moats 24 – Nicholas Sablich 25 – Byron Sablich 31 – Janet Cook	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	
	9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Adult Forum 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship Deadline for Poinsettia Orders	4:00p Disciple deadline	7:00p Consistory	7:00p Chancel Choir				
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
	9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Adult Forum 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship		9:30a Disciple mailing			Annual Reports Due		
	20	21	22	23	Christmas Eve ²⁴  Music 7:00pm Worship 7:30pm	25	26	
	27	28	29	30	31			
	No Chapel or Sunday School. 11:00a Worship 12:00n Fellowship				New Year's Eve			

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