

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 22 Issue 20

May 2022

Howdy St John's Congregation,

Did you know that May is Mental Health Awareness Month? There are millions of people worldwide who live with mental illness, and it is in this month that we are called to educate people about mental illness and work together to fight the stigma surrounding this struggle! If you visit the official website for the National Alliance on Mental Illness (www.nami.org) you can find more information, resources, and testimonies, and even share your own story!

Data and statistics from the CDC show how drastically experiences of depression and anxiety have increased in our youth over the last 20 years. These numbers spiked even higher during the COVID pandemic. It can be challenging to know how to support people *at any age* with mental illness; one of the first steps is normalizing the fact that ***it is okay to not be okay!*** Even in 2022 there still exists the stigma that to be struggling with mental health is wrong or bad in some way. The fear of being judged can in many cases prevent people from seeking treatment or seeking the support that they need. But the fact is that we are stronger together! 1 Corinthians 12:24 reminds us that, "The body is not supported by one person, but by all of us." We are one; we are strongest working together in unity.

We are called to get educated and support one another, and, most important, to love! The United Church of Christ Mental Health Network has developed a curriculum to help guide congregations on how to become safe spaces for people struggling with mental health by becoming a WISE Congregation. What is a WISE Congregation? "A WISE Congregation has joined the mission to being Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged in the Mental Health of the community and the wider world." If you would like to join me in the work to make St. John's UCC a WISE congregation, please reach out to me!

It is okay to not be okay, and it is always okay to ask for help! Christ is with you, your friends at St. John's are ready to support you, and I'm always happy to lend a hand or an ear. One of the strongest things a person can do is ask for help!
-Pastor Becky Sausser

Consistory Summary

The Consistory meeting on April 12 was held in the Trinity room. The minutes were approved. Cassidy just received the quarterly statement that afternoon, so she will report on it next meeting. Pastor Becky reported that the Lenten Study was a success! There are a number of events with the other churches in the near future including a pulpit exchange on May 15. On June 12 there will be a combined picnic and service, more information coming soon. Pastor Becky provided an update on the other four congregations and reported that there will be a meeting soon with Dave, the pastors, and Consistory presidents. Nancy reminded everyone that this endeavor is a process that will take time and many conversations.

The Benevolence Committee reported that May will be the offering for Phoebe home. Fellowship reported that we have resumed Fellowship Hour. Property reported that they are awaiting estimates for the Dryvit. Personnel met with April last month for an annual review; next they will be looking at the administrative assistant job description. Christian Ed will be scheduling a planning meeting for VBS, anyone interested please contact Judy Garrigan or Pastor Becky. There was a formal vote to approve Battle Borne renting space in our building, which passed unanimously. The next meeting is May 10 at 7pm.

Our Ministry with Central Elementary School - May

Our Partnership with Central Elementary School

This is the first time in three years that there has been a full year of in-person education inside the school building at 829 West Turner Street, here in Allentown...the first time in three years that each and every classroom (and nook and cranny tucked away here and there) has been overflowing with “littles”, as the staff affectionately calls them...the first time in three years that the school has come to life with the energy, the ginormous snap, crackle, and pop of nearly 800 children’s voices...and there’s what you don’t hear -- the quiet voices and listening ears taking it all in.

It’s a new day at Central Elementary School. Is it back to normal? Who’s to say what “normal” is? Is this the “new normal”? Perhaps until tomorrow. There’s a comfort found in being back in a routine of classes, of being together as a class with its teacher, of movement from one activity to another. However, underscoring every minute of each new day is the daunting challenge of overcoming gaps in the students’ education, gaps formed during the pandemic and left behind for the teachers to conquer, much like climbing mountains and valleys left by earthquakes, volcanic activity, and major shifts in the earth’s surface over millenia.

Never underestimate the tenacity of a teacher! That’s the good news! Central’s teachers and administration have always been committed to achieving a strong academic program and have the drive, the ingenuity, and the patience to provide just that.

Did you know that Central hosts LIVE bedtime stories on their website or Facebook page every Monday at 7pm? This week, Superintendent Stanford read “Imagine” by Juan Felipe Herrera.

We will begin our offerings of school uniforms during the last two weeks of May and continue through June and July. Information about the different types of uniforms for girls and for boys and the cost of each will be forthcoming.

Submitted by Wendy Williams

May's Special Mission Offering

Our Special Mission Offering is Phoebe Ministries. Phoebe Ministries, founded by the Reformed Church in 1903 as Phoebe Deaconess Home, has for nearly 120 years a core mission of promoting healthy aging by providing communities and services for active retirement with the security of a full continuum of senior care.

This is a ministry with which St. John's has had a long involvement, both financial and personal. It continues to remain a vital mission of the UCC as it seeks to serve the needs of a growing aging population in eastern Pennsylvania. While traditionally, special emphasis for this annual offering has been associated with Mother's Day, May 8, you may donate anytime in May using special envelopes found in the Narthex, the Donate button on our webpage, or by designating it as part of your weekly offering.

Thank you for considering helping to continue St. John's support of this vital ministry.

-Bonnie Falla

Important Dates:

Worship Information – May Sermons - Mental Health Awareness Month

- May 1- Third Sunday of Easter
 - o Reading 1: John 21: 1-19
 - o Reading 2: Acts 9:1-20
 - o Call to worship: Revelation 5:11-14
 - o Title: Feed My Sheep
 - o Christ appears before seven disciples, asking Simon Peter to feed Christ's sheep, taking care of the flock of believers after Jesus' ascension. In Acts we read Paul's amazing conversion story.
- May 8- Mother's Day
 - o Rev. Allan Kramer-Moyer will be preaching while Rev. Becky Sausser is away on vacation.
- May 15- Fifth Sunday of Easter
 - o Reading 1: John 13: 31-35

- o Reading 2: Acts 11:1-18
- o Call to worship: Revelation 21:1-6
- o Title: All Things New
- o This week is Mental Health Awareness Sunday! In John we hear the promise of Heaven from Jesus that is echoed in our call to worship from the book of Revelation. In Acts we learn that what God has called holy must be honored as holy!
- May 22- Sixth Sunday of Easter
 - o Reading 1: John 14:23-29
 - o Reading 2: Acts 16:9-15
 - o Call to worship: Psalm 67
 - o Title: Holy Spirit, Truth Divine
 - o In our gospel we learn that the advocate, the Holy Spirit, will be sent to guide us and teach us what we need to know. In Acts we learn the conversion story of Lydia.
- May 29- Seventh Sunday of Easter
 - o Reading 1: John 17:20-26
 - o Reading 2: Acts 16:16-34
 - o Call to worship: Psalm 97
 - o Title: One in Christ
 - o In our gospel we learn that we are one in Christ and one in God. In Acts we see Paul and Silas unjustly arrested when something amazing happens in the jail!

Announcements:

Sidewalk Sale!

The Sidewalk Sale is back this year! The sale will be on September 10 here at St. John's UCC! We are already collecting items, so as you go about your spring-cleaning, feel free to drop items off in the "Blue Room" located across from the Trinity room.

If you would prefer to sell your own items, contact Pastor Becky Sausser or Cindy Danenhower to sign up for a table. In addition to items, we will also need volunteers to help with the sale, face painting, and much more! So mark your calendars and organize your garage, because the Sidewalk Sale is coming!

Sidewalk Sale

Let's all give some cheers
For it's been many years
Since we opened our closets and trunks
And gleaned from the piles
Our useable styles
Of clothing and tchotchkes and junks
Just box it and bag it
We'll price it and tag it
We're sure it'll sell without fail
Because once again
Hallelujah! Amen!
St. John's plans a Great Sidewalk Sale!
So try to remember
The 10th of September
The day we work hard and have fun
There's more info coming
(This place will be humming!)
And everyone pray for some sun.
-Becky Bronfenbrenner

Graduation News

If you have information about a member who is graduating, please call the church office or let Becky Bronfenbrenner know. We'd like to honor our graduates with a write-up and share this joy.

Live-Streaming

We believe the technical problem with the streaming sound has been resolved. If anyone still has a problem, please call the church office, and let them know.

Hospice Information

Happy Spring! Think about getting out to help a neighbor in need. Consider volunteering for SpiriTrust Lutheran Home Care & Hospice. Make friendly visits to hospice clients, supportive phone calls to grieving families, or sew memory bears. For more information, please call Cathy Sweeney, Volunteer Coordinator at 570-599-5390.

Multi-Church Picnic Celebration!

Emmanuel UCC, Grace UCC, St. John's UCC, and Zion's Liberty Bell UCC are joining together to celebrate and worship at Waldheim Park on June 12!

The main course and drinks will be provided. We ask that everyone please bring a side dish or snack.

Contact the church office to sign up!

When: June 12 @ 11am

Where: Waldheim Park (2400 S. Hall Street, Allentown, PA 18103)

What to bring: A covered dish, side, or snack; contact pastor to sign up.

We are asking that you contact the church office to sign up so we have an accurate head count!



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

ADULT FORUM RETURNS

It's spring at Adult Forum! Before our summer break, we are looking forward to hearing from a wide selection of guest speakers. Please join us Sunday mornings before worship for a variety of studies and programs. We begin to gather in the Trinity Room at 9:30 for a sharing of joys and concerns, and start our program at 9:45.

May 1 -Karen Berard, the Executive Director of The Neighborhood Center, will update us on the work of the center and their busy schedule of events and activities. The Neighborhood Center has been a long-time recipient of St. John's Community Benevolence Grants.

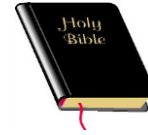
May 8 -Come hear about our wonderful Allentown parks, trails, and outdoor events from Karen El-Chaar, Director of the Department of Parks and Recreation for the city. We are blessed with fantastic parks, so come and say thanks!

May 15 -Battle Borne, a group whose mission is to connect veterans with the resources to recover from mental, emotional, and physical trauma has expressed interest in our location for their important work. Chris and Phil will join us to share the story of Battle Borne.

May 22 -What would you like to learn more about? Who would you like to hear? Do you have something you would like to share? This is our annual brainstorming session to list ideas for our next Adult Forum year. This input has always been a huge help, so please share your ideas this day or any time!!



Lectionary Readings for May 2022



May 1 – Third Sunday of Easter –

Acts 9:1-6, (7-20); Psalm 30; Revelations 5:11-14; John 21:1-19

May 8 – Fourth Sunday of Easter –

Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23; Revelations 7:9-17; John 10:22-30

May 15 – Fifth Sunday of Easter –

Acts 11:1-18; Psalm 148; Revelations 21:1-6; John 13:31-35

May 22 – Sixth Sunday of Easter –

Acts 16:9-15; Psalm 67; Revelations 21:10, 22-22:5; John 14:23-29

May 29 – Seventh Sunday of Easter –

Acts 16:16-34; Psalm 97; Revelations 22:12-14, 16-17, 20-21; John 17:20-26

May 2022

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1 – Christopher Gutt
Olivia Gutt
4 – Shinea Pyle
Subrina Pyle
5 – Alexander Cloak
8 – Karline Mosebach
13 – Shirley Bartynski
14 – Abby Garrigan
20 – Lynn Cloak
23 – Hawthorne Rissell
25 – Sonya Middleton
26 – Brenda Schuler



5/21 – Allison M. & Richard Hausman
5/26 – Ralph & Doris Todd
5/27 – James & Rebecca Bronfenbrenner

1	11am Worship Communion Adult Forum 9:30 am	2	3 – 1pm Elders Meeting 4 – 9am Prayer Call			5	6	7
Pastor Becky's Vacation - Mon. May 2 through and including Sun., May 8								

8	11am Worship Rev. Allan Kramer-Moyer Special Offering taken for Phoebe Ministry Adult Forum 9:30 am	9	10	7pm Consistory	6	9am Prayer Call	7	8	9
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15	11am Worship Pulpit Swap with Emmanuel Adult Forum 9:30 am Disciple Due	16	17	18	9am Prayer Call	19	20	21
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22	11am Worship Adult Forum 9:30 am	23	24	25	9am Prayer Call	26	27	28
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29	11am Worship Adult Forum 9:30 am	30	Office Closed 	31				
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May – Named for the Roman goddess Maia, who oversaw the growth of plants. Also from the Latin word maiores, “elders,” who were celebrated during this month.



Disciple Deadline is the 15th of every month!

If you write something for The Disciple, we want to thank you for your hard work and dedication! Articles and stories are due the 15th, if you miss the deadline, don't worry, just let us know!

Thank you!

Visit us at www.stjohnsuccallentown.org

Like us on Facebook at St. John's UCC Allentown