

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 23 Issue 38

November 2023

Howdy St. John's Family,

I hope this finds you in good health and good spirits! During our Consistory meeting last month, our illustrious president, Jeffrey Rissell, stood up at the end of the meeting and announced that there were only 76 days until Christmas. This of course was met with a round of groans, and several people asking him not to say such things! As one of the people who groaned, I found it funny when I was reflecting upon it later. We always say, "remember the reason for the season", but that is much easier said than done when we feel inundated by obligation, tradition, and perhaps even the pressure that we put on ourselves. So, what are we to do?

First things first, go get your Christmas shopping done! No, I'm just kidding! But it can often feel like that, right? You may even be sitting there, thinking to yourself, "why on earth would Pastor Becky make her November letter about Christmas and not Thanksgiving?" What an astute observation! And thank you for the transition... according to an article published in January of this year from *Neuroscience News*, they found that when people practice gratitude, feeling grateful, it lowers their systolic blood pressure, demonstrating a "unique buffering effect against reactions both to and recovery from psychological stress". One thing that we can do to help ourselves re-center when the stress of the holidays becomes overwhelming is to reflect on that for which we are grateful.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 tells us, "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you". Thanksgiving reminds us that there is so much to be grateful for; and on Christmas Eve we get to celebrate the thing that we are most grateful for, a loving Savior who came to earth to save us! So, take a deep breath, close your eyes for just a moment, and remember that in the midst of the chaos there's so much to be grateful for!

-Pastor Becky Sausser

Consistory Summary

The Consistory meeting was held on October 10 at 7pm. Missy Repash joined the meeting. Members shared joys and concerns and Rick Guhl led devotions. The minutes from our September 12 meeting were approved. Pastor Becky reported that the stewardship letter, and the Covenant Cards are being sent in the mail this week; special thanks to the Stewardship

team for their feedback. The cards will be dedicated on November 19. Our confirmation class this year includes three students, Henry Dopera, Josh Pyle, and Savannah Grabowski. Their mentors are Ralph Todd, Allan Kramer-Moyer, and Trudi Egan. The confirmation class was to visit Congregation Keneseth Israel on October 13, but were unable. This December the confirmation class will participate in the "Luke Challenge", and the congregation is invited to join; see this issue of *The Disciple* for more details. Invitations have been sent to families that have lost someone this year for our All Saints' Day celebration to be held on November 5. Pastor Becky will be at an NGLI educational intensive November 10-16; Rick Guhl will be preaching on Sunday November 12.

Lynn Cloak shared the highlights of the Fellowship events last month including the Rally Day breakfast, fresh bread on World Wide Communion Day, and a special cake for the Delorey family. Under Fundraising, Lynn shared that the new date for the kitchen clean-up has not been set yet; on October 15 there was a pulled pork sale, and if anyone has a fundraiser they would like to run, please contact Lynn. Under Property, Jeff reported that things are going well. Under Christian Education, Pastor Becky reported that the Sleep Out for Homelessness on October 14-15 was canceled due to bad weather. On October 19 Judy Garrigan lead the youth at Trunk-or-Treat at the YMCA. On October 22, the youth and the congregation participated in the CROP Walk. Cassidy Bell and Jim Bronfenbrenner gave the Treasurer's report; the report was accepted. Under Personnel, Jeff Rissell and Pastor Becky shared that St. John's has hired a new administrative assistant, Andrea Williams, who began on October 18. Rick Guhl shared a report from the newly formed Green Team; they will have a sermon series in January. They continue to work on getting an energy audit, and they have several other exciting things coming soon. Rick Guhl shared how the Consistory Book Study went; he and Pastor Becky will be working on developing a 60-day challenge to encourage the church to seek discernment.

Under old business, there is no update on the MST classes. Under new business Jeff Rissell shared that he invited the congregation to join with him for a brainstorming meeting via zoom on October 16. The invitation went out on October 11. Pastor Becky reported that we are in conversation with Michael Andolina, a CPR and AED Trainer who would like to rent space in this building. The next meeting of the Consistory is on November 14 and Tom Raub will be leading the devotions.

November Special Mission Offering

It is November, which means that **Tallulah, the Turkey** is back on her mission to combat hunger in the Lehigh Valley. We have agreed to assist her as we did her predecessor, Tilly, in this endeavor. Therefore, our Special Mission Offering for November is the **Allentown Ecumenical Food Bank**. Tallulah also wants us to remember that while donations of non-perishable food items are welcomed, monetary donations are desired since the Food Bank can buy in bulk and purchase more food per dollar than we can.

So, let's help her with our donations for the Food Bank during the month of November. We may do so by dropping off food items in the Food Bank tote in the Narthex. Monetary

donations can be given using the pew or weekly offering envelopes (designated for the Food Bank) or by using the Donate button on our website.

Tallulah, and more important, those in need will thank you.

Community Bike Works Cycle Challenge

Community Bike Works Cycle Challenge for October 1-15, 2023, is complete! Not all the statistics are in *, but the Nancy/Allan Kramer-Moyer team is proud and grateful that we completed 204 miles during the 2-week challenge and raised \$830, a large chunk of which came from St. John's members! Thank you all! You can feel good about supporting such a great program.

*As of October 14, 2023, 14,019 miles have been ridden by various individuals and teams. \$80,008 has been raised toward the \$100,000 goal.

-Submitted by Nancy Kramer-Moyer

“We Made It Across the Finish Line!”

Thank you to the Challengers who rode, walked, spun, and ran with us in the 2023 Community Bike Works Cycle Challenge, and thank you to the community members who supported the challengers!

Our 27 teams, consisting of 158 dedicated community members, have raised an amazing \$100,000 and rode a total of 17,728 miles to support the kids of Bike Works in this year's Cycle Challenge. Our student riders even got involved in the Challenge this year and rode a total of 394 miles throughout Allentown and Easton--including on a wet, muddy, and fun ride through Easton in Saturday's rain!”

ST. John's wants to thank Allan and Nancy Kramer Moyer for their participation in the Cycle Challenge! Our church is pleased to support Bike Works through our Benevolence Fund and applaud Nancy and Allan for their energetic support! Thank you!

November Sermons

- November 5- All Saints' Day
 - Reading 1: Joshua 3:7-17
 - Reading 2: Revelation 5:1-14
 - Call to worship: Resources
 - Title: The Journey.
 - This week we have another famous river crossing in Joshua, juxtaposed against a vision of heaven. These stories unite to remind us of the ancestors who laid the foundations of our faith and spur us on to share the good news of the kingdom of heaven!
- November 12
 - Reading 1: Matthew 25:1-13
 - Reading 2: 1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

- Call to worship: Psalm 78
- Title: I Want to Be Ready.
- In our gospel lesson we hear the parable of the ten bridesmaids, and in 1 Thessalonians we hear about when Christ will return! How do we as Christians in 2023 carry the hope of Christ's return into the world?
- November 19
 - Reading 1: Judges 4:1-7
 - Reading 2: Matthew: 25:14-30
 - Call to worship: Psalm 123
 - This week we revisit the story of Deborah and Barrack and hear the gospel parable of the talents. What would it look like if we used our full potential for the glory of Christ?
- November 26- Reign of Christ Sunday
 - Reading 1: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24
 - Reading 2: Matthew 25:31-46
 - Call to worship: Resources.
 - In Ezekiel we see images of God as the good shepherd, in Matthew we hear the call to care for one another. This week we celebrate Christ as king of the universe!

ADULT FORUM

Welcome Back! Old friends and new, please join us Sunday mornings before worship for a variety of studies and programs. We gather in the Trinity Room at 9:30 for coffee or tea, then begin our program at 9:45 with a sharing of joys and concerns. This is what we have planned so far for the autumn.

Oct. 29 - Margaret Borene from The Institute for Learning in Retirement who held classes at St. John's this summer calls her topic: "Elizabeth I and the English Reformation: What Would Luther Think?" She notes that the benefit of incorporating Luther's method of reform with Elizabeth's will be her highlights. Reformation as a process rather than our historical emphasis on a moment in time. Margaret makes history great fun!

Nov. 5 - Carole Dorr from LVHN's Tobacco Treatment Program will be with us to discuss their 'Freedom From Smoking' classes and how to develop tobacco-free policies. She will talk about the dangers of smoking and the newer E-cigarettes and vaping devices. As a bonus, our youth will join us and all who attend will be entered in a chance to win a \$25 Visa gift card!

Nov. 12 - Prior to retirement as a police officer, Darius Puff started to teach others about the history and culture of the Lenape people. He uses both artifacts (real and reproductions) and traditional stories of the Lenape and other Native American nations. His goal is to try to educate others about these people and how their culture changed after contact with the new settlers. Please join us to learn more about this important part of our nation's story.

Nov. 19 - You may have heard that Moravian Seminary and Lancaster Seminary are joining programs, and it would be great to learn more. Allison Berger, Assistant Director of Seminary Admissions and Student Success, will be joining us to explain and to tell us what is going on at Moravian. (Rescheduled from October)

-Submitted by Trudi Egan

Announcements

Fall Dates To Remember

- November 5- All Saints' Day Celebration
- December 3- Advent Breakfast and First Sunday of Advent
- December 24- Sunday morning service at 11am and Christmas Eve service at 7:30pm

Covenant Cards

Every year during the month of November we ask you, the members of the congregation of St. John's UCC, to do something to renew your commitment to the mission of the church. In October, I sent out a letter that contained a blank Covenant Card, and I ask that you return the Covenant Card by November 19! In the past, many have understood the Covenant Cards to simply be about a financial commitment, but the Covenant Card is about more than that. There is a place on the card to reaffirm your commitment to the ministry of the church! Your financial commitment helps us to create a budget that allows us to do the work we are called to, but your prayers and your volunteer hours are just as important a contribution!

To show our appreciation for you taking the time to reaffirm this commitment in whatever way you are called to, we will be sending every household a small gift to express our gratitude for sending in your Covenant Card. Please mail your Covenant Card or bring it to the service on November 19 so that we can bless and dedicate them together.

Something exciting to look forward to:

Our delicious
Nuts and Truffles
Fundraising Sale

These tasty treats will make a perfect addition to your Christmas Celebrations
or
for gift giving!

Orders will be taken between November 12 and November 26, 2023.

Distribution will take place on December 10.
(Additional information to be announced.)

Luke Challenge

You may remember that two years ago during our last confirmation class, we invited the congregation to join with the students for a challenge! This challenge is known as the *Luke Challenge*. The gospel of Luke has 24 chapters, so we ask our students to read a chapter a day of this gospel as they make their way toward Christmas Eve. What this does is help us to connect the story of the birth of Christ with the death and resurrection of Christ. Without the birth of Christ on Christmas Eve there would be no resurrection on Easter morning. We know that the advent season is a busy time of year for many; that is why this challenge is by invitation, not expectation. But if you are willing and able, I would invite you to read, or even listen to, the gospel of Luke during the month of December. Thank you!

Getting to Know you

We have been incredibly blessed to be able to welcome so many wonderful folks into our congregation! Some of these folks are members who can no longer attend in person but are still a blessed part of the body of Christ and beloved members of St. John's UCC! In this new section of *The Disciple*, you will get to know who they are!

Meet one of our homebound folks from Emmanuel, **Grace Parry!** Grace was baptized and confirmed, and sang in the children's, youth, and chancel choirs at Salem UCC until it closed. She then became a member at Emmanuel UCC, which was very convenient as she lived at B'nai Brith. For the past several years she has resided at Whitehall Manor.

Grace is a delight to speak with, sharing her growing up right next to Cleveland Elementary School where she attended grade school. She attained a Commercial Degree from Allen High School and then attended Ryder College in New Jersey completing a medical secretary degree. During that time, she worked as a nanny in Morrisville, Pa. She worked at the Osteopathic Hospital and for several Allentown physicians as a medical secretary but changed her focus and spent her final 20 working years at LCCC working for the Director of the Library.

Grace's mother grew up in Allentown and was raised by her aunt as her own mother died in childbirth. Grace's father was Welsh. Grace was raised by her parents and great-aunt.

She has enjoyed travel with one of her most memorable trips being to London, and another to the Dominican Republic. She uses a device for low vision and keeps up with current events. We are happy Grace has us as her church family!

-Submitted by Nancy Kramer-Moyer

Consistory Supports 60-Day Spiritual Challenge

Join us during January and February as we engage in a 60-day challenge of Scripture readings and prayer. We want all of us to exercise our spiritual powers for personal growth, for discerning where God is leading us as a church, and for the sake of our troubled world. Consistory said, "Yes!" to this challenge at its October meeting. We hope you will too. Watch for more details in upcoming newsletters and announcements.

November 2023



- 5 – Sarah Collier
- 6 – Cyrah Morris
- 7 – Joseph Hein
- 8 – Byron Cook
- 10 – James Bronfenbrenner
Piper Van Ingen
- 17 – Noelle Schuler
- 23 – Jay Mosebach
- 25 – Daniel Collier
- 27 – Susan Steinberg



11/07 – Todd Saylor and Edward Gildea
11/24 – Cindie and Joe Penzes

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9am Prayer Call	2 Volunteering at Food Bank!	3	4
5 All Saints' Day Service 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	6	7 Elder's Meeting Election Day!	8 9am Prayer Call	9	10	11
12 9:30am Adult Forum No Sunday School 11:00am Worship	13	14 Consistory Meeting	15 9am Prayer Call	16	17	18
19 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	20	21	22 9am Prayer Call	23 Thanksgiving Day	24 No Food Bank	25
26 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	27	28	29 9am Prayer Call	30	31	

Check out our website: <https://stjohnsuccallentown.org/>

Follow us on Facebook by searching St. John's UCC Allentown (our logo is a picture of the church)



THANKSGIVING Crossword

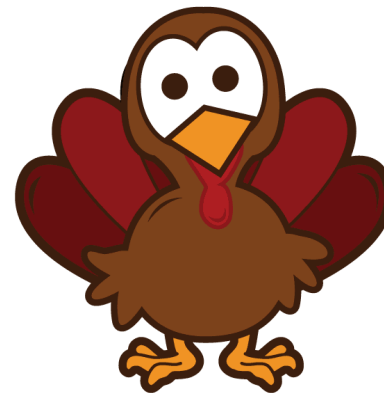
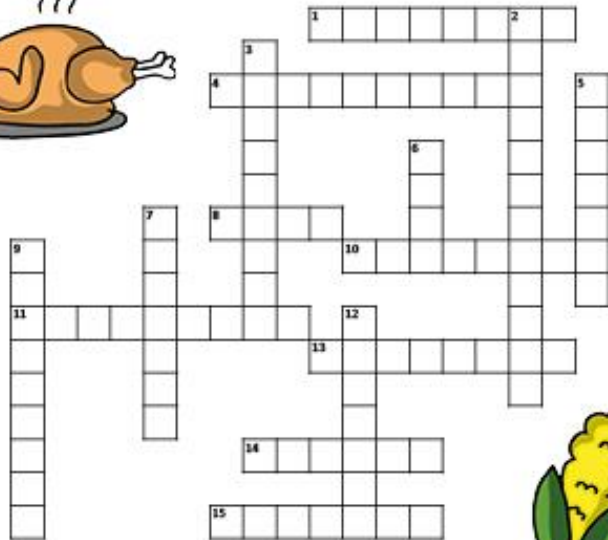
	6		7	1	4			2
	5							4
				6		3		7
			4			8	3	
			5		6			
	3	2			9			
3		7		5				
2								5
5			9	7	3			2



Thanksgiving WORD SEARCH



Solve the following puzzle by finding all the hidden words!



ACROSS

1. First village established by the Pilgrims
4. Symbol of abundance and nourishment
8. An essential grain in the New World diet
10. Literally, travelers going to a holy place
11. The Pilgrims' boat
13. 16th and 17th century English Protestants
14. The traditional holiday bird
15. American Indian who taught the Pilgrims many things

DOWN

2. 4th Thursday of November
3. A traditional American Indian dwelling
5. Gathering of crops
6. Season for harvesting
7. Country the Pilgrims left behind
9. Indigenous people who were present at the first Thanksgiving
12. Bright orange squash used to make pie



- | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| ACORN | FAMILY | GRATEFUL | TURKEY |
| FEAST | BEANS | DINNER | COOK |
| TRADITION | AUTUMN | DESSERT | BREAD |
| BAKE | CELEBRATE | CORNBREAD | VEGETABLES |