

# The Disciple



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

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

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November 2024

Howdy St. John's Family,

In this month of gratitude, let me once again share my deep thanks to all of you! While speaking at a Penn Northeast Conference event for mental health, I had the opportunity to brag about you and the amazing work that we've been able to accomplish together. I explained that it's not me; it's the people who make up my congregation that allow us to do the incredible things we are able to do! Thank you!

This month we continue studying the letters in the New Testament; last month we looked at 1 Timothy; this month we are diving into 2 Timothy! This letter is once again from Paul to Timothy, and we remember that Paul is a mentor to Timothy, and in this letter in particular, we see that loving relationship going well. I said that, in the first letter that Timothy receives, we saw a lot of instruction being given about how Timothy should address the issues going on in his congregation in Ephesus. This letter opens with Paul sharing very personally that he's having a difficult time. This letter may line up with the house arrest that Paul was under that we hear about in the book of Acts 28, but we aren't sure. Paul asks Timothy to come help with planting a church in the area where Paul is working, but first Timothy should finish his work in Ephesus. Paul thanks God for Timothy and his family and then encourages Timothy to have no shame for preaching the gospel! People were beginning to desert Paul because of his frequent trips to prison, but Paul says that following the gospel isn't easy! He says it's like a soldier training for war, an athlete working for competition, or a farmer being diligent to the land. Paul explains that hardship and sacrifice are difficult but often part of the job as a worker for Christ. Paul calls Timothy to faithfulness, no matter what the cost is.

Before Timothy can come to help Paul, he must finish his work in Ephesus. There were teachers telling people that the resurrection and new creation have already happened. These false teachers were telling people they needed to be hyper-spiritual and totally disconnected from the world. To counteract this, Paul tells Timothy to get together a strong leadership team to help guide the young church and navigate the divisiveness of these bad actors. The leaders should focus on the main stories of the scriptures, which will give them wisdom! Paul explains that scripture is "divinely breathed" and can challenge us, teach us, and train us in righteousness! Paul closes with the stark reminder that he is in a bad spot right now, and he needs Timothy to come soon; Paul is worried about freezing to death as winter grows closer. He asks Timothy to bring him a coat and scrolls. Nearly everyone has abandoned Paul, except Jesus, and Paul takes comfort in this knowledge. Then the letter ends! So, what do we do with this letter? This letter, for me, explores

the tension of the joy that is found in the message of Jesus Christ juxtaposed with the innate suffering that we experience being human. Being a Christian is not always easy! But we can take this reminder from Paul that even in the midst of our suffering, Jesus Christ is with us, offering us comfort and assurance. Happy Thanksgiving, everybody! -Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky

## **Consistory Summary**

The Consistory meeting was held on October 8 at 7pm in the Trinity Room. After sharing joys and concerns, Janet Cook led devotionals. The minutes from September 10 were approved. We received the Treasurer's Report. Under the Minister's Report, Pastor Becky shared that St. John's UCC is now a safe location for the Resurrected Life School; we serve as a safe location for two other schools in the area. This simply means that in case of a fire or emergency, students would be brought to St. John's as a safe location where their parents could pick them up. Pastor Becky shared that there was a minor incident this past month with someone we were helping in the office. As a result of this, Pastor Becky will be writing a covenant with rules for our guests to follow. The luncheon on October 6 was a huge success, and Pastor Becky is working on synthesizing the data. Trudi Egan requested Consistory feedback on the possibility of our conference merging. On October 17 through 26, Pastor Becky will be away; pastoral coverage will be performed by Rev. Janet Newett; our guest preacher is Rev. Bill Falla; thank you both! Covenant cards were sent last week; we hope that everyone will return them!

Under the committee reports, Lynn Cloak shared that the Fellowship Committee had a successful Rally Day breakfast with 41 people in attendance. Fellowship also helped with the meal served at the luncheon at the October 6 meeting. Under Fundraising, Lynn reported that the June hoagie sale had a net profit of \$336.10, and the August sale profit was \$308.85. Special thanks to all the volunteers! There will be hoagie sales in October and December, and the annual nuts and truffle sale will take place the two Sundays prior to Thanksgiving. Under Christian Education, Pastor Becky reported that the crop walk will be October 13. Under Personnel, Jeff Rissell shared that Glenda Learish has accepted the position of Administrative Assistant and will begin working on October 28. Under Property, Jeff Rissell reported that we spent \$9,500 to replace two leaking valves in the heating pipes in the social hall ceiling. We will be spending approximately \$5,000 to replace leaking gutters and downspouts on the Emory Street side of the building. There will need to be adjustments made to the flat roof above the office spaces as well. Under the Capital Campaign, Jeff Rissell reported that there will be 4 possible dates proposed to have the next Capital Campaign Zoom. Once people have responded with their top two choices, we will set the date. Under Benevolence, Pastor Becky shared that all the grant proposals have been received, they have been distributed to the committee members, and the meeting to discuss the requests will be on October 15. Under the Green Team, Rick Guhl shared the outlines of a proposed plan he wants the Consistory to approve to distribute to the congregation.

Under old business, it was shared that the Administrative Assistant position was posted on Indeed and has now been filled. Pastor Becky shared that the camera, which was approved

for purchase last month, has been purchased, and she installed it personally. We have used the new camera the last three weeks. The next Consistory meeting will be November 12. Tom Raub will be sharing devotionals. -Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky

### **November Special Mission Offering**

It's 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.

Also in November, we will continue to offer the opportunity to support the ongoing recovery efforts for Hurricane Helene and Milton.

### **Central Elementary**

**Central Elementary** will be requesting monetary donations for clothes emergencies. They will also be requesting hats, coats, and mittens as the weather gets cooler. Any other items may be put in the **Central** box in the Narthex for delivery to the school. If you wish, you may make a monetary donation to purchase these items using your regular offering envelopes or the blue pew envelopes. Be sure to designate **Central Elementary** on your donation.

### **Adult Forum**

Greetings! You are all once again invited to join us Sunday mornings before worship for a variety of studies and programs. And, bring your friends! We gather in the Trinity Room at 9:30am for coffee or tea then begin our program at 9:45am with a sharing of joys and concerns. This is what we have planned for November:

**November 3 and 10-** We will once again participate in an intergenerational Bible study with our youth, led by Pastor Becky. She will be exploring the Hebrew Bible with us. Always a terrific conversation

**November 17-** TBD

**November 24-** Dave Edinger, Deputy Director of Community Bike Works, will join us with an update of this organization long supported by St. John's. Come find out what is new and exciting at Bike Works!

## **Tales from the Resource Room**

Our incredible administrative assistant, Andrea, and I get to see so many wonderful things happen here at church. In this section of our newsletter, I hope to share some of these stories with you so that our joy can multiply as we celebrate the incredible things happening at St. John's UCC, Allentown! A few months ago, a man called the office to see if our church was able to make a car payment for him; we explained that this is unfortunately something we can't help with, but we could help him apply for programs that might be able to help and offer our resource room. He came to the church, and as we helped him, he explained that he and his two daughters were finally able to get an apartment this month after living in a car. He works at a local restaurant and was just promoted to lead chef. He was able to find shoes and school supplies for his daughters, and a number of pots, pans, and even an entire dish set. Money was tight, and since they had just moved in, they were trying to buy things a little at a time. He expressed deep gratitude for us stocking his kitchen. He held up one of the pots and said, "Thanks to this, I can feed my family my cooking!".

As we prepare our homes for Thanksgiving, with friends and family gathering around to eat a lovingly prepared meal, let us all offer our gratitude to the Lord! - Rev. Becky Sausser

## **November Sermons**

- November 3- All Saints' Day
  - Reading 1: Mark 12:28-34
  - Reading 2: Revelation 5:1-5, 11-14
  - Title: Teach Me Love.
  - Summary: This week we celebrate All Saints' Day, remembering those who have gone before us to join with the saints of St. John's. Our message this morning celebrates the people who teach us about love.
- November 10
  - Reading 1: Mark 12:38-44
  - Reading 2: Hebrews 9:24-28
  - Title: Sacrifice.
  - Summary: In Mark we explore the offering of a poor widow, and in Hebrews we hear the truth that Jesus takes away the sin of the world.
- November 17- Pastor Becky will be at an NGLI learning experience this week. Our guest minister will be Jeremy Lau.
- November 24- Christ the King Sunday
  - Reading 1: John 18:33-37
  - Reading 2: Revelation 1:4b-8
  - Title: Christ the King.
  - Summary: This Sunday we celebrate the reign of Christ over our lives and over the universe! Come celebrate with us!

## 2024 Calendar

- November
  - November 3- All Saints' Day.
- December
  - December 1- Advent Breakfast/First Sunday in Advent.
  - December 22- Youth Pageant.
  - December 24- Christmas Eve service.

### Lehigh Conference of Churches Thanksgiving Service at St. John's UCC

Every year the Lehigh Conference of Churches hosts a service the week of Thanksgiving with a poignant theme. This year the theme is unity, and our church will be hosting the service! Join us on Monday, November 25, at 6pm for a very special service of unity in our sanctuary! If you have any questions, or would like to participate in the service, please contact the church office. Thank you! -Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser.

### **Something exciting to look forward to:**

#### **Our delicious Nuts and Truffles Fundraising Sale**

These tasty treats will make a perfect addition to your Thanksgiving celebration and they make a perfect host(ess) gift!

No orders will be taken since we have a limited number of volunteers.

Maple sugar almonds, sweet and salty peanuts, as well as 3 or 4 flavors of dark chocolate truffles will be offered.

Sales will take place in the Trinity Room following the worship service on **November 17 and 24.**

Contact Lynn Cloak with questions.

# November 2024



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  
 Felicita Hernandez  
 27 – Susan Steinberg



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

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
<b>3 All Saints' Day Service</b> 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	4	5  <b>Elders Meeting</b> 1pm	6  9am Prayer Call	7  <b>Food Bank</b>	8	9  <b>PNEC Fall Conference</b>
10 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	11	12  <b>Consistory Meeting</b> 7pm	13  9am Prayer Call	14	15	16
17 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Guest Minister: Jeremy Lau <b>Nuts and Truffles Sale!</b>	18	19	20  9am Prayer Call	21	22  <b>Food Bank</b>	23
24 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship <b>Nuts and Truffles Sale!</b>	25  <b>St. John's hosting Lehigh Conference Thanksgiving Service</b>	26	27  9am Prayer Call <b>Military Food Share Program</b> No Choir Rehearsal	28  <b>Thanksgiving Day</b> Office Closed	29  Office Closed	30

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)

