

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 25 Issue 9

September 2025

Howdy St. John's Family,

Woah doggie, it is time for the big one... Revelation! Once when I was in a college class, the professor belittled me because I accidentally said *Revelations*, as in, more than one revelation. After that I for sure never forgot the title! Revelation is written by John, which may refer to the Beloved Disciple, but may also be just the normal disciple named John. We are not sure. In the very beginning of the book, the author says this is a book of revelation, or in the Greek, apocalypse. For the people receiving this letter, it would have reminded them of other apocalypse writings, like Ezekiel, Daniel, Ezra, and Enoch. These are symbolic visions using history as a guiding light to understand the current climate of the world.

We know that this letter was written to seven churches, and we see that John has the number seven pop up a lot throughout this book. John uses the Jewish tradition of secret codes and numbers to be able to speak openly about current political leaders and issues. That means that this book is not a magic prophecy about end times, but more of a wake-up call and commentary on how people should respond to injustice that is happening NOW. Sorry to anyone who was excited for me to tell them when the world ends, you will just have to wait like everyone else. John's intention was for people to look at the symbols and go find the origin reference of that symbol in the traditional scriptures so that they could understand the commentary on current political affairs.

Remember, this is a letter with a message for 7 specific churches, even though it is still relevant today. These 7 churches were being severely persecuted by the government, and so John is calling them to stay faithful and resist the temptation to deny Jesus. John shares a vision of God's throne room in chapters 4 and 5. Here we see a message of Jesus Christ as the lion of Judah who will conquer, but this lion is actually a sacrificial lamb. Jesus overcame the world by his death on the cross, conquering the world by making this sacrifice, and making a way for everyone to be connected to the holy and divine.

Okay, so next is the "revelation-y" stuff that you are expecting. In chapters 6 through 16 we have the 3 sets of 7 divine judgements. A lot of folks like to read this section as a playbook for the end of the world, but as we said, this was meant to serve as a commentary on the world that the 7 churches were living in. We see images of four horsemen (war, conquest, famine, and death), we see martyrs being slain, and the day of the Lord! There is a really interesting distinction throughout Revelation of what John hears, versus what he sees. He *heard* that it would be a lion of Judah, but he *sees* the lamb of God representing Jesus. In chapter 7, John *hears* that the lamb will lead an army of the 12 tribes of Israel, but he *sees* a diverse group made up of the many nations of the earth.

All of these stories end the same way, with the saints gathered in the holy temple in the presence of God. You caught me! I was being a Bible nerd and only got through half of the book. Next month we will look at the second half of Revelation. But for today, I think the take-away is that we are called to follow the example of Jesus and worship Jesus as Lord. We see example after example telling us to follow the message of the Lamb (Jesus) and act in ways of love, rather than war. We will truly see what it means to "conquer", to overcome the world, with the love of Jesus.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

Singing in September

- September 7
 - Reading 1: Psalm 46
 - Reading 2: Hebrews 1:1-4
 - Title: A Mighty Fortress
 - Summary: To begin “Singing in September” we examine one of Martin Luther’s most famous hymns! What can the stanzas of this beloved classic teach us about Christianity today?
- September 14- Pastor Becky is away today, so Becky Bronfenbrenner will be delivering a poignant message!
- September 21
 - Reading 1: John 10:1-4
 - Reading 2: Romans 12:1-8
 - Title: Take my Life and Let it Be
 - Summary: This week we study the incredible true story of Frances Havergal as we ponder what the words of “Take My Life and Let it Be” truly mean
- September 28
 - Reading 1: Deuteronomy 33:24-29
 - Reading 2: John 14:1-7
 - Title: Leaning on the Everlasting Arms
 - Summary: This week we explore grief, trust, and the promises of Christ as we conclude singing in September

Announcements

Important Dates!

- October 5- Pulled Pork BBQ & Coleslaw Sale



Bible Bites

Did you know that the most frequently used word in our Bible is the word, *Lord*. And yes, I am excluding the words “and” and “the”. Lord appears between 7,000 and 8,000 times, depending on which translation of the Bible you are reading. Looking at our Hebrew, we see that there is Adon or Adoni, which was a title used to refer to the head of house, but there is another word that goes beyond just titles. Look at Deuteronomy 6:4-5, “Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.”⁵ You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” The word translated as LORD, with all capitals is actually the word Yahweh which means, He will be, and comes from “I am the I am”, or “I am the God who is”. Moses is the first person to hear this name for God through the burning bush. It appears over 6,500 times in the Old Testament. So, how did we end up knowing Adonai as a word to describe God? Well, it became a common practice that when scripture was read out loud, rather than using God’s name they would say Adonai out of respect. This is a practice that stuck when Christians began translating scripture.

-Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky Sausser

Tales from the Resource Room

Last month we had a woman come to the church seeking help. She had heard from a member of our church that we had basic toiletries and might be able to help her while she worked to get back on her feet. We provided toiletries and food, and shared our resource list with her to help her get connected to other resources in the area. One of the things that you may not know is that people outside of the Lehigh Valley will provide transportation to unhoused persons to the Lehigh Valley in the hopes that the aid resources will be able to provide assistance for them. As the needs of our community continue to increase, and as nonprofits struggle to provide for this growing need with shrinking funding, I want to take a moment to breath. Just breath in, count to 4 and breath out counting to 6. It may seem like small potatoes just handing out some toiletries and food when people are in such great need, but we are called to do our part. Mother Theresa said, "Noone can do everything, but everyone can do something." Even if we can't provide for our entire community, the work we are doing to help those we are able is making a difference

.-Respectfully Submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

ALLENTOWN AREA ECUMENICAL FOOD BANK

The following is quoted from Anne Egan, Executive Director of the AAEFB, in an email to supporters of the Food Bank.

"Thanks to generous individuals like you, the AAEFB has made a powerful impact in 2024.

- 2.4 million meals were provided to neighbors across Lehigh County
- 1 million pounds of food were distributed
- 72,000 summer meals were served to children who otherwise would go without food.
- Ongoing support for 130 + seniors through monthly delivery of food.

Thank you for your continued generous support."



GREEN TEAM MONTHLY SHARING

I have been concerned for years about our excessive use of plastics in all walks of life.

Recently the Washington Post published an article May 16th, 2025:

"On a remote Australian Island the birds are so full of plastic they crunch." A dead bird was discovered with 778 pieces of plastic in its stomach, nearly double the previous record.

Human beings have filled our oceans with more than 170 trillion pieces of plastic as of 2023. This plastic cloud is doubling every six years.

Environmental groups are running multipronged campaigns to crack down on plastic pollution. Corporations like Amazon and Sysco are being urged to reduce unnecessary plastic packaging. Penn Environment recently helped pass the 40th local plastic ban in Pa. Other groups encourage our communities to do Advance Recycling (breaking down materials to their molecular level), which can improve the recycling rate for plastic waste.

We as individuals can make a difference if we notice how we might be contributing to our plastics problem and then act!!!

Contributed by Nancy Kramer-Moyer of the Green Team

JAMES LAWSON FREEDOM SCHOOL

The 2025 six-week session of the James Lawson Freedom School celebrated graduation of its sixty scholars on August 2nd at the downtown campus of Resurrected Life UCC (formerly Zion UCC). The scholars spanned kindergarten through ninth grade and were lovingly guided by six student

interns who are college students. The program focused on enrichment opportunities, nutrition and health, cultural development, social justice and civic work.

This Freedom School is the only one in the state. It's a national program of the Children's Defense Fund; a non-profit organization focused on child advocacy.

Each day commenced with breakfast, singing, chants, read-aloud, then breaking into small groups according to grade level for a variety of in-house activities. Field trips to City Hall, the DaVinci Center, Allentown Art Museum, Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island were also included. The scholars hosted a Town Hall where they questioned a panel of three (Mayor Tuerk, Senator Miller, and Representative Schlossberg) concerns related to education and their schools.

The most important emphasis of the program was encouraging a strong and good self-image and providing tools to help with that.

Our St. John's UCC was acknowledged for its generous contribution of over \$1,200. We can feel proud, supporting such a worthy cause. Thank you all that helped support this inspiring and valuable mission.



What's new *On The Menu?*


Homemade pulled pork with barbecue sauce and homemade coleslaw will be sold in the Trinity Room on October 5th, following the worship service. Half-pound and full pounds will be offered.

Chancel Choir


Rehearsals will resume on Wednesday, September 3, at 7:00pm in the choir room. Anyone who loves to sing is welcome to attend! You will get to sing with expert musicians and you will be coached by our own patient music director, Lois Mease. Please contact Lois (loismease@gmail.com) if you have any concerns.

We joyfully announce the marriage of Courtney Fillman and Michael Ventola, which took place on June 27, 2025 at St. Thomas More, Allentown. Reception was held at the Woodstone Country. The couple begins their life together with gratitude for God's blessings and the love and support of their family, friends, and church community. Please join us in celebrating their union and praying for a marriage filled with faith, love, and grace.

September 2025



3 – Nancy Rissell
 4 – Katrina Schuler
 5 – Christina Sausser
 6 – William Falla
 9 – Alan Cloak
 12 – Cassidy Bell
 20 – Angelice Roman
 21 – Byron Cook
 27 – Marjorie Cloak

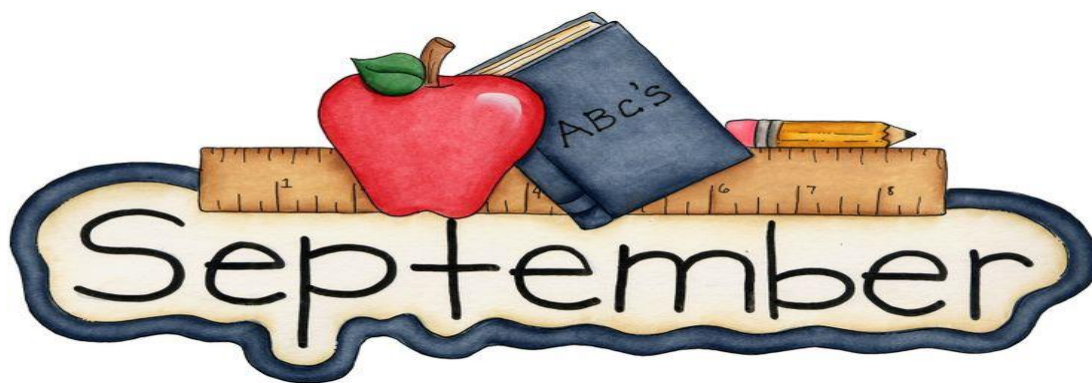
Celebrating


9/03 – Thomas and Kelly Rissell
 9/08 – Richard and Jeanette Schmoyer

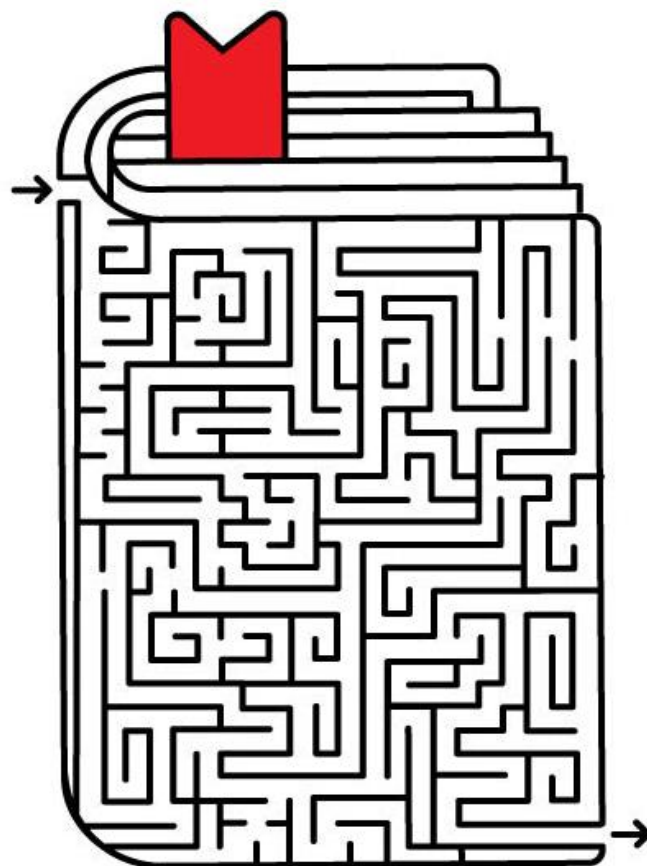
9/09 – Alan and Lynn Cloak

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 Office Closed	2 Elders Meeting 1pm	3 9am Prayer Call	4 Food Bank	5	6
7 11:00am Worship	8	9 Consistory Meeting 7pm	10 9am Prayer Call	11	12	13
14 11:00am Worship	15	16	17 9am Prayer Call	18	19	20
21 11:00am Worship	22	23	24 9am Prayer Call	25	26 Food Bank	27
28 11:00am Worship	29	30				

Check out our website: <https://stjohnsuccallentown.org/> If you found this, contact Pastor Becky to be entered to win a gift card.
 Follow us on Facebook by searching St. John's UCC Allentown (our logo is a picture of the church)



BACK TO SCHOOL



LESSON
TEACHER
BOOKS
STUDENT

PAPER
CLASSROOM
NOTEBOOK
ERASER

LUNCHBOX
REGISTER
DESK
PENCIL

HOMEWORK
BACKPACK
RECESS
PLAYGROUND



letsdopuzzles.com - for personal use only



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