

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 25 Issue 11

November 2025

Howdy St. John's Family,

Do you remember those Good News Bibles? The ones with the matte-finished golden covers? As I was going through old cupboards in the church to clean and make room for new purposes, I was delighted to find a number of these Bibles scattered throughout the building. For so many of us, this was the first Bible that we owned or read in Sunday School. So, what is the good news? In the Greek, good news is *eugelion*, but what does that word *actually* mean?

Let's turn in our Bibles to the gospel of Mark. Check out Mark 1:1, "The beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ the son of God." Whoa! I guess you can't get much more intentional than that; Mark is going to tell us about the good news of Jesus Christ. The interesting thing that happens next is that Mark begins to talk about the writings from the prophet Isaiah, which were written 700 years before Mark's time. Check out what Mark is doing here; Mark is explaining that the good news is a story that is already in motion! Check out verses 14 through 15: "Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee proclaiming the good news of God and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news". Jesus is the good news! His teachings guide our steps and change our hearts. The good news is that we are all made into a new creation through the salvation of Jesus Christ.

This November as we gather around tables with delicious food and eat an obscene number of desserts, let us all remember to give thanks with a grateful heart! Let us give thanks to Jesus Christ, God's son, the good news of great joy! I think it is also important to thank the people in our lives that have shaped our faith. Give thanks for those who taught you about Jesus, and for those who pray for you and strengthen you, and don't forget to pray for them in return.

In closing this letter, I would like to give thanks to God for each one of you! I consider it one of the greatest honors of my life to be able to serve as your pastor! It is not just the work that we do here with our ministry in the heart of the city, it is the *way* that each one of your beautiful hearts come together to form the stained-glass picture of Christ's love moving in the world. Thank you for all that you do, and all that you are! Be blessed!

-Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky

Consistory Summary

The Consistory meeting was held on October 14 at 7pm in the Trinity Room. Members of the Property Committee were also invited to attend this meeting, and a link was shared with the entire congregation. After sharing joys and concerns, Pastor Becky led devotionals.

The minutes from the September meeting were approved. Under the Minister's report, Pastor Becky shared that we will be replacing the quarterly purchase of bulletin covers with St. John's UCC-specific bulletin covers. This will save money, and the bulletin covers will be of a higher quality. Breakfast items have been made available for the children in the children's chapel area; the breakfast items have been well received. Covenant Card invitations were sent out last month along with a letter of explanation. The Covenant Cards will be dedicated on November 23. The Advent Breakfast is on November 30. An advent devotional has been chosen and ordered; it will be made available at the back of the sanctuary in November. Pastor Becky asked if the church would be willing to try having a 'Pray Ground', a designated space in our sanctuary for children. Consistory agreed to try this for a month-long period of time and then assess the benefits.

Under New Business, it was shared that the most recent project in the **Step-By-Step Building Renovation Project** was completed; thank you to Barney Cook for fixing the stairs and thank you again to Barney and Al Cloak for replacing the sidewalk grates on our 6th Street sidewalk. Discussion took place and it was determined that the next project will be fixing the lights in the sanctuary. For more information about this project, see the below section on the building renovations.

Under Fellowship and Fundraising Lynn Cloak reported that the pulled pork barbecue sale brought a profit of \$266. 50. We will continue the hoagie sale every month, and the annual nuts and truffle sale is being planned for November 16 and 23. Under Property there was no further discussion. Under Christian Education Pastor Becky restated that the pageant will be on December 21. The Crop Walk took place on October 19. Jim Bronfenbrenner presented the treasurers' report, and it was accepted. Under Personnel, Pastor Becky shared that we are now working with Allied Agency; we are currently receiving resumes for a new administrative assistant.

Under the Green Team, Nancy Kramer-Moyer highlighted the upcoming Community Cleanup on October 26. Under Benevolence, it was shared that all the Grant application applications have been received and the first meeting of the Benevolence Committee will be on October 21. Under the Scholarship Team, it was reported that the group met with an attorney. The group will continue to work with the attorney as they create the scholarship. The next meeting will be on November 11 at 7pm. Pastor Becky led the closing prayer and the meeting adjourned.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

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. This year Tallulah is very concerned because many of its traditional sources that supply the food have dried up. The need, however, has not. The Food Bank not only needs money to purchase food from new (more expensive) sources but wholesome, non-perishable food donations as well. 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.

-Respectfully submitted by Bill Falla

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 2-How well are we caring for our creation? There has been much in the news about our dwindling bee population. Shailynn Hughes is a beekeeper who will share with us about her adventures with bees.

November 9-Bill Falla continues our Bible study with a look at I Peter.

November 16-TBD

November 23-More excitement with Pastor Becky exploring the Bible. She does indeed get excited!

November 30-Kicking off the Advent season with a wonderful breakfast!

Tales from the Resource Room

One day as I was rushing around the office trying to get everything done there was a buzz from the back door. I was delighted and surprised to see that it was one of our regular friends who often stopped by to talk and to get basic hygiene products. I had not seen him for a while, and he joyously told me that he had just celebrated another milestone in his sobriety journey. He had brought a friend with him, another gentleman who had recently lost his home. We provided him with a blanket, sturdy shoes, a pair of socks, some basic toiletries and food, as well as a suitcase to carry everything in. He was bewildered by this generosity and nearly brought to tears. I asked him, "Before you go, can I get you a jacket? The nights are going to be getting cold soon." At first, he was hesitant, expressing that we had already blessed him so much, but he accepted the coat and it was a perfect fit.

We are so incredibly blessed to be able to do ministry here in the heart of the city! We are in the heart of an amazing community working with wonderful partners. This November, I am so grateful for each one of you, and I am grateful to our wider community. I hope that we continue to be a blessing to everyone who stops by our church.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser



Bible Bites

It is time to give thanks this month, and so I want to draw our attention to the word *eucharisteo*. This is a word found in Matthew 15:36, as well as other places in our gospels. It literally translates as “giving thanks” and “to express gratitude.” In this particular verse, Jesus is blessing the bread and fish as he prepares to feed several thousand people with an amount of food that wouldn’t feed his disciples. Yet Jesus gives thanks for what they have, and there is so much abundance left over that they need to collect it in baskets. The word *eucharisteo* is also where we get the word *eucharist*, which is another word for Holy Communion. At the last supper, Jesus blesses the bread and the wine in the same way as he did that meal for thousands. Let us give thanks for the many blessings in our lives, and especially the blessing of Christ Jesus in our lives.

-Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky Sausser

November Sermons

- November 2- All Saints’ Day
 - o Reading 1: Revelation 5:1-14
 - o Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 3:1-3,10-11
 - o Title: All Saints’ Day.
 - o Summary: This week we celebrate the saints of St. John’s UCC and remember the incredible people who have touched our lives.
- November 9
 - o Reading 1: Haggai 2:2-9
 - o Reading 2: Luke 20:27-38
 - o Title: Who’s on First?
 - o When the Sadducees try to trick Jesus with an unanswerable question, he ends up revealing great truths about the kingdom of heaven. Join us this week as we look at the gospel of Luke, chapter 20.
- November 16- This week guest minister Rev. Allan Kramer-Moyer shares a poignant message with us.
- November 23- Christ the King Sunday.

- o Reading 1: Luke 23:33-43
- o Reading 2: Colossians 1:11-20
- o Title: Christ the King.
- o Join us this week as we celebrate Christ the King Sunday!
- November 30- First Sunday in Advent.
 - o Reading 1: Matthew 24:36-44
 - o Reading 2: Hebrews 11:1-3
 - o Title: Hope.
 - o Summary: This week as we begin the season of Advent, we examine the concept of waiting in the tension of HOPE!

2025 Calendar

- November
 - November 2- All Saints' Day.
 - November 30- First Sunday in Advent and Advent Breakfast
- December
 - December 21- Youth Pageant.
 - December 24- Christmas Eve service 7:30pm. Music begins at 7pm.

Green Team Report

This month the Green Team shares this devotion by Mary Luti.

Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, and I saw the holy city coming down out of heaven. It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. - Revelation 21:1-2, 11 abridged (NIV)

During the restoration of Notre Dame after the 2019 fire, a reporter toured the roof where carpenters were securing the rebuilt rafters.

They told him that the wood they were using was from oak trees selected to match exactly the contours of the damaged ancient beams. Each had been carved meticulously to duplicate the peculiarities of the hand-tooled originals, including the medieval maker's mark on the undersides.

Those details were high and hidden, not for show. The public will never see them. "Faithful" only begins to describe this effort," the reporter wrote.

The pressure to finish on time was immense, but the worksite was surprisingly calm, imbued with quiet joy and certitude. When he asked one worker what the job meant to her, no words came. She wept.

The team leader acknowledged that the work was beset with unimaginable difficulties every day. Then he added, “But it’s different when you work on something that has a soul. Beauty makes everything easier.”

It’s daunting to try to rebuild something that’s been horrifically damaged. It takes everything you have. Details matter, the hidden ones more than anyone will ever know. It takes such a long time, too. The pressure is overwhelming. So much is at stake.

But because you’re working on something soulful – human kinship, structures of justice and care, a polity of tender mercy, a new earth; and because what you’re laboring on, what you’re laboring for, what you’re being given is so beautiful, you return to the jobsite of the world each day in calm, in joy, in receptive trust, and grateful flowing tears.

Prayer

With You we are rebuilding here on earth your damaged house of love. Ground us in its vivifying beauty. It makes everything easier.

Something exciting to look forward to:

Our delicious Nuts and Truffles

This year’s sale will include:

dark chocolate truffles in caramel, raspberry, orange and mint, or an assortment of all 4 flavors;

sweet and salty peanuts;

maple sugar pecans (since pecans have lots of nooks and crannies to hold the natural maple sugar);

dark chocolate peanut clusters.

The sales will take place on the two Sundays prior to Thanksgiving, **November 16 and 23.**

(Pre-orders will be limited to the volunteers helping to make the goods.)

Step-By-Step Essentials Building Renovations

This month we celebrate another step completed! The following information is from Barney Cook, who conducted research and donated his time and labor to this building renovation project. Thank you Barney!

“Taking advantage of good weather and the positive feedback from my earlier message on this topic, I

went ahead and did some experimental work on the church steps with mixed but overall, positive results.

My first step was to try and remove the rust stains from the steps. This resulted in considerable reduction in the stains, but the stains were still quite visible, even from a distance. But the good news, as a result of cleaning the steps, I was able to deep clean the cracks of debris. The water pressure in Allentown is surprisingly strong. I completed this on Friday afternoon and was also able to dry the cracks before leaving with my shop vac.

With the cracks clean and with all loose fragments removed, I decided to fill the cracks with a cement patch mixture with epoxy additives on Saturday morning. This mixture contracts significantly and required two coats to hide the majority of the crack locations. While I had patch mixture in hand, I plastered over the major rust stain areas reducing greatly the visibility of them.

My suggested next step is to give the cement patch a couple of weeks to cure. Cool dry weather like we are having helps a lot. At that time I will apply a sealer, possibly with grit to prevent slippage, to the entire step area. This would complete the work that I intend to perform.

The result is not a new set of steps, but a functional one that should not cause anyone from thinking they are not safe to use.

My theory, and mine only, is the rebar is too close to the surface of the concrete. This prevents the concrete from insulating the rebar from expansion and contraction from heat and cold temperatures. As the rebar expands and contracts, it will continue to stress and crack the concrete. My work does not address any of this if that is part of the root cause.

Feel free to share with others. Any thoughts and comments are always welcomed.

Barney Cook

Additionally, Barney Cook and Al Cloak replaced the grates on the sidewalk that cover the drain leading from our parking lot onto 6th Street. These metal grates had become warped over time. Barney and Al took measurements and replaced the sheets of metal with thicker sheets of corrugated steel. Each sheet was 100 pounds. They then painted the sheets. Thank you, Barney and Al!

At the consistory meeting on October 14, the Deacons, Elders, and Property Committee discussed the projects completed and discerned what the next project will be. We will be fixing the lighting in the sanctuary. This is essentially two projects, as we will need to replace the lights behind the large stained-glass window facing 6th Street with newer, more efficient LED lights. We will also need to re-wire two of the large lamps in the sanctuary (these are the large golden lamps over the pews). The project is estimated to be \$8,700. Subscribe to our weekly email to receive frequent updates about the projects.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

November 2025



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 PNEC Fall Conference
2 All Saints' Day Service 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	3	4 Elders Meeting 11am	5 9am Prayer Call	6 Food Bank	7	8
9 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	10	11 Consistory Meeting 7pm	12 9am Prayer Call	13	14	15
16 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Guest Minister: Jeremy Lau Nuts and Truffles Sale!	17	18	19 9am Prayer Call	20	21 Food Bank	22
23 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Nuts and Truffles Sale!	24	25	26 9am Prayer Call Military Food Share Program	27 Thanksgiving Day Office Closed	28 Office Closed	29
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)

That time of year....

The poinsettias will be in church on December 24 for the Christmas Eve service. You may take your plants home following the evening service.

Deadline for ordering is TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 25.



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

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

Red Poinsettia(s) 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 of plants:

For Pick-Up _____ **For Homebound** _____

Price: \$9.00 (**Orders must be in by November 25, 2025**)

If writing a check, please make payable to "St. John's UCC" and mark the memo line **"poinsettia"**.

You may complete this order blank or call the church office (610-433-0146) and pay later.