

# The Disciple



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

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

Volume 26 Issue 4

April 2026

Howdy St. John's Family,

This year as we travel through the 12 months of our calendar, we will be looking at the 12 tribes of Israel. It is perfect that we are looking at the tribe of Judah in the same month that we are celebrating Easter! You may remember in the story of Leah and Jacob that each one of her sons born up to this point was intended to strengthen their relationship. Leah wanted Jacob to be united with her, as we saw last month with Levi's name. When her fourth son is born though she names him Judah, which means *praise*, and Leah declares to herself that "this time I will praise the Lord".

As we look at the tribe of Judah, you may see it referred to as the *Royal tribe of Israel*, or the *Lion's Welp* tribe. It is even represented symbolically with the image of a lion. It is from the line of Judah that we have the lineage of King David! We see in the book of Joshua that this tribe mainly lived in the southern land of Israel. As we follow along through the Old Testament and make our way to the book of Samuel (as it is known in the Hebrew Bible), we see the monarchy start with King Saul and then King David.

I had mentioned that it is wonderful that we have the opportunity to talk about the tribe of Judah during the month that we celebrate Easter, and this is because Jesus's own lineage can be traced back to the tribe of Judah. If you look at the gospel of Matthew, you will note that the lineage of Jesus traces back 42 generations and includes 5 women! Have you ever heard Jesus referred to as *the Lion of Judah*? Revelation 5:5 refers to Jesus as the Lion of the tribe of Judah. This combines the symbolism of Judah being associated with royalty and the lineage of Christ. This month as we celebrate that Jesus has conquered death itself and offered us eternal salvation, let us remember that we are made holy through our relationship to Jesus Christ. Have a blessed Easter, and God bless.

-Rev. Becky Sausser

## **Consistory Summary**

The March consistory meeting began at 7pm in the Trinity Room. After joys and concerns, Alan Kramer-Moyer led devotions. The minutes of the February 10 meeting were approved. Pastor Becky inquired about dates for the anointing of the consistory, which took place on March 22. She reported that Lent is going well and asked for volunteers to help move tables during Holy Week; the choir volunteered to help her following their Tuesday practice. Pastor Becky thanked the Building and Property committee for joining the meeting. She shared a new building covenant that has been placed in the halls of St. John's. The covenant asks that all guests be kind and respectful to staff, members, and other guests. Pastor Becky introduced Mandy Mueschette, our intern, who will be installed on April 12.

Under New Business, the Consistory and Building and Property committee discussed the pros and cons of which project to choose next for the Step By Step Building Renovations. Since safety is a priority, it was determined that we will install new security cameras and get a fire suppression system for the kitchen simultaneously. Under Fellowship, Lynn Cloak reported that the Lenten Breakfast and the delayed Annual Meeting Luncheon were both a success. Under Fundraising, Lynn Cloak reported that the soup sale was a success and that Easter candy-making was going well. Sales were on March 22 and 29. The Treasurer's report was accepted. Personnel shared that we have a new cleaning company, Coverall, and that our new Administrative Assistant began this March. The Green Team shared news of their upcoming hike and other ways to get involved; see the Green Team's report in this month's issue for more information. Under the Scholarship Committee, Nancy Rissell informed the consistory that invitations to qualifying youth have been sent. There was no old business. The next meeting is set for April 14, 2026, at 7pm in the Trinity room. Pastor Becky closed the meeting in prayer.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

## **April Special Mission Offering 2026**

One of our Special Mission Offerings for April focuses on helping people within our congregation---the Curtis Fund.

During April, we will be collecting donations for the Curtis Fund. The Curtis Fund, founded by longtime member, William Curtis, provides emergency financial aid for members of our congregation who find themselves in financial distress due to

an unforeseen emergency. We will have an opportunity to make our contributions anytime during April.

Please prayerfully consider making a donation designated to the Curtis Fund along with your regular Church Offering or by using the Blue Pew Envelopes or the Donate Button on the Church website.

Our second Mission Offering will be collecting items for Central Elementary. These items listed in St. John's Corresponds 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. Thank you for supporting either, or both, of these efforts.

-Bill Falla

## **Central Elementary**

The children at Central Elementary have the following needs:

- Clothing sizes 8-16
- Adjustable belts
- Shoes, sizes Adult 5-9
- Body Wash
- Shampoo
- Conditioner

## **April Sermons**

### April Sermons

- April 2- Maundy Thursday
  - Reading 1: John 13: 1-17, 31-35
  - Title: Red.
  - Summary: Tonight, we gather together around a table to recall the Last Supper that Jesus shared with his disciples. Service begins at 7:30pm.
- April 3- Good Friday
  - Title: Black.
  - Summary: Tonight, we will journey through the last moments of Christ's life. Join us for this important event.
- April 5- Easter
  - Reading 1: Matthew 28:1-10
  - Reading 2: Acts 10: 34-43
  - Title: Colors of Grace.
  - Summary: Praise the Lord! Join with us as we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

- April 12
  - o Reading 1: John 20:19-31
  - o Title: “Peace be with you”.
  - o Summary: Jesus appears to the disciples and offers them peace amidst their anxiety and turmoil. What can we learn from this incredible moment of unexpected peace?
- April 19
  - o Reading 1: Luke 24:13-35
  - o Title: Walking with Jesus.
  - o Summary: Join two disciples on the road to Emmaus as we discuss what it means to walk with Christ.
- April 26
  - o Reading 1: John 10:1-10
  - o Reading 2: Matthew 18:10-14
  - o Title: The Good Shepherd.
  - o Summary: This week we see Jesus described as the Good Shepherd as we see the parable of the lost sheep.

## ADULT FORUM

Please join us Sunday mornings before worship for a variety of studies and programs. And bring your friends! We gather in the Trinity Room at 9:30 for coffee or tea and a sharing of joys and concerns, then begin our program at 9:45.

# Bible Bites

with Pastor Becky



## Bible Bites

I remember being in a Bible study in middle school when I learned for the first time that the chapters and verses of the Bible were a relatively recent innovation. By recent, I am of course talking about the 16th century. Somehow, in my middle school brain I had just assumed that the original authors got done writing a chapter and said, to themselves, “oh, better make a new chapter here”. The process of incorporating chapters began around the 13<sup>th</sup> century, and then in the 16<sup>th</sup> century editors began subdividing each chapter into verses. As scholars began creating these subdivisions within the text, the intention of each chapter was to be roughly one page in length. The first English translation of the New Testament to have verse division was made in

1557 and translated by William Wittingham. If that name sounds familiar, it is because he was one of the scholars who helped translate and assemble the Geneva bible.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

## **Announcements**

### **Important Dates!**

- April 13 – Palm Sunday Service 11am.
- April 17 – Maundy Thursday Service 7:30pm.
- April 18 – Tenebrae Service 7:30pm.
- April 20 – Easter Morning Service 11am.
- May 20 - Book Study for Anne Lamott's *Hallelujah Anyway: Rediscovering Mercy*.
- June 1- Services return to the summer schedule with worship at 10am.
- June 8 - Confirmation Service 10am.
- June 15- Church Picnic at Waldheim Park at 11am.

### **Easter Candy Fundraiser**

Our annual homemade Easter candy sale will take place  
in the Trinity Room on

**March 22**

**March 29 (Palm Sunday)**

Peanut-rolled, peanut butter, coconut cream eggs  
sold in ½ pound containers for \$10.00

An assortment of all three varieties  
sold in 1 pound containers for \$20.00

Chocolate peanut clusters  
sold in ½ pound containers at \$10.00

### **Consistory**

On March 22 the Consistory was appointed for the important work of leader of the congregation. We thanked Nancy Kramer-Moyer for her service as a Deacon, and we thank Jim Bronfenbrenner and Lynn Cloak for their service as Elders. We welcome Becky Bronfenbrenner and Cassidy Bell as Elders, and Alan Kramer-Moyer for serving as a Deacon.

These are our Consistory Members:

Nancy Rissell, President

Janet Cook, Vice President  
Becky Bronfenbrenner, Secretary, Elder  
Rev. Becky Sausser, Pastor  
Missy Repash, Deacon  
Cassidy Bell, Elder & Treasurer  
Trudi Egan, Deacon  
Duquan Stellingberg, Deacon  
Alan Kramer-Moyer, Deacon

**The annual church picnic will be held on Sunday,  
June 14, at Waldheim Park at 11am.**

Please sign up on the sheet posted on the bulletin board in the Great Hall and let us know how many people will come and what your covered dish will be.

**Please Consider Donating  
Picnic Party Game Prizes**

Since everyone had a good time at last year's picnic, we plan to play "now you have it, now you don't" and have a cake walk at the annual church picnic on **June 15**.

For "Now you have it, now you don't", we need small, inexpensive items, wrapped so you can't tell what is inside.

Examples: Life Savers, Tic Tacs, note pads, puzzle books, small toys, small kitchen gadgets...

Please wrap all donations, so that the contents can't be seen.

**Donated items can be brought to the Trinity Room and placed in the indicated box or taken directly to the picnic.**

For the cake walk, we need baked goods. Homemade baked goods are welcome, but not necessary.

Examples: cookies, brownies, hand pies, Tastykakes...

**Donated baked goods can be brought to the church within a day or two prior to the picnic or taken directly to the picnic.**

## Green Team Report

As part of the United Church of Christ we are caring for our environment at the local, state, and national levels.

Our Green Team has organized a nature walk along the Monocacy Creek on Saturday, April 25<sup>th</sup>, for all able-bodied members of St. John's who can navigate a somewhat challenging trek. This walk goes through a protected nature reserve. Rides from the St. John's parking lot can be arranged. The walk is scheduled for 10-noon. If you need a ride, please be at the church parking lot by 9:15 that morning.

Also, on April 25th, the United Church of Christ Environmental Justice Ministry will hold its Fourth Annual Earth Summit via Zoom, beginning at 1:00 pm. The keynote address will be given by the Rev. Dr. Kenneth Samuel followed by a panel discussion and online Q&A.

Meanwhile, in the newly formed, statewide Keystone Conference a Climate Justice Team has been organized. It meets on the third Monday of each month via Zoom at 7:00pm. Since the theme of this year's Annual Meeting in June is "People of the Table", the Team is working on a display about the impact of climate change on agriculture and fisheries.

Quote of the month: submitted by Bruce DeLong

***All that is gold does not glitter, all those who wander are not lost, the old that is strong does not wither: deep roots are not reached by the frost .  
by JRR Tolkien, From " The Fellowship of the Ring."***

### Tales from the Resource Room

During the month of March we saw a sharp increase in need in our community. We helped a couple get connected to resources in the area, as well as food from the resource room. We helped another couple that was about to become homeless get connected with housing assistance through the Conference of Churches. There was a young man who stopped in with no coat and left warm and safe in a new pair of boots, a hat, gloves, and a coat (and some food). It has been a challenging time for so many in our community. Sometimes it feels hopeless... like trying to fill the ocean using a bucket. It is in those moments that we need to remember that if everyone has a bucket and does their part, we can and will make an impact.

If you are able, consider donating to the resource room. Below are items that we need. Thank you!

-Pastor Becky Sausser

- Ramen noodles in microwave cups
- Crackers
- Granola bars
- Pasta sauce and pasta
- Cans of soup
- Men's and women's underwear

- Flashlights with batteries
- Sleeping bags



## 50 Days of Easter Food Challenge A People of the Table Mission Project for Keystone Conference's 1st Annual Meeting

The Challenge: Churches across the Conference are challenged to donate non-perishable food to a local food bank between Easter (04/05/2026) and Pentecost (05/24/2026) and to report the quantities of their donations.

Each church will report its totals (by category) via a web link, and the Conference-wide total will be revealed at the 1st Annual Meeting, June 5–7, 2026. Using categories such as canned fruits and vegetables, cereal, pasta and rice, toiletries, and more will provide an easy-to-visualize picture of the breadth of donations.

Having churches donate locally will allow you to serve the communities in which you live, work, and minister. We want to avoid hauling donations across the commonwealth to a single location when we know the need exists everywhere.

We are also asking delegates to bring a one-pound bag of rice or beans to the Annual Meeting as a representation of their local donation. These items will be donated to the Lancaster Food Hub.

The churches of the Keystone Conference are already working hard to alleviate food insecurity in their areas beyond these donations. We ask that you report the ministries your church supports—from community gardens to meal deliveries—so we can celebrate them at the Annual Meeting.

*Want to learn more about People of the Table? Check out the page on the Keystone Conference website*

# April 2026



- 2 – Gary Gumlock
- 4 – Cindy Dannenhower  
James Bartynski
- 5 – Courtney Fillman
- 8 – Richard Brensinger
- 11 – Brenda Saylor
- 14 – Julius Pyle
- 15 – Wendy Williams
- 16 – Susan Fegley  
Charles Gillenwater III
- 18 – Cindie Penzes
- 19 – Megan Van Ingen  
Ethan Reyes
- 20 – Judith Guhl
- 26 – James Saylor
- 30 – Judy Garrigan

**Celebrating**   
*An Anniversary This Month*

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

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)