

# The Disciple



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

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

Volume 26 Issue 5

May 2026

Howdy St. John's,

This month we are on to the next tribe, Dan! Following along in the scriptures, we know from the census in the book of Numbers that the tribe of Dan is actually the second largest tribe, just slightly smaller than the tribe of Judah. Jumping over to the book of Joshua, Dan is the last tribe to receive its territorial inheritance. The land they were originally supposed to be in the central coast of Canaan between the tribes of Judah, Benjamin, Ephraim, and the Philistines. Things were still a bit dangerous with the Philistines next door, and so we see that they end up heading northward. Looking at a map today, this would have been the region *Gush Dan*, which means "The Dan area".

Sometimes we get extra books that were not in the bible, like *The Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, which is an apocryphal text that gives us more insight into the 12 tribes. We see in this noncanonical work that Dan was the one who took the lead on trying to kill Joseph, the beloved son of Jacob-Israel. The symbol that represents the tribe of Dan is a set of scales, because we see in Genesis 49:16 that Dan "shall achieve justice for his kindred." The most famous bringer of justice from the tribe of Dan is Samson. You can read all about Samson in Judges 13-16 if you are interested in action, drama, and a story that really brings the house down!

One more interesting fact about the tribe of Dan is that they are not listed among the rest of the tribes in the book of Revelation 7. This may be a mistake, but some scholars argue that this is due to the fact that the tribe of Dan was the first to fall victim to idolatry and to reject the God of Israel. What can we learn from the tribe of Dan? The lesson I'm taking away is that we are called to trust in God when we are at our best and at our worst. At their best, Dan was the defender of the weak, bringing up the rear guard in the desert wanderings, and bringing justice to the people of Israel through the judges like Samson. At their worst, they worshipped idols and gave into their worst inclinations of jealousy. Martin Luther said that we are all sinner and saint; we are all in need of the presence of God in our lives, even when we stumble and make mistakes on the way.

-Pastor Becky Sausser

## Consistory Summary

The Consistory met on April 14, 2026, at 7pm. Becky Bronfenbrenner led devotions. The minutes from the March 10, 2026, meeting were approved. Under the minister's report Pastor

Becky shared that within the last month the consistory had been anointed and our new intern, Amanda Muschett, was installed. Easter and Lent went well, Pastor Becky asked for feedback on Holy week, and a brief discussion took place. In July we will have a sermon series on the book of Acts which focuses on the stories of the work our nonprofit hub is performing in the heart of the city. Pastor Becky had also invited Jim Saylor to come and share an update.

Under new business, the summer meetings of the consistory were reviewed. The first week of June through the last weekend of August we have our summer church hours at 10am. In the recent past we have taken a recess during July and August; it was suggested that June be added to the recess time. Everyone agreed to this addendum. Under Fellowship and Fundraising, Lynn Cloak shared the success of the candy sale. Under Property, the committee is actively working on getting estimates for a fire suppression system for the kitchen. Under Christian Education Pastor Becky shared that youth Sunday will be on May 31. Under the Treasurer's report, Jim Bronfenbrenner shared a suggestion on how to approach our OCWM giving now that we have an Association that is separate from the conference. His suggestion was approved. The Green Team shared that they would have a hike on April 25. Under the Scholarship Committee, Nancy Rissell shared that the applications have been sent to eligible students. The next meeting of the Consistory will be on May 12, 2026, at 7pm and Ralph Todd will lead devotions. The meeting adjourned with a prayer.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

### **Phoebe Ministries Mission Offering**

As has been our tradition at St. John's, we will once again on **Mother's Day** take a **Special Mission Offering** in support of **Phoebe Ministries**. This organization, founded by the Reformed Church in 1903, continues to serve more than 2300 seniors in Allentown and Eastern Pennsylvania as a mission partner of the UCC.

Phoebe's stated mission reads: A community of faith, called by God, to enrich the lives our seniors, their families and the communities we serve. They are guided by this mission to provide compassionate care to those in need regardless of their ability to pay. In 2021, they provided more than \$15 million in charitable care to their residents. How can they do it? The Mother's Day offering is a major source of funding that the UCC churches provide for this effort.

So once again on Mother's Day, May 10<sup>th</sup>, we will have the opportunity to support this worthwhile ministry. You may donate as part of your regular Sunday offering, the blue pew envelopes, the special Phoebe Envelopes or the Donate button on our website. For the first two, be sure to designate Phoebe Ministries. Furthermore, you may contribute anytime in May.

Please prayerfully consider supporting this vital mission effort. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Falla

## 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.

## May Sermons

### May Sermons 2026

- May 3
  - Reading: John 14:1-14
  - Title: The Way
  - Summary: This week we hear the teaching that the way to God is through living in relationship with Jesus!
- May 10 Mother's Day
  - Reading: Psalm 66:8-20
  - Reading 2: John 14: 15-21
  - Title: Standing on the Promises
  - Summary: This week we revisit the promise from Jesus to send the Holy Spirit to us as we honor the women in our lives who have taught us about God!
- May 17- Ascension Sunday
  - Reading 1: Luke 24:44-53
  - Reading 2: Ephesians 1:15-23
  - Title: Ascend!
  - Summary: This Sunday we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus! And in Ephesians Paul gives us the gospel summarized!
- May 24- Pentecost
  - Reading: Acts 2:1-21
  - Title: Pentecost!
  - Summary: Today we celebrate the Holy Spirit descending up on us!
- May 31- Youth Sunday!

## 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 then begin our program at 9:45 with a sharing of joys and concerns.

This is what we have planned until our summer break:

**May 3**-We always look forward to welcoming Mayor Matt Tuerk. He will update us on happenings in Allentown. This is always an informative and fun discussion!

**May 10**-Put on your thinking caps and express your ideas for Adult Forum. What did you enjoy...or not? What would you like to hear more about? No idea too outrageous!



### Bible Bites

How did our NRSV get made? The **New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)** is a translation of the Bible in American English. First published in 1989 by the National Council of Churches, the NRSV was created by an ecumenical committee of scholars "comprising about thirty members". The NRSV is considered a revision of the Revised Standard Version, and relies on recently published critical editions of the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts. It is thus a revision in a series of English translations that has been identified as beginning with the Tyndale Bible. A major revision of the NRSV, the New Revised Standard Version Updated Edition (NRSVue), was released in 2021. -Excerpt from Wikipedia

## Spring Dates

May 31 – Youth Sunday Service

June 14 - Picnic at Waldheim Park

## ECO-TOURISM

I recently heard a broadcast on NPR radio (WDIY) about eco-tourism. Since I am on the Green Team because I am interested in how to care for the earth, I was very attentive. It was a very helpful short segment, and it seemed worth sharing some of the principles.

Here is some info that I got from the internet. The 4Cs are conservation, community, culture, and commerce.

Did you know there are 10 commandments of eco-tourism?

Here they are:

1. You will respect the surrounding nature.
2. You will collect ALL your waste.
3. You will favor local trade.
4. You will sleep in eco-labeled accommodations
5. You won't forget your water bottle.
6. You will indulge in fun, environmentally friendly activities.
7. You will take your time and enjoy yourself.
8. You will be courteous and respectful of people and culture.
9. You will choose the right equipment.
10. You will continue these practices, even at home.

I realized toward the bottom of the list that I was on a bicycle site. Oh well, since time is precious, I decided these suggestions were worthy of everyone reading them and applying them as applicable.

Thank you, Nancy Kramer-Moyer

### **Tales from the Resource Room**

A colleague of mine called me one afternoon and asked if we could provide some hospitality for a young couple in the area. They were members of his church and they were in Allentown trying to figure out next steps for housing, since they had a little one on the way. I told him to send them over! There were a number of things they needed, and we ended up sending them off with a suitcase full of necessities and some gift cards for subway. While they were visiting, they shared their stories of struggle and of hope. We prayed together and then I pointed them in the direction of the next place they were headed. That week our resource room helped 5 different people get connected with resources that made a huge difference in their lives. If you are looking for a way to support this ministry, you can check our weekly email and announcement sheets for an updated list of the things we need or consider making a monetary donation so that we can buy important supplies.



## **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*

# May 2026



- 4 – Shinea Pyle
- 4 – Subrina Pyle
- 5 – Alexander Cloak
- 13 – Shirley Bartynski
- 14 – Abby Garrigan
- 20 – Lynn Cloak
- 23 – Hawthorne Rissell



May 21 – Allison and Richard Hausman  
 May 27 – James and Rebecca Bronfenbrenner

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				Food Bank	1	2
<b>3</b> 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Communion Sunday	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b> No Choir Elders Meeting 7pm	<b>6</b> 9am Prayer Call	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10</b> Mother's Day 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b> Choir 10am  Consistory Meeting 7pm	<b>13</b>  9am Prayer Call	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Choir 10am	<b>20</b>  9am Prayer Call	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> Food Bank	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> Choir 10am	<b>27</b>  9am Prayer Call	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Youth Sunday!						

