

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 26 Issue 6

June 2026

Howdy St. John's,

As summer gets fully into swing, we are looking at the next tribe of Israel, Naphtali! This tribe is represented on the golden ephod breastplate as an agate or an amethyst stone. Naphtali was Jacob's sixth son, and the second son of Bilhah. Who is Bilhah? Well, remember when Jacob wanted to marry Rachel but her father, Laban, tricked Jacob into marrying Leah? Well, when Jacob finally did get to marry Rachel, Laban sent Bilhah with Rachel to be her handmaiden. Wait, so why is Jacob sleeping with his wife's handmaiden? In Genesis 30 we see that Rachel is jealous of her sister Leah, because she has been blessed with several sons, and Rachel does not have any. Rachel gives her handmaiden, Bilhah, to Jacob so that Rachel would be able to have children through this process. The first son born through this process is Dan, who we read about last month, and the second son is Naphtali. In some commentaries they view this story as a form of surrogacy, but the power dynamics at play do complicate this ancient story for us as modern readers.

The tribe of Naphtali settled just west of the sea of Galilee; because of this ideal location, they had fertile soil for vegetation, especially the plain of Gennesaret. If that name sounds familiar, you may remember it is from the gospel of Luke as the place where Jesus taught a crowd that had gathered. He also performed healings in this same location in the gospels of Matthew and Mark. Famous folks from this tribe include the judge Deborah, and the military commander Barak; read Judges chapter 4 and 5 for their incredible story. The tribe of Naphtali is later conquered by the Neo-Assyrian empire and has become part of the displaced peoples in exile. The tribe of Naphtali reminds me of the important fact that God's eyes see things differently than our eyes do. The area where this tribe settled wasn't considered to be that great, yet Jesus saw it as the place for his home and early ministry. Naphtali's name means *to wrestle or struggle*, because when we are failing to see the positive side in a situation, it can help immensely to look through God's eyes and see the beauty and complexity of life.

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

Consistory Summary

The consistory met on May 12, 2026, at 7pm on Zoom. After joys and concerns Ralph Todd led devotionals. The minutes from the April 16 meeting were approved. Under the Minister's Report Pastor Becky reported that the Building Covenant has been helpful for use during the week when guests are in the church. St. John's will participate in the Pride Booth for the Mountain Valley Association on August 30 from 1-7pm; the sign-up sheet will be available soon to volunteer. This summer Pastor Becky has several sermon series planned. Youth Sunday will be on May 31. She shared a mural participation opportunity in the area, but it was determined after discussion that we would reevaluate this opportunity and consider doing it next year. Under Fellowship Committee Lynn Cloak shared that there was special fellowship on Easter and a special fellowship time in honor of our new intern, Mandy Muschett. The church picnic will be on June 14 at Waldheim Park. Food for Vacation Bible School is being planned. Under the Fundraising Committee, Lynn Cloak shared that we made \$1,222 on our Easter Candy sale! The quarterly hoagie sales will continue this year. Lynn is planning a pulled pork BBQ sale.

Under The Property Committee it was shared that we received three proposals for the new fire suppression system for the kitchen; the Property Committee met in May and decided to get updated quotes. Barney Cook and Alan Cloak have volunteered to get the new estimates. Under Christian Education, Pastor Becky reminded folks to attend Youth Sunday on May 31. Under the Scholarship Committee Ralph Todd reported that three of our youth applied for the scholarship and the committee voted to give all three applicants the scholarship. Our next meeting will be on September 8, 2026, at 7pm in the Trinity Room.

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

June Sermons

June Sermons

- June 7- Trinity Sunday
 - Matthew 28:16-20
 - Sermon Title: Trinity Sunday.
 - This week we explore the myriads of ways that the Holy Trinity speaks to our lives as we receive holy communion and renew our discipleship.
- June 14- Flag Day and Picnic
 - Romans 5:1-8
 - Sermon Title: The Camp Bubble!

- Our passage this week shares that our strength is found in Jesus! Pastor Becky shares stories and reflections from her time as a camp counselor and how it relates to Romans.
- June 21- Father's Day
 - Reading: A collection of verses from Scripture.
 - Sermon Title: What Is God Like?
 - Today we explore the many ways the Bible describes God as we read the children's book, *What is God like?* By Rachel Held Evans and Matthew Paul Turner.
- June 28
 - Reading: Matthew 10:40-42



Bible Bites

The Bible is a mix of proactive and reactive texts. Each book of the Bible is a product of its time. Some books were written in reaction to certain events, such as Lamentations being written in reaction to the fall of Jerusalem. Others were more proactive, prescribing principles or teachings for readers moving forward. (Proverbs is a great example of this!). -excerpt by Jeffrey Kranz

Since the Bible is compiled in a nonlinear way, it can sometimes be challenging to figure out which part of the timeline you are in. One helpful tool is a Bible Timeline! There are a number of timelines available free online, and I particularly enjoy the free resources on Bible Project's website, www.bibleproject.com. Some timelines are color-coded to specific scriptures while others try to emphasize big themes. Google image 'bible timeline' for examples of the different ways you can use this tool!

-Respectfully submitted by Rev. Becky Sausser

Announcements

Important Dates!

- June 7- Summer Hours Begin 10am
- June 14- Picnic at Waldheim Park
- July 18- Vacation Bible School
- August 30- Lehigh Valley Pride 1-7pm

June Special Mission Offering

For the month of June, our Special Mission Offering will focus on **Central Elementary and the Resource Room**. For **Central**, and for the **Resource Room**, we will focus on the items listed in *St. John's Corresponds*. Items for Central can be placed in the box in the Narthex. Items for the Resource Room can be placed in the Resource Room across from the Trinity Room. Monetary donations designated for the Resource Room should be given using regular offering or the blue pew envelopes. Thank you for your continued support of these two important ongoing mission efforts.

Our second Special Mission Offering is designated for the **James Lawson Freedom School**. This summer program, held at Resurrection Life UCC focuses on reading for at-risk students. They are seeking donations for scholarships to help defray the \$285 tuition cost for deserving but needy students. A gift in any amount is welcome. See the article by Nancy Kramer-Moyer in this newsletter for further information and the preceding paragraph for how you can give. Thank you for your help.

Submitted by Bill Falla

Environmental Stewardship

When stewardship is mentioned, we usually think of Church financial campaigns. But the Bible suggests a broader understanding. In earlier times, a steward referred to someone who was in charge of caring for a house/home. In the second Creation account (Gen 2:4b-25), we see that humans were created to maintain that which God created. God provides the materials but we are here to maintain/care for it. "The Lord God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to till and keep it." ((2:15) Remember that Eden is their home and that ultimately, the earth is ours. We too are asked to till and keep (care for) our home.

We will explore this concept of home in religion and science more next month.

Submitted by Bill Falla

Tales from the Resource Room

As things begin heating up for the summer, we see an increase in people requiring resources to survive outside. In February we saw lawmakers working to ban evictions during extreme weather conditions, like cold and heat. As we work to change legislation, the need in our area is still growing. **Please consider making a monetary donation!** Yes, receiving gently used items is helpful, but it would also be incredible to buy items we need in bulk. For example, I can bulk purchase 10 camping tents for just \$20 a tent! Consider making a financial donation so we can purchase bulk tents, bulk flashlights, and bulk reusable water bottles specifically made for durability. Thank you!

-Respectfully submitted by Pastor Becky Sausser

A special thank you to our Administrative Assistant, Lucia Guido, our intern Mandy Muschett, and Pastor Becky for their diligent work in reorganizing the Resource Room, making it more accessible and approachable!



Come join the fun at St. John's annual
Church Picnic!

When: Sunday, June 14, 11:00am. (After a brief 10:00am
worship service in the sanctuary, we will travel to the
picnic.)

Where: Waldheim Park

Park address: 2400 S. Hall Street, Allentown, Pa.

Food: The Fellowship Committee will supply mild chili with
with optional hot sauce, plates, bowls, forks, spoons,
napkins, cups and beverages.

Everyone is asked to bring their favorite "covered dish" to
share.

Entertainment: We plan to play "Now you have it, now you
don't!" To make it a success, please consider donating
some wrapped "treasures". Please place your donation(s)
in the indicated box in the Trinity Room.

It will also be great to spend time catching up and
strengthening bonds with your church family!

Sign Up: Please sign up on the sheet on the Great Hall
bulletin board and let us know how many people are
coming and what "covered dish" you plan to bring.

Please join us for food, fun and fellowship!

June 2026



2 – Ralph Todd
 15 – Richard Schmoyer
 19 – Jared Saylor
 24 – Sarah Shaw
 30 – Mark Strouse

Celebrating 
An Anniversary This Month

6/26 – Becky & Christina Sausser

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
10:00am Worship	1	2 Elders Meeting 7pm	3 9am Prayer Call	4 Food Bank	5	6
7 10:00am Worship Pentecost & Confirmation	8	9	10 9am Prayer Call	11	12	13
14 10:00am Worship Church Picnic at Waldheim Park 11am	15	16	17 9am Prayer Call	18	19	20
21 Father's Day 10:00am Worship	22	23	24 9am Prayer Call	25	26 Food Bank	27
28 10:00am Worship	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)



GIFTS FOR DAD



Aftershave
Beer
Belt
Book
Card
Chocolate
Compass
Cuff Links

Golf Balls
Grilling Tools
Hat
Keyring
Mouse Pad
Mug
Pen
Phone Case

Pocket Knife
Power Tools
Razor
Slippers
Socks
Tie
Wallet
Watch

H A P P Y



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