

The Disciple



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

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

Volume 26 Issue 10

October 2026

Howdy St. John's family,

This is one of the best months of the year in my personal opinion. The pumpkin spice latte is back, we celebrate Halloween, and this year we get to talk about Zebulun! Zebulun was the tenth son of Jacob and the sixth and final son of Leah. His name means "to dwell" and "to honor", and we see in Genesis chapter 30, verse 20, that Leah hopes Zebulun's birth will encourage Jacob to finally to honor her and love her since she bore six sons. We see in the verse that immediately follows that Leah also gives birth to a daughter and names her Dinah. She is the only daughter of Jacob that is specifically mentioned; we see she meets a terrible fate in Genesis 34, as we remember from learning about Simeon and Levi (trigger warning if you seek this passage out).

When Jacob is bestowing blessings unto his sons, he blesses Zebulun in Genesis 49:13 saying, "Zebulun shall settle at the shore of the sea; he shall be a haven for ships, and his border shall be at Sidon". Sidon was an ancient port city. It makes sense that the tribe of Zebulun is best known for becoming sailors who profited in seagoing trade. Last month we talked about Issachar, the scholarly tribe, and we see that the tribe of Zebulun settles beside them and has a close relationship. In the Song of Deborah (see Judges 5), we see her name the tribe of Zebulun as carrying forth the *sopher shebet*, the *rod of the scribe*. Some scholars believe this is because Zebulun supported the tribe of Issachar, allowing them to focus on their studies.

Looking at the tribe of Zebulun, I am reminded of the way that we are all called to love and support one another. Like the famous song, *Lean on Me*, we can call on our siblings when we need help, with the confidence that when they need help, we will return it gladly.

-Rev. Becky Sausser

Consistory Summary

Our consistory meeting was held on September 8, 2026, at 7pm in the Trinity room. After the sharing of joys and concerns, Pastor Becky let us through a brief devotional. The minutes from our May meeting were approved. Under the minister's report, Pastor Becky shared that she, Lucia, and Mandy accomplished several odd jobs during the summer to spruce up the church. Pastor Becky and Mandy are planning an upcoming fellowship event to make hats and scarves for the Resource Room. We have three confirmation students this year, Erin Dopera, Hawk Rissell, and Jacob Pyle. Under Christian Education Pastor Becky reported that she and Judy Garrigan planned activities for each month for our youth to participate in worship.

Under new business, Pastor Becky shared the possibility of applying for grants that would allow our congregation to hire Mandy as a quarter-time associate pastor of outreach. This idea was approved, and so Pastor Becky and Mandy will apply for numerous grants. Under the Fellowship Committee, Lynn Cloak shared that the Church picnic was a success. Under the Fundraising Committee, Lynn shared that the nuts and truffle sales will be looking for volunteers soon. Under Property, Jeff Rissell shared that the roof above the office spaces was assessed by the same company that replaced the peaked roof. They are in the process of creating a proposal to fix a leak and a drain issue. The Treasurer's Report was received. Rick Guhl presented a proposed creation of justice covenant to the consistory; this covenant will be shared with the congregation for feedback. Our next meeting will be on October 13 at 7pm. Pastor Becky closed the meeting with prayer and we adjourned at 7:48pm.

-Respectfully submitted by Reverend Becky Sausser

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 9:30 for coffee or tea then begin our program at 9:45 with a sharing of joys and concerns. This is what we have planned for October:

October 4-Pastor Becky will be joining us with the Confirmation Class for a "Crash Course on Communion." It is always a fun time when our youth join us!

October 11-Our own Mandy Muschett will be with us to share her faith journey, talk about the ordination process, and discuss her hopes for her time at St. John's. Come and get to know Mandy better!

October 18-The midterm elections are fast approaching. Barbara Connolly from the Lehigh Valley League of Women Voters will get us up to date with the latest election information.

October 25-St. John's has long supported the Ripple Community and it will be great to hear what is happening with this important organization from their director, Sherri Binder.

October looks to be a great month!



Do you remember back in 5th grade science class when you learned about the Hydrological cycle? The more common name is the *water cycle*. Scientist Bernard Palissy was finalizing our understanding of the hydrologic cycle around the year 1580. Some religious leaders were quick to point out that the Bible had already said that, in Amos 9:6, “who builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth, who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth— the LORD is his name”. It is fascinating to read the history of science and religion, because so often they are inspiring one another. In the same way that the original Star Trek communicator served as inspiration to Martin Cooper, the inventor of the mobile phone!

-Rev. Becky Sausser

Tales from the Resource Room

One of the most inspiring things about our Resource Room is the way that it has brought our community together! The nonprofits who call this building home use and donate to the Resource Room. So many individual members of this church have made brand new connections with other missions to collaborate on what we can all share! Over the summer, our incredible Admin and our awesome intern worked with me to reorganize the Resources to reflect the needs of the community more accurately! With so many hands helping, this has become light work! I wanted to use this article to express my gratitude to all of you; this congregation is truly living into Christ’s words in John 13:34-35, “I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

-Rev. Becky Sausser

Green Team

Creation Justice Covenant

Covenant is one of those church words that pop up a lot. A covenant is like an agreement, or a contract, but it is less legalistic and more intimate. When we agree to make a covenant, we promise to do our best to uplift what was said and make it part of our identity. Below, the Green Team has constructed a covenant in the hope that the congregation will receive it and consider it for our congregational family and community. Thank you for your kindness and consideration!

-Rev. Becky Sausser

CREATION JUSTICE CHURCH COVENANT

We, the congregation at St. John's UCC, Allentown, as faithful followers of our Triune God and aware of God's commandment to "tend the garden", as well as Christ's teaching to "care for the least of these", commit ourselves as individuals and as a congregation to care for creation and seek justice for all God's children. We acknowledge that abuses to creation inevitably lead to human suffering borne by some more than others. We desire to be an agent for change beyond the walls of this church as we fulfill our commitments made here to God the Creator, Jesus the Redeemer of Creation, and the Holy Spirit who sustains Creation and us in these endeavors.

Submitted by the Green Team, September 2026

October Sermons

- October 4
 - Reading 1: Isaiah 5:1-7
 - Reading 2: Matthew 21:33-46
 - Title: The Fruit we Bear
 - In our gospel, Jesus shares a parable about a vineyard that seems very confusing at first. Looking to Isaiah, we see the history in which the parable is rooted.
- October 11
 - Reading 1: Matthew 22:1-14
 - Reading 2: Philippians 4:1-9
 - Title: Many Called
 - Using a story about a wedding feast, Jesus explains how we are called and invited into a covenantal relationship with God.
- October 18
 - Reading 1: Isaiah 45:1-7
 - Reading 2: Matthew 22:15-22
 - Title: What is Caesar's?
 - Jesus is tested in public about paying taxes, and his answer has many layers that speak to our lives.
- October 25- Pastor Becky on vacation
 - Reading 1: 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
 - Reading 2: Matthew 22:34-46

Creating Warmth for Our Community



This October, we are hoping to gather for a special Crochet, Knit & Pray event; a time to bring together creativity, fellowship, prayer, and service to our neighbors.

Together, we will create scarves, hats, and other winter-weather items that will be donated to the Resource Room and shared with individuals and families who need a little extra warmth during the

colder months.

Scripture reminds us to *Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.* (Colossians 3:12, NRSVUE).

During this gathering, we will have an opportunity to live those words in a very tangible way. With each stitch, knot, and piece of fabric, we can create something that not only provides physical warmth but also communicates compassion and care.

Jesus also reminds us in Matthew 25 that when we care for those who are hungry, thirsty, alone, or in need of clothing, we are serving Christ himself. Our handmade items may seem simple, but they can become an expression of God's love placed directly into the hands of someone in our community.

Crocheters, knitters, and crafters of every skill level are invited! Whether you have been knitting or crocheting for decades, are just beginning, or have never worked with yarn before, there will be a place for you.

For those who are new to crafting, we will also have easy no-sew winter projects available. No experience is necessary. Experienced knitters and crocheters are encouraged to bring their gifts, share their knowledge, and perhaps help someone discover a new skill.

As we create, we will also share conversation, fellowship, and prayer, remembering the individuals who will eventually receive what we make.

This gathering is not about creating the perfect scarf or making the most complicated project. It is about gathering around a table, sharing our gifts, learning from one another, and putting our faith into action.

We are currently considering a Saturday in October, with the final date and additional details coming soon.

Whether you come with knitting needles, a crochet hook, a willingness to try something new, or simply a desire to serve, you are invited.

Come create. Come knit. Come crochet. Come pray. Come share fellowship. And together, let us wrap our community in warmth, compassion, and love.



Joining Our Light Together at Lehigh Valley Pride

This year, our congregation was proud to join churches from the Mountain Valley Association, community organizations, families, friends, and neighbors at Lehigh Valley Pride at SteelStacks for a day filled with celebration, connection, and a powerful reminder that everyone deserves to know they are loved, valued, and welcomed.

Lehigh Valley Pride is organized by the Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, whose work extends far beyond this one celebration. The Center serves the LGBTQ+ community throughout the Lehigh Valley through programs focused on connection, education, health, advocacy, and creating spaces where LGBTQ+ people can experience community and joy.

Our participation in Pride gives us an opportunity not only to celebrate, but also to strengthen the relationship between affirming churches and organizations that are doing this important work throughout the year.

Our Pride celebration also began right here in our own church community. During fellowship time, we enjoyed ice cream topped with rainbow sprinkles, sharing laughter and conversation as we celebrated the beautiful diversity of God's people. It was a simple but joyful reminder that fellowship is about more than gathering around a table, it is about creating a place where everyone can experience belonging.



One of the special ways we celebrated this year was by inviting Pride attendees to help us "join our light together." Visitors were invited to sign our banner, adding their names, messages, and presence to a growing symbol of hope, love, and connection. The banner will not remain in just one place. It will travel among participating ONA churches in the association, where each congregation will have the opportunity to add even more names and continue spreading the light. Every new signature reminds us that the circle of welcome can always grow wider and that no person and no congregation stand alone in the work of creating communities of extravagant welcome. Each person, church, and community partner adds another light to something much larger.

Jesus reminds us, *"You are the light of the world"* (Matthew 5:14). At Pride, we experienced what can happen when those individual lights come together. Our lights may shine in different places; through congregations, community organizations, and through individuals, but when we join our light together, that light becomes brighter and harder to miss.

Together, may we continue to join our light together so that our communities know: No matter who you are or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

Announcements

- **Important Dates!**
- October 11 **Love Feast**

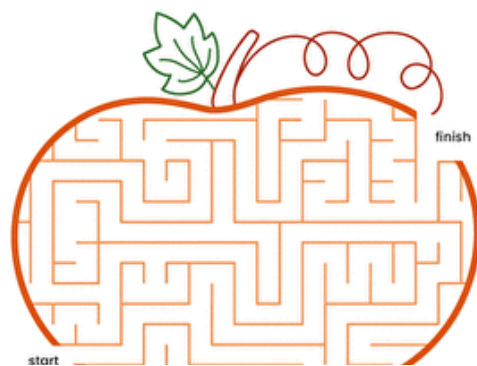
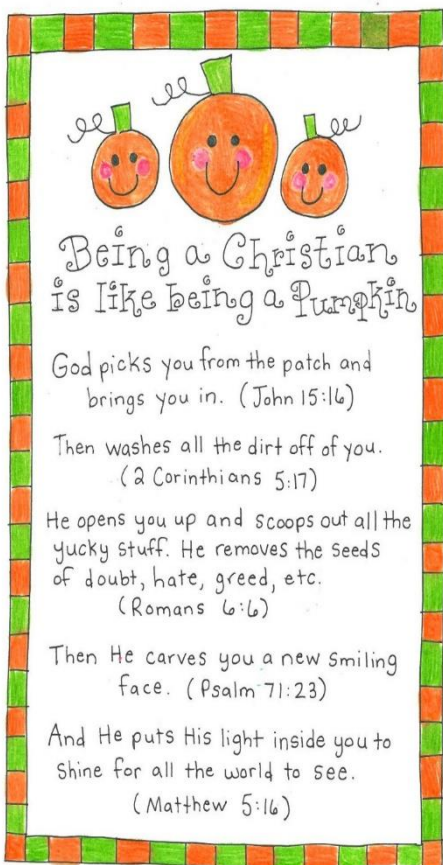
October Special Mission Offering

Our Special Mission Offering for October is **Neighbors in Need. Neighbors in Need (NIN)** supports the UCC's ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries to fund a wide array of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct services. In 2025, 26 grants were granted and were awarded to churches to run such programs.

The remaining third is used to support our Native American neighbors within the UCC. This is accomplished by NIN's support of the UCC's Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Currently, there are 21 UCC congregations on reservations and one urban multi-tribal congregation in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The funds are used to support the ministries of these congregations. CAIM also serves as a resource for more than 1,000 individuals from other tribes and nations who are members of other UCC congregations throughout the U.S.

We would ask that you prayerfully consider giving generously to support these ministries of justice and compassion **throughout the month of October**. You may do so by writing a check to St. John's UCC-Allentown designated for NIN, making it a designated part of your weekly offering or by using the DONATE button on our website. Thank you.

-Respectfully submitted by Bill Falla



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Halloween Word Search

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S	B	R	L	E	F	W	H	X	B	V	C	L	P	K	W
P	H	P	Q	V	F	T	O	S	H	T	F	X	H	X	H
O	B	F	H	D	J	I	J	N	O	T	E	L	E	K	S
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BOO
GAMES
HALLOWEEN
PARTY
SPOOKY
WITCH

CANDY
GHOSTS
MASK
PUMPKINS
TRICK

COSTUMES
GOBLIN
MUMMY
SKELETON
TREAT

October 2026

 7 – Keith Morris Delia Phillips 8 – Trudi Egan 9 – Cheryl Phillips 14 – Melissa Repash 14 – Lucia Guido 19 – Thomas Raub 20 – Brenda Saylor 22 – Du’Quan Stellinburg 27 – Bonnie Falla 29 – Sterna Klingborg	Celebrating An Anniversary This Month  10/06 – Robert and Susan Fegley 10/26 – James and Brenda Saylor						
	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Food Bank	2	3
	4 World Communion 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	5	6 Elders Meeting	7 9am Prayer Call	8	9	10
	11 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship Love Feast	12 Office closed	13 Consistory Meeting 7pm	14 9am Prayer Call	15	16	17
	18 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	19	20 Benevolence Committee Meeting 7pm	21 9am Prayer Call Veteran Food Share Program	22	23 Food Bank	24
	25 9:30am Sunday School & Adult Forum 11:00am Worship	26	27	28 9am Prayer Call	29	30	31 Halloween!
							

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)

