

DECEMBER 2025

THE MESSENGER

St. John's Episcopal Church, Lancaster PA

www.stjohns-lancaster.org



The birth of the child into the darkness of the world made possible not just a new way of understanding life but a new way of living it.

- Frederick Buechner

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Rector's Message
- World AIDS Day
- Advent Event
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- Angel Tree
- Emma's Ordination!
- Musings from the Organ Bench
- Foyer Groups
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- Birthdays & Anniversaries
- Calendar

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR



Greetings St. John's,

Wow, what a fall it has been! This past month was full of incredible generosity, community building, and inspiring worship. I am so excited to report that we raised over \$25,000 for the Food Pantry and Outreach Ministries through the Extra Give, Makers Market, and special Food Drives. Our neighbors are going to continue being fed thanks to YOU! Thank you doesn't seem sufficient. As your Rector, my heart is full and my spirit is so encouraged.

This past week, I was spending some time in the All Purpose room with folks who were waiting their turn to get food and a gentleman said to me, "It's like fishes and loaves here. Jesus was able to feed a lot of people with just a couple of fish, you guys do that here, too." He was right. The food expands because your hearts continue to expand. Thank you for living lives of abundance and generosity.

As we turn towards Advent, I keep hearing the gospel reading from our beautiful Evensong service on repeat. It was the familiar story of Mary and Martha. Martha is busy working in the kitchen and she complains to Jesus that her sister, Mary, isn't helping. Mary, on the other hand, sat at the feet of Jesus just taking in his words and presence. Jesus tells Martha to leave her sister alone because Mary has chosen the better thing. I think we have an opportunity to take a page from Mary's book this Advent; to slow down and sit at the feet of Jesus taking in all He wants to share. Perhaps this Advent we could be a little more counter-cultural, by doing less and listening more, by studying scripture instead of sales prices and amazon reviews...Let us choose the better thing by joining together in worship and formation.

Choose the better thing...Luke 10:42

Advent is a brief, yet vital season in our church year. For just a few weeks, we have the gift of sitting in watchful anticipation as Christ reveals himself to us through the gift of the nativity, pageants proclaimed by our youngest members, music that shares our greatest yearnings, the holy sacrament, and each other. May we discover Christ in our midst by choosing the better thing this Advent.

God's peace,
Amanda+

WORLD AIDS DAY



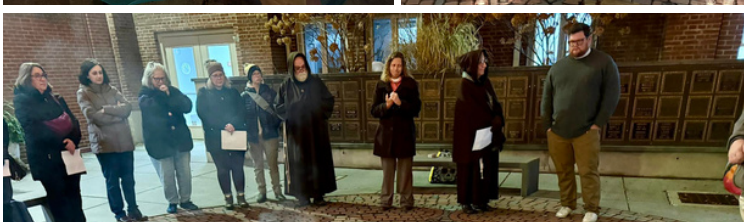
WORLD AIDS DAY

An Interfaith Vigil

THE BETTY FINNEY AIDS MEMORIAL GARDEN

Monday, December 1 | Janice Stork - Linear Park
6:00 PM | W Lemon - Water St Intersection

A LOOK BACK AT TRANSGENDER DAY OF REMEMBRANCE



On the evening of November 20, St. John's met in the courtyard to mourn the deaths of 55 of our trans siblings through violence or suicide in the past year. St. John's Clergy, members of our Trans Loving Community (TLC) ministry, friends, and neighbors gathered around a fire pit to read each name and light a candle. Designed by Maria Weaver and Deklan Lewis (who also provided music and led us in song), the service was quiet and intensely moving. We will commemorate such sad, senseless deaths on Trans Day of Remembrance each year until the need no longer exists.

ADVENT EVENT!

Advent Event

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 2025
5:30 - 7:30 PM

Potluck Supper
Make an Advent Wreath (\$12)
Decorate Cookies

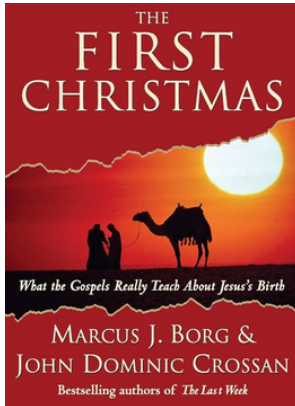
Everyone is Welcome!



Please sign up in the
Parish Hall. Email
lalimule@verizon.net
with questions

Advent is a season of waiting, yearning, and preparing for Christ. For four weeks, we are invited to slow down and turn our attention to prayer, scripture, and our relationships with Christ. As a way of entering into this season, we invite you to make an Advent Wreath, offer prayers of thanksgiving for the light that shines all around us, and join in community through breaking bread together. In a world that focuses on commercialism, chaos, and the individual, Advent offers us a different way, a way of love and relationship.

ADULT FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES



Words like expectation, waiting, watchfulness, darkness, longing, and light are ones we commonly use to describe Advent, the liturgical season we now find ourselves in. Advent might also be described as a time in-between—between the hopeful joy of Christ arriving as a child two thousand years ago in the Holy Land and the watchfulness we are called into as we wait for Christ to usher in the fullness of his promised Kingdom. It is in this in-between time that we live our lives, seeking to know Christ in word, in sacrament, and in encounters with our neighbors. Through past, present, and future, Advent draws us back to the core of our faith: God is with us, and that reality transforms our lives.

As we seek new ways to explore what it means for us as Christians that God chose to live among us, we invite you to participate in a book study with us this Advent season. We will meet at 5:30 p.m. on December 10 and December 17 to discuss *The First Christmas: What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus's Birth* by Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan. In this book, Borg and Crossan take a scholarly approach to the birth narratives in Matthew and Luke, inviting readers to look more closely, not so much at what happened, but at why these stories matter and what they teach us about Jesus, God, and humanity.

We will discuss the first half of the book (through chapter 5) on December 10, and the remainder on December 17. Dinner will take place from 5:30-6 p.m. with our conversation following from 6-7 p.m. Books can be purchased at your favorite book store or on Amazon.

Bible Study at St. John's: Wednesdays at 2:00 PM

Eighteen months ago, a group of male parishioners agreed, with Amanda's blessing, to begin a men's bible study group. An important assumption about the new group was that men "of a certain age" are reluctant to read scripture and discuss it, so a male-only setting might ease such inhibitions.

We've met weekly since then, and all participants have found it to be a deeply rewarding experience. We've learned two things: First, a mutually supporting group is a great way to overcome shyness and hesitation for any reason, not just gender. Second, bible study in a group provides an opportunity to hear a variety of interpretations. And the more participants, the better.

So, again with Amanda's blessing, we hope to become simply the St. John's Bible Study group, open to all who have an interest. Since spring 2024 we have read the Old Testament and are mostly through the Apocrypha. After the holidays we will begin the New Testament. We use a commentary text in addition to the Bible. No previous experience required.

As of now, we meet Wednesdays, 2:00-3:30 pm in the Parish Hall. But based on interest, we are open to discussing day and duration. If interested, contact Wade Hinkle (571-533-5181, wphinkle@gmail.com) or Dave Martin (717-327-5621, mdsmartinduncan@aol.com).

Remembering Our Loved Ones

A Service of Hope for Times of Loss

Sunday, Dec. 7 at 4 pm

Groff Funeral Home

528 West Orange St., Lancaster

Please RSVP with family name
and number of guests.

Call 717-394-5300

GroffTM

Funeral & Cremation Services
Serving Lancaster for over 125 years

Partnering with Covenant United Methodist Church
and St. John's Episcopal Church

The Groffs Family Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc., Elizabeth M. Groff, Licensed Supervisor

COMMUNITY EVENTS

JONATHAN KUTTAB LECTURE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2025 - 3:00 PM

"The Church's Message of Peacemaking for the World and Gaza" is the theme of a presentation by Palestinian Christian pacifist Jonathan Kuttab to be hosted by Lancaster Church of the Brethren on Sunday, December 7, at 3:00 p.m. The church is located at 1601 Sunset Ave., Lancaster.

The hour-long program is sponsored by the Peace Action Network of Lancaster and will feature Kuttab's presentation followed by a time for questions.

A well-known human rights attorney, Kuttab practices in the US, Palestine, and Israel. He is co-founder of the Palestinian human rights group Al-Haq and Executive Director of Friends of Sabeel North America (FOSNA), a nonprofit Christian ecumenical organization seeking justice and peace in the Holy Land through education, advocacy, and nonviolent action. He has authored many books and articles, including *Beyond the Two-State Solution* and his recent memoir *The Truth Shall Set You Free*. Questions? Please see Sue Heilman!

ANGEL TREE

Join us in spreading the Christmas spirit through our Angel Tree! Gift tags will be available the first two Sundays in Advent. Grab a tag, do some holiday shopping, and bring your gift to the church wrapped and ready to go by December 14th. Thanks for sharing the magic of Christmas with our neighbors in need!



GREENING OF THE CHURCH



Greening of the Church – December 6

The greening of the campus will take place on Saturday, December 6th at 10:00 AM. If you would like to get into the Christmas Spirit by hanging wreaths and garland outside of St. John's, please join us for the festivities! Thanks, Janice & Kevin Henry

EMMA DI PACE IS GETTING ORDAINED!



By the Grace of God,

The Right Reverend Audrey C. Scanlan
XI Bishop of the Diocese of Central Pennsylvania

Will Ordain

Emma Rose Di Pace

To The Sacred Order of Deacons
In Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

On Sunday December 14th
At 4 o'clock in the afternoon

At
St. Stephen's Episcopal Cathedral
221 N. Front Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Your prayers are requested.
Clergy are invited to vest and process (*rose or white*)
Reception will follow.

If you are unable to attend, the service will be available via livestream.

<https://www.facebook.com/saint.stephens.cathedral>

MUSINGS FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

The call of the prophet Isaiah is one of expectation and hope....hope for the arrival of the Light even while walking through the darkness. Such is the direction of Pilgrimages through the centuries. We are called to move forward to a special place, a special experience even while walking through current life experiences, never looking back but looking forward.

In the Wonder, Love, and Praise hymnal supplement, we find the words...*When from bondage we are summoned out of darkness into light, we must go in hope and patience, walk by faith and not by sight....Through all stages of the journey, Christ is with us, night and day, with compassion for our weakness ev'ry step along the way.Let us hasten to our homeland and rejoicing, enter in.* (#753 WLP, Delores Dufner, OSB)

What comes to my mind as we move into the Advent season of hopeful expectation is a piece of literature. When I was sixteen, I purchased my first set of the Lord of the Rings at the Lancaster Two Guys (forerunner of the mega Walmart, I suppose). I have loved the story that Tolkien crafted and it is ever new and always reminds me that as on a pilgrimage, we travel with fellow companions, often far different than ourselves, with the goal of arriving at a outcome that is uplifting and full of renewal.

Each Advent season, we are called to go on pilgrimage, figuratively and perhaps literally to arrive at that special day when darkness was broken by the light of a new birth. All too often...well even before Halloween our culture has moved us into Christmas with little thought of how we get there in mindful preparation. We rush into things, in a hurry to get there. Like children who ask on a trip...."Are we there yet?" we miss the sights and sounds and smells along the way only wondering how quickly we can move to the end goal. I know that when I walk the road near my home, I see so much more than we a drive the same stretch of road...wild flowers, small critters, bees pollinating, the smell of the mint growing on the edge.

Enjoy the Advent season of music and light as we prepare for Christmas eve with the special music of both services....carols, solos, anthems, the brass, the children. And we rejoice in arriving even more with the service of lessons and carols on the Sunday after Christmas.

View the present through the promise, Christ will come again. Trust despite the deepening darkness, Christ will come again. Lift the world above it's grieving through your watching and believing in the hope past hope's conceiving: Christ will come again. (Thomas Troeger, from Borrowed Light, Oxford University Press, London 1994)

FOYER GROUPS ARE UP AND RUNNING... AND IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO JOIN!



Friends, our Foyer Groups are off to a great start! Thanks to everyone who has signed up to take part. Foyer groups are all about building relationships and community within our parish. Groups meet once a month to share a meal and conversation, there's no agenda, no pressure, just friendship and food! If you are interested in joining a group, it's not too late! Please email Gretchen at gretchdw@gmail.com to get connected.

There is also a Daytime Foyer group that meets the first Wednesday of the month at 1:00 pm. All are welcome. If you have any questions regarding the Daytime Foyer Group, please see Sue Heilman!

The French meaning of the word Foyer is hearth or hearthside and evokes an image of warmth and comfort.



THANK YOU, CONGREGATION AND COMMUNITY, FOR HELPING MEET THE NEED FOR FOOD IN THE LANCASTER AREA THIS YEAR!

Unprecedented Blessings in November through our many partnerships!

1. Scouting for Food Donations
2. Faith that Feeds: Flash Food Drive Donations
3. Sacred Heart Catholic Church Food Donations
4. Sacred Heart School Food Drive and Donations
5. St. Thomas Episcopal Church Diaper Drive
6. Landis Place on King Food Donation Drive
7. Willow Valley Neighbor Food Donations
8. Fulton Elementary Food Donation Drive
9. Crispux Attucks Community Food Donations
10. Community Action Partnership Produce Donations
11. Ric's Bread Donations (2 x per week starting soon)
12. Endo Cafe donation of muffins and baked goods
13. Generous outpouring of members who have donated financially and by Amazon!
14. Extra Give 2025
15. St. James Daughters of the King Chapter

Thank you, thank you, thank you! Wishing you a Blessed Advent and Christmas!



FINANCIALS BY CHARLES WEAR, TREASURER

Operations:

- Contributions were below budget for the month and YTD, but below budget expenses are keeping us on track to finish the year with a surplus.
- The 2026 church operating budget will require any realized 2025 surplus to be carried over as 2026 income. We also face the challenge of maintaining our current contribution level to balance the 2026 budget, as we have recently lost several generous parishioners.
- A generous \$202.1k unrestricted legacy gift was received and deposited into the endowment (pledged) account per Vestry directive.
- Paychex continues to provide us with payroll errors. A new service will be hired effective Jan 1.

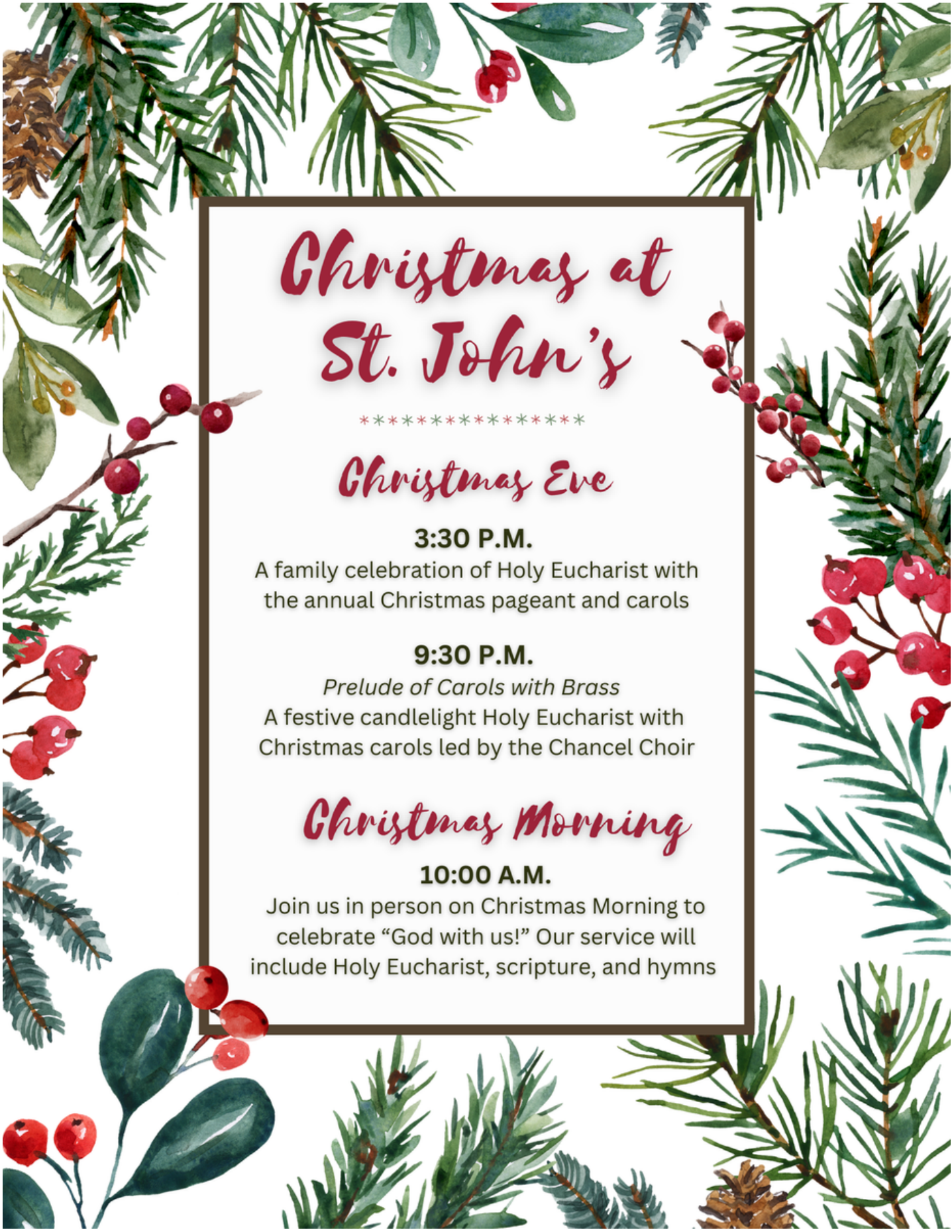
Capital Projects:

- Capital gifts of \$10.7k were received in October, bringing the total for the project to \$805.0k. Additional one-time bequests and pre-campaign donations bring the grand total to \$927.4k, with an additional \$200.5k in pledges outstanding. The current estimated total project cost is \$1.27 million, leaving \$140.7k as additional need.
- The only capital expense for the month was our monthly Heistand loan service of \$5.7k.

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St. John's Episcopal Church
Church Operating Income Statement
CONDENSED
 October 2025
 Cash Basis in \$000's

	October		Year to Date		Annual
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Budget
Income					
Contributions	\$25.0	\$42.1	\$381.2	\$420.9	\$505.1
Investment Draws	\$0.0	\$6.1	\$30.0	\$61.3	\$73.6
Other Income	(\$4.2)	\$2.9	\$32.1	\$28.7	\$34.4
Jubilee	\$3.5	\$3.0	\$32.8	\$30.1	\$36.1
Transferred Income	\$0.0	(\$3.3)	\$0.0	(\$33.3)	(\$40.0)
Total Income	\$24.3	\$50.8	\$476.1	\$507.6	\$609.2
Expenses					
Clergy	\$14.9	\$23.1	\$173.8	\$231.2	\$277.5
Lay Staff	\$10.4	\$9.4	\$92.8	\$93.7	\$112.4
Vestry/Finance/Comm	\$1.2	\$2.5	\$21.8	\$25.2	\$30.3
Utilities	\$5.1	\$3.3	\$49.5	\$32.5	\$39.0
Building Repairs & Supplies	\$2.2	\$3.0	\$27.2	\$30.1	\$36.1
Other Property	\$0.0	\$3.1	\$23.6	\$30.5	\$36.6
Worship/Ed/Community	\$0.3	\$1.9	\$14.0	\$18.5	\$22.2
Outreach	\$5.5	\$5.3	\$52.1	\$53.5	\$64.2
Jubilee	\$0.5	\$3.1	\$22.7	\$30.9	\$37.1
Transferred Expenses	\$0.0	(\$3.9)	\$0.0	(\$38.5)	(\$46.3)
Total Expenses	\$40.1	\$50.8	\$477.6	\$507.6	\$609.2
Net Total	(\$15.8)	(\$0.0)	(\$1.5)	(\$0.0)	\$0.0



Christmas at St. John's

Christmas Eve

3:30 P.M.

A family celebration of Holy Eucharist with
the annual Christmas pageant and carols

9:30 P.M.

Prelude of Carols with Brass

A festive candlelight Holy Eucharist with
Christmas carols led by the Chancel Choir

Christmas Morning

10:00 A.M.

Join us in person on Christmas Morning to
celebrate "God with us!" Our service will
include Holy Eucharist, scripture, and hymns

MARK YOUR JANUARY CALENDAR FOR JOE'S ORDINATION!



By the Grace of God,

The Right Reverend Audrey C. Scanlan
Bishop of The Episcopal Diocese of the Susquehanna

Will Ordain

Joseph Edward Pritchett

To The Sacred Order of Priests
In Christ's One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church

On January 24th, 2026
At 10 o'clock in the morning

At
St. John's Episcopal Church
321 West Chestnut St.
Lancaster, PA 17603

Your prayers are requested.
Clergy are invited to vest and process (*red stoles*)
Reception will follow.

BIRTHDAYS

2 Marcia Meikrantz
2 Charles Wear
6 Lynn Hayford
7 Julia Hale
8 Charley Braught, Jr.
9 Gretchen Walden
12 Bradley Moyer
15 Shirley Parmer
16 Fred Honaman
17 Faith D'Urbano
18 Kendall Stonerook
19 Polly Ann Brown
19 Len Jackson
19 Randy Krueger
21 Ed Summers
24 Jenny Kintner
24 Steve Latshaw
25 Jim Crothers
25 David Rutledge
26 Rich Brenton
29 Dan Dorgan
30 Adam Kilp
31 Ned Grove

ANNIVERSARIES

17 Amy & David Dissinger
28 Steve & Karen Latshaw
31 Christine & Tom Shevock

OUR FRIENDS AT HOME

Ellen Keller, Nancy Nemith, Ricky Smith, Joanna Sweeney, Al Kuser, Mary Sue Farmer, Ellen Sellers, Edith Kane, Merle Schnee, Sandy Grove, Peggy Zuke, Peggy Buscher, Teresa Sullivan

SERVING IN THE MILITARY

Alex Kelly, Brooks Morgan, Brian Hobbins, Joshua Watkins, Kirby Kinderwater, Kyle Kinderwater, David Wolfe

CHURCH PRAYER LIST

Ella, Kevin, Judy Modene, Andrew Gilpin, Cheryl and Rhoda, Ted Griswold, Collin, Eileen Waite, Denise Chandler, Shirley Parmer, Ann Marie, Karlah Gibbs, Kathy Dodge and Family, Sandy Patrone, Marshall, Leslie Tahsler, Marianne, Elly, Steve, Heidi, Danny, and Kenneth, Ginny Young



Watch over your children, O Lord, as their days increase; bless and guide them wherever they may be. Strengthen them when they stand; comfort them when discouraged or sorrowful; raise them up if they fall; and in their hearts, may your peace which passes understanding abide all the days of their lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

December 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
30 <i>Coffee hour after each service</i> 8:00am Holy Eucharist: Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist: Rite II	1 12:00pm NA 6:00pm World AIDS Day Service- Betty Finney AIDS Memorial Garden 7:00pm SLAA	2 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 5:00pm Immigration Clinic 6:00pm AA (AP)	3 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 1:00pm Daytime Foyer Group 2:00pm Bible Study 5:30pm Advent Event	4 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Worship Committee 2:30pm Food Pantry	5 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	6 10:00am Greening of the Church 1:00pm AA 6:00pm AA
7 Birthdays & Anniversaries <i>Coffee hour after each service</i> 8:00am Holy Eucharist: Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist: Rite II 1:00pm Education for Ministry 4:00pm A Service of Remembrance	8 12:00pm NA 4:00pm Carfing Ministry Meeting 7:00pm SLAA	9 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 4:00pm Finance Committee 5:00pm Immigration Clinic 6:00pm AA (AP)	10 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Bible Study 5:30pm Advent Forum	11 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:30am Staff Meeting 2:30pm Food Pantry	12 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	13 12:30pm Citizen's Climate Lobby Group 1:00pm AA 6:00pm AA
14 <i>Coffee hour after each service</i> 8:00am Holy Eucharist: Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist: Rite II 1:00pm Education for Ministry 4:00pm Emma Di Pace Ordination!	15 12:00pm NA 7:00pm SLAA	16 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 5:00pm Immigration Clinic 6:00pm AA (AP)	17 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Bible Study 5:30pm Advent Forum	18 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:30am Staff Meeting 2:30pm Food Pantry	19 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	20 9:00am Community Breakfast (First Reformed) 1:00pm AA 6:00pm AA
21 <i>Coffee hour after each service</i> 8:00am Holy Eucharist: Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Holy Eucharist: Rite II 12:00pm Vestry Meeting 1:30pm Education for Ministry	22 12:00pm NA 5:00pm Stewardship Committee Meeting 7:00pm SLAA	23 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 6:00pm AA (AP)	24 Christmas Eve 12:00pm NA 3:30pm Christmas Eve Family Service 9:30pm Christmas Eve Candlelit Service	25 Christmas Day MESSSENGER DUE 10:00am Christmas Day Service	26 <i>Office Closed</i> Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	27 1:00pm AA 6:00pm AA
28 <i>Coffee hour after each service</i> 8:00am Lessons and Carols with Holy Eucharist: Rite I 9:15am Sunday School 10:15am Lesson and Carols with Holy Eucharist: Rite II 1:00pm Education for Ministry	29 12:00pm NA 7:00pm SLAA	30 1:30pm Martha's Ministry 2:30pm Food Pantry 6:00pm AA (AP)	31 12:00pm Holy Eucharist with Healing 12:00pm NA 2:00pm Bible Study	1 9:00am Morning Prayer 9:30am Staff Meeting 10:00am Worship Committee	2 Rector's Day Off 12:00pm NA	3 1:00pm AA 1:00pm Daytime Foyer Group 6:00pm AA