

JANUARY 2026

THE MESSENGER

St. John's Episcopal Church, Lancaster PA

www.stjohns-lancaster.org



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF THE **Susquehanna**

As of January 1, 2026 we are officially a parish in the Diocese of the Susquehanna!

A NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

**In the turning of the year,
we give thanks for
God's mercy behind us
and God's promise ahead.
May we begin again,
not by striving harder,
but by trusting deeper.**

NEWS & STORIES FOR THIS ISSUE:

- Rector's Message
- New Year's Eve & Day Worship!
- Formation Opportunities
- Diocesan Women's Retreat
- Emma's Ordination
- Joe's Ordination
- Musings from the Organ Bench
- Winter Clothing Collection
- Food Pantry News
- Financials
- Birthdays & Anniversaries

A MESSAGE FROM THE RECTOR



Greetings St. John's,

Wow, it's hard to imagine another year has come and gone and a New Year is upon us! Every year, I fight the urge to make New Year's resolutions that involve diets, exercise, or my pant size. This year, I'm focusing on a spiritual resolution - perhaps, you'll join me!

I have a vision of 2026 being the year of spiritual learning and growth; in 2026, I hope to spend more time studying scripture, reading modern day theologians, and taking advantage of the various opportunities for trainings and workshops through the diocese and online learning. There is something holy and transformative when you study together in community. Different viewpoints, thoughts, and experiences help to shape our own understandings. I have always found group study to be an enriching experience.

Joe+ and I, along with others in our parish, are committed to providing opportunities for continued faith formation for all ages and stages. Already, we have Education for Ministry, a weekly bible study on Wednesdays, and an Inquirer's class (Episcopal 101), launching soon. Our younger Elementary school students will begin studying parables in Sunday School utilizing Godly Play and Catechesis of the Good Shepherd materials, our older Elementary and Intermediate students will be launching into Rite 13, and our older students will be engaging in the Journey to Adulthood curriculum with various service opportunities.

There is something for everyone when it comes to our faith formation!

*Will you continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship,
in the breaking of the bread, and in the prayers?*

I will, with God's help.

As we enter into this New Year, I pray we discover the richness of scripture, the depth of Christ's love for us, and the gift of communal study. May the year that awaits enliven our minds and transform our hearts through worship, service, and FORMATION!

God's peace,
Amanda+

WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES - NEW YEAR'S EVE & DAY!

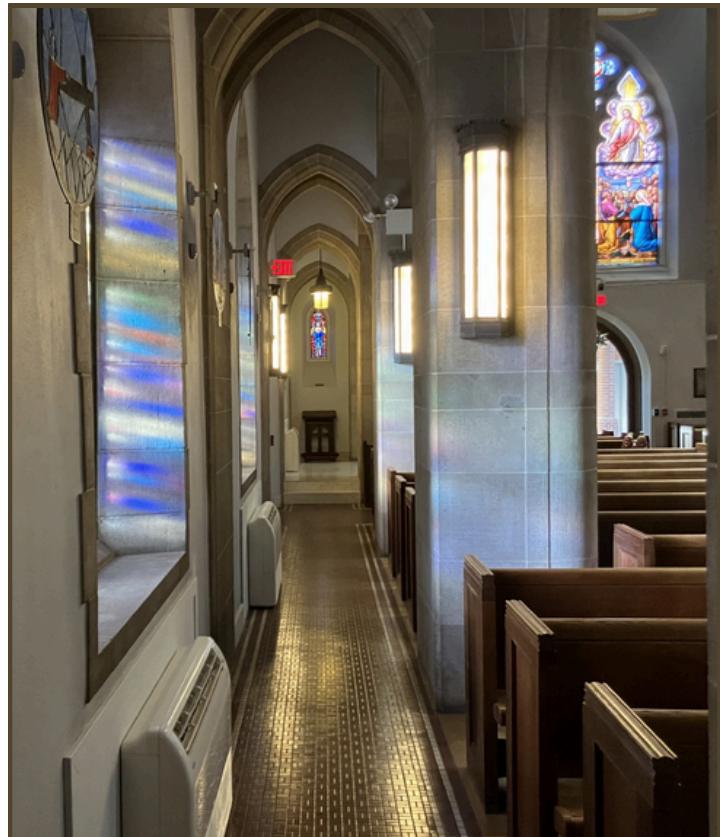


NEW YEAR'S EVE WORSHIP AT NOON

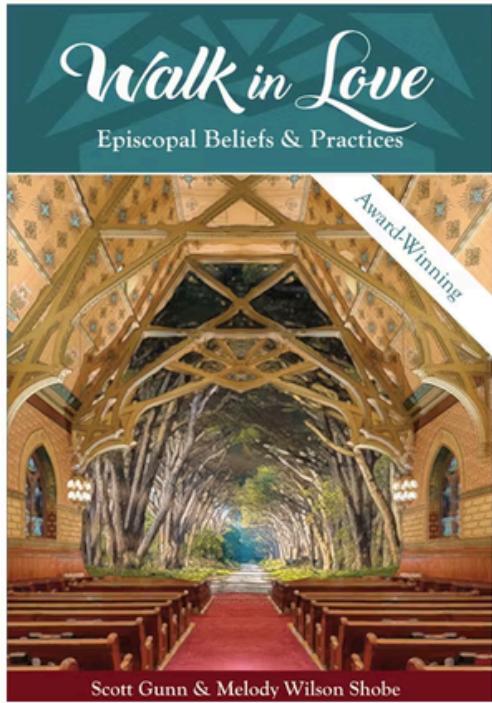
What better way to end the year than with worship! Our Wednesday healing service is an invitation to lay before God the people and situations in need of healing, our hopes for the coming year, and thanksgivings for what has been and what awaits! This service, using the Book of Common Prayer is grounded in healing prayers, anointing with holy oil, and the sharing of the sacrament. Please join us!

MORNING PRAYER NEW YEAR'S DAY - 9:00 AM!

Join us as we launch into a New Year with Morning Prayer led by Brother David Rutledge, CFC. The commemoration and readings will be for the Holy Name of Jesus as we use "Common Worship: Daily Prayer" from the Church of England. Morning Prayer is held in the Mary Chapel.



EPISCOPAL 101



Are you new to the Episcopal Church? Been here for a while, but would like to know more? Interested in becoming an official member through the sacrament of Confirmation or Reception when the bishop visits?

If you answered yes to any of the questions above, then this is the course for you! Join us as we explore the depth of our history, the sacredness of scripture and sacrament, and what we believe as Episcopalians. Using the book, "Walk in Love" as our guide, we will explore the richness of the Episcopal Tradition.

If you would like to participate, please email amanda@stjohns-lancaster.org.

BIBLE STUDY - WEDNESDAYS AT 2:00 PM

St. John's Bible Study will resume meeting Wednesday, January 7, at 2:00 pm in the Parish Hall. Going forward, date and time are negotiable.

We've been meeting now for about 18 months and all agree that studying the Bible collectively has been a transformative experience. We are willing to say to each other, "I've never read this", "this makes no sense to me" and "this outrages me."

The big news is that we have changed our name. We are no longer the "Men's" study group. Beginning January 7, we are open to all and indeed hope for new members. We will read the New Testament in chronological order by date written: Epistles, Gospels, Acts, Revelation. We use a commentary text by Judy Fentress-Williams, *Holy Imagination*. Amanda will reimburse you for the book.

We have reorganized our meeting plan so that each week's advance reading should take about an hour; the class length will also be an hour. Our motto is "Come even if you didn't get to the readings. We need you for the discussion and fellowship."

No prior experience reading the Bible is required or even expected. You will be among friends. We would love to have you participate. For more info, contact Wade Hinkle, 571-533-8151, wphinkle@gmail.com.

2026 DIOCESAN WOMEN'S RETREAT

In every season of life, God meets us: grounding us in times of change, renewing us with the promise of new life, and inviting us into the unforced rhythms of grace. This retreat offers space for women of the Diocese of Susquehanna to step away, rest, and be renewed in Christ's gentle presence.

Deadline to register is January 4, 2026. If interested, you may register on their website: [**Women's Retreat!**](#)

If you have questions about this retreat, please contact: Rev. Sarah Weedon, (sarahweedon13@gmail.com, or; text at 610-316-3582) or Rev. Stuart Scarborough, Deacon (sscarborough@diocesecpa.org, or; 717-585-0576.)



EMMA DI PACE IS A DEACON!

On Sunday, December 14, Emma Di Pace was ordained to the Transitional Deaconate surrounded by her St. John's family and friends! Emma will graduate this coming May from Virginia Theological Seminary and then will be launched into the world to begin her ordained ministry! Thanks to everyone who has supported Emma in her journey. Please continue to keep her in your prayers as she faces GOE's (Graduate Ordination Exams) this month!



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.

MUSINGS FROM THE ORGAN BENCH

We have come through the wonderful words and music of the Advent season, and the Christmas centered anthems and hymns and special music. Epiphany has its own special message in poetry in music that we are enriched by through reading and singing of great pieces such as "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star". Speaking of stars, there is a wonderful story that I would encourage you to find and read. It's about this story and the author that I focus my words this month.

While thinking about what to share for this month of January, I reached for my 1982 hymnal at home. On top of the hymnal a little book was lying. I don't remember putting it there, and it was a delightful surprise and one that I believe was not just an accidental "drop in my lap". Inspiration for artists of all genres often come in serendipitous ways, and I don't think they are just accidental. I tend to believe it is God's hand in our life coming to surprise us at opportune moments.

The little book I want you to search for and read is Henry Van Dyke's "The Story of the Other Wise Man." Van Dyke claimed in the preface to his book (130 years ago), that the story came to him... unsought and unknown. He claimed it was not his own doing to write it. Rather, it was a gift sent to him by the Giver. This is the same Henry Van Dyke who took the wonderful music of Beethoven and wrote his own poem that has become perhaps, one of the most familiar and loved hymns that Christians and non Christians can sing and find inspiration in together. That hymn "Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee (#376 The Hymnal 1982) has these words in verse two....."Thou Our Father, Christ our Brother: all who live in love are thine; teach us how to love each other, lift us to the joy divine".

In the Story of The Other Wise Man, a fourth Magi misses connecting with his fellow Magi on their journey to Bethlehem because he stopped to healing a dying man with his skills as a Magi. In the process he missed connecting with the person of Christ, from the very birth of the Holy One, to the death of Jesus on the Cross. He sought to gift Christ with a great treasure, as did the three other Wise Men. For 33 years, he kept traveling and just missing the Christ, but along the way he served where there was need, using the wealth that he planned to give to the Christ by using that treasure to ...heal a dying man with his skill, visiting the oppressed and the afflicted, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked....It was at the end of his life when he ended up in Jerusalem on the very day Christ was crucified that he felt as was dying that he failed in his mission to worship and physically show with a great treasure is love for the promised one. He had given all that he had planned to give to the King of Kings, to the many along the way that he helped. And as he died he heard a voice say "Inasmuch as thou has done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, thou hast done it unto me" (page 77, The Other Wise Man, 1895 Grosset & Dunlap, New York).

The kind of life that is exemplified in The Other Wise Manis our calling as it has been for many in our church....through our ministries in the use of our time, talents and treasures. We are blessed to be a blessing. As the words of a song I learned as a youth go....."Christ has no hands but our hands to do his work today". Blessings in this new year of work, worship, and relationship building.



2026 WINTER CLOTHING COLLECTION

We are collecting items of warmth for our neighbors on Sundays in January and February. Drop off items in the collection box in the atrium!

Needed (for all ages!):

new gloves
socks
hats



Items will be distributed at the Community Meals at First Reformed Church and at the St. John's Food Pantry.

Questions? Contact Br David Rutledge drutledge1225@gmail.com

MLK DAY EVENTS!



- 38th Annual MLK Breakfast: Monday, January 19, 2026, at Ville Courts, featuring the Essence of Humanity & Ruby Payne Cook awards and keynote by Frederick Joseph, benefiting Crispus Attucks Community Center.
- MLK Celebration Concert: Monday, January 19, 2026, 1 PM - 4 PM at Strasburg Rail Road, with performances by Music For Everyone Community Chorus, Wehye Vocal Studio, and T.H.E.M. The Collective.
- YWCA Lancaster Children's Celebration: Monday, January 19, 2026, 10 AM - 1 PM at YWCA Lancaster (110 N. Lime St.), with readings, STEM activities, music, snacks, and free books for kids.



EXPRESSING OUR JOY & APPRECIATION FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS & OUR CHURCH FAMILY!

A RECORD-BREAKING YEAR!

We have been able to serve a record-breaking 15,803 people in the first eleven months of 2025 compared to 9,071 in the whole of 2024 without having to turn a single visitor away because we could not provide food. We have formed a volunteer pool of over 63 people not only from our St. John's family but also from the community and other churches (and are still growing)! We have packed and distributed almost 2,900 bags or about 72,500 lbs of food.

To the amazing volunteers who pick up food, repack eggs, pack bags, serve during distribution, help with the new immigration clinic food pantry, and especially to the amazing leadership team making this food pantry succeed, thank you for your service!

To the generous St. John's church family who have donated financially, thank you for helping us exceed our fundraising goal!

For the church staff, Vestry and office volunteers, thank you for all your extra work to help the food pantry operate and to meet all the challenges of our growth!

God is at work in this ministry and we give thanks for this blessing!

RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS IN 2026

We will face new challenges and opportunities in the new year and need even more teams of helpers! There are many different jobs to help everyone become involved in this outreach ministry.

See our table display in the Parish Hall starting January 11, 2026, to see if one of those jobs is just calling your name!

FINANCIALS BY CHARLES WEAR, TREASURER

Operations:

- Contributions continue to fall below budget, but favorable staffing costs are helping us maintain a small surplus for both November and year to date.
- The budgeted draw of \$12.4k was taken from the restricted investment account in November in order to shore up our operating checking account balance. In addition, \$12.6k was transferred from the restricted rental account to reimburse the church account for the purchase of a new A/C unit and other maintenance for 209 Concord.
- ExtraGive online gifts to St. John's food pantry totaled \$17.5k from 98 donors. These funds should be received early next year. Additional offline gifts of \$6.9k brings the ExtraGive total to \$24.4k.
- Receipts from the Makers Market currently stand at \$7.1k. The food pantry is also the beneficiary of these funds.

Capital Projects:

- Final payment of \$45k for the auditorium windows was made to Saltzer in November, which required us to borrow \$30k against our line of credit at Orrstown bank. A \$37.7k surge in capital gifts late in the month should allow us to pay most of this loan back in short order.
- A grand total of \$965.2k has been received for the project through November with \$163.6k in pledges yet to be paid. The current estimate to complete the project (fund the sanctuary windows, pay off the Heistand loan and reimburse our endowment fund IOU) requires additional gifting of \$148.8k.

| | November | | Year to Date | | Annual Budget |
|-----------------------------|---------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| | Actual | Budget | Actual | Budget | |
| Income | | | | | |
| Contributions | \$22.8 | \$42.1 | \$404.0 | \$463.0 | \$505.1 |
| Investment Draws | \$12.4 | \$6.1 | \$42.4 | \$67.5 | \$73.6 |
| Other Income | \$8.8 | \$2.9 | \$40.9 | \$31.5 | \$34.4 |
| Jubilee | \$23.3 | \$3.0 | \$56.1 | \$33.1 | \$36.1 |
| Transferred Income | \$0.0 | (\$3.3) | \$0.0 | (\$36.7) | (\$40.0) |
| Total Income | \$67.3 | \$50.8 | \$543.4 | \$558.4 | \$609.2 |
| Expenses | | | | | |
| Clergy | \$18.2 | \$23.1 | \$192.0 | \$254.4 | \$277.5 |
| Lay Staff | \$10.2 | \$9.4 | \$103.0 | \$103.1 | \$112.4 |
| Vestry/Finance/Comm | \$3.0 | \$2.5 | \$24.8 | \$27.8 | \$30.3 |
| Utilities | \$3.7 | \$3.3 | \$53.3 | \$35.8 | \$39.0 |
| Building Repairs & Supplies | \$5.2 | \$3.0 | \$32.4 | \$33.1 | \$36.1 |
| Other Property | \$7.8 | \$3.1 | \$31.4 | \$33.6 | \$36.6 |
| Worship/Ed/Community | \$1.4 | \$1.9 | \$15.4 | \$20.4 | \$22.2 |
| Outreach | \$4.9 | \$5.3 | \$57.1 | \$58.8 | \$64.2 |
| Jubilee | \$2.3 | \$3.1 | \$25.0 | \$34.0 | \$37.1 |
| Transferred Expenses | \$0.0 | (\$3.9) | \$0.0 | (\$42.4) | (\$46.3) |
| Total Expenses | \$56.7 | \$50.8 | \$534.3 | \$558.4 | \$609.2 |
| Net Total | \$10.6 | (\$0.0) | \$9.1 | (\$0.0) | \$0.0 |

BIRTHDAYS

- 2 David Kilp
- 4 Stephen Sherman
- 5 Jeff Koller
- 5 Linda Shore Novosel
- 6 Paul West
- 8 John Knouse
- 10 Nick Di Pace
- 10 Bruce Tahsler
- 13 Mary Lou Brought
- 16 Ken Watts
- 20 Wayne McKee
- 21 Ricky Smith
- 22 Martha Lamb
- 23 Lyn Bailey
- 23 Emily Durand
- 25 Jean Gordon
- 25 Michael Patrone
- 26 James Williams
- 27 Chris Hasircoglu
- 29 Lily Mausolf
- 30 Annie Lattanzio-Hale
- 30 Marion Wear
- 31 Sophia Thompson

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 & Rhoda, Ted Griswold, Collin, Eileen Waite, Ann Marie, Karlah Gibbs, Kathy Dodge & family, Sandy Patrone, Marshall, Leslie Tahsler, Marianne, Elly, Steve; Heidi, Danny & Kenneth; Ginny, Norma, Ibrahim, Garth, Gladys Engle, Holly, Alex, Mary Ann Justice, Anthony Suliveras, Kate Benson

ANNIVERSARIES

- 26 Kendall & Tom Stonerook



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.