

Perfect Conditions and Perfect Partners Aren't Required

I had to pause when I read a little piece from Seth Godin the other day, as I am not typically one to gravitate toward brief words of wisdom. "Somewhere, there is the ideal soil for growing mangoes. Or the best possible wave for surfing. Or the most romantic sunset for a proposal. But it's not right here and it's not right now. Our success has a lot to do with how we dance with conditions that aren't quite perfect." My first reaction was to say out loud, "You'll never know 'success' until you start dancing!" I've known my fair share of people who say, "I think I'll...", "My friends say I ought to...", "I've been meaning to...", which are all thoughtful starter phrases, but not one of them is an "I'm committed to..." and "I am doing..." action phrase.

With all that's going on around the world, I get it. I understand hesitation, fatigue, and the inability to summon what it takes to take that first step. And still, I believe that God is asking us to dance even when conditions aren't quite perfect. I love that our God seems to enjoy dancing with all creation. God enjoys us and we're invited to enjoy God, too!

In the Gospel of Luke, we see that Mary's first Christmas was far from perfect. She was shamed by her own community for being an unmarried pregnant teenager. She just completed a very long journey, thanks to a nationwide census, while pregnant. She gave birth in a barn (more likely a cave) surrounded by animals. After all that, she had to be host to strange and unexpected visitors right after giving birth. These were not perfect conditions. This is how you treat your favored ones, God? How about cutting her some slack?

She could have thrown an adolescent fit, sought a place of isolation, or even screamed about her accommodations. Instead, when we read scripture, we see the character of Mary. Instead of focusing on the unknown, she focused on the one right in front of her, her brand-new baby boy, the Son of God. ***But Mary treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19)*** I see a woman connected to God's mission to reconcile all humanity and set them free. This led her to experience complete joy during a

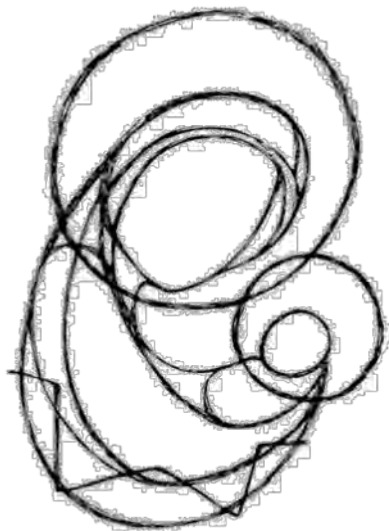
less than perfect time, under less than perfect conditions, surrounded by less than perfect people. We don't see fear. We don't hear bitterness. We read no words that would lead us to believe that there was anger. She willingly stepped into the gift of that miraculous moment. That's our Mary. Do you remember her words? ***"I am the Lord's servant. Let everything you've said happen to me." (Luke 1:38)***

We really don't have to know all the steps of the journey, only that the hardships, disappointments, and celebrations along the way are directed by God. They are all precious invitations to join with God and a bunch of imperfect people in loving all creation. Let's be even more intentional in our congregational community, in Boyertown and beyond at trusting God with all our heart, mind, and soul this season and all year long. May we too say with Mary - "Let everything you've said happen to me."

Merry Christmas!

Be blessed,

Pastor Bob



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Holden Evening Prayer

mid-week Advent service

Wednesdays
December 6, 13, 20
7:00 PM



DIRECTORS BIG BAND CHRISTMAS CONCERT

DEC 9 SAT
7PM FREE ADMISSION

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
45 N. READING AVENUE, BOYERTOWN



TAKE NOTE!

The Fourth Sunday of Advent
falls on Sunday, December 24 this year.

Locations for worship are as follows:

Sunday, December 24 - Advent 4 worship
9:30 am in the **Lower Level**

Sunday, December 24 - Christmas Eve worship
3:00pm & 8:00pm in the **Sanctuary**



blue christmas

a Christmas service for those
dealing with loss and grief

thursday,
december 21
7:00 pm



A new liturgical year begins on December 3 with the start of Advent. The church year is cyclical; seasons flow one to another. There are 6 seasons in the liturgical calendar: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. Each season has its own theme, color and symbol. The church year is a never-ending circle beginning with Advent.

Christmas

AT ST. JOHN'S

December 24 Christmas Eve
3:00 PM *worship*
8:00 PM *candlelight worship*

December 25 Christmas Day
10:30 AM *worship*
11:30 AM *Community Christmas Meal*

LET THERE BE *Peace* ON EARTH



CHRISTMAS DAY MEAL

December 25
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Join with others in our community
on Christmas for this free,
family-style meal, open to everyone!

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
45 N. Reading Avenue, Boyertown



ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, December 10
immediately following 9:30 am worship

In accordance with Article C.10.01.01 of our constitution, the Annual Congregation Meeting will be held on Sunday, December 10, 2023, immediately following 9:30 am worship. The agenda consists of the following items:

- accept the reports of the church
- present and approve the budget (Ministry Action Plan) for the next calendar year
- elect members to the Congregation Council

THE CHURCH OFFICE IS CLOSED

MONDAY, DECEMBER 25 - MONDAY, JANUARY 1

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?

COME TO THE TABLE NOT JUST ABOUT THE NUMBERS

This testimony comes from one of our volunteers:

"I spoke to someone who's dad is getting meals on a Saturday night from Come to the Table. She is so grateful that these meals are available for him since his health has deteriorated recently and his children do not live in the area to help as much as they would like. He is limited to getting out for groceries and he does receive Meals on Wheels during the week. He says the meals are delicious and he enjoys them and he usually gets two so he has another meal for later in the week."

Building intentional relationships with those in our community is what this ministry is all about!




'TIS THE SEASON

Help is needed with decorating for
Advent and Christmas.

Contact Mary Kay at heim82@aol.com or
610-367-6693 if you are available these dates:

Advent Decorating
December 2 at 9:00 am

Christmas Decorating
December 23 at 9:00 am



CAROLING TO HOMEBOUND

On December 14, the
Joyful Sisters of Service will
host our monthly worship service at
Chestnut Knoll and deliver Christmas cards and
cookies. Afterwards they will travel to
St. John's homebound members
to sing Christmas carols.

The service begins at 10:00am
and will last approximately one hour.

If you are interested in participating,
please contact Phyllis Kershner for more details
at pKershner@comcast.net
or 484-447-7811.



'BE STILL' A MOVING EXPERIENCE

On October 25, the worship team hosted Atsuko Hanson on the piano for an evening of worshipful piano music intended to calm the mind and soul. A member in attendance had this to say following the evening:

"I wanted to say Thank You to the Worship Team and everyone else who was involved in making the event last night possible. I have been to hundreds of concerts in my lifetime but I have never experienced an event like this. It didn't take very long for me to realize how the music and the atmosphere moved me into a state of unbelievable relaxation. I have not been that relaxed and at peace in a very long time. As I was listening to the music and enjoying the stillness, I was going through all of the things I am so thankful for in my life. You, Pastor Bob, and St. John's are a very big part of what I am thankful for. I was also very thankful that my husband was with me, not only for him to experience the event, but also because he was driving home...I was so relaxed! As we were walking out, he shared the very same feelings I had, but we were able to get home safely!

So, THANK YOU to everyone! We really and truly appreciate what you do for all of us!"

CHRISTMAS DAY MEAL

December 25
11:30 am - 1:00 pm

Volunteers needed -
Sign up on our website!

Monetary donations for the purchase
of food and supplies is appreciated.
Checks noting "Christmas day meal"
can be mailed to the office.

**scan to
volunteer!**



REGARDING CONTRIBUTIONS

The IRS provides clear guidelines with regard to the date of posting contributions, which we follow carefully. All contributions received or postmarked by December 31 will be included in that year's contribution statement. If the contribution is received or postmarked after December 31, it will be included in the contribution statement of the year in which it is received/postmarked, regardless of the date on the check.

Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Monday, December 4 for January issue

Monday, January 8 for February issue

Monday, February 12 for March issue



WHAT'S GOD UP TO IN PRESCHOOL?

By: Bethany Calderwood, Preschool Teacher

On Sunday, October 22, the preschool staff were officially installed as a ministry team of St. John's church. We affirmed our commitment to minister to families and students, sharing the love of God and the practical academic and life skills of a comprehensive preschool curriculum.

Our Bible curriculum this year takes us on a chronological journey through highlights of the Old and New Testament. So far, we've explored these stories:

Creation: God made everything, and we are a part of God's good creation.

Noah: Noah was a man who followed God. God told Noah to build a boat because a flood was coming. God took care of Noah, Noah's family, and two of every kind of

animal. After the flood, God promised that there would never again be a worldwide flood. From Noah, we learn that God keeps his promises and cares for his people.

Abraham and Sarah: God told Abraham and Sarah to leave home and move far away. God also told Abraham that his family would be as numerous as the stars. The problem was that for many years, Abraham and Sarah had no children. Finally, God kept his promise and gave Abraham and Sarah a son named Isaac. From Abraham we learn that God keeps his promises and that we are part of Abraham's larger family.

Jacob and Esau: Isaac had twin sons, Jacob and Esau, who were very different from each other. Jacob and Esau had a conflict over a blessing from their father Isaac. After many years they made peace. From Jacob and Esau we learn that God made all of us different. We learn to address conflict and try to make peace. We also learn that God blesses us.

Joseph: Joseph had 11 brothers. These brothers were so jealous of Joseph that they arranged for him to go to Egypt as a slave. God took care of Joseph in Egypt, where he eventually took charge of a project to save food for a time of famine. When Joseph's brothers came to Egypt looking for food, they found Joseph. They apologized, and Joseph forgave them. From Joseph we learn two important and difficult phrases: I'm sorry and I forgive you.

It's been a busy month in the preschool! In addition to the Bible lessons, we study a letter of the alphabet each week. So far, we've done L, F, E, and H. Why don't the letters go in alphabetical order? Our academic curriculum introduces letters based on the pencil strokes used to form each uppercase letter, so we are teaching children to form and write the letters as well as identify the letters and sounds. This approach gives attention to children's fine motor development as well as their literacy needs.

In October, classes engaged in activities surrounding the theme of Harvest. We explored types of apples, dissected pumpkins, and more. We welcomed families into the school for a Halloween party and parade, sharing snacks, crafts, stories, and games. Later we took a trick-or-treating expedition to Walnut Woods where we enjoyed interactions with residents and staff.

Speaking as part of the preschool staff, we are thankful to be a part of this ministry and appreciate the welcome and support of the church family. Thank you!



THE REASON FOR THE SEASON?

By: Dwight Fuqua (Sparta, TN); *bulletindigest.com*

It's December! For many, especially children, "It's The Most Wonderful Time of the Year." It is also the time of the year when we hear the slogan, "Jesus is the reason for the season." How do you feel about that slogan?

I take issue! Jesus is not "the reason for the season." For devoted Christians, Jesus is "the reason for all of life" — our lives! Read Colossians 3:1-4! Paul reminds us that Christ is "our life." We "died" and "were raised with Christ," an allusion to our repentance and baptism (2:11-12). We "seek those things which are above" and our minds are set "on things above." Our lives are "hidden with Christ in God." A "season" may be long enough for those of a secular mindset, for those who give a little thought to Jesus this time of the year. But to God's faithful a "lifetime" is not long enough to serve the Lord we love! He is not "the reason for our season" — He is "the reason for our surrender."

We rejoice every day that God sent His Son into the world to save us — the story of His birth being a part of that grander scheme. Many are enamored with the story of Jesus' birth because a babe in a manger makes no demand upon their lives. They can have God without obligation. They can talk about His birth, sing a carol or two and then walk away! The emphasis of the gospel, however, is on the Lordship of Christ, not the birth of Christ. In the first sermon to the Jews Peter declared that Jesus is "both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36). In the first sermon to the Gentiles he declared that Jesus is "Lord of all" (Acts 10:36). His birth is only the beginning of the story! Surrendering to Him as Lord is the story! Wise men still seek Him! Wise men surrender to Him as Lord!



SALUTE TO OUR VETERANS

A Salute to Our Veterans was held on Thursday, November 9.

St. John's was honored to host the Rotary Club of Boyertown, Boyertown Middle School Show Choir, Boyertown High School NJROTC, and keynote speaker, Lt. Colonel (R) Christopher Spohn, U.S. Army.

Thank you to the 12 St. John's volunteers who helped make this night a success!



COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING MEAL



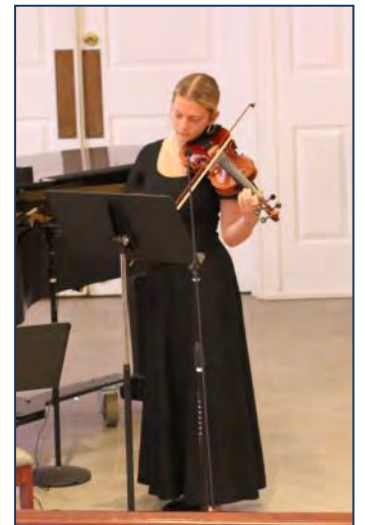
On Sunday, November 19, St. John's welcomed the Boyertown High School Show Choir as musical guests for worship. After a meaningful service with a message on the power of our words, and the musical gifts of our community's young people, guests moved to the Lower Level for some more singing and then on to Fellowship Hall for a Thanksgiving meal with all the trimmings.

It is no small feat to host such an event, and the worship team would like to thank the 46 volunteers who helped to plan and execute the day's festivities. From set-up to tear down, baking, serving, mingling, and cleaning - THANK YOU!



WEATHER RELATED CLOSINGS

Our 'Inclement Weather' policy at St. John's states that when the Boyertown Area School District is closed, we follow their lead and cancel all meetings and events. For weather related closings, check Channel 69 News or www.wfmz.com.



WORSHIP MINISTRY

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day	Acolyte	Altar Assistant	Altar Guild	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
12/3/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 1	Tatum Friz	Amanda Ehst, Tom Engle	Sue Hill, Donna Little	Phyllis Kershner	Sarah Eidle	Sue Grofe	Ashley Gheer	Mike Gilbert, Jerry Krause, Ed Schaeffer, Scott Scheiry	Camryn Friz
12/6/2023	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Holden Evening Prayer	Alina Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Shannon Omlor	NA	Brianna Rohrbach	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Jason Eidle
12/10/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 2	Philip Derr	Bev & Joe Blake	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	Sarah Eidle	Olivia Alderfer	Susan & Andy Varzally	Melissa Eidle	Darin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Susan & Andy Varzally	Justin Jones
12/13/2023	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Holden Evening Prayer	Camryn Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Jason Friz	NA	Myles Omlor	Sandy & Terry Wade	Abbe Grofe
12/17/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 3	Tatum Friz	Michele & Dave Eidle	Mary Kay Heimbach, Lauri Stofflet	Missy Endy	Sarah Eidle	Karen Pollock	Ashley Gheer	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Justin Jones
12/20/2023	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Holden Evening Prayer	Alina Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Shannon Omlor	NA	Brianna Rohrbach	Bev & Joe Blake	Camryn Friz
12/21/2023	Thursday	7:00 PM	Blue Christmas	Camryn Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Olivia Alderfer	Bonnie Moatz	Melissa Eidle	Ros & Brian Moatz	Jason Eidle
12/24/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Advent 4	Philip Derr	NA	Mary Kay Heimbach	Krista Fretz	NA	Ros Moatz	Brianna Rohrbach	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Abbe Grofe
12/24/2023	Sunday	3:00 PM	Christmas Eve	Delaney Hersperger	Amanda Ehst, Becky Scheiry	Melissa Eidle, Mary Kay Heimbach	Jean Machamer	Sarah Eidle	Martha Bentley	Ashley Gheer	Martha Bentley, Joanne Dykie, Barbara Houpp, Nathan Wanish	Justin Jones
12/24/2023	Sunday	8:00 PM	Christmas Eve	Tatum Friz	Tom Engle, Jen Friz	Joanne Dykie, Sue Hill	Jen Friz	Shannon Omlor	Lauren Frey	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake, Ben Rohrbach, Bill Rohrbach	Camryn Friz
12/25/2023	Monday	10:30 AM	Christmas Day	Philip Derr	Jen & Jason Friz	Joanne Dykie, Sue Hill	Terry Wade	Jason Friz	Sandy & Terry Wade	Melissa Eidle	Sandy & Terry Wade	Jason Eidle
12/31/2023	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lessons & Carols	Delaney Hersperger	Jen Friz, Becky Scheiry	TBD	TBD	Olivia Alderfer	Tom Engle	Brianna Rohrbach	Ros & Brian Moatz, Carol Sematis, Terry Wadsworth	Abbe Grofe
1/7/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Baptism of Our Lord	Philip Derr	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer	Bonnie Moatz, Mary Kay Heimbach	Charles Haddad	Jason Friz	Ros Moatz	Ashley Gheer	Gerry Krause, Darin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Scott Scheiry	Nathan Wanish
1/14/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Delaney Hersperger	Melissa Eidle, Lauren Frey	Paula Kriebel, Jean Machamer	Dave Babb	Sarah Eidle	Friz Family	Brianna Rohrbach	Charles Haddad, Phil Haddad, Andy & Susan Varzally	Scott Scheiry
1/21/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Philip Derr	Bev & Joe Blake	Shirley Hartman	Lori Carnes	Shannon Omlor	Nathan Wanish	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake, Mike Gilbert, Ed Schaeffer	Justin Jones
1/28/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Delaney Hersperger	George Hill, Bonnie Moatz	Dorothy and Walter Breitkreutz	Mary Kay Heimbach	Olivia Alderfer	Karen Pollock	Melissa Eidle	Martha Bentley, Joanne Dykie, Barbara Houpp, Nathan Wanish	Camryn Friz

DECEMBER 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 4:00p Historical Holiday Tour 4:00p Festival of Trees	2 9:00a Advent Decorating 10:00a Festival of Trees 4:30p Come to the Table
3 Advent 1 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	4 5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:00p Joint Parking Lot Committee	5	6 6:30p Worship Team 7:00p Midweek Advent Service	7 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	8 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	9 4:30p Come to the Table 7:00p Directors Big Band Christmas Concert
10 Advent 2 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Annual Congregation Budget Meeting 5:00p Shop with a Cop	11 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club of Boyertown	12	13 7:00p Midweek Advent Service	14 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service & Christmas Caroling 8:00p Worship Broadcast	15 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	16 4:30p Come to the Table
17 Advent 3 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a Christmas Meal Volunteer Walk-Thru 2:00p Facility Rental	18 6:30p Girl Scouts Holiday Party	19 6:30p Finance Team	20 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen 7:00p Midweek Advent Service	21 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 7:00p Blue Christmas Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	22 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	23 9:00a Christmas Decorating 4:30p Come to the Table
24 Advent 4 Christmas Eve 9:30a Worship Celebration (in Lower Level) 3:00p Worship Celebration 8:00p Worship Celebration 'Candlelight'	25 Christmas Day Office Closed Preschool Closed 10:30a Worship Celebration 11:30a Christmas Day Meal	26 Office Closed Preschool Closed	27 Office Closed Preschool Closed	28 Office Closed Preschool Closed 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	29 Office Closed Preschool Closed 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	30 4:30p Come to the Table
31 9:30a Worship Celebration 'Lessons and Carols'						

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1 Terry Wade	2 Joan Kessler
3	4	5 Nathan Vogt	6	7	8	9
10 Linda Auman	11	12	13	14 Evelyn Heimbach Sherry Mendez	15 Connie Babb Noelle Erb Nathan Wanish Gloria Weller	16 Shane Johnson
17 Sharon Leister	18 Ros Moatz	19 Becky Scheiry	20	21 Chris Hoagey	22 Timothy Krause Susan Varzally	23 Darin Moyer
24 Corrie Shaner	25 Nick Frey	26 Jen Friz	27 Vicki Davidheiser	28 Martha Bentley	29 Cody Rhoads	30 Elaine Smith
31 Virginia Harze Heather Murray Jane Spade						

Happy Birthday



EAGLE MESSENGER

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH | 45 North Reading Avenue | Boyertown, PA 19512
610-369-1024 | 610-369-1463 Fax | www.stjohnsboyertown.org

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As children of God and disciples of Christ seeking peace and justice in the world, we welcome, affirm, and include all people into the fullness of God's love. We celebrate and lift up people of all races, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, physical or mental abilities, economic statuses, political affiliation, appearances, family status, and citizenship as equally loved and valued in the eyes of God and in this place. All are invited to join this community as we worship God, grow in faith, and strive to love and serve one another.

All, without exception, are welcome in this place.

Return Service Request - Dated Material
Mailed November 21, 2023

WORSHIP

SUNDAY 9:30 AM

IN-PERSON & LIVESTREAM ON YOUTUBE

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am - 12:00 pm

Pastor Bob Machamer

Kay Christman, Finance Team

Sue Grofe, Finance Team

Donnie Heimbach, Property

Bonnie Moatz, Finance Team

Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator

Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer

Becky Scheiry, Parish Administrator

Renae Walther, Director of Preschool Ministry

bmachamer@stjohnsboyertown.org

financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org

financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org

financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org

somlor@stjohnsboyertown.org

treasurer@stjohnsboyertown.org

parishadmin@stjohnsboyertown.org

preschool@stjohnsboyertown.org



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.