EAGLE MESSENGER

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FEBRUARY 2024

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP

SACRIFICIAL SERVICE

RADICAL GENEROSITY

Dear Siblings in Christ,

I greet you in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

On Wednesday, January 17 our staff, Congregation Council, and other team leaders gathered for a briefing on Mission Alignment for 2024 at St. John's. An outcome of that gathering was the suggestion that an assessment tool could be shared with the whole congregation to enhance the alignment of all who are committed to the future and positive forward movement of St. John's. To that end what follows is a resource available on the ELCA website and a tool we've used for years to assist the development and growth of our leadership team and members of this ministry. Special note: This resource is located under the heading Women of the ELCA; however, it is clearly adaptable to all people.

"Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey of living out and spreading the good news of Jesus Christ so that others may believe. Jesus invited the disciples, and many others along the way, to embark on a faith journey as they learned about his ministry. A lifelong journey means lifelong learning. The more we discover about who we are and whose we are, the more we can appreciate the journey and the ministry to which we have been called. Discovering who we are includes discovering our spiritual gifts."

"Each one is given gifts by the Holy Spirit, gifts that shape who we are and how we operate in the body of Christ. Discovering or recovering your spiritual gifts and exploring how you can better use them is part of growing in faith and life and discipleship. These gifts are part of your DNA. Spiritual gifts are as unique to you as your fingerprints and dental records."

"Gifts for You: Opening your Spiritual Gifts"

(https://www.womenoftheelca.org/filebin/pdf/resources/SpiritualGifts.pdf)

"Using this resource and 'assessment tool' will assist disciples in increasing their capacity for ministry by embracing the spiritual gifts they have been given and then discerning God's plan as to how those gifts will be used in the body of Christ. Our DNA controls our physical make-up, and the Holy Spirit is the power that allows us to use our physical make-up to actualize the spiritual gifts with which we have been blessed. Spiritual gifts are biblical. They are given to everyone, essential to discipleship, and exciting to discover and reveal."

"This resource is designed to support participants in their calling to be disciples by enabling them to understand God's purpose for spiritual gifts, to discover or recover their spiritual gifts, and to see how their gifts are needed in God's mission. This resource can be used by everyone. Every person should begin this learning experience from wherever they are on their faith journey."

Some who will complete this assessment may be hearing about spiritual gifts for the first time, while others may be familiar with spiritual gifts but hesitant to embrace the language and the power of using them actively.

"Remember to not use the terms spiritual gifts and talents interchangeably; they are not synonyms. Allow the Holy Spirit room to work. Be creative when engaging the material. Remember to pray. Remember to offer prayers of thanksgiving to God for providing new insights and other blessings that were experienced. Read the assigned biblical texts before looking for the focus verses. Be honest with your responses."

Next Steps:

When you've completed your homework assignment (you've got a month) sign up for one of our Fireside Chat sessions to join others in discussing what you've discovered, learned, or had affirmed about your spiritual gifts. Dates for these sessions are scheduled for Sunday, March 3 and 10 following worship (you only need to attend one session).

Be blessed! Pastor Bob

WHAT'S INSIDE?							
Lent Worship News	What Are People Saying?	Preschool News	Experiences from Cuernavaca Mexico				
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WORSHIP NEWS

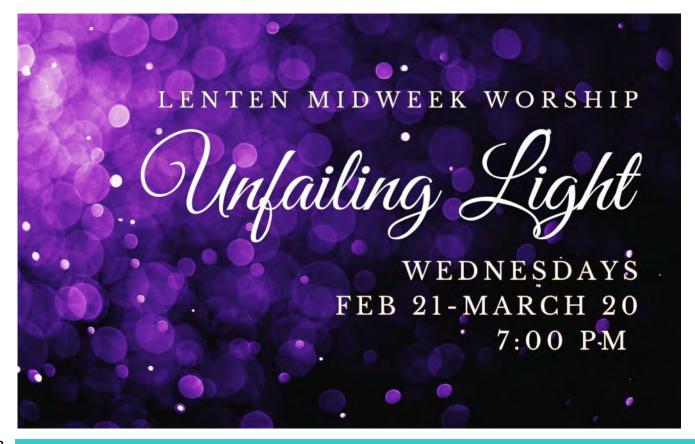
Sunday, February 11 @ 9:30 am Transfiguration of Our Lord

The Sundays after Epiphany began with Jesus' baptism and end with three disciples' vision of his transfiguration. In Mark's story of Jesus' baptism, apparently only Jesus sees the Spirit descending and hears the words from heaven. But now Jesus' three closest friends hear the same words naming him God's Beloved. As believers, Paul writes, we are enabled to see the God-light in Jesus' face, because the same God who created light in the first place has shone in our hearts to give us that vision. The light of God's glory in Jesus has enlightened us through baptism and shines in us also for others to see.

Wednesday, February 14 @ 7:00 pm Ash Wednesday

On Ash Wednesday we begin our forty-day journey toward Easter with a day of fasting and repentance. Marking our foreheads with dust, we acknowledge that we die and return to the earth. At the same time, the dust traces the life-giving cross indelibly marked on our foreheads at baptism. While we journey through Lent to return to God, we have already been reconciled to God through Christ. We humbly pray for God to make our hearts clean while we rejoice that "now is the day of salvation." Returning to our baptismal call, we more intentionally bear the fruits of mercy and justice in the world. *sundaysandseasons.com*





MINING THE PSALMS

By: Cathy Krause

When we read the Psalms, often the psalm is attributed to someone, e.g., David or Solomon. But, there are others whose names are mentioned. They are not household names. And, it may read "Psalm" in the heading and then below it is given another name. Confusing?...maybe not. Keep reading!

To begin, the definition of Psalm is a poem that is intended to be sung. In *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, two of the settings include the statement: "The psalm for the day is sung." With this in mind, the following may make more sense.

One of the subheadings is a Maskil. This is a literary or musical term, relating to the purpose of specific psalms or how they are to be performed. Another subheading term is Mikhtam. This is of uncertain meaning. It perhaps is a technical term, or, perhaps it means golden or precious. A third common subheading for a psalm is song of ascents. These psalms refer to steps that go up, as in a pilgrimage, like going up to Jerusalem. They are songs of encouragement.

Other psalm writers, besides David and Solomon, are the sons of Korah. These are ancestors of a group of sacred musicians of the tribe of Levi. Likewise, Asaph is a descendant of Gershon. (Gershon was a son of Levi.) Asaph was nominated by the chief Levite as the lead singer. Another appointee was Heman the Ezrahite. He was appointed by King David as one of the leaders of temple singing. Ethan the Ezrahite was a wise man – not as wise as Solomon – but wise nonetheless. He was one of three masters of temple music.

As you read the Psalm for each Sunday, look for these names and subheadings. It may provide clues as to how you are to interpret the passage. Remember, this Scripture was written long before we were born and in another language.

Resources Consulted:

"Ethan." 2004-2024. 3 Jan 2024. www.biblehub.com/topical/e/ethan.htm

"Michtam." 2004-2024. 3 Jan 2024. www.biblehub.com/topical/m/michtam

Leake, Mike. "Finding Encouragement for Our Journey in the Psalms of Ascent 25 May 2023. 3 Jan 2024. www.biblestudytools/ bible-studies/topical-studies/finding-encouragement-for-our-journey-in-the-psalms-of-ascent.

The New Bible Dictionary. Grand Rapids: Wm B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. 1974. 94,703, 519, and 1053.

"What is a maskil in the Book of Psalms?" n.d. 3 Jan 2024. www.gotquestions.org/maskil.html

"Who Was Melchizedek? His Story and Importance to Jesus." 2 Aug 2020. 7 Sept. 2023. www.biblestudytools.com/bible-study/ topical-studies/how-to-find-jesus-in-the-story-of-melchizedek.html



Palm Sunday Sunday, March 24 @ 9:30 am

Maundy Thursday Thursday, March 28 @ 7:00 pm

Good Friday Friday, March 29 @ 7:00 pm

Easter Day

Sunday, March 31 @ 9:30 am

WHAT ARE PEOPLE SAYING?

comments found on St. John's social media

"St. John's is an all inclusive church. Do not be afraid to attend because of the fear of being judged."

"I have never felt so welcomed at this place. This is a safe place who love all people! For someone who use to struggle who I truly was. I found a place where I can be myself. I will not be judged or anyone!"

"They do an awesome job of service to the community."

Regarding the Christmas Day Meal:

"I think this is the true Spirit of Christmas expressed today and every Saturday. Let this church be a light on the hill, an example of what churches with the love of Christ to be in every community. We support serving our local community. Pastor Bob, we will be signing up to support your outreach to Boyertown."

> Subscribe to us on Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube!





New leadership elected - thank you for serving!

2024 Congregation Council

Jen Friz, President Jen Schlegel, Vice-President Melanie Roth, Secretary Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer Joe Blake Tom Engle Lauren Frey Ashley Gheer John Gheer George Hill



WHAT'S GOD UP TO IN PRESCHOOL?

By: Melissa Geary, Preschool Assistant Teacher

The start of a new year brings space for reflection, contemplation, and a sense of appreciation for all that occurred in 2023. It is with this mindset that we are able to move forward, learn, and grow from the past year.

December brought us the celebration of Christmas and Jesus' birth, in which we held a "Happy Birthday Jesus" themed party for the students. This interactive event called for the integration of our 2's/3's play group with the 3's and 4's classes. During this event, the children watched *The Star* (2017). The movie told the story of a few young animals (a donkey, a dove, a sheep, camels, and a few eccentric stable animals) on a journey to follow the bright star they see in the night sky. Little did they know, they

were on an adventure that led them to the greatest miracle ever experienced – the first Christmas.

Additionally, the children were each gifted a copy of *God Gave Us Christmas* by Lisa Tawn Bergren from their respective teachers. This book aims to help young children discover and celebrate the true meaning of Christmas and learn just how much God loves them!

The togetherness experienced during Christmas, whether it be with families or community was fully extended into our preschool ministry. As we are rooted in developing intentional relationships, we look forward to continuing joining children of different ages and abilities within the walls of our church.

In February, we look forward to opening our "Little Gym" in the newly modified basement. Modifications included numerous safety enhancements to the area, a telephone line, and an AED. Beyond the well-known benefits of exercise and fitness, movement is a par-

ticularly crucial and foundational aspect of childhood development. We are excited to open a new, safe space where students can move freely and challenge their motor skills.

On behalf of the preschool staff, it is a constant joy to be part of this team and ministry. We are continually growing, adjusting, and evolving in togetherness. With eyes to see and ears to hear, we step into a new year continuing to share God's love with the students and families of St. John's ministry to families with children of preschool age.

Happy Birthday, Jesus party!





Learning about the nativity.

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 <u>www.wfmz.com.</u>



CUERNAVACA AND MISSION ALIGNMENT

By: Jen Schlegel

'The good Lord willing and the creek don't rise.' This expression has been floating around my head since I read Pastor Bob's January Eagle Messenger article encouraging us to say "the great yes" to God's calling and his recently reminding us that it's not enough for each of us to say "I will" – we have to discern "if the Lord wills." If the Lord wills and there are no impending floods or other disasters, let the good work continue! So the good Lord willing and the creek don't rise, I'll be engaging in better spiritual practices this year!



Working alongside migrant camp workers.

Back to discerning what the good Lord wills. I confess to finding discernment difficult. That's why I'm thankful for the ways Pastor Bob has taught us to orient ourselves to where God is smiling and where God is crying (sometimes I wonder about those spaces where God doesn't seem to be doing either). In the St. John's/Wellspring Karitas site visits in Mexico, it's readily apparent where God is smiling and crying. Certainly God is crying over adult men working 10-12 hours a day cutting sugar cane with a machete in order to harvest one ton of cane – all for about \$7 US. No wonder men bring family members into the field to cut one ton of cane faster. We witnessed men, women, and children cutting cane in the fields. There is an alternative for children, and that's the migrant camp school. By supporting the school at the migrant camp, St. John's contributes to enticing the children to remain in school rather than work in the fields. This past year some of our contributions led to the establishment of a music program at the migrant school. As the school administrators put it, one fewer child in the cane fields now is one fewer migrant cane worker in the future.

And now back to the metaphorical creek. In our case, the creek was literally rising as the group left for Cuernavaca. While there was minor flooding back home, it could have been so much worse. And there are water disasters all over the world: too much water, too little water, too dirty water – too little access to clean water is absolutely something God cries over and is a significant issue at multiple sites we visited in Mexico. We spent



time at a community school supported by Wellspring Karitas and examined the water capture and filtration system that was recently installed thanks to Rotary International. At a cost of approximately 40k, students and staff at this school have access to clean water for drinking, for cooking, and for taking home to their families. Clean water reduces illness. Reduced illness means more days in school. More days in school means better performance. Better performance means increased likelihood of retention and completion of high school. Completion of high school means increased opportunities for employment and college education.

Of course, now I'm imaging what life would be like at the migrant camp if they, too, had a water capture and filtration unit at their school. How would that benefit the schoolchildren? How would that benefit the workers and their families? How might that be an example of loving God and loving people?

I am assured that St. John's contributions to Wellspring Karitas have absolutely made substantive positive changes in the lives of many people through various programs. Yes, God is crying, and yes, God is smiling. The money is being spent purposefully, contributing to building intentional relationships and activating these relationships to address and fulfill the needs of specific communities. Wow, is God at work!

I'd like to think that everything in our Ministry Action Plan for 2024 and beyond could generate such amazing and life changing results. I believe our St. John's community has never been more clear about our purpose, the behaviors we engage in as we pursue our purpose, and the strategic processes we execute to achieve our purpose. I wonder how we can help the organizations we support – near and far – to be equally clear about their purposes, behaviors, and processes, so that all investments yield transformative results like those we see in Mexico - the good Lord willing and the creek don't rise.



Spending time with a family in their home in the migrant community La Estacion.



Time at ALEM, learning from staff how to repair wheelchairs and what it's like to be mobile in a wheelchair.



Café Resiliente, an inclusive café hiring those with special needs, was able to increase staff and move into a larger, better space thanks to funding from St. John's.



Preparing to call in 'live from Mexico' for worship on Sunday morning.





Learning about living conditions in the migrant camp.





VALENTINE TREE

Valentine hearts with addresses of our homebound members will be available on the tree in the back of the sanctuary Sunday, January 28 and Sunday, February 4. Please take a heart off the tree and mail a note of cheer to a homebound member! Our preschool students will also be making and sending valentines to homebound members. Take a heart, send a card and let those not able to be with us know they are thought of and prayed for.

2023 FINANCIAL REPORT SUMMARY

You're invited to attend a year-end 2023 Financial Report Summary given by members of our finance team:

Sunday, February 25

immediately following worship meet in the Sanctuary



GUESTS are always welcome to the Table!

MEMBERS (two types) Voting & Non-voting

The only way you can ever be removed from the membership roll

- at St. John's, or any ELCA congregation:
 - You request a transfer
 - You ask to be removed
 - You depart this life

Voting members must make a record of having:

- Filled out a communion card and received the Lord's Supper ONE time per year
- Contributed ONE time per year, making sure your name is included



BREAD, BOWL AND BIBLE

March 3 & 10 | 3:00 - 6:00 pm Trinity Lutheran Church 1749 S. Main Street Bechtelsville

Eagle Messenger Article Deadlines

Monday, February 12 for March issue Monday, March 11 for April issue Monday, April 8 for May issue

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day	Acolyte	Altar Assistant	Altar Guild	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
2/4/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Alina Friz	Michele & Dave Eidle	Jodi Dykie, Mary Kay Heimbach	Jay Herbert	Jason Friz	Jean Machamer	Ashley Gheer	Ros & Brian Moatz, Carol Sematis, Terry Wadsworth	Jason Eidle
2/11/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Transfiguration of our Lord	Camryn Friz	Mel Roth, Becky Scheiry	Melissa Eidle, Bonnie Moatz	Sue & George Hill	Sarah Eidle	Sue Grofe	Brianna Rohrbach	Lauren Frey, Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Bill Rohrbach	Abbe Grofe
2/14/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday	Philip Derr	TBD	Sue & George Hill	Phyllis Kershner	Shannon Omlor	Michele Eidle	Melissa Eidle	Sandy & Terry Wade	Scott Scheiry
2/18/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 1	Delaney Hersperger	Tom Engle, Jen Schlegel	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	Jill Koch	Olivia Alderfer	Sarah Eidle	Myles Omlor	Mike Gilbert, Gerry Krause, Ed Schaeffer, Scott Scheiry	Nathan Wanish
2/21/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service	Tatum Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Jason Friz	NA	Ashley Gheer	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Justin Jones
2/25/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 2	Alina Friz	Amanda Ehst, Jen Friz	Shirley Hartman, Donna Little	Dave Long	Sarah Eidle	Mel Roth	Brianna Rohrbach	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Camryn Friz
2/28/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service	Camryn Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Shannon Omlor	NA	Myles Omlor	Bev & Joe Blake	Jason Eidle
3/3/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 3	Delaney Hersperger	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer	Dorothy & Walter Breitkreutz	Amy Moyer	Olivia Alderfer	Tom Engle	Melissa Eidle	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Phil Haddad, Nathan Wanish	Abbe Grofe
3/6/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service	Philip Derr	NA	NA	TBD	Jason Friz	NA	Ashley Gheer	Ros & Brian Moatz	Nathan Wanish
3/10/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 4	Tatum Friz	Melissa Eidle, Lauren Frey	Paula Kriebel, Jean Machamer	Karen Pollock	Sarah Eidle	Lauren Frey	Brianna Rohrbach	Martha Bentley, Joanne Dykie, Barbara Houp, Girl Scouts	Scott Scheiry
3/13/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service	Alina Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Shannon Omlor	NA	Melissa Eidle	Sandy & Terry Wade	Justin Jones
3/17/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 5	Philip Derr	Bev & Joe Blake	Jodi Dykie, Bonnie Moatz	Mel Roth	Olivia Alderfer	Andy & Susan Varzally	Myles Omlor	Phil Haddad, Darin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Nathan Wanish	Camryn Friz
3/20/2024	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Midweek Lenten Service	Camryn Friz	NA	NA	TBD	Jason Friz	NA	Ashley Gheer	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach	Jason Eidle
3/24/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Passion/Palm Sunday	Delaney Hersperger	George Hill, Bonnie Moatz	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	TBD	Sarah Eidle	Martha Bentley	Brianna Rohrbach	Carol Sematis, Susan & Andy Varzally, Terry Wadsworth	Abbe Grofe
3/28/2024	Thursday	7:00 PM	Maundy Thursday	Philip Derr	TBD	Mary Kay Heimbach	Becky Scheiry	Shannon Omlor	Ros Moatz	Myles Omlor	Ros & Brian Moatz	Nathan Wanish
3/29/2024	Friday	7:00 PM	Good Friday	Alina Friz	NA	NA	Jen Schlegel	Jason Friz	Bonnie Moatz	Melissa Eidle	Bev & Joe Blake	Scott Scheiry
3/31/2024	Sunday	9:30 AM	Easter Day	Camryn Friz	Shannon Omlor, Becky Scheiry	Jodi Dykie, Mary Kay Heimbach	Jean Machamer	Olivia Alderfer	Friz Family	Ashley Gheer	Lauren Frey, Justin Jones, Ben Rohrbach, Bill Rohrbach	Justin Jones

FEBRUARY 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Operation 143 Delivery 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	2 Men's Retreat 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	3 Men's Retreat 4:30p Come to the Table
4 Men's Retreat Valentine Tree 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	5 6:30p Girl Scouts	6 Bishop's Conference	7 Bishop's Conference Oley Cluster 6:30p Worship Team	8 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	9 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	10 4:30p Come to the Table
11 Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a Coffee & Conversation	12 9:00a Sweetheart Breakfast 5:00p Newsletter Submission 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club	13 9:00a Sweetheart Breakfast	14 Ash Wednesday 7:00p Worship Celebration	15 Operation 143 Delivery 9:30a Community Leaders 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	16 Preschool Professional Learning Day 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	17 4:30p Come to the Table
18 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration	19 President's Day Office Closed Preschool Closed	20	21 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen 7:00p Midweek Lenten Service	22 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 8:00p Worship Broadcast	23 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	24 4:30p Come to the Table
25 9:30a Sunday School 9:30a Worship Celebration 10:45a 2023 Financial Report Summary	26 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club	27 1:00p Joyful Sisters of Service 6:30p Building a Better Boyertown	28 7:00p Midweek Lenten Service	29 Operation 143 Delivery 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service w/ Holy Communion 8:00p Worship Broadcast		

FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Marie Adamski David Babb
4	5 Cody Gheer Constance Gilbert Joanne Sheidy	6	7 Krista Fretz	8 Joe Matthews Ruth Weil	9 Dave Long	10
11 Nyla Omlor	12	13	14 Val Gonzalez	15 Sandy Wade	16	17
18	19	20	21 Delaney Cook Tom Engle Susan Laubach Brianna Rohrbach	22	23 Melissa Eidle	24 Bobbi Eddinger
25 Kiersten Kulhamer	26 Shirley Miller Susan Schaeffer Bertha Schott	27	28	29		a second



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 Non-profit Organization U.S. POSTAGE PAID Boyertown, PA Permit No. 10020

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 January 25, 2024

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 McClelland, Director of Preschool Ministry bmachamer@stjohnsboyertown.org financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org financialsecretary@stjohnsboyertown.org

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