

EAGLE MESSENGER



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JANUARY 2026

AUTHENTIC WORSHIP ✚ INTENTIONAL RELATIONSHIPS ✚ SACRIFICIAL SERVICE ✚ RADICAL GENEROSITY

Dear Friends,

I appreciate you! Through you I am reminded, almost daily, that Christians are those who have an undying love for our Lord Jesus Christ. I see it in your actions. I hear it in your language. I hear our members express their desire to grow closer to Jesus. I witness it in the way you worship. You remind me that we are at our best when we love God by worshipping and taking delight in God.

I'm not always a visibly emotional worshipper like I've seen frequently while attending conferences with other denominations in the room. Perhaps you can relate. I'm bouncing off the walls inside with joy for certain, but I probably appear like a shirt with medium starch to onlookers. I'm not a hand raiser or a sway back and forth worshipper. I don't think there is anything wrong with demonstrably feeling delight and feeling emotional about our relationship with God; even so I'm just fine adoring God standing still. However, it might be worth a thoughtful pause if we never feel joy when we consider our relationship with Jesus. Scripture tells us that we are to love God with our heart, our soul, and our mind. We demonstrate that love with behavior and commitment that remains consistent, even when our feelings fluctuate as they always do. Love is something that we feel, at least sometimes, and I cannot help but think that God is pleased with the vulnerability that allows those fluctuating feelings to be expressed. That's how it worked for Jesus' handpicked disciples. Scripture says when they saw him after the resurrection they worshipped him; but some doubted. The disciples in Matthew (for that matter, the entire Bible) are recorded as worshipping Jesus twice and doubting him twice. Interestingly, they are the same two times. Reminding us that Jesus gave the great commission to worshippers and doubters alike. A more recent example of this vulnerability was timely in helping me see the incarnation, God among us, in a fresh way. "I am about to do a new thing! It springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

Thank you, God, for gifting us a Worship Team who provided our midweek Advent season worship services, themed "Labor Classes with Mary and Joseph". The selection of our preachers, Lauren and Justin Jones and Michele Frey (with her message delivered by Amy Moyer) could not have been a more timely and

wise decision. The heartwarming authenticity of their real life and recent experiences shared vulnerably with us deepened my relationship with Jesus specifically around that beautiful blend of fear and wholehearted trust. We are a marvelously blessed congregation to hear the family story of one of our recent newborns, but also, in the 'sounds' we hear from other newborns announcing to us that they are among us, reminding us that new life is all around. "I am about to do a new thing! It springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

We are committed to celebrating new life as we grow into the fullness of Christ through increased understanding. In this new calendar year, we will embrace our definition of stewardship - all we do after we say 'yes' to Jesus. We will focus on loving Jesus through worship, small groups, service opportunities, and more. We will offer opportunities to nurture mature faith. We will encourage simple practices grounded in biblical literacy, resulting in deeper faith. We will gather for worship not only because of what we hope to get out of it; but because we love Jesus and want to worship God. We will spend an hour adoring God, praising Jesus Christ, and giving thanks to our Lord who is so good to us. If you feel blessed, it's a bonus. "I am about to do a new thing! It springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19).

You are invited to experience the resurrected Christ and join others in responding to his great commission as a profound call to a transformative love for God explored through scripture and personal devotion. With your siblings in Christ at St. John's, know that we are here to assist your faith formation by offering worship, learning, and service opportunities to deepen our connection with God and our neighbors. "I am about to do a new thing! It springs forth; do you not perceive it?" (Isaiah 43:19). This new thing isn't a new beginning, not for our congregation that's been around for over two centuries, one defined by the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Instead, it's a chance to remind ourselves that we are one Church, connected in the call to share the "good news of great joy" with all people.

Be blessed!
Pastor Bob

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UPCOMING WORSHIP

Sunday, January 4 @ 9:30 am

*We'll celebrate Epiphany,
which liturgically falls on Tuesday, January 6.*

The feast of Epiphany ("manifestation") concludes the Christmas season with a celebration of God's glory revealed in the person of Jesus Christ. In Isaiah and Ephesians, that glory is proclaimed for all nations and people. Like the light of the star that guided the magi to Jesus, the light of Christ reveals who we are: children of God who are claimed and washed in the waters of baptism. We are sent out to be beacons of the light of Christ, sharing the good news of God's love to all people.

Sunday, January 11 @ 9:30 am

Baptism of Our Lord

In the waters of the Jordan, Jesus is revealed as the beloved Son of God. Through this great epiphany, Jesus fulfills all righteousness and becomes the servant of God who will bring forth justice and be a light to the nations. In the waters of baptism we too are washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit, and named God's beloved children. Our baptismal mission is to proclaim good news to all who are oppressed or in need of God's healing.

Sunday, February 15 @ 9:30 am

Transfiguration of Our Lord

Over the past Sundays, we have seen Jesus show himself to be Christ, the one anointed by God to be our Savior. This Sunday, the Transfiguration, when Jesus appears on a mountain in divine glory, concludes the time after Epiphany. Three days after, on Ash Wednesday, we begin the climb to the mountain of Jesus' crucifixion. The church holds side-by-side the brilliance of God and the cross of Jesus.

Wednesday, February 18 @ 7:00 pm

Ash Wednesday

The beginning of Lent gives us the occasion to admit that we will die and that we are sinners. On Ash Wednesday we are marked with ashes—a sign of our death and of our sorrow for sin—but the ashes trace a cross on our forehead, where the baptismal water first marked us with God's grace.

Sunday, February 22 @ 9:30 am

First Sunday in Lent

Each year on the first Sunday in Lent we hear about Jesus being tested in the wilderness. In this way Jesus joined with us, who are also, one way or another, tested in some wilderness. We say Sundays "in" Lent, since when counting the forty days of Lent, we omit the six Sundays, because Sunday is always a celebration of Christ's resurrection. So this Sunday we are both in Lent and beyond Lent.



send some love

Mail a note of cheer
to a homebound member!

Addresses available
February 1 & 8
from the Valentine tree
in the Sanctuary.



On February 1 and 8, you'll find a heart-filled tree at the back of the sanctuary. These hearts contain the names and addresses of our homebound members. Please help us share our love for them by choosing one or two hearts and sending a valentine. This small act reminds our homebound members that they are remembered and cherished by their St. John's family!

Congregation Council members were
elected at our Annual Meeting on December 7.
2025 Annual Reports are available to pick up
in the church office. Please call ahead.

Congregation Council

Jennifer Schlegel, President

John Gheer, Vice-President

Angie Berkosky, Secretary

Linda Rohrbach, Treasurer

Jen Friz

Abbe Grofe

Pastor Bob Machamer

Go tell it on the mountain! Over the hills and everywhere!
Go tell it on the mountain that Jesus Christ is born!

In the seasons of Christmas and Epiphany, let us go and tell
what we hear and see. Let us be the kingdom, bearing witness
and testifying to God-With-Us everywhere we go.

Thank you to all who participated in the start of our new
liturgical year, through prayer, in worship services, through
the devotional, in community, and in service to others.

I pray we move into the new calendar year with the same joy
and eagerness to "go tell it on the mountain"
as we experienced on Christmas.

- Jennifer Schlegel, Council President

CELEBRATING ADVENT

By: Mel Roth

While many hurried to malls or websites to shop for Christmas gifts after church on Sunday, November 30, others came together in the Fellowship Hall to make Advent wreaths.

Given a flat wreath form with four candle holders, evergreens, a branch of holly berries and four white tapered candles, participants of all ages learned the history and meaning of the Advent wreath as they assembled their wreaths.

As the wreaths were finished, excitement of a New Year's countdown mounted. Participants wore paper Happy New Year glasses and crowns, raised glasses of grape juice and prepared to fill the air with cheers and sounds from noisemakers. This was not a countdown to Christmas but a countdown to Advent, the start of a new liturgical year in the church.

During the Advent season, we are invited to participate in four weeks of focused prayer, Scripture reading and additional worship that encourages hopeful waiting, resilient joy and giving of oneself to others in our still troubled and suffering world. It is an opportunity for us to walk as Jesus did to bring peace to all. Hope you had a Happy Advent!



GETTING THE NEWS

By: Bethany Calderwood

Preschoolers love sharing news. Generally the moment they walk through the door, they are bursting with information about one topic or another, desperate to share something they saw, heard, or did in the hours since they last entered the building. When they enter the classroom, they are also quick to take stock of their surroundings and note any "news" at school, such as different calendar numbers, new pictures, relocated toys, or absent peers.

In collective Preschool News, December was a busy month. We made various ornaments to decorate the tree in our lobby, learned carols to sing for our neighbors at

Walnut Woods, and had a birthday celebration for Jesus complete with cake, crafts, and a story from Santa.

In December, we ask preschoolers what Christmas means. Santa Claus, snow, presents, and decorations are popular answers. Then we talk about Christmas in the Bible – Christmas in the Bible means Good News: Jesus is born! The Christmas story contains a number of news announcements. An angel told Mary she would have a baby, an angel told Joseph Mary would have a baby, and angels told the shepherds a baby was born. Each of these announcements contain the same admonishment: Do not be afraid.

How often does the announcement of something new spark fear in people? That which is unknown can be intimidating. The message of Christmas constitutes the reason that we do not need to be afraid, whatever news we may receive. Isaiah 43 says, "Do not fear, for I have redeemed you." As we pass Christmas and enter the new year, we begin to examine the life of Jesus, whose ultimate purpose in incarnation was just that –to redeem us. Isaiah continues with a message from God, "Do not be afraid, for I am with you."

December highlighted Jesus's role as Emmanuel, *God with us*. As the lights and trees come down and we enter a dark and wintry month, do not be afraid. Jesus isn't going anywhere. *Good News: Jesus is born, and Jesus is with us.*



OH! SUSANNA!

A story from the Apocrypha

By: Cathy Krause

Note: The Apocrypha is a group of books that were not included in the Protestant and Jewish Biblical canon. These books are not considered divinely inspired, but are worthy of study.

Resources consulted:

"Apocrypha." 14 Nov 2025. n.d. <[britannica.com/topic/apocrypha](https://www.britannica.com/topic/apocrypha)>

"What Is the Apocrypha. And Can We Trust It?" 14 Nov 2025. n.d.

<biblestudytools.com/bible-study/topical-studies/what-is-the-apocrypha-and-can-it-be-trusted.html>

Until I began reading and researching about Susanna, I did not know what kind of a pickle she found herself in. Her story is found in the Greek manuscript of the book of Daniel and is in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox canons, but not the Protestant or Jewish canons. Susanna was a beautiful woman, the wife of Joacim, the daughter of God-fearing parents, raised to love the Lord. In her story, Joacim is a secondary character; he was rich and his home was the site of the courthouse.

One day after court left out for the midday meal, Susanna walked in the adjoining garden. Since the garden was enclosed, she decided to bathe in the garden as the day was hot. Now for the plot twist: Two elders had hidden themselves in the garden. Each was filled with lust for Susanna. They decided to collaborate to pressure her to engage with each of them. So, when Susanna sent her maids to fetch some ointment, the way was cleared for the elders to begin their dastardly deed.

Susanna, of course, claimed innocence of the tryst the elders claimed they saw. All three raised their voices and soon a crowd gathered. She was tried and condemned to death, for women in those days were not believed to speak truth. The elders seemed to be vindicated. However, the next day on the way to her execution, Susanna cried to the Lord. The Lord sent a young man named Daniel (yes, the Daniel of the lions' den) to speak for her. He indicated that since the two elders had not been examined, he would do it. The two men were separated. Each was asked under which tree he saw this tryst. One answered the mastic tree. The other, not knowing the answer of the first man, answered the holm tree. Thus, they proved their guilt and Susanna's innocence. Now Susanna's punishment became theirs. A most exciting story to read in full; this is highly condensed version.

According to the sources I referenced, the Jewish community of the time this story was written were facing internal pressures to keep their identity. Susanna's story was a way of promoting the Jewish faith. There are also other concepts that can be explored in this narrative: that of seduction vs. rape; the trustworthiness of men over women; the rules governing moral conduct, and others. Susanna's story can be found online if an Apocrypha is not available to you. Please take time to discover more thoroughly this fascinating woman.

Resources consulted:

Apocrypha. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. 2007. 109-111.

Cohen, Marsh B., "Oh, Susanna: Women in Apocryphal Texts." 14 Nov 2025. 6 Dec 2022. <<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/451425.1?lang=bi&with=AboutSheet&lang2=en>>

Glancy, Jennifer. "Susanna: Apocrypha." Jewish Women's Archive. 14 Nov 2025. 2009. <jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/susanna-apocrypha>

Ward, Elaine. Old Testament Women. New York: Enchanted Lion Books. 2004. 26.



MILLER KEYSTONE BLOOD DRIVE

Thursday, February 19

2:00pm-7:00pm

Fellowship Hall



Prayer Shawl Ministry

STARTING

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14 @ 6:30PM

IN THE WELL

(2ND FLOOR PARISH HOUSE)

CONTINUING THE 2ND WEDNESDAY EACH MONTH

MEN'S RETREAT

Forksville, PA

JANUARY 30-
FEBRUARY 1

(Friday evening - Sunday afternoon)

Register on our website
by January 19

Questions?

Contact Brian at bmoatzsj@gmail.com



SCAN TO REGISTER

WORSHIP MINISTRY

Date	Day	Time	Liturgical Day (Special Service)	Acolyte	Altar Assistant	Altar Guild	Assisting Minister	Lector	Media	Prayers	Sound	Ushers	Video
1/4/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Second Sunday of Christmas (celebrating Epiphany)	Delaney Hersperger	Jen & Jason Friz	Jodi Dykie, Mary Kay Heimbach	Jason Friz	Amy Moyer	Sarah Eidle	Mel Roth	Brianna Rohrbach	Ros & Brian Moatz, Sandy & Terry Wade	Jason Eidle
1/11/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Baptism of Our Lord	Abby Torres	Melissa Eidle, Jennifer Schlegel	Mary Dierolf, Nancy Edwards	Jennifer Schlegel	Mel Roth	Jason Friz	Karen Pollock	Myles Omlor	Becky & Barry Erb, Bunny & Ron Riffle	Camryn Friz
1/18/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Second Sunday after Epiphany	Grant Hersperger	Tom Engle, Mel Roth	Shirley Hartman, Sue Hill	Mel Roth	Jennifer Schlegel	Shannon Omlor	Michele Eidle	Ashley Gheer	Carol Sematis, Susan & Andy Varzally, Terry Wadsworth	Abbe Grofe
1/25/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Third Sunday after Epiphany	Tatum Friz	George Hill, Amy Moyer	Amy Moyer	Amy Moyer	Dave Long	Sarah Eidle	Tom Engle	Melissa Eidle	Jerry Krause, Darrin Moyer, Kevin Moyer, Ed Schaeffer	Scott Scheiry
2/1/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fourth Sunday after Epiphany	Delaney Hersperger	Michele & Dave Eidle	Dorothy Breitreutz	Amanda Ehst	Dave Babb	Jason Friz	Jean Machamer	Brianna Rohrbach	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer, Jennifer Schlegel, Scott Scheiry	Jason Eidle
2/8/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Fifth Sunday after Epiphany	Philip Derr	Ashley Gheer, John Gheer	Jodi Dykie & Mary Kay Heimbach	Melissa Geary	Jean Machamer	Shannon Omlor	Bonnie Moatz	Myles Omlor	Mary Kay & Donnie Heimbach, Sue & George Hill	Camryn Friz
2/15/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Transfiguration of Our Lord	Abby Torres	Tom Engle, Amanda Ehst	Mary Dierolf & Nancy Edwards	Amy Moyer	Bev Blake	Sarah Eidle	Martha Bentley	Ashley Gheer	Carol & Larry Angstadt, Phil Haddad, Ros Moatz	Abbe Grofe
2/18/2026	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Ash Wednesday	Camryn Friz	NA	Sue Hill	Bev Blake	Sue Hill	Jason Friz	Ros Moatz	Melissa Eidle	Ros & Brian Moatz	Scott Scheiry
2/22/2026	Sunday	9:30 AM	Lent 1	Delaney Hersperger	George Hill, Jennifer Schlegel	Bonnie Moatz	Jennifer Schlegel	Brian Moatz	Shannon Omlor	Sue Grofe	Brianna Rohrbach	Martha Bentley, Jodi Dykie, Barbara Houpp, Josee Ruckebrod	Jason Eidle
2/25/2026	Wednesday	7:00 PM	Unfailing Light	Philip Derr	Jason Friz	Mary Kay Heimbach	Jason Friz	TBD	Sarah Eidle	NA	Ashley Gheer	Bev & Joe Blake	Camryn Friz

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 all weather related closings, including Sundays, check Channel 69 News or www.wfmz.com.



JANUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 Preschool Closed Office Closed 8:00p Worship Broadcast	2 Preschool Closed 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study	3 11:00a Funeral 4:30p Come to the Table
4 9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Christmas Meal Debrief	5 10:00a Yoga Class 6:30p Girl Scouts	6 Epiphany of Our Lord	7 10:00a Move & Groove Class 6:30p Worship Team	8 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 7:00p Handbells 8:00p Worship Broadcast	9 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 6:00p Council Retreat	10 8:00a Council Retreat 4:30p Come to the Table
11 Baptism of Our Lord 9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 10:45a Coffee & Conversation 6:30p Girl Scout Leaders	12 10:00a Yoga Class 5:00 Newsletter Submission 6:30p Jr Optimist Club 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club of Boyertown	13	14 9:00a Preschool Drop off Social 6:30p Prayer Shawls	15 9:30a Community Leaders 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 7:00p Handbells 8:00p Worship Broadcast	16 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 10:00a Move & Groove Class	17 4:30p Come to the Table
18 Pastor Bob's Ordination Anniversary 9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School	19 Preschool Closed 10:00a Yoga Class 6:30p Girl Scouts	20	21 Preschool Chapel Time 9:30a Pottstown Soup Kitchen	22 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 7:00p Handbells 8:00p Worship Broadcast	23 7:00a Men's Small Group Bible Study 10:00a Move & Groove Class	24 4:30p Come to the Table
25 9:30a Worship Celebration 9:30a Sunday School 11:00a MAG	26 10:00a Yoga Class 6:30p Jr Optimist Club 6:30p Girl Scouts 7:30p Optimist Club of Boyertown	27 1:00p Joyful Sisters	28 6:30p Congregation Council	29 10:00a Chestnut Knoll Service 7:00p Handbells 8:00p Worship Broadcast	30 Men's Retreat 7:00a Men's Small Group 10:00a Move & Groove Class	31 Men's Retreat 4:30p Come to the Table

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3 Johanna Clark
4 Ryan DiPietro	5	6	7 Abigail Rhoads	8 Elizabeth Rose	9 Connor Cordero Amy Moyer	10
11	12 Randy Rupert	13	14	15	16	17 Jenny Clark
18	19	20	21	22	23 Bev Blake Harper Gaugler	24 Amanda Kulhamer Ronald Sheidy
25	26	27 Beth Anne Stork	28	29	30 Jason Eidle Jackson Fretz	31 Christopher Houser

Happy Birthday!



EAGLE MESSENGER

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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 December 22, 2025

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

Bethany Calderwood, Director of Preschool Ministry

Kay Christman, Finance Team

Sue Grofe, Finance Team

Donnie Heimbach, Property

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Shannon Omlor, Communications Coordinator

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