

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER 2025

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Mahoning

826 Mahoning Drive West; Lehighton Pa 18235 • Church office: 570-386-9960 • Email address: stjohns@ptd.net
Website: www.stjohnsmahoning.org • Facebook at StJohnsMahoning • "A Family of friends alive with God's love!"



SEASON of ADVENT

— Celebrate the Coming King —

Church Staff

Pastor	Reverend Anthony Pagotto (610-377-4242)
Music Director	Colleen Rudelitsch
Bookkeeper	Cathy Smith
Sexton	Sherry Stafiniak
Church Admin	Anne Scott
Church Office	570-386-9960
Church Office hours	M-W-F 9 AM-2 PM

2025 Church Council

Reverend Anthony Pagotto

Julia Schock, **President** Allison Everett, **Vice President**

Keith Drummond	Geoff Ebbert	Donald Freeman
Ronald Fried	Kimberly Gerhard	Cheryl Kistler
Tia Tyson		

Worship Schedule for December 2025 at St. John's

Dec 7 – 10:45 AM – Fellowship Hall Worship *with Holy Communion* – **12:30** – Confirmation Class

Dec 14 – 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Worship

Dec 21 – 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Worship – **12:30** – Confirmation Class Christmas Caroling

Dec 28 – 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Worship Lessons & Carols *with Holy Communion*

Morning Prayer Zoom

Wednesdays at 9:00 AM

<http://zoom.us/j/187911224>

Meeting ID: 187 911 224

Call in: 1-929-205-6099

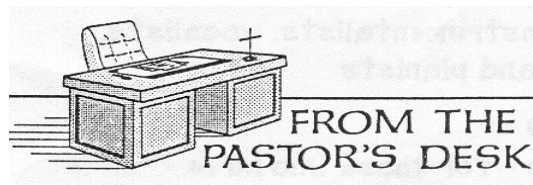
Bible Study Zoom

Thursdays at 9:30 AM

<http://us02web.zoom.us/j/376540617>

Meeting ID: 376 540 617

Call in: 1-929-205-6099



Giving It All Away

On November 4, Dinkey held its annual Election Day Spaghetti Dinner. Some of the faces helping with the dinner changed, but it was still the same fantastic salad bar, great selection of sauces, and wide variety of desserts. There were even many familiar faces that support the dinner year in and year out. Yet there was one big difference from previous spaghetti dinners.

This year, the profits from the dinner would go to VALOR (Veterans Assisted Living Out Reach). VALOR Clinic Foundation is a nonprofit organization committed to improving access to quality of healthcare and shelter of veterans. Their office is located at “Paul’s House” in Kunkletown at the Old Jonas Hotel.

The difference isn’t that profits are going to VALOR; every year donations are made to different organizations. The big difference this year is that all the profits are going to VALOR. This is the first time that I or anyone else can remember that everything is being given away to a ministry outside the congregation – which brings me a great deal of joy!

A check for \$2163.13 will be presented to VALOR to support the work they do with veterans. This is possible all because people were willing to donate their time, efforts, and resources. What makes this even cooler is that this wasn’t a solo venture.

Last year, and again this year, St. John’s, Mahoning provided the meatballs and members volunteered to help with the setup, serving, and clean up. When St. John’s council heard all the profits were going to VALOR, there was no hesitation, they were going to donate all the meatballs for the dinner. And trust me, they made a lot of meatballs!

When Dinkey and St. John’s entered into the Purchase of Service Agreement over 3 years ago now, the reasons were that there aren’t enough pastors and neither congregation was positioned financially to support a fulltime pastor on their own. As a result of these two congregations working together, we are able to partake in outreach ministry like the spaghetti dinner and let that light of Christ shine. This is why we agreed to work together, not to keep the doors of each congregation open, but to share the love of God with the community and beyond. Thank you all for your commitment to living out our calling as the people of God! You are an inspiration to me!

Your servant in Christ, Pr. Tony

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn.

(Isaiah 58:6-8a)



12/2 Kathleen Monk
12/5 Sandra Guy
12/8 Lori Hawk
12/11 Ava Trach
12/12 Jeanette Jennings
12/14 Terry Moyer
12/20 Toby Tyson
12/20 Robert Hawk
12/25 Neal Ebbert Sr
12/28 Lisa Moyer

12/5 Rochelle Rodgers
12/6 Matthew Lasky
12/9 Drew Yenser
12/11 Cindy Grosso
12/12 Lucille Knittle
12/19 Mike Andrews
12/20 Caitlin Lees
12/22 Lucas Kistler
12/28 William Trach Jr

(If we missed your birthday for this month, it is possible we do not have it in our membership database. Please give us a call at the office (570-386-9960) so we can update our files.)

Grief Support- will meet on **Monday, December 1st & December 15th at 6 PM.**

Book Club- will meet **Tuesday, December 9th at 6:30 PM** with book *"Comfort & Joy"* by Kristin Hannah.

Dinner & Discussion- will be taking break for the Winter months. There will be no Dinner & Discussion in the months of December, January, and February. We will meet next on **Thursday, March 19, 2026 at 6:30 PM.** Please contact **Cheryl Kistler at 610-533-5723.**

Fundraising Committee- will be taking a break and will meet next on **Tuesday, February 24th at 6:30 PM** (also stuffing raffle tickets).

Community Cupboard- Dinkey Memorial has a food cupboard available to those in need of supplemental food resources. It is **available to members of Dinkey Memorial and St. John's, and to residents of East Penn Township.** The distribution is the **third Thursday of every month from 3:30-5:00 PM** in Dinkey's Social Room, located below the sanctuary. If you or anyone you know would benefit from receiving food from the Community Cupboard, please speak with Pr. Tony.

Message from the Fundraising Team:

♦Thanks & blessings to our church family for your help throughout the year. It's great to spend time together & connect with our community. Have a Merry Christmas & a happy, healthy, & safe New Year!



Council Meetings are held the second Monday of every month unless otherwise noted.
(Complete copies of the minutes may be obtained from the church office.)

November Council Meeting – Items Discussed

- Financial reports being completed for the Congregational Meeting so the budget can be approved.
- Sheila has people set up to bake cookies for Trees for Troops collection Sunday (11/23).
- Pastor is working on the themes for Mid-week Advent Worship & Soup Supper. Sign up sheet is located outside of Fellowship Hall for food donations.
- Worship will start at 11 AM beginning in the New Year to make it easier on Pastor traveling from Dinkey Memorial's service.
- The next scheduled meeting is **Monday, December 8, 2025 at 7:30 PM.**

******A reminder to everyone that council meetings are open to all members of St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.**



Winter Weather is approaching!!! The church uses One Call phone automation to pass along important information. One of the purposes is to inform you if church is cancelled. Be sure you're on our One Call for alerts regarding church closings or event changes. We also list church snow closures on wfmz.com.

Prayers for our Congregation Members

Mike Andrews	Marlin Frey	Betty Frey	Diane Berner
Arthur Rudelitsch	Stacy Freeman	Cliff Gledhill	Florence Duffy
Diane Gould	Liz Koch	Allane Kistler	Marilyn Frey
Timothy Gerhard	Brenda Lasky	Bart Cunfer	Donna Horvath
Jeanette Jennings			

Prayers for Our Friends

Joanie Radler	Jen Nielsen	Wesley King	Rev. John Hazel
Fern Miller	Dolores Solt	LJ Dailey	Chris Green
Jesse Rudelitsch	Stewart Henritzky	Kathy Steigerwalt	Nichole Hydro
Nicole M. Rowles	Vince Rodgers	Barbara Kerschner	Shirley Long
Dan Myers			

Please also pray for

The people of Jamaica and all areas affected by Hurrican Melissa.
Doctors without Borders. Global Refuge.
Those struggling with mental health. The People of Israel and Gaza.
Refugees all over the world. The Children of Ukraine.
The Homeless.

Prayers for Our Homebound and Long-Term Care Members

Judith Ahner	Willard Ahner	Rachel Bednar	Ferne Berger
Robert Berger	Marie Boyer	Myrtle Creitz	Mary Flyzik
Joan Heintzelman	Scott Heintzelman	Carol Houser	Mary Ann Kollar
Kathryn Leibenguth	Franklin Mertz	Dorothy Reinhart	Ruth Troxell
Betty Willet	Elaine Windbeck	Carolyn Zacharias	

Our Military Personnel at Home and Abroad

Dalton Berger	Daniel Berger	Douglas Boyer
Aaron Cetnar	Sean Fisher	Austin Heilman
AJ Light	Ryan McArdle	Dustin McCarroll
Alexis Scott	Jonathan Sheehan	Dylan White

●If you wish to put yourself, a friend or loved one on the church prayer list, please call the church office at 570-386-9960 or email stjohns@ptd.net). The name is placed on the list for 30 days unless we receive a monthly update. Please feel free to let the office know if someone should be removed as well. Thank you!



Trinity Food Pantry
Food of the Month Spotlight
December: Soup

REQUEST FROM CEMETERY COMMITTEE:

We need help to relocate a Vietnam Military Marker. The marker was found on the grave of someone who was never in the military. If you know someone that is buried in our cemetery and served in the Vietnam War, would you please contact Robbie Hawk, Vice President of the Cemetery Committee, at 484-264-0426 with this information. We would like to get this Military Marker relocated to the correct grave site as soon as possible.

Thank you!

To order TEXT
Joanie @
(484)619-1583
or Karen @
(610)751-1151 by
12/14/25

**Christmas
Cookie Tray
Sale**
Includes 3 dozen
homemade cookies
Plus wrapped
chocolates & candy
\$20 each



Pickup Saturday,
December 20th from
12:00-2:00 p.m. @ St.
John's Lutheran Church
826 Mahoning Dr. W.
Lehighton

Benefits
Jen
Nielsen's
cancer
treatment
efforts

There is an order form on the Community Bulletin Board outside of Fellowship Hall or you may call the numbers listed to order as well.

MIDWEEK

ADVENT WORSHIP & SOUP SUPPER

WEDNESDAYS 6:00PM

Join us each Wednesday in Advent for a
Soup Supper and Worship Service:

December 3rd, 10th & 17th

St. John's Lutheran Church
826 Mahoning Drive West
Lehighton, PA 18235

Offering Envelopes

Our offering envelopes have three designated areas for giving.

- You can designate your offering go to our Current Expenses to meet our monthly bills.
- You can designate your offering go to Benevolence. St John's is committed to contributing \$10,000 yearly to our NEPA Synod and the ELCA Church for synodical and church wide mission and ministries beyond St John's church. We use donations marked in this section to meet our charitable commitment.
- You can designate your offering go to the Improvement Fund or Building Fund for construction, renovation or maintenance of our building and grounds.
- Your offering can be designated to one area, two areas or split between all three.

So that we honor your intentions on where you would like your offering to be credited and for end of year reporting, we ask that you take time to fill in the sections on your envelope.

If you do not mark on the envelope where you would like your offering credited, we automatically default your contribution to Current Expenses.

Should you have any questions, please speak to
Lori Heimbach or Cheryl Kistler.

Got Free Turkeys? Share the Joy!



Hey St. John's

It is that time of year when stores are giving points for free turkeys. If you just don't need it or wondering what to do with it, we have an answer!! The fundraising team is looking for turkeys (to make BBQ) for the Spring Bazaar. Please keep this in mind over the holidays.


Thank you!





Yenser's Tree Farm & Trees for Troops Brings Military Families Together in the True Spirit of Christmas

- This year is the 21st Anniversary of Trees for Troops. Yenser's is proud to be a sponsor for all 21 years and the areas only Official Location.
- To date, Trees for Troops has donated 326,273 trees to military families.
- A donation of \$30 will send a Christmas tree to a military family (up to 300 trees). Additional money donated will be given to the Trees for Troops non-profit to continue the program.
- Donations can be made at our farm, online at yenserstreefarm.com or mailed to the address below.
- Any questions can be emailed to yenserstreefarm@gmail.com.
- You're invited to join our annual Trees for Troops program on Friday, December 5th at 10AM at Valley View at Yenser's Building.

Checks Payable to:
Yenser's Tree Farm
1910 Mahoning Dr. East
Lehighton, PA 18235



Donut Day



Tuesday Feb. 17, 2026

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
Order by Sunday January 25, 2026
Call/Text/Email Jean Everett at 570-778-8668/myjean@ptd.net

Name _____ Phone # _____

_____ (1) Persian X \$2.50	\$ _____
_____ (2) Iced Long Johns X \$5.00	\$ _____
_____ (2) Coconut Long Johns X \$5.50	\$ _____
	Total \$ _____

Pick up
_____ Mon. 3:30-5 PM _____ Tues. 9-10 AM

FILLING for Sale!

Just \$7.50 a pan

Please see any one of our Fundraising Committee Members if interested.

From our friends at Dinkey Memorial
Fundraising: Dinkey is selling Streak free cloths; \$5 each. Please contact Jan in the office if interested (610)377-4242.
Giant Gift Cards: If you would like to purchase Giant gift cards please contact Kathy Steigerwalt at (540)250-6539. Cards are in \$100, \$50 and \$25 denominations. We receive 5% from each gift card sold.
Clothing Bin: Dinkey is sponsoring a clothing bin to collect clothing, stuffed animals, sneakers, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, drapes & pillowcases. They ask that NO rags, pillows, fabric scraps, toys or household goods be put in the bin. The bin is located in the parking lot of Dinkey Memorial Church.

CLOTHING & COAT DRIVE

WARM HEARTS, WARM CLOTHING



JOIN US IN PROVIDING WARMTH TO THOSE IN NEED THIS WINTER! ITEMS CAN BE ANY TYPE OF WINTER WEAR. NEW OR GENTLY USED.

Your generous donations will help support The Cold Weather Station in Lehigh, PA.

Donate today! There is a large box in the Narthex and one by Fellowship Hall. We will be collecting until December 15th.
 Thank you!



JOIN US FOR CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES
 AND CELEBRATE WITH US THIS YEAR!

3 PM - St. John's
 5 PM - Dinkey Memorial
 10 PM - Dinkey Memorial

Lehigh Cold Weather Station:

The LCWS is an important ministry for the homeless in the Lehigh area. When the temperature drops below 25 degrees overnight, the station is open to anyone in need to have a warm place to sleep overnight. Volunteers and donations are always needed, so if you would like to help in any way, please come out for one of the following information sessions:

Mon 11/24 at 5:30PM - Lehigh Rec Center, 243 S. 8th Street, Lehigh
Tues 12/02 at 1:15PM - Lehigh Library, 124 North Street, Lehigh
Thurs 12/04 at 1:15PM - Lehigh Library, 124 North Street, Lehigh
Thurs 12/11 at 5:30PM - Lehigh Library, 124 North Street, Lehigh

Seeking Raffle Ticket Prizes!

The Fundraising Committee is looking for raffle prizes valued at \$50 or more!

Questions?
 Contact Anne Yenser
 570-390-9108

Thank you for your generosity!



December 28th will be a fun day at worship. Wear your favorite funny/ugly/festive Christmas shirt or sweater to church. If you don't own one, please wear red or green. It is a Lessons and Carols service. Part of the songs will be in a Hymn Sing style, where you can suggest your favorite Carols to sing!



10:45 AM - Sanctuary
Worship with Holy
Communion - Lessons
& Carols

On Sunday, November 9th, we welcomed representatives from The Lehighon Cold Weather Station to our service. They were presented a check for the 10% of the Fall Bazaar profit as well as a matched donation from St. John's Mission Fund. (Keith Drummond, photograph)



Goodie Bag Deliveries to Homebound Members

Questions? Contact Cheryl Kistler at 610-533-5723



We will again be delivering goodie bags to our homebound members in December. This year we will be splitting our visits between two days, Friday, December 5th & Saturday, December 6th, 2025. Look for a note in the mail to let you know which day we will be visiting with you.

Worship Time

New Start Time Announcement



Starting Jan. 4, 2026,
we will change our
Sunday Worship to 11 AM.



Should you have any questions, please reach out to a member of Council.

Welcome

We would like to welcome our newest member, Edward Powell.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 7 Advent 2 10:45 AM – Fellowship Hall Worship with Holy Communion 12:30 – Confirmation Class 14 Advent 3 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Worship	1 6 PM – Grief Support 8 10 AM – Pastor Tony at the Palmer House 7:30 PM – Council Meeting 15 Jan. Newsletter Deadline 6 PM – Grief Support	2 6:30 PM – Book Club Christmas Party 16	3 9 AM – Prayer with Pastor 6 PM – Advent Worship & Soup Supper 10 9 AM – Prayer with Pastor 6 PM – Advent Worship & Soup Supper 17 9 AM – Prayer with Pastor 6 PM – Advent Worship & Soup Supper	4 9:30 AM – Bible Study with Pastor 11 9:30 AM – Bible Study with Pastor 18 9:30 AM – Bible Study with Pastor 3:30-5 PM – Dinkey Comm. Cupboard 25 CHRISTMAS DAY	5 10 AM – Presenting our 11/23 collection day donations to Trees for Troops at Yenser's Tree Farm Gift bag delivery to our shut-ins (day #1) 12	6 Gift bag delivery to our shut-ins (day #2) 13 20 Jen (Radler) Nielson Christmas Cookie Fundraiser 27
21 Advent 4 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Worship 12:30 – Confirmation Class Christmas Caroling at the MVNH 2-9 PM – Fellowship Hall Member Rental 28 Christmas 1 10:45 AM – Sanctuary Lessons & Carols Worship with Holy Communion (wear a fun or fancy sweater)	22 29	23 30	24 CHRISTMAS EVE  Christmas Eve Services: 3 PM St. John's 5 PM Dinkey Memorial 10 PM Dinkey Memorial 31 NEWS YEARS EVE 			

