

# JANUARY NEWSLETTER 2026

## 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](mailto:stjohns@ptd.net)  
Website: [www.stjohnsmahoning.org](http://www.stjohnsmahoning.org) • Facebook at StJohnsMahoning • "A Family of friends alive with God's love!"



### 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

### 2026 Church Council

**Reverend** Anthony Pagotto

Julia Schock, <b>President</b>	Allison Everett, <b>Vice President</b>
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Keith Drummond	Geoff Ebbert	Donald Freeman
Ronald Fried	Kimberly Gerhard	Cheryl Kistler
Tia Tyson	Colleen Rudelitsch	

### Worship Schedule for January 2026 at St. John's

**Jan 4 – 11 AM** – Fellowship Hall Worship *with Holy Communion*

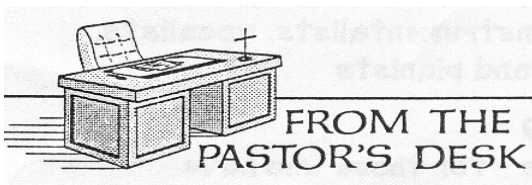
**Jan 11 – 11 AM** – Fellowship Hall Worship *with Holy Communion* – **12:30** – Confirmation Class (SJ)

**Jan 18 – 11 AM** – Fellowship Hall Worship

**Jan 25 – 11 AM** – Fellowship Hall Worship *with Holy Communion* – **12:30** – Confirmation Class (D)

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



## **Extra! Extra! Read all about it!**

It is amazing how quickly information can be shared today. If there is something taking place on the other side of the world I can hear about it in real time. News spreads fast but it hasn't always worked that way.

Originally, if you wanted to tell someone something you had to go directly to them and share the information, or you could send someone to share the information for you. To speed things up a person could use a horse. Then there were carrier pigeons. The telegraph was an enormous leap, followed by radios and television. Now with cell phones and the internet we can be in touch with anyone anywhere in the world instantaneously. But what about when it comes to sharing God's good news?

The Bible itself is a means to share information of God's love for God's people because within its pages are story after story demonstrating that love. There were times God communicated directly with people, through dreams and visions, and through acts of nature. But there were also times God sent angels. The Greek word for angel is *angelos* and literally means *messenger*. These messengers varied in their appearance and power, but all invariably communicated God's word to the people.

Today we communicate and share God's word through a variety of ways. Bible studies, worship services, bulletin announcements, personal interactions, newsletters, and online resources are some of the ways we share how God's word is active among us to share love and hope. You're reading this right now because someone has taken the time to assemble this newsletter (and pester me for my article).

We can share what is taking place within our congregation, neighboring congregations, our community, and even the wider church. I would like to share with you another means by which information about the wider church is being shared. The NEPA Synod publishes a Weekly E-News sharing things taking place within our synod and across the ELCA. I encourage you to sign up by visiting the synod's website at <https://nepasynod.org/e-news/>. Then in addition to our newsletters and announcements you can encounter many of the other voices that are messengers of God's love and grace all around us. Let's hear that good news and continue to be messengers of that love ourselves.

Your servant in Christ, Pr. Tony

*In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for see-- I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord."*  
(Luke 2:8-11)

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1/1 Lindsay Neff  
1/5 Liam Haldeman  
1/10 Dakota Trach  
1/12 Claudia Pagotto  
1/13 Molly McFadden  
1/13 Gilbert Walters  
1/19 Allison Everett  
1/30 Joseph Lawson

1/4 Jean Everett  
1/5 Valerie Kohanski  
1/10 Mary Ann Kollar  
1/12 Allane Kistler  
1/13 Keith Drummond  
1/16 Wesley Ebbert  
1/26 Marilyn Hahn  
1/31 Gianna DeBlasio

(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.)

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**Grief Support-** will meet on **Monday, Jan 5<sup>th</sup> & Jan 19<sup>th</sup> at 6 PM.**

**Book Club-** will meet **Tuesday, Jan 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM** with book *"The Second Chance Book Club"* by *Stephanie Butland*.

**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 24<sup>th</sup> 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.

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**Message from the Fundraising Team:**

♦ Kicking off the new year with Donut Day orders due on Jan 25th.

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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.)

**December Council Meeting – Items Discussed**

- Construction on the ladies bathroom in the Narthex will begin on Jan. 5<sup>th</sup>. All services for January will be held in Fellowship Hall.
  - The Annual Congregational meeting will be held on March 1, 2026, after worship.
  - M&H Marine and Sports CTR LTD will be handling the salt and snow removal for the church.
  - The next scheduled meeting is **Monday, January 5, 2026 at 7:30 PM.**
- \*\*\*\*A reminder to everyone that council meetings are open to all members of St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church.**
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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](http://wfmz.com).



### Prayers for our Congregation Members

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

### Prayers for Our Friends

Family of Stephen Hood	Mackenzie	Lyman Gruber
Joanie Radler	Wesley King	Fern Miller
Dolores Solt	Jesse Rudelitsch	Stewart Henritzky
Kathy Steigerwalt	Nicole M. Rowles	Vince Rodgers
Barbara Kerschner	Dan Myers	

### Please also pray for

Victims, families, and first responders in the recent mass shootings.  
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](mailto: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!



Dinky Memorial is selling Island Expressions Pizza Kits:

3-12" Plain Kit is \$15

3-12" Pepperoni Kit is \$16

3-12" Sausage Kit is \$16

Deadline to order is 1/18/2026.

Pick-up is 2/5/2026 from 3-6 PM.

Call the office at 610-377-4242 or there is an order sheet hanging up on the Community Bulletin Board near Fellowship Hall at St John's.



## 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

## Trinity Food Pantry 2026

January  
February

Pasta  
Pork & Beans

## St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting

Our Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on **Sunday, March 1, 2026**, following morning worship in the social hall. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the church committees' summary of last year and the upcoming plans for this year. Please join us for this meeting and share in the conversation.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church  
826 Mahoning Drive West  
Lehigh, PA 18235  
570-386-9960



## 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!*



## 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.

## 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.



## 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!





On Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, Sunday School and Confirmation students presented their Christmas Program. This year's program was a combined effort between Dinkey Memorial and St. John's. It featured sign language, a presentation of the children's book "The Grumpy Shepherd" by Paddie Devon and the song "Noel" by Lauren Daigle. Wonderful job by the youth, teachers and parents.  
(photos from Julia Schock and Keith Drummond)

On Friday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, Pastor Tony presented Yenser's Tree Farm a check from our Trees for Troops donation collection. St John's collected \$673.00 this year. Thank you to all who were able to donate. Below are some pictures taken from the event. (photos by Keith Drummond)







Dinke Memorial Evangelical Lutheran Church in Ashfield has had an annual Election Day dinner for many years. This year the decision was made to donate the entire profit to Paul's House Valor Foundation Clinic (in Jonas, PA). Our sister church, St. John's Lutheran Church of Mahoning, Lehighton, made and donated 400 meatballs and helped with cleanup. With our 30+ volunteers, we provided a variety of spaghetti dishes, a fabulous salad bar and plenty of homemade desserts and served 184 persons. With a \$250.00 donation from Thrivent Financial for supplies and an additional \$250.00 donation, we were able to present a check for \$2,163.13 to Valor Foundation to help provide for our veterans in need.

In the photo, from left to right, Tony Pagotto, Pastor of Dinkey Memorial and St. John's Mahoning, Lutheran

Churches, Kurt Steigerwalt, Dinkey Memorial, Steve Daderko, Valor Community Service Coordinator, Brian DeMorrow, Valor Outreach Ambassador, Drew Yenser, St. John's Mahoning.

(Story by Kurt & Kathy Steigerwalt)



St John's -

Thank you for the beautiful card and for the heavenly angel. Your thoughts and kindness are greatly appreciated.

- Diane Berner



Dear St. John's,

I would like to thank you for the gift certificate to Cousin's for Pastor appreciation. Serving as your Pastor is truly a blessing & I look forward to many more years of ministry together.

Yours in Christ,  
Pr. Tony

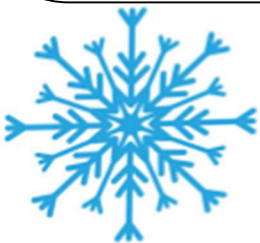
Dear Pastor Tony, Julia and the Congregation of St. John's,


We are SO grateful and blessed beyond measure by your generosity, compassion and support.

Your donation of \$2,600.00, the fruit of so much labor, will train our many volunteers and bring warmth and comfort to our guests and a place of refuge.

God Bless you. Please keep all of us in your prayers. Know we pray for you.

With love and appreciation,  
Esther, Nancy, Jessica, Grace and  
the team of the Cold Weather Station



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						
<b>4</b> <i>2 Christmas</i> <b>11 AM</b> Fellowship Hall Worship with Holy Communion - Removal of the greens <b>3PM</b> Hall Rental by member	<b>5</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> Construction to update Women's bathroom in Narthex begins today <b>6 PM</b> Grief Support <b>7:30 PM</b> Council Meeting	<b>6</b> <i>Epiphany of our Lord</i>	<b>7</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>9 AM</b> Prayer with Pastor	<b>8</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Bible Study with Pastor	<b>9</b> <b>Office 9-2</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> <i>Baptism of Our Lord</i> <b>11 AM</b> Fellowship Hall with Holy Communion <b>12:30 PM</b> Confirmation Class (S)	<b>12</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>10 AM</b> Pastor at Palmer House	<b>13</b> <b>Newsletter Deadline!!</b>	<b>14</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>9 AM</b> Prayer with Pastor	<b>15</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Bible Study with Pastor <b>3:30-5 PM</b> Community Cupboard distribution at Dinkey Memorial	<b>16</b> <b>Office 10-3</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> <i>2 Epiphany</i> <b>11 AM</b> Fellowship Hall Worship <b>Week of Prayer for Christian</b> <b>Unity Begins</b>	<b>19</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <i>MLK Jr.'s Birthday</i>	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>9 AM</b> Prayer with Pastor	<b>22</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Bible Study with Pastor	<b>23</b> <b>Office 9-2</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>25</b> <i>3 Epiphany</i> <b>11 AM</b> Fellowship Hall with Holy Communion <b>12:30 PM</b> Confirmation Class (D) <b>Week of Prayer for Christian</b> <b>Unity Ends</b>	<b>26</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>6 PM</b> Grief Support	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> <b>Office 9-2</b> <b>9 AM</b> Prayer with Pastor	<b>29</b> <b>9:30 AM</b> Bible Study with Pastor	<b>30</b> <b>Office 9-2</b>	<b>31</b>