

FEBRUARY

THE EAGLE

February 1 - 6:00 p.m. - Secret Pal Dinner
 February 3 - 10:00 a.m. - Worship, Communion
 February 10 - 10:00 a.m. - Worship
 February 10 - 11:00 a.m. - Fellowship Hour
 February 14 - 6:30 p.m. - Rejoicing Spirits Worship
 February 15 - 1:00 p.m. - Bloodmobile, Fellowship Hall
 February 16 - 6:00 p.m. - Italian Feast, Fellowship Hall
 February 17 - 10:00 a.m. - Worship
 February 24 - 10:00 a.m. - Worship



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

St. John's UCC
 1050 Buffalo Road
 Lewisburg, PA 17837
 stjohnslewisburg.org



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You may have heard the story that is told concerning a bear which is rescued when still a cub. It is taken to a zoo and compelled to grow up in a cage that measures a mere twenty feet in length. Every day the growing bear unhappily paces back and forth, back and forth across the length of its cage.

One day the unthinkable happens. The strongest storm of the century blows through that city, with winds so strong that the heavy cage is picked up by its roof and cleanly hurled many yards away.

The zookeepers are alarmed at the possible release of the bear, which is now a very large and powerful creature. Depending upon its response to freedom, the animal could pose a serious threat to the public and, if antagonized, could maim or even kill some unwary citizen.

They hurry to the area where the cage once stood, eager to pick up the animal's trail and successfully track it down. When they arrive, however, they can't believe their eyes. The now-great bear is still there on its concrete slab, mechanically pacing the twenty yards back and forth, escaping nowhere, behaving as though the bars are still in place!

This story is admittedly a sad one. Aside from the perhaps questionable practice of stealing animals from the wild and sequestering them for our amusement, the saddest part of this tale is that the bear doesn't know freedom when it has it.

The only thing sadder, I suspect, is that, through the bear, we recognize ourselves. Truly, the bear is us. It is we who pace back and forth within the imagined cages of our own lives, never realizing the fabulously free potential at our feet.

It is the American poet and mystic, William Blake, who speaks of our "mind-forged manacles." The plain truth is, Blake submits, that our lack of freedom (or most anything else) begins in our minds. If we think we are enslaved, then truly we are enslaved. If we think that we are helpless, then we are indeed helpless. If we think that there are no alternatives for the future, then no alternatives will present themselves to us.

There are, of course, within and without, restrictions and limitations that we must reckon with over the course of our lives. That fact notwithstanding, however, the odds are very great that we have far more moving room than we typically think, that we have more options that we usually have been able to see, that we have greater possibilities than we ordinarily give ourselves credit for.

As you might guess, these "bottom lines" are applicable not only to us as individuals but also to us as a congregation--certainly a valuable insight as we continue on in this interim period. The quality and clarity of our collective thinking can yield a future that is bright and promising, or produce one that simply is un-"bear"-able (sorry about that!).

Cordially,

Bob Stoudt

FEBRUARY VOLUNTEERS

Ushers:

Lock-up Person: **BARRY CATHERMAN**

Lay-Reader: **KAY NOTTIS**

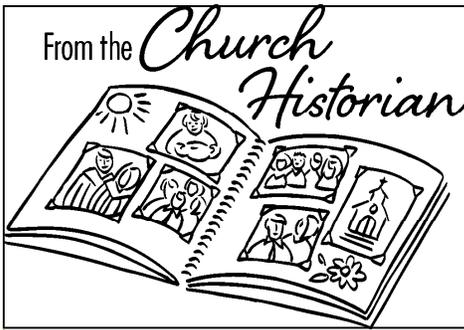
Preparation of Communion Elements: **TESS GROOVER, RUTH RICHARD**

FEBRUARY	Children's Church	OPENER/FLOWER DEL.
3		LINDA SARTWELL
10		
17		
24		

FEBRUARY	FLOWER SPONSORS	Acolyte	Drivers Route 1*
3		ERIN DeSANTIS	ADAMS
10	JEAN RESSLER	ADDIE MILLER	BAISH
17	LAUREN/RICK RAUTZHAN	DANIEL DeSANTIS	SPICKLER
24	KAY/GARY NOTTIS	JAMES DONLIN	ADAMS

FEBRUARY	GREETERS
3	MARTHA/BRUCE RAUCH
10	DOT/ART BOWER
17	TESS/FRED GROOVER
24	LINDA & WAYNE WILLIAMS

If you need a ride to church, please contact Ron Zug (570-523-3987) who schedules the drivers.



“Red Book” Memories XIV

“Webs of Mutual Support”

St. John’s does not and cannot live in isolation. It is interconnected with other faith communities in webs of mutual support. This has been true since the beginning of our faith community. These connections need to be fostered as we consider our next 100 years.

As our “Red Book” reminds us, St. John’s started in 1824 as an offshoot of the Dreisbach Church, a German Reformed congregation. And even

though the people of St. John’s established themselves as a separate German Reformed congregation in 1832, we were part of the Dreisbach Charge, a group of area churches, including the Dreisbach Church and others located in Mifflinburg, New Berlin, Aaronsburg, and Brush Valley. Each of those congregations shared a single pastor, Rev. Yost Henry Fries (resigned 1836), and provided support for each other.

Following Rev. Fries’ resignation, St. John’s was united with the Sunbury Charge, which was served by Rev. Richard Fisher (1836-1842). Then in 1843, our congregation was linked with three others when Rev. Henry Harbaugh (1843-1850) served. St. John’s apparently remained in that group of churches during the subsequent pastorate of Rev. Daniel Heisler (1850-1852). Finally, under the guidance of Rev. Benjamin Bausman (1853-1859), St. John’s united with the congregation at Dreisbach to form the Lewisburg Charge, which existed until 1881. Afterwards, St. John’s was only part of a “charge” at one other time in its history. That came in 1932, when St. John’s joined with the German Reformed congregation at Vicksburg. This union continued through the merger of the Reformed Church and Evangelical Synod of North America in 1934 and lasted until the Vicksburg church closed in 1948. In short, nearly one-third of our church’s 193-year history has involved being in a “charge” with one or more faith communities.

Over time, those various church “charges” served as vital webs of local mutual support for our congregation. But, they were not the only places where there were connections with others. St. John’s has also been a part of even larger networks of support. For example, during our German Reformed years (1824-1934), our church was a member of the Susquehanna Classis, an organization of churches and church charges, as well as a bigger Synod, and the Reformed Church denomination. When St. John’s was a congregation of the Evangelical and Reformed Church (1934-1957), we were a part of a Synod and a General Synod. Now, as a faith community in the United Church of Christ (UCC), we are a part of the greater webs of mutual support known as the Central Association, the Penn Central Conference, and the UCC’s General Synod.

At all points of our church’s history, these different webs of mutual support have sustained and nourished us. They have helped to provide us with quality pastors, encouragement, and spiritual care, as well as valuable information exchanges and material resources. Without those connections, especially the ones that involved local churches, our congregation probably would not have survived.

Today, we strive to enrich and be enriched by the networks of mutual support we have at the Association, Conference, and General Synod levels of the UCC. That is a wonderful thing. However, we have sometimes overlooked redeveloping and maintaining webs of mutual support with other local UCC congregations. We could be sharing experiences, information, and other resources with our sister churches for the health and wellbeing of each. Together, we might be able to increase youth participation in our churches, build even stronger Christian Education programs, better serve the needs of struggling individuals and families in the area, and grow our congregations.

Two years ago, we took some tentative steps towards reestablishing a local web of mutual support by working with St. John’s UCC, New Columbia on a Vacation Bible School. It’s time to continue that effort by joining with other congregations to do even more. The possibilities are endless. But the outcomes are sure to prepare us for the future God has planned for St. John’s.

Gary Nottis

THANKS — from the — HEART

Dear St. John's,

Thanks so much for inviting Ken and me to the lovely Christmas dinner!
Such fun!

Sally & Ken Kellermeyer

Dear St. John's UCC,

Please accept our most sincere appreciation for all that you do in support of the food bank. It takes generous people like you in our community to make this valuable program a success. Thanks for your ongoing care and support!

Cindy Garmer, Teri Manganao, and Jo Orris

Dear Members of St. John's,

Thank you so much for the cards, calls and kind thoughts sent my way while I am recovering.

Thanks also to Pastor Bob for his visit and for bringing the Altar flowers.

It means a lot to have so much support from my church family!

Linda Sartwell

THE REST OF THE STORY

As part of worship on January 6th, all St. John's leadership elected at the November, 2018, Congregational Meeting (all Church Officers and members of our six Standing Committees) were called forward to be installed into their positions within the congregation for the coming year.

As impressive as that sight was, it is only part of the St. John's story. For every person serving in an elected position, there is at least one other serving as a volunteer of some sort.

There are (at the risk of missing someone), for example, our Worship Hour Greeters (Dot & Art Bower, Tess & Fred Groover, Martha and Bruce Rauch, and Linda & Wayne Williams); our Children's Church leaders (Don Adams, Liz DeSantis, Angie Donlin, and Linda Williams); our Weis and Giant Gift Card sellers (Brian Griffith, Todd Hummel, and Sue & Jim Tomlinson); our Sunday morning offering counters (Sue Baish, Deb Catherman, Jean Ressler, Linda Sartwell, Millie Satteson, Marie Smith, Dianna Spickler, and Barbara Woodson); our altar parament attendants (Jean & John Letteer); our Sunday morning audio (Sue Baish, Alex Catherman, and Linda Sartwell) and video technicians (Barry Catherman); and our recruiters for acolytes (Kelly Snayberger), Scripture readers (Linda Sartwell), and offering ushers (Dianna Spickler), to say nothing of our faithful Sunday School teachers (Chris DeSantis, Liz DeSantis, Gary Nottis, and Linda Williams).

We are most appreciative for the time, energy, and love that these many, mostly-unsung volunteers bring to their tasks among us! Thank you, all!





HOW'S THE NEW ORGANIZATION GOING?

With last year's amending of St. John's Constitution & By-Laws, we are now duly re-organized to function on the basis of our six Working Committees--namely, Building & Grounds, Christian Education, Hospitality & Growth; Mission & Social Action, Stewardship & Finance/Personnel, and Worship & Music.

Happily, each of these groups has a full complement of members to share in the program planning and to shoulder the work generated by it. Each is also personally represented at Consistory meetings, so that the proverbial left hand always knows what the right hand is doing, benefiting the overall agenda for the congregation.

Changing from one pattern of organization and style of doing things to a new one is never an easy thing. While it is expected that there will be wrinkles that will need ironing out through this first year, things overall have been progressing very nicely. In terms of the "report card" for our efforts, then, we'd have to say that things to date are going very well.

Many thanks to all who so ably serve as one of our Church Officers or as a member of one of these core Committees! They are making it happen!!

Upcoming Sunday Morning Adult Christian Education Topics

During the month of February, the Sunday Morning Adult Christian Education class will be completing one fascinating study and then beginning another.

First, the class will be completing its five-part study of the Apocrypha, those 17 "In-Between" books that separate the Old Testament from the New Testament in some, but not all Bibles. Altogether, the books of the Apocrypha offer a glimpse into the period spanning the return of the Babylonian Exiles to their homeland up until the Roman occupation of Palestine. They provide important insights into Jewish thought that influenced the life and times of Jesus. These final discussions will take place on February 3rd and February 10th.

Following the completion of the Apocrypha study, the class will launch into a four-part exploration of the Book of Galatians, Paul's witness to the Celtic tribes situated in the ancient Roman province of Galatia. This in-depth Bible study will examine the origins of the Celts, Paul's relationship with them, the purpose of the Book of Galatians, issues addressed by the book, and the influence Paul had on the eventual rise of Celtic Christianity.

Our consideration of the **Book of Galatians will begin Sunday, February 17th and continue into the month of March.** The tentative class schedule is as follows.

February 17th – Introduction; February 25th – Paul's Teachings for the Celts; March 3rd – Foolish Celts: Issues Addressed in Galatians; March 10th – Galatians and the Rise of Celtic Christianity

If you are considering attending these classes, please remember:

There is no cost for any class materials.

You don't need to make a commitment to participate every Sunday. Just come when you can.

All our welcome! Don't miss out on these wonder opportunities to expand and enrich your faith!

AN APPROACHING ADULT ENRICHMENT OPPORTUNITY

It may seem like we're way ahead of the curve on this one, but it's time to announce the next Adult Enrichment event, which will begin early in March. The deadline for "registration" falls on Sunday, February 24th, in order that we can get the books ordered in plenty of time for participants to begin the reading.

The subject of this seminar will be the provocative 14th Century German priest and mystic named Johannes Eckhart. Given the appellation "Meister" (i.e., "Master"), Eckhart serves as a congregational pastor whose preaching evokes the acclaim of many--and the condemnation of some, who lodge formal charges of heresy against him.

His remarkable ideas, deeply grounded in his personal spirituality, influence many thinkers in the generations to follow, including, in our own day, theologian Matthew Fox and the "Creation Spirituality" folks, and contemporary writer Eckhart Tolle (who goes so far as to adopt the Meister's name).

If you're seeking a powerfully spiritual focus for the upcoming Lenten weeks, then this may be a series that you'll want to share in. The sessions will be held on the Wednesday evenings of March 13th, 20th, 27th, and April 3rd and 10th, in the Community Room, beginning each evening at 7 p.m. The only cost is that for the text (roughly \$10 each). To get your name on the list, give a call to the Church Office (523-0162).



The Congregation has begun to enjoy coffee and fellowship before the worship service. We would like to extend the same opportunity to the UCC military chaplains and troops in Afghanistan, Iraq and Kuwait. The Holy Joe's Café ministry enables the UCC chaplains to provide a coffee house atmosphere for spiritual care and good coffee. This program can be supported by placing a donation in the Holy Joe's container located by the coffee cart or visit Holy Joe's Café' at www.ucc.org.



Rejoicing Spirits worship service was a blessing to 28 people on Thursday night, January 10th. Through the spirit-filled direction of our friends from St. Andrew's Episcopal church, we celebrated Epiphany with song, scripture and glow sticks. We let our light shine as we marched around the sanctuary and out into the narthex for a time of refreshments. Nine special worshipers, accompanied by their four care-givers, enjoyed singing, playing instruments and munching on snacks. We owe many tanks to Mother Sarah and the piano accompanist, Sharon who brought the message through word and song. Refreshments were provided by Retta Lincicome, from Beaver United Methodist church.

Plan to gather on Thursday, February 14th at 6:30 p.m. for our February Rejoicing Spirits worship service.

WHAT HAPPENS IF IT SNOWS?

Will we have to cancel church this winter? If the weather is bad, listen to one of these radio stations to hear if St. John's has cancelled services.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE:

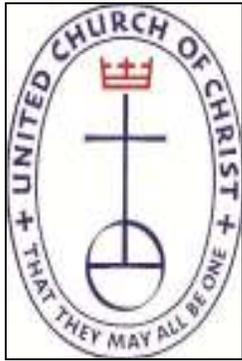
www.stjohnslewisburg.org

or our Facebook page

WGRC 91.3 FM

WKOK 1070 AM WQKX 94.1 FM

Will the office be closed? If the weather is bad, call first.



WORSHIP HOURS
Sunday School: 9:00 a.m.
Coffee Café - 9:30 a.m.
Worship: 10:00 a.m.

Visit us on the Web!
www.stjohnslewisburg.org



St. John's United Church of Christ **An Open and Affirming Congregation**

1050 Buffalo Road
 Lewisburg, PA 17837
 Phone: 570-523-0162
 E-mail: stjohnsucc@ptd.net

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you're welcome here!



The Communion offering for **February** is dedicated to **Church Vocation Fund**.
 The Communion offering for **March** is dedicated to **One Great Hour of Sharing**.
Thanks for your continued support of St. John's missions!



You are invited to an evening out of Italian Cuisine on **February 16th at 6:00** in our Fellowship Hall. The menu will include salad, bread, lasagna and a dessert. Donations will be accepted to offset the cost of the meal and any additional moneys will be donated to the local Food Pantry. Reservations can be made on the poster in the narthex. Invite a friend or another couple to share an evening of fellowship and food.
 Sponsored by the Hospitality and Growth Committee

Another Joyous Christmas Day Spent at St. John's!

This past Christmas, members of St. John's once again hosted a Christmas Day Dinner for individuals who would otherwise celebrate Christmas alone or who simply wished to spend the day with their church family. Originally started in 2004 as an initiative of the Evangelism and Membership Committee, this annual dinner has been offered without interruption for the past 14 years, thanks largely to the efforts of Linda Sartwell, as well as a small group of committed St. John's members, including Kay and Gary Nottis, and Brenda and Don Adams. Also joining in this year was Beth Moser. And of course, this event couldn't have continued through the years without the help and donations of past and present St. John's members, especially Russ Richard, who helped with getting the tables ready and later cleanup as well as providing fruit salad for many years.

This year's Christmas Day dinner was the largest ever held. Twenty-eight individuals were treated to a variety of hors d'oeuvres and glasses of punch, before being seated for a sumptuous meal that included roast turkey, ham, mashed potatoes, sweet potato casserole, stuffing, rolls, and much more. Following the dinner, several kinds of desserts, as well as coffee and tea were also served. It was a time of warmth, celebration, and heartwarming memories. And, as always, there were leftovers for all attendees to take home with them. Everyone loves that ham or turkey sandwich Christmas night!

If this sounds like a Christmas tradition you would like to be a part of, think about joining in the festivities next year or prayerfully consider how you can help to make it another St. John's success. It is an experience you'll cherish and never forget!