

St. John's Way, Truth and Life

218 N. Jefferson St. Kittanning, PA 16201-1324

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December 2025



Let the little children
come to me....

LUKE 18:16

*Our Vision is to be a church
for all generations nurturing the faith
by supporting young families.*

When St. John's worships, all the baptized are expected to be present to worship our God. We worship Him in the most ancient, historical, western rite which dates back millennia. When we worship, we enter into something bigger than ourselves—for these are the ways of God.

When we worship, we enter into something that has been passed down to us, and we are dedicated to passing on the faith to upcoming generations. Children learn to worship by worshipping. There is no minimum age for worship, (nor a maximum age).

In fact, we are all the children of God—from the oldest to the youngest of us. Sometimes young families need help. When they do, remember to help. We worship God not as individuals, but as the body of Christ, the communion of saints, the holy catholic church. We are the community that the Holy Spirit has called together in baptism to worship the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Worship is a gift from God. Spend time with God: praising Him, listening to His Word for our lives, being reminded of who we are and whose we are—we desperately need these things. The Lord provides.

See you in Worship,

Pastor Johnson



St. John's Lutheran Church

Presents the

Annual Christmas Concert

Featuring:

The Vocal Choirs

The Bell Choirs

Under the direction of Rebecca Veith

Accompanist Elizabeth Cramer

Sunday, December 7, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

Admission is free.

No offering will be taken.

Refreshments to follow the concert.



Congregational Meeting:

Sunday, December 14th

following 11:00 am worship

for the purpose of electing new Congregational Council members, voting on designating the 2024 New Church Building Fund earnings for the building loan and voting to ratify the Constitutional Amendments to the national NALC Constitution.

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Electronic Giving is Good for You and the Church

You can now make a contribution to our church

through a mobile app!

To get started, download GivePlus Church for free from the App Store or Google Play. Simply search for "GivePlus Church" to quickly find and download the app today. Then, you can easily make donations directly from your smartphone using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account.

You can also choose to donate as a guest or set up an account that allows you to securely and conveniently schedule recurring donations and manage and review your giving history.

We hope you enjoy this new way to contribute to our ministry, and thank you for your support.

1. Download the free app on your Apple or Android phone.
2. Make one-time or recurring donations using your debit/credit card or checking/savings account.
3. Log in or donate as a guest.
4. Securely and conveniently manage donations using Touch ID/Fingerprint, PIN or password.

To give through the app, search your phone's app store for "GivePlus Mobile" or contact the church office.

To give from your personal computer go to:
<https://secure.myvanco.com>

"Give according to your income,
 lest God make your income
 according to your giving."



"Give according to your income,
 lest God make your income
 according to your giving."

Mark Your Calendars

December 7	Christmas Concert
December 14	Christmas Pageant
December 14	Congregational Meeting

*Every Sunday morning
 Jesus is waiting
 to meet you in church.*



- Decided to call a Congregational Meeting for December 14th following worship for the election of Council Members.
- Decided to recommend to the December 14th Congregational Meeting that the New Church Building Fund Earnings from 2024 be used to pay off debts to the Capital Campaign.
- Decided to recommend to the December 14th Congregational Meeting ratifying the Constitutional Amendments to the national NALC Constitution.
- Received thank yous from Received thank you from Bethesda Lutheran Services, Lutheran Military Veterans and Families Ministries, Progressive Workshop, Water Missions, Lutheran World Relief, Hope Lutheran Church Smethport, Lutheran Bible Translators (for the Ethiopian Seminary), and North American Lutheran Seminary for donations.

A complete copy of the approved minutes from each month is posted on bulletin boards in the Narthex and Education Building.

Your Church Council members are always available for your questions and concerns:

Ryan Shafer, Vice President	724-859-2749
Bill Bouch -	724-859-0359
Chris Choncek	724-664-6947
Wendy Hodak	724-664-4345
Elijah Holt	860-534-0023
Gene Hughes	724-859-1497
Patricia Kirkpatrick	724-525-0962
Susan Neal	724-763-8331
Brendan Swanson	724-525-7255
John Swanson	724-525-1381
Richard Thorell	724-349-5287
Jill Wranich	724-902-9389

Each Sunday we are examining different parts of the liturgy. As we look at each individual part of the worship service, we are exploring why we do it, and why it is essential, and how worship is so much bigger than ourselves. Having the privilege of entering into the mysteries of God each Sunday is truly a blessing from God.

Children and Youth December 2025

December Kids Stuff:

Sunday Dec. 10th:

Christmas Pageant Dec. 14th @ 10am.
Rehearsals, 10am Sunday Nov. 23-Dec. 7

No Spark in the Month of December*

December Student Stuff:

Sunday Dec. 7th: No Youth Group, Come to
Christmas Concert @7pm

Ispirare Coffee Shop Bible Study:

Sign up for Group Text,
see Marlee Smith to be added

DATE AND TIME TBA FOR DECEMBER

Tuesday Dec. 30th: Youth Group Christmas
Party & Caroling! 5-8pm



**Youth Group Christmas
Party and Singing
Carols to Shut Ins!**

Tuesday Dec. 30th

5-8pm



K-love Challenge for 2026!
Only listen to CHRISTIAN
Music for an entire month!
See how much what we
listen to, can change our
hearts and minds!

*98.3fm, KLOVE.COM, or Christian Playlists
on Spotify and I-Tunes!*

*Check out... Josiah Queen, Phil Wickham,
Leanna Crawford, Elevation Worship and MORE!*



DECEMBER

2 Kaitlyn Young
 3 Erik Repak, Bob Barto
 6 Bekki Lash, Tabitha Bowser,
 Alycia Lambert, Kylie Shultze
 7 Jeffrey P. Boarts, Mona Bouch

8 Peggy Goldstrohm, Kelly Bearer, Lloyd Cravener
 10 Megan Taylor, Vera Hartung
 11 Rose Montgomery
 12 Karl Walker, Noah Spatafore, Gail Purvis
 13 James Enders, Emily Boarts, Helen Boarts, Helen Kaufman, Beverley Kozuch, Rochelle Debna
 14 Tanner Law
 16 Edward Parry, Donna Loughery
 17 Sandra Bradigan, Randy Lash,
 18 Debbie Frye, Kent Walker,
 Nick Wranich
 19 Jeffrey A. Boarts
 22 Connie Choncek
 23 Kiersten Houde, Kimberly Tregaskes
 25 Crystal Olinger, Julie Tomiczek
 26 Carol Runninger
 27 Jonathan Pfeister, Katie Panchik, Tyra Sanders
 28 Ashley Nolte
 30 Josh Howlett



Our October Church Offerings

	Oct.	Oct.	Year	Budget
<u>Offerings</u>	<u>Receipts</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>To-Date</u>	<u>To-Date</u>
Current				
Operating	25,754	27,974	237,241	279,737
Benevolence	2,389	3,333	16,578	33,333
Capital				
Campaign	2,065	1,655	24,647	16,550
Current Account	Income	Expenses	Gain/-Loss	
Current Month	25,754	25,000	754	
Year to Date	237,241	249,444	-12,203	



ATTENDANCE

Our October Worship Attendance

October	2024	2025
1 st Sunday in Oct.	114	120
2 nd Sunday in Oct.	94	E(41) L(73)
3 rd Sunday in Oct.	E(47) L(74)	86
4 th Sunday in Oct.	206	182
5 th Sunday in Oct.		
Average for Oct.	133	125

Empower the Mission and Ministry of St. John's!

Amounts needed in offerings during November and December to meet our budget in the following accounts:

Current Account: \$98,000.00
 Benevolence: \$24,000.00

Every November and December we count on your generosity to make up the difference in these accounts so that we finish the year in the black. This year presents a very great challenge for each and every one of us! Please consider increasing your giving and/or making a significant one time gift over and above your normal offerings. Thank you for your continued commitment to making the mission and ministry of Jesus Christ happen at St. John's.

Creative ways of year end giving to St. John's:

- It is possible, if you are over 70 1/2, to make a direct payment from your IRA to St. John's. This saves the taxes and the gift is still eligible for a charitable gift deduction.
- Giving stock saves capital gains taxes and the gift is still eligible for a charitable gift deduction.



Heading into the hospital?

If you or a member of your family is hospitalized, please contact the office @ 724-548-2051. Because of confidentiality issues, the hospitals are not as helpful in notifying us as they once were.

"Jesus did not come to make God's love possible, but to make God's love visible."



Thank You's for December 2025:

- ♥ To Linda Charley, Ruth Ann Hankey, Betty Mitchell, Susan Neal, and Janice Smith for helping with the November newsletter mailing.
- ♥ To everyone who continues to support & donate to the Katie's Cupboard Ministry @ St. John's.
- ♥ What a feast we had on Reformation Sunday from all of the churches contributing dishes and desserts. So much frolic-ing cooking and cleaning up we had as well! Thanks so much to the crew: Scott Stirling, Mark and Sharon Hankey, Toni Smail, Connie McMaster, Blair & Mary Jane Dawson, Gene Hughes, Nick and Jill, Jerah & Mitch Wranich, Bill and Deb, Molly, Emily and Bill Bouch, Tammy Fleeger, Karen Waugaman.
- ♥ Thank you to everyone who helps with the Fellowship Hours after worship!
- ♥ Thanks to all who came for the food, fun and fellowship for the local Turkey Fund Drive. It was a great success again this year! Thrivent for providing funds (thanks Rose Montgomery), Nick, Jill, Jerah & Mitch Wranich, Bill, Deb, Molly, Emily and Bill Bouch, Toni Smail, Connie McMaster, Tammy Fleeger, Sandy Duncan, Karen Waugaman, Gene Hughes, Becky and John Swanson, Michelle and Ralph Kozlowski and ALL the wonderful *Pie People* who baked!
- ♥ Thank you to the following crew who helped tremendously to make our Super Spark Event AMAZING!! Our Kitchen Crew, Tammy Fleeger and Sue Bain! Our Group, Game and Craft Leaders: Emily Bouch, Vaila, Vieira and Avia Clever, Ella Fennell, Nicholas Furguiele, Donna Livengood & Stella and Anna Venesky, And our Special Guest: Captain America, Rich Farah!
- ♥ Thanks to Tammy Fleeger and Jessica Bailey for an awesome Movie Night, Great food and treats, and watching over our group!
- ♥ Thanks to Jessica Bailey for Chaperoning the Lock In!
- ♥ Thank you to our praise band members for your time, talents and service to God and St Johns, leading worship!
- ♥ Thank you to EVERYONE who continually supports our Children's & Youth Ministry!
- ♥ Thank you to our Youth who step up to fill in to acolyte, serving in many ways at worship, cleaning up various events, or leading a Bible study, or Christian Group at school! You are a great example for the next kids coming up after you. Keep up the great work of God!

- ♥ Thanks to our brass ensemble Dan Minnich, Brendan Swanson, Karina Blose and Nick Wranich for providing special music on Reformation Sunday.
- ♥ Thanks to Dean Crooks and Mark Hankey for fixing the knee wall in the alley.
- ♥ To those who helped with the Marve Gaiser Funeral Dinner: Toni Smail, Patty Olinger, Mary Olinger, Jack & Debbie Griffin, Nancy Johnson, Sandy Duncan, Ruth Ann Hankey, Betty Mitchel, Sharon Hankey, Blair & Mary Jane Dawson, Charlie Bleakney, Kay Thorell, Nancy Pierce, Gene Hughes, Julie Smith, Marcia Williamson.
- ♥ I so appreciate my church family and all you have done to support myself and family during this time of Marve's passing. From lifted prayers, hugs, items for the kiddos and an awesome dinner here at St Johns - you always & truly show Christ's love. I hold each and every one of you dear to my heart ~ Tammy
- ♥ To Men's Breakfast Cooking Crew: Scott Sikowski Ken Burkett, Scott Stirling, Keith Livengood, Clair Roudebush, Dean Crooks and Pastor Johnson.



A time of fellowship will be provided each Sunday after worship in the Gathering Space. Please plan to stay after worship to meet and greet fellow members and visitors of St. John's. If you would like to help host a fellowship hour, please see Pastor Johnson.



CHURCH MUSIC NOTES

The Senior Ringers will hold a special Christmas Concert rehearsal Sunday December 7th immediately following the worship service from 12:30-1:30.

The Senior Vocal Choir will meet at 5:30 pm Sunday, December 7th to warm up for the Christmas Concert.

No choir rehearsals on December 10th – enjoy a well-deserved evening off!



Katie's Cupboard

Thanks so much for your outpouring of love, prayers and support~

Lenape Tech, Mr. Choncek's classes, Harvest Home Sunday and your donations have made this fall an overwhelming success in ministering to our community.

As winter is preparing for full swing, please remember Katie's after this holiday season.

The need for a warm meal and necessities does not change. **HOWEVER, you** are impacting lives in the greatest of ways as Jesus commanded, "love your neighbor".

If you would care to volunteer, have great ideas to further this ministry, offer suggestions ~please contact any member of council, Amber Zurn 724/902-9471 or Tammy Fleeger 724/664-1773.

"You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them.... That's how prayer works" ~ Pope Francis



Social Ministry Christmas Project

This year we have the opportunity to adopt families for Christmas. There are sign-up boards in the narthex that list wants, needs and sizes. If you

are unable to shop but would like to help, please make a donation in an envelope marked Christmas Families and place it in the offering. If you choose to purchase the item(s), please place a check mark in the box next to each item you wish to purchase. Please use gift cards for food assistance. Remember to get a gift receipt when purchasing the gift and enclose it with the gift.

Gifts should be unwrapped and a gift tag on each gift with the child's number.

IMPORTANT! The gifts should be brought to the church by **Sunday, December 7th** and each package marked with a Post it note attached on the outside describing the item inside and the name of the child (***this information is for the committee only***).

Any questions, please contact Michelle Kozlowski at 724-816-1680. Thank you for your support!



Christmas in the Barn

December 10th at 7:00 pm at 256 Adrian Sherrett Road St. Mark's is hosting a Christmas Carol Service for all area NALC congregations. The service will feature carol singing, and a special Christmas sermon by Vicar Matthew. Following the service there will be hot chocolate, cookies, and fellowship.

Come experience Christmas in the Barn amidst the cattle, sheep, oxen, and donkeys—and get a feel for the way the holy birth really took place.

Oh Come Let us Worship Him!

"The more you recognize and express gratitude for the things you have, the more things you will have to express gratitude for."

—Zig Ziglar



Internet streaming

St. John's Live Broadcast

The St. John's worship service is broadcast live on You Tube each Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Christmas Eve service will also be broadcast live at 7:00 p.m. and again at 11:00 p.m.

"It is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child himself."

—Charles Dickens



During the Christmas holiday, please take a little time to remember our shut-ins. A card or letter would certainly brighten their holiday and let them know they are being thought of.

For your convenience, their names and addresses are listed below:

SHUT-INS

Jane Neidig
1360 N. Grant Avenue
Kittanning, PA 16201-1052

Mrs. Gloria Sgro
729 Ferne Dr.
Kittanning, PA 16201

Mrs. Dorothy Rush
4165 W. Pike Road
Indiana, PA 15701

Mrs. Vivian Bowser
Grey's Colonial Acres
272 Colonial Rd. Rm 405
Kittanning, PA 16201

Mrs. Vera Hartung
246 East Brady Road
Kittanning, PA 16201-2050

Mr. and Mrs. Emil Debnar
379 Lemmon Hollow Road
Kittanning, PA 16201

Mrs. Carole Cable
Concordia at Cabot
134 Marwood Road
RM 2235 Lund Building
Cabot, PA 16023

Mrs. Helen Boarts
147 Butler Road
PO Box 974
Kittanning, PA 16201-0974

Mrs. Virginia Dodd
Rosebrook
723 South Pike Road
Room 503
Sarver, PA 16055

*"Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love."
—Hamilton Wright Mabie*

*"So sing! The song of rejoicing softens hard hearts."
—Hildegard of Bingen (12th century)*



We have a Texting App!

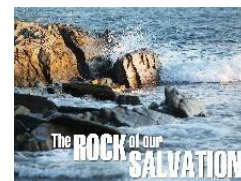
Mojo texting was created FOR churches! It is safe and doesn't sell your number to anyone else!

If you would like to receive schedule changes, updates, reminders and announcements from St. John's, please text the word **GRACE** to 724-276-5321. It will send you a welcome message.

You will now receive important messages via text about what's going on at St. John's! Messages will only be sent out on occasion and when important changes need to be communicated.

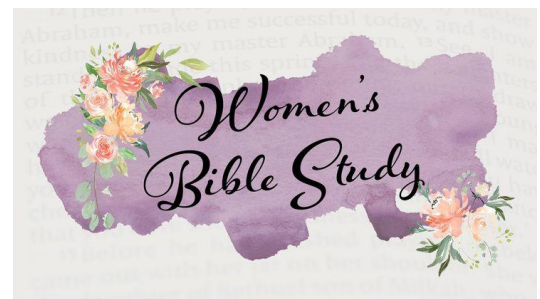
Thank you so much!

If you have any questions, please contact Julie Smith.



Rock of our Salvation Worship

8:30 a.m. Sunday, December 28th.



Women's Bible Study

will return at the King's restaurant on **Tuesday, December 9th at noon**. Any questions, please contact Rose Montgomery at rosetrix38@comcast.net. All are welcome!

A Farmer's Prayer

A pastor asked an older farmer, decked out in bib overalls, to say grace for the morning breakfast.

"Lord, I hate buttermilk", the farmer began. The visiting pastor opened one eye to glance at the farmer and wonder where this was going. The farmer loudly proclaimed, "Lord, I hate lard." Now the pastor was growing concerned.

Without missing a beat, the farmer continued, "And Lord, You know I don't much care for raw white flower". The pastor once again opened an eye to glance around the room and saw that he wasn't the only one to feel uncomfortable.

Then the farmer added, "But Lord, when you mix them all together and bake them, I do love warm, fresh biscuits. So Lord, when things come up that we don't like, when life gets hard, when we don't understand what you're saying to us, help us to just relax and wait until you are done mixing. It will probably be even better than biscuits. Amen."



Christmas Tree Set Up and Decorating

Tuesday, December 9th @ 6:00 p.m.

Sanctuary Decorating

After Church, Sunday, December 21st

*Prepare Ye
The way of the Lord!*
—John, Son of Zechariah



Christmas Poinsettias

If you would like to place a poinsettia(s) in our Church for the Christmas Eve service, please complete and return this form with your check made payable to: "St. John's Lutheran Church" marked "Christmas Flowers" in the memo line. **Poinsettias are \$9.00 each and orders must be received by Monday, December 8, 2025.**

Number of **RED**: _____

Number of **WHITE**: _____

I wish for the acknowledgment in the bulletin to read as follows:

PLEASE PRINT, USING FIRST AND LAST NAMES

IN MEMORY OF:

IN HONOR OF:

GIVEN BY:

Please check one: Check _____ Cash _____

Check # _____ Amount \$ _____

Please check one:

_____ I will take my poinsettia(s) with me after the Christmas Eve service.

_____ Please take my poinsettia to a shut-in.

*"The world can't save itself.
That's the message of Christmas."*
—Timothy Keller

December

December 7

Assisting Minister Gene Hughes
 Lector Jonah Petruschke
 Communion Susan Barto, Susan Neal
 Lance & Christine Whiteman
 Acolyte Ella Fennell
 Welcome Team The Shafer Family
 Camera Operators Bill Bouch

December 14

Assisting Ministers Charlie Bleakney
 Lectors Colvin Adkins
 Acolytes Vieira Clever
 Welcome Team The Bouch Family
 Camera Operator Keith Livengood

December 21

Assisting Ministers Sara Shafer
 Lectors Elijah Holt
 Communion Charlie Bleakney & Corina Blose
 Sophia & Elijah Holt
 Acolytes Kendall Bailey
 Welcome team The Bailey & Jazwinski Families
 Camera Operator Nick Wranich

December 24: 7pm

Assisting Minister Debbie Bouch
 Lector Emily Bouch
 Communion William & Mollie Bouch
 Acolytes Mitchell Wranich & William Bouch
 Welcome team The Griffins & Adkins Families
 Camera Operator Robert John

December 24: 11pm

Assisting Minister Karen Waugaman
 Lector Charlie Bleakney
 Communion TBA
 Acolytes TBA
 Welcome team TBA
 Camera Operator Bill Bouch

December 28

Assisting Minister Robert John (E)
 Karen Waugaman (L)
 Lector Cassidy Smith (E)
 Nancy Pierce (L)
 Communion Gracie Hodak & Melissa Venesky (E)
 Acolyte Tommy Baker (E)
 Avia B. Clever (L)
 Welcome team The Farahs (E)
 Baylee & Brandy Kozlowski (L)
 Camera Operator Robert John (E)
 Keith Livengood (L)

"Because of his boundless love, Jesus became what we are that he might make us to be what he is."

—Irenaeus, third-century

December

Altar Guild: The Bouch Family

Money Counters: John Swanson, Susan Neal, Ryan Shafer

Ushers: Mark Hankey, Dean Crooks, Ed Walker, & Kraig Walker

Children's Hour:

Children's Hour is every Wednesday or Thursday from 9:30 a.m. until

11:00 a.m. **Christmas Party:** Dec. 10th & 11th.

Class resumes Jan. 7th & 8th




St. John's Lutheran Church Staff:

Director of Children's & Youth Ministry Julie Smith
 Secretary Angela B. Clever
 Sexton TBA
 Director of Music/Organist Rebecca Veith
 Sr. Choir Accompanist Elizabeth Cramer

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."



December St. John's Lutheran Church 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30 First Sunday in Advent <small>Blue</small> 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Senior Choir 11:00 Worship First Advent Preparations	1	2	3 9:30 Children's Hour 6:15 Senior Bells 7:00 PJ's Bible Study 7:30 Senior Choir	4 9:30 Children's Hour 2:45 Catechism 7:00 Catechism	5	6
7 Second Sunday in Advent <small>Blue</small> 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Senior Choir 11:00 Worship: Communion 7:00 Christmas Concert	8	9 12:00 Womens Study at Kings 6:00 Christmas Tree Set-up, Decorating	10 9:30 Children's Hour 6:15 Senior Bells 7:00 Advent in the Barn 7:30 Senior Choir	11 9:30 Children's Hour 2:45 Catechism 7:00 Catechism	12	13 8:00 a.m. Men's Breakfast
14 Third Sunday in Advent <small>Blue</small> 10:00 Christmas Pageant 10:00 Senior Choir 11:00 Worship After Worship: Congregational Meeting Reception in honor of Julie Smith's 15th Anniversary as our Director of Children's and Youth Ministry	15 7:00 Council	16	17 6:15 Senior Bells 7:00 PJ's Bible Study 7:30 Senior Choir	18 1:00 Newsletter mailing 2:45 Catechism 7:00 Catechism	19	20
21 Fourth Sunday in Advent <small>Blue</small> 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Senior Choir 11:00 Worship: Communion After Worship: Decorating	22	23	24 Christmas Eve <small>White</small> 7:00 Worship: Communion 11:00 Worship: Communion	 Office Closed	25 Office Closed	26
28 First Sunday After Christmas <small>White</small> 8:30 Worship: Rock of our Salvation 9:45 Sunday School 10:00 Senior Choir 11:00 Worship: Hymn Sing	29	30 5-8 p.m. Youth Christmas Party/Caroling to shut-ins	31	1 Office Closed	2	3