

St. John's News

St. John's United Church of Christ
183 South Broad Street, Nazareth, PA 18064-2153
610-759-0893 ~ Fax: 610-759-0868

Web Site: www.sjucnaz.org

Email: mail@sjucnaz.org



Christmas Eve Worship ~ 2017

Family Service
4:00 p.m.



**The Animals'
First Christmas**



Candlelight Services
7:00 & 9:30 p.m.

Worship Invitation: Worship and celebrate with us as we ponder the light which is brought by God into the world.

Message: **Light in the Darkness**
Scripture: Isaiah 9:2-7;
Titus 2:11-14;
Luke 2:1-20

*Friendly
Reminders*

- ~ **Order your Poinsettias** — by December 6.
- ~ **Order your Christmas Cookies** through December 10. Pick-up is December 17.
- ~ **Submit your Memorial Stars Order Form** to the Church Office by Monday, December 18.
- ~ **Have a Heart** gifts are due on Sunday, December 17.



**Advent
Communion**

Sunday, December 3
8:00 & 10:45 a.m.



In case of inclement weather on a Sunday... please call the Church Office at 610-759-0893 and press 2 for weather related information, visit WFMZTV Channel 69 News Storm Center, or online at www.wfmz.com/weather/storm-center.

Do Some Christmas Shopping



Join us at a private sale at “**Missing Piece,**” 462 Bushkill Center Road, Nazareth (about a half mile past the Nazareth Boro Park) on **Sunday, December 3,** from **5-8 p.m.**

The store offers a fabulous selection of gifts, furniture, Vera Bradley items and candles.

A portion of the proceeds from the evening's sales will help us to offer unique gifts and baskets at the Italian Dinner and Buffet in the spring and help our Summer Crew. Refreshments will be served.

Volunteers Needed at St. John's for Christmas in Nazareth

**Saturday, December 9, 2017
12:00-4:00 p.m.**

St. John's will participate in this year's "Christmas in Nazareth" celebration as a way of encouraging fellowship with others in our community. We have accepted an invitation to use our parking lots for visitor parking and trolley pick-up. The trolley has been sponsored by The Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce. The trolley will have about five drop off points around town, and will be perfect for riders to start and finish their trips at St. John's.

We are still looking for a few adult and youth volunteers for several different events throughout the day, hopefully in just one or two hour shifts. These include: men to help with the trolley riders, greeters to welcome visitors and guide them to our church activities, youth to help with crafts for children, and women to donate and serve a variety of finger foods. Please join us in welcoming the community to St. John's. Flyers, posters, signs, and newspaper ads are being paid for by the Lehigh Valley Chamber.

St. John's U.C.C. Schedule

Bell Choir Performance

1:30 - 2:15 p.m. in the sanctuary
Conductor - Rick Hilborn
Organist - Susan Frickert

Refreshments: 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Hot and cold drinks
A variety of finger foods

Children's Craft Tables: 12:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Make and Take Projects
Theme: Winter

Age appropriate - toddler to 12 years.

~ Mark Your Calendar ~

- ~ Parish Health Winter Doldrums Series
 - January 14 - Movie Matinee
 - February 11 - Wii Tournament
 - February 25 - Bingo
 - March 10 - Game Night
- ~ January 28 - Buffet Brunch
- ~ February 25 - Annual Congregational Meeting

December Church School News

The Church School teachers and children, pre-school through fifth grade, are excited to celebrate the season of Advent. We will continue to follow our curriculum, "Faith Weaver Now".

Here are the Bible stories that we will be reading, hearing and experiencing during the month of December to prepare us for Christmas. We will be spending time reading through the Gospels of Mark, John and Luke, preparing for the birth of Jesus.

December 3: John the Baptist Prepares the Way for Jesus – Mark 1:1-8

Bible Point: We prepare our hearts for Jesus.

December 10: God Dwells With Us – John 1:1-14

Bible Point: Jesus is God

December 17: Jesus is Born - Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20

Bible Point: Jesus was born for us.

December 24: Special Presentation by Church School Children during the 9:30 a.m. worship service. (Children to report to class rooms at 9:00 a.m. to prepare for Worship Service.) No Church School

December 31: No Church School

The Church School Teachers will also be leading the Children's Message throughout the month of December!

We would like to wish our children and their families a very Merry Christmas!



The Church Office is requesting your email address....

If you are receiving the newsletter by mail, then this means that we do not have an email address on file for you. If you have an email address, please share it with us by emailing it to the Church Office at mail@sjuccnaz.org. We are working towards emailing as many newsletters and church correspondences out instead of using the postal system in order to reduce mailing expenses. Thank You!!

We extend warm and friendly **Birthday Greetings** to our member who is homebound and having a birthday in December.

December 30 - Pearl Hill



Happy Birthday, with our caring thoughts and prayers.



Church School

(Grades 6-12)

**December Advent Study:
Christmas Gifts that Won't
Break**

All Youth Groups

December 3, 2:00-5:00 p.m. — Caroling with the homebound. One of our favorite times of the year! Dinner provided by your leaders from 5:00-6:00 p.m.

December 9 — Christmas in Nazareth, 12-4:00 p.m. We've got the crafts covered... with ice and snow!

Xplosion and Seekers

December 10, 7:00 p.m. — Let's make Gingerbread houses! Bring a bag of candy to decorate and share.

Leaders: Pam Dawe and Connie Rought

Seekers (Grades 9-12)

December 17 — CookieSwap. Bring the dough ready to bake. Once baked, we'll switch it up!

Leaders: Pam Dawe, Lori Rogora and MargeBaltz

Summer Crew (Grades 9-12)

December 3 and 10 — Cookie orders taken.

December 17 - Delivery of cookies

December 3, 5:00-8:00 p.m. — Missing Piece Private Sale

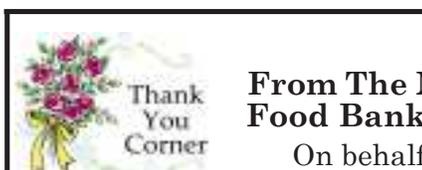
Our Youth in Action...



From Pam Dawe — "When I was a kid I can remember helping out with many Rake n Runs with my church youth group. We always had so much fun, getting exercise hanging out with friends and most of all helping others. I'm glad I can be a part of this rewarding day with my daughter, Grace, and her youth group friends."



Still smiling after loading 4,254 pounds of clothes (with some help) on November 12.



From The Nazareth Area Food Bank...

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I'd like to thank you for the generous donation of \$1,000 from the Social Concerns committee. Every dollar donated is a blessing to our clients, who face a daily struggle to feed their families. We are very grateful for your consideration of those less fortunate in our area.

— Kay Stracko, Corresponding Secretary

From Loaves & Fishes...

Dear Members of St. John's UCC — Thank you for your continued support of Loaves & Fishes, both in your generous donations and the use of your facilities.

Sincerely, Staff of Loaves & Fishes

The Cost of Hiding Our Light

A Los Angeles restaurant owner recently discovered that a neon light had been covered — without being disconnected first — during a construction project 77 years prior. The calculated electricity cost to run the hidden light all that time was \$17,000!

People don't intentionally hide light; that would be counterproductive, not to mention wasteful. Yet when we shrink back from sharing Jesus' good news, we do indeed hide "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14) that is in us. When we're too modest to use God-given talents such as singing, playing piano or reading to bring others joy, we hide our light. When we put our own wants ahead of meeting someone else's needs through giving and serving, we hide the light of God's love. And at what cost?

"Let your light shine before others," Jesus says, "that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven" (verse 16).

Golden Age Sunday



*Diane Detweiler, Elton Johnson
and Pauline Flory*



Golden Age One-Shot Choir was once again the highlight of our celebration! Thanks for your faithful service, singers!

October 22, 2017 was our 110th celebration of Golden Age Sunday. Fifty-five Golden Agers celebrated at the 10:45 worship service along with three guests. Our most distinguished Golden Agers were Pauline Flory, age 94, Elton Johnson, age 90 and guest, Diane Detweiler, age 86. All three were presented with a floral arrangement.

Like the Golden Agers before you, you have shown us through your dedication and leadership how to live your faith by example. Golden Age Sunday is our day to thank you for your faithful leadership and service to the congregation and St. John's through the years.

Several of our youth volunteered to "interview" our Golden Age members as a way to connect the young and old. There were several questions to choose from for their interview. With age comes wisdom. Golden Agers have much to share with us still and we are continuing to learn from them.

The celebration continued with a delicious luncheon prepared by Chef Al Kern and his crew and served by many of our youth. Susan Frickert led us in an old fashioned hymn sing.

A special thank you is extended to Ruth Shirer, Becky Shepherd, Joy Betz, Bev Frey and Debbie Claycomb who assisted greeting our guests and members, and presented each with a yellow carnation for recognition as one of St. John's prestigious "Golden Agers".

*Respectfully Submitted,
Evelyn Kilpatrick and Nancy Thorne*

A Few Things....

- ~ There is one morning worship service at 9:30 a.m. on Sunday, December 24 and 31.
- ~ Offering envelopes will be available for pick up beginning December 10.
- ~ Childcare will not be available at any service on Sunday, December 24 or Sunday, December 31.
- ~ The Church Office will be closed on December 25 & 26.
- ~ The last day for contributions for the year is December 29 at noon.

A Holiness Invasion

"Advent" means "coming," of course, and the promise of Advent is that what is coming is an unimaginable invasion. The mythology of our age has to do with flying saucers and invasions from outer space, and that is unimaginable enough. But what is upon us now is even more so — a close encounter not of the third kind but of a different kind altogether. An invasion of holiness. That is what Advent is about.

— Frederick Buechner, *The Clown in the Belfry*



From the



December 10 is Blood Pressure Day. One of our registered nurses will be in the Miko Chapel following the worship services to check your blood pressure.

REFLECTIONS

Conversations In the Shadow of a Crib

by Pastor Jeff

As I write these words for your reflection, it is more than a month prior to Christmas. We are ending a week in which a horrible and senseless massacre at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas occurred. Children and adults were killed in this small town church by a single gunman who should never have been allowed to purchase the gun that he had, but was able to through an oversight in reporting his name to the agency that would have prevented the purchase. Then on Tuesday, Election Day, we grappled with a State Trooper, a resident of Upper Nazareth Township, who was shot by an individual after a traffic stop. This resulted in the lockdown of our schools until the shooter was located and apprehended. I know that by the time you read these words this will be “old news” and the sad truth is that most likely there will be “new news,” that makes us forget the two incidents I just mentioned. Now, as we approach the time of year when we are in the shadow of the Crib, I would like nothing more than to be able to say we are making progress in this world, but I cannot. Last February, CBS News reported that: Compared to 22 other high-income nations, the United States’ gun-related murder rate is 25 times higher. They quoted a study published February 1 in *The American Journal of Medicine*. “Overall, our results show that the U.S., which has the most firearms per capita in the world, suffers disproportionately from firearms compared with other high-income countries,” said study author Erin Grinshteyn, an assistant professor at the School of Community Health Science at the University of Nevada-Reno. <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/how-u-s-gun-deaths-compare-to-other-countries/>

In this season, when we proclaim God’s Peace, we live in times which are anything but peaceful.

Gun violence seems to be on the rise in our nation and yet we cannot seem to find a way to have a reasonable conversation about this issue. On the one hand, is a group of people shouting at the top of their lungs that we need to get rid of all privately owned guns. On the other hand, a group who raises huge sums of money to ensure that there are few, if any, limits on our “right” to own firearms. In private conversations with people on both ends of the spectrum, it is easy to reach a place where we agree at least on the notion that private citizens do not need to own automatic or military grade weapons. We have been able to reach a place of being able to continue the conversation after we have had time to reflect on what another’s point of view is. We are not able to do this in the “public square.”

Here, in the shadow of a crib, can we find a way to talk about living together in community in safety and harmony? Can we talk about what it means to build a world of hope and peace? How can we stand up as people of faith and say enough! Here, in the shadow of the crib of the Prince of Peace, we find ourselves living in shadows of fear and concern. Dare we stop and offer a stranger in distress our help? Do we need to worship in a locked church or have security checkpoints at the entrances? But wait, isn’t there something about this particular baby that speaks precisely to our longings? Wasn’t Jesus born into a world where hope was dwindling, where oppressors were taking advantage of the people and where people were turning their backs on God? It may not have been gun violence or drug or alcohol overdose, but it was still a time when people lived in fear. Into the midst of this world we hear the voice of the angel bidding us to not be afraid. If we are to live that out, our conversations in the shadows have to become public conversations in the school auditorium or the Sanctuary, or the supermarket or the park. If nothing else, the message of the crib is a message of hope and joy for all of the world. It is a message of love for all the world. It is a message that needs to be shouted!

Our whole family wishes you and yours a very joy-filled and peaceful Holiday Season.

*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 2:10–11
(NRSV)*



December 3 - 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Advent 1 - Hope

Communion

Bring Offering Forward

Preparing for Worship at Home:

1. Complete this phrase: What I hope for the most is _____.
2. Pray about your hope.
3. Share your hope with someone.
4. Find out how someone else would fill in the blank.

Worship Invitation: Hope. What gives you hope? For what is it that you find yourself hoping? Do you see reason for optimism in our world? Join us as we consider whether or not we experience hope in this world.

Message: **Hope in Today's World**

Scripture: Isaiah 64:1-9; 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:24-37

December 10 - 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Advent 2 - Peace

Preparing for Worship at Home:

1. Complete this phrase: I know peace when _____.
2. Pray for the experience of Peace in your life.
3. Share your peacefulness with another.
4. Find out how someone else would fill in the blank.

Worship Invitation: Peace is far more than the absence of conflict. True peace seems to have something to do with faith and relationships. Have you found it? Are you able to hold on to it? Come share your peace or your search for peace with us this morning.

Message: **Do You Know Peace?**

Scripture: Isaiah 40:1-11; 2 Peter 3:8-15a;
Mark 1:1-8

December 17 - 8:00 & 10:45 a.m.

Advent 3 - Joy

Anointing with Oil for Healing

Bring Offering Forward

Preparing for Worship at Home:

1. Complete this phrase: What makes me dance with joy is _____.
2. Pray that you might have more reasons to dance.
3. Share your joy with someone.
4. Find out how someone else would fill in the blank.

Worship Invitation: Come celebrate life with us. Come, dance with us!

Message: **What Causes You to do your Happy Dance?**

Scripture: Psalm 122; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24;
Luke 1:46b-55



December 24 - 9:30 a.m.

Advent 4 - Love

Preparing for Worship at Home:

1. Complete this phrase: Love feels like _____.
2. Pray for opportunities to be more loving.
3. Share your answer with another.
4. Find out how someone else would fill in the blank.

Worship Invitation: Join us at 9:30 as we celebrate the 4th Sunday of Advent.

Message: **What Does Love Feel Like to You?**

Scripture: Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26; Luke 1:26-38;

December 24 - 4:00 p.m.

Family Christmas Eve Service

December 24 - 7:00 and 9:30 p.m.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Services
(See page 1 for details.)

December 31 - 9:30 a.m.

Preparing for Worship at Home: Think about what God has done for you lately.

Worship Invitation: Come sing God's praises with us on this final day of 2017. Celebrate with us the glorious good news that you and I are actually part of God's extended family!

Message: **What Does it Mean to be Part of The Family?**

Scripture: Psalm 148; Luke 2:22-40; Galatians 4:4-7



**Merry
Christmas**
from the staff at St. John's.

Jeffery Brinks

Kathy Sofie

BrendaLee Howell

Marjorie Baltz

Susan Frickert

L. Rick Hilborn

Tammy Bacak

Stephanie McLaughlin

Corinne Remaly

Kristina Caka

Pamela Wallaesa

Anthony Regeg

Shirl Young

Dawn Trapp

SuLin Flanagan

Nicolas Muscler

Rummage Sale Reminder

Do you clean out your closets before Christmas?
After Christmas?

Don't forget to save your "stuff" for our
April 14, 2018 Rummage Sale.



Those Who Serve ~ January

Volunteers are needed to greet on a Sunday morning. If you would like to volunteer, please call the church office at 610-759-0893 or sign up in the DeRemer Gallery.

We are in need of volunteers to be Greeters, Ushers and Soundboard Operators for services on December 24. Please sign up in the DeRemer Gallery or call the Church Office at 610-759-0893.

December 24 — Advent 4 - 9:30 a.m.

**December 24 — Christmas Eve -
4:00, 7:00 and 9:30 p.m.**
Counting Chair - Willie Donnelly

December 31 — One service - 9:30 a.m.

9:30 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Acolyte TBA
Head Usher Richard Kraemer
Sound Board Lou Murante
Counting Chair — Peggy Benfield

January 7

8:00 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Head Usher Carl Solt
Sound Board Walter Fries
10:45 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Acolyte Grace Dawe
Worship Host Annie Schaller
Sound Board Michael Goch
Child Care Kacy Miller
Counting Chair — Marie Ashenfalder

January 14

8:00 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Head Usher Richard Garr
Sound Board Steve Kraemer
10:45 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Acolyte Emma Dorko
Worship Host Nancy Thorne
Sound Board Mark Walter
Child Care Susan McNamara
Counting Chairs — Jerry & Sandra Treon

Ministers: All Members of the Church
Senior Pastor: The Rev. Jeffery A. Brinks
Student Pastor: Kathy Sofie
Parish Nurse: BrendaLee Howell, RN
Youth Ministry Coordinator: Marjorie Baltz
Director of Music: Susan L. Frickert
Handbell Director: L. Rick Hilborn
Director of Nursery School: Jane Radio
Child Care: Tammy Bacak
Nursery Coordinator: Stephanie McLaughlin
Office Manager: Corinne Remaly
Office Secretary: Kristina Caka
Financial Secretary: Pamela Wallaesa
Building Manager: Anthony Regec
Sextons: Shirl Young, Dawn Trapp, SuLin Flanagan, Nicolas Muscler
Editor: Peggy Benfield
Reporters: Linda Danner, Kacy Miller
Photographers: Marge Baltz, Peggy Benfield, Pam Dawe

January 21

8:00 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Head Usher Terri Quinter
Sound Board David Weikel
10:45 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Acolyte Anna Estrada
Worship Hosts Bill & Ruth Shirer
Sound Board Emma Dorko
Child Care Beth Sensenig
Counting Chair — David Blackstone

January 28

8:00 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Head Ushers Les & Ruth Anderson
Sound Board Pat Stracko
10:45 Greeters **2 Volunteers needed**
Acolyte Vanessa Garren
Worship Hosts Scott & Lisa Hoffman
Sound Board John Muscler
Child Care Lauren Madson
Counting Chair — John Waha



The Wills and Memorials Committee has received contributions to the Fund during the month of October 2017 in memory of **Elenora Arndt**.

St. John's is appreciative of the funds received in remembrance of loved ones. Won't you please make your wishes known to your family for memorials to be designated to the church.

Parish Ministrations

Deaths

Margaret LaToure, born November 1, 1927
died October 18, 2017
David Kern, born October 12, 1947
died November 1, 2017



ATTENDANCE

Average Attendance

October 8:00 - 91 10:45 - 133

NewsLetter
DEADLINE

The deadline for submitting newsletter articles is the 15th of each month. Articles may be submitted to the Church Office, the church's email or the editor's email, pjbring126@yahoo.com.