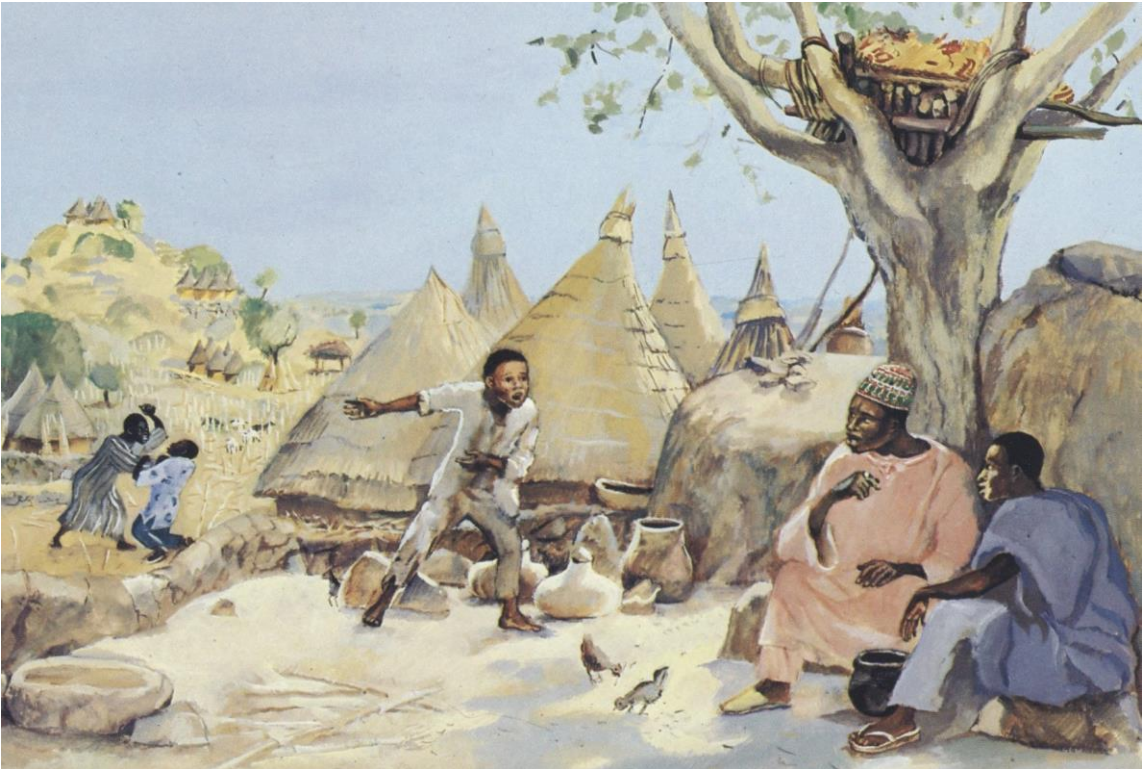




St. John's Lutheran Church Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

THE SIXTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

September 17, 2023 | 10:30am



In today's second reading Paul questions why we judge one another, since we all stand before the judgment of God. Yet we do sin against one another, and Jesus' challenge that we forgive seventy-seven times reveals God's boundless mercy. When we hear the words of forgiveness in worship and sign ourselves with the cross, we are renewed in baptism to be signs of reconciliation in the world.

WELCOME TO ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

St. John's Lutheran Church is located on the original and ancestral homelands of the Munsee Lenape, Schaghticoke, and Wappinger peoples. We give thanks for their presence here since time immemorial and wish to recognize and honor all our Indigenous siblings who have and continue to call this land their home.



It is a joy to have you worship at St. John's Lutheran! As we gather to praise God, we trust that the Spirit will make Jesus known in our midst, draw us ever closer to God's grace, and equip us for service and witness in the world.

If you are a visitor, please sign the guest register near the main entrance of the church. If you are looking for a church home, contact the pastor for information about St. John's Lutheran.

Check out the website of St. John's Lutheran Church for information about the array of ministries and mission initiatives of the congregation. www.stjohnelca.org

If you or someone you know is in the hospital or in need of pastoral care, please call the church office at 203-322-0066.

Children

We welcome families with children to our worship.

To assist you, please know:

- † Parents, if you need to take a break with your little one, there is a nursery room in the back of the church.
- † Sundays when Sunday School is held, the worship will include a children's message at the front of the sanctuary. Accompany your child if you wish.
- † During the offering, children may bring coins to the receptacle on the chancel steps.



MISSION STATEMENT

All are welcome! We share Christ's love, grow in faith, and serve others.

Welcome to St. John's. We invite you to join us as an active participant in the worship of God.

The prelude signals a time of silent prayer and reflection.

PRELUDE

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

*CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism.

In the name of the Father, and of the ✝ Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sins against God and our neighbor.

Most merciful God,

**we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed,
by what we have done, and by what we have left undone.**

**We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as
ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent.**

**For the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us;
that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways,
to the glory of your Holy Name.**

Amen.

Almighty God have mercy on you, forgive you all your sins through our Lord Jesus Christ, strengthen you in all goodness, and by the power of the Holy Spirit keep you in eternal life.

Amen.

***GREETING**

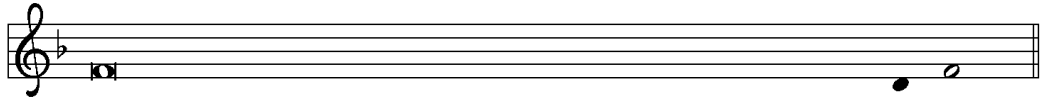
The grace of our Lord Jesus, Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

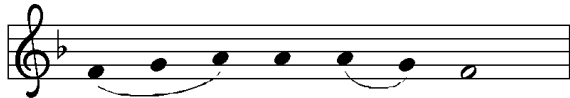
***KYRIE & GLORIA**



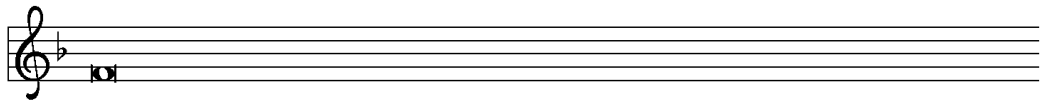
In peace, let us pray to the Lord. **Lord, have mer - cy.**



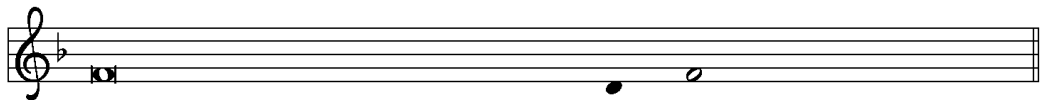
For the peace from above, and for our salvation, let us pray to the Lord.



Lord, have mer - cy.



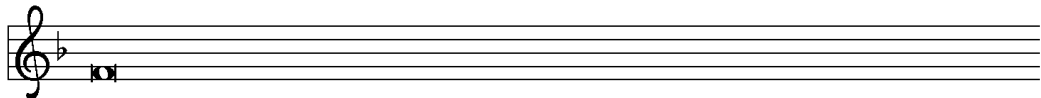
For the peace of the whole world, for the well-being of the church of God,



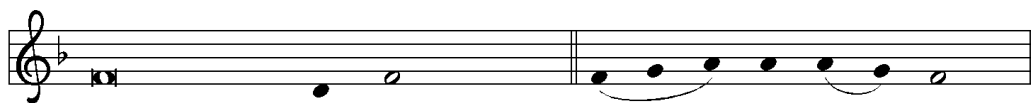
and for the unity of all, let us pray to the Lord.



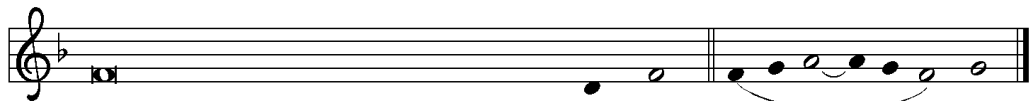
Lord, have mer - cy.



For this holy house, and for all who offer here their worship and praise,



let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mer - cy.



Help, save, comfort, and defend us, gra - cious Lord. A - men.

Assisting minister



Glory to God in the highest, and peace to God's peo - ple on earth.

All



Lord God, heav - en - ly King, al - might - y God and Fa - ther,



we wor-ship you, we give you thanks, we praise you for your glo - ry.



Lord Je - sus Christ, on - ly Son of the Fa - ther, Lord God, Lamb of God,



you take a - way the sin of the world: have mer - cy on us;



you are seat - ed at the right hand of the Fa - ther: re - ceive our prayer.

For you a - lone are the Ho - ly One, you a - lone are the Lord,
 you a - lone are the Most High, Je - sus Christ, with the Ho - ly Spir - it,
 in the glo - ry of God the Fa - ther. A - men.

***PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

O Lord God, merciful judge, you are the inexhaustible fountain of forgiveness. Replace our hearts of stone with hearts that love and adore you, that we may delight in doing your will, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

WORD

FIRST READING

GENESIS 50:15-21

A reading from Genesis.

REALIZING that their father was dead, Joseph's brothers said, "What if Joseph still bears a grudge against us and pays us back in full for all the wrong that we did to him?" ¹⁶So they approached Joseph, saying, "Your father gave this instruction before he died, ¹⁷'Say to Joseph: I beg you, forgive the crime of your brothers and the wrong they did in harming you.' Now therefore please forgive the crime of the servants of the God of your father." Joseph wept when they spoke to him. ¹⁸Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰Even though you intended to do harm to me, God intended it for good, in order to preserve a numerous people, as he is doing today. ²¹So have no fear; I

myself will provide for you and your little ones.” In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GRADUAL PSALM

PSALM 103:8-13

Sung by the congregation to the tune of ST. THOMAS.

1 The Lord has set his throne
Above the earth and sea;
His kingship has dominion now
For all eternity.

2 Bless God, you angel hosts,
Strong servants of the Lord,
Who do his bidding, hear his voice,
And hearken to his word.

3 Bless God, all you his hosts,
All you who do his will
Throughout creation, all his works;
O bless the Lord, my soul.

SECOND READING

ROMANS 14:1-12

A reading from Romans.

WELCOME those who are weak in faith, but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ²Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³Those who eat must not despise those who abstain, and those who abstain must not pass judgment on those who eat; for God has welcomed them. ⁴Who are you to pass judgment on servants of another? It is before their own lord that they stand or fall. And they will be upheld, for the Lord is able to make them stand.

⁵Some judge one day to be better than another, while others judge all days to be alike. Let all be fully convinced in their own minds. ⁶Those who observe the day, observe it in honor of the Lord. Also those who eat, eat in honor of the Lord, since they give thanks to God; while those who abstain, abstain in honor of the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷We do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸If we live, we live to the Lord, and if we die, we die to the Lord; so then, whether we live or whether we die, we are the Lord's. ⁹For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰Why do you pass judgment on your brother or sister? Or you, why do you despise your brother or sister? For we will all stand before the judgment seat of

God. ¹¹For it is written,
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”
¹²So then, each of us will be accountable to God.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

***SEQUENCE**

CANONBURY

Lord, speak to us, that we may speak in living echoes of your tone;
As you have sought, so let us seek your straying children, lost and lone.

***GOSPEL**

MATTHEW 18:21-35

The holy gospel according to Matthew.
Glory to you, O Lord.

PETER came and said to Jesus, “Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²²Jesus said to him, “Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times.
²³“For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, ‘Pay what you owe.’ ²⁹Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

***SEQUENCE**

CANONBURY

O fill us with your fullness, Lord, until our very hearts o'er flow
In kindling thought and glowing word, your love to tell, your praise to show.

SERMON

PASTOR PEDERSON

Silence for reflection follows the sermon.

***HYMN OF THE DAY**

Forgive our sins as we forgive

HYMN 605



1 "For - give our sins as we for - give," you taught us, Lord, to pray;
2 How can your par - don reach and bless the un - for - giv - ing heart
3 In blaz - ing light your cross re - veals the truth we dim - ly knew:
4 Lord, cleanse the depths with - in our souls and bid re - sent - ment cease;



but you a - lone can grant us grace to live the words we say.
that broods on wrongs and will not let old bit - ter - ness de - part?
how tri - fling oth - ers' debts to us; how great our debt to you!
then, by your mer - cy rec - on - ciled, our lives will spread your peace.

***APOSTLES' CREED**

I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

***PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION**

Each intercession ends with these words:

Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

***PEACE**

The peace of Christ be with you always.
And also with you.

MEAL

OFFERING

We offer our tithes and gifts to the Lord.

Children may bring their gifts to the receptacle on the chancel steps next to the pulpit.

OFFERTORY HYMN

Praise the Lord, rise up rejoicing

HYMN 544

***HYMN AT THE PRESENTATION**

DIX

For each perfect gift of thine, peace on earth and joy in heav'n;
For thyself, best gift divine, to our world so freely giv'n:
Christ, our God, to thee we raise this our sacrifice of praise.

***GREAT THANKSGIVING**

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

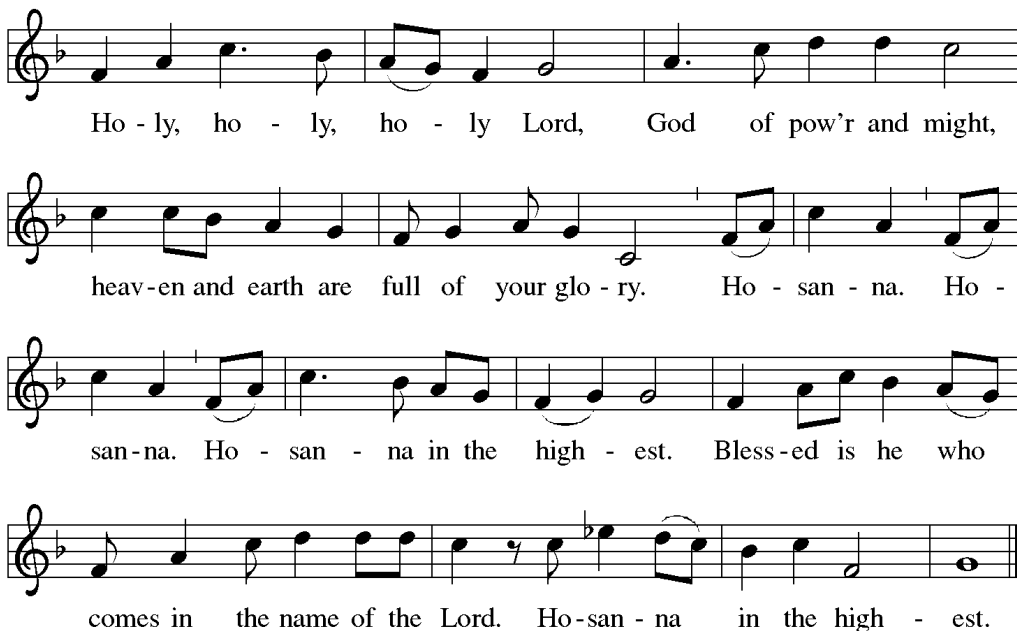
Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise . . . *Here the minister continues with the preface for the day, concluding:*
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:



Ho - ly, ho - ly, ho - ly Lord, God of pow'r and might,
 heav-en and earth are full of your glo - ry. Ho - san - na. Ho -
 san-na. Ho - san - na in the high - est. Bless-ed is he who
 comes in the name of the Lord. Ho-san - na in the high - est.

You are indeed holy, almighty and merciful God.
 You are most holy, and great is the majesty of your glory.
 You so loved the world that you gave your only Son,
 so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but have eternal life.
 We give you thanks for his coming into the world
 to fulfill for us your holy will and to accomplish all things for our salvation.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
 our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
 broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
 Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
 and gave it for all to drink, saying:
 This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
 shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
 Do this for the remembrance of me.

Remembering, therefore, his salutary command,
his life-giving passion and death,
his glorious resurrection and ascension,
and the promise of his coming again,
we give thanks to you, O Lord God Almighty,
not as we ought but as we are able;
we ask you mercifully to accept our praise and thanksgiving
and with your Word and Holy Spirit to bless us, your servants,
and these your own gifts of bread and wine,
so that we and all who share in the body and blood of Christ
may be filled with heavenly blessing and grace,
and, receiving the forgiveness of sin,
may be formed to live as your holy people
and be given our inheritance with all your saints.
To you, O God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
be all honor and glory in your holy church, now and forever.
Amen.

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

**Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.**

**Save us from the time of trial
and deliver us from evil.**

**For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours,
now and forever.**

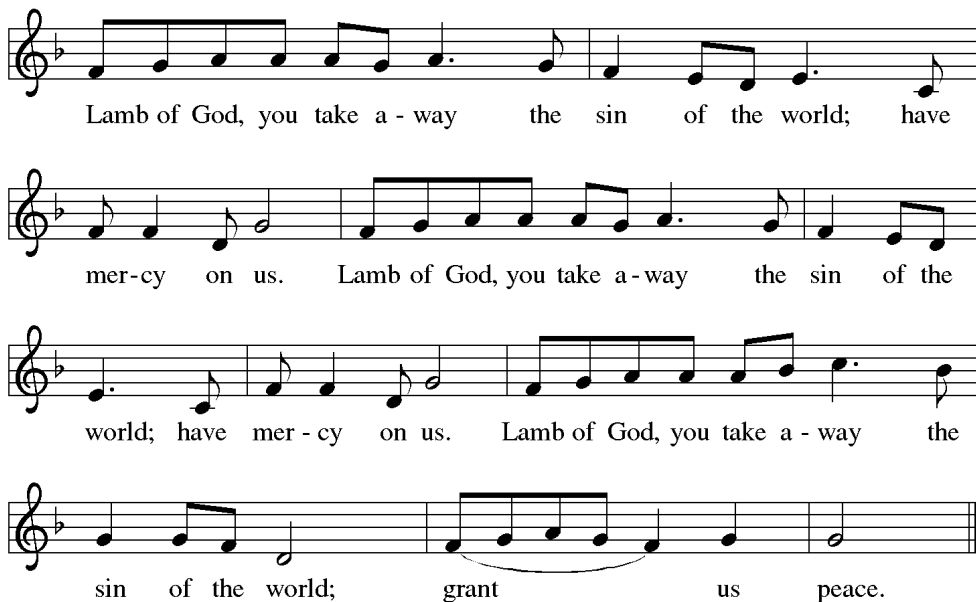
Amen.

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

The Gifts of God for the People of God.

All who believe that Jesus is present in the bread and wine, forgiving sin and promising eternal life, are welcome to the Table of the Lord. Gluten-free wafers are available upon request.

LAMB OF GOD



Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the world; have
mer-cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the sin of the
world; have mer - cy on us. Lamb of God, you take a - way the
sin of the world; grant us peace.

MUSIC AT THE DISTRIBUTION

VOLUNTARY

Instrumental

NKL

*PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray.

Eternal God, heavenly Father, you have graciously accepted us as living members of your Son our Savior, Jesus Christ, and you have fed us with spiritual food in the Sacrament of his Body and Blood. Send us now into the world in peace, and grant us strength and courage to love and serve you with gladness and singleness of heart; through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

SENDING

*BLESSING

Almighty God, Father, ☩ Son, and Holy Spirit, bless you now and forever.

Amen.

*HYMN AT THE PROCESSION

In thee is gladness

HYMN 867

*DISMISSAL

Go in peace to love and serve the Lord.

Thanks be to God!

POSTLUDE

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JESUS MAFA. The Unforgiving Servant, from **Art in the Christian Tradition**, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48396> [retrieved September 12, 2023]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).

Worship Leaders Today

Celebrant & Preacher	The Rev. Dr. Duane C. Pederson
Organist	Cantor Nathan Lively-Greyling
Worship Assistant	Michele Effren
Reader	Max Leffers
Communion Assistant	Sheila Koch, Jen Leffers
Acolytes	Gino D’Orta, Max Leffers
Usher	Eric Lane
Altar Committee	Cheryl Milukas
Counters	Tim Brumbaugh, Lois Coffin, Pat Fisher, Gary Esposito

Adult Education

Sneak Peek Bible Study meets each Monday, 7 pm, via Zoom. Participants study the Scripture passages that will be read the following Sunday.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/556531179>

Pumpkin Patch

Help unload the semitruck of pumpkins on Saturday, September 23, 9 am. Bring gloves and a wheelbarrow if you have one. We need everyone – young and old, neighbors and friends – to unload and set up the pumpkins for sale. We also need volunteers to staff the sales shifts from September 23 through the end of October. Sign up for as many shifts as you can. Go to this link if you can help unload pumpkins; the link also lists shifts for which you can sign up:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/8050A48A8AE2DA6F85-pumpkin2> Sign up today!

Pastoral Transition

All members of St. John's are strongly encouraged to complete the Congregation Assessment Tool (CAT), a survey to solicit responses from everyone about our ministry, the direction our church should go, and the kind of leadership desired.

The link to the survey is <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/STJOHNSLCSTAMFORDCT>.
The deadline to complete the survey is Saturday, September 23.

2024 ELCA Youth Gathering

Students in grades 8 through 12 this fall, are encouraged to register to attend the July 16-20, 2024 ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans. This exciting gathering of thousands of teens will explore the theme, "Created to Be" through service projects, fun, mass gatherings for worship and speakers, and activities. We hope the majority of our youth will have registered by September 10. St. John's members, look to support our young people in the fund raising they will do to make the experience affordable for all.

LOOKING AHEAD . . .

September

23 Unload pumpkins, 9am

October

1 Ecumenical Blessing of the Animals, 4pm at the Patch

8 Single 9:30am Worship

History Event, 10:30am

Evensong, 5pm

14 Outdoor Movie at the Pumpkin Patch, 6pm

21 Oktoberfest, 5pm

29 Reformation Sunday – wear red!

November

5 All Saints' Sunday

The Loving Memory Concert, 5pm

12 Single 9:30am service for Stewardship Sunday

Youth Pancake Breakfast, 10:30am

December

3 Santa Lucia Procession, 10:30am

Decorate the Church for Christmas, 4pm

Advent Night, 5-7pm

10 Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols, 5pm

- 16 Youth Outing to NYC
- 24 Advent Lessons and Carols Service, 9:30am service
- 24 Family Christmas Eve Worship, 5pm
- 24 Christmas Eve Candlelight Worship (with choir), 8:30pm
- 31 Christmas Lessons and Carols Service, 9:30am service

CHORAL EVENSONG FOR *HOLY CROSS DAY*



Sunday, September 17, 2023 | 5pm
St. John's Lutheran Church, Stamford, CT

CANTICLES: Walmisley in D minor

PRECES & RESPONSES: Woodley Responses

ANTHEM: Long Since in Egypt's Plenteous Land from *Judith*, Parry, arr. R. Pantcheff

PSALM 98: chant Ann Mounsey, altered

This festival, which originated in the fourth century, celebrates the triumph of the cross. Paul reminds us that Christ crucified is the power and wisdom of God. As Moses put a serpent on a pole to be a source of healing for the Israelites, we lift high the cross as the sign of our health and salvation. Each time we make the sign of the cross we remember our baptism into the death and resurrection of Christ.