

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

120 N. Main St., Lewistown, PA 17044-1719

Main Office: 717-248-8780 Mon. Tues., Thurs. 8:00AM-4:00 PM Fri. 8-Noon

stjohnslewisstown@gmail.com

Interim Pastor: Rev. Allen Hulslander 570-220-4402 (cell)

Office Hours: Tues. 9am-Noon and Thurs. 9am-Noon *please call ahead.

Director of Music/Organist: Mrs. Patricia O. Loudenslager

<http://www.stjohnslewisstown.com>

www.facebook.com/St.John'sLutheranChurch,LewistownPA

Sunday, September 13th, 2026, 9:00AM Sixteenth Sunday after Pentecost / Setting 3



INTRODUCTION

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 worship at St. John's, whether virtually or in person. We are delighted to share this time together. St. John's focus is to share the Good News of Jesus Christ, strengthen believers and care for those in Need.

HOLY COMMUNION is served by a 2-line procession down the center aisle. We will celebrate with bread, wine, or grape juice. Gluten-free wafers are also available.

GIVE TO ST. JOHN'S Offering plates are located at each entrance. If you prefer to give electronically, visit our website, and click on the **E-Giving Tab**. Use your existing login information. For new users, search for St John's Lutheran Church Lewistown. Information on **E-Giving** is available on the SJLC resource table. Thank you for your continued support.

IF YOU ARE A VISITOR, we would like to get to know you. Please fill out a visitor's card from the pew rack and place it on the offering plate at the entrances. May Christ's spirit be with each and every one of us in our congregational life and faith journey.

LARGE PRINT SERVICE BOOKLETS are available, please see a door greeter.

RALLY DAY!

SERVING TODAY

Pastor – Allen Hulslander

Acolytes – Geneva Kelly, Dorian Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Sue Shawver, Becky Yeater, Mina Phillips

Cantor – Mina Phillips

Communion Assistants – Scott Price, Sue Shawver, Hillary Worley

Crucifer – Scott Price

Lay Lector – Geneva Kelly

Ushers – Gavin Martin, Anderson Bitner, Carl King

Media & Production – Grant and Carrie Stufft, Nancy Ressler, Annette Rager

PRELUDE 9:00 AM "All Creatures of Our God and King" Music from "Geistliche Kirchengesang" Arr. Phillips Keveren, 20189 Hal Leonard LLC

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

GATHERING

*Please stand as you are able. Congregational responses are in **Bold**. Red Hymnal (ELW) will be used for parts of the service.*

Confession and Forgiveness

All may make the sign of the cross, the sign that is marked at baptism, as the presiding minister begins.

Blessed be the holy Trinity, one God,
who forgives all our sin,
whose mercy endures forever.

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.

Most merciful God,

we confess that we are captive to sin and cannot free ourselves. 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. For the sake of your Son, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Forgive us, renew us, and lead us, so that we may delight in your will and walk in your ways, to the glory of your holy name.

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace you have been saved. In the name of † Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen you with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in your hearts through faith.

Amen.

Processional Hymn

ELW pg. #605 “Forgive Our Sins as We Forgive”

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

ELW pg. #138 Setting 3

This Is the Feast

ELW pg. #140 Setting 3

PRAYER OF THE DAY

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.

Please be seated.

Special Music

"Indescribable" Laura Story, Arr. Dennis Allen, 2005 worshiptogether.com
Mina Phillips – Vocal

CHILDRENS MESSAGE *All children are invited forward.*

WORD

First Reading: Genesis 50:15-21

After Jacob's death the brothers of Joseph begged for forgiveness for the crime they had done against him. You intended to do me harm, Joseph said, but God used this as an opportunity to do good and save many lives.

¹⁵ 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?" ¹⁶ So 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. ¹⁸ Then his brothers also wept, fell down before him, and said, "We are here as your slaves." ¹⁹ But Joseph said to them, "Do not be afraid! Am I in the place of God? ²⁰ Even 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. ²¹ So have no fear; I myself will provide for you and your little ones." In this way he reassured them, speaking kindly to them.

Reader ends with: **"The Word of the Lord."**

Congregation responds: **"Thanks be to God."**

Psalm: Psalm 103: [1-7] 8-13

LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy. (Ps. 103:8)

- ¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and all that is within me, bless God's holy name.
- ² **Bless the LORD, O my soul,
and forget not all God's benefits**
- ³ who forgives all your sins
and heals all your diseases;
- ⁴ **who redeems your life from the grave
and crowns you with steadfast love and mercy;**
- ⁵ who satisfies your desires with good things
so that your youth is renewed like an eagle's.
- ⁶ **O LORD, you provide vindication
and justice for all who are oppressed.**
- ⁷ You made known your ways to Moses
and your works to the children of Israel.
- ⁸ **LORD, you are full of compassion and mercy,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love;**
- ⁹ you will not always accuse us,
nor will you keep your anger forever.
- ¹⁰ **You have not dealt with us according to our sins,
nor repaid us according to our iniquities.**
- ¹¹ For as the heavens are high above the earth,
so great is your steadfast love for those who fear you.
- ¹² **As far as the east is from the west,
so far have you removed our transgressions from us.**
- ¹³ As a father has compassion for his children,
so you have compassion for those who fear you, O LORD.

Second Reading: Romans 14:1-12

This Christian community has significant struggles with diversity. Here Paul helps us understand that despite different practices in worship and personal piety, we do not judge one another. All Christians belong to the Lord Jesus Christ who died for all of us and will judge each of us.

¹ Welcome those who are weak in faith but not for the purpose of quarreling over opinions. ² Some believe in eating anything, while the weak eat only vegetables. ³ Those 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. ⁴ Who are you to pass judgment on slaves 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.

⁵ Some 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. ⁶ Those who observe the day, observe it for the Lord. Also, those who eat, eat for the Lord, since they give thanks to God, while those who abstain, abstain for the Lord and give thanks to God.

⁷ For we do not live to ourselves, and we do not die to ourselves. ⁸ If 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. ⁹ For to this end Christ died and lived again, so that he might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

¹⁰ Why 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. ¹¹ For it is written,

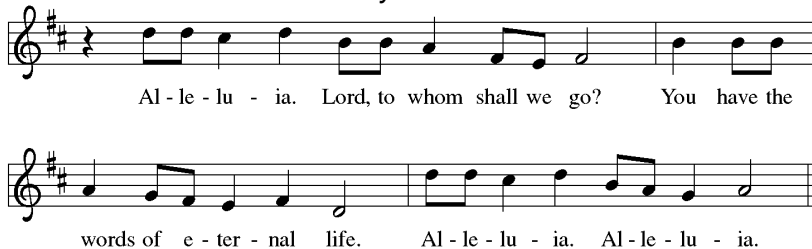
“As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to me,
and every tongue shall give praise to God.”

¹² So then, each one of us will be held accountable.

Reader ends with: **“The Word of the Lord.”**

Congregation responds: **“Thanks be to God.”**

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION *Please stand as you are able.*



The Holy Gospel according to Matthew the 18th Chapter.

Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 18:21-35

When Peter asks about the limits of forgiveness, Jesus responds with a parable that suggests human forgiveness should mirror the unlimited mercy of God.

²¹ Peter came and said to [Jesus,] “Lord, if my brother or sister sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?” ²² Jesus 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. ²⁴ When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him, ²⁵ and, as he could not pay, the lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions and payment to be made. ²⁶ So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.’ ²⁷ And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸ But 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.’ ²⁹ Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, ‘Have patience with me, and I will pay you.’ ³⁰ But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹ When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³² Then his lord summoned him and said to him, ‘You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³ Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?’ ³⁴ And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. ³⁵ So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

After the reading ...

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.**

Please be seated.

SERMON

Pastor Allen

Apostles' Creed

Please stand as you are able.

**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.**

Blessing of Christian Education Persons

Hillary Worley – Christian Education Chair
Nikki Hidlay – Nursery/Pre-K (Children's Church)
April Montgomery and Anne Spicer – K-5
Mina Phillips and Dave Ray – Adult Sunday School
Pastor Allen/Nikki Hidlay – Confirmation

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The petitions end with: "Hear us, O God"
And the Congregational response is
"Your mercy is great"

SHARING of GOD'S PEACE

Share the Peace in a safe manner.
Simply say the words. *"Peace be with You."*
"And also with you."

Keep In Prayer: Deb Montgomery, Larry Niemond, Gail Ingram, Linda Goss, Toby Sweigart, Freda Hook, Darwin Guyer, Steve Yohn, Patti Niemond, the Rankin family and the Call Committee.

*To have someone added to the Prayer Guide-with their permission-please contact the church office.

MEAL *Please continue to stand.*

Let the Vineyards Be Fruitful

Offering Song

Let the vine-yards be fruit-ful, Lord, and fill to the brim our cup of
bless-ing. Gath-er a har-vest from the seeds that were sown, that
we may be fed with the bread of life. Gath-er the hopes and dreams of
all; u-nite them with the prayers we of-fer. Grace our ta-ble
with your pres-ence, and give us a fore-taste of the feast to come.

OFFERING PRAYER

God of creation, you send rain and the earth springs forth abundantly.
All blessings are from you; make us generous with what we have.
Use our gifts, our abilities, and our hearts in service to you and in love to our
neighbors, today and always. **Amen.**

GREAT THANKSGIVING (spoken)

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.**

COMMUNION PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy, that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God, through our Savior Jesus
Christ; who on this day overcame death and the grave, and by his glorious
resurrection opened to us the way of everlasting life. And so, with all the choirs of
angels, with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

THANKSGIVING AT THE TABLE

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.

For as often as we eat of this bread and drink from this cup
we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Christ has died.

Christ is risen.

Christ will come again.

We pray for the gift of your Spirit: in our gathering; within this meal;
among your people; throughout the world.

Blessing, praise, and thanks to you, holy God, through Christ Jesus,
by your Spirit, in your church, without end. **Amen.**

The Lord's Prayer (spoken)

**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come,
thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we
forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the
glory, forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION

Christ invites you to this table.

All who are thirsty, all who are hungry, come!

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.

COMMUNION

All who are baptized are invited to come forward. Children, if not already communing, may be brought forward for a blessing from the Pastor. Please hold both hands out to receive the bread, then choose a cup from the Acolyte. Please dispose of your communion cup in the nearby waste basket.

Communion Music

“Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow” Louis Bourgeois, Arr. Phillip Keveren, 2011 Hal Leonard

“O Great God” Inspired by Rachmaninoff’s “Piano Concerto No. 2” Swedish Folk Melody, Arr. Faye Lopez, 2017 Alfred Music

“All Things Bright and Beautiful” 17th Century English Melody, Arr. Phillip Keveren, 2017 Hal Leonard LLC

POST-COMMUNION BLESSING

The body and the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in his grace. **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION PRAYER

Sustaining God, with this bread and cup, you nourish us with mercy and abundant life. By your Spirit, send us from this table to serve a needy world. Make us living signs of your liberation, healing, and love, following the way of Jesus, in whose name we pray. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

The God of love draw you into full accord and one mind, in the body of Christ Jesus.

Amen.

The God of hope grant you strength and joy in all circumstances through the interceding of the Spirit.

Amen.

The God of grace bless you now and forever.

Amen.

Sending Hymn

ELW pg. #452 “Awake, O Sleeper, Rise from Death”

Silent Meditation

DISMISSAL

Go out in joy. Be led forth in peace.

Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “Praise the Lord, Rise Up Rejoicing” (#544 in our hymnal)

From Sundays and Seasons.com. Copyright © 2026 Augsburg Fortress. All rights reserved. Reprinted by permission under Augsburg Fortress Liturgies Annual License. New Revised Standard Version Bible, Copyright © 1989, Division of Christian Education of the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the United States of America. Used by permission. All rights reserved. Revised Common Lectionary, Copyright © 1992 Consultation on Common Texts, admin Augsburg Fortress. Used by permission. **NOTICE: Audio/Video recording** When you enter a St. John's Evangelical Lutheran worship service/event, you will be entering an area where photography, video and audio recording may occur. Please see notes at entrances for further details. Live-Streaming will continue as needed- if you are behind camera, you will not be on camera.

DEDICATIONS

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS are presented by Ed Aurand in memory of Joanne and Jack Kornmann.

THIS WEEK'S BASKET is presented by Pat and Mike Reeder in memory of their parents who have passed.

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN is presented by Nancy Maguire in loving memory of Ann and Joseph Arborgast.

THIS WEEK'S ETERNAL CANDLE BURNS in honor of their parents given by Katrina and Dan Martin.

THE COMMUNION WINE this morning is given by Gloria Stewart in honor of our church family.

ST. JOHN'S NEWS

RALLY DAY is **today!** There is a brunch in the fellowship hall after service today. Sunday School officially begins on **Sunday, September 20th**.

ALL ARE INVITED to "A Celebration of God's Gift of Music" concert is **today September 13th at 3:00pm**. There will be a variety of performers and music presented. Following the concert there will be light refreshments provided by the Barnabas Brothers in the fellowship hall. Please plan to attend this special event.

PASTOR ALLEN AND JOY will be on vacation from Monday, September 21st, to Saturday, October 3rd. If you have a Pastoral need, please call Nikki Hidlay at 717-994-6058.

RECITAL FELLOWSHIP The Barnabas Brothers are proudly providing refreshments after the organ recital **today September 13th**. Refreshments will include; ham and chicken salad sandwiches plus organ recital celebration cake and beverages. We anticipate 60 to 80 recital attendees participating in the Fellowship Hall for a special time of Christian Fellowship. We respectfully request that congregation members bring a dessert or snack item to assist the Barnabas Brothers in providing refreshments for this special church and community event praising Our Lord and Savior.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH has decided to partner with Wesley Chapel in a mission to help the families of children who are in the Janet Weis Children's Hospital NICU Danville starting on **Sunday, September 6th**. We will be **collecting water, snacks, energy bars, microwave soups** and a variety of **non-perishable heat and serve meals** through the month of September, with collection ending on September 27th. These donations will help to stock the Family Lounge that parents and loved ones use while their child is staying in the hospital. It enables them to take a quick break or to get a much needed pick-me-up without having to go too far from their child. There will be a box located under the coat rack in the lobby and Pam will collect all donations to make sure they are taken to Danville. We greatly appreciate all your donations and support of our mission.

PRAYER CHAIN If anyone would like to be added as one of our **Prayer Warriors** to the prayer chain, please contact Gloria Stewart at 717-348-3935.

BLOOD DRIVE! The Red Cross will be having a blood drive at St. John's Lutheran Church on **Thursday, September 17th** from Noon to 5:00pm. SJLC is a central location that attracts donors from Mifflin, Juniata and Snyder counties. Please plan to attend and help our Brothers and Sisters in Christ by donating blood at this urgent time. **"Save a life. Donate today!"**

THE BARNABAS BROTHERS will resume their regular meetings on **Saturday, September 19th** at 8:00am in the Fellowship Hall. All men of the church are invited to attend a morning of Christian Fellowship, King's Breakfast and updates on this year's planned activities and events. This will be a scheduled business meeting. The Barnabas Brothers are dedicated to serving the St. John's Lutheran church, congregation and community.

CONFIRMATION CLASS will begin on **Sunday, September 20th** at 10:15am. We will meet in the sanctuary with parents to discuss class schedule and expectations.

ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH will be hosting "**Messiah**" **Sunday, December 6th** at 3:00pm with Fred Benner as the Conductor. Rehearsals will be on Sunday's at 3:00pm beginning on **November 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd, and 29th**. Any singers who are interested please join us!

ACOLYTES We have had adults show interest in being acolytes. If this is something you may be interested in, please see Norma Fisher to be added to the schedule.

WE ARE HIRING! LUMINA Center is looking to hire a full-time Program Coordinator and part-time Program Support Staff. If you or someone you know is looking for a great opportunity to spearhead missional programming, someone with vision, adaptability and a passion for making a huge impact on our local children and youth, please email inquiries and/or resume to execdirector@lumina-center.org

NEW LUMINA CENTER community restaurant cards are here! Cards sell for **\$10** and have discounts for **20 local restaurants**. New cards will be effective August 31, 2026, through August 31, 2027. Please see Janet Deamer or Susan C. in the church office.

WELCA GROUPS Our WELCA groups recently received word from Lutheran World Relief that there is a **GREAT** need for **Personal Care Kits**. Therefore, we have decided to ask for only Personal Care Kits this summer. The information display is in the fellowship hall. We sent 20 last year. We are hoping for 100 this year. We will collect them until the end of September.

SEAFARE'R BAGS are now available in the church lobby. Instructions for them are in the bags. At Synod Assembly we learned that only **M** and **L sweatshirts and tee-shirts** are needed. Other items remain the same as last year. If you have already purchased XL sweatshirts and/or tee-shirts, please see Joy Hulslander or Paula Hershberger.

3rd QUARTER OFFERING has been designated to Shelter Services.

COMMUNION ROBES If your communion robe is in need of cleaning (i.e. wine) please place it in the laundry basket in the robe room.

SJLC OFFICE lunch hour Tuesday and Thursday is between 11:30am -12:30pm.

LOST & FOUND there is a lost and found box in the lobby on the shelf above the coat rack. Please check for any items that you may be missing.

COMMITTEES/ORGANIZATIONS

SJLC COUNCIL MEETING is on **Tuesday, September 22nd, at 6:30pm.**

MOTHER HUBBARDS CUPBOARD items for **September/October** are cereal, breakfast bars, sugar, shelf stable milk, powdered milk.

Worship SCHEDULE

September 20 [Seventeenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

September 27 [Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

October 4 [Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

October 11 [Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

October 18 [Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

October 25 [Reformation Sunday] 9:00am Worship, 10:15am Sunday School

Meetings (Please see above for details)

Tue. September 22nd Council meeting at 6:30pm

Reminders for September

Acolytes – Geneva Kelly, Dorian Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Ann Hetrick, Nancy Craig, Becky Yeater, Kathy Limes

Communion Assistants – Scott Price, Sue Shawver, Hillary Worley

Ushers – Dave Ray, Ginny Ray, Deb Kling

Money Counters – Helen Rager, Deb Kling

Lay Lectors

September 13 – Youth

September 20 – Jenna Dudukovich

September 27 Anne Spicer

Next Sunday's Readings: *Genesis 50:15-21, Psalm 103: [1-7] 8-13, Romans 14:1-12, Matthew 18:21-35*