

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

stjohnslewistown@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.stjohnslewistown.com>

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

Sunday, July 26th, 2026, 9:00 AM ✦ *Ninth Sunday after Pentecost / Setting 3*



INTRODUCTION

As Solomon prays for wisdom, we seek to more deeply know the treasures of faith. In today's gospel Jesus offers everyday images that reveal to us the reign of God: a tree that becomes a sheltering home, yeast that penetrates and expands, a treasured pearl, a net that gains a great catch. Even as we seek the riches of God's reign, the great surprise is that God's grace finds us first!

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.

SERVING TODAY

Pastor – Allen Hulslander

Acolytes – Anderson Bitner, Dave Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Carrie Thierwechter, Holly Seby, Candace Sonnenberg

Cantor – Josie Baughman

Communion Assistants – Dave Ray, Ginny Ray, Candace Sonnenberg

Crucifer – Dave Ray

Lay Lector – Ed Deamer

Ushers – Ed Stewart – head, Gloria Stewart, Deb Kling

Media & Production – Grant and Carrie Stuftt, Nancy Ressler, Mary Barr, Annette Rager

PRELUDE 9:00 AM "We're Marching to Zion" (In the setting of Franz Joseph Haydn's "Sonata in G Major") Robert Lowry, Arr. Cindy Berry, 1995 Pilot Point Music)

WELCOME & 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,
whose compassion endures forever.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin to God.

Silence is kept for reflection.

Compassionate God,

we confess to you all our sins.

Our burden is heavy, and we cannot free ourselves.

In your mercy, call us back to you.

Your yoke is easy and your burden is light.

Restore us to dwell in your peace.

In Christ's name we pray,

Amen.

Jesus says, "Come to me,

all you who are weary

and are carrying heavy burdens,

and I will give you rest."

In the name of God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

your sins are forgiven.

Rest in God's love.

Amen.

Processional Hymn

ELW pg. #441 "Oh, Happy Day When We Shall Stand"

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

Beloved and sovereign God, through the death and resurrection of your Son, you bring us into your kingdom of justice and mercy. By your Spirit, give us your wisdom, that we may treasure the life that comes from Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

Please be seated.

Special Music
Congregation Sing ELW# 439
"Soon and Very Soon"

CHILDRENS MESSAGE *All children are invited forward.*

WORD

First Reading: 1 Kings 3:5-12

Because Solomon did not ask for long life, riches, or the defeat of his enemies, God gave him what he asked for: wisdom to govern the people well.

⁵ At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon in a dream by night, and God said, "Ask what I should give you." ⁶ And Solomon said, "You have shown great and steadfast love to your servant my father David because he walked before you in faithfulness, in righteousness, and in uprightness of heart toward you, and you have kept for him this great and steadfast love and have given him a son to sit on his throne today. ⁷ And now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David, although I am only a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. ⁸ And your servant is in the midst of the people whom you have chosen, a great people so numerous they cannot be numbered or counted. ⁹ Give your servant, therefore, an understanding mind to govern your people, able to discern between good and evil, for who can govern this great people of yours?"

¹⁰ It pleased the Lord that Solomon had asked this. ¹¹ God said to him, "Because you have asked this and have not asked for yourself long life or riches or for the life of your enemies but have asked for yourself understanding to discern what is right, ¹² I now do according to your word. Indeed, I give you a wise and discerning mind; no one like you has been before you, and no one like you shall arise after you."

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

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

Psalm: Psalm 119:129-136

When your word is opened, it gives light and understanding. (Ps. 119:130)

- ¹²⁹ Your decrees are wonderful;
therefore I obey them with all my heart.
- ¹³⁰ **When your word is opened it gives light;
it gives understanding to the simple.**
- ¹³¹ I open my mouth and pant
because I long for your commandments.
- ¹³² **Turn to me and be gracious to me,
as you always do to those who love your name.**
- ¹³³ Order my footsteps in your word;
let no iniquity have dominion I over me.
- ¹³⁴ **Rescue me from those who oppress me,
and I will keep your commandments.**
- ¹³⁵ Let your face shine upon your servant
and teach me your statutes.
- ¹³⁶ **My eyes shed streams of tears,
because people do not keep your teaching.**

Second Reading: Romans 8:26-39

These words celebrate the depth of God's actions for us. Through Christ's death for us and the activity of the Spirit praying for us, we are fused to God's love poured out in Jesus Christ. Nothing, not even death itself, is able to separate us from such incredible divine love.

²⁶ The Spirit helps us in our weakness, for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with groanings too deep for words. ²⁷ And God, who searches hearts, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God.

²⁸ We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn within a large family. ³⁰ And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.

³¹ What then are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? ³² He who did not withhold his own Son but gave him up for all of us, how will he not with him also give us everything else? ³³ Who will bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who is to condemn? It is Christ who died, or rather, who was raised, who is also at the right hand of God, who also intercedes for us. ³⁵ Who will separate us from the love of Christ? Will affliction or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword? ³⁶ As it is written,

“For your sake we are being killed all day long;
we are accounted as sheep to be slaughtered.”

³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than victorious through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, ³⁹ nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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 13th Chapter
Glory to you, O Lord.

Gospel: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Throughout Matthew's gospel, Jesus and his disciples proclaim the good news that "the kingdom of heaven is near!" Here, Jesus offers several brief parables that explore the implications of this announcement for people's lives.

³¹ [Jesus] put before [the crowds] another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field;³² it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

³³ He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and reburied; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶ on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷ “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸ when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. ⁴⁹ So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

⁵¹ “Have you understood all this?” They answered, “Yes.” ⁵² And he said to them, “Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple in the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old.”

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.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

The petitions end with: "God of Grace"

And the Congregational response is:

"hear our prayer"

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, Joanne Troutman, Toby
Sweigart, Freda Hook, Darwin Guyer,
Steve Yohn 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*

The musical score is written for a single voice part on a treble clef staff. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and the time signature is common time (C). The melody is composed of eighth and quarter notes, with some rests. The lyrics are written below the staff, aligned with the notes. The song is a hymn-style 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

Loving God, we offer at your table the gifts of our hearts. Help us take heart in you and share freely of your love, so that all creation can taste your abundance. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit abiding with us now and forever. **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:

Holy, Holy, Holy

ELW pg. #144 Setting 3

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

Heaven has come near. Come, share in the feast!

Lamb of God

ELW pg. #208 Setting 3

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

“When the Roll Is Called Up Yonder” (Inspired by Bach’s “Invention in B-flat major”) James M.Black, Arr.Faye Lopez, 2025 Alfred Music
“I Am His, and He Is Mine” James Mountain, Arr. Cindy Berry, 2015 Alfred Music
“Be Thou My Vision” Irish Melody Arr. Larry Shackley, 2014 Hope Pub. Co.

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

Compassionate God, through the gifts of bread and wine our hearts are filled with the abundance of your love. Strengthen us that we, through this holy meal, may share your love freely, as you have shared with us. We ask this in the name of Jesus, through the Spirit nourishing us now and forever. **Amen.**

SENDING

BLESSING

Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer, one God, bless, heal, and hold you today and always. **Amen.**

Sending Hymn

ELW pg. #618 “Guide Me Ever, Great Redeemer”

Silent Meditation

DISMISSAL

Heaven has come near. Go, share the good news!
Thanks be to God.

POSTLUDE “O God, Our Help in Ages Past” (#632 in our hymnal)

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DEDICATIONS

TODAY'S ALTAR FLOWERS are presented by Norma Fisher in honor of her 12 great-grandchildren.

THIS WEEK'S BULLETIN is presented by Janet and Ed Deamer in honor of their children.

THIS WEEK'S ETERNAL CANDLE BURNS sending prayers, love and healing for members of our church family.

THE COMMUNION WINE this morning is given by Scott Price in loving memory of Helen Price and Esther Henry.

ST. JOHN'S NEWS

PASTOR ALLEN will be **out** of the office on Thursday, July 30th.

ORGAN'S CAMPAIGN REACHED With much gratitude, church council is thrilled to announce that not only has the Organ's Capital Campaign been reached, but the goal has also been surpassed! We are beyond blessed by your generosity and commitment to St. John's and our music ministry. With the extra monies received from surpassing the goal, church council plans to put it back into our Capital Improvements Account. It is encouraged to continue to give to help rebuild the Capital Improvements Account for future needs. Again, we thank you for your prayers and generous donations in making the goal a reality. Hillary N. Worley Council President.

TODAY'S SOCIAL HOUR is hosted by Gloria Stewart, Pam Tressler, Peggy Finkenbiner and Jennifer Blessing.

THE BARNABAS BROTHERS are very proud and humbled to announce that they have been nominated for the 2026 Sentinel Reader's Choice Award for Nonprofit Organization. To be nominated for this Award by the Sentinel Readers is an honor as this category includes such highly esteemed Organizations like the United Way, Juniata Valley YMCA and the Lumina Center. The Barnabas Brothers Mission Statement is to support the St. John's Lutheran Church Congregation, Community Agencies and Members of the Community facing life's struggles and challenges. Helping Our Brothers and Sisters in Christ and God's Children in a Christian Manner is Our Goal. God's Work Our Hands. Thanks to Members of the Congregation for their support of our projects that provides hope for others. Thanks Steve Burk, Ed Stewart, Mike Reeder Barnabas Brothers Executive Committee.

HOME COMMUNION will be on **Sunday, August 2nd**.

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.

THE LUMINA CENTER discount cards will be expiring soon. From now till they expire at the end of August 2026 they have been reduced to **\$5 each**. The discounts apply to 16 local restaurants in the community. Look forward to the 2026-2027 cards coming soon.

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

WELCA MEETING is on **today** following worship.

SJLC COUNCIL MEETING is on **Tuesday, July 28th** at 6:30pm.

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION MEETING is on **Tuesday, August 11th** at 6:00pm.

WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE MEETING is on **Tuesday, August 18th** at 6:30pm.

MOTHER HUBBARDS CUPBOARD items for **August** are non-perishable foods and condiments.

Worship SCHEDULE

August 2 [Tenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship
August 9 [Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship
August 16 [Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship
August 23 [Thirteenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship
August 30 [Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost] 9:00am Worship

Meetings (Please see above for details)

Sun. July 26th WELCA meeting after worship.

Tue. July 28th SJLC council meeting 6:30pm.

Tue. August 11th Christian Ed meeting at 6:00pm.

Tue. August 18th Worship & Music Committee meeting at 6:30pm.

Reminders for August

Acolytes – Dorian Phillips, Mina Phillips

Altar Guild Volunteers – Pam Tressler, Jennifer Blessing

Communion Assistants – Dennis Noble – crucifer, Candace Sonnenberg, Gisele Miller

Ushers – Tom Beaver – head, Melissa Rosenberry, Jim Rosenberry

Money Counters – Andrew Thierwechter, Gloria Stewart

Lay Lectors

August 2 – Joyce Tanner

August 9 – Adele Craig

August 16 – Kim Crone

August 23 – Jim Rosenberry

August 30 – Sue Shawver

Next Sunday's Readings: *Isaiah 55:1-5, Psalm 145-8-9, 14-21, Romans 9:1-5, Matthew 14:13-21*

