



St John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

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From the Pastor's Desk

With the summer comes the wonderful aroma of grilled meat over a hot charcoal kettle. The sound of children in the neighborhood playing outside on hot, humid days either at the local pool or in a friend's backyard. But the most telling sound of the summer is the sound of fire trucks coming down Main streets, with lights flashing and horns blowing to the crowds lined up on either side: it's time for local parades and carnivals. The 4th of July will be special this year as we begin to observe the 250th anniversary of our Nation's struggle for Independence from the British Empire in 1775. The re-enactments of Lexington and Concord have already occurred, and every year will provide numerous events commemorating the battles and events which helped to forge our original colonies from 13 separate "fiefs" into something that will soon become a grand nation not like any other seen before in history. But what was the role of religion and the church in this colossal struggle? Did it even have any influence at all? The answer to these two questions is a resounding 'YES'!!

To examine the role of religion in pre-colonial America, we need to take each colony separately since the dominant religion was different in each one. Colonies such as the New England states, sans Rhode Island and Maine, were Puritans from England who were here because of persecutions by the Church of England. Puritanism was the "state religion" of that area and those of other beliefs were exiled such as the founder of Rhode Island, Roger Williams and Anne Hutchinson. New York was a mixed bag of Holland Dutch, English and even some Scots Irish settlers who came early through the harbors of New York. This meant that there was no true state religion established since the Dutch Reformed was very strong and even when England captured New York in 1664 and the Church of England became the "official religion", New York kept its ideals of separation of church and state, plus religious tolerance for all.

Pennsylvania was the most unique in that it was the only colony founded by a Quaker, which were persecuted and even executed, *see Mary Dyer and the Quaker martyrs of New England", At least five Quakers were executed in Boston Massachusetts between 1659 and 1666. Other states outlawed Quakers. However, William Penn allowed all faiths to come to his colony and the strength and diversity of these early Swedes, Anabaptists, Lutherans, Swiss Reformed, Catholic and Jewish are still seen today in many neighborhoods. Pennsylvania would be the leader in religious tolerance towards all faiths and peoples in Colonial America. Maryland was a Roman Catholic colony while Virginia, North and South Carolina were Church of England.

Georgia was more Lutheran in its early days with the influx of German immigrants. Of these, the Church of England was the official religion of the most important state involved in the Revolution: Virginia.

In the beginning of our nation's founding, the earliest settlers were the Scots Irish and Swedes along with French. If you look at the early churches in Pennsylvania, the first churches that were founded were either Presbyterian or a sect of Huguenots, (French Protestants). With more immigrants moving in, the Irish moved westward and were replaced by the first wave of Germans, mainly from the Palatine region between France and modern Germany along the Rhine River near Mannheim to Heidelberg. Thus, the Lutherans and Swiss Reformed became prominent in local communities from 1700 to 1800. Most Lutheran/Reformed congregations were founded at this time as Union churches which one denomination would have service one Sunday and the other would have its turn on the next Sunday. The most notable German Pastor of this era was Henry Melchoir Muhlenberg. He was sent from Germany to formally establish Lutheranism in Pennsylvania and to organize the clergy so that more leaders could be ordained. The Muhlenberg family became synonymous with Pennsylvania history as Henry married Anna Marie Weiser, the daughter of Conrad Weiser and would father eleven children. Peter Muhlenberg was a Major General in the Revolutionary War and served with George Washington, Frederick Muhlenberg was the first "Speaker of the House" after he was elected to Congress. Henry Ernst Muhlenberg was a prominent scientist and was the first President of present-day Franklin and Marshall College.

With such a diverse background of faiths coming together, it is possible to see how and why one of the first rights written into the Constitution was the separation of church and state. The vast majority of those who came to the colonies were fleeing the "official church" religion, and the horror of the Thirty-Year War was still very fresh in their minds. Never again did people wish to have a state church, so the colonies became the first country to establish no state church or religion. Within several years France and others would soon follow in abolishing state churches and instead, preserve the right for freedom of worship. We need to remind ourselves that this freedom can easily be lost when the next generation forgets the lessons that were learned from history. Our ancestors fled from persecutions to this land to enjoy freedom, let us not give those freedoms away because freedom that is lost, is freedom that we may never get back. Happy Fourth of July and a wonderful, blessed Summer! Pastor Dan.

EDUCATION NEWS

Our Sunday School formal lessons are complete for this school year. We would like to Thank all the teachers and helpers as they gave of their time and talents to share God's words with the Youth of our church.

Enjoy your summer!

Bible School will be coming up soon. Our theme is At the Table. We will be having a meeting on June 3 at 6:00 pm to complete our plans. Bible School will be starting on June 16th – June 19th from 6:00 pm – 7:30 pm.

On June 1st we will be honoring our Graduates Emily Detterbeck, Julia Evans, Erica Miller and Jake Shotwell. You can read about some of their plans for the next chapter in their lives. Join us to show them our St. John's Family support.

GRADUATES – June 1, 2025

Emily Detterbeck – Emily will be graduating from Central Columbia High School. She will attend Commonwealth University-Bloomsburg to major in Nursing.

Julia Evans – Julia will be graduating from Central Columbia High School and will be attending Commonwealth University- Bloomsburg in the fall. She is majoring in English with a concentration in Creative Writing with hopes of being an editor.

Erica Miller – Erica graduated from Commonwealth University – Bloomsburg with degrees in Health Sciences and Communication Studies. She has accepted a year long Part Time research position with an organization called the Genomics Education Partnership. She is currently in the process of interviewing for a Genetic Counselor Assistant position at two different locations – one at Geisinger in Danville and one at The Kennedy Krieger Institute in Baltimore.

Jake Shotwell – Jake has graduated from Muhlenberg College with a Bachelors Degree in Media and Communications and a minor in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. He has accepted a job with Aesir Logistics (located in Fleetwood) beginning in August. His title is Office and Marketing Coordinator. He will be doing Marketing and Administration for them.

BLOOD DRIVE

Our next scheduled blood drive will be on **Wednesday, June 18th from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM.**

Fellowship & Evangelism News

CANNED GOODS COLLECTION

The first Sunday of each month has been designated as “Fill the Shelves” Sunday.

St. John's will continue to collect canned goods and non-perishable items for Columbia County Volunteers in Medicine. Your generosity is supporting a vital and much appreciated ministry in our community. ***(St. John's is the only church to support CCVM regularly.)***

You can place your items in the collection bags at any of the church entrances.

~ Thank You! **(Please remember to check the expiration dates on your donations)*

WELCOME TABLE

The Welcome Table is a place where someone can get a free meal without judgment or discrimination. It relies solely on the generosity and donations of other's and volunteers. In April/May we served 108 / 96 meals. **Upcoming meals will be held on June 14th, and July 12th from 10:30am – Noon.**

THANK YOU SO VERY MUCH for your dedication and support to this ministry!

Sign-up sheets are in the rear of the sanctuary, or you can call Lydia (570-204-2516) to volunteer. ***Please Note: Drop off times for donations will be on Friday's from 5:30 – 6:00 before the day of the meal and Saturday, the morning of, at 9:00 am. (unless otherwise announced)***

GATHERING TIME

Gathering time has been very enjoyable. We are meeting some new friends and catching up with our old friends! We look forward to our next Gathering-times on June 15th (*Father's Day*). There will be light refreshments. July 13th - no Gathering time.

If you would like to volunteer to bring a light snack (cookies, donuts, cake) please give the office or Lydia Ferro a call and she'll sign you up! Looking forward to seeing you!

June 8th, 2025 - Church Music Sunday – To be held at FUEL at 3:00pm

June 22nd, 2025 – Men's Chorus Concert – 3:00pm at St. John's followed by an in the Gathering Area.

July 13th, 2025 – Congregational Outdoor Service & Picnic –Beginning at 9:00am at St. John's Service to be held in the Lois Gassert Pavillion, Picnic to be held immediately following in the social Hall. F&E to provide hotdogs, buns, and drinks (iced tea, lemonade and water). Bring a covered dish to share, Eva will bring BBQ, Bring your own table settings. David will grill.

August 10th, 2025 – Hymn Sing & Gathering Time

Directory of Congregants – If you would like to send a card to a fellow member, please call the church office for further information.

MEN'S CONCERT ON JUNE 22ND AT ST. JOHN'S

The Penns Valley Men's Chorus will be performing a concert of Old-Fashioned Hymns and Sunday School Songs at St. John's on Sunday afternoon, June 22nd at 3:00 PM. An Ice Cream Social will follow the concert.

The Penns Valley Men's Chorus last appeared at St. John's two years ago and wanted to come back again for another concert. Located in eastern Centre County, the men represent around 14 different churches of all faiths from Lutheran to Mennonites. They were formed around 1946 as part of the worship service for the Centre County Sunday School Association to assist with worship at the Centre County Grange Fair. They are still active each year in leading worship at the fair on Sunday Morning. With the Chorus are two separate barbershop quartets which perform with the Chorus and we invite anyone from the audience to come and join in the singing. Admission is free and a goodwill offering will be taken at the event. Bring a friend, bring your neighbor and join us in singing the Old songs of the faith!!

LETTER OF CALL

You are invited to attend the Thirty-seventh Annual Convention of the Women of the ELCA, Upper Susquehanna Synod, on July 26, 2025. It will take place at Faith Lutheran Church, 2349 Old Turnpike Rd, Lewisburg PA. Please plan to attend this one day Convention. It is an excellent opportunity to unite with our sisters from neighboring churches. There will be programs to enjoy, worship, and meals provided. Registration forms are on the rear table of the church. The theme: For All The Faithful Women. Please return your registration form with \$40.00 payment by June 15, 2025

This year we will be putting together packs of feminine products which we have been collecting in a box at the rear of the church. The plan is to pack 200 kits with any extras going to a local shelter. Monetary donations would also be appreciated.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRY

We are forming teams of two to restart Homebound Ministry at St. John's. The teams will take communion to our members who are unable to attend worship. Visitation for communion will take place once a month immediately after worship.

Please see Pastor Dan or Carolyn Bahlavooni if you are interested in becoming a part of this ministry. Pastor Dan will be holding a training session.

GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP

After a summer hiatus, The Grief Support Group will meet **on Wednesday, September 17th at 7:00 PM**. Anyone who has experienced grief due to the recent or past death of a loved one is welcome to attend. This is an informal group whose purpose is to talk about any issues group members may be experiencing related to loss. Refreshments will be served.

DAY OF LEARNING AND RENEWAL

On Saturday, April 26th the USSWO Enjoyed a Day of Learning and Renewal at Salem Lutheran Church in Selingsgrove. Participants were led by Christian artist Judy Mummau in painting a picture of 3 crosses to take home with them.





Happy
Birthday!

JUNE BIRTHDAYS

Sylvia Hahn 2
Zachary Ferro 6
Michael Morris 8
Paul Lanning 9
Ronald Brink 11
Tammy Detterbeck 11
Grant Johnson 12
Patty Mausteller 15
Clayton Nevel 17
Rebecca Evans 17

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Tyler Beck 2
Rebecca Warntz 4
Pastor Dan 5
Loreen Comstock 7
Ellena Adams 9
William Hower Jr 10
Alison Whitmoyer 11
Leslie Huntington 20
Kevin Johnson 22
Andrea Zajac 24
Bryce Yoder 25
Matthew Evans 30

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St. John's Mission Statement

*"We the people of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church,
celebrate God with us as we worship, learn, grow and serve."*

Upcoming Events:

Worship

JUNE / JULY 2025 - 9:00 am

Honoring our Graduates

Outdoor Service

Vacation Bible School

Gathering time, Father's Day

Penn Valley Men's Chorus Concert

WELCA convention