



ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

2026

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! **Today is the First Sunday after Epiphany, The Baptism of Our Lord.** We are delighted to have you worship with us. If you'd like to connect with us, share a prayer request, or learn more about St. John, please complete a yellow communication card located on the back of the pews and place it in the offering plate.

PRAYER REQUESTS

When we pray for each other, we demonstrate Christ's love for each of us

For **Jonette Christy**, struggling with the flu

For **Patty Ross**, friend of Sally Acton, recovering from the flu

For **Darin Pigg**, friend of Bonnie Butterbaugh, diagnosed with a serious illness

For **Alan Ott**, grandson of Michele (Mike) Moore, diagnosed with a tumor at the base of the brain

For **Peggy Smith** and family, as they mourn the loss of Lee Smith

For **Karma Wisecarver**, daughter of Lee & Peggy Smith, having a difficult time as she continues through her cancer journey

For **Brian Fowler**, as he slowly recovers from West Nile Virus

Continued prayers for **Jim Fogle, Jon & Linda Leist, Bill Meyer, Freda Rutter, Linda Miller, and Shirley & Larry West**

If you have a prayer request, please reach out to Sue Mason, who will email our church members. She can be reached at: 614-260-1107 or at susiemase3@hotmail.com.



Scripture for today, Jan 11:

Isaiah 42:1-9, Psalm 29,
Acts 10:34-43, Matthew 3:13-17

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Alan Fisher	January 13
Neva Hornbeck	January 15
Judy Kellett	January 26

We joyfully welcome Rev. Bob Abrams, Assistant to the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, as he brings us today's message and leads the commissioning of Amy Lytle as Synod Authorized Minister (SAM) for St. John Lutheran Church. This is a moment of great celebration and gratitude in the life of our congregation as we rejoice in God's calling, give thanks for Rev. Abrams' leadership, and celebrate Amy's faithful service and ministry among us.





THE INSIDE STORY BY SALLY ACTON



Today's Gathering Song, "As With Gladness Men of Old" was written by William Chatterton Dix in 1858 inspired by the biblical story of the Magi (Wise Men) visiting baby Jesus, drawing parallels between their journey following the star and a Christian's spiritual path to Christ, emphasizing joyful worship and offering oneself to God rather than just material gifts. The hymn compares the Magi's outward journey with the believers inward, personal pilgrimage to Jesus, urging constant spiritual movement towards Him.

Guys & Gals Lunch Bunch will dine at the Olive Garden in Lancaster on **Tuesday, January 13**, located at 2093 Schorrrway Dr NW, Lancaster. Please RSVP to Charlotte Meyer, if possible.

The **Altar Flower** chart is in the Narthex where you may sign up to place flowers on the altar. Flowers are \$35. You may leave the money in the envelope under the chart for Linda Leist. Please be sure to indicate if the flowers are for a special occasion, and let Don Hornbeck know if you would like it posted in the Bulletin.



We all know times have been tough lately, and our local food pantry is seeing more families in need. If you are able, please place your food donation for the **Food Pantry** in the shopping cart. For the **Embassy of Winchester** nursing home, please place your donated items in the collection box located in the Narthex. Every contribution, no matter how small, makes a difference. Together we can help ensure no one goes hungry.



The Baptism of Our Lord

The First Sunday after Epiphany marks the Baptism of Our Lord, when the Church remembers Jesus' baptism by John in the Jordan River. In this moment, Jesus is publicly affirmed as God's Son as the Holy Spirit descends and a voice from heaven declares him to be God's beloved. This event signals the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and helps reveal who he is for the world.

In the ELCA, baptism is understood as a gift of God's grace, given through water and the Word. Through baptism, we are claimed as God's children and joined to Christ's life, death, and resurrection. As we observe this day, we are invited to remember our own baptisms and reflect on how God's grace calls us to live in faith and service.

2026 YTD Offerings Summary	
Offerings through:	1/4/2026
Budget (yearly)	60,180.40
Budget YTD	2,314.63
Offerings - Received	1,216.10
YTD Over(+)/Under(-)	-1,098.53

2026 Average Sunday Attendance Watch	
2025 Avg = 35	Jan = 34

Worship Leader

Today	Amy Lytle, Synod Authorized Minister (SAM)
1/18/2026	Jon Leist
1/25/2026	Jon Leist
2/1/2026	Jon Leist

Happenings

Today	<u>Amy's SAM commissioning</u> by PS. Bob Abrams
1/13/2026	<u>Guys & Gals Lunch Bunch @ Olive Garden</u> (Lancaster)
1/14/2026	<u>Amy's Foot surgery</u> - Pray for a successful outcome
1/18/2026	<u>Council Meeting</u> immediately after church (With <u>NEW</u> members)

Opportunities to Serve

Contact Don Hornbeck with information for our weekly Sunday bulletins.

Sunday School & Bible Study

Adults - Sunday mornings 9am-10am upstairs in the Parish Hall

Children - During the church service in the Parish Hall youth room (Jonette Christy)

Weekly Average Attendance by month for 2022 through 2026

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Avg
2022	14	21	26	48	40	32	31	30	38	32	29	34	31
2023	24	31	29	35	38	33	33	30	35	26	29	29	31
2024	17	23	30	25	46	46	45	39	34	29	30	36	33
2025	36	28	37	38	35	36	33	37	31	33	31	35	34
2026	34												34
Yr-Yr Chg	-2												

Amy Lytle's email address: amyblytle@gmail.com
 Amy Lytle's cell phone: 614-208-3719
 Council President contacts: 614-286-6175 / alfisher@aol.com
 St John's website: www.stjlithopolis.com
 St John's email address: office.stjohnlithopolis@gmail.com
 St John's office phone: 614-837-2947 (voice mailbox)
 St John's mailing address: 133 West South Street, PO Box 206 / Lithopolis, Ohio 43136
 St John's facebook page: https://facebook.com/StJohnLithopolis

Sunday, January 11, 2026 – The Baptism of Our Lord
ELW Service of the Word

WELCOME & ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

Blessed be the holy Trinity, ✝ one God,
who creates us and forms us,
who redeems us and calls us,
who unites us and sends us.

Amen.

Gathered in God's presence, let us confess our sin.

Mighty and loving God,

**we confess that we are captive to sin
and cannot free ourselves.**

We seek our own way. We divide the body of Christ.

In your mercy, cleanse us and heal us.

**Let the words of our mouths, the thoughts of our hearts,
and everything that we do be filled with faith, hope, and love.**

Amen.

Hear the voice of Jesus:

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me
to proclaim release to the captives.”

In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, I proclaim to you
that your sins are forgiven and you are released.

The joy of the Lord is your strength,
and the gifts of the Holy Spirit are yours forever.

Amen.

GATHERING SONG *As with Gladness Men of Old* (ELW 302)

1 As with gladness men of old did the guiding star behold;
As with joy they hailed its light, leading onward, beaming bright;
So, most gracious Lord, may we evermore be led by thee.

2 As with joyful steps they sped, Savior, to thy lowly bed,
There to bend the knee before thee,
Whom heav'n and earth adore;
So may we with willing feet ever seek thy mercy seat.

3 As they offered gifts most rare at thy cradle, rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring, Christ, to thee, our heav'nly king.

4 Holy Jesus, ev'ry day keep us in the narrow way;
And when earthly things are past,
Bring our ransomed souls at last
Where they need no star to guide, where no clouds thy glory hide.

5 In the heav'nly country bright need they no created light;
Thou its light, its joy, its crown,
thou its sun which goes not down; there forever may we sing
Alleluias to our king.

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.

CANTICLE OF PRAISE (ELW p. 213)

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
Glory to God, glory to God,
And peace to God's people on earth.
Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father,
We worship you, we give you thanks,
We praise you for your glory.**

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
Glory to God, glory to God,
And peace to God's people on earth.
Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father,
Lord God, Lamb of God,
You take away the sin of the world: have mercy on us;
You are seated at the right hand of the Father:
Receive our prayer.**

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
Glory to God, glory to God,
And peace to God's people on earth.
For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High,
Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit,
In the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

**Glory to God, glory to God, glory to God in the highest;
Glory to God, glory to God,
And peace to God's people on earth,
And peace to God's people on earth.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray.

**O God our Father, at the baptism of Jesus you proclaimed him your beloved Son and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Make all who are baptized into Christ faithful to their calling to be your daughters and sons, and empower us all with your Spirit, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
Amen.**

FIRST READING: Isaiah 42:1-9

God's servant is endowed with God's spirit in order to bring justice to the nations. The servant will not exercise authority boisterously or with violence, nor will weariness ever prevent the fulfilling of the servant's task. God's old promises have been fulfilled; the servant's new assignment is to bring light to the nations.

A reading from Isaiah.

- ¹ Here is my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
- ² He will not cry out or lift up his voice
or make it heard in the street;
- ³ a bruised reed he will not break,
and a dimly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
- ⁴ He will not grow faint or be crushed
until he has established justice in the earth,
and the coastlands wait for his teaching.

- ⁵ Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people upon it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
- ⁶ I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I have taken you by the hand and kept you;

I have given you as a covenant to the people,
a light to the nations,
⁷ to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
⁸ I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to idols.
⁹ See, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth,
I tell you of them.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 29

¹ Ascribe to the LORD, you gods,
ascribe to the LORD glory and strength.
² **Ascribe to the LORD the glory due God's name;
worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.**

³ The voice of the LORD is upon the waters; the God of glory
thunders; the LORD is upon the mighty waters.
⁴ **The voice of the LORD is a powerful voice;
the voice of the LORD is a voice of splendor.**

⁵ The voice of the LORD breaks the cedar trees;
the LORD breaks the cedars of Lebanon;
⁶ **the LORD makes Lebanon skip like a calf,
and Mount Hermon like a young wild ox.**

⁷ The voice of the LORD

bursts forth in lightning flashes.

⁸ **The voice of the LORD shakes the wilderness;
the LORD shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.**

⁹ The voice of the LORD makes the oak trees writhe and strips
the forests bare.

And in the temple of the LORD all are crying, “Glory!”

¹⁰ **The LORD sits enthroned above the flood;
the LORD sits enthroned as king forevermore.**

¹¹ O LORD, give strength to your people;
give them, O LORD, the blessings of peace.

SECOND READING: Acts 10:34-43

Peter crosses the sharp religious boundary separating Jews from Gentiles and proclaims the good news of God’s inclusive forgiveness in Jesus’ name to Cornelius, a Roman centurion. As a result of Peter’s preaching, Cornelius and his family become the first Gentiles to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ.

A reading from Acts.

³⁴ Peter began to speak to [Cornelius and his household]: “I truly understand that God shows no partiality, ³⁵ but in every people anyone who fears him and practices righteousness is acceptable to him. ³⁶ You know the message he sent to the people of Israel, preaching peace by Jesus Christ—he is Lord of all. ³⁷ That message spread throughout Judea, beginning in Galilee after the baptism that John announced: ³⁸ how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power; how he went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with him. ³⁹ We are witnesses to all that he did both in Judea and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, ⁴⁰ but God raised him on the third day and allowed him to appear, ⁴¹ not to all the people but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses and who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead.

⁴² He commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God as judge of the living and the dead.

⁴³ All the prophets testify about him that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name.”

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION (ELW p. 216)

Alleluia, Lord, to whom shall we go?

Alleluia. You have the words of eternal life.

Alleluia, alleluia.

GOSPEL: Matthew 3:13-17

Before Jesus begins his ministry, he is baptized by John, touched by the Spirit, and identified publicly as God's child.

The holy gospel according to Matthew.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹³ Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. ¹⁴ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ¹⁵ But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. ¹⁶ And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw God's Spirit descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷ And a voice from the heavens said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

The gospel of the Lord.

Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON: REV. BOB ABRAMS

HYMN OF THE DAY (ELW 304)

Christ, When for Us You Were Baptized

1 Christ, when for us you were baptized,
God's Spirit on you came,
As peaceful as a dove, and yet
As urgent as a flame, as urgent as a flame.

2 God called you, "My beloved Son";
You are God's servant true,
Sent to proclaim the reign of heav'n,
God's holy will to do, God's holy will to do.

3 Straightway and steadfast until death
You then obeyed the call
To serve with free and willing heart,
To give your life for all, to give your life for all.

4 Baptize us with your Spirit, Lord;
Your cross on us be signed,
That likewise in God's service we
May perfect freedom find, may perfect freedom find.

WE CONFESS OUR FAITH

Let us confess our Christian faith using the words of the Nicene Creed:

**We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

For us and for our salvation

**he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the scriptures;
he ascended into heaven**

and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the
dead, and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and
glorified,**

who has spoken through the prophets.

We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.

We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,
and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

Commissioning to a Synod Authorized Minister

Please stand as you are able.

Rev. Bob Abrams, Assistant to the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod:

I have been authorized by the church to commission Amy Lytle as
a Synod Authorized Minister for St. John Lutheran Church,
Lithopolis, Ohio.

Alan Fisher, Council President:

After prayerful deliberation, we, of St. John Lutheran Church, have invited Amy Lytle to be our Synod Authorized Minister. I present her for that commission.

The congregation may be seated.

Pr. Abrams: A reading from Matthew: Jesus said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.

And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

(Matthew 28:18-20)

A reading from First Timothy: Set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Attend to the public reading of scripture, to exhorting, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you through prophecy with the laying on of hands by the council of elders. Put these things into practice, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching; continue in these things, for in doing this you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Timothy 4:12-16)

Pr. Abrams: Amy, in the presence of this assembly, will you commit yourself to this new trust and responsibility, in the confidence that it comes from God through the charge of the church?

Amy Lytle: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Pr. Abrams: Will you preach and teach in accordance with the holy scriptures and with the confessions of the Lutheran church? Will you carry out this ministry in harmony with the constitutions of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America under the authority of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod?

Amy Lytle: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Pr. Abrams: Will you be diligent in your study of the holy scriptures and in your use of the means of grace? Will you love, serve, and pray for God's people, nourish them with the word and sacraments under the authority of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod, and lead them by your own example in faithful service and holy living?

Amy Lytle: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Pr. Abrams: Will you give faithful witness in the world, that God's love may be known in all that you do?

Amy Lytle: I will, and I ask God to help me.

Pr. Abrams: Almighty God, who has given you the will to do these things, graciously give you the strength and compassion to perform them.

Congregation: Amen.

Pr. Abrams: Please stand as you are able.

People of God,
will you receive Amy as a messenger of Jesus Christ sent to serve the congregation with the gospel of hope and salvation?

Will you regard her as a servant of Christ serving you under the authority of the Bishop of the Southern Ohio Synod?

Congregation: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Pr. Abrams: Will you pray for her, help and honor her for her work's sake, and in all things strive to live together in the peace and unity of Christ?

Congregation: We will, and we ask God to help us.

Pr. Abrams: Amy, the commission of Synod Authorized Minister at St. John Lutheran Church is now committed to you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

BLESSING

Pr. Abrams: The God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, make you complete in everything good so that you may do God's will, working in you that which is pleasing in God's sight; through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.

People of God, I present to you your Synod Authorized Minister, Amy Lytle.

Please remain standing for the prayers.

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Minister: As God's beloved children united in Christ, let us pray for the church, the whole human community, and the well-being of the earth, our home.

Minister: Steadfast God, give courage to your servant church. Heal our divisions and unite us in mission. Uphold our lay leaders, missionaries, pastors, and bishops, and all who proclaim hope in a broken world. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reader 1: Restoring God, cleanse the life-giving waters of rivers, seas, and springs. Create in us an urgent desire to preserve the beauty and bounty of your good creation. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reader 2: Righteous God, you guide the nations. Reconcile warring enemies and end cycles of violent retribution. Defend the rights of prisoners, detainees, and all who flee from persecution. Sustain international aid workers and peacemakers. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reader 3: Compassionate God, you care for all in distress. Provide safety and support for those seeking asylum or in need of shelter. Be near to the dying, and comfort all who are grieving or ill. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reader 4: Loving God, awaken the gifts of the Spirit in this congregation, that we may serve Christ by loving one another, our neighbors, and our enemies. We pray for travelers and those who are homebound. Merciful God,
receive our prayer.

Reader 5: Promising God, in baptism we die and rise with Christ. We give thanks for those who have gone before us, and we trust that we will join them in your everlasting peace. Merciful God, **receive our prayer.**

Minister: Confident that the Holy Spirit receives our prayers and answers us, we commend all for whom we pray to God's loving-kindness made known to us in Christ Jesus our Savior.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

THANKSGIVING FOR THE WORD

Let us pray.

Praise and thanks to you, holy God, for by your Word you made all things: you spoke light into darkness, called forth beauty from chaos, and brought life into being. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

By your Word you called your people Israel to tell of your wonderful gifts: freedom from captivity, water on the desert journey, a pathway home from exile, wisdom for life with you. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Through Jesus, your Word made flesh, you speak to us and call us to witness: forgiveness through the cross, life to those entombed by death, the way of your self-giving love. For your Word of life, O God, **we give you thanks and praise.**

Send your Spirit of truth, O God; rekindle your gifts within us: renew our faith, increase our hope, and deepen our love, for the sake of a world in need. Faithful to your Word, O God, draw near to all who call on you; through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be honor and glory forever. **Amen.**

LORD'S PRAYER

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

**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.**

BLESSING

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
May the Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.
May the Lord look upon you with favor
and ✝ grant you peace.
Amen.

SENDING SONG *Arise, Your Light Has Come!* (ELW 314)

1 Arise, your light has come!
The Spirit's call obey;
Show forth the glory of your God
Which shines on you today.

2 Arise, your light has come!
Fling wide the prison door;
Proclaim the captive's liberty,
Good tidings to the poor.

3 Arise, your light has come!
All you in sorrow born,
Bind up the brokenhearted ones
And comfort those who mourn.

4 Arise, your light has come!
The mountains burst in song!
Rise up like eagles on the wing,
God's pow'r will make us strong.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.
Thanks be to God.

CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING:

God be with you 'til we meet again,
By his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you,
God be with you 'til we meet again. Amen.

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