

GREETINGS AND “MESSAGES” FROM
THE HILL
ST. JOHN’S CHURCH AUBURN



November, 2020

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Then the Devil led Him up and showed Him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world. And the Devil said to Him, "To You I will give their glory and all this authority; for it has been given over to me, and I give it to anyone I please (Luke 4:5,6 NIV).

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ...

On October the 2nd, I had the good fortune of receiving an invitation to participate in the prayer vigil here in Auburn. Several pastors and lay people prayed for our nation. They prayed that our nation would have a spiritual revival and we would turn back to God. It was a very powerful evening. As I was driving home that night I thought there is no doubt that our nation is in dire need of God's blessings.

The other day I was watching the news. I saw people rioting, looting, assaulting individuals, destroying private property and burning cars. Then I was watching the judicial hearings and how viciously the politicians were attacking the nominee to the Federal Supreme Court. Attacking her for no other reason but her faith in God. I watched how politicians blatantly lie and how they and their acolytes viciously attack anyone who disagrees with them. Sadly I see how families are torn apart by differences in ideologies. I thought what is happening to us? Suddenly, I was reminded of a monolog by Paul Harvey.

In 1965, Paul Harvey broadcasted a monolog titled, "*If I Were the Devil*". It is really amazing to realize over 55 years ago how accurately he "prophesied" the future spiritual condition of the United States of America. Many of his statements were considered ridiculously outlandish at that time in history. Yet, when we think about this, I must beg the question as to where do we find

ourselves today? Read the words of Paul Harvey as he delivered them on his radio show some 55 years ago...

If I were The Devil”

By: Paul Harvey

If I were the devil ... If I were the Prince of Darkness, I'd want to engulf the whole world in darkness. And I'd have a third of its real estate, and four-fifths of its population, but I wouldn't be happy until I had seized the ripest apple on the tree — Thee. So I'd set about however necessary to take over the United States. I'd subvert the churches first — I'd begin with a campaign of whispers. With the wisdom of a serpent, I would whisper to you as I whispered to Eve: 'Do as you please.'

“To the young, I would whisper that 'The Bible is a myth.' I would convince them that man created God instead of the other way around. I would confide that what's bad is good, and what's good is 'square.' And the old, I would teach to pray, after me, 'Our Father, which art in Washington...'

“And then I'd get organized. I'd educate authors in how to make lurid literature exciting, so that anything else would appear dull and uninteresting. I'd threaten TV with dirtier movies and vice versa. I'd pedal narcotics to whom I could. I'd sell alcohol to ladies and gentlemen of distinction. I'd tranquilize the rest with pills.

“If I were the devil I'd soon have families that war with themselves, churches at war with themselves, and nations at war with themselves; until each in its turn was consumed. And with promises of higher ratings I'd have mesmerizing media fanning the flames. If I were the devil I would encourage schools to refine young intellects, but neglect to discipline emotions — just let those

run wild, until before you knew it, you'd have to have drug sniffing dogs and metal detectors at every schoolhouse door.

“Within a decade I'd have prisons overflowing, I'd have judges promoting pornography — soon I could evict God from the courthouse, then from the schoolhouse, and then from the houses of Congress. And in His own churches I would substitute psychology for religion, and deify science. I would lure priests and pastors into misusing boys and girls, and church money. If I were the devil I'd make the symbols of Easter an egg and the symbol of Christmas a bottle.

“If I were the devil I'd take from those who have, and give to those who want until I had killed the incentive of the ambitious.

And what do you bet I could get whole states to promote gambling as the way to get rich? I would caution against extremes and hard work in Patriotism, in moral conduct. I would convince the young that marriage is old-fashioned, that swinging is more fun, that what you see on the TV is the way to be. And thus, I could undress you in public, and I could lure you into bed with diseases for which there is no cure. In other words, if I were the devil I'd just keep right on doing what he's doing.

Paul Harvey, good day.”

Sadly, much of what Paul Harvey saw as emerging trends back in the 60's has come to fruition. Moreover, realizing that many readers may not believe in the devil, per se, doesn't change the fact that these portents have achieved fulfillment. Whether the causality is the devil or some may assert other nefarious evil or harmful sources, or merely the result of wanton and self-gratifying

human nature, the culmination of these destructive trends in society has dramatically come to realization in recent years.

Cultural society chose to ignore Paul Harvey’s prophetic words spoken 55 years ago. The result is rioting and looting in our cities, police officers shot and killed, failing school systems and political corruption the likes our nation has never seen.

Today, right now - I ask you to put this newsletter down and immediately pray. Let us pray for our nation. Let us pray for our church. Let us pray for each other. Let us pray that we once again put God back into our society. Healing of the nation begins with prayer. Let us ask God for forgiveness, guidance and most of all His renewed blessing.

Shalom,

Pastor Breiner

**Bible Study every Wednesday at 6:30 pm
followed by Prayer Meeting at 7:30 pm.
New Bible Study coming!**



Thanks to our members who continue to mail donations to support St. John’s ministry. Your support is appreciated

“The thankful receiver bears a plentiful harvest.”
—William Blake



November, 2020

New:

A message from the
Joint Board

- **Read your newsletter!**
- **ALL Saints Day – 1st Sunday in November** - If you have a deceased family member or loved one you would like to be remembered, please contact Pastor Breiner ASAP.
- The **stained glass window** that was removed : Lutheran members have pledged memorial funds from their families to help pay for having the window reframed & back-lit, and to pay for electrical work that needs to be done for its installation. The amount out of the Lutheran Memorial Fund is capped at \$15,000.00. The U.C.C. consistory has pledged \$1,250.00 from their Memorial Fund. Lori Rausch would also like to donate toward this project. **Anyone is welcome to donate to this project!**
- Time to order **poinsettias!** Look in this newsletter for the order forms. If you want to place an order but cannot come to the church to pick it up, **I will deliver it to you.** Just let me know.
- **Joint Congregational Meeting, Nov. 22, immediately after worship service** to vote on the ratification of the new constitution & by-laws for a federated St. John's Church of Auburn, Pa. **Copies are available in narthex.**
- The **Annual Lutheran Congregational Meeting** is also scheduled for **Nov. 22**, immediately after the Joint Congregational meeting. Read the newsletter for details.
- A **catechetical class** has begun!
- **Kim Stoudt** – has received permission from the Jt. Board to conduct her music lessons in St. John's. She will be here Monday through Friday at various hours.
- The **Christmas Shoe Boxes** – are here! They need to be returned by November 8. Everyone is to fill their own Shoe Boxes for whatever age group & gender that they prefer. We are not filling the boxes as a group. If you

would like a box to fill, but are unable to come to get one, let me know, I will bring it to you & pick it up after you fill it.

- Don't forget : **Cemetery clean-up is November 1st !** Remove any item(s) you want to keep, or the clean-up will remove & discard it/them.

Old:

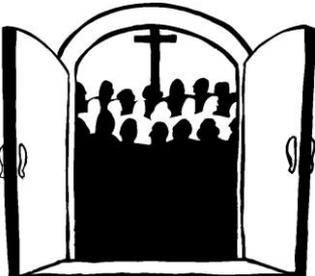
- The church is OPEN! Come and listen to the service in St. John's.
- We are **still wearing masks** to enter/ leave, and move about the church. Once you are seated, you may remove them.
- **Please do not sit near others for everyone's health safety.** We are still using the **6 foot rule of distancing.**
- **An offering plate will be in the narthex. Please place your tithes/offerings in the plate as you enter.** This is to reduce contact between all.
- **When there is communion :** the communion host will be in baggies in a basket in the narthex. Take one as you enter.
- **New, temporary acolyte job :** the acolyte will bring the offering plate to the altar at the indicated time in the bulletin.
- There will be no exchanging of the Peace until further notice.
- Sunday's sermon is being streamed on FaceBook at 10:15 AM. Please join us on line, if you cannot physically attend. Please bear with us, as we have occasionally hit a few snags while trying to stream the service.
- **The church has hired Colonial Mapping and Surveying of Orwigsburg, to work on updating the church's deeds.** Research had stopped due to the courthouses being closed for Covid-19. Hopefully we will hear from Dave Humanensky soon.

May God keep His arms around each and every one of you.
Share the love of Jesus with your neighbors.



Keep your church's leaders in your prayers, so that we keep an open ear and heart to God's voice, and do His will, not ours. Have a Blessed Thanksgiving. Betty R. 570-573-1143

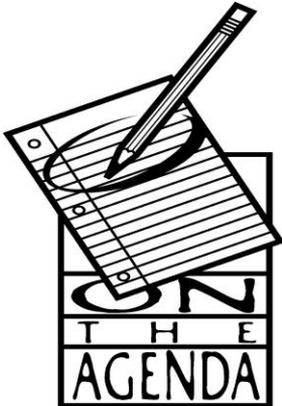
Task Force: They have completed the federation constitution/bylaws. It is ready for the voting procedure.



Congregational MEETING

JOINT CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

There will be an official congregational vote for the ratification of the constitution and bylaws of the "new" soon-to-be federated "St. John's Church of Auburn PA" on Nov. 22, 2020 (immediately after the church service and before the Lutheran Congregational Meeting).



ANNUAL LUTHERAN CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Lutheran Congregational Meeting will be on Nov. 22, 2020, after the church service to nominate, then elect, Council members for the next term. Also, the 2021 budget needs to be reviewed and voted upon. Please plan on attending.

**THESE MEETINGS ARE IMPORTANT!
OUR FUTURE DEPENDS ON EVERY ONE OF US.**



Greetings from the organ bench! Many of you have noticed that I used student musicians to provide special music for St. John's. I want to thank you for your support and encouragement of these young people. It truly benefits both you and them;

AND it gets these young people into church to hear the Word of God; to realize they have a gift to share and to not hide it under a bushel basket. My mother encouraged me as a young girl to play for services.

One of my jobs was to get the choir music ready on a Saturday night and put the hymn cards on the bulletin board. She was good at enlisting me, (and dad) and when I turned 15, she turned me loose to serve at Salem United Methodist church in Orwigsburg. It was my first real job. I am so blessed to be on her and Margret Koch's organ bench.

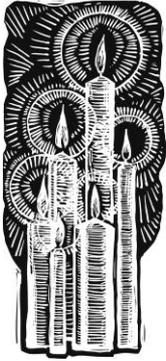


Choir rehearsal will begin on Saturday, October 31 at 11:00 am. I am planning on having rehearsals every week, knowing that some may not be able to make all the rehearsals. I will be there and work with whoever can attend. It will be a time of testing, not so much for learning the music, but learning it with Covid restrictions. We will NOT sing with masks, but space ourselves appropriately.

We need to be flexible!

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE IS THE 20TH OF THE MONTH

Remember, if you have any **corrections or additions to the directory**, please text to Judy at 570-985-8705



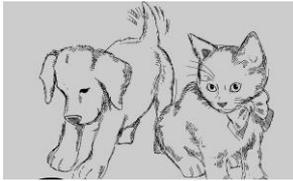
All Saints Day

On All Saints Day (Nov. 1) we will be having a special service by remembering the faithful who have departed from us since last All Saints Day 2019.

Pastor Breiner will be sharing the names of those who have departed from this earthly life and have gone home to the Father in heaven.

Included in the prayer will be those who passed away since last All Saints Sunday -

Nov. 3rd, 2019 If you have a family member or friend who has been called to his/her heavenly home since this date and you would like them included in the prayer, please call Pastor Breiner at 570-657-7565 **no later than Wednesday, Oct. 28th** so that their names can be listed in the bulletin.



We love our dogs, cats, birds, turtles, but God loves them as well. Not only does He love pets, but God loves all animals. We never take the time to recognize God's awesome creation. Animals can love, they can grieve, they get excited, etc. In a way they are just like us. Animals show us how

God loves us as well. When you see a mother bear protecting her cub, that shows how God will protect us. **On November 14th** the youth will be traveling to the "Ruth Steinert Memorial SPCA" to assist with the animals housed there. All youth (5th grade and up) are invited to attend. Parents are also welcome to join us. Thrivent Action Team will pay for supplies but we'll take monetary donations with us. More details to follow. Spread the Word!
Pastor Breiner



December Outreach – We will be collecting donations for the month of December for

"Food for the Poor" There will be a special plate in the Narthex for your donations. If you would like to mail your donation – put "Food for the Poor" in the memo on the check.



Rules for St. John's Cemeteries:

Any work performed in the cemetery must be approved by the cemetery committee or parish office. No digging or planting of any trees or shrubs (flowers, etc. limited to one foot in front of the headstone)

Cleanup dates of cemetery are

March 15th, August 1st, and **November 1st**. All items must be removed by these dates or they will be discarded.



Helping Harvest of Berks and Schuylkill Counties Mobile Food Market

is always the 3rd Wed of every month.

Currently, it is at the Auburn Borough Hall staffed by volunteers from St John's Church. No ID is required. Just pull up and we'll load the variety of meats,

produce, snacks & baked goods for you. We serve over 75 families locally every month. Thank you to everyone who helps to make this a continued success for our community!

Shoebboxes for kids



The shoeboxes are here!

This year we will be packing our own and all the supplies are on the table in the narthex. They will be due in the middle of November. Samaritan's Purse has told us this year the need for the boxes will be greater than ever due to the Covid 19 virus.

If you are not able to shop for a box you may make a donation of \$12.00 for each box and the committee will shop for you. Postage is not necessary this year as Operation Christmas Child receives donations specifically for postage. This may encourage you to pack more than one box. If you have any questions feel free to contact me. Thank you for your support in this worthy project. They will be taken to the Lighthouse Church on Nov. 23rd. God Bless, Peggy and the outreach committee



Dates Available



November, 2020

Altar Flowers: Nov. 8, 15, 22 or 29

Bulletins: Nov. 8, 15, 22 or 29

This Month Children Bulletins: Nov. – 1st or 2nd Half

Memorial Flowers: Nov. 1, 8, 15, 22 or 29



December, 2020

Altar Flowers: Dec. 6, 13, 20 or 27

Bulletins: Dec. 6, 13, 20 or 27

Children Bulletins: Dec. – 1st or 2nd Half

Memorial Flowers: Dec. 6, 13, 20 or 27

2020 Flower & Bulletin Date papers are in the Narthex,
please sign-up early for your favorite dates. Please remember to
call or hand a paper to Judy with your information, thank you.

Meetings & Gatherings:

Bible Study – Wednesdays at 6:30 P.M.

Prayer meeting – following Bible study

Nov. 1st – All Saints Sunday Worship at 9 A.M.

Nov. 22 - Congregational Meeting – after worship

Nov. 22 – Lutheran Cong. Meeting after Congregational meeting

Joint Board Meeting – Thursday, Nov. 12th at 7 P.M.

**Food Bank – Wed., Nov. 18th at the Auburn Borough building
10 A.M. to Noon.**

Lutheran Council Meeting – Tues., Nov. 17th at 7 P.M.



***The pastor will continue to give live sermons on our FaceBook page –after our live service he will broadcast his sermon again – live. Pastor is also looking into doing a live broadcast of the full service.

All you need is a telephone: We are checking into having the shut-ins listening in on our Sunday morning worship service. All that they will need to do is wait for their phone call and press #1 to join or worship. If this is something they may want to do they should notify Judy Epting or Pastor Breiner with their phone number. We're not sure if this is a possibility but first we need to see who would want this service.



FOR THE HOLIDAY!

We will be selling our famous poinsettias again this year.

Order deadline is: **December 13, 2020**

\$7.00 each comes with foil and sleeves.

6.5" pots with 5-7 blooms Colors are Red, Pink, White, Marble & Jingle Bell The order form is included in this newsletter and is also available in the Narthex.

Special dates:

- **All Saints' Day, November 1, 2020**
- **Daylight-Saving Time ends, November 1, 2020 ****
- **Election Day, November 3, 2020**
- **Veterans Day, November 11, 2020**
- **Thanksgiving Day, November 26, 2020**
- **First Sunday of Advent, November 29, 2020**

Maddie's Grab-A-Tab is still continuing for Ronald McDonald House. Mrs. Edwards and Blue Mtn Elementary East staff thank you all.



They recycle your aluminum beverage or product tabs, and deposit the tabs at the school. The Ronald McDonald House of Danville relies on this collection to help finance the many programs it offers, as well as the day-to-day operation of the House **LET'S COLLECT TABS FOR A GOOD CAUSE!** See the BLUE flyers in the narthex.



Boyer's Key Tags This is an easy way to donate, by shopping for your groceries using the Tag. Boyer's will donate a % to the St. John's Youth Fund. If you already use one, maybe you would like one for a family member or friend----with this card our youth fund benefits. ****Key Tags are available in the Narthex**



Donations Needed!

Becky Boltz is looking for YOUR tapes. There is a RED PLASTIC ENVELOPE in the

Narthex for your TAPES This Fundraiser benefits the Youth Fellowship group – please help them raise money for their activities. If you shop for Groceries – YOU CAN HELP---- **Thank you!** for submitting your Redner's Save-A-Tape store receipts, which are used to provide funds for St. John's Youth Fellowship. Redner's provides a 1% rebate for all qualifying purchases on the Save-A-Tape receipts. For the receipts to be validated by Redner's, they must have Save-A-Tape message printed on the receipt, which is added when you use your Save-A-Tape card at the time of purchase. The way to identify the qualifying amount on the receipt is to find the amount printed as "Today's contribution: \$(Amount)" or "Today's 1% Save-A-Tape Total \$(Amount)". In order for the church to use the receipt, that portion of the receipt must remain attached.





Food Pantry Donations: Can you help????

Our donations are in need of a BOOST! There are lists of the needed items in the Narthex. Although we collect Food Pantry items all the time, remember, **we also collect cash for the Food**

Pantry on the last Sunday of each month as you leave church. This is a great idea, since it is much easier to carry! You may also mail a check to the church, remember to put “Food Pantry” in the memo.

In the Area

Auburn Historical Society is currently seeking a new president as the former has moved out of the area. The secretary has agreed to fill in temporarily until the end of the year. Come and get involved in Auburn's rich history and become a steward for future generations. A lot of St John's Church is part of that legacy.



Next Red Cross Blood Drive is **Thursday, November 5th from 1-6 pm** at the Auburn Ambulance Bldg. To avoid a long wait, please make an appointment at 1800GiveBlood.

Blood is in high demand with the blood going to a person in need within days.

Don't throw away those Aluminum Cans! The Auburn Fire Company has been collecting aluminum cans at the back of the parking lot for many years. The money from the cans help with fire company expenses.

Another aluminum can site is alongside the Auburn Church of God, behind the Memorials on Market St. The money from this collection site benefits the Church's “Community Outreach Program.” Either site would appreciate your donations.

~~**Used Clothing?** The Auburn Fire Co. has a clothing shed in the lot across from the firehouse. We take used clothing, shoes, sneakers, belts, purses, blankets, sheets, pillowcases, drapes and stuffed toys. The items donated are sorted and sent to the needy in the U.S. and around the world. Our mission is to get USEABLE clothing to people in need. The Fire Co. is paid a % according to the weight of the items. This money helps with our expenses. **Closed until further notice!**~~

Auburn Fire Co. Rotisserie Chicken Sale - Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020
Pickup from Noon to 2 PM at the Auburn Firehouse in Auburn
½ Chicken, Baked Potato, Applesauce, Roll and Bottle of Water
Cost - \$8 There will also be Baked goods for sale. Please contact
Judy Epting or any other member of the Fire Co. for tickets
before Dec. 8th, 2020 Thanks for your support!



On Nov. 11 at 11 am the Auburn VFW will hold a brief Veterans Day Service. Rain or shine. Food & refreshments to follow. Please join us to honor our Veterans, all are welcome!



Growing through gratitude

Thankfulness, studies show, has multiple physical, mental and emotional benefits. Psychologist Robert Emmons calls

gratitude “fertilizer for the mind” because of its powerful effects.

He admits gratitude isn’t always easy — especially when life throws us curveballs (see the year 2020) — but says it can be most helpful during and after difficulties. Emmons suggests reframing challenges using thankfulness-based language. Ask, for example: Though I wasn’t grateful for the experience at the time, how can I be now? What lessons did I learn, and how did I grow as a person?

Throughout his letters, the apostle Paul reframes his extensive sufferings and urges us to do the same. “Give thanks in all circumstances,” he writes, “for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NIV).



+Christian Symbol+

St. Andrew's Cross

This cross is a symbol of humility and suffering. It first came into use during the Middle Ages. According to tradition, St. Andrew was crucified while preaching in Greece. He felt unworthy to be crucified in the same way as Jesus, so he begged that his cross be made differently. St. Andrew’s cross is the national cross of Scotland. It’s also called Cross Saltire.



Solitude as soul care

Richard J. Foster (*Celebration of Discipline*) says solitude is “more a state of mind and heart” than a place: “There is a solitude of the heart that can be maintained at all times. Crowds, or the lack of them, have little to do with this inward attentiveness.”

Although Jesus preferred crowd-free alone times, that’s not always feasible. But no matter your surroundings and responsibilities, you can carve out intentional time to “be still” (Psalm 46:10). Try these tips for adding solitude to life’s rhythms:

- Take a day. Every month or two, enjoy a day of solitude. Turn off your phone and spend the day with God.
 - Take an hour. Treat this time as an important calendar appointment. Keep it free to protect your solitude.
 - Take a minute. Before a big meeting or as you’re answering the phone, breathe deeply and invite God into the moment.
- Janna Firestone

Surreptitious saints

One of the most gracious dispensations of God concerning his saints is their lovely unawareness of sanctity. The nearer they move to him, the more conscious are they of sin. If it were impossible at times not to note their own growth in grace, it were impossible also to forget that it was all by his power. If they could be persuaded to admit their progress and talk of it at all, the language of their heart would be this: “If God could do this in me, he could do it in anyone.” —W.E. Sangster

Strangers no more

Some people open their holiday meals to strangers, and one host even did so inadvertently. In 2016, Wanda Dench texted 17-year-old Jamal Hinton about Thanksgiving dinner, thinking she was contacting her grandson. When a skeptical Hinton requested a photo and received a selfie of someone with a different skin color, he chuckled — but then asked if he could still come eat! Thus began a new friendship and a new annual tradition, which Hinton documents online. “Family is more than blood,” says Dench. “It’s the people you want to be with.”

This year’s meal will be bittersweet, with an empty chair for Dench’s husband, who died of Covid-19 in April. To show support after that loss, Hinton sent his “grandma” a collection of loving video messages. Strangers worldwide expressed condolences to a woman who’d fully embraced a stranger.

Joint Board – meets 2nd Thursday of each month (except July)

President – Betty Renninger 570-573-1143

Vice-President – Sandi Riedel – 570-294-3228

U.C.C. Consistory – Quarterly meetings - to be announced

President – Jim Peiffer 570-366-0066

Vice-President – John Naftzinger 570-754-4021

Lutheran Council – meets 3rd Tuesday of each month

President – Peggy Bachman 570-754-2201

Vice-President – Ami Dalkner 484-951-8374

The Church Staff:

Joint Board President: Betty Renninger – 570-573-1143

Sextons: Jack & Pat Hinchey – 570-754-4236

Parish Secretary/Treasurer: Judy Epting – 570-754-3014

Music Director: Debra Perkins – 570-640-8056

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran
& United Church of Christ
200 Pearson St., P.O. Box 103
Auburn, PA 17922

Address Service Requested

November, 2020
Dated Material