

The Grapevine

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
15 N. Church Street | Thurmont, MD 21788



**Summer 2026
Edition**



Greetings from Pastor Joe

*Grace and peace to you - in
the Name of our Lord Jesus
Christ*

Earl Weaver, the late
and great manager of the
Baltimore Orioles has an
autobiography titled *"It's
What You Learn After You
Know It All That Counts."*

In his book Weaver showed
his respect for Orioles great
Brooks Robinson when
he said, *"I thought, I'd like
to be like Brooks Robinson.
The guys who never said no
to anybody, the ones that
everybody loves because they
deserve to be loved, those are
my heroes. "*

Heroes come in all shapes
and sizes but little did I
know, when I began my
ministry here at St. John's,
that an elderly local farmer
would eventually be a hero
to me.

On April 23rd, Rodman

Myers passed into eternal
glory. I didn't realize how
much this man meant to
me until that first Sunday I
looked out into the church
and didn't see him sitting in
his familiar place - back pew
- on the center aisle.

The title of Earl Weaver's
book intrigues me because
- at the ripe old age of 65 - I
didn't think that there was
much that life had to teach
me. That was until I met
Rodman Myers.

I was honored to preside at
his funeral service and in my
eulogy I mentioned what
Rodman had taught me over
the past five-plus years.

One thing I learned very
quickly after Rodman took
me on a tour of his farm
is that I know absolutely
nothing about farming.
For me, it was good for a
city-born man to see how
farming is done. Now I know
that there are a few steps
before food gets to the
grocery stores.

Rodman taught me what it
means to be humble and
to understand that not
everything will go the way I
want it to.

He also taught me, and this
is the biggest and most
important life lesson, to trust
God.

My guess is that there is a

lot of trust in God when it
comes to farming. Planting
a seed and trusting that it
will grow is much like being
a pastor of a church and
trusting that God will take
care of the growing part.

There is much that I will
miss about Rodman Myers,
but the thing I will miss the
most is the fist bump that
he would give me after
church while saying, "Pray
for rain."

I love how God has brought
together people from all
walks of life here at St.
John's. Where else can a
city-raised person like me
be embraced by small-town
folks?

And as God has brought us
together, the mission of St.
John's continues. My prayer
is that we continue to be
"Loved by God... to Love
Others!" as our mission
statement says.

May we celebrate the saints
that have gone on before
us and look towards the
future.

God's Blessings to our
family at St. John's during
the summer months and
beyond.

In Christ,
- Pastor Joe

Council News

by Lisa Riffle, Council President

Greetings from your council president. Things have been busy around the church these past 3 months, and there are also some upcoming events, so I would like to give you an update.

We had an issue with the boiler that caused the radiators in the sanctuary to leak. This problem has been corrected, and a new piece has been installed that eliminates the need to drain the boiler every week. Also concerning the property, the Tankersley children have taken on the task of planting the flowers in front of the church...we would like to thank them for taking on this ministry.

We are currently collecting information so that an updated church directory can be compiled. Please add your information to the sheets in the back of the sanctuary, or give it to Linda.

The Easter flower and bake sale was a great success for the fundraising committee, and Kelli Donaghue is working on a Crafting with Friends fundraiser to be held on Thursday, June 18th at 6pm. Please see below for more information. A women's luncheon was held at Kountry Kitchen on May 16th. It was very well attended, and the fellowship was enjoyed by all. The most recent Saturday evening worship service was held May 30th at 4pm.

As always, please feel free to contact me or any council member if you have any questions or concerns. Wishing everyone a safe and enjoyable summer!

Current Council Members

Kelli Donaghue | Carolyn Fraley | Chris Kreitz | Lisa Riffle | Barbarateen Roderick | Gayle Spahr



Join us for this beautiful bedside tray created with colored resin and flowers. You will have multiple colors to pick from and flowers too. \$60 per participant. Each tray is unique and absolutely gorgeous. A portion of the proceeds will be donated back to the church to benefit their Terrific Tuesdays ministry.

Please visit this link to sign up for this fun event!
<https://www.facebook.com/share/18qj6CURUh/?mibextid=wwXlfr>

Financial Report

by Chris Kreitz

Is it spring yet? Seems we are having our typical Thurmont/Maryland weather: warm, cold, rainy, windy and repeat! But, before you know it we will be able to complain about the hot weather and the rising cost of electric due to air conditioning! With that in mind, I would like to remind everyone that if you are not here on Sunday, please consider sending your monetary gift to the church or adding it to the next Sunday collection. Just like home bills keep coming if you're not there, so do the bills at St. John's.

We are close to switching to the new office/financial program. Linda has been working diligently with ICON support to have this up and running as soon as possible.

On a positive note, congregational giving is fairly consistent and our checking account is staying about the same with minor fluctuations. I would like to thank everyone who is in a pew on Sunday for your generous support to our church both financially and by giving your time and talent. I also want to thank those members who can't physically make it to Sunday service because of illness or distance. Your ongoing support is a blessing.



Preschool News

by Wanda Mathias

As we welcome in summer, we can't forget that St. John's Christian Preschool had a busy month of May, and we can't believe another Preschool year has come and gone.

During the last of the Preschool year, the four's class went to the Cunningham Falls State Park Aviary to learn about animals. There are 21 non-releasable animals both native and non-native that the children could look at and learn about. They walked on a nature trail and looked for and discussed items as part of a Scavenger Hunt lesson. Due to the uncertainty of the weather, we did rent the pavilion from the Park Service to help keep everyone dry from the periods of rain that day.

All classes studied the life cycle of the Butterfly. Numerous Insect Lore Cups (Butterfly Garden Kits) were purchased, for each class to watch and learn about caterpillars as they form their chrysalides, and go through a few weeks of metamorphosis, and then finally emerge as Butterflies. Once the Painted Lady Butterflies were ready, we released them back into the wild to help pollinate our world.

The two- and three-year-old classes both had a fun day packed with exciting games and activities. This event was held here at the Preschool in the play yard, where numerous learning stations were setup for the children, and families were welcomed to attend and participate. This was an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors and make lasting memories with friends. The day concluded with freeze pops and was enjoyed by all.

All classes participated in Community Helpers Week. The four-year-old class went next door to the Fire Department, and the three's had a presentation from two of our fathers - a MD State Trooper and a Frederick County Sheriff Deputy - along with a story time from a local librarian.

All classes participated in the annual combined Pizza Day party, to celebrate all their hard work. This is a day when the Preschool orders pizza from a local vendor, and we all gather together in the Fellowship Hall for a fun time of pizza and fellowship.

The two-year-old class participated in "bring your stuffed animal to school" day. Each child told their classmates all about their favorite stuffed animal and why it's so special to them.

Some of the other summer themes the two- and three-year-old classes learned about and studied were Camping, the Beach, Clouds, Glow Day (showing we are glowing with excitement for the year), Mother's Day, and Father's Day,

Our Spring/Graduation ceremony was held on May 21, during which the three- and four-year-old classes showcased their singing and dance moves that they worked on so hard to learn. The program consisted of both classes performing separately and then a combined song was also presented. Both classes received a certificate of completion for the 2025/2026

school year.

Preschool is over now for Summer Break during the months of June and July. In August we will hold some "Open House" nights for parents and children to come and meet their teacher and see their classroom. The 2026/2027 School Year will begin on August 28, 2026, with the two-year-old class; the three- and four-year-old classes will start on September 8.

We wish everyone a happy, carefree summer!



Fundraising Committee

by Mary Lou Royer

Thank you to all of our members and friends who contributed with awesome baked goods, donations of cash, and your valuable time to make our Easter bake/flower sale a huge success. We were able to add \$1,200.00 to the Fundraising account. That, of course, helped to defray the expenses incurred when we needed to replace the commercial fridge in the church kitchen. We could not have done it without you.

We would love to hear from all of you concerning a possible fundraiser in the fall during Colorfest weekend. Should we return to our traditional yard sale, try to repeat a "rent your own booth" event or just have a food and bake sale? We have always done well with the yard sale but we need more volunteers to make it possible. Please let us know what you think.

With the big 250th Anniversary of our dear Country this year, we look forward to many patriotic events taking place in our area. Please keep in mind that our social hall is available to rent if your family or even some civic group is looking for a perfect place to hold a party. Call Linda to reserve your spot. On a personal note, my Thurmont High School class of 1961 held our 65th reunion dinner here on June 5th. It was the ideal homecoming venue for many of my classmates who grew up at Saint John's.

Happy 250th USA!



Outreach Update

by Carolyn Fraley

“Loved by God . . . to love others!” *A reminder to one and all that this is our St. John’s mission statement.* Remembering, therefore, that each of us is called to love our neighbor as ourselves and to be the hands and feet of Christ, your Outreach Team has voiced support again this year for the following programs, which reach out both locally and globally: The Thurmont Food Bank, “Loads of Love,” the ELCA “Good Gifts” Ministry, and “Operation Gratitude.”

- **Thurmont Food Bank-** As we’ve emphasized in so many previous newsletters, our local Food Bank increasingly needs the ongoing support of area churches and organizations, and is so grateful for donations given regularly by St. John’s.

The Outreach Team also wishes to thank those who contribute regularly to our Food Bank collections. As we continue with these **monthly** food collections, please note that **personal hygiene products** are always a welcome donation, as are boxes, bags and cans of **pet food**. Our weekly church bulletins will continue to specify requested food items each month. Thank you, in advance, **for whatever you can provide** for this truly vital ministry! Just remember to check “expiration dates” ... and **no glass jars, please**.

- **“Loads of Love”-** Support for this ministry comes through our **weekly collection of quarters**. The money is then used to assist patrons at Thurmont’s Super Suds Laundromat with the cost of their clothes laundering. This outreach opportunity typically occurs on the last Saturday of the month, depending on Pastor Joe’s availability. Most recently, Pastor Joe visited the laundromat on Saturday, April 25, and distributed a total of \$24.00 to appreciative patrons.
- **ELCA “Good Gifts” Ministry** - Again this year, we have chosen this particular transformative ministry for St. John’s continued support. We’ve set our goal for 2026 at **\$300**, in order to purchase the following “Good Gifts”:

Water Filter - \$30

Piglet - \$30

Mosquito nets for a family (2x @ \$20) - \$40

Goat - \$50

Seeds and gardening tools - \$50

Serve 50 at a feeding ministry - \$100

To meet our goal, our Summer Produce display began already in mid-May with fresh eggs, and then garden goodies will be added as they become available. All produce will be “on sale” (solely by donation) each Sunday in the fellowship hall. Individual piggy banks will also be available in June for further donations. We have decided not to use a Pentecost jar again this year, particularly as we remain committed to collecting quarters for our “Loads of Love” ministry. We are

Outreach Update (*continued*)

confident, however, that we can still reach our goal without the use of said jar, as we did in 2025.

We thank, in advance, those who are able to provide fresh eggs and garden produce and, of course, we also thank our purchasers!

- **“Operation Gratitude”** - Looking ahead to autumn, we will again be encouraging St. John’s participation in our yearly “Operation Gratitude” program, which consists of adding brief notes of thanks and encouragement in Christmas cards that will eventually be sent to American military personnel. As usual, volunteers will be needed in October and November. More details to come later.



Looking Ahead... *Mark Your Calendars!*

by Carolyn Fraley

- **Bible Study** - A group meets with Pastor Joe every Tuesday at 11:00am in the fellowship hall. We are currently studying the book of Psalms and invite you to join us whenever possible. *Please note that we'll be taking a break during July and August, with plans to resume in early September.*
- **"A Cup of Joe with Pastor Joe"** - We continue our weekly get-together with Pastor Joe every Tuesday at Dunkin' Donuts, 9:00-10:00am. It makes a pleasant, relaxing way to begin the day. Stop by sometime - we'd love to see you!
- **Sunday Socials** - Please remember to join us on the **first** Sunday of each month for food and fellowship following our worship service. You'll be happy you stayed!
- **Terrific Tuesdays** - This important ministry gives parents and children the opportunity to understand the Bible using puppet presentations and crafts. We typically meet with Pastor Joe (and his helpers) at 6:00pm in the fellowship hall on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month, with food provided. Come and join the fun!
- **Pastor Joe's Vacation** - Please note that Pastor Joe will be on vacation during the following weeks.

Sunday, June 14 through Saturday, June 20
Sunday, July 12 through July, 18
Sunday, August 16 through August 22
- **"Crafting" Fundraiser** - St. John's is hosting a fundraiser on **Thursday, June 18**, 6:00pm-8:00pm in the fellowship hall. Participants will be creating their own resin trays under the direction of Tammy Brown. The cost is \$60.00 per person, at the door. Please spread the word to your friends to come out and support us!
- **"The Journey" - Saturday Worship Experience** - Come join us on the last Saturday of each month at 4:00pm in our fellowship hall for a unique worship experience including contemporary music, prayer, and wrestling with God's word. We hope that you will come as you are, and leave changed!
- **Yard Sale and Bake Sale at Elias Lutheran Church in Emmitsburg** - For the bargain hunters among us, you'll have a chance to browse through a large selection of wares at Elias on **July 23, 24, 25**. The Sale runs **9:00am - 2:00pm each day**, with assorted baked goods also available for purchase.
- **Annual Church Picnic - Sunday, August 30, in Emmitsburg**. This year, as in 2024, Elias Lutheran Church has invited St. John's to join them at the Emmitsburg Memorial Pavilion. Time and more details to come later, but please mark the date now!

Worship Assistants' Schedule

June 2026

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
6/7	Kelli Donaghue	Harriet & Randy Valentine
6/14	Lisa Riffle	Kandy & Steve Hauk
6/21	Chris Kreitz	Kenny Favorite & Mike Kreitz
6/28	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Kandy & Steve Hauk



Worship Assistants' Schedule

July 2026

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
7/5	Kelli Donaghue	Harriet & Randy Valentine
7/12	Lisa Riffle	Kandy & Steve Hauk
7/19	Chris Kreitz	Kenny Favorite & Mike Kreitz
7/26	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Harriet & Randy Valentine

"The highest form of worship is the worship of unselfish Christian service."
- Billy Graham

As a follower of Jesus Christ, we are all called to service to others and service in and to the church. The role of the Assisting Minister (AM) is a reminder that we all share in the Priesthood. The role of the AM goes beyond simply assisting the pastor. The AM is also a visible sign that worship happens when we all participate. We honor those who serve as AMs, and give thanks to God for their leadership in our church.

Worship Assistants' Schedule

August 2026

DATE	ASSISTING MINISTER (and Lector)	WELCOMERS
8/2	Kelli Donaghue	Kandy & Steve Hauk
8/9	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Kenny Favorite & Mike Kreitz
8/16	Lisa Riffle	Harriet & Randy Valentine
8/23	Stacey Brown-Hobbs	Kandy & Steve Hauk
8/30	Chris Kreitz	Kenny Favorite & Mike Kreitz

****Please Note****

**If you cannot be present on the assigned date,
be sure to trade with another assistant. Thank you!**

“Church greeters provide a tremendous service for the Kingdom of God that impacts people for Christ just as much as the Sunday morning preacher or worship leader.” - Christian writer, John J. Frady

Our Welcomers play a very important role and in essence are the very face of the church for members and visitors alike. Welcomers are usually the first faces people see when they enter the church and they are responsible for creating a positive first impression. If the first impression is a poor one, most likely our visitors will not return. Welcoming goes beyond distributing bulletins. The very definition of the name is to make others feel welcome by being attentive to their needs (especially first-time visitors), and to offer assistance and direction when needed. Welcomers play a crucial role in making sure visitors feel seen, valued and welcomed. We thank God for our Welcomers as they continue to bless our church by serving in this vital ministry.

Birthdays & Prayers

June Birthdays

6/5 Traci Getz
6/18 Judy May
6/22 Kandy Hauk
6/23 P.J. Donaghue
6/24 Mary Ellen Eyler



July Birthdays

7/2 Gayle Spahr
7/10 Elaine Baltzell
7/10 Nancy Creager
7/12 Luke Bradley
7/13 Lillith Stansberry
7/27 Crystal Girona

August Birthdays

8/7 Don Valentine
8/9 Cathy Delauter
8/20 Karen Fox
8/25 Ashley Tankersley
8/27 Belle Grimes



Worthy of Note: Belated “Happy Anniversary” wishes to Richard and Inus Lohr, who celebrated 72 years of marriage on May 22, 2026! Living in Waynesboro, PA, they continue to be valued members of our St. John’s community and we wish them continued happiness!

Prayers

Please remember to pray for our Members:

Luke Bradley	Dan & Tracey Bradley	Fred & Julie Balias
Chester & Jean Zentz	Brian Getz	Denny Edwards
Nancy & Donald Creager	Connie Fox	Ross Smith, Jr.
Steve & Mary Ann Erlitz	Dottie Valentine	Richard Lohr
Mitch Unger		

For pastoral care, contact Pastor Joe @ 443-255-5229 or jherb1@yahoo.com

Birthdays & Prayers (*continued*)

Family and Friends:

Pam Ardery - MM Griggs
P.J. Donaghue - Kelli Donaghue
Debbie Fornwald - Carolyn Fraley
Mandy Valentine - Harriet & Randy Valentine
Ethel Brauer - Carolyn Fraley
Melinda Bitner - Sara Hahn
Carl Thayer - Carolyn Fraley
Nancy & Tommy Fraley - Carolyn Fraley
Jim Latham - The Tankersley Family
The Resch Family - The Tankersley Family
Becky Gorby - Ashley Tankersley
Angela Ashenfelter - Tonyia Miller
Jim & Sandy Schrock - Carolyn Fraley
Richard & Doris Slavey - Carolyn Fraley
Janice Allgood - Elaine & Michael Baltzell

Katie Wisnor - MM Griggs
John Oravec - Kelli Donaghue
Sharon Harrison - Sara Hahn
Alan Cornett - MM Griggs
Patty Reid - Carolyn Fraley
Cindy Parks - MM Griggs
Geoffrey Chandler - Carolyn Fraley
Irene Denning - Lisa Riffle
Dennis McGrew - Lisa Riffle
David Sanders - Tina Mumm
Michael Allshouse - Gayle Spahr
Roger Miller - Tonyia Miller
Debbie Ayers - Darlene Fogle
Joanne Saguban - Ashley Tankersley
Sandra Snyder - Chris & Mike Kreitz

(Please notify the office of any changes to the Prayer List. Thank you.)

In Service to our Country:

Josh Waldron Nickalas Kath

We express our heartfelt sympathy to the family and friends of C. Rodman Myers, who passed away on April 23, 2026. Rodman will be greatly missed, indeed, by his St. John's church family!

Over 40 years of Dedicated Service

I'm sure that most of us have heard the phrase "Cleanliness is close to godliness." Although there is nothing wrong with the premise of this statement, this phrase is not found in the Bible. The theologian John Wesley used these words in a sermon and has been credited with inventing the saying.

Regardless of whether the statement is Biblical or not, my guess is that we all feel good about entering a clean church building each week. For the staff of the preschool, the cleaning of the bathrooms and classrooms are essential to keeping them and the students healthy and free as possible of germs and viruses.

The building doesn't clean itself. For over 40 years Darlene Fogle and David ("Jigs") Fogle have dusted pews, emptied waste baskets, polished floors and vacuumed carpets. Usually with a smile on their faces, Darlene and Jigs can be seen throughout the building offering themselves to the mission of keeping St. John's as clean as possible.

"We've been here so long because you are like family to us," said Darlene. Darlene and Jigs - you can be assured that the people of St. John's feel the same way about you both. We thank you for your many years of service, for your friendship and kindness, and for showing us that there are many ways to serve others in the name of Christ to the glory of God.

Congratulations on your 40+ years of being part of the St. John's family! May God bless us with many more years together!



Arielle Mumm Receives Her Doctor of Physical Therapy Degree

We are delighted to congratulate Arielle Mumm on graduating from the University of Florida with her Doctor of Physical Therapy degree and receiving her white coat last month. This past March, Arielle participated in a service trip to Yucatán, Mexico, with the University of Florida Physical Therapy Department and College of Medicine, helping provide healthcare services to smaller towns outside of Mérida. Throughout her doctoral training, Arielle completed 8-week clinical rotations at Shands Hospital in Gainesville, Florida, working in medical-surgical and ICU settings; outpatient orthopedics at FYZICAL Therapy & Balance Centers in Largo, Florida; inpatient rehabilitation at Tampa General Rehabilitation Hospital; and outpatient pediatrics at the Tampa General Outpatient Center in Brandon, Florida. Arielle is currently studying for her licensure examination this July and has accepted a full-time position at Encompass Health, an inpatient rehabilitation hospital in Largo, Florida, beginning at the end of August. We celebrate her hard work and accomplishments, and we pray for God's continued guidance and blessings as she begins this new chapter serving others through physical therapy.



St. John's BAPTISMS!!!!

No greater jewel, therefore, can adorn our body and soul than baptism, for through it we become completely holy and blessed, which no other kind of life and no work on earth can acquire."

- Martin Luther

Again this year, we have been blessed to celebrate God's gracious way of washing away our sins through baptism, as we welcomed into the family of God two precious children.

On Easter Sunday, April 5, 2026, David Michael Pulice III, son of David and Mary Pulice, and grandson of Joe and Gail Bindus, received the holy sacrament of baptism.

On Mother's Day, May 10, 2026, Benjamin Allen Brandenburg, son of Cody and Sarah Brandenburg and grandson of Brian and Traci Getz, received the holy sacrament of baptism.



David Michael Pulice III



Benjamin Allen Brandenburg

St. John's Welcomes New Members!

It is a blessing to welcome new members into the St. John's family! On February 8, 2026, we welcomed two families into St. John's - Andrew, Lillith and Adam Stansberry; and Crystal and Austin Girona stood before the congregation and agreed to become active members of St. John's.

On March 15, 2026, Kyle, Ashley, Logan, Lily and Lincoln Tankersley also stood before the congregation and agreed to become active members of St. John's.

We welcome you all and look forward to serving with you and worshipping with you for many years to come! Thank you for choosing St. John's!



Crystal and Austin Girona



Andrew, Lillith and Adam Stansberry



Kyle, Ashley, Logan, Lily and Lincoln Tankersley

St. John's - Out and About

Women of the Church

On Saturday, May 16, the Women of the Church enjoyed a lunch and fellowship at Kountry Kitchen here in Thurmont. The time spent together was filled with good fellowship and good food. The Women of the Church are looking forward to providing more opportunities for the ladies of our church to get together, share a meal, and share time with each other. Please refer to our Sunday bulletins for the next Women of the Church luncheon.



Emmitsburg Community Chorus

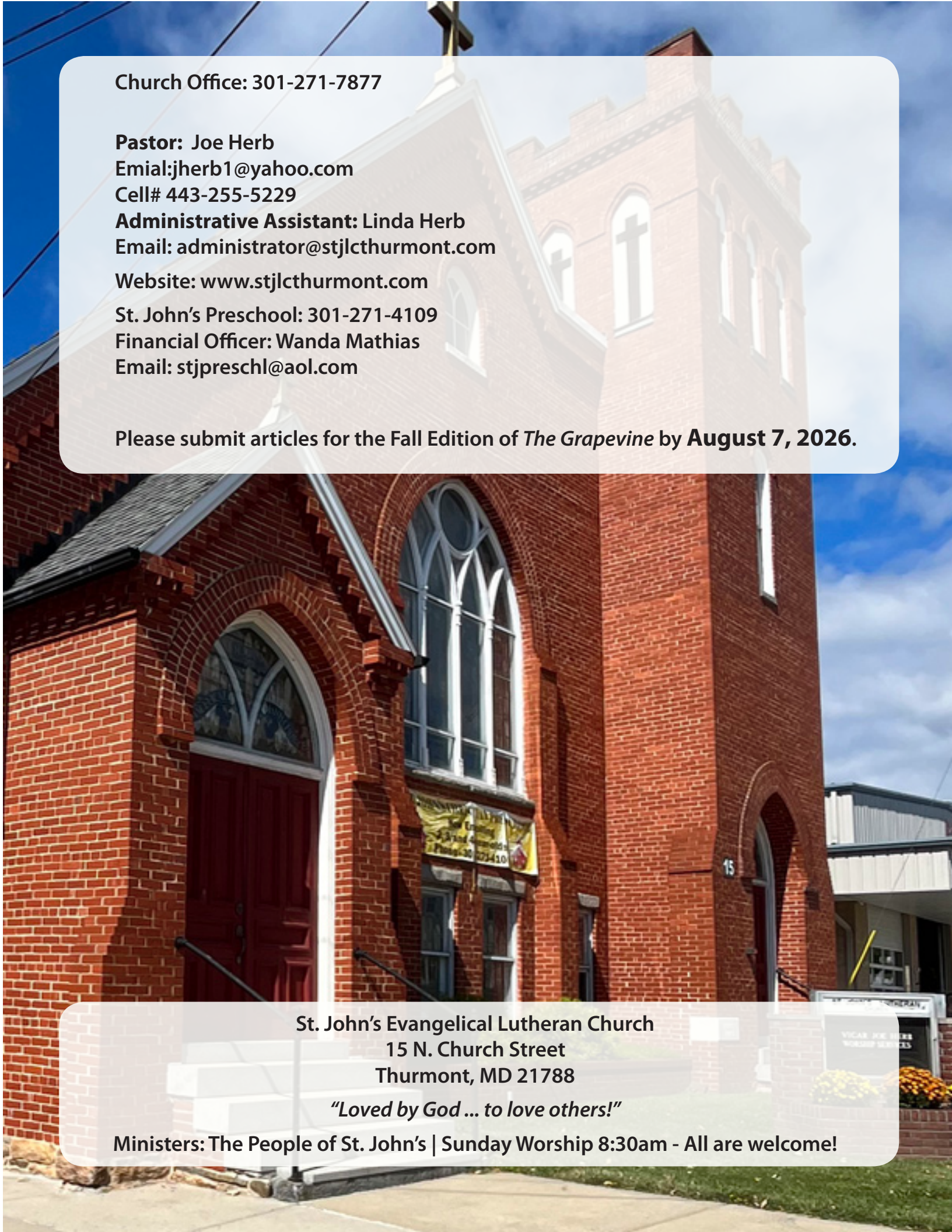
Also Saturday, May 16, a group of us from St. John's attended a concert by the Emmitsburg Community Chorus at Apples Church here in Thurmont. You may recognize someone in the photos below. Our very own Chris Kreitz added her melodic voice to the assembled choir. Those in attendance were entertained with a varied repertoire of choral music ranging from classical to contemporary.



There Are Budding Artists Among Us!

Have you ever thought that the back of our Sunday bulletins could be canvases for great works of art? Apparently, the Tankersley children channel their inner-artist and produce wonderful pencil sketches during our worship services. Perhaps there will be a St. John's art exhibition someday. God gives us different talents and we thank the Tankersley children for sharing their gift of art with us.





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Please submit articles for the Fall Edition of *The Grapevine* by **August 7, 2026**.

St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church
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"Loved by God ... to love others!"

Ministers: The People of St. John's | Sunday Worship 8:30am - All are welcome!