

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

SEPT 2025

VOL. XXXVIII No. 09

www.stjohnnaitkin.org

BE STRONG AND COURAGEOUS - THE LORD GOES BEFORE YOU (Joshua 1:1–9)

A new school year. A new job. A new town. A new pastor. Even joyful transitions often come with a hidden companion—anxiety. What if things go wrong? What if the past repeats itself? What if I'm not ready for this?

In Joshua chapter one, God's people stood on the edge of a new chapter. Moses was dead. Joshua—his assistant—was now called to lead Israel into the Promised Land. Can you imagine the pressure Joshua must have felt? The shadow of Moses loomed large. The enemies ahead were real. The uncertainties were many.

But then came the Word of the Lord: *"Be strong and courageous... Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go."* (Joshua 1:9)

These words weren't just motivational. They were grounded in God's promise and presence. Joshua wasn't called to courage based on his strength or leadership skills. He was called to confidence because the Lord Himself had pledged to be with him.

The same is true for you. As you step into a new season—whether as a student, teacher, worker, parent, or member of a congregation receiving a new shepherd—you do not go alone. Christ, who has died and risen for you, goes before you. He has already conquered your greatest enemies: sin, death, and the devil.

Yes, the past may tempt you to fear the future. But our Lord does not lead us backward into shame. He leads us forward in mercy. He leads us not into uncertainty, but into His Word and promises.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous." (Joshua 1:9)

This isn't a call to be fearless by nature, but faithful in Christ.

This isn't a denial of hardship, but a deeper assurance: that nothing—no change, no trial, no transition—can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:38–39).

So take heart. The God who parted the sea for Moses, who led Israel with a pillar of cloud and fire, who raised up Joshua to lead His people—this same God is your refuge and strength. Christ Jesus, your Savior, is with you and will not forsake you.

Whether you are opening the door to a new classroom, workplace, or church building, He is already there.

Be strong and courageous. Your Lord goes before you.

So, as this new chapter begins, be strong and courageous. Not because you or I have all the answers, but because Jesus does—and He is with us.

It's natural to notice differences between pastors—styles, personalities, even ways of expressing care. But know this: the Lord Pastor Becker served, and the Lord I now serve among you, is the same—yesterday, today, and forever (Hebrews 13:8). The Word we preach is the same. The Christ we proclaim is the same. And the grace that sustains this congregation through all seasons is the same.

As I prepare to serve as your new pastor, I want to give thanks for the faithful ministry of Rev. David Becker, who served this congregation with dedication and love for 36 years. That kind of steadfast pastoral care is a rare and beautiful gift from the Lord. I give thanks for his ministry among you and the foundation of Christ he has continually pointed you to.

Pastor Ben Hollingsead

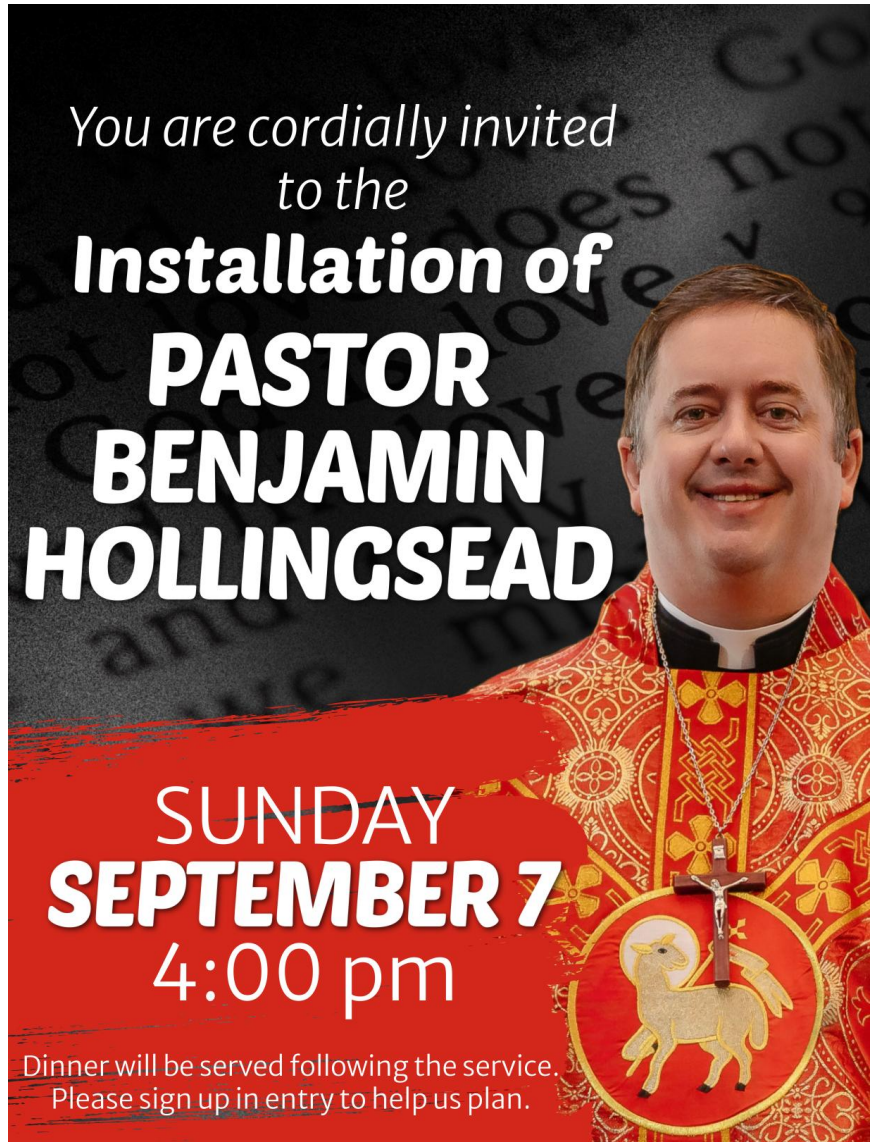
Prayer:

Lord God, You are faithful in every season. You led Your people through the wilderness and into the Promised Land, not by their strength but by Your grace. When I am anxious about the unknown, strengthen me by Your Word. Remind me that You are with me wherever I go. In Jesus' name, Amen.

*You are cordially invited
to the*
**Installation of
PASTOR
BENJAMIN
HOLLINGSEAD**

**SUNDAY
SEPTEMBER 7
4:00 pm**

Dinner will be served following the service.
Please sign up in entry to help us plan.



ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH ANNUAL BAZAAR & BAKE SALE

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 4 | 9 am to 2 pm



It's Never Too Early to Think About the Fall Bazaar & Bake Sale! Get ready to start crafting, baking, and stocking Grandma & Grandpa's Attic with household treasures that will delight all ages. (Keep an eye out for upcoming drop-off dates!)

As in years past, we'll be baking our delicious homemade pies—a favorite at the sale! If you have **apples and/or blueberries** to donate, please bring them to the church **by Sunday, September 28.**

After the service that day, we'll gather in the kitchen to peel apples and plan for the big event—everyone is welcome to join the fun!

TIME TO GET CRAFTING

Let's get together each week starting
Tuesday, September 16
to craft together.

Meet at church starting at **9:00 am.**

ALL ARE WELCOME TO JOIN US!

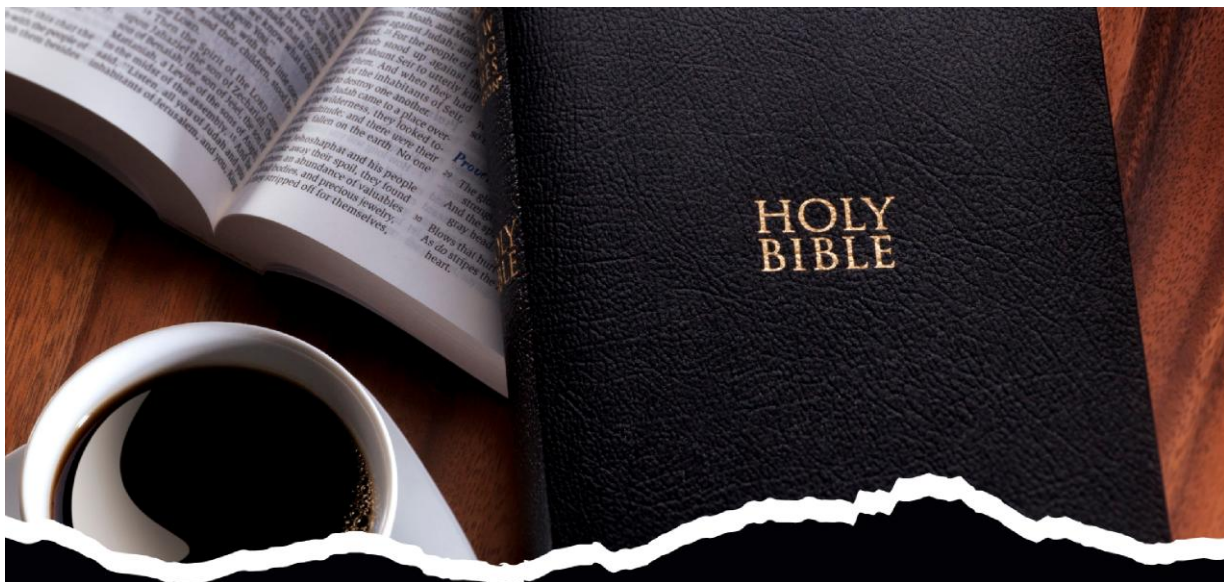


DONATE TO THE ATTIC

Start gathering items for the Grandma & Grandpa's Attic (no clothing or large electronics)

LET'S MAKE THIS AN EVENT TO REMEMBER!

Money raised at this event will go towards much needed new window treatments in the entry, kitchen and Fellowship Hall.
THANK YOU FOR EXTRA EFFORTS TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN!



JOIN US THIS FALL FOR BIBLE STUDY

Adult Bible Study
**'L' IS FOR LUTHERAN:
WHAT DOES THAT MEAN?**
Sundays, starting Sept 21
10:30 am

Men's Bible Study
THEME: TBD
Wednesdays, starting Sept 17
9:00 am

Women's Bible Study
THEME: TBD
Tuesdays, starting Sept 16
1:30 pm

**Women's Evening
Bible Study**
THEME: TBD
Thursdays, starting Sept 18
7:00 pm



You're invited to
St. John's Lutheran Church

RALLYDAY

the adventure continues this fall

9:00 am - Worship
Teacher Installation

10:30 am - Music
in Sanctuary

10:50 am - Games

12:00 pm - Lunch
ALL INVITED

SUNDAY
SEPT 14

Register for Sunday School at www.stjohnnaitkin.org





ST. JOHN'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

YOUTH NEWS

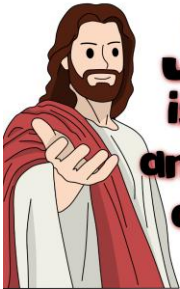


SUNDAY SCHOOL IS ALMOST HERE

AND IT IS GOING TO BE AWESOME!

We're so excited to see all our young friends again – and meet some brand-new ones too! Get ready for a year full of fun, friends, and learning about Jesus! We'll be using the Christ Light Curriculum again this year, starting with the amazing story of how Jesus died on the cross and came back to life!

We welcome back our teaching staff along with some new faces: Brittney W. (Director), Lindsey B. (PK – K), Brea H. (1st - 2nd), Lisa F. (3rd – 4th), Luke H. (5th – 6th), and James F. as a sub.



JESUS
is the way,
and the truth,
and the life!

John 14:6

RALLY DAY IS SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 14. We're kicking off the new Sunday School year with a morning full of excitement – don't miss it!

Register online at www.stjohnnaitkin.org

We can't wait to have fun and learn about Jesus with YOU! See you soon!

CONFIRMATION NEWS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS AND TEENS

As we start a new school year, we welcome 7th and 8th grade students to Confirmation Classes. **Pastor Ben would like to meet with all parents and students of 7th and 8th grade students on Sunday, September 14** following worship in the big conference room (across from office). In this meeting parents/students will have the opportunity to meet Pastor Ben, get to know what this year of Confirmation will look like, hear about expectations and bring any questions you might have. Confirmation will officially begin on Wednesday, September 17 at 3:30 pm. We're looking forward to growing in faith together!



Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but be an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. 1 Timothy 4:12

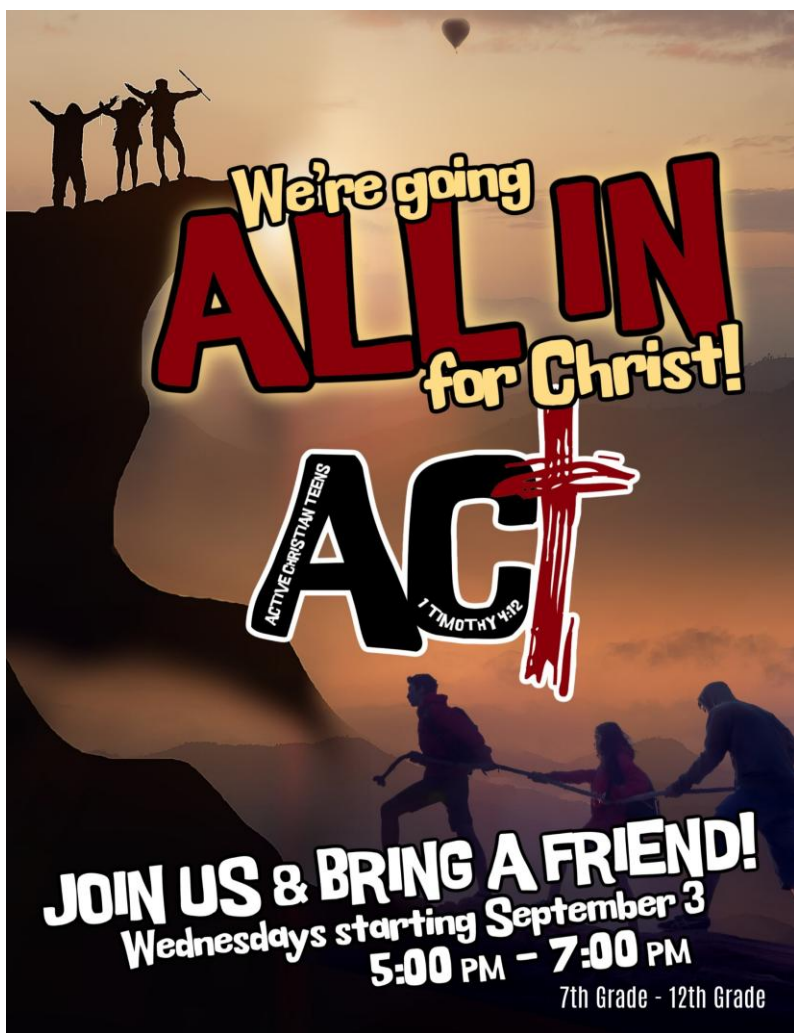
SHARING CHRIST TOGETHER AT ACT

St. John's Active Christian Teens will get back to our regular Wednesday meeting time, starting **Wednesday, September 3 from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm**. Supper will be served at 5:00 pm, followed by devotion and games.

As we come off the summer of the Youth Gathering, we plan to share our experience in a presentation to the congregation. Unknown date yet, but likely in September.

This coming year will bring excitement of new faces with incoming 7th graders and other friends. Teens in 7-12 grades are welcome to attend each week. They can be members of our congregation, another church, or have limited exposure to Jesus.

We welcome any adult that is a member of St. John's to become part of the ACT Leadership Team. If interested in becoming part of the leadership team, join us Tuesday, September 23 at 6:00 pm at the Flerlage Home. For more info talk with Tony Flerlage.



Be in the Know

KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED + INVOLVED

CHANGES TO THE LORD'S SUPPER

Beginning in September, members will have the option to receive communion either from the common cup (offered at the first table) or from individual cups. We will also be discontinuing the use of individual cups for communion wafers; instead, wafers will be offered directly from the chalice.



Communion will be celebrated each week throughout September, including *Holy Cross Day* (September 14) and *St. Michael and All Angels Day* (September 28), when Communion is traditionally observed.

MAKE BUDGET REQUESTS IN SEPTEMBER

The Budget Committee will begin preparing the proposed 2026 budget for presentation at the October Voters' Meeting. If you have any requests for budget adjustments, please submit them during the month of September. To discuss your request, reach out to one of the committee members: Paul Zenke, Bruce Schultz, or Debbie Schultz.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Blessings on your special day!

Wesley Crowther	03	Roger Hasskamp	14	Elaine Wegner	22
Tony Lemire	03	Karla Schendel	14	Claire Hill	23
Adam Mishler	03	Grace Novotny	15	Clark Peysar	24
Kristi Hills	06	Virginia Van Horn	15	Jennifer Elmquist	25
Georgia Wold	07	Eva Williams	15	Sara Johnson	25
Jordan Wold	08	Marv Baty	15	Kelli Johnson	25
Adalee Twardy	09	Shala Christian	18	Parker Hohenstein	27
Nicholas Harmon	10	Eden Hollingsead	19	Luke Hamdorf	29
Kayla Lamson	12	Toni Anderson	20	Justin Schlagel	29
Noah Rose	13	Tyler Kowalik	21	Mickey Williams	29
Judy Witt	13	Kelsey Rom	22		

**The birthdays listed are from our church records. Any mistakes are unintentional. Please notify the office of any mistakes, deletions, or if you do not want your birthday listed.*

TOGETHER IN MISSION | NEWS FROM THE NEUENDORFS



We recently received the following from James and Christel Neuendorf:

One of the goals we have as a mission and congregation is to establish more opportunities to serve children and their families. In June, Vicar Paul and Courtney revamped our kids area upstairs in the Mercy House to establish the Ponce Children's Library. This Summer we offered times for a Bible story reading time with crafts and games. We are grateful for the help from the young adults from the congregation in San Juan as well for helping Fuente de Vida prepare the space to receive visitors!

On Pentecost, we celebrated with all **three** congregations in Bayamón, five confirmations! It was a wonderful day of celebration! James had the opportunity of teaching catechism to this group over the last year with Pastor Adam Lehman and getting to know each of these incredible people.

Taking it to the streets, really the parks! We have always had for the past few years a Bible study or some form of study and fellowship on Wednesdays meant for outreach. In June, we took that to an ocean side park here in Ponce, La Guancha. We set up a table with our church sign and offer a time of games and stories for kids, crafts, and water. It has given us the opportunity to meet a whole new group of people, including a lot of families that we have been able to invite to church and other activities. One of the greatest joys is serving alongside church members who leading some of the activities and starting conversations with those whole come by to check out what is going on.

Painting on the beach! Doesn't get much more relaxing than that! We hosted a women's event one Friday in July for the ladies to invite their friends to as well the general public. We opened with a devotional on Jesus calming the storm (Mark) with the assurance that even when we are in the storms of life, Jesus is always with us, never abandoning us, even when times get hard.

Ironically, we almost cancelled the event because of a storm, but it passed and gave us a beautiful sunset and evening to share together in God's beautiful creation.



If you would like to give toward the support of our Together in Mission Missionaries please place your offering in an envelope marked "Together in Mission."



BE A PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER

Become an officer at St. John's

St. John's has several officer positions open for re-election. This is an opportunity to become a leader of our church and to assist in growing St. John's and making us a stronger church family. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the duties of each position and prayerfully consider running. **We will be voting in these positions at the next Voters' Meeting in October. If interested in running for an office please contact, Greta in the office before the October Voters' Meeting.** If you have questions about any of the offices, feel free to reach out to those currently in those positions.

CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS: each position is up for re-election

CHAIRMAN

- ❖ Chair all meetings of the congregation, the voters' assembly, and the church council
- ❖ Call meetings of the congregation, the voters' assembly, or the church council as regularly scheduled or as necessary
- ❖ Assist the pastor in the administration of the temporal affairs of the congregation
- ❖ Appoint committee members as necessary
- ❖ See that the constitution and bylaws are followed

VICE - CHAIRMAN

- ❖ Perform the duties of the chairman during his absence or inability to serve
- ❖ Help the chairman carry out his duties

RECORDING SECRETARY

- ❖ Keep a written record of actions of the voters' assembly and the church council in the form of minutes of these meetings
- ❖ Keep a written record of all standing resolutions
- ❖ Conduct the correspondence of the congregation not otherwise arranged
- ❖ Keep an accurate and current roster of the members of the voters' assembly

TREASURER

- ❖ Receive the rightful and lawful bills to the congregation and make disbursement by check from congregational funds on authority of the congregation
- ❖ Make written quarterly and annual reports to the voters' assembly
- ❖ Submit the financial books of the congregation for audit after the close of the fiscal year

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

- ❖ Keep an accurate account of all receipts and deposits
- ❖ Issue offering envelopes, provided by the congregation, to each communicant member
- ❖ Record the contributions of members through the offering envelopes on forms provided by the congregation and distribute them on a periodic basis
- ❖ Make written annual reports to the church council and quarterly reports to the voters' assembly

BOARD OF FINANCE: two seats open for re-election

- ❖ Receive all contributions for the congregation, and see to their prompt deposit in a bank
- ❖ Make weekly written reports to the Treasurer, Financial Secretary, and church office of deposits made.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES: one seat open for re-election

- ❖ Be concerned with and responsible for the maintenance and repair of real and personal property of the congregation (*this does NOT mean you are responsible for repairs, but instead contacting someone to repair things as necessary*)
- ❖ Take such action as may be necessary in an emergency to protect the property and interest of the congregation
- ❖ Arrange proper insurance coverage for the congregational properties and make any necessary reports and recommendations to the voters' assembly
- ❖ Regulate the use of all congregational facilities by organizations of the congregation, individual members, and non-member individuals or groups
- ❖ Make proper and adequate arrangements for the housing of the pastor and his family
- ❖ Attend to the business matters of the congregation, including the signing of all legal documents
- ❖ Perform such other duties as assigned by the voters' assembly

BOARD OF DEACONS: two seats open for re-election / one seat to fill

- ❖ Assist the pastor in all spiritual matters of the congregation, in particular to cultivate peace, harmony and love among the members, to assist in the pastoral care of the sick, the needy, and such as are negligent in worship participation or the use of the Sacraments
- ❖ Ensure that the worship services are conducted decently and in order, that the Gospel is preached in its purity and in accord with sound Lutheran doctrine, and that all instruction, religious or secular, is in accord with the Word of God
- ❖ Make provision for pastoral care and services in the absence, sickness, or disability of the pastor or in times of pastoral vacancy
- ❖ Assist the pastor in the administration of the Sacraments in whatever ways are considered necessary and mutually agreeable
- ❖ Devise and foster ways by which guests and visitors are sincerely welcomed and made to feel at home in the congregation
- ❖ Promote personal witnessing among the members and organize outreach into the community of the congregation
- ❖ Direct and supervise the incorporation of new members and make every effort to bring them into the life and work of the congregation
- ❖ Approve all special services, entertainments, performances, or any other functions planned for presentation to the congregation or general public or to any society or organization
- ❖ Supervise the music staff
- ❖ Supervise the altar guild in the care, use, and maintenance of all items such as communion ware, chancel furnishings, banners, vestments, etc.
- ❖ Consider cases of church discipline and bring them to a satisfactory conclusion or bring them to the attention of the voters' assembly in accordance with Matthew 18
- ❖ Exercise leadership in gathering call lists and calling a new pastor when a vacancy occurs
- ❖ Be concerned about the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare of the pastor(s) and his family (adequate compensation, housing, free time, vacation, assistance in times of illness) and specifically review these items annually
- ❖ Assist the pastor(s) in processing changes of membership among congregation membership
- ❖ Pray for the pastor(s) and other spiritual leaders and encourage them in their work by word and action
- ❖ Train and supervise the ushers
- ❖ Review and recommend salary changes to the voters' assembly