

“Stop! Look! Listen!”

*“Give attention to Me, My people,
and give ear to Me, My nation”*

Isaiah 51:4

Stop! Look! Listen! This is what Sunday morning is for. Stop! Look! Listen! This is what Sunday School is all about. Stop! Look! Listen! This is what we do in adult Bible study on Tuesdays. Stop! Look! Listen! This is what happens in Confirmation instruction.

The Old Testament prophet Isaiah tells us to **Look** to where you have come from. You have come from Abraham and Sarah. Look! Abraham believed the promises God gave him, and because he believed, God considered him a righteous person. He is also the “father” of all believers because of the Rock from which we were all hewn, Jesus Christ. Look! Abraham’s wife, Sarah, gave birth to Isaac, who also believed in Christ. And since then, it is as though Sarah also gave birth to you when you were baptized. Your Baptism makes you a believer, a Christian.

Your salvation is Rock solid. Look! The heavens will vanish someday, and the earth will wear out like an old set of clothes. In the meantime, people will die, but the righteousness God gives you because of your faith in Jesus—that will be forever! That righteousness will carry you into heaven, and you will have it forever with all believers.

All of you, whatever generation you are in, lift up your eyes. Look! See what God has done for you in His Son, your Rock, Jesus. Look at the bloody cross! Look at the empty tomb! Jesus was raised from the dead! And you will be raised when Jesus comes again.

Listen! You are righteous because God counts your faith as righteousness, the same as He did

for Abraham. So now God is saying to you, “Listen!” God wants you to **Listen** to Him in a very special way. God wants you to be familiar with the message He is telling you. You will have to **Stop** for a couple hours every Sunday morning to **Listen** to God. God wants to make His messages become part of your way of living. Your children and grandchildren belong in God’s kingdom. God wants to guide and direct your children and your grandchildren in their lives.

God insists, “Give attention. Give ear. Listen up.” Pay close attention. Allow God to make His Word become part of your way of living. God wants His teaching about righteousness and salvation to become part of your way of living.

For God’s teachings to become part of your way of living means you will live the right way. You will conform your life to God’s ethical and moral standard, which God tells you in His Word. That is why God wants you to **Listen** to His Word. And if you want to boil it down to some words that are easily remembered, then think of the Ten Commandments. You know the right way to live from the Ten Commandments. The person who is righteous lives to care for the peace and prosperity of the people around him or her. You will live striving to fulfill the commands of God as you relate to the people around you.

Righteousness and salvation are centered in Jesus. Isaiah assured his hearers, and he assures you, that God works on you to have you **Listen** to His teachings. Jesus is the righteous king Who suffered under Pontius Pilate and was crucified to pay the price for your sins. He was buried, but on the third day He was raised from the

dead.

Stop! That is what Isaiah was saying. Stop living as if you are living only with the crooked and twisted generation of this world. Stop for a couple hours on Sunday mornings to be together with other believers on the day Jesus rose from the dead. Look! Lift up your eyes to see the empty cross, where Jesus was hanging to pay for your sins. Listen! Give ear to God’s teachings in His Word so He can make His teachings become part of your way of living. Do that every Sunday and every Tuesday. **Stop! Look! Listen!**

Your Servant of Our Lord,

Pastor Riley

**MID-WEEK
ADULT BIBLE
STUDY**



Pastor Riley will be resuming his mid-week Bible Study on Tuesday, September 3. The morning group will meet at 10 a.m. The evening group will meet at 6 p.m.. We will be studying the last book of the Holy Bible—the Revelation given to the Apostle John. As we examine this divinely inspired Scripture, we will rejoice at the ultimate defeat of Satan and all the forces of evil. We will be reassured in the confident hope which we, and all believers, have in our reigning Savior Jesus. We can look forward to sharing in the final, glorious destiny of all those who trust in Jesus for their eternal salvation.

A PRAYER : *Almighty God, our heavenly Father, without Your help our labor is useless, and without Your light our search is in vain. Invigorate our study of Your holy Word that, by due diligence and right discernment, we may establish ourselves and others in Your holy faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

Restoration Project Update-

We're not done yet, but are almost there.

In the lower foyer and classroom hallway, the remediation work of removing the new floor tiles that were popping up and the old asbestos tiles underneath has been completed. The next step of the installation of the new floor tiles is happening as the newsletter is being sent out. This has been an uncomfortable time for using that area, but thankfully, it has not been too busy.

Again, no additional expense to the church. That's why we have insurance.

When we are all done, we will have new floors to add to our beautiful facility.



I Want YOU To Join The Choir!

Choir season begins on Wednesday, September 4th. Rehearsals will be held every Wednesday in the lounge beginning at 7:15 p.m.

We invite you to join us for choir as we join our voices to tell of the greatness of our God! If you have any questions, please speak to our music director, Jeff Windoloski.



The Hand Chimes Choir will begin at 6:30 p.m. in Room 2. It will also be starting on September 4th. We look forward to returning members as well as some new faces to join. Reading music is not required, just being able to count 1, 2, 3, 4. If you have questions, please contact Linda Slozak at 413-237-8643.

The WINGS next meeting will be on Saturday, September 14th in Room 8 at noon. A light luncheon will be served followed by the meeting which includes finalizing details for the Dress for Success event in October. We will also be starting the planning stages for the upcoming events for 2019.



Come and enjoy the fellowship and lunch.

The following have signed for flowers for September & October:



- September 1- open
- September 8- Sienkiewicz(1)
- September 15 - McClure (1)
- September 22 - Sienkiewicz (1)
- September 29- Riley (1)
- October 6 - McLeavy (1)
- October 13 - Sienkiewicz (1)
- October 20 - Caba (1)
- October 27 - Riley(1)

If you would like, sign up in the 2019 FLOWER BOOK located on the round table in the church foyer or contact Jane McClure. We can do up to three bouquets per Sunday. The cost per bouquet is \$21.00.

St. John's BACKYARD PICNIC



Everyone is invited to join in the fun at St. John's backyard picnic to be held directly after our worship service on September 22. Inclement weather, activities will move inside. The grill will be fired up for hamburgers and hot dogs along with condiments and ice cold beverages. An ice cream treat will be dessert. Every family attending is asked to bring their favorite picnic dish. A sign-up sheet will be located in the foyer. Don't forget your lawn chairs. We are asking for volunteers to help set up, barbecue, games, clean up, etc. Children be ready for water games. There will be a sign up sheet in the church foyer so the correct amounts can be purchased. Invite your family and friends to join us.



A SIGN-UP SHEET IS POSTED OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OFFICE

Hope you were all able to enjoy some restful time off this summer. Whether you are away for a weekend to visit family or taking some time off, there's no excuse for not getting the Good News, just log on to <http://stjohnswestfield.org>

Please help in the continuing outreach mission project of our Radio Broadcast of Sunday morning Worship. Broadcasts can be heard each Sunday at 7:30 a.m. on WHYN (560 AM). The cost for the program is **\$125 per week**. If you are interested in sponsoring a broadcast (or a part of a broadcast) in memory of or in honor of anyone please call the church or sign up on the sheet outside the office door. Donations of any amount are welcome. Additionally, we have posted previous weeks' broadcasts on our website along with the associated bulletin. Just log onto <http://stjohnswestfield.org>; links to the broadcasts and the weekly bulletins are on the main page.

Let us know if there is a shut-in or someone who missed a week, and we will email a link so they can hear the whole service.

Please see/call Bill Schneeloch (413-568-4906 or 860-604-5264) or e-mail at radio@stjohnswestfield.org with any questions.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEEDS YOUR HELP!!!



We are in desperate need of Sunday School teachers for the fall. **ALL GRADES ARE NEEDED!** You do not have to be an expert to be a Sunday School teacher - just the desire to help the young people of our church grow in their faith. If you are interested in sharing your love and knowledge of Jesus, please speak with Pastor.

STANDING TO SING

Does the posture we take to sing in church matter? This may seem like a trivial question, but on reflection, the posture we take to sing generates a world of difference in the quality and life of our song.

To begin with, standing is the historically normative posture in worship. Not only in worship settings but in lecture settings as well, it was the rabbi/teacher/learned man who sat, while those being taught stood. This is attested to in Scripture. All the way back in Exodus, the Tabernacle courtyard was just an empty space for the Israelites to stand in, and the same was true for Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple. When Jesus taught in the synagogue (Luke 4:20) and preached the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1), He sat while His listeners stood.

The practice of congregations standing continued in the early Church, and on into the Middle Ages. Indeed, St. Basil the Great describes in detail a fascinating tradition of the Church of his time: the congregation refrained from kneeling during Eastertide and on Sundays (the weekly observance of the Resurrection), standing instead in imitation of the posture of the risen Christ.

Even the pew itself is a modern invention. The great European cathedrals have no pews, only free-standing chairs arranged in rows, and the fact that those chairs are there in the 21st century does not imply that they were there in e.g. the 14th. Pews were installed in the Lutheran churches of Germany at least by the late 17th century as by the time of Bach it was common for rich parishioners to purchase their pews to be away from the masses. Churches of the English Reformation had pews for the choir and clergy to sit behind the rood screen, but the section for the congregation again was just chairs, if that.

Aside from the historical liturgical practice, standing for singing has many salutary benefits. The first is that it is the natural posture of the body for singing. Standing straightens your back and allows more space in your abdomen for your diaphragm to expand downward, opening your lungs more fully. This, in turn, creates the support necessary to sing in tune, with volume, and with confidence. Humans are built to sing and there is nobody who cannot do so. Proper posture can go a long way to making congregational song into a robust choir of saints.

The second benefit is that standing frees the body to move. The body naturally moves with music in subtle, and not so subtle ways. Whether singing an energetic dancing chorale, or a somber penitential song, or a marching warlike hymn, the body has different motions and responses to a song. This motion is a good thing as it allows the singer to more naturally express the music. While emotion is never the main thing in worship, rightly directed emotion in conformity with the Word is a salutary secondary effect. This motion and emotion are properly in line with the words being confessed in the music.

This brings us to point three, standing allows music to breathe and have life. A common complaint, and frankly rightly so, is the lifelessness of traditional worship. This should not be. The solution to the problem of robotic worship is to breathe life back into it, for the service has become vain repetition. One of the best ways to breathe life back into the service, aside from believing what you are singing, is to stand for singing. Standing for hymns and songs are more natural and earnest for the congregation is able to breathe and act naturally.

In the end, the liturgy is not the words on the page, but rather the

lived out worship of the church. This worship is living and active because of the Word of God in the words we speak and sing to one another. As such we should sing and say and mean and feel what we believe. The whole body should be allowed to be in conformity with this truth. Standing creates this freedom for the body so that it may move and breathe freely in the grace of Christ and sing His praises loudly and with a joyful heart.

COFFEE HOURS

Volunteers are needed to help host coffee hours on Sunday Mornings following the worship service. The coffee, juice and half & half are provided. All the host needs to do is provide baked goods or snacks, serve after the worship service, and clean up. There is a sign-up sheet in the foyer. This time after church allows for wonderful fellowship among our members. There is a sign up sheet located at the coffee hour tables. If you have any questions, please speak with Linda or Erika Slozak.



“St. John’s & the Community Table”: Every fourth Friday of the month our church serves the Westfield Community Table. We are looking for volunteers to help cook and serve. If you are able to help on a regular basis or just once in awhile, please speak to Jane (562-0492) or Doris (568-7440).

The Feast Day of: ST. MICHAEL AND ALL ANGELS

September 29

"Everlasting God, you have ordained and constituted in a wonderful order the ministries of angels and mortals: Mercifully grant that, as your holy angels always serve and worship you in heaven, so by your appointment they may help and defend us here on earth; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever." Amen.

"And he said to him, 'Very truly, I tell you, you will see heaven opened and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" John 1:51



Giving to God and Country

The Pharisees, who were trying to discredit and intimidate Jesus, asked Him a loaded question about whether or not it was proper to pay taxes to Caesar. Responding to the Pharisees, Jesus said, "*You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap Me? Show me the coin used for paying the tax.*" After receiving the coin He said, "*Whose portrait is this? And whose inscription? Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's.*" (Matthew 22:18-21).

In His response, Jesus conveys to us our dual responsibilities to our country and to our God. We are to give to our country what belongs to our nation and give to God what belongs to Him.

What belongs to our country? What are our responsibilities to our country? Certainly, we are to support our nation with our words and deeds. If need be, we are to serve in the military. We are to pay our fair share of the cost to run our country through our taxes. We need to be obedient to its laws.

What belongs to God? As Christians, we know that it all belongs to Him. Everyone and everything is His. He is our creator and redeemer. Our first responsibility to God is to love Him above everything else. We are to serve and obey Him. We are to obey His commands, and we are to return a portion of our money to Him through our church and other Christian ministries.

Unfortunately, it seems that our nation often fares better than God. Our nation threatens, and we obey. God commands our obedience, but we often ignore His commands. Our country forces us to pay our taxes, and so, by April 15 of each year, we submit our 1040 tax returns. God wants us to give generously to Him; however, we often neglect to give our offerings to our church. Because our offerings are voluntary, they can be seen to be less important than our taxes.

May God help us all see how important it is for us to serve Him through the faithful use of our time, talents, and money.