

PASTOR LUHRING'S SERMON SCHEDULE

December 31	6:30 P.M. New Year's Eve Resolutions	Daniel 1
January 1	8:00/9:30/11:00 (The Bridge) 11:00 AM Pastor Luhring	"Waiting For Christ at Christmas" Luke 2
January 7/8	6:30/11:00 (The Bridge) Pastor Luhring 8:00/9:30/11:00 (Church) Pastor Schmidt	"Walking To Christ At Christmas" Matthew 2
January 14/15	6:30/9:30/11:00	"God's Antidote To Worry" Psalm 23
January 21/22	8:00/11:00	"God's Antidote To Busyness" Psalm 23
January 28/29	9:30/11:00	"God's Antiodote To Damaged Emotions Psalm 23
February 4/5	8:00/9:30/11:00 (Church)	"God's Antiodote To Indecision" Psalm 23

Are you aware of the following values and how often each is mentioned in Scripture?



- | | |
|-----------|-------------|
| 1. Faith | 246 times |
| 2. Hope | 185 times |
| 3. Love | 733 times |
| 4. Giving | 2,285 times |

If you care to leave your church a permanent legacy through our Endowment Fund, here is sample language for you will to share with your attorney:

I give, devise and bequeath to the St. John Lutheran Church Endowment Fund, tax identification number, 34-6401215, 655 Wayne Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512 (insert percentage, amount or nature of gift, or remainder of estate) to be used for Endowment Fund purposes"

Dave Memmer, Chairman – St. John Lutheran Endowment Committee

January, 2012 **The Epistle** **Vol. 65 #1**
St. John Lutheran Church and School
Defiance, Ohio



PURPOSE STATEMENT

Worshipping God's Name...
Teaching God's Word...
Living with Christian Values...
Caring with God's Love

Donald L. Luhring, Pastor
 Joshua Schmidt, Pastor
 655 Wayne Avenue
 Defiance, Ohio 43512
 419-782-5766
 Fax: 419-782-0954
 E-mail: sjl@defnet.com

From Pastor Luhring. . . .

CHRISTMAS BRINGS THE PEACE OF GOD.

Once you make peace WITH God, that is spiritual peace. Then you must get the peace OF God in your heart, and that is emotional peace. Look at Philippians 4:7, "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." It is emotional peace that you really need for daily living. The Peace of God happens in your heart when you have made peace with God. All of a sudden the stress in your life goes down. You are not as angry as you used to be. Things do not bother you as much. You are a lot more patient. You are filled with a lot more love and peace. Why? Because once you have peace WITH God, you have the peace OF God in your heart!

YOU HAVE CHOICES IN LIFE:

You can pray or you can panic. You can worship or you can worry. Worry has never solved a single one of your problems. If you prayed as much as you worry, you would have a lot less to worry about! Prayer changes things. That is why the Bible says, "Don't worry. Pray! Look at Philippians 4:6, "Pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all He has done. . . (If you do this, you will experience the peace OF God!).



**Stephen Leaders
and
Ministers**

STEPHEN LEADERS

Pastor Donald Luhring
419-782-5766

Pastor Joshua Schmidt
419-782-5766

Penny Mueller — 419-784-3299

Rita Bergman — 419-782-4213

Faith Smith — 419-782-2073

Sheryl Frederick — 419-784-3104

Sandy Joost — 419-542-8564

Dr. Jeff Pruitt — 419-395-1875

STEPHEN MINISTERS

Kristina Baxter

Ruth Benien

Dolena Bergman

Lisa Buntain

Elaine Carpenter

Brenda Gary

Karen Haaser

Deb Hastedt

Cathy Heyman

Wendy Hulbert

Larry Joost

Jo Luderman

Sharon Lynn

Sandy McKeen

Bill Philipot

Lauren Pruitt

Marilyn Reeb

Jeanette Tingle



**St. John
Staff Directory**

Pastor

Rev. Donald Luhring

419-782-5766

Pastor

Rev. Joshua Schmidt

419-782-5766

Christian Day School

Principal

Mike Saxton

419-782-1751

Director of Youth

DEC

Zech Teasdale

419-782-5766

Senior Choir Director

Jan Kaiser

419-784-0706

PASTORAL ACTS

BAPTISMS:

Jasmine Marie Schmidt
December 25, 2011

Sydney Kimberly Schmidt
December 25, 2011

Christopher Stephen Schmidt
December 25, 2011



LOSSES:

Lori Wellman (Gathman) released

DEATHS:

Gerry Goebel who died December 15, 2011
Received Christian Funeral December 18, 2011

Nanette Hull who died December 22, 2011
Received Christian Funeral December 27, 2011

Russell Grimes who died December 22, 2011
Received Christian Funeral December 30, 2011

MARRIAGE:

Matthew McGough and Balynda Elkins
December 10, 2011 at St. John

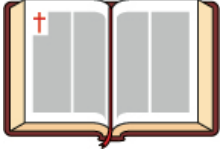
**ADULT MEN'S BASKETBALL IS PLANNED
EACH TUESDAY**

Zech Teasdale and a number of college age young men are playing basketball each week---schedule permitting. If you are interested in joining for a good workout, full court fast break basketball, call the church office and ask for Zech, or we can just see you on Tuesdays from 8:00 – 10:00 P.M.

**VOLLEYBALL IS PLANNED
EACH THURSDAY**

Zech Teasdale and other eager volleyball players are playing each Thursday night from 7:30- 9:00 P.M. in our gym. Several of our members are extending an open invitation for those who would like to exercise with them!

THE FRIDAY'S IRON MEN BREAKFAST BIBLE STUDY



“Working For The Man Upstairs” is a new study by Lutheran Hour Ministry by Pastor Tim RadKey. This study is dedicated to men everywhere who are seeking God’s will for their lives. St. John Iron Men breakfast Bible Class, Friday, 6:30 A.M. to 7:30 A.M., is held in the Lunch Room each week. This men’s study enables men to see the true joy of living out their God-given vocations. You are invited! See you next Friday!

CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

DVD’s of the Children’s Christmas programs are available in the Church Office for a \$5 fee. Call to place an order 419-782-5766.

SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS NEEDED

Teachers are needed to teach Sunday school at 9:30 A.M. If you are interested Call Zech Teasdale at 782-5766.

THE LADIES AID

On January 26 the Ladies will meet in the Fellowship Room. Plan to attend and bring a friend. Refreshments will be served.

WINTER LUTHERAN INFORMATION CLASS



The winter Lutheran Information Class begins February 13 Sunday evening, 6:30-8:30 P.M. In the weeks of February through April Pastor Luhring and Pastor Schmidt will teach this Lutheran Information class to review our Lutheran doctrines and the basic teachings of the Bible. Consider joining this class for personal growth in your faith and understanding of the Bible. Upon completing the class non-members are offered the opportunity to join St. John Lutheran Church and participate in the sacrament of Holy Communion.

PASTOR SCHMIDT



What is the purpose of a shepherd? If you were in charge of raising sheep, what would be your ultimate goal? We know what a shepherd does: he feeds the sheep, leads and guides them to green pastures and to water, protects them from danger, cares for them when sick or injured. But what is the point of all that? Are these things done simply to maintain the flock or does the shepherd do these things as a means to an end?

I heard a great insight recently about shepherds from an actual shepherd. When this shepherd asked what the point of shepherding was, he replied, “The purpose of taking care of the sheep is to get them to reproduce. That is the end goal- to produce more sheep.” This shepherd made sure his sheep were well fed and never thirsty. He protected them from danger and cared for them when they were sick or injured. But he did not do these things just so the sheep would be as comfortable as possible. He did it so that they would produce more sheep.

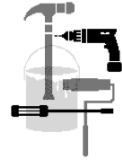
The word “pastor” literally means “shepherd.” Your pastors have been called as the spiritual leaders of the flock here at St. John Lutheran Church. Every week, we feed you with the Word of God. We proclaim to you the forgiveness of sins and place into your mouths the very body and blood of Jesus. We do our best to care for you when you are sick, either physically or emotionally. We try to protect you from the danger of false doctrine and from sin. But we do not do these things simply to maintain the flock that we have. Our purpose in shepherding is for you to reproduce. We want to take care of your needs, not just so that you will be comfortable, but so that you will produce more sheep. Jesus said, “I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice.” John 10:14-15

May Jesus, the Good Shepherd, continue to feed and care for his flock here at St. John through the under-shepherds who have been called here. And by the grace of God, may this flock produce more sheep who listen to the Shepherd’s voice.

Check out Pastor Schmidt’s blog by typing <http://onedayworkweek.wordpress.com> into your web browser or by visiting St. John’s homepage www.stjohndefiance.com and clicking the link on the right side of the page.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR PROJECTS

1. **“The Men’s Project Team”** will meet on Friday, January 6, at 9:00 A.M. Come to the Lunch Room for a light breakfast and fellowship. During this time current projects will be discussed. Call Nancy Schatz if you are interested.
2. **“Phone Calling of Members”** Phone calls to make caring contacts with members, listen to shut-ins, share in their struggles with illness and loneliness, etc. Calling will be done on Tuesday evenings. Call Phil Rohlf 784-0495 or the church office 782-5766.
3. **“First Impressions”** Our ministry of ushering and greeting has a purpose statement: “Guests should know they matter to God and to us in the first ten minutes!” The first impression given by our greeters and by our ushers is the most important feeling a visitor or a potential new member carries out with them when they leave our services. Before they hear the message of God’s Word that every child matters to God, each visitor must know that they truly do matter to us! Call Mike Saxton, 393-2513, Jim Schatz, 784-3122, or Tony Homier for more information!
4. **“PowerPoint Preparers”** are needed to prepare the weekly orders of worship for projecting at worship services. Call the church office (782-5766) or Rita Bergman (419-782-4213) if you want more information.
5. **“Clickers”** for the weekend worship services. Must be dependable and have good attention span during all parts of the worship service. Call Jim Gary 395-2192 or the church office 782-5766 for more information.
6. **“Sound”** people are needed to help with monitoring the sound control in all worship services. Are you interested?
7. **“Video Taping of 11:00 service”** This ministry needs someone who can learn to use a video camera and do some editing. Call the church office or Carroll Bergman 782-9086.
8. **“Receptionists”** are needed who can help for four hours either in the morning or in the afternoon at the reception desk. Please call Nancy Schatz (782-5766). for a job description.
9. **“CrossTraining Guides”** are needed to help a small group of four or five boys or girls to share their weekly highs and lows and to develop a positive mentoring relationship with them. Call Zech Teasdale at 782-5766 if you are interested.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

A Great Way You Can Help a Hurting Friend

Do you have a friend, neighbor, coworker, or relative who has suffered a loss or is going through a difficult time? Here's a great way you can help them-- tell them about our Stephen Ministry! Stephen Ministers are members of *St. John Lutheran Church* who have received special training to provide high quality, confidential, one-to-one, Christian care to hurting people. Stephen Ministers meet weekly with their care receivers to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. (Males are matched with males, and females are matched with females.) The caring relationship lasts for as long as the person needs care. It's free, and it's a powerful way you can help a hurting friend.

To learn how to connect someone you know with a Stephen Minister, talk with one of our Stephen Ministry Leaders: *Pastor Luhring, Pastor Schmidt, Dr. Jeff Pruitt, Penny Mueller, Faith Smith, Rita Bergman, Sheryl Frederick, and Sandy Joost.*

Call St. John to speak to a Stephen Leader 419-782-5766.

OUR STEPHEN MINISTERS ARE THERE TO CARE!





WE CARE!

Third Grade Fall OAA Reading Results - The results of the third grade fall Ohio Achievement Assessments were recently received, and our students performed very well. 89% of our students were proficient or above, compared to 70% for the Lutheran Districts of Ohio and 59% for the state. St. John's average score was 412, while the average for the Lutheran Districts of Ohio was 410 and the state average was 405.

Carry One Another's Burdens - Each month, Pastor Schmidt will be choosing one student as the best example of someone carrying another

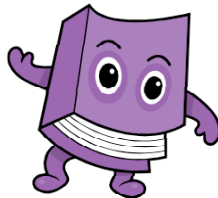


person's burden (Galatians 6:2), this year's school theme. The winner each month will get lunch provided by Pastor Schmidt and carried in his awesome Batman lunchbox!

The winner for the month of November was third-grader, Madeline Zachrich! Madeline is always willing to help her teacher and fellow classmates and has a servant spirit. She is wonderful example of carrying other's burdens.

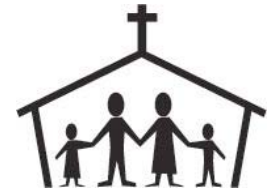
Thank You! - A belated thank you to all that made the Election Day Sauerkraut Supper a huge success. A total of 475 individuals were served a delicious meal that was planned and prepared by a host of volunteers. Profits from the supper will be used to benefit the school.

School Spelling Bee - Students in grades 5-8 that signed up to participate have been busy preparing for the School Spelling Bee that will be held on Wednesday, January 11, at 2:30 PM. The St. John winner and runner-up will move on to the Defiance County Spelling Bee that will be at the Ayersville Auditorium later in January. Thanks to Mandy Schmidt, our Spelling Bee Coordinator, who has spent a great deal of her time in helping the students prepare for the contest.



INVITE FRIENDS TO CHURCH

Please extend an invitation to your unchurched family members and friends to attend services with you. Many people say that they did not attend a church service "Because nobody invited me". So invite your friends to hear God's Word and to become a member of God's Family. Your pastors' sermons are designed to be contemporary and aimed for bringing God's Word to bear on our most significant struggles and challenges of life. Because of Jesus we have hope for tomorrow, confidence in the future, light in our darkness, victory in each trial, rest when we are weary and love for a life time – for Jesus is the Light of the world. Our worship services focus on God's story and how it can still impact lives with stronger faith today and with hope for tomorrow. Bring a friend to worship.



DECEMBER FOOD PANTRY STATISTICS



167 Families served = **598** People

611 Bags of food given

Approximately **\$6,170** worth of food given

75 Christmas Gift Bags were given

We give thanks to everyone for all of your donations that we receive to our Food Pantry.

RING IN THE NEW YEAR WITH FINANCIAL RESOLUTIONS

With the New Year comes the opportunity to improve your financial well-being. Here are four financial resolutions to help you get started:

1. Establish a budget based on what you spent last year, taking rising gas, heating and food prices into account.
2. Cut back on debt by paying off a credit card balance, foregoing unnecessary purchases or adding \$50 a month to your mortgage payment.
3. Prioritize major purchases you want to make and figure out how to pay for them out of your current income.
4. Meet with a legal professional to review your will or estate plan to ensure it reflects your current life situation.

For help achieving your 2012 financial strategy, contact Bob Heyman, at 419-782-0228 or email bob.heyman@thrivent.com or Caitlyn Badenhop at 419-758-3600, email Caitlyn.badenhop@thrivent.com today or visit Thrivent.com.

FINANCIAL AND ATTENDANCE FOR DECEMBER

\$21,361.46 Needed Weekly To Meet Budget			
Dec. 3/4	Service	Offering	Attendance
6:30 PM		\$ 2,658.06	86
8:00 AM		\$ 3,482.00	77
9:30 AM		\$ 4,650.00	115
11:00 AM		\$ 1,391.00	97
11:00 AM BRIDGE		\$ 1,169.00	95
ADVENT SERVICE		\$ 509.00	
SCHOOL TUITION		\$ 2,807.42	
DEBT REDUCTION		\$ 162.00	
DIRECT DEPOSIT		\$ 975.00	
TIGERS' DEN FEES		\$ 885.75	
TOTAL		\$ 18,689.23	470
Dec. 10/11	Service	Offering	Attendance
6:30 PM		\$ 1,449.00	83
8:00 AM		\$ 3,651.00	92
9:30 AM		\$ 2,444.00	128
11:00 AM		\$ 3,085.00	88
11:00 AM BRIDGE		\$ 1,436.00	115
ADVENT SERVICE		\$ 875.00	241
SCHOOL TUITION		\$ none	
DEBT REDUCTION		\$ 1,541.00	
DIRECT DEPOSIT		\$ 170.00	
TOTAL		\$ 14,651.00	747
Dec. 17/18	Service	Offering	Attendance
6:30 PM		\$1,288.06	86
8:00 AM		\$2,058.00	78
9:30 AM		\$3,291.00	181
11:00 AM		\$1,755.00	114
11:00 AM BRIDGE		\$ 528.00	95
SCHOOL TUITION		\$ 331.00	
DEBT REDUCTION		\$ 261.25	
DIRECT DEPOSIT		\$ 170.00	
TIGERS' DEN FEES		\$ 381.50	
TOTAL		\$10,063.81	554
Dec. 24/25	Service	Offering	Attendance
Christmas Eve & Day		\$8,724.06	1178
7:30 PM Dec. 21		\$ 465.00	153
SCHOOL TUITION		\$ none	
DEBT REDUCTION		\$ 489.25	
DIRECT DEPOSIT		\$ 720.00	
TIGERS' DEN FEES		\$ none	
TOTAL		\$9,933.31	1331

Rewards Day - A total of 24 fifth through eighth grade students that met the goal for participation (based on the number of tardies, completion of homework assignments, discipline issues) in Rewards Day for the first quarter were treated to the movie "October Sky." Based on a true story and set in a coal mining area of West Virginia in the late 1950's, "October Sky" details the life of Homer Hickam, Jr., whose dream was to build his own rocket. Overcoming seemingly impossible odds to fulfill his vision, he not only successfully built his own rocket, but eventually became a key engineer at NASA during the space race with the Soviet Union.



Christmas Caroling - On December 19, St. John students visited area nursing/assisted living homes and sang Christmas carols to the residents. This activity was a great opportunity to reinforce our school theme for this year: "Carry one another's burdens." (Galatians 6:2).



Packages From Home - The 5th and 6th graders are writing letters to our military personnel for creative writing classes. They will send them via the non-profit organization "Packages From Home", which will include them in boxes that are sent to troops. The class is also sending birthday cards to Nidia Blanco from Costa Rica, a friend of the family of Erin Hess, who visited Spanish class recently. The cards will include some Spanish words and phrases.

Teacher In-Service - A Teacher In-Service will be held on Monday, January 16, Martin Luther King Day, and thus there will be no school for students.

Student Council - The first meeting for Student Council was held on December 9. Topics of discussion included an action plan for Student Council for the year, great things currently happening at St. John as well as concerns within the school. Time was also spent talking about the best ways to show a caring attitude toward others, as noted in this year's school theme: "Carry one another's burden." (Galatians 6:2).

Total Lockdown Drill - A total lockdown drill was held at St. John in early December, with Defiance Police Officers reviewing the procedures. To be done on an annual basis, this drill is required by the state in order to be prepared in the case of a threatening situation in the building.

National Lutheran Schools Week - National Lutheran Schools Week will be from March 4 through March 10, 2012. This year's theme is "Securing Each Child's Future - Equipped" and is based on 2 Timothy 3:16-17.