



## PASTORS' SERMONS

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 pastor's 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.

## PASTOR LUHRING'S SERMON THEMES

Sat/Sun Mar 3 & 4	What to do when Leaders feel like Giving Up.	Neh 4
Sat/Sun Mar 10 & 11	Temptations of Leadership	Neh 5:14-15
Sat/Sun Mar 17 & 18	How Leaders Plan	Neh 4:1
Sat/Sun Mar 24 & 25	Eight Reasons God Allows Suffering	James 1:2-4

**Holy Week Wed 1:00/7:30 Pastor Schiemann**

**Maundy Thursday Cross and Friendship Pastor L**

**Good Friday 1:00 Pastor Schiemann**

**Tenebrae w/ Choir Father, Forgive Them Pastor L**

**Easter Mar 31/Apr 1 8:00/11:00 Jesus Unknown On Easter**

**Sat/Sun Apr 7/8 You Can't Keep A Good Man Down**

## THE FRIDAYS IRON MEN BIBLE STUDY

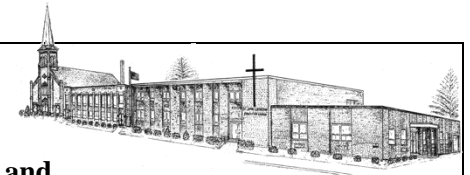
Iron Men's Bible Study meets every Friday morning from 6:30AM to 7:30AM in Adult Ed Room A. Topic for a couple weeks: ISLAM, already the religion of roughly one-sixth of the world's population, appears to be on the rise in the United States and worldwide as Muslims, followers of Islam, actively spread the message of their prophet, Muhammad. As the number of Muslim immigrants and converts in the U.S. increases, the chances that you will come into contact with a Muslim also increases. Come join this Friday morning. Iron Men's Bible study with Pastor Luhring, Rich Baldwin, Bob Heyman, Walt Smith, Jim Schatz, Jim Sunderman, Tom Koppenhofer, Steve Zachrich, Charlie Koch. Dr. VanVlerah, Bob Dawson.

# The Epistle

March 2018 Vol. 73 #3

**St. John Lutheran Church and  
Christian Day School**

655 Wavne Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512



Rev. Donald L. Luhring

Rev. Matthew P. Schiemann

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### PURPOSE STATEMENT

Worshipping God's Name...

Teaching God's Word...

Living with Christian Values...

Caring with God's Love

### FROM PASTOR LUHRING

**THREE MISTAKES** to avoid in the face of difficulty: Trouble is a part of life. You will have difficulties! Jesus told us so in John 16:33, "In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the word."

**IN ACTS**, Paul set sail for Rome with other prisoners and they face great difficulties on their journey because the winds were against them. Paul warned the men on one leg of their voyage, that if they set sail, they would be caught in a major storm and the results would be disastrous. They decided to sail anyway, making three common mistakes that are the same mistakes we tend to make that get us into trouble.

**1. WE LISTEN TO BAD ADVICE.** "They followed the advice of the pilot" (Acts 27:11) God had already said not to do it. Paul warned them not to do it. But because the expert said it was OK, they did it. If God tells you to do thing and all the experts in the world tell you to do something else, don't listen to the experts. Listen to God.

**2. WE FOLLOW THE CROWD.** "The majority decided that they should sail on" (Acts 27:12) the majority is often wrong. The majority of the Israelites wanted to go back to Egypt. They were wrong too. Peer pressure keeps a lot of people from doing what God wants them to do.

**3. WE RELY ON CIRCUMSTANCES.** "When a gentle south wind began to blow, they saw their opportunity". (Acts 27:13) Paul warned the others that they were heading into a storm, but they sailed anyway. You should not go through every open door you see. You should not accept every job that is offered to you. Satan can arrange circumstances, too, so you need to ask God for His direction.

**REMEMBER THESE THREE MISTAKES. AVOID THEM!**



**Stephen Leaders  
and  
Ministers**

**STEPHEN LEADERS**

Pastor Donald Luhring  
419-782-5766

Penny Mueller - 419-784-3299

Dr. Jeff Pruitt - 419-395-1875

Kristina Phipps - 419-266-  
1672

**STEPHEN MINISTERS**

Dolena Bergman

Brenda Gary

Karen Haaser

Linda Hageman

Deb Hastedt

Sharon Lynn

Kathy Reynolds

Mary Ann Hurst



**St. John**

**Staff Directory**

**Pastor**

*Rev. Donald Luhring*  
419-782-5766

**Pastor**

*Rev. Matthew Schiemann*  
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**Christian Day School**

**Principal**

*Shellie Kosmerchock*  
419-782-1751

**Youth Leader**

*Angie Morris*  
419-782-5766

**Senior Choir Director**

*Darci Van Vlerah*  
419-395-2460

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**CAROL A. FONT SCHOLARSHIP**

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St. John established this scholarship to express appreciation and to encourage young people to train in the area of education and teaching. To be eligible for this scholarship, the applicant must be a communicant member of St. John Lutheran Church and must be enrolled and accepted as a freshman in a teacher education program. Please stop by the church office to pick up an application. The application deadline is April 9.

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**STAY CONNECTED**

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Our lives are busy and we are going in a lot of different directions. However, no matter where you are you can still see and hear worship services from St. John. On our web page at [www.stjohndefiance.com](http://www.stjohndefiance.com) you can select Pastor Luhring's and Pastor Schiemann's sermon each week to see the video as many times as you wish. Also, you will find a "PodCast" logo to click and you can hear the sermon. This is a wonderful feature. You download a "PodCast" app on your smart phone and connect with St. John and can listen to the sermon's as you drive.

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**THE LUTHERAN CHURCH MISSOURI  
SYNOD FOUNDATION**

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Since 1958, the LCMS Foundation has helped fellow Christians and LCMS organization achieve their financial and ministry goals. Our experienced, local gift planning professional, Eileen Fitzenreiter helps faithful donors like you support hundreds of Lutheran ministries through:

- \*Donor advised funds
- \*Direct gifts
- \*Gift annuities
- \*Wills
- \*Endowments
- \*Trusts

You may contact Eileen in Napoleon by calling 888-482-8425 for an appointment. Eileen is a highly trained professional and deserves a place on your planning workbench. Please also remember The SJL Endowment Fund as you deliberate.

Dave Memmer of The Endowment Committee.

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## SAVE THE DATE – APRIL 22, 2018

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On Sunday, April 22 at 5:00 p.m. we are going to honor all our volunteers at St. John with a supper. This would include volunteers that help the school, people serving on boards, ushers, greeters, sound board techs, etc. and volunteers that help the church office. Please save the date, more information to follow in March. Thank you to everyone that volunteers their time and talent to the Glory of God!

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## FEBRUARY FOOD PANTRY STATS

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Through February 28, 2017

70 families served; 250 people served  
313 bags of food given  
Approximately \$3,130. worth of food given

*“For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in.” Matthew 25:35*

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## YOU'RE INVITED

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The congregation is invited to attend the school's weekly Chapel service each Thursday morning at 8:55 a.m.

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## PASTORAL ACTS

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### Baptisms:

**Abigail Jo-Leigh Wolford**  
Baptized on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 2018

### Deaths:

**Corrine H. Duerk** died on Feb. 5, 2018.  
Funeral was held Wed Feb 9, 2018.

**Deborah S. Maxey** died Feb. 25, 2018  
Funeral was held Fri Mar 2, 2018

**Russell G. Wichman** died on Jan 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018.  
Funeral was held on Jan 29, 2018

## FROM PASTOR MATT

### The Lost Doctrine of Sin

What is my problem? What's wrong with me? I try to do the right thing, but in the heat of the moment I find myself back in the same broken situation and behaviors as in the past. What is wrong with me? I try and try, but nothing ever seems to change; even the small progress I make only makes it clear how far I still have to go...

Have you ever felt the way I feel? My guess is you probably have. Deep down we all know we're not the way we should be. We try, we strive, we struggle, but the same things keep happening. It can be frustrating and aggravating. What's wrong with us...?

The biblical answer is simple. SIN. We are corrupted... messy. I think sin may be the most misunderstood, short-changed biblical doctrines there is. Why do I say that? We seem to believe that sin is a bad choice, a bad thought, or the grand scale societal issues. What we fail to see is how sin has corrupted us down to the core, every part of creation has been infected, every corner of the universe corrupted and rotting because of sin. Sin has corrupted our DNA, our minds, our health, our pets and all animals, our land, our rivers, streams, mountains, and plains, our economy, our institutions and our government, even our churches. There is nothing in all of creation that does not suffer from the devastating results of sin. Just read Genesis 3:14-19 again:

*So the Lord God said to the serpent, “Because you have done this,*

*“Cursed are you above all livestock*

*and all wild animals!*

*You will crawl on your belly*

*and you will eat dust*

*all the days of your life.*

*15 And I will put enmity*

*between you and the woman,*

*and between your offspring and hers;*

*he will crush your head,*

*and you will strike his heel.”*

*16 To the woman he said,*

*“I will make your pains in childbearing very severe;*

*with painful labor you will give birth to children.*

*Your desire will be for your husband,  
and he will rule over you.”*

*17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit  
from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’*

*“Cursed is the ground because of you;  
through painful toil you will eat food from it  
all the days of your life.*

*18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,  
and you will eat the plants of the field.*

*19 By the sweat of your brow  
you will eat your food*

*until you return to the ground,  
since from it you were taken;*

*for dust you are  
and to dust you will return.”*

I spend a lot of time trying to listen to people and listen to what the media and culture are saying. It has been particularly revealing in the aftermath of the Parkland, Florida shooting. What seems to be the prevailing sentiments? Shootings happen because we’ve taken God out of the school as if God is impotent without our permission. School shootings happen because we don’t arm people in the schools to protect themselves, as if handing out more guns to sinful, broken people is a good solution. Others advocate for government legislation, which may rid us of some gun violence as has happened in other countries, but it won’t stop sinful people from hurting others. People advocate prayer as the solution to all our problems (now I’m not dismissing the power of prayer), but as James 2:14-17 says, *“What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but has no deeds? Can such faith save them? Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, “Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,” but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.”* Prayer without action to protect people is a cop out. But on the other side, pretending that legislation will solve the gun violence problem is a shortsighted answer as well. Certainly there is an obligation for the government to do what it can to protect people, but sin as we said earlier

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## STEPHEN MINISTRY

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### **“Christ Caring for People through People”**

*Pray for the Spiritual Lives of Pastors,  
Stephen Ministers, and Stephen Leaders*



**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

- That God would develop the fruit of the Spirit in them: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22-23)
- That God will give them a humble and teachable spirit and enable them to wait before God for His leading.
- That God will enable them to model obedience to God’s Word in their homes, workplaces, and ministry.
- That God would reveal to them any unresolved resentment or anger they may be harboring toward God or people (Hebrews 12:15).
- That God would purify their motives and give them a passion only for God’s glory in every situation. (Psalm 115:1, Malachi 21-2)
- That God will prevent or heal burnout and discouragement and provide for their spiritual and emotional needs.
- That they will find their greatest fulfillment in having a more intimate relationship with the Lord, rather than in ministry accomplishments:
- That worship and praise become a more integral part of their lives.
- That they make ministry to the Lord a priority. (Luke 4:8)

Trained Stephen Ministers are here to help. If you need someone to listen to you and pray with you then you could benefit from a Stephen Minister. Our trained Stephen Ministers are held to confidentiality and prayerfully embraces this ministry to serve other’s needs. Please call the church office, or see one of the Pastors, Penny Mueller, Kristina Baxter or Dr. Jeff Pruitt if you wish to have a Stephen Minister. 419-782-5766 or email:

[sjl@defnet.com](mailto:sjl@defnet.com)

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## ST. JOHN CLOTHES CLOSET UPDATE

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St. John Clothes closet continues to be a valuable ministry outreach tool to the Defiance Community. During last year approximately 70 families were helped with clothing and household items because of financial need or other circumstances.

Many St. John Lutheran members and other community volunteers, totaling about 25 individuals, helped with the sorting, organizing, pricing and selling of clothing and other items. In total, about 75 hours of work is performed each week in these various talks.

About \$27,300 approx., the same as last year, was generated in 2017 from the sale of good quality, reason price merchandise. Money raised from the Clothes closet funded numerous projects, totaling about \$16,600 for St. Joh Church and School and also for other community needs. A partial listing of those projects includes:

- \$12,000 for St. John Lutheran Missions contribution
- \$500 for Christmas Com. project administered by Raves Care
- \$200 for the St. John Lutheran Card Ministry
- \$500 to defiance Area Foundation for support of area schools' assistance with needy students.
- \$250 to St. John Lutheran School
- \$1000 to Lutheran Church Missouri Synod earmarked for Hurricane Relief.
- \$935 to St. John Lutheran Hand Bell Choir for repair of hand Bells.
- \$250 for St. John Lutheran Youth Lock-in
- \$500 for St. John Lutheran Food Pantry
- \$500 for St. John Lutheran School Playground improvements.

In addition, the clothes closet reimburses the church about \$3,000 per year for utility bills for the 646 Wayne Ave. property where the clothes closet is located.

The Clothes Closet sends heartfelt thanks to the many church and community volunteers who help support the clothes closet operation and especially to those who donate clothing and other items to be sold.

corrupts every institution, every heart, every atom of all creation. The problem in our culture is that we've dismissed the evil, the brokenness within each of us. We think the grand evils of our world aren't part and parcel of the same sin that corrupts every heart.

So back to the beginning...what is my problem? My problem is that the battle against sin will be a never-ending fight. My problem is that far too often I act as if sin doesn't corrupt even my best intentions, thoughts, and behaviors. Far too often I forget that even the very best of human institutions, governments, and people are corrupted by sin. But where does that tangibly leave us? I believe it leaves us with two key things to focus on moving forward.

First, our days must start on our knees in humility and confession before the Lord recognizing our need for His grace, mercy, and strength throughout the day. This prayer and confession is not only to humble ourselves, but also to help us open our eyes to what is happening around us.

Second, we need to take action using the authority we do have to curb sin. The Lord uses government to curb people and behavior. In our churches, we must start with holding ourselves and one another accountable. In our communities as part of democracy, we need to hold our government accountable, instead of simply throwing up our arms on difficult issues. God is working in and through our broken creation. Sin and death have been defeated in Christ, but until the day of His return we dare not take sin and its effects lightly. So we pray and act to bring our Lord quickly to bear in our lives

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## BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

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Sunday: 9:30 a.m.	Lunchroom—Phil Rohlf Lunchroom—Faye Luhring Fellowship Room—Jeff Rohlf Fellowship Room—Sandy Gyurnek
Wednesday: 9:00 a.m.	Moms in Touch—Faye Luhring
	(2 <sup>nd</sup> and 4 <sup>th</sup> Wed. of the month)
Wednesday: 6:30 p.m.	Adult A—Phil Rohlf Lunchroom—Shellie Kosmerchock
Friday: 6:30 a.m.	Iron Man Study – Pastor Luhring



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## SCOUTING NEWS

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### Scouting News

March 2018

Scouts from Cub Pack 75 (ages 5-11) and Boy Scout Troop 75 (ages 12-18) continue to look forward to new opportunities and challenges each month.

March is always an exciting month for the Pack in that this is when the annual Pinewood Derby is held. Given a block of wood to shape and paint/decorate as they desire, along with wheels and axles, Cubs are very creative in what they build. The cars are then raced down a track with winners in each division qualifying for a district event (5 counties in Northwest Ohio). More importantly, the event is fun for Cubs and parents/guardians alike!

The Boy Scout Troop is currently looking forward to its annual Polar Bear, a 24-hour camping experience where Scouts spend an evening in an outside shelter and cook at least 3 meals while there. The Troop is also planning activities for the next six months, which includes preparing for a week-long summer camp experience at Camp Lakota. In addition, troop members are exploring the possibility of a backpacking trek to Philmont, located in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains of New Mexico, in 2020. Philmont is one of the premier high adventure bases operated by the Boy Scouts of America.

Service to others is a very important part of Scouting. Thus, both the Pack and Troop will be participating in the annual Scouting for Food campaign, a national program of the Boy Scouts of America. On March 3, Scouts will be passing out yellow bags in a number of Defiance eastside neighborhoods. Other Defiance Packs and Troops will be doing the same in other areas so that the entire city will be solicited for non-perishable food items. Scouts will then return to the neighborhoods on March 10 to pick up the items and transport them back to local food pantries. All items collected by Pack 75 and Troop 75 will be brought to the St. John Food Pantry.

Another upcoming service project for the Pack and Troop is the annual Soup and Sandwich Supper, one of the meals served by various church groups on Wednesdays during Lent, on March 24. Plan to attend and enjoy the wide variety of soups that will be available for a free will donation.

The Boy Scout Troop has for many years recycled newspapers as a conservation project. Anyone wishing to recycle newspapers can place them in the garage on the east side of the south parking lot. Money made from their sale is used to help pay for Scouts to attend summer camp.

Youth and adults are always welcome to attend pack and troop events to learn more about the program. Questions at any time can be addressed to Mike Saxton, Chartered Organization Representative, at 419-439-2079.



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## LADIES AID News

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The Ladies Aid will be making noodles, Tues., March 13 at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall. Come join us, learn the art of noodle-making, or add your skills as we complete the task. Coffee, doughnuts, and even lunch is available on noodle-making morning!

Our next meeting will be March 29th in the Fellowship Hall at 2 p.m. The suggested item to be brought in for donation to the food pantry is *dish soap*.

Mr. Dave Jones will be giving a program about pulmonary fibrosis. Dave has discussed his health issue publicly on national TV to inform and help others learn more about "living with" pulmonary fibrosis.

Hostesses are Judie Zachrich, Dianna Gathman, Sandy Gyurnek, and Shellie Kosmerchok.

Don't forget to attend the **Lenten meal** sponsored by the Ladies Aid on March 14 from 5-7 p.m.. We thank you for your support!