

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 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.

THE FRIDAYS IRON MEN BIBLE STUDY

The Iron Men's Bible Study meets every Friday morning from 6:30AM to 7:30AM in the Lunch Room. A new study called "Working For The Man Upstairs" is being used. For many guys your job is your whole life. But what happens when you can no longer do your job? What happens to your identity when you find yourself unemployed, underemployed, retired or disabled? This video Bible study by Pastor Tim Radkey encourages us to look beyond our day-to-day work to see our bigger place in God's world. Join the group on Friday mornings. Iron Men's Bible study with Pastor Luhring includes Rick Baldwin, Bob Heyman, Walt Smith, Jim Schatz, Jim Sunderman, Tom Koppenhofer, Steve Zachrich, Charlie Koch. Dr. Don VanVlerah and Bob Dawson.

PASTOR LUHRING'S SERMON THEMES

Sat/Sun Sept 31/Oct 1	"Healing Your Hidden Wounds"	I Peter 4:1-11
Sat/Sun Oct 7/8	"How To Be Unselfish"	I Peter 3:11-17
Sat/Sun Oct 14/15	"When Your Faith Is On Trial"	I Peter 4:12-13
Sat/Sun Oct 21/22	"Living a Thanksgiving"	I Peter 5:1-7
Sat/Sun Oct 28/29	"Reformation: Luther Who?"	Romans 1:17
Sat/Sun Nov 4/5	"Top Ten Marriage Killers"	I Peter 3:8-9

INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

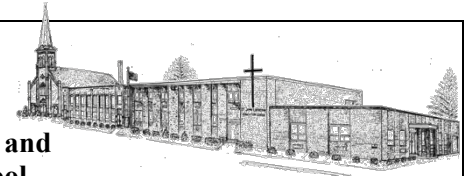
If you would like to know what is happening at any given moment at our church, you can go to our church web page at www.stjohndefiance.com and see what is scheduled. We are going to have more detailed information on the calendar so you can make use of this valuable tool to keep you informed. The address is <http://www.stjohndefiance.com/calendar>. If you have any questions you may call the church office at 419-782-5766 or email slj@defnet.com.

The Epistle

October, 2017 Vol. 70 #10

St. John Lutheran Church and
Christian Day School

655 Wayne Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512



PURPOSE STATEMENT

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

FROM PASTOR LUHRING

GOD LOOKS AT YOU THROUGH EYES OF GRACE

The Bible says in John 1:17, "The Law was given through Moses but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ." Why through Jesus? Why is Jesus Christ the only way to heaven? Why not Buddha? Why not somebody else?

Jesus Christ is the only way for you to get into heaven because He alone paid the price of admission. On the cross He paid for your sins. Grace is free, no doubt about that. But it is not cheap. It cost Jesus His life. The Law tells me when I do wrong. It says, "You blew it. But Grace says, "You are forgiven. Here is now to get back on track. Let's get going in the right direction."

In the Bible, the favorite description for someone who receives God's grace is "in Christ". That phrase is used more than 120 times in the New Testament. It refers to somebody who has found salvation through the grace of God. Jesus takes your life with all its scars, guilt, and shame. When you receive God's free gift of grace and salvation, you are "in Christ".

Paul writes, "Don't treat the grace of God as meaningless. For if keeping the law could make us right with God, then there was no need for Christ to die." (Galatians 2:21) If you could have made it to heaven without any help from God, Jesus would not have come and died on the cross for you. But there was no other way. You are either going to get into heaven "in Christ" or you are not going.

GRACE: Grace is "God's Riches At Christ's Expense." It is a free gift. Just receive it in faith. When God looks at you with eyes of grace, He sees only the perfection of Jesus.

SEPTEMBER FOOD PANTRY STATS



Through Sept. 28, 2017

84 families served; 330 people served

3,54 bags of food given

Approximately \$3,540 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

YOU'RE INVITED

The congregation is invited to attend the school's weekly Chapel service each Thursday morning at 9:00.

NANCY KEMPER RETIREMENT SUNDAY

Nancy Kemper has dedicated 34 years to parents and students of St. John Lutheran Christian Day school. She is retiring from this ministry in October. The Board of Christian Education would like you to join us as we celebrate Nancy. We will be recognizing her in all services October 8th as well as hosting a luncheon after the 11 o'clock service. Menu is: ham, scalloped potatoes, green beans, roll and dessert. Please spread the word to current and former students and parents of St. John Lutheran! There will be an area to drop off cards & well wishes to Nancy as she hangs up her school secretary hat and puts on the hat of Mom and Grandma!! If you could, please RSVP to any member of the school board or to Shelly Kosmerchock at 419-782-1751- that would be awesome!!! We're trying to get a count of people who will be attending.

PREMIER BOOK ON THE REFORMATION

Concordia Publishing House is offering to congregations at a special price of \$22.49 (regular price of \$29.99) a hardback, 250 page book entitled The Reformation. The price is valid until October 16, 2017. The Reformation provides a richly illustrated and engagingly written overview of this amazing time of change and renewal in the Christian Church In this beautifully designed coffee table-style book, you will learn about famous leaders and lesser-known players who took part in the complex chain of events that shook church and state to their very foundations. Please stop by the church office or email: sjl@defnet.com to order your copy today.

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR MATT

Why is the church here? The church has been a staple of our communities for hundreds of years. St. John itself has been part of the Defiance community for 166 years. That's longer than any of us have been or will be here. It is remarkable and humbling to serve and worship as part of a congregation that has such a rich history. Yet, a church that is 166 years old has only been in gathering here for about 8.4% of The Church's history.

We have to have perspective as we deal with the changing reality of culture around us. While the Church is not in trouble, it seems to me that the North American church is at a crossroads. The reason for this is because we're having an identity crisis. We've forgotten the purpose of the church.

The church is not God's end goal, it is the means by which God's mission continues here on earth and if we are not faithful to God's mission, He will continue it through another church. We must be people who remember our purpose. We don't exist for ourselves; we are here for the world around us. God doesn't care about our comfort, or if our spot in the "pew" is taken. God cares about the lost. His plan is to reach them through us so that they may join us in glorifying the one true God. That has always been the way He has sought to do things. After God had redeemed Israel from Egypt, He told them the reason in Deuteronomy 26:16-19, *"The Lord your God commands you this day to follow these decrees and laws; carefully observe them with all your heart and with all your soul. 17 You have declared this day that the Lord is your God and that you will walk in obedience to him, that you will keep his decrees, commands and laws—that you will listen to him. 18 And the Lord has declared this day that you are his people, his treasured possession as he promised, and that you are to keep all his commands. He has declared that he will set you in praise, fame and honor high above all the nations he has made and that you will be a people holy to the Lord your God, as he promised."*

God wants His people to glorify God and to use them as a way of drawing others to himself. Israel as God's people, and the church, as the new Israel, are here for others. The church's purpose is to worship the one true God and to draw others into worshipping that same one true God. Unless we relearn God's heart and mission, we will simply be spinning our wheels. If we are not about God's mission and glorifying His name, we stop doing what we were created to do. We must learn to let go of being focused primarily on our desires and needs as a church-- we need to become less self-absorbed. <continued on pg 4>

The way we do this is by becoming more and more concerned with service and sacrifice for the community. Our focus should not be on what we want or what would make us more comfortable, but what this community needs so that we can transform this community with the Gospel as we connect people to Christ. Ultimately, if we aren't focusing on reaching the lost, then we've lost sight of God's heart.

My challenge to you is to pray for the lost. Pray for those who are far from the kingdom. Seek to go and be where the lost are, love them, care for them, and get to know them. We won't reach the lost until we meet the lost. We won't be part of God's mission to seek and save those who are far from His kingdom, if we are not near them and inviting them into our lives as the people of God.

IT'S STILL ALL ABOUT JESUS!

The Reformation was not about anything new, but about returning to the unchanged and unchanging truth. So it is still today. The celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation is not a time for novelty. It is a time to return: to the truth, to the basics, to the foundation.



Do you remember the Small Catechism? Many of us were required to memorize the catechism (or at least part of it) during our Confirmation classes. Some of us might have even suffered through a public examination over its contents.

How much do you remember? Say it with me: "I believe that I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ, my Lord, or come to Him..." Can you finish? Do you remember where that is found? (It's in Luther's explanation of the Third Article of the Apostles' Creed.)

It's time to return. Luther wrote the Small Catechism for the instruction of laypeople. Luther intended the Small Catechism to be used at church and in the home to instruct children in the faith and to reinforce the faith in the hearts and minds of adults.

There is no better time than in this year of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation to review the catechism.

Read it for yourself. Refresh the theology in your mind. Pray the catechism daily. Memorize it. <cont. on pg 5>

LADIES AID

PAPER ART, "THE MAKING OF CARDS" will be presented by Frieda Stritt at the Ladies Aid meeting on Thursday, October 26th at 2:00 p.m. This presentation is open to all members of the congregation. The Food Pantry item is Kleenex.

NOVEMBER 7th LADIES AID CRAFT BAZAAR

November 7th is the "Annual Craft Bazaar" coordinated by the Ladies Aid. If you are interested in having a booth, please contact Elaine Harris, 419-782-3046. The Ladies Aid invites all ladies of the congregation to donate homemade baked goods and crafts.

NOODLES – All members of the congregation are invited to join Ladies Aid in making noodles on **Tuesday, October 3**, beginning at 9:00 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. The noodles will be bagged on Wednesday at 2:00 p.m., and sold after services on **October 7 and 8**.

DISHES - There are dishes remaining in the Fellowship Room kitchen from funeral dinners, etc. If you are missing a dish, please check to see if it may be in the kitchen.

PASTORAL ACTS

Deaths:

Betty Hunt, who died on August 27, 2017
and received Christian burial on August 28, 2017

Robert Heil, who died on August 28, 2017
and received Christian burial on August 31, 2017

Baptisms:

Paisley Mae Meyer, October 1, 2017
Madeline Joan Cereghin, October 15, 2017

Marriages:

Rob Gray and Balynda McGough on October 7, 2017

SENIOR CHOIR MEMBERS AND POTENTIAL MEMBERS

Please consider joining our singing family! We welcome all skill levels. Our practices are Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. in the school library. Practices last about one hour. We work hard, but we also have fun. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Darci Van Vlerah at (419)980-1435. Come and join us!

NEW NWO-1 DISTRICT CIRCUIT VISITOR

Pastor Kurt Letcher from Edgerton, Ohio was elected the new Northwest Ohio-1 District Circuit Visitor for our area. He is Pastor of Zion Lutheran Church in Edgerton, Ohio. Pastor Letcher replaces Pastor William Stottlemyer.

LCMS WORLD RELIEF

LCMS getting reports from missionaries in Caribbean, Mexico after disasters

Hurricane Maria continues her destructive course in the Caribbean, and residents surrounding Mexico's capital city frantically work to dig through rubble left by a major earthquake on Tuesday, Sept. 20.

The LCMS Office of International Mission and LCMS Disaster Response are working to connect with our missionaries and partners in these two regions to determine the scope of the disaster and how the church might be able to respond.

In Puerto Rico, we evacuated our missionary family ahead of Maria's landfall there, and our team in the Dominican Republic is finishing preparations to weather the storm. Once the storm passes, our regional leadership team will work with local church leaders to determine how the church might bear Christ's mercy.

In Mexico City, our two missionary families are safe following the earthquake. In coming days, they will assess the impact of this earthquake on the local church, the communities, and individuals among whom they work.

We will provide updates as we know more about the scope of these disasters. If you wish to contribute by mail — Make checks payable to "The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod" (or "LCMS"). On the memo line, write "Disaster Response/Relief," and mail to the LCMS, P.O. Box 66861, St. Louis, MO, 63166- 6861.

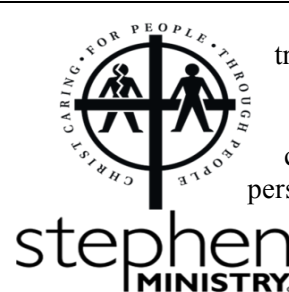
It's Still All About Jesus <cont.>

But even more, teach it. If you are a parent, teach it to your children. As you have opportunity, share it with your friends and peers.

The catechism teaches the fundamentals of the Christian faith: the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, the Apostles' Creed, the Sacrament of Baptism, the Sacrament of the Altar and the Office of the Keys and Confession. This small book is well worth your time and study.

May this celebration of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation be a time when we return to the Word and Sacraments, when we turn to Christ and His love. It's *still* all about Jesus.

STEPHEN MINISTRY



Stephen Ministers are congregation members trained by Stephen Leaders to offer high-quality, one-to-one Christian care to people going through tough times. A Stephen Minister usually provides care to one person at a time, meeting with that person once a week for about an hour. Once a month, Stephen Ministers gather with their Stephen Leaders for supervision and continuing education.

Care Receivers are people going through tough times who are being cared for by Stephen Ministers. These can be, congregation members and others in the community.

These are people struggling through a difficult time in life—experiencing grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, or some other life crisis. Some important guidelines for this caring relationship protect both the care receiver and the Stephen Minister:

- The relationship between a care receiver and a Stephen Minister is confidential.
- Men are matched with men; women with women.
- When a care receiver's needs exceed what a Stephen Minister can provide, the Stephen Ministry team makes a referral to an appropriate mental health professional or other community resource.

If you need a Stephen Minister, please call the church office at 419-782-5766.



Scouts from Cub Pack 75 (ages 6-11) and Boy Scout Troop 75 (ages 12-18) continue to look forward to new opportunities and challenges each month.

The Cub Scout Pack recently held an overnight camping experience at Camp Lakota. Among the activities included were a special campfire program, archery, fishing and hiking to the “slate beds” along the Auglaize River. Cubs also helped cook a breakfast of pancakes and sausage, and a lunch of ham and cheese sandwiches made in pudgy-pie irons over a fire.

The first meeting of the school year welcomed 14 new boys and their families into the Pack. In addition, a flag retirement ceremony that honored worn-out flags was held.

The Cubs are looking forward to a Fall Festival event in October that will feature pumpkin carving, apple bobbing and sack races, among other activities.

The Boy Scout Troop attended the 25th annual Fall Invitational Camporee on South Bass Island in September. This also was the 100th year anniversary of the Perry Memorial, and the Scouts camped in the shadow of the memorial along the shores of Lake Erie. A Court of Honor was recently held as well, recognizing many of the achievements of the week-long summer camp experience at Camp Lakota.

Both Pack and Troop members are now selling Scout popcorn. This annual sale helps provide funds for various expenses that both units incur to provide a quality program. If you would like to purchase one or more of the numerous varieties, please contact a Scout or leader.

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.

OCTOBER YOUTH SCOOP

You are invited to our...

Murder Mystery Dinner

Sunday, October 22, 2017 from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Menu: Chicken Parmesan, Spaghetti, Salad, Bread, Beverage

“Art to Die For”

by Kimberlee Mendoza

\$15 a person, \$25 per couple

Come and enjoy an evening together!

We will have various artwork pieces that night up for auction as well. All the profits go to youth room improvements. Contact Angie Morris (419.956.1171) or Sarah Cavin (419.438.6003) for tickets.

COSTUME PARTY FOR GRADES 6-12

Calling all youth in grades 6 to 12. Come dressed in your favorite costume and join us on Thursday, October 26 for the Costume Party from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m.

SEARCH AND RESCUE—SR. HIGH GATHERING

The Senior High Gathering for grades 9-12 will be held on November 17-18 at Crowne Plaza, Dublin. Have you ever been lost without a GPS? Or even worse . . . lost in a store without your Mom - remember when you were little? Worst feeling ever—right? Believe it or not, many people go through their whole life feeling that way even though someone has been looking for them the whole time! Through all their times of change, big or little, He has never stopped looking, holding out His hand to guide them and lift them back up when they thought there was no hope left. *Come join us at the **OHIO DISTRICT SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GATHERING*** to find out who HE is and His awesome SEARCH AND RESCUE tactics. NOVEMBER 17—19, 2017, Featuring Dr. Micah Parker & Echlon. Cost is \$75.00 due on Oct. 11 with registration.

CROSS TRAINING is every Wednesday night from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. for grades 6-8 Confirmation. A program for grades 1-5 is available as well with lessons, crafts and games.

We're on the web!

Check out our calendar at www.stjohndefiance.com/youthcalendar or search for us on Facebook at St. John Lutheran Youth Group.