



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.

PASTOR LUHRING'S SERMON THEMES

Sat/Sun April 28/29 How To Make Wise Decisions James 1:7-8
Sat/Sun May 5/6 How To Win Over Temptation James 1:12-17
Sat/Sun May 12/13 Hope For Hurting Parents Luke 15:11-24
Sat/Sun May 19/20 How To Receive God's Word James 1:19-21
Sat/Sun May 26/27 How To Have Real Faith James 1:19-21
Sat/Sun June 2/8 How To Treat People Right James 2:1-13

THE FRIDAYS' IRON MEN BIBLE STUDY

Iron Men's Bible Study meets every Friday morning from 6:30AM 7:30AM in Adult Ed Room A. Topic for a couple weeks

Topic: Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School-Matthew and Mark's Gospels with Bruce Wurdeman: The four hundred-year period of transition between the Old and New Testaments witnessed significant changes in Israel's History. In Palestine groups like the Pharisees, Sadducees, Zealots, Essenes, and others filled the stage. Superpowers like the Persians, Greeks, and Romans were the dominant geopolitical players. Into this milieu comes Jesus, and the Word Incarnate along with His disciples would change the world forever.

Come join this Friday morning Iron Men's Bible study with Pastor Luhring, Rick Baldwin, Bob Heyman, Walt Smith, Jim Schatz, Jim Sunderman, Tom Koppenhofer, Steve Zachrich, Charlie Koch.

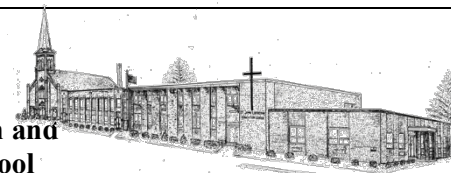
Dr. Van Vlerah, Bob Dawson.

The Epistle

May 2018 Vol. 75 #5

St. John Lutheran Church and
Christian Day School

655 Wayne Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512



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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

DON'T JUST HOPE YOU WILL GO TO HEAVEN.

If you were to head out to the mall today and ask people if they are going to Heaven or Hell, you will likely hear them say, "I hope I will go to Heaven." But hope just isn't good enough. I pray that is not your answer. Your eternal destiny is too important not know for sure.

Only a fool would be unprepared for what we all know is inevitable: death. The most recent statistics show that mortality rates in the world are 100%! You are not guaranteed another minute on this planet, much less another hour. Don't put off the most important choice you will ever make. The Bible says in

I John 5:11-12, "And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life and this life is in His Son. Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." That is about as clear as it gets. If you have Jesus, you have life. If you don't have Jesus, you do not have life. Your choice.

This is why Christmas and Easter are so important. If Jesus had not come at Christmas and if He had not died and come back to life on Easter, we would be hopeless. Nothing we do would matter. The cross is the answer to our deepest problem – our separation from God. God nailed everything that separated you from Himself to the cross. In your Baptism and at your Confirmation you were adopted into God's eternal family and you and your family celebrated the promise of eternal life and God's forgiveness. Jesus loves you and you are in His family. That's for sure!



Stephen Leaders and Ministers

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STAY CONNECTED

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 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.

TELECARE CONNECTING

The TeleCare is a program of St. John Lutheran Church, Defiance. Every month, TeleCare volunteers phone congregation members.

Volunteer teams spend two hours the first Monday of every month from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the church, making calls and then praying together for each person contacted, naming each joy and concern. It helps keep St. John congregants connected, and people appreciate the call, often saying it came just when they needed it.

TeleCare callers want everyone to know there is always someone available who cares about them and wants to offer encouragement in a spirit of unity. Contact the church office if you are interested in making calls once a month or if you are needing a call from your TeleCare minister.

HONOR MOTHERS - PUBLIC WELCOME

Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church is offering an Italian Pasta Bar on May 12, 2018 from 5:00-7:00 p.m. Please join them at Christ Our Savior Lutheran Church in honoring mothers everywhere. All proceeds to benefit The House of Ruth. Free will offering.

MAY FOOD PANTRY STATS



Through April 26, 2018

- 53 families served; 169 people served
256 bags of food given
Approximately \$2,560 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*

PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms:

Gunner Lee Borkosky

April 8, 2017

New Members:

April 22, 2018

Linda Duerk – Reaffirmation of Faith

Katie M Gerken– Adult Confirmation

Troy & Michelle Hastedt – Reaffirmation of Faith

Michael Menzel – Membership Transfer

Deaths:

Roger Grim died on March 26, 2018

Funeral was held on March 31, 2018

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

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

FROM PASTOR MATT

Facebook, Manipulation, and the Death of Truth.

#DeleteFacebook. In the wake of the latest scandal in a year filled with more scandals and messiness than I’d believed was possible, there is a movement to get off of social media or at least off of Facebook entirely. This began with the revelation that the data of many users was illegally given to an agency that sought to use our information to manipulate us through ads, posts, likes, and tags. Just getting rid of your online presence is one option, and it’s certainly not a bad idea to get yourself off of Facebook. A lot of research shows how social media actually causes us to be more stressed out, depressed, and lonely. The problem we have is that while Facebook may be the company being rocked by the current scandal, it is hardly the only culprit.

I believe that Facebook needs to be held accountable; they didn’t tell us what Cambridge Analytica was doing with our data. But at the same time, it’s our responsibility to be vigilant. In the year 2018, you have to assume everything you click online, everything you watch, every website you visit will be collecting data on you and that data will eventually be used to try to sell you something. Even the people in the places you trust are trying to sell you something; never forget that. People and organizations have an agenda. They want you to buy their product, support their platform, agree with their view, and so on. So if everyone is playing an angle and manipulating content to try and make us believe, do, and buy specific things, can we trust anyone or anything to be truthful?

Is the truth dead in our culture? Is there no place we can go where truth is still spoken even when it’s hard? Even when it hurts? If that place does exist, are we still willing to listen when it doesn’t confirm our agenda, bias, or viewpoint? The reality is that the truth frequently hurts, and it challenges us and our view. The truth can make us feel incredibly uncomfortable with our situation, our lives, and our past actions. But if we value truth, it must be dealt with.

“What is truth?” Pilate famously asked at Jesus’ trial when Jesus said, *“The reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me”* (John 18:37-38).

What is truth? It seems as though it should be obvious. Truth is what is real, accurate, faithful, honest. It is what is in line with reality and fact. Yet somehow we struggle with the truth. We struggle with figuring out what really happened as gossip runs rampant in churches, schools, communities, on social media and in the media. >>>>

We struggle to determine truth as people hide the truth and seek to cover up what is shameful. No one wants others to know their mistakes, their flaws, their faults and so we hide them, or point the finger at others whose faults we deem worse. We struggle with truth because everyone has an agenda and an angle. We struggle with truth, because the truth exposes our sin and our brokenness, and facing that terrifies us.

Just listen to what Jesus said about the light which exposes sin, lies, and deception in John 3:19-21, *“This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.”* People love the darkness and hide their deeds. People hide the truth because they don’t want their lives, their lies, their deception exposed.

Now, we all have things we’ve said and done in the past that we are ashamed of; that’s the reality of living in a fallen, broken world. But covering up a sin and denying truth - hiding in the dark to cover our lives or to make ourselves look better- is not what Christians are called to do. It’s not what decent human beings are called to do. Rather, integrity comes by speaking the truth even when it hurts, even when it costs us personally. The death of truth in our culture has drawn near, because we’ve stopped speaking the truth as God’s people. Not only about the gospel, but about our own lives and actions. We’ve let the lies of others slide because we hope then our own lies are acceptable and permissible or at least justifiable. They aren’t. Jesus says, He *“testifies to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to Him.”* In a world of deception, when everyone is trying to spin a story, and convince you of their truth you can feel like it is a fool’s errand to find the truth at all. When you hear all of this, you can begin to think that maybe you’re the one going crazy rather than the world. We can start to think all the lies and the madness happening around us is normal and so we begin to just ignore the voice telling us “this is not okay”. In the midst of this, we have to encourage one another to stand in the light of the truth, even when it’s hard. That also means when someone has the courage to stand up and speak the truth, we must stand beside them through it. >>>

LADIES AID NEWS

The Ladies Aid wants to thank those who attended all the Lenten meals served by various groups in our church. Your attendance and donations were appreciated. The Ladies Aid will use this money to have our church pianos and organ tuned.

May 1st is our evening for grandmothers, mothers, daughters, relatives, and friends to enjoy a "girls' night out". **"A Walk to Remember"** is the theme of our banquet to be held at 6:30 in the school cafeteria. See information in the bulletin and hallways. We hope to see you there!

A Walk in the Woods

May 19th will be a special day for moms (grandmothers, aunts or another significant female in a boy's life) and their lads to enjoy God's creation. May is a marvelous time to witness the natural beauty at Camp Lakota and come face to face with all that nature has to offer. With the walk to begin promptly at 10:00 AM, everyone should meet prior to this time at the Administration Building near the entrance to Camp Lakota, located at 2180 Ginter Road. Grilled hot dogs and all the fixings will be available at the end of the walk. Cost is \$5.00 per family. A special thanks to Mike and Barb Saxton and Elaine Harris for offering their time and energy!

Thursday, May 31st is the next Ladies Aid meeting to be held at 2:00 p.m.. The program, called "Storytelling", will be given by Pastor Dale Kern. Come and enjoy! Suggested item to bring for the food pantry donation is SHAMPOO.



STEPHEN MINISTRY

Think of a time when you really felt cared for. Chances are someone



**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

focused on what you had to say, was attentive to your needs, and listened to how you felt instead of telling you how you should feel or what you should do.

Listening is one of the most powerful ministry tools at our disposal. It demonstrates that you care about the other person. In Stephen Ministry, a great deal of time is

spent in teaching and practicing listening skills because of its importance as a caregiving tool. You too can become a more caring listener by understanding and applying these six listening concepts from Stephen Ministry training.

1. **Listening is active.** Focus your attention on what the other person has to say, instead of thinking of what you'll say next.
2. **Listening takes practice.** Often you need to build trust before someone will open up to you. Constant, patient listening is a key.
3. **Listening involves more than just words.** Pay attention to body language. Does it agree with or contradict a person's spoken words?
4. **Good listeners aren't completely silent.** They restate key thoughts or ideas to be sure they understood correctly or ask focused questions to encourage the person to reach a little deeper.
5. **Listening happens over time.** As you listen over several conversations, are there any recurring themes or patterns in what the person had said? These are signs there may be more to explore underneath.
6. **Listening is confidential.** A great way to build that trust and to show the person you really care for him or her is to maintain confidentiality and not to share with others what was told to you in private conversation.

Stephen Ministers are here to listen and care for you. If you would like a Stephen Minister, please call the church office at 419-782-5766 or email, sjl@defnet.com.

We, as God's people, must encourage one another to stand with integrity, to sift through the lies, and take the time and effort to question what we hear from others in our community, what we read on the internet, and what we hear on the news. We must be vigilant and relentless in seeking out the truth, and fighting for it. Even when it's unpopular and costly. Because even if the liars and the deceivers win today, the truth cannot be killed. As Jesus reminds us in Luke 12:2-3, *"Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops."*

SCOUTING NEWS



Scouting News May 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.

Younger Cub Scouts recently visited the Auglaize Fire Department where they had an opportunity to not only view fire equipment but also to wear it. And they even were able, with help, to use the fire hose! A definite learning and fun experience!!

Older Cub Scouts, on the other hand, have been busy planning the menu for an overnight camping adventure at Camp Lakota this month. While at Lakota, all Cub Scouts, along with their parents/guardians, will enjoy a special campfire program that will focus on rank advancement, outdoor cooking and a visit to the Shook Nature Center.

Boy Scouts had a fantastic experience recently when they traveled to Toledo for an introduction to scuba class. After learning the fundamentals, all spent time completely submerged in 10 feet of water! There was even a stop at a Japanese Steakhouse where they enjoyed a delicious meal. Further, the Troop is planning for a week-long summer camp experience at Camp Lakota.

An Eagle Court of Honor will be held this month as Jacob Geckle becomes the 85th Eagle Scout of Troop 75. In addition, a number of other rank advancements and merit badges will be awarded to other members of the Troop.

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.

YOUTH SPRING FLOWER SALE

The youth will be taking orders for their annual flower sales event. Orders will be taken between April 15 to May 2. The order form is available in the weekly bulletin or by the youth bulletin board. The youth will be having cash-and-carry items in the parking lot on Mother's Day, May 13. Pre-orders can be picked up then as well. Thank you for supporting our youth program.

