

PASTOR LUHRING'S SERMON THEMES

SPECIAL ADVENT SERVICES

Wed Dec 5 1:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. *"Our Potter"* Isaiah 64:8
 Wed Dec 12 1:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. *"Our Shepherd"* Isaiah 40:11
 Wed Dec 19 1:00 p.m. / 7:30 p.m. *"Our Living Branch"* Isaiah 11:1

CHRISTMAS WORSHIP OPPORTUNITES

Sun, Dec 9 2:00 p.m. Preschool Program
 Sun, Dec 9 3:30 p.m. Kdg-8th Grade Program
 Sat, Dec 22 6:30 p.m. Sr Choir Candlelight Service
 "God's Gift Exchange"
 Sun, Dec 23 8:00/9:30/11:00 a.m.
 "God's Gift of Joy"
 Mon, Dec 24 Family Candlelight 3:30/5:00/6:30 p.m.
 "God's Gift of Messiness"
 Mon, Dec 24 10:30 p.m. Sr Choir Candlelight
 "God's Gift Exchange"
 Tues, Dec 25 10:00 a.m. with Holy Communion
 "Type of Person God Uses: Mary"
 Mon, Dec 31 6:30 p.m. with Holy Communion
 "Preparing For The New Year"

PASTOR LUHRING'S DECEMBER SERMON THEMES

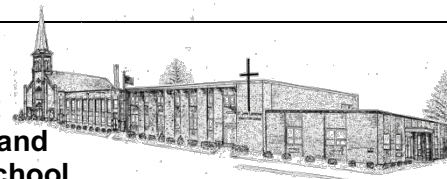
Sat/Sun Dec 1/2 *"Jesus Came So You Might Be Surprised"* Jn 8
 Sat/Sun Dec 8/9 *"God's Gift of Purpose"* Matt 5
 Sat/Sun Dec 15/16 *"God's Gift of Strength"* Ps 29
 Sat/Sun Dec 22 *"God's Gift Exchange"* Matt 6
 Sat/Sun Dec 23 *"God's Gift of Joy"* I Thess 5
 Sat/Sun Dec 29/30 *"God's Gift of Hope"* Prov 13
 Sat/Sun Jan 5/6 2019 *"Wise Men Keep Their Eyes On Jesus"* Matt 2

The Epistle

December 2018 Vol. 82 # 12

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

655 Wayne Avenue, Defiance, OH 43512



Rev. Donald L. Luhring
 419-782-5766 Fax: 419-782-0954
 sjl@defnet.com
www.stjohndefiance.com
www.facebook.com/stjohnlutherandefiance

PURPOSE STATEMENT

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

FROM PASTOR LUHRING

Advent calendars are now marketing the Christmas season. Traditionally Advent calendars include the characters and items related to the birthday of Jesus in a manger and His first Coming. Today commercial calendars are completely secular in nature. They offer puzzle pieces and toys and candy and wrapped packages to count down the 25 days of December to Christmas Day! This kind of Advent leads to great disappointment when the last gift is opened and the thrill fades away.

The 25 days of December prepares our hearts for something unfading: Jesus! We celebrate the birth of Jesus. Our focus is on the Prince of Peace. It is the Prince of Peace alone that can make the difference in our hearts, our homes, and our congregations.

Peace in our hearts come through trusting faith in Jesus who died on the cross that we might have forgiveness of our sin and healing from the sickness of sin. The primary difference that the Prince of Peace can make is peace between us and God.

Peace in our homes comes as a timely message for our nation. The popularity of home improvement and remodeling projects is understandable for most of us desire to improve our homes. Remodelers advise owners to focus on the front entrance when remodeling. >>>



**Stephen Leaders
and
Ministers**

STEPHEN LEADERS

Pastor Donald Luhning
419-782-5766

Penny Mueller
419-784-3299

Dr. Jeff Pruitt
419-395-1875

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 Luhning
419-782-5766

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

PASTORAL ACTS

Deaths:

Elizabeth I. Blevins passed away on November 4, 2018

Alvin Warncke passed away on November 13, 2018

Virginia Tule passed away on November 16, 2018

NOVEMBER FOOD PANTRY STATS



Through November 28, 2018

101 families served; 350 people served

491 bags of food given

Approximately \$4,910 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

THANK YOU!

Thank you to everyone that contributed monies and items to the food pantry for the Thanksgiving Bags and Christmas Bags that were distributed to the Food Pantry Clients in November and December. The families that we serve are very thankful for the generous amount of food that they receive from our Food Pantry.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SENIOR CHOIR CONCERT

“Angels of Christmas” will be presented on



Saturday, December 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Monday, December 24 at 10:30 p.m.

Members and friends are invited to the concert as we join the Senior Choir in singing praises to our Lord – Christ the Savior is born!

The choir is directed by Darci Van Vlerah. The pianist is Donna Van Vlerah. We will have brass accompaniment. Our thanks to all participants in the concert. *Merry Christmas!*

MEIJER'S TO FEATURE ST. JOHN FOOD PANTRY

Meijer's to feature St. John Food Pantry for their **“Simply Give Program”**, November 18 to December 29. On Friday, December 7, they will “Double” the amount. If you buy a \$10.00 gift card they will give us \$20.00 worth of gift cards. Thank you for supporting St. John Food Pantry.

I often wonder when I see beautiful homes if it is as peaceful inside as it looks on the outside! The presence of God through the reading of His Word and through daily prayers individually and as a family is what makes for peace on the inside.

Peace in our congregations happens when God's people gather at the Lord's Table to celebrate the Prince of Peace who came that first Christmas to bring forgiveness to all people and who comes now at His Table to bring forgiveness for a lasting peace with God and with one another.

His Table to bring forgiveness for a lasting peace with God and with one another.

LADIES AID NEWS

Everyone who is signed up should be ready for *“Advent by Candlelight”* either as a hostess, or guest. The event takes place in the gym on Dec. 9, 6:30-8:00.

We are continuing to support our seminary student, Andrew Lehenbauer until May of next year.

We raised \$154.00 by the sale of our homemade noodles in October.

Our next meeting will be on Dec. 13, at 2:00 p.m. at Kingsbury place. We will be having a cookie exchange. Please bring 3 dozen cookies to share. A program will be presented about the story of Rudolph, and singing of Christmas carols around the piano. Please join us!

The Food Pantry item this month is disposable razors. The Hostess Committee is: Nancy Baldwin, Susan Becker, Diana Grim, Elaine Harris and Lorna Smith. See you there!





Christ caring for people through people

**STEPHEN
MINISTRY**

GENUINE PRAYER

Martin Luther said the first rule of prayer is, “Don’t lie to God.” If this is the first rule, then the second is like it: Don’t lie to the person you are promising to pray for, either. If you say you are going to pray for someone, make sure you do it. A friend wrote to me after Joan died: “You stay in my prayers daily, Ken. They are real prayers, not just the kind we sometimes say we will offer but don’t.” I knew this person truly was praying, and I was strengthened by it.

People find great comfort when they know others are praying for them. “When I was in a threatening circumstance, I was so distracted by my pain that I didn’t feel as if my prayers were very effective,” one person said. “It was such a relief to know that someone else was stepping in to pray on my behalf.”

A painfully honest man, however, said the following about those who told him that he would be in their thoughts and prayers: “I appreciate the sentiment but have no expectations that person actually will pray. That’s because when I say something similar, I usually forget.”

Your sincerity will never be questioned, however, if you are specific about when and how you will pray. “I thought of you three times today,” someone told Joan, “and prayed each time that God would enclose you in his love.” Another person wrote to her, “Each morning in my prayer time I pray for you. Today God prompted me also to write to you.” One friend was very specific with a research participant: “When I pray tonight, I’m going to ask God to walk with you and hold your hand through this difficult time.” >>>>

THE PASTORS SERMONS

PASTOR’S 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.

THE FRIDAYS’ IRON MEN BIBLE STUDY

Iron Men’s Bible Study meets every Friday morning from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 a.m. in Adult Ed Room A. The topic for a couple weeks is “*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 Luhning, Rich Baldwin, Bob Heyman, Walt Smith, Jim Schatz, Tom Koppenhofer, Steve Zachrich, Charlie Koch, Dr. VanVlerah, Bob Dawson.

SCOUTING NEWS - DECEMBER 2018

Cub Scouts recently participated in a “Turkey Shoot” where they shot nerf guns at paper turkeys. The Cub who shot the highest score from each Den (Dens are based on age groups.) received a 12-13 pound frozen turkey for his family to enjoy at Thanksgiving.



Cubs have also been busy learning and reviewing the Scout Oath and Law. In addition, the Tiger Den has built birdhouses while other Dens have visited the Defiance City Police Department.

A Christmas Celebration is on the agenda for December. Because a Scout is reverent, Cubs are also working on their Duty to God achievement. Opportunities also exist for them to go further and earn the religious award for their faith.

Members of the Boy Scout Troop are currently working on the Horsemanship Merit Badge. Further, with the Klondike Derby scheduled for January at Camp Berry, Scouts are honing their skills as they prepare for that outdoor event. Planning for snow tubing at Mad River Mountain is also on the agenda.

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.

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.

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.

Be careful to make sure that talking about prayer—or praying with a hurting person—is appropriate. Someone who is angry at God, for instance, may not want you to pray with him or her. It’s always appropriate, however, to pray privately for that person. As one caregiver commented, “While I think praying for people in pain is always good, sometimes praying with that person is not.”

Listening is also a key factor in praying for others. One woman reflected on her thoughts about prayer when she had been suffering: “Prayer without enough listening is not always that helpful. I wanted someone to listen to me first, to know what I needed, and to ask my permission to pray with me. Otherwise, it seemed like they were just doing their duty without having a sincere interest in my and my situation.”

Once you determine that praying with an individual is appropriate, the most reassuring way to approach the subject is to ask what the person would like you to pray for. That way, the person you are praying for helps you build the content of your prayer. He or she will know that you are praying specifically about his or her fears, pain, or other needs.

Article is from the Stephen Ministry Training Book, “*Don’t Sing Songs to a Heavy Heart*” by Kenneth C. Haugk, PhD., founder of Stephen Ministries.

All of our Stephen Ministers have been trained to be good listeners and genuinely be the best caregiver for you. If you need a Stephen Minister to prayer with you, please call the church office at 419-782-5766 or email: sjl@defnet.com