



The Epistle

Newsletter of St. John Lutheran Church and School, Defiance, Ohio 43512

Vol. 84 #12

Pastor Luhring and Pastor Mews

Pastor Luhring

Three Wednesday Advent Worship Services: ***ARISE AND SHINE***

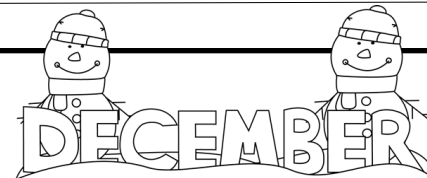
In this Advent series for midweek services of worship, we welcome the Christ Child, who is the light of the world, arising in our lives this season. In celebration, we, in turn, shine with the light of Christ in various ways for all the world to see the brightness of his love. Each week will focus on a different aspect of the light of Christ and how we are enlightened by him throughout our lives. The theme verse for the entire series is: “Arise, shine, for your light has come” (Isaiah 60:1). Hymns in the series include “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus,” “Arise, O Christian People,” “The King Shall Come When Morning Dawns” and “Lift Up Your Heads, Ye Mighty Gates.”

Week 1 December 4 1:00PM / 7:30PM: Rising Light (Isaiah 60:1): Living in the light of Jesus, we prepare to celebrate his birth. Repenting of our sins, we put away the works of darkness and dress in the armor of light.

Week 2: December 11 1:00PM / 7:30PM: Reflected Light (Zechariah 9:16): During Advent we remember the birth of Jesus, the Light of the world. We reflect his light in our daily lives.

Week 3: December 18 1:00PM / 7:30PM Healing Light (Malachi 4:2): With repentant joy we anticipate the birth of our Savior. We listen to his Word and live according to it until he comes again.

Join us in our Advent series, “*Arise and Shine.*” Each week will focus on a different aspect of the light of Christ and how we are enlightened by Him throughout our lives. In our worship for the first week, we will celebrate the rising light. Repenting of our sins, we put away the works of darkness and dress in the armor of light! Each service features a sermon, a children’s message and prayers.



- Pg. 2 Pastor Mews’s Message
- Pg. 3 “Build on the Rock”
- Pg. 4 Minimalism
- Pg. 5 LCMS Foundation News
- Pg. 6 December Events
- Pg. 7 December Events
- Pg. 8 Food Pantry/Clothes Closet
- Pg. 9 Ladies Aid/Telecare
- Pg. 10 REALM
- Pg. 11 Scouting News/Endowment
- Pg. 12 Pastoral Acts
- Pg. 13-16 School News
- Pg. 17-18 Youth Scoop
- Pg. 19 December Calendar

Church Service Times

Traditional Services
 6:30 p.m. Saturday
 8:00 and 9:30 a.m. Sunday
Contemporary Service



Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Pastor Mews' Epistle, December 2019 Christmas Hymns of Light.

The opponents of Dr. Martin Luther during his struggle to reform the church stated that as Dr. Martin Luther would write hymns for his congregations to sing, "They would then sing his doctrine into their hearts." They were correct! The reality is that we do sing faith into our hearts through the singing of hymns and Christian songs. Hymns are not only a way for us to do that, but they are also deep, resounding prayers to God. Additionally, Christian hymns and songs tie deep Scriptural truths to art that amplify our Christian life and relationship to God and each other. In American religion we are led to believe that only songs that resound with the words, "Praise God or Praise Him," can truly be praise songs or hymns. In reality the deeper the hymn in its reflection of Christ's redeeming work and the depth of Scriptures the greater the praise. To appropriately thank or adore someone is far beyond just saying 'thank you,' or 'I praise you,' but to lift up what that person has done and in specifics and in synthesizing and elaborating their deeds and fruit to us in great detail! (We all enjoy thank you notes that praise us for specifics in our time, gifts and efforts for what was done for others). Hymns are 'thank you notes,' & further more moving art that touches our hearts & soul with deep blessings.

Christmas hymns are a few of the immense and expansive list of hymns written over the centuries which our secular society enjoys. Personally, I truly only enjoy Christmas hymns and songs after Thanksgiving. (LOL, the cartoon strip with the turkey telling Santa to wait his turn reflects me-IMHO!) Whether it's Nat King Cole, Elvis, Carrie Underwood, Alabama, Amy Grant, John Denver, Neil Diamond, or your favorite group or artist singing Christmas Carols-they all sing of Christ our Lord. Their words and lyrics fill our cars, dining rooms and shopping places with the songs of "Glory to our New Born King", or "Joy to the World", or Love Came Down or Little Town of Bethlehem." They really are evangelistic and faith creating and sustaining. Let's examine 5 of these hymns which are really a sample and a small slice of the vast number of 'greatest hits' of Christmas hymns of Christ's birth over the centuries. Below you will read of their unique origins and meanings that make them all the more personal, pertinent, divine and majestic!

1. Luther wrote his timeless Christmas Hymn, "From Heaven Above," to be a family hymn. It has two parts 1) one part represent angels in heaven announcing his birth and 2) the other part is believers welcoming Him with humble faith. Family members in different parts of his house sung specific stanzas representing those who proclaimed or in faith heard of the birth of Jesus.
2. The Christmas song, "Go Tell it on the Mountain," reflects the faith of former slaves and the music that blessed and shaped that culture throughout the generations. Its words reflect the joy of the announcement of freedom and blessings for all in Christ--we believers are called to "Go!"
3. The English Pastor Phillip Brooks visited the holy land and worshiped on Christmas Eve at The Church of The Nativity in Jerusalem. So moved by being in the location of Christ's birth, he desired to bring back a gift for all. Pondering the gift while overlooking the night sky of Bethlehem, he imagined what Christ's birth would be like on that blessed morn and then wrote his vision in the hymn of "O Little Town of Bethlehem," which has blessed many over the years.
4. This hymn is a union of a Shakespeare Play tune which Queen Elizabeth danced to, a Christian poet, and the contrast of pain and joy. William Dix, a children's author poet, reflected the birth of Jesus with His death and then wrote the classic hymn "What Child is This," to "Greensleeves."
5. Finally, the crises of a broken organ in Austria on Christmas Eve in 1838 led Pastor, Joseph Mohr to reflect that likewise at night & in silence Mary & Joseph accepted their circumstances. In response he wrote the classic hymn, "Silent Night, Holy Night," accompanied by a guitar.

Come sing faith into your hearts through Christmas hymns during our Christmas celebrations!

“BUILD ON THE ROCK” SEMINAR

This Build on the Rock, The healthy congregation is presented by Ted Korber, renowned author and leader who has years of experience in church consultation. Real life stories from actual case work inspires and encourage. The ideas, are not just great theory, but practical and fruit bearing. The workshop is presented in 5 one hour sessions:

- A. A Bride Like No Other
- B. Spiritual Heart Disease
- C. Spiritual Leadership
- D. Structuring the Healthy Congregation
- E. What does this mean?



This seminar will be taking place Saturday, February, 8, 2020
from 8:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m. and lunch will be provided.

All the Congregation is welcome. More details to come soon!

BIBLE STUDY OPPORTUNITIES

Led by Pastor Mews

(feel free to join any class at any time)

1. 1. IN DEPTH BIBLE STUDY 1

“Law and Gospel”. This group gathers on Tuesdays from 2:00-3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. All is provided, feel free to join at anytime.

2. GENESIS 1-3 THURSDAY A.M. BIBLE STUDY

Class gathers on Thursday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. The topic is the Book of Genesis”. Bring yourself and all else will be provided.

BIBLE STUDY CLASS SCHEDULE IN DECEMBER

“Life with God”– Monday at 6:30-8:30 p.m. Last class is Monday, December 2.

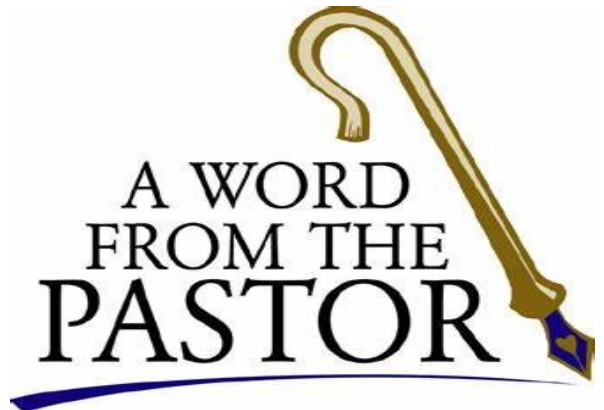
A new winter “Life with God” class will be advertised soon.

LAW and GOSPEL

Tuesday, December 24– NO CLASS– Christmas Eve
Tuesday, December 31– NO CLASS– New Years Eve

GENESIS BIBLE STUDY

Thursday, December 26, NO CLASS– Christmas Break



PERSONAL NEWS FROM PASTOR MEWS

My family and I will be on vacation from January 1 to January 13, 2020.

Please continue to keep my mother and father in your prayers.

Thank you for all the prayers and cards for my childhood church friend, Frank Trevarthan as he nears his time to enter the Church Triumphant.

My wife and I would like to thank everyone for the cards and kind words for October’s Pastor Appreciation month. It is a joy to serve you.

I have a NEW cell phone number:
419.670.5014.

THOUGHTS ON MINIMALISM:

What is Minimalism?

Minimalism is the idea that most people can exist on fewer possessions than they have. The idea also is to simplify one's life in the process of letting go of these unneeded items. This frees up physical and mental space in a person's life.

For the Christian, the principle of Minimalism has a deeper meaning. We know that all things actually belong to God, not to us. How we use the gifts that God has allowed us to have will either please Him or displease Him. Sometimes things actually get in the way of our relationship with God. They can become idols to adore, polish and keep. Reevaluating how we feel about these things periodically and changing what needs changing is simply good stewardship....of possessions and relationships.

SPRING CLEANING!

I started in my closet. It has been a busy week and there I was on Sunday morning, staring at the clothes in my closet and trying to figure out what was in there to wear to church. Luckily I woke up early that morning, because I stood there for almost an hour. I couldn't see the trees through the forest! Or the outfit through the mountain of clothes. This was my wakeup call.

I'd recently read a book by Joshua Becker called "The More of Less" which talked about minimalism. I highly recommend it. So I had some idea of what it involved. The next day I started working....boxes to donate....a bag for throwing away....and an empty closet to start. Nothing went back into the closet if it did not match something else or if I had another similar to it. I gleaned out the closet— donating the good, tossing the bad, and keeping about 25% of it. It took two days. This was my first time through and it was a good start. But only a start.

I realized that there were many things in my life and in my house that were like my closet. Too many "things" were getting in my way.

It was at that point that I realized how minimalism really relates to life as a Christian. We need to take the time to put "things" into perspective. We need to see what is really needful, what is really important, and how God would want us to use His gifts to us. We need to unclutter our lives and our hearts and focus first on God, on His love and provision, on His plan and purpose.

I don't know how many people were clothes by what I donated....for me, that wasn't the point....I gave the items and left it to God to place them where He wanted them. Every donation is just that, trusting that the item will go to someone who needs it or for some purposes that furthers God's Kingdom. It is always a matter of the eternal versus the temporal.

The "Treasures in Heaven" ministry can help with this proves. Taking the coverage in our lives and turning it into gain in another person's life and to further the ministry and live of St. John Lutheran Church for the future.



December 2019: Charitable Gift Planning
 Newsletter Article
 For Associated Ministries, Gift Planning Counselors
 and Associate Counselors

Preparations

Home decorations have transitioned from pumpkins to turkeys, and now to snowmen and sparkly trees. Children of all ages treasure year-end holidays. Memories kindle warmth of glowing fires etched in our family and emotional rooms.

Churches celebrated Reformation and Thanksgiving. Advent's expectation is that the Savior of the World is arriving! With décor changes, God's people prepare their hearts to receive their King.

Mary, chosen to bear God's son in the flesh, was told to get ready. After the angel's visit, Mary exclaimed, "All generations will call me blessed, because **He has done great things for me!**" Mary recognized the Giver and Gift.

"God's good things are merely gifts which last for a season; but His grace and His regard are our inheritance which lasts forever. Truly, the grace of God is eternal life," wrote Martin Luther.

Year-end preparations include planning and arranging. Many organize their lives to get ready for what lies ahead. What else can we put in order besides tangible and perishable presents that adorn our Christmas trees and represent our human love?

Martin Luther also said, "God would not have us put our trust in His goods and gifts, spiritual or temporal (provision and protection) however great they be, but in His grace and in Himself (providence), yet without despising the gifts."

The time-based clutter of life pulls us toward temporal concerns. Statistics indicate that less than 10% of Americans have included a charitable gift in their estate plans. One reason might be due to an uncomfortable visit with an attorney.

Have you considered allowing a fellow LCMS Gift Planning Counselor as a trustworthy guide to help you to prepare for expressing the enduring intent of your faith and love?

You can discover that your congregation has a trusted charitable guide available to encourage you to plan and direct your passion to give to family and beloved ministries, so others might know that your own heart is prepared to fulfill God's Will, as His steward. Contact Eileen Fitzenreiter at 419-599-0213 or Eileen.Fitzenreiter@lfnd.org.

CHRISTMAS DINNER AND NEW MEMBER WELCOME

This dinner will be held on Sunday, December 1, 2019 at 5:00 p.m.

The meal will be Baked Ham, Cheesy potatoes, Green beans, Tossed Salad, Roll and Cookies for dessert.

The theme this year is "O Christmas Tree". The classes of St. John Lutheran School are decorating Christmas trees for auction. All the proceeds will be given to the Pregnancy Crisis Center in Defiance.

We hope to see you there.

We would like to welcome new members:

Alexis Phillips, Don & Angela Parish, Phyllis (George) Kaiser, Gary & Mary Bergman, Douglas Helmke and Chris Mann.

WELCOME TO ALL!

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

December 21

6:30 p.m. Senior Choir Cantata

December 24

3:30 p.m. 5:00 p.m. 6:30 p.m.
10:30 p.m.

December 25 with Communion

10:00 a.m.

December 31 New Year's Eve

with Communion

6:30 p.m.

ANGEL TREE

PROGRAM

St. John will be participating in the Prison Fellowship Ministries Angel Tree Program again



this year. Each child will have two Angels on the tree. One for a clothing item and one for a fun or toy item. Each gift should be about a \$20.00 value. Please return the wrapped gifts with the Angel attached to the outside of the gift to the church office by Wednesday, December 11, 2019. St. John Youth Group and other volunteers will then deliver the gifts to the families. If you are unable to shop for a gift a monetary gift may be given to the church office. The Youth Board will choose an Angel and shop for the gift for you. Monetary gifts may also be given to the church office to assist with the food baskets that are prepared and given to each family.

Any questions contact Jenny George at 419-784-4008, Angie Morris or the Church Office .

CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Our School Children will be performing a Christmas Program on Sunday, December 15



Preschool program will be at 2:00 p.m.

K- 8 grade program will be at 3:30 p.m.



CHRISTMAS CAROLING AND CARDS

The young adults are inviting the congregation to join them in an afternoon sharing the Christmas joy by singing at

a few nursing homes on December 14 at 1:00 p.m.

A box for donations of unused Christmas cards, stock, and stickers is in the lunch room on the piano.

After singing, we will come back to the church for snacks and hot chocolate.

Please come and join us.

DECEMBER 40+ WEDDING ANNIVERSARIES

- ◇ Keith & Marlene Eberle (58) December 2
- ◇ Hal & Lori Hanenkrath (40) December 8
- ◇ Tom & Samira Stelzer (40) December 8
- ◇ Neal & Judy Detter (47) December 9
- ◇ Ron & Marilyn Burke (69) December 16
- ◇ Ron & June Crosser (41) December 22
- ◇ Allan & Valerie Van Vlerah (51) December 28
- ◇ Alan & Jennifer Steingass (52) December 30



80+ DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

- ⇒ James Miller (81) December 7
- ⇒ Marilyn Ankney (83) December 10
- ⇒ Helen Delventhal (91) December 10
- ⇒ Anna Sines (85) December 14
- ⇒ Larry Meyer (81) December 15
- ⇒ Henry Gerken (88) December 21



DECEMBER SERMONS

- ◇ December 7/8- “Learning to Let Go of Hurt” Exodus 34:10—Pastor Luhring
- ◇ December 14/15- “Master or Mastered” Matthew 11: 2-15—Pastor Mews
- ◇ December 21– Choir Candlelight “When Your Plans Get Messed Up” Psalm 81- Pastor Luhring
- ◇ December 22- “Learning Contentment: Surviving the Holidays” Eccelastics 4:6– Pastor Luhring
- ◇ December 24 -(3:30, 5:00, 6:30 p.m.) “Christmas Songs of Light” - Pastor Mews
- ◇ December 24 (10:30 p.m.) - “ When Your Plans Get Messed Up” Psalm 81—Pastor Luhring
- ◇ December 25- “God’s Part: My Part In Changing Me” Pastor Luhring
- ◇ December 28/29- “Wardrobes of Heirs” Galations 4:4-7 Pastor Mews
- ◇ December 31—”Godly 20/20 Vi-sion” Romans 8:31-39– Pastor Mews

NEWS FROM CALIFORNIA

Below is an email the church office received:

Dear Sir or Ma’am-
 I am writing from Bakerfield, CA and every Sunday morning I set my alarm clock for 5 a.m. PST to listen to your broadcast on WONW 1280. I came across WONW radio station and I love your church. Pastor Donald Luhring is the best and is truly anointed in my opinion and God Bless WONW for bringing your church to me every Sunday morning. I would like to know if you can please kindly provide me with the song that is sung after Pastor Luhring says “Help, Save, Comfort and Defend us gracious Lord.” I would sincerely appreciate that because I just love to hear it.
 Thank you for your time and please send me an address where I can send a donation.
 As Pastor Luhring would say– Go In Peace, Serve the Lord.
 Your church has become my church.
 Everton Pakeman

SIMPLY GIVE PROGRAM BY MEIJER



St. John Lutheran Food Pantry will be featured at Meijer from *SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 10 THROUGH SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 2019.*

There will be **TWO DOUBLE MATCH DAYS.**

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3 and FRIDAY, DECEMBER 13 the donations that are received at Meijer on those days will be doubles in gift cards to us at the end of the promotion.

You can pick up a donation card in the church office or pick one up at the Defiance Meijer. The cards are \$10.00 each and will be applies to your grocery order. Last year we received \$6,610.00 in Meijer food gift cards.

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT HELPS KEEP
OUR FOOD PANTRY SUPPLIED!!**



FOOD PANTRY

The Food Pantry is open on Tuesday and Thursdays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 am.

In November, we served 99 families or 357 people. 499 bags of food were distributed at a value of \$6,520.00.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF THIS
MINISTRY.**



**Food
Pantry**

CLOTHES CLOSET

Clothes Closet is open on Thursday's from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Friday's from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

We offer clean, affordable clothing and small household items. The sales support many ministries at St. John. We will always welcome volunteers to help.

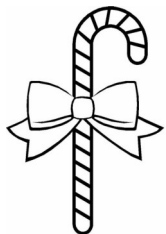
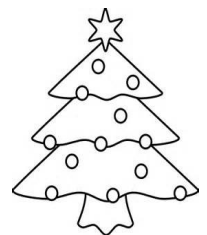
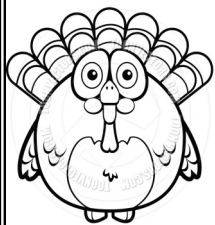
Please consider helping if you can.



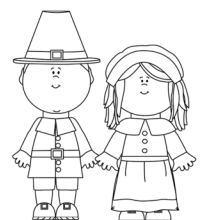
THANK YOU TO EVERYONE THAT

DONATED TO THE

**THANKGIVING AND CHRISTMAS ITEMS for
the BAGS for the FOOD PANTRY!**



**Thank You
so much!**



LADIES AID NEWS

Thank you to those who purchased baked goods and noodles in November at our sale. Your continuous support is very much appreciated.

Ladies Aid will have a Christmas cookie exchange December 19th at 2:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. Members are asked to bring 3-4 dozen cookies to share. A special program will be presented by Janet Koch portraying "Mary". All women of the church and their guests are welcomed.



Advent by Candlelight is soon approaching. A special thanks to St. John Lutheran School administrator, Shellie Kosmerchock who has made it possible to have Jennie Williamson, a Nashville recording artist, offer her talents as we prepare our hearts for Christmas. Thank you to all who have worked to make this a memorable evening! Merry Christmas!

TELECARE

"The Next Best Thing to Being There"

GETTING THROUGH THE HOLIDAYS WHEN YOU'VE LOST A LOVED ONE



When you've lost a loved one, the holiday season can be a painful reminder of the terrible loss you are feeling—instead of bringing warmth, love, and excitement. The first few years are perhaps the most difficult, but even years later, the holidays may lack the joy they once had for you. The holidays can become a time of peace and reflection, a time to cherish the gift your loved one has been—and continues to be—in the life of your family.

When you are ready, and it feels right, one way to refashion the holidays is to focus on the underlying religious meaning. In the Christian tradition, Advent can be a time of quiet reflection and spiritual preparation. Let your grief lead you to a deeper appreciation for the time-honored traditions of the holiday season, traditions that bring home the meaning of God's promise of everlasting love and life.

The Telecare team will be calling on Monday, December 2 and reaching out to people in our congregation. If this is a time of grief, health concerns or relationship issues "the team" is here to listen and offer a prayer.

If you are looking for a simple and yet profound way to "reach out with the love of Christ", this could be just the ministry for you.

We provide Telecare training so people are prepared to do this ministry. If you would like to help, please call Penny Mueller at 419-304-4455. Many of our Stephen Ministers participate in this ministry as an extended care ministry to our members. Email: sjl@defnet.com if you are in need of a Stephen Minister. All contacts are confidential.

We invite your prayers for these people as they extend Christ's hand of love to you and others in our congregation.

REALM CONNECT



St. John Lutheran Church is moving to a new kind of church record keeping software called Realm® Connect. It primarily serves the administrative needs of our staff, but it also offers some exciting opportunities to support the way you are involved in our church. Not only will this improve work life for our ministry staff, it will make it easier for our church family to connect with each other, keep up with what's going on, and grow as a connected community of believers.

WHAT IS REALM CONNECT?

Realm Connect is a real ministry tool. Realm Connect is an online ministry tool designed for real time connection. It helps our church connect with you and you connect with us. If you consider yourself part of this church family, you'll love it. Realm Connect allows you to manage your personal information and who is allowed to see it, control your giving, and keep in touch with the groups that matter to you.

WHY USE REALM CONNECT?

Realm Connect strengthens church connections. Being the church doesn't just happen at the church. Realm Connect helps us serve you better and leads this church well between Sundays. Everyone can be connected from anywhere at any time, right from our mobile devices. It engages everyone in the life of our church by supporting the healthy relationships essential to our church's mission. We'll stay organized, and you'll stay informed about all of the opportunities for fellowship. When we share life together, we will grow together.

WHAT ABOUT MY PRIVACY?

Realm Connect is safe, private, and secure. Your privacy is one of our greatest concerns. Realm Connect is only made up of the people in our church, it's not like a social network that's open to everyone. Realm Connect keeps your data safe and gives you in control over what information you share and who can see it.

WHAT ABOUT GIVING?

Realm Connect gives you control over your giving. Giving should be easy, and Realm Connect places giving right in the palm of your hands. You may set up recurring gifts, view your giving history, and make changes at any time. Realm Connect automatically records all electronic gifts and adds them to your giving record making it easy for you to give, and easy for our bookkeeper to track.

REALM APP

There will be an app you can download to get connected to St. John Lutheran (S JL) on the go. The app is available on iTunes or Google play.

JANUARY TRAINING

More information will be put in the up in coming bulletins and the January Epistle about a training class that will be held in January.

If you would like to do a self-guided tour of the Realm program, please look up the web page listed below.

<https://www.acstechnologies.com/products/realm/demo/tour>

We will be all set and ready to connect by the end of February, 2020.

SCOUTING NEWS DECEMBER 2019

A Cub Pack Christmas Celebration will be held this month with a variety of fun activities and games. Included will be a cookie exchange. With one of the points of the Scout Law being that a Scout in reverent, a number of the boys are working on their religious award which will be presented on Scout Sunday in February. Cubs will also continue working on engaging achievements, specific to each Den.

Service to others is an important part of scouting and therefore, Cubs collected 1,399 donated food items and a \$10.00 donation at the Crescent-News Recipe Challenge in November. These items and donation help to resupply the St. John Food Pantry.

The troop is currently exploring options for winter activities. Tobogganing at Pokagon State Park and/or skiing and snowboarding at Mad River Mountain are currently being discussed. Its annual Polar Bear, an overnight camping experience during the winter months, is also being planned.

Together, the Pack and Troop are completing construction of a mounting platform for the Ohio Horseman's Association that will be used on the Rails to Trails route in Williams County. This service project will allow youth and those less mobile to mount and ride horses along the trail.

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.

ENDOWMENT COMMITTEE

The Endowment Fund Committee would like to thank **ALL** people that have given to the fund.

At this time, we would like to show what we have given back to the church for the last two years with the maintenance of your money. Since 20018-2019, we have given back to the church \$172,985.54.

In the last two years we have given the School \$74,407.06. The Church office \$21,837. Evangelicalism \$3,240. Youth Board \$8,855. The Trustees \$64,646.48.

Here are things we have done:

School: Computer for lunchroom, Leading Together Conference & Laptops for preschool teachers and the new playground equipment.

Church: Volunteer Luncheon, Men's Project, Tables for Fellowship Room, Vacuum cleaners, Computers, laptops for Pastor Mews, Insurance deductible from storm damage, upgrade of software & Equipment in church and church property from the lightning strike.

Evangelism: Trip to San Juan Dominican Republic and Donate, Best Practices Conference and Red Letter Challenge Books.

Youth Board: 75" Clevertouch TV, Refrigerator, Ping Pong Table, Speakers for Lock in, curriculum and volunteer training.

Trustees: Chair lift to balcony, windows in lunchroom, roof over the church office to fellowship room, HVAC system for fellowship room and sealing the three parking lots.

We have given back over \$734,865.54 since 1993.



PASTORAL ACTS

Baptisms: Baptism of *Brooks Nelson Heutte* on Sunday, October 27, 2019 in Morton, IL. Pastor Mews Baptism of *Callie Jean Colwell* was baptized on November 16, 2019. Parents are Christopher & Stephany Colwell. Sponsors are Andrea Ankney and Joshua Mangas.

Transfers: *Douglas Helmke* from St. Peter Lutheran Church LCMS, K980 County Rd 17, Napoleon, OH
Don & Marye Jagow from Trinity Lutheran Church in Monroe, MI

Transfers: *Donna Kniesly* to Zion Lutheran Church, LCMS, 1018 Cicero Rd. Edgerton, OH 43517
Greg and Susan Becker to Zion Lutheran Church, LCMS, 389 Co Rd 12 Corunna, IN 46730

MILITARY and THE HOLIDAYS

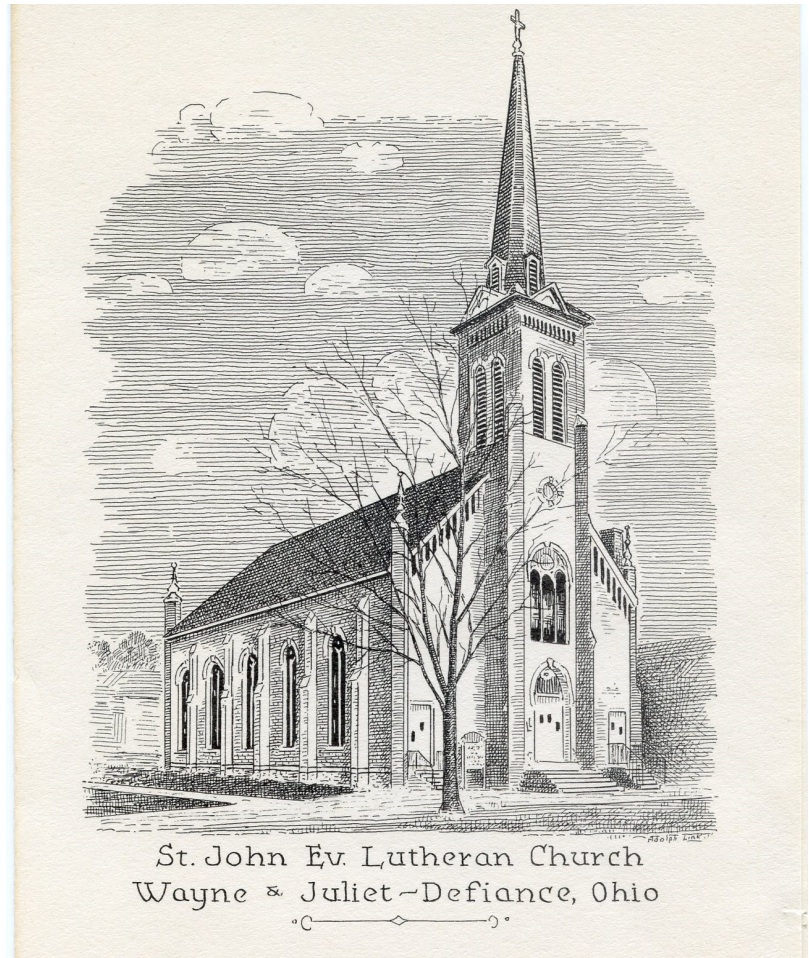
Please provide an updated address for any active military in order to send cards and care packages during the holidays.

Please call the church office or send an email to csecretary-sjl@defnet.com.



THINGS YOU NEED TO KNOW

We recently received a letter from a Dennis Reynolds from Glyn Ellyn, IL. He is the grandson of Adolph Link. Adolph Link worked in Chicago as a commercial artist until the Depression put everyone out of work. He moved his family to Schaumberg, IL to work for the land/farm owners of what is now the Spring Valley Nature Center. IN the 1095s and 1060s, Adolph made a living as an independent commercial artist marketing mostly to churches. Typically, this meant making stationary or greeting cards with a drawing of that church on the cover. His gold standard work was when churches commissioned him to make a drawing of the church using the names of all the parishioners in the drawing.



St. John School News

A Christmas Message from the Principal:

I would like to wish each of you a safe, happy, holy Christmas and holiday season. At this time I want to acknowledge the contribution of our members to St John Lutheran School in 2019. Walt Disney once said **'You can dream, create, design and build the most wonderful ideas in the world, but it requires people to make the dream a reality'**. Without your continued support St. John would not exist!

This is certainly the case as a principal. The reality is that the learning experiences and projects that have taken place during 2019 could not have happened without a great deal of commitment and support from the staff, parents and students. I am privileged to be a part of a school with highly capable and committed teachers and support staff.

One of the critical factors of any successful school is the staff. There has never been a time when being a teacher has been more demanding or challenging. To our

teachers and support staff, thank you for your energy, passion and enthusiasm throughout the year. Whether your passion is visible be at our annual fund event, "An Evening with Friends," the Walk-a-thon, or National Lutheran School's week, the support was always evident. Our accreditation process would not be happening now without your dedication either! All of the experiences of this year have contributed in some way to ensure that we offer our students the best education.

To all staff, students and families I look forward to strengthening our relationship and embarking on an exciting journey in 2020. There will be many exciting experiences planned! I believe together we will create a unique place for students to learn in a Christian environment. Have a wonderful Christmas and Happy New Year! Mrs. Kosmerchok

Classroom News

Preschool Happenings

Mrs. Debbie Wagner - PreK

Wow... November already! As we finish up our "My Community" unit, we will begin an in-depth study of "Awesome Animals" in December. Learning about animals and caring for them are ways that we get more information about the natural world and ourselves. When studying animals, we gain knowledge of the environment and better understand our place in it. We will take advantage of our intrinsic interest in animals to teach important content and concepts such as animal habitats and their life cycles. For Jesus time, we will learn about the days leading up to the

birth of our Savior - the Annunciation, the government census, and then the birth of Jesus. How wonderful it was that the shepherds and the wise men came to worship him - just as we worship him. We will be diligently practicing for our Preschool Christmas program on Sunday, December 15th - "Someone Has A Birthday!" We would like to extend an invitation to all of our members and acquaintances to attend this special event at 2pm in the church sanctuary.

Mrs. Cavin – 3 Year Old

We have been having a wonderful year! We have enjoyed learning about the seasons

The Epistle, December, 2019

of the year, with our unit, Seasons All Around. We have gathered leaves, compared, weighed, and measured nuts, and talked about changing weather patterns. We have also learned all about different types of apples. We tasted Granny Smith, Red Delicious, and Ambrosia apples and made a chart of which apples we liked best. We also cut apples up to see the seeds and star inside. We made apple print paintings with our cut up apples. We have enjoyed learning all about autumn and the other seasons. We are looking forward to learning about animals in our next unit, Animals Everywhere.

For Jesus Time, we have been working our way through the Old Testament. We spent quite awhile on Moses, and the 10 Commandments, the Battle of Jericho, Daniel, and Jonah. We are looking forward to beginning the New Testament after Thanksgiving break. We have already started singing some Christmas songs to prepare for our Christmas Program. We really enjoyed creating our Paw Patrol Christmas tree for the Congregational Christmas Party! It is always nice to find ways to give back to our church and our community.

We are excited about our upcoming Thankful Harvest pot-luck/turkey party!

Kindergarten Happenings - Mrs. Stottlemyer

November is always such a great month in kindergarten. It is wonderful to hear about all the things my students are thankful for, but it's also fun to learn about turkeys! It's also amazing to hear them read and write on their own. Their faces light up when they realize how much they have learned and what they can do now. In December we've been working hard at learning our part for the Christmas program. I am always impressed at the fact that these young children know the true meaning of Christmas. While they are still excited about getting new toys they understand that Jesus was the greatest gift ever given.

First Grade News - Mrs. Jan McGhee

November flew by in a wink. Kindergarten - Fourth Grade students visited Kingsbury Nursing Home for a Veterans Day Program. The children sang for a good 40 minutes. We brought flags along so the

Boy Scouts in uniform could lead us all in the Pledges, National Anthem, and God Bless America. Our 2nd and 4th grade Boy Scouts also recited their Motto, Oath, and Law. I do believe the residents as well as staff were impressed. We all sang songs- Christian, Patriotic, Fun ones, and even a few Christmas Carols. The students also colored pictures for the resident in attendance. Special gifts were passed out to each veteran. I was very proud of the children and feel they represented St. John Lutheran in a very positive manner.

December will be exciting as always. Preparing for the Christmas Program is a highlight and singing Christmas Carols at Nursing Homes is also a joy. The class decorated a Christmas tree for the auction at the Congregational Christmas Dinner. We chose an angel theme and made clothespin angels for decorations. Each one has its own cute hand decorated face.

We wish the members of St. John Lutheran Church many blessings this Christmas and for the year to come. Thank you for all you do to make this school possible. We love being able to talk about the REAL meaning of Christmas.

Second Grade News - Mrs. Cheryl Yoder

November was a busy month full of field trips and fun! The second graders went to Promedica Hospital for a tour of several departments. They learned about physical therapy, radiology, emergency rooms, and the nursery. Later in the month, they enjoyed leading chapel with a skit based on a Dr. Seuss book where they talked about the importance of friendship and how God shows love to all His children. Then the kids spent a great morning sharing in making an art project with their visitors in the classroom. We are looking forward to an awesome December and are ready to learn more about the birth of Jesus and celebrating all the gifts of Christianity.

From home to home,
and heart to heart,
from one place to another
The warmth and joy of
Christmas brings us
closer to each other



Third Grade - Mrs. Tiffany Scheurich

This has been a very busy time in our classroom! We have been hard at work learning lots of new things! In math, we have started to learn how to multiply and divide! In reading, we have been working on main idea and details as well as sequencing events in a story. We wrote a personal narrative for writing and finished our cursive alphabet. We are now writing exclusively in cursive in our classroom! We learned about healthy food choices with My Plate and the Defiance Health Department! We also met a children's author Kelly DiPucchio! It was a lot of fun! In science, we are studying the engineering process and even designed our own tree houses just like Pete Nelson on TreeHouse Masters! Finally, in social studies, we have been studying how our country works and created presentations about our government. We are now studying our heritage and culture and soon will be learning about cultures around the world!!

Fourth Grade - Miss Carli Rossow

We've finished up our Poetry Unit here in fourth grade. We've read some poetry, used our Chromebooks to help create our Poetry Boxes complete with a Poet's biography, and submitted one of the poems we wrote to be published. Wish us luck. -Thanks! We're still working on our Multiplication. We're doing pretty well with 7×8 , but 780×425 is a little harder. As we continue to learn about Ohio, we're learning about the first Europeans to visit the territory and what it took to survive back then. It won't be long now. Ohio is almost ready to be a state. We've been reading a book about two brothers and their sister who meet a professor. Together they succeed in reaching a magical place where they finally get to meet the Last of the Really Great Whangdoodles. We've loved listening to our teacher read this book and know you would enjoy reading it too. What book is next on our list? What type of book will it be? Only time will tell.

Wow, we've been working hard, but it's also important to take time to Remember the Reason for

the Season. We're eagerly preparing for Christ's birth as we assembled two shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child, made some ornaments, set up an advent wreath with our Classroom Christmas tree and nativity, as well as participated in daily Advent devotions and lessons.

Sixth Grade – Ms. Santo

Science/Math - Merry Christmas! 7th and 8th graders will learn about what causes weather and climate: Earth's hydrosphere and atmosphere. 5th graders will be exploring the solar system. 6th graders will be learning about life on a microscopic level. 5-7th graders are working on number sense and operations. 5th graders are traveling the long road of division, and 6th and 7th graders are rationalizing rational numbers. Have a blessed holiday and a restful break!

Fifth Grade – Miss Mews

5th/6th Reading – Have you ever had to dig a hole in the sweltering heat? Thank goodness we haven't either! Students in the 5th and 6th grade are just wrapping up the book Holes by Louis Sachar. The story follows the boy, Stanley, who tends to be in the wrong place at the wrong time all of the time. In class, we have been discussing the unfairness of Stanley's situation and topics that arise with the story, including "Is it okay to lie?", "Could you teach someone to read?", and "Could you dig a hole in the sweltering heat, knowing that you are innocent?"

7th Literature class – They have been writing an autobiographical narrative of a time that changed their outlook on life. Life is full of crazy moments that impact us and help us grow. When has a situation really changed your own outlook?

5th-8th P.E. – In 5th-8th grade PE, students have been learning all the rules and techniques to soccer. The greatest challenge is maintaining control over the ball at all times. Look out! You may be seeing soccer balls flying into goals in no time!

Seventh & Eighth Grade – Mrs. Phillips

Where did November go? One minute we were decorating our Christmas tree for charity, and next thing we know, it's almost Christmas! In

7th/8th social studies, the kids just learned about how to make a sale by advertising a colony for European settlers. I can see real estate in their future! We're learning about the colonies before the Revolutionary War. In 5th/6th social studies, we're learning about different Native American tribes all around the United States. For 8th math, we're working on functions and slowly making our way towards triangles and how to use the Pythagorean theorem. For ELA we've been practicing how to write five-paragraph essays by working on each element (introduction, three bodies, conclusion) day by day. In literature, we're wrapping up *The Finish of Patsy Barnes*.

We wish you a peaceful December. We wish you an Angelic Christmas. We wish you a snowy winter, and an apple dropping New Year. May it not be too zooey for you and your offspring. We're on a roll celebrating Christmas, which no movie can beat!

We had a lot of fun putting together our classroom Christmas Trees for the Silent Auction. Blessings to each of you and for all those who benefit from the funds raised!



5th Annual Cupcake Wars February 22, 2020

Do you like to bake? Are you creative? Like a challenge? Get ready to participate in St. John Lutheran School's 5th Annual Cupcake Wars! Everyone is welcome! So gather your friends, your family members, your neighbors and start planning your winning cupcake!

Preregistration is required! The cost is \$20.00 per entry. Registration forms and information will be available after the New Year!

I can't wait to be WOWed! Mrs. Kosmerchok

6th Annual Fund Event

an evening with
friends

is planned for March 7, 2020!

So mark your calendar and be prepared to have some fun!

The event will be at the Defiance VFW with many exciting activities you won't want to miss!

Dinner will be prepared this year by Bill Phlipot and his Moose friends!

So get ready to have a delicious meal!

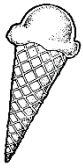
The school is in need of the following:

- 1. Sponsors**
- 2. Donations**
- 3. Participants**

Tickets are \$25 each or reserve a table for \$200, which seats 8 people!

You won't be disappointed!

Together we can reach our goal of \$40,000 this year!



YOUTH SCOOP

Dec 2019

All kids going into 6th grade through 12th grade are welcome to join us for all youth activities.

Congregation Christmas Party



**Sunday, Dec. 1st
4:45-6pm**

The youth will be serving the congregation at the Christmas party. Please wear all your Christmasy clothes and accessories!



MOVIE NIGHT

**Dec. 8th 6:00-
8:30p**

Popcorn
provided

Bring or buy your
own drinks.

Cookie Walk

Make cookies

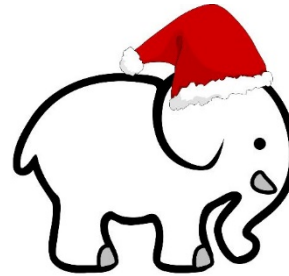
Sat., Dec. 14th

10a-12 noon

Cookie Walk

Sunday, Dec. 15th 12:30-4p

Profits go into youth ledgers that
participate.



White elephant Christmas Party

Dec. 15th 4:30-6:30p

Bring a white
elephant gift.

Snacks to share can be brought in also.
See bulletin board for more information.



Angel Tree Gift Delivery

**Dec. 21st
12noon till 3p**

The congregation is welcome to share in
this experience of delivering gifts to
children who have a parent in prison. Pizza
lunch provided.



Highlights of November

Sock Drive



Thank you to all who donated over 230 pairs of socks to warm the hearts and soles of local veterans and their families. A special thank you to Jen Hoeffel who shared about homeless and at risk veterans in our area.



Character and Team work was the focus for November. Here the kids are working together to get a ball to the other side using gutters.



When we are all pulling against each other it's hard to accomplish anything. Here they are working against each other to get to their bucket.



Thank you to all who purchased poinsettias to beautify our church this blessed Christmas season. Profits go toward the purchase of food for the families of the Angel Tree kids. Plants may be picked up after Christmas services on Christmas day.

REMINDER-

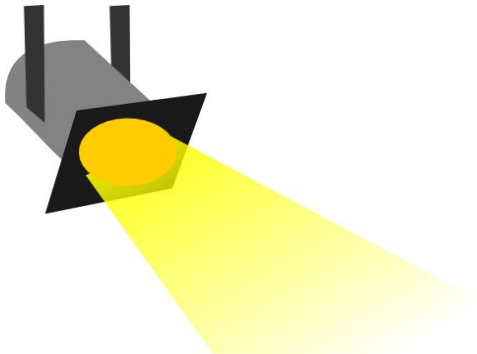
No Youth on Sunday, Dec. 22 & 29.

No Cross Training on Wednesday, Dec. 25th and Jan. 1st.



Pokagon State Park Tobogganing- Please check the youth bulletin board for dates and times in January.

Youth Nites- are held Sundays at 6:30-8:30pm in the basement for grades 6-12th except on holidays or special events. Please see calendar on bulletin board. Copies of calendars and forms can be found next to the board by the gym entrance.



Spotlight Student





When you're an 8th grader in youth, you are expected to lead the younger Jr. High kids by example. Max Green is a great example to his younger youth goes. He shows integrity of doing what is right even when he thinks no one is watching. He is committed to his faith by coming to almost every youth night & event.

Spotlight Parent



Ryan Soukup, dad of Kaleb, Madi and Emma, has helped our youth room look more inviting by helping paint and changing the lighting around. When we need volunteers for a project he steps up to help with his kids. Thanks Ryan for helping our youth program improve.

December 2019

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 8:00a Worship/Communion 9:30a Worship/Communion 11:00a Worship/ Communion 5:30p SJL Christmas Dinner GM	2 9:15a EC Chapel- N. Kemper 3:30- 5p Boys BB Practice GM 6:30p Finance 1 6:30p Telecare CO 6:30p Cub Scouts Den Mtg LR 6:30-8:30p "Life with God" AE (last class)	3 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 10:00a Bible Study AE- last session until January 21 2:00-3:00p In-Depth Bible Study 1 FR 2:00-4:00p Tuesday @ 2 3:30p Best Practices AE 6:30p Adult Basketball GM 6:30p Boy Scouts LR	4 8:55a Advent Chapel 1:00p Children Sing- Advent Svc. 3:30- 5p Boys BB Practice GM 5:30p Handbells Practice CB 6:30p Cross Training 6:30p Bible Study (Rohlf) AE 6:30p Senior Choir LB	5 9:00-4:00p Clothes Closet 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 9:30-12:00p C. Rossow FR/AE 10:00-11:30a Bible Study FR 5:00p Boys BB Game (H) St. Pat 7:00p Elders	6 6:30a Iron Men's Bible St. LR 9:00a Men Project Team LR 10:00-2:00p Clothes Closet 6:00p Wedding Rehearsal Santos	7 10:00-12:00p Making Cookies (Youth) LR 10:00a Boys BB Game (A) St. Mary's Edgerton 9:00a-8:00p Set-Up for Advent Dinner GM 3:00-7:00p Baby Shower FR 6:30p Worship
8 8:00a Worship 9:30a Worship- Baptism 11:00a Worship 9:00a-2:00p Set-Up/Advent Dinner GM 3:00p Prep-Advent Dinner Kitchen 4:30p Wedding Santos 5:30-9:30p Wedding party- FR 5:30-8:00 Advent Dinner GM 6:00p Jr/Sr Hi Youth YR	9 3:30- 5p Boys BB Practice GM 4:00- 6:20p Girls Scouts AE 5:30p Trustees FR 6:30p Finance 2 6:30p Boy Scouts LR 6:30p Cub Scouts Den Mtg LR	10 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 8:00- 12:00 Noodle Making FR 2:00-3:00p In-Depth Bible Study 1 FR 4:30p Boys Basketball game (H) St. Paul 6:30p PTL Meeting 6:30p Youth Board YR 7:00p Stewardship Board 6:30p Adult Basketball GM	11 8:55a Advent Chapel 9:00a Moms in Touch at Tim Hortons (Xmas party) 11:30a Endowment Meeting at Slammin' Sammies 2:00-3:00p bagging Noodles FR 3:30- 5p Boys BB Practice GM 5:30p Handbells Practice CB 6:30p Cross Training 6:30p Bible Study (Rohlf) AE 6:30p Senior Choir LB	12 9:00-4:00p Clothes Closet 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 10:00-11:30a Bible Study FR 12:00-2:00p Knit & Study FR 5:00p Boys BB Game (H) Tinora 7:00p School Board Mtg FR	13 6:30a Iron Men's Bible St. LR 10:00-2:00p Clothes Closet	14 9:00-1:00p Cookie making LR, K 1:00-3:30p Christmas Caroling 3:30p Hot Chocolate and snacks for singers 6:30p Worship/Communion
15 8:00a Worship/Communion 9:30a Worship/Communion 11:00a Worship/ Communion 12:00p Angel Tree Delivery LR 1:00- 3:30p Cookie Walk- LR 2:00p PS Christmas Program 3:30p K-8 Christmas Program 4:30p Youth Christmas Party	16 4:00- 6:20p Girls Scouts FR 5:30p Boys BB Game (A) Holy Cross 6:30p Finance 1 6:30p Cub Scouts Christmas Party LR	17 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 2:00-3:00p In-Depth Bible Study 1 FR 2:00-4:00p Tuesday @ 2 5:00p Boys BB Game (H) St. John Freedom 6:30p Adult Basketball GM	18 8:55a Advent Chapel 9:00a Moms in Touch at Tim Hortons School Spelling Bee 3:30- 5p Boys BB Practice GM 6:30p Cross Training 6:30p Bible Study (Rohlf) AE 6:30p Senior Choir LB	19 9:00-4:00p Clothes Closet 9:00a 4 th gr Grandparent/ Visitor Chapel 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 10:00-11:30a Bible Study FR 2:00p Ladies Aid FR 5:00p Boys BB Game (H) Trinity 6:30p Sr. Choir practice in Sanctuary 7:00p Parish Planning FR	20 6:30a Iron Men's Bible St. LR 10:00-2:00p Clothes Closet School Christmas Assembly	21 6:30p Worship- Sr. Choir Cantata
22 8:00a Worship 9:30a Worship 11:00a Worship	23 3:30- 5p Boys Bball Practice GM 6:30p Finance 2 No School TD Open	24 10:30 Sr. Choir Cantata CHRISTMAS EVE No School/Tigers Den Closed Church Office Closed at 2:00	25 CHRISTMAS DAY No School/No Tigers Den Church Office Closed	26 Clothes Closet Closed 9:30-11:30a Food Pantry 10:00-11:30a Bible Study FR 12:00-2:00p Knit & Study FR No School- Office Closed Tigers Den OPEN	27 6:30a Iron Men's Bible St. LR Clothes Closet Closed No School- office closed Tigers Den OPEN	28 6:30p Worship/Communion
29 8:00a Worship/Communion 9:30a Worship/Communion 11:00a Worship/ Communion	30 6:30p Finance 2 No School – office closed Tigers Den OPEN	31 NEW YEAR'S EVE No School- office closed Tigers Den OPEN			AE= Adult Education FR= Fellowship Room LR= Lunch Room YR= Youth Room CH=Church GM=Gym LB= Library CB=Church Balcony CO Church Office a=AM p= PM	

