

# THE EPISTLE

## SEPTEMBER 2025



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH  
655 WAYNE AVENUE  
DEFIANCE, OH 43512  
[WWW.STJOHNDEFIANCE.COM](http://WWW.STJOHNDEFIANCE.COM)  
419.782.5766

## ***From the Desk of Pastor Mews***



### **PASTOR MEWS EPISTLE: September, 2025**

#### **KEEP YOUTH FROM “STAYING, NOT STRAYING” FROM THE CHURCH:**

“Now you are the body of Christ and each one of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:27

This past month I returned from two motivating Christian gatherings: 1) “Endure,” the 2025 LCMS Youth Gathering in New Orleans, from July 19–23, and 2) “Best Practices–Heartland,” held August 8–10, in Frankenmuth, MI.

Here is a review:

#### **2025 LCMS YOUTH GATHERING, ENDURE:**

This was my first gathering since 2007, and it was joy to see our young people as well as young people from around the world join in praise, growth and service. You, the people of SJL, helped to make that possible. More importantly, you invested in the faith and future of these young people to BE the church. A six-day trip with a variety of faith-enhancing experiences was a joy!

#### **2025 HEARTLAND BEST PRACTICES:**

At this conference, I was a speaker and twice led the session on “Why Youth Stay and Stray from the Church”. Differing sources of data state that about 20% of LCMS baptized babies will be active in a LCMS church as an adult, and only 60–70% of baptized infants attend catechism instruction. SJL is not immune to this reality and these numbers aren’t good.



**BEST PRACTICES**  
for Ministry | Heartland

*Encouragement In Our Callings*

August 10 – 12, 2025 • St. Lorenz Lutheran Church • Frankenmuth, MI



## **BLENDING of ENDURE and BEST PRACTICES:**

What enables youth to endure from infancy to adulthood? This is what the data, mostly from LCMS youth and young adults, says: The most influential people who help them endure in the faith are:

- 29% parents
- 13% pastor of home church
- 12% other family members
- 12% teacher
- 11% another pastor
- 10% youth minister

## **Other factors that assist young people to endure, mature in the faith and stay in the body of Christ:**

- Youth and parents do Christian ministry and service projects together.
- Parents are active in the faith and their youth can discuss faith doubts with them.
- Pastor(s) who show them personal concern
- Attending a youth gathering or a Lutheran camp
- Being involved in leadership and meaningful ministry in their local church

We are the Body of Christ. Youth and children are the Body of Christ, and they are the Church NOW!

## **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR US?**

It's joyous and encouraging to lead, mentor, coach and be part of SJL in forming and building on this ministry. The blessing is that "Church Doctors" has a lot to offer to us. May Christ, who was crucified for all, lead us to be the Church so that all, both young and old, ARE part of the Body of Christ and Endure until our Lord calls us to our heavenly home. ***And all God's people say, Amen!***

## **PERSONAL FROM PASTOR MEWS**

- Visited father in Euclid, Ohio from 7/24-7/25
- Visited granddaughters/family in IL in August 14-16
- Will be on vacation from 9/28/25-10/2/25
- Will attend Alabama-LSU Football game, 11/6/25-11/9/25
- Will be on vacation 1/16/26-1/27/26



## ***Ministry Matters from Pastor Mews:***

### **OFFICIAL ACTS FROM PASTOR MEWS:**

- *Funeral of Murlan Miller on 7/11, at SJL; he died on 7/6*
- *Funeral of Bill Duerk on 7/16 at SJL; he died on 7/8*
- *Memorial Service for Don Jagow on 8/9 at SJL; he died on 6/21*
- *Funeral of Darlene Voigt, member at Christ Our Savior, at SJL on 7/25; she died on 7/19 (conducted by Rev. Terry Cripe)*
- *Memorial Service for James Waldman on 8/13; he died on 7/15*
- *Baptisms of Gracie Lynn Wagner and Elijah Logan Wagner on 8/3*

### **UPCOMING OFFICIAL ACTS FROM PASTOR MEWS:**

- *Baptism of Landon Tharrington on 8/31 following the 11:00 a.m. service*
- *Marriage of Isaac Reynolds and Mandy Hartman, 10/4, 3:30 at family member home.*
- *Baptisms of Molly, Bella, and Ziva Harrington on 11/16 at 9:00*
- *Marriage of Braydon Savage and Erica Stykemain at 12/6 in Ada, Ohio; rehearsal on 12/5*

## **SJL RECONCILIATION PROCESS: “Church Doctor Ministries--*Healthy Churches Thrive*”**

- A three-year commitment with Diagnostics & *Healthy Churches Thrive*
- Congregational “Who Broke My Church?” Discussion group every Wednesday this summer from 6:30-8:00.
- Vision Team Meeting TBA
- Will arrange “Governance Team” shortly
- Church Doctor Staff consultation - Rescheduled / TBA



## ***Bible Study Opportunities - Led by Pastor Mews***

### **FALL LIFE WITH GOD:**

Begins on September 8 and will conclude on December 8, 2025. The class gathers on Monday evenings from 6:30-8:30 in the Fellowship room. For those interested in learning about the Lutheran faith, wishing to reaffirm their faith or to become a communicant member. For high school age and above. After the 2nd class no new members may join; another Life with God (WINTER LWG) will be offered in January, 2026.

September dates:

Monday, September 1, NO Class, Labor Day

Monday, September 8, CLASS

Monday, September 15, CLASS

Monday, September 22, CLASS

Monday, September 29, NO CLASS Pastor is on vacation.



**“HOW JESUS CHANGED THE WORLD”** In-depth Bible class discussing how Jesus impacted society and shaped the world we live. The class gathers from 2:00-3:00 p.m. each Wednesday in the Fellowship Room. All is provided, guests are welcome.

September dates:

Wednesday, September 3, CLASS

Wednesday, September 10, CLASS

Wednesday, September 17, CLASS

Wednesday, September 24, NO CLASS pastor at Conference.

**“ROMANS BIBLE STUDY” THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY:** This class is an overview of Paul's Epistle to the Romans. It gathers Thursday mornings from 10:00-11:30 a.m. in the Fellowship hall. Guests are always welcome, all is provided. The first Thursday in each month, we have a collection of food, kitchen and bathroom items for the Path Center.

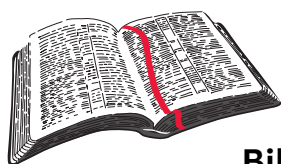
September dates:

Thursday, September 4, CLASS

Thursday, September 11, CLASS

Thursday, September 18, CLASS

Thursday, September 25, NO CLASS pastor at Conference.



### **Bible Studies**

**SUNDAY-10:00 a.m.**

**Phil Rohlf — “Mews Sermon Review”  
in the Cafeteria**

**Sandy Gyurnek —  
“God Never Gives Up On You”  
Fellowship Room on the left**

**Jeff Rohlf — Max Lucado: “The Promise  
of Psalm 23, Traveling Light”  
Adult Ed A Room**

### ***Prayer Requests***

***Please let the church office know of any  
prayer requests. Call 419.782.5766 or  
email [church.office@stjohntigers.com](mailto:church.office@stjohntigers.com).***

***For the Prayer Chain, please contact Judy  
or Penny via phone, text, or email if you  
have a prayer request, an addition, a  
correction, or any feedback for the Prayer  
Chain Warriors to include in their prayers.***

***Judy Detter ([detterjudy@gmail.com](mailto:detterjudy@gmail.com)), text  
Judy: 419.783.7032. Penny Mueller  
([pennym41@gmail.com](mailto:pennym41@gmail.com)) text Penny:  
419.304.5768***



## ***Pastor Mews Sermons, September, 2025***

**Sept. 6 & 7, 13<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: “Division-Free Partnership”  
based on the text: Philemon 1-21 Partnership / Believers**

**Sept. 13 & 14, 14<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: “If You Want It Done Right”  
based on the text: Ezekiel 34:11-24 Sheep / Shepherds**

**Sept. 20 & 21, 15<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: “Only One I Will Serve”  
based on the text: Luke 16:1-15 God / Mammon**

**Sept. 27 & 28, 16<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST: Substitute Pastor**



### **PRIVATE COMMUNION**

Pastor continues to offer private Communion for anyone who wishes to have Communion. Please call the church office for an appointment.

### **SHUT-IN CALLS**

We have around 30 people who are designated as shut-ins in our congregation. Pastor and Walt & Lorna Smith are keeping in contact with our members. If the shut-in person is comfortable having a home visit, arrangements will be made for this visit.

### **PASTOR'S SERMONS**

If you missed a sermon, you can find it on our YouTube channel, on our webpage ([www.stjohndefiance.com](http://www.stjohndefiance.com)) and on our Podcast site.

Google search: st john lutheran church defiance ohio youtube. Then subscribe to St. John channel to get notified when we are broadcasting “live”.

### **LINK TO OUR WEBPAGE**

<https://www.stjohndefiance.com/sermons-2/>

### **LINK TO OUR PODCAST**

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/54964>

Put your favorite podcast app on your phone and listen to the sermons any time of day.

Our service is broadcast a week later on the radio on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on WONO 1280 AM and on WZOM 105.7 FM at 8:00 a.m.

We are getting started with our Adult CrossTraining Studies (ACTS) on September 3, 2025 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Do you want to grow closer to God? Would you like to learn how to share Jesus' love with others? Think about ACTS - a great way to grow individually and as a group of people who love the Lord.



ACTS is the name we use for the habit of people who come together on a regular basis to pray and worship as a group.

But why have this habit at all? The best explanation was from a woman who has had a difficult life. She said, "Having this time allows us to acknowledge the God who's getting us through the day." That's the main reason, pure and simple - to have a short time when we can lift our eyes above the craziness of our daily lives to focus on the God who loves us and is with us to help us. It's a time to stop running and simply breathe for a while – to rest in God's presence – to remember once again that we are God's children through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Dates for September:

September 3 — Family Game Night with Pizza, Bible Bingo, and CrossTraining Orientation

September 10 — topic: Confusion                      Adult Ed Room A.

September 17 — topic: One in Love                      Adult Ed Room A

September 24 — topic: The Shepherd                      Adult Ed Room A

We hope to see you then ~ Judy Detter and Penny Mueller

**ACTS**  
Adult CrossTraining





### **MEN'S PROJECT TEAM**

The Men's Project Team meets on the first Saturday of the month at 8:30 a.m. in the Fellowship Room. The team discusses projects around the church. We also discuss leadership, talent, and time schedules for projects. The Project Team is not all blood, sweat and tears, but a time of fellowship, to get to know your fellow Christians, and sometimes to solve the world's problems. In the past the Team has had coffee and sometimes donuts while breaking down the work list, dividing the work load according to talents. This format has worked pretty well. God has given every human being a gift or talent to use for His purposes. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace" ( 1 Peter 4:10 ).

I look forward to enjoying everyone's company as we share fellowship.

-Thom Kent



### **LADIES AID**

James 5:7 "Be patient, therefore, brothers, until the coming of the Lord. See how the farmer waits for the precious fruit of the earth, being patient about it, until it receives the early and the late rains."

Our September meeting will be held on the 25th at 2 pm. Jan McGee's team will be the hostesses. The food pantry item for the month is dish detergent. Please remember that the food pantry can always use toilet paper and laundry soap. We will be discussing ways to raise money for our group. We hope you can be at the meeting.



### **SAVE YOUR PLASTIC CAPS!**

We are saving CLEAN plastic caps (any size, shape, or color) to possibly have a park bench on our church property. Please bring them to the church office.

Examples of caps: water bottles, milk jugs, sprays (oil, etc.), cleaning products, food products. Thank you!





**Meijer is featuring  
St. John Food Pantry for their  
Simply Give Program.**

**Thank you, Meijer!**

***Please support this program.***

The campaign will run through  
Saturday, September 27, 2025.

During the campaign, the next Double Match Day opportunity will be held

**Saturday, September 13, 2025.**

For every \$10 Simply Give card purchased on these dates, Meijer will provide an additional contribution of \$20, bringing the total to \$30 for a single customer purchase. Simply Give cards are available at the store at the end of the checkout lane or at St. John's south entrance on the receptionist desk. Please take one of the cards at the desk and take it to the Defiance Meijer store to have it scanned and \$10.00 will be added to your food order. **YOU DO NOT NEED TO BUY ANY GROCERIES TO HAVE THE CARD SCANNED, YOU WOULD JUST OWE THE \$10.00.** If you have any questions, please call Rita Bergman at 419.788.0951.

At the end of the campaign, the final totals, in addition to any online sales, Meijer matching, and other promotions, will be converted into Meijer food-only gift cards. These cards will allow our pantry staff members to purchase food.

I spend a little over \$1,000 a month from Meijer using the Meijer gift cards and buying the food items that we cannot obtain from the Toledo Food Bank and Seagate Food Bank. The Meijer Simply Give Program is a huge help for us and other food pantries in our community. Please mark your calendar for **Saturday, September 13** and have your \$10.00 contribution return back to our pantry for \$30.00.

We received \$14,000 worth of gift cards from the Meijer Simply Give Program that ended in June.

Sunday, September 14 will be Friendship Sunday and we will have a display for the Food Pantry. Stop by to pick-up a snack and an information sheet about St. John Food Pantry.

As of August 18, we served 55 families or 166 people. We distributed 229 bags of food worth \$3,435. We calculate a value of \$15.00 a bag. We have four more serving days in August. The final August report will be printed in the weekly bulletin.

Thank you for helping keep food on the St. John Lutheran Food Pantry shelves and serving the Defiance Community.

Rita Bergman

Food Pantry Manager



## **The Clothes Closet**



**located across the street from the school, continues to provide gently used clothing at an affordable price to our community. The Clothes Closet is open on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. If you have a donation, you may drop it off on Monday or Tuesday from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. or during the times we are open. Bring donations and come on in and do a little shopping. The Clothes Closet took in \$18,603.34 in 2024. We also helped 60 families with 110 bags of free clothing. The Clothes Closet donated \$1,000 to the Defiance Furniture Bank, \$1,000 to Operation K.A.V.I.C (Keller Assists Veterans In Crisis), and \$50 a month towards missions. We also funded the ramp out in front of the Clothes Closet. If anyone would be interested in volunteering at the Clothes Closet, please call Sharon Keller at 419.782.2639.**

## **OUTREACH MINISTRY**

### **Epistle – September 2025**

Outreach Ministry seeks to share the Gospel of Christ within and outside of our walls to proclaim Jesus and the ministry of our church and school locally, nationally and globally.

Outreach will have a table display during Friendship Sunday on September 14 at St. John. Please feel free to stop by and learn more about this ministry. Outreach also continues to supply guest bags for those who attend a service at St. John for the first time.

Seeking ideas, the committee continues to explore opportunities to reach out to the community.

The Outreach Ministry Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m. to plan additional opportunities to be more welcoming to worshippers and be more visible in the community. Anyone who is interested to learn more is welcome to attend.

Additional information regarding this ministry is available by contacting Mike Saxton at 419-393-2513 or Pastor Mews at 419-782-5766.





# Scouting News September 2025

It's a busy time for Scouting. It's POPCORN season! Both the Cub Scouts and Boy Scouts will be out this month selling popcorn to support our year of Scouting and outings! This month, the Boy Scout Troop will continue building relationships with the Cub Scout Pack by taking the current Pack with its new members on a hike through Camp Lakota.

The Cub Scouts are welcoming new members to build our Pack and getting to know each other through games and building their Scout skills. You will see them out and about in front of Lowe's and Ollie's selling popcorn to fund all they do. They will have their first campout of the year in late September at Camp Lakota.

The Boy Scout Troop joined some of the Cub Scouts at movie night at Fleo's Flicks in Edgerton. Great movies and loads of fun! We will hold elections for new officers early this month. We're waiting to see who will lead! Their concentration this month is on selling popcorn at Walmart. October is a busy month, with two different Apple Butter Festivals, a Camporee, and the Halloween Parade, so September meetings are about planning.

The Troop extends their thanks to all who have dropped off pop cans and newspapers in the garage in the south parking lot. It not only helps with their conservation project of recycling but it has also helped with the cost of their activities. Youth and adults are always welcome to attend Pack and Troop activities to learn more about our program. Any questions can be directed to Stephanie Sindel at 419-438-8268.

## CARE NOTES

**There are new Care Notes available in the Bergman Resource Room:**

**Take One – Take Heart; Give One – Give Hope  
Working Your Way Through Stressful Circumstances**

**Additional titles have been placed in the Caring Ministry Resource Room just off of the Work Room. Please take one for you or give to a friend.**

**Notes now available:**



**"Grieving the Loss of a Good Friend"**

**"Parenting a Troubled Teen"**

**"Giving Your Worries to God"**

**"Breaking Through Your Denial"**

**"Examining Your Unresolved Anger"**

**"Facing the Emptiness of Depression"**

**"Bargaining Continuing on Your Healing Path"**

**"Transforming Your Loss With Acceptance"**

**"What is Palliative Care--And When Is It Called For?"**

## ENDOWMENT SEPTEMBER 2025



Recently our Endowment Committee has undergone some changes. First we have enlisted Edward Jones to manage all funds for us. They will give us professional management, diversification, and local representation at a reasonable cost. This relieves our committee members of fiduciary responsibility for money management and onerous recordkeeping to keep accounts accurate. Second we will be meeting on a quarterly basis rather than monthly.

What hasn't changed is our screening of money requests to assure compliance with the rules governing distribution of funds. We will also remain accessible to all church members for help in their legacy planning to benefit church ministries in the long term. We will continue to work with the LCMS Foundation when their products and/or advice will benefit our members.

Finally, our committee is short two members. We would love to have some younger members aboard. If you or anyone you know might be interested please contact me.

Blessings,  
Dave Memmer, Chairman Endowment Committee  
Phone 419.956.1920



# September

## Eighty +



Tom Koppenhofer	September 4	(82)
Mary Goldenetz	September 10	(81)
Clarence Meyer	September 17	(96)
Neil Andrews	September 20	(81)
Marilyn Burke	September 20	(93)
Dave Memmer	September 24	(81)
Marian March	September 25	(85)
William Johnson	September 30	(89)

# Happy Anniversary

## 40+ Years

Kevin & Sandee Fackler	September 4 <sup>th</sup>	(43)
Larry & Susan Meyer	September 11 <sup>th</sup>	(65)
Tom & Pam Kime	September 15 <sup>th</sup>	(53)
Gerry & Jenny George	September 23 <sup>rd</sup>	(47)





# September



## SEPTEMBER 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>AUGUST 31</b> <b>COMMUNION</b> Worship: 9:00 & 11:00 am <b>Sunday School 9 am</b> Adult Bible Study 10 am Youth Bible Study 10 am	<b>1</b> <b>LABOR DAY –</b> <b>CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED</b>	<b>2</b> Food Pantry 9 am Finance 9 am Book Club 2 pm <b>Outreach Mtg. 6:30 pm</b>	<b>3</b> <b>Mews' Bible Study 2 pm</b> <b>Handbells 5:45 pm</b> <b>Senior Choir 6:30 pm</b> Cross Tr. / ACTS 6:00 pm	<b>4</b> Clothes Closet 9 am <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Romans Bible St. 10 am</b> <b>Elders Meeting 6 pm</b>	<b>5</b> Clothes Closet 10 am	<b>6</b> <b>COMMUNION</b>  Worship Ser. 5:30 pm
<b>7</b> <b>COMMUNION</b> <b>Worship:</b> 9:00 & 11:00 am <b>Sunday School 9 am</b> Adult Bible Study 10 am Youth Board Mtg. 7 pm <b>@ Buchhop's Home</b>	<b>8</b> Finance 9:30 am <b>Music Mtg. 11 am</b> <b>TeleCare 6:30 pm</b> <b>Boy Scouts 6:30 pm</b> Life With God 6:30 pm	<b>9</b> Food Pantry 9 am <b>Tuesdays @ Ten 10 am</b> <b>Knit &amp; Study 1 pm</b>	<b>10</b> <b>Mews' Bible Study 2 pm</b> <b>Handbells 5:45 pm</b> <b>Senior Choir 6:30 pm</b> Cross Tr. / ACTS 6:00 pm	<b>11</b> Clothes Closet 9 am <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Romans Bible St. 10 am</b> <b>Boy Scouts 6 pm</b> <b>(District Mtg.)</b>	<b>12</b> Clothes Closet 10 am	<b>13</b> <b>NON-COMMUNION</b>  <b>Worship Ser. 5:30 pm</b>
<b>14</b> <b>NON-COMMUNION</b> <b>FRIENDSHIP SUNDAY</b> Breakfast 8:30-10:30 am <b>Worship 9:00 / 11:00am</b> <b>Sunday School 9 am</b> Adult Bible Study 10 am	<b>15</b> <b>Finance 9:00 am</b> <b>Life W/ God 6:30 pm</b> <b>Boy Scouts 6:30 pm</b> <b>Life With God 6:30 pm</b>	<b>16</b> <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Tuesdays @ Ten 10 am</b> <b>Book Club 2 pm</b> <b>Trustees 6:30 pm</b>	<b>17</b> Vision Team Mtg. 1 pm <b>Mews' Bible Study 2pm</b> <b>Handbells 5:45 pm</b> <b>Senior Choir 6:30 pm</b> Cross Tr. / ACTS 6:00 pm	<b>18</b> Clothes Closet 9 am <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Romans Bible St. 10 am</b> <b>Parish Planning 6 pm</b>	<b>19</b> Clothes Closet 10 am	<b>20</b> <b>COMMUNION</b>  Worship Ser. 5:30
<b>21</b> <b>Communion</b> <b>Worship:</b> 9:00 & 11:00 am <b>Sunday School 9 am</b> Adult Bible Study 10 am	<b>22</b> <b>Finance 9:30 am</b> <b>Life W/ God 6:30 pm</b> <b>Boy Scouts 6:30 pm</b> <b>Life With God 6:30 pm</b>	<b>23</b> <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Tuesdays @ Ten 10 am</b> <b>Knit &amp; Study 1 pm</b>	<b>24</b> <b>Handbells 5:45 pm</b> <b>Senior Choir 6:30 pm</b> Cross Tr. / ACTS 6:00 pm	<b>25</b> Clothes Closet 9 am <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Ladies Aid 2 pm</b>	<b>26</b> Clothes Closet 10 am	<b>27</b> <b>NON-COMMUNION</b>  <b>Worship Ser. 5:30 pm</b>
<b>28</b> <b>Non-Communion</b> <b>Worship:</b> 9:00 & 11:00 am <b>Sunday School 9 am</b> Bible Studies 10 am	<b>29</b> <b>Finance 9:00 am</b> <b>Life W/ God 6:30 pm</b> <b>Boy Scouts 6:30 pm</b>	<b>30</b> <b>Finance 9 am</b> <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Tuesdays @ Ten 10 am</b>	<b>OCTOBER 1</b> <b>Senior Choir 6:30 pm</b> Cross Tr. / ACTS 6:00 pm	<b>2</b> Clothes Closet 9 am <b>Food Pantry 9 am</b> <b>Elders Meeting 6 pm</b>	<b>3</b> Clothes Closet 10 am	<b>4</b> <b>COMMUNION</b>  Worship Ser. 5:30 pm

