



Ask the Pastor

Volume 0659
Issue 284
December 2019

Inside this issue:

Stephen Ministry/ Food Pantry
Grateful Hearts/ Staff gifts
Memorials and Sympathy
WELCA Circle News/Altar Flowers
Weekly Events
Faith Practices/New for 2020
Stewardship Page
Cookie Sale/Shopping with the Stars
Eagle Scout News
St. John Youth News
St. John Kids Connection
ELCA-From the Bishop
God's Global Barnyard
Online Giving/Amazon Smile
Christmas Tree Lighting 2019
Children's Christmas and Advent Tea
From the Luther Home of Mercy
Service of Hope on the Longest Night
Christmas Eve Services
Council Highlights
Finance Report
December Celebrations
December Worship Helpers
January Worship Helpers
December Calendar

2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

Someone asked me about the saying "Love the sinner and hate the sin"; is that in the Bible, how do we do that, are we supposed to do that? While I was working on a response I came across an article from Living Lutheran (from June 2015) about adages, proverbs, sayings that help us simplify the complexity of life. I posted the answer to that question already (*September 2016*). But I would like to share the article's responses to some other popular adages. The author's name is posted at the end.

"God helps those who help themselves"

The character on a sitcom spouted this line as he helped himself to the last slice of pie. The canned laugh track prompted viewer laughter. It's funny until someone takes that line to heart.

I've been in many conversations over the years in which I have gently disabused friends, family and church members alike that "God helps those who help themselves" is not in the Bible. One church member half-jokingly said, "Well, if it's not in the Bible, then it should be." This unscriptural adage has found its way into the religious imagination and skews our thinking about God.

It collapses into judgment of the worst sort because we tend to apply it to others when we believe them to be lazy or when we think they refuse to help themselves. It links God's presence in our lives to our abilities that are finite, fragile and fleeting. While there is value and dignity in hard work, it doesn't shield us from life. Life can be haphazard and quite random.

Frequently it eludes our every attempt to control it. Job loss, accidents, illness, natural disasters and other crises can change our life without a moment's notice. Any one of these can immobilize us and render us helpless. In other words, there are times when we can't resolve our challenges through our own efforts.

It's during those times when the simplicity of lessons learned in confirmation rise to consciousness: "I cannot by my own reason or strength believe in Jesus Christ ...". We aren't called to live by guts but by grace. God's assistance and presence in our lives is independent of our feelings, thoughts or activity, all of which can be erratic and fickle. God's love is unwavering toward us.

— Angela L. Shannon

If you would like to submit a question for "Ask the Pastor", Biblical, theological, church related, anything you have been dying to ask a pastor, you can hand me a note, ask me after church, send an e-mail, or sneak into the church after dark and anonymously slide a sealed envelope under my office door. If I answer your question in print, I will not include your name unless you explicitly ask me to.

STEPHEN
ministry

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

WE ARE HERE TO JOURNEY WITH YOU.

Our Stephen Ministry is here to help through the Holidays!
When we're going through a tough time, we often feel pressured to "be strong." But pushing down your feelings to put on a brave face often only makes things harder. True strength isn't being unemotional and completely independent; it's letting yourself be human. Our Stephen Ministers are here to help you through the process. For more information, please call or see Pastor O'Brien or contact the church office.

Don't Miss the
DEADLINE!

FORERUNNER NEWS

Please note that because of the timing of the Christmas Holiday, the deadline for the January Forerunner is on **FRIDAY, Dec. 20th at 9:00 AM.** Thank you for your understanding!

Worship Helpers Needed! Sign up in the office today!



**Genoa Area
Community
Food Pantry**

***Needs for December**
Cereal, Dish Soap
and Laundry Soap

***Needs for January**
Spaghetti, Meat Sauce, Dry Pasta,
Egg Noodles

The Forerunner

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[@stjohnwilliston.org](mailto:stjohnwilliston.org)

Fall/Winter Worship

Saturday at 5:00 PM

Sunday School 8:30 AM

Sunday Worship 9:45 AM

**Deadline for the
January 2020 newsletter is
FRIDAY, DECEMBER 20th**
Please send articles and/or
information to
office@stjohnwilliston.org.



**"Creating and nurturing life changing
relationships based on the love of God
in Jesus Christ, so that we may grow
in faith, serve God and
serve our neighbor."**

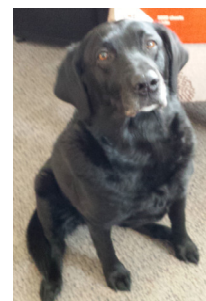


**LisaAnne Gregg
Office**

Administrator

9am—3pm

Mon. thru Fri.



*Bella
Fredericksen*

*The Greeter of
St. John*



With Heartfelt Thanks



Thank You....

I would like to thank everyone for the cards, prayers and well wishes during my recent surgery. A special thank you to Pastor O'Brien for his visits and prayers.

Marvel Nelson

Thank You.. ..

Having a church family becomes really very special when facing persistent medical concerns. Thank you all for the many concerns and prayers offered for me during the past year. We now anticipate another year of care and repair. Stick with us! Many, many thanks to everyone.

Clarence and Wilma Smithers

Thank you..

Thank you all for all your thoughts and prayers during my family's time of need. Your support is so greatly appreciated.

Joe Brossia

St. John Family,

Thank you for all your prayers, love, support, cards, flowers and for all you've done for Ron and me following my recent back surgery. God is Good! Recovery continues! Thanks to each of you for the food that was brought in; a warm thank you to the Quilting Ladies for the beautiful quilt and many thanks to those who visited and called. A very special thank you to Pastor O'Brien for his visits and reassuring words of support. We are indeed blessed with friends who care, who seem to know our needs and respond with love. You are a vital part of our lives and we are grateful every day for you!

Thanks also, dear friends, for the many memorial cards and wishes in honor of our 60th wedding anniversary. We are very blessed!

Ron & Diane Gerkenmeyer

Thank you, St. John!

The Tuesday Morning Blanket Ladies would like to thank the congregation and the community for your support of our recent Quilt Sale and Auctions. With your generous help, we were able to sew and tie hundreds of blankets to send to those in need, send monetary donations to the Susan Komen Foundation and others. And, we will be able to continue our ministry! Please consider joining us on Tuesday morning at 10!

Arlene Sabin, Marcia Morgan, Marvel Nelson, Jan Sheahan,
Ellen Wilhelm, Gertrude Eckerman, Margaret Berger

Friends,

We are so overwhelmed and thankful with the generosity of our friends, neighbors, Solomon church family, area churches and the NWOS of the ELCA. There are simply not enough words to share our thankfulness. Your kindness is so amazing! You have been such a blessing to me and my family. Thank you for the gift cards, financial contributions, food, quilts, toys, prayer and care as we rebound from this life changing event. Everything you have done for me and for my family has simply been a reminder to me of why God send me to serve among you, I am blessed to be a part of Solomon Lutheran Church. Please continue to hold my family in prayer as we navigate the claims process and contemplate construction of a new home while trying to keep our lives somewhat normal.

Pastor Alan Brown



**Thanks to our St. John Staff
for a Great 2019!**

**As we reflect on the wonderful
accomplishments of 2019 here at St. John, we
extend an invitation to the congregation
to contribute to
“Gifts for our Staff” for their hard work and
dedication through the year.**

**If you feel you would like to contribute, please
use an envelope and mark “staff gifts”
on the front and place it in the
offering plate. Thank you!**

Remembering with Love

Memorials and Gifts to St. John

In Memory of Rene Berger

Bob and Diane Kapp
Linda Schlievert
Gary and Darlene Carstensen
Joanne Koch
Danny & Karen Jeffers
Brian Autumn and Braden Jeffers
Stacy Travis and Ashleigh James
Ryan Kim Trent and Austin Merrow
Diane Dickinson

In Memory of Mary Lowe

Scott and Rachelle Selee

In Memory of Albert Vargo, Sr.

Gary and Darlene Carstensen
Marilyn Sandrock and Carolyn Lasseter
Ron and Diana Gerkenmeyer

In Memory of Stephen Harmeyer

Mary J. Harmeyer

In Memory of Keith Snider

Shelley Snider

In Memory of Norma Gast

Terry Gast (Good Sam fund)

In Memory of Donald Berger

Arline Sabin

In Memory of Tim Berger

Gertrude Eckerman
Alan and Renee Bowser
Gary & Darlene Carstensen
Evalyn Witty
Mary Ellen Klaege
Janice Sheahan
Darryl and Diane Traver
Jane & Richard Phillips
Judith & Kim Cruthers & Ann Nuhfer
Mike & Ann Mann
Linda Schlievert
Mary Harmeyer
Gene & Amy Bihn
Mary Schimming
Ronald & Becky Busdecker
Bob & Diane Kapp
Carole Beamer
Cal & Marvel Nelson
Tom & Joan Truman
Danny & Karen Jeffers
Brian Autumn & Braden Jeffers
Stacy Travis & Ashleigh James
Ryan Kim Trent & Austin Merrow
Lee & Debbie Wehner
John and Pam Cheney
Steve & Cindy Heilman
Al & Traci Brown
Kent Delventhal
Merle & Shirley Berger
Roland & Janice Sandrock
Thomas & Charlene Higginbotham

Keith Lenz
Richard & Becky Brossia & family
Tim & Cebie Titgemeyer
Doris Titgemeyer
Margaret Berger
Dwayne & Eva Hoeft
Bob & Marlene Behlmer
Duane & Tami Tailford
Jim & Dilly Schimming
Bob Younker
JoElaine Schimming
Edna Sandrock
Carolyn Lasseter
Marilyn Sandrock
Phyllis Haefl
Bernie Blausey
Alice Witt
Phil & Audrey Milbrodt
Wayne & Linda Bauman
Melissa & Fred Lammers
Clarence & Wilma Smithers
Allen & Beverly Harder
Lowell & Diane Hartman
Dave & Marrilei Hitchen
Carl & Nancy Munley
Carol Vargo
Cathy Zeller
Dean Lowe
Gary Lambert
Shirley Witt
Elaine Gruetter
Carol & Steve Jensen
Dennis Roder
Roy & Ginny Gnepper
Carrie Sankey
Robert & Donna Fought
Apex Metal Fabricating
Diane Dickinson
Roger & Connie Meeker
Jim & Mona Vogelbacher
Dave & Kris Lee
Lee & Jean Havens
Annette, Robert & Megan Textor

In Honor of Ron & Diane Gerkenmeyer's Anniversary

Doris Titgemeyer

In Honor of Carol Tank's 95th Birthday

Lowell & Diane Hartman

*If a name has inadvertently been left off the list, please let the office know.



Timothy D. Berger
1960-2019

Timothy Donald Berger, 59, of Jerusalem Township, went home to be with his Heavenly Father on November 11, 2019. Tim was born August 10, 1960, to Donald and Margaret (Witt) Berger at St. Charles Hospital in Oregon.

On June 6, 1980, he married his high school sweetheart, Cheryl A. Base, at St. John Lutheran Church in Williston, where he was a lifelong member. They were looking forward to their 40th wedding anniversary.

After graduation from Penta County Vocational School in 1978, he started his welding career working at Apex Metal Fabricating and Machining, spending the next 41 years there. Professionally, Tim was most proud of being a Certified Welding Inspector and his company, Tim Berger Testing, LLC.

He is survived by his loving wife, Cheryl; children, Kelly (Craig) Morse, Jeremiah Berger and his girlfriend, Shelby Barney; brother Daniel (Pamela) Berger; and his mother, Margaret Berger. Tim was preceded in death by his father, Donald Berger, and his grandparents.

A private family interment will be held in Allen Township Cemetery at a later date.

In lieu of flowers, memorials can be made to St. John Lutheran Church-Williston, Ohio or The Jerusalem Township Fire Department

ESTHER CIRCLE: Tuesday, December 3, 6:30 p.m.
Bible Study: Christmas Sing-a-Long/D.Hartman
Hostess: Hors d'oeuvres & cookies
Ellen Wilhelm setup

REBEKAH CIRCLE: Tuesday, December 3, 6:00 p.m.
Bible Study: Nancy Strohscher
Christmas Potluck at Strohscher's

DORCAS CIRCLE: Thursday, December 5, 1:30 p.m.
Bible Study: Group study
Gifts for Sunshine Friends

WELCA Board Meeting Monday, December 9, 7:00 p.m.

50th Annual Women's Ecumenical

Christmas Service

Thurs. December 5th

St. Peter Lutheran

Church (Blackberry)

17877 W St Rt 579 Martin, Ohio

Registration at 6 PM, Buffet at 6:30 PM

Program to follow. Area churches are asked to make salads and desserts. Please bring a non perishable food item to be shared with the food pantries in Elliston and Genoa.

There is a sign up sheet in the Narthex so please sign up by December 2nd.



ALTAR FLOWERS

The 2020 Altar and Chancel Flower chart is posted in the Narthex.

Please sign up for the weekend you would like to order Altar or Chancel flowers.

Fill out the blue slip and place it in the offering plate or drop it off at the office with your payment.

**Altar flowers are \$25.00
Chancel flowers are \$20.00**

Please submit your order/blue slip as soon as possible before the order date as orders are placed several days in advance.

Flowers will not be ordered without a blue slip.

We are using Hirzel Bros. Florists again this year. They do such a nice job and are very customer friendly. Please pass the word if you know someone looking for flowers!

St. John Prayer Chain is there for you....

"Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matthew 21:22

When there is illness, a special need, or a time of thanksgiving in your family, or among friends or neighbors, you may wish to ask for the prayers of your sisters and brothers at St. John. If such a need arises, call Pastor O'Brien (419-972-4003, cell ph 419-378-1112) or the church office (419-836-5514) who will begin the prayer chain.

Please keep your message to the minimum to avoid any errors in passing it on. Thank you!

WEEKLYEVENTS @ST.JOHNWILLISTON



High School Bible Study!

Is coming soon! Watch for dates and times!
We will join together to discuss future meetings
while enjoying snacks and great fellowship!

All High School students are welcome!
Invite your friends on this new adventure at St.
John. For more information, call or email Stefanie
Neuman at stefaniehneuman@gmail.com.

The "Blanket Ladies" gather to make quilts on
Tuesday mornings at 10:00 am.

These beautiful blankets are then distributed to those in need
all over the country! Come join us! No experience needed!

Bed sheets (preferably queen size) are needed for
quilt backings. Donations may be left in the box outside the
church office. Join us! You only need to know how to tie a
knot!



Did you know....

*There is an Adult Bible study class that meets
Mondays at 10:00 am?*

*This study is lead by Pastor O'Brien and concentrates on the
lectionary lessons for the upcoming week.*

Just bring a bible...No experience needed!

*And, there is a Ladies Bible/Book Study that meets in the
lounge on **Tuesdays at 11:30?** Ladies from around the
community meet, share, pray and learn!*

You are welcome to join us!

Join the St. John Dartball Team!

Get those pitching arms ready! Join us for fun on Tuesday nights at 7:30 PM
as the Western Ottawa County Dartball League continues its season.

All are welcome. No experience is needed.

All are welcome to come and cheer on our St. John Team, too!
See or call Jeff Schimming for more info. 419-356-3552

Upcoming games:

Dec. 3 7:30 PM at Home

Dec. 10 7:30 PM at Elmore St. Paul

Jan. 7 7:30 PM—Bye (no game)

Jan. 14 —at Home

Jan. 21 7:30 PM at Home



Faith Practice #3 Reading

We finished up the book of Proverbs at the end of November. We will take a break with the questions until after the first of the year. (If you have a request for what you would like to read next please let me know.)

But just because there won't be questions before worship doesn't mean you have to stop reading the Bible. If you want to continue in the Wisdom Literature section of the Old Testament, consider reading Song of Solomon (aka Song of Songs). The book is basically understood as a love song. According to my study Bible, it is seen as a religious allegory recounting God's love for his people, or it is perhaps a sacred marriage liturgy with ideas borrowed from a Mesopotamian fertility god.

Either way, it is interesting to read.

The images are often quite different from we would expect in a "love song". It also has some language and themes that would make it a very difficult book to ask questions about.

There are 8 chapters in the book; that's about two a week for the month of December.

When you are finished, if you DON'T tell me what you think fawns, sweet fruit, and bags of myrrh are alluding to, I will give you all the candy you want.

Pastor Shawn O'Brien

stephen
MINISTRY

God's Love in ACTION

There are times when every one of us experiences difficulties—

- loss of a loved one
- spiritual crisis
- cancer
- hospitalization
- imprisonment
- disability
- discouragement
- divorce
- rehabilitation
- job loss
- loneliness
- many other challenges

God never intended for us to go through these experiences alone. That's why God has brought us together as a congregation—and why we have Stephen Ministry.

Stephen Ministers are members of our congregation who have received 50 hours of caregiving training to minister to people experiencing a crisis, facing a challenge, or simply going through a tough time.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you—privately and confidentially—on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, support, and remind you of Christ's presence in your life.

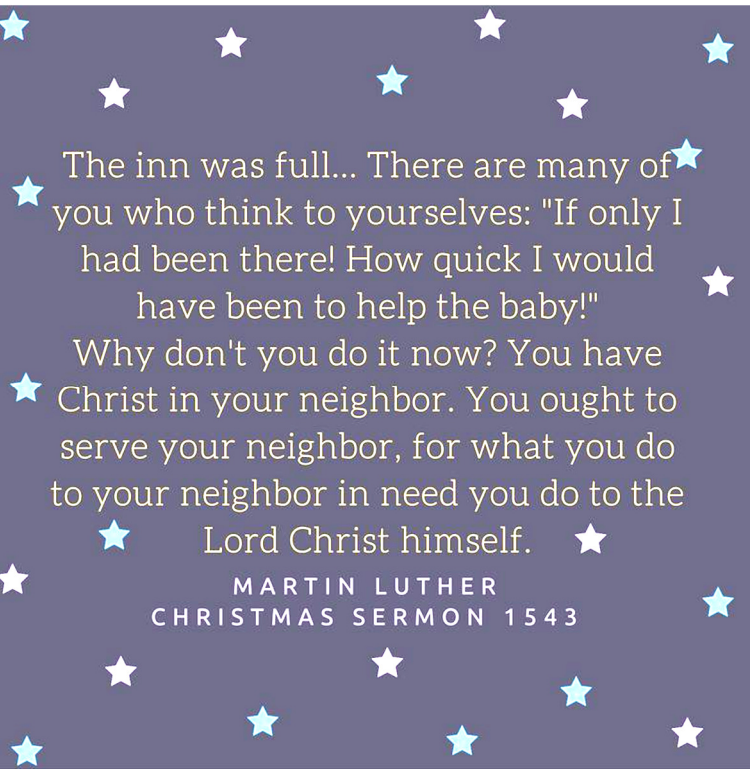
If you'd like to learn more about Stephen Ministry for yourself, a family member, or a friend, neighbor, coworker, or someone else you know—inside or outside our congregation—talk with one of our pastors or Stephen Leaders.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."
—Matthew 11:28

You're
Invited

A New Year of Faith Practices: #5
Inviting others into a relationship with Jesus
Each year we focus on one of our Faith Practices.
2020 will be the year for Faith Practice #5:
Invite others into a loving relationship with Jesus!
Think about it this Christmas season! How can we be
invitational? Who should we be inviting? How do
you "invite someone into a relationship with Jesus?"
Got ideas? Please contact Pastor O'Brien
or any member of church council.

December Stewardship Page



December Stewardship Prayer

Gracious Lord,

Let your goodness reveal itself to us, that we, made in your image, may conform ourselves to it. We cannot imagine your majesty, power and wonder on our own; nor is it fitting for us to try. But your kindness and mercy reach from the heavens, through the clouds, to the earth below to show us the fruits of your Incarnation. You have come to us as a small child, but you have brought us the greatest of all gifts, the gift of your eternal love. Caress us with your tiny hands, embrace us with your tiny arms, and soften our hearts with your tender voice so that we might respond as humble stewards of your active presence in the world. We pray this through Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

Adapted from a prayer by Saint Bernard of Clairvaux



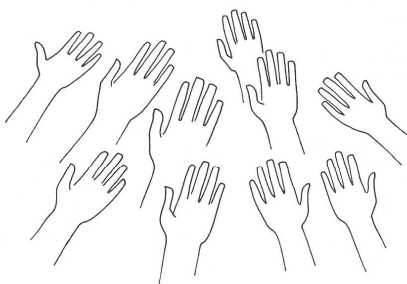
You have special gifts!

And you can use them to serve in worship at St. John!
There are several opportunities to serve at both Saturday and Sunday worship services.
Sign up today to be an usher, communion server, lector, greeter or to work with the audio visual equipment! See Pastor or the office for details!

STEWARDSHIP OF PROPERTY

We bring nothing into this world...
and we take nothing out of it.

EVERYTHING that we have
while we are here comes as a
GIFT FROM GOD...



In appreciation, we choose to share a portion of these gifts.

The stewardship of our property is an ongoing process.
We give regularly and systematically in proportion to the gifts which we are given...

...the talents which earn us our possessions.
Because we love God, we gladly dedicate these gifts to God's service, and give a worthy portion for the care of people in need.



Putting our complete trust in the Lord without expecting anything in return. Stewards strive to put God first in all things and follow Him wherever He may lead us. As we prepare for the birth of our Lord, pray for the strength and courage to be a model of discipleship, just as Joseph was.



Annual Youth Christmas Cookie Sale December 14th and 15th In the Cloister

Youth, please bring a batch of cookies to church on Sat. Dec. 14th at 10:00 AM.
We will assemble plates for sale at that time.
Questions, contact Pam LaRue.



SHOPPING WITH THE STARS!

Help us celebrate the spirit of Christmas as we provide wonderful gifts for the residents of the Luther Home of Mercy.
Simply pick a star from the tree ...and shop!
Then, bring your **unwrapped** gift back to church and place it under the tree.

**All gifts must be at church by
Dec. 4th.**



Help Us Adopt a Family this Christmas!
Pastor Mary Carman from Iglesia Camino de Vida Church in Fremont, Ohio-A joint ministry between the ELCA and the UMC has asked neighboring churches to help adopt a family this Christmas.

Special Christmas Tags with individual needs listed on them will be available in the Narthex from December 5th through December 14th.

The gifts will be delivered Dec. 15th.

No gift wrapping is needed. Thank you!!



Congratulations to Matthew Robinson for earning the BSA Eagle Scout rank. He is the 18th Eagle Scout from Troop # 342.

For his Eagle Scout service project, Matthew chose to install mile marker posts, directional signs, and course map signs for the two Cross Country running courses at Genoa High School. His project was completed during the Cross Country season last Fall.

His Eagle Scout court of honor ceremony was held on August 4th at the Brunner Campus Community Room in Genoa.

Congratulations, Matthew!



St. John Youth

December, 2019

Lock-In

Saturday, December 28th starting at 6:00 p.m. we will gather at the church for our annual Youth Group Lock-In. *(I guess it is not technically a real 'lock-in' because we will be going to the Luther Home of Mercy gym again this*

year, but you get the idea.) This event is for confirmation through senior high youth. We will play games, eat pizza, have a faith talk, play more games, and hang out with friends. As with all of our events, non-St. John friends are also welcome.

Pastor O'Brien has committed to stay until mid-night, we need parent/adult volunteers to chaperone after that and help keep the peace (see the sign-up sheet at the church for a schedule). We can't have an overnight lock-in without parent/adult commitment to help. Please encourage your parents to volunteer. Any questions, please contact Pastor O'Brien.

High School Bible Study

Meets in the church lounge at 6:00 PM. Snacks will be provided. Contact Stef Neuman for scheduled dates.

High School Sunday School

Meets in the church lounge each Sunday morning. We would love to have you join us! You can just show up, or contact Jennifer Delventhal for more information.

Bell Ringing

The December Year of Service activity is bell ringing for the Salvation Army. The "Youth Group" will be taking the 10a—noon shift on Saturday, December 7th. No need to signup. Just show up for any/all of it if you would like to help. Any questions, please contact Pastor O'Brien.

YOUTH LOCK-IN



Mark Your Calendar!

Upcoming Youth Activities/Events

December 7 – Salvation Army Bell Ringing

(Miller's Market from 10-12)

December 7 – Tree Lighting

(this is a good fellowship event and an opportunity to earn service points by helping serve/clean up)

December 15 – Christmas Program

(contact Tammy Mazur if you would like to participate)

December 14 – Cookies

Make cookies at home and bring them to the church. Meet at 10a, to assemble trays. Sale is before and after worship.

December 15 & 16– Youth Group Cookie Sale

December 28 – Lock-In

(this is the Saturday between Christmas and New Year; it may be late night or overnight depending on availability of adult volunteers)

Cookie Sale

To raise funds for the 2021 Youth gathering, we will be meeting on Saturday December 14th at 10:00 to assemble cookie trays. Cookies will be sold before and after worship on December 14 and 15. Any questions, contact Pam LaRue.



CONFIRMATION STUDENTS

Don't forget to turn in Sermon Note and Service Point forms to your confirmation teacher. Also remember your one Church council visit. They meet on the third Thursday of each month at 7:00.

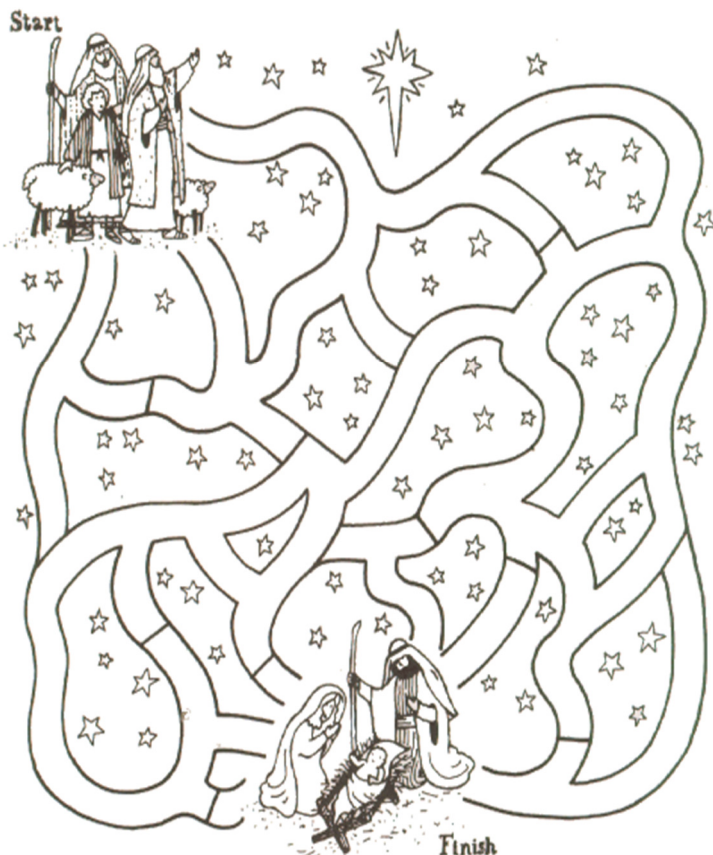
Question forms for your visit are available in the 8th grade confirmation room.

Youth/Parents: If you have an idea for an activity, please contact Pastor O'Brien and he will help you make it happen.

CONNECTING KIDS TO CHRIST The Connection



Help the shepherds find the path to Jesus.



Jesus, Gentle Shepherd
This cane of red and white
Proclaims the sweet
love story,
Born on Christmas night.

This cane, you see,
when turned around
Begins your name of Love;
And now becomes
a symbol
Of peace proclaimed above.

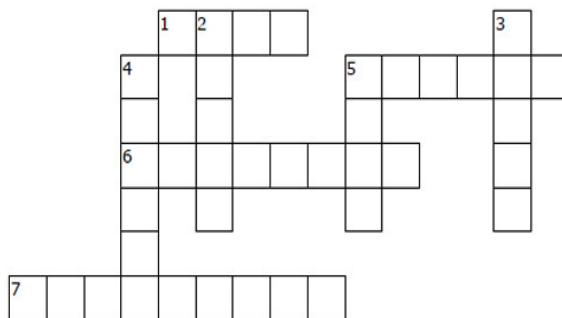
The lively peppermint flavor
is the regal gift of spice,
The white is Your purity
And the red Your sacrifice.

And so this cane
reminds us
Of just how much You care,
And like Your Christmas
gift to us,
It's meant for all to share.

The Birth of Jesus

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2:7 (KJV)

Puzzle is based on Luke 2:1-20



ACROSS

1. An infant or very young child
5. The place where Mary laid the baby Jesus
6. A person who takes care of sheep
7. The city where Jesus was born

DOWN

2. Heavenly being that told the shepherds about Jesus' birth
3. The savior of the world
4. The earthly father of Jesus
5. The mother of Jesus

JOSEPH
MARY

ANGEL
SHEPHERD

BETHLEHEM
JESUS

BABY
MANGER



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

The Statement on Israeli Civilian Settlement

November 19, 2019

The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America is very disturbed by the November 18 announcement by Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo that the Administration unwisely is changing current U.S. policy by stating that the “establishment of Israeli civilian settlements in the West Bank is not per se inconsistent with international law.”

Our church has consistently called for an end to the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territory, the cessation of all settlement activities and withdrawal from settlements on Palestinian territory to the 1967 boundaries, a negotiated, final status agreement between Israel and the Palestinians and the establishment of and international support for a viable, contiguous Palestinian state. We will continue to work with ecumenical and inter-religious partners who share these commitments. In the long term, we wish to see Israelis and Palestinians co-existing in justice and peace, as citizens of viable and secure Israeli and Palestinian states.

The Administration's announcement makes the realization of these outcomes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict more difficult and distant, rather than advancing the cause of peace. The announcement, like earlier ones on the conflict, gives no evidence of having been developed in consultation with those who will be most adversely affected by this policy, namely the Palestinians in the occupied territory. Instead, it will give a “green light” to further settlement activity and a worsening of the conditions of occupation, including intensified military and police measures and the further diversion of natural and other resources that benefit only settlers.

By reverting to the policy of the Reagan Administration, the new policy ignores facts that have been created on the ground since 1989 (from a settler population then of close to 200,000 to an estimated more than 700,000 at present in the West Bank and East Jerusalem). It also discredits international law such as various provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention -- to which Israel is a party -- about the obligations of an occupying power as well as the prevailing international consensus about settlements, most recently articulated in Security Council resolution 2334 of 2016 (to which all UN member states are bound according to the UN Charter).

Our distress with this announcement is primarily its impact on the daily life of Palestinians, especially our sisters and brothers in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Jordan and the Holy Land, but also their Christian and Muslim neighbors. We are also concerned with policy changes that further distance the United States from the prevailing international consensus on the path toward a negotiated solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including respecting human rights standards and international law.

God's peace,

The Rev. Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America



To learn more about the Presiding Bishop, read about current events in the ELCA, discover the ELCA Blog, participate in conversation, use several ELCA resources or to learn more about our faith...visit www.elca.org.

God's Global Barnyard

An animal can make a world of a difference for a family in need. Animals provide food to eat, fertilizer to grow crops and offspring to sell at the market. With one gift, you can help a family escape the cycle of hunger and poverty for good.



Cow

A cow's milk, meat, fertilizer and calves can quickly strengthen a family's financial security.

\$500



Chicks

Chicks begin laying eggs at just a few months old, offering nutritious, protein rich meals for families who are hungry.

\$10



Goat

Fresh milk from a goat is very nutritious and can be used to make products like yogurt and cheese to sell at the market.

\$50



Honeybees

Bees pollinate plants and boost crop growth – helping the wider community. Soaps and candles can be made from their wax and sold at the local market.

\$20



Pig

Within months after birth, piglets grow to weigh over 200 pounds – bringing a big payoff at the market.

\$30



Fish Farm

A fish farm and training in good business economics can provide a lifetime of meals for a community.

\$250



Oxen and plow

A pair of oxen will help create record-breaking harvests, provide natural fertilizer for the fields and give families the gift of time.

\$1,000

Give through your congregation, by visiting ELCA.org/goodgifts or by sending a check to ELCA Good Gifts, P.O. Box 1809, Merrifield, VA 22116-8009.

Please indicate your gift in the memo line of your check.

ELCA.org/goodgifts

With the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, save yourself a little time and give online. It's Simple, Safe and Just a Click Away!



Start the new year with one less worry!
Online giving is now available at St. John.
Simply visit our web site at www.stjohnwillistion.org
and click on the “online giving”
link at the top of the page.

You may give one time or set up reoccurring donations to automatically give from your checking or savings account. (We suggest using your checking or savings account as credit cards are charged an additional transaction fee. There are no fees associated with checking/savings accounts through VANCO, our online processor.)

Not online? See LisaAnne in the office to set up an account or fill out an “Authorization Form” (located in the Narthex) and return it to the office.

Thank you for being a blessing to St. John!

**SUPPORT US WHEN YOU SHOP
THIS HOLIDAY SEASON**

Buy your gifts and holiday essentials at smile.amazon.com. You Shop. Amazon Donates.



amazonsmile
You shop. Amazon gives.

AmazonSmile donates 0.5% of your purchase (before taxes and rebates) on all eligible products to your charity of choice. This may not sound like a lot, but if you're like many others who prefer the convenience of ordering gifts and necessary items online, imagine how quickly it could add up!



2nd Annual Community Christmas Tree Lighting At St. John -Williston

**Saturday, December 7, 2019
6:00 PM**

Join us for a light meal followed by singing
of Christmas Carols and
wonderful fellowship.

The Lighting of the Community Christmas
Tree will follow the meal and take place in the
lot to the east of the Parsonage– along SR 579.

Please brings items for the
Ottawa County Holiday Bureau.
(socks, mittens, scarves, toys,
hygiene items, paper products,
cleaning items
and non perishable food items)

.

**St. John's Annual Children's
Christmas Pageant
"A Christmas to Believe In"
December 15, 2019 * 6:00PM**



Practice will be on Saturday, December 14th
from 9:00am to 12:00pm and during the
Sunday School hour on Dec. 15th
Any Catechism student that is not in the pageant
will be having class During
practice on Sunday.

The Advent Tea will follow the Christmas Pageant.
Please bring a dessert or appetizer to share.
Slips have been sent home with the students
to see who will be participating in the program.

If your child did not receive one and
would like to participate in the program,
please contact Tammy Mazur or Beckie Goldstein

Luther Home of Mercy *Happenings at the Home*



We were surprised and thrilled to be recognized by the Genoa Area Chamber of Commerce as the **2019 Business Outstanding Community Support Award** recipient. This award acknowledges a business whose civic and community service goes beyond "normal" responsibilities, creating a lasting and beneficial impact for the Genoa Area. This work would not be possible without the support and devotion of our 450 employees along with volunteers, families, residents and community partners. Thank you, Genoa Chamber, for recognizing our collective efforts! [#enrichinglives](https://www.facebook.com/enrichinglives)



LUTHER HOME OF MERCY'S

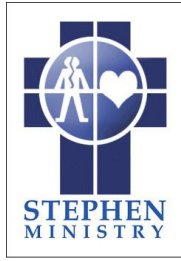
Adopt-A-Resident Program

Give Back this Holiday Season

"Adopt-A-Resident" this holiday season and bring joy to an individual served by Luther Home of Mercy.

If you are interested in adopting or would like more information, contact Jeanne Rollins at 419-836-7741 or jrollins@lutherhome.org.





St John Stephen Ministries
invites you to

A Service of Hope On the Longest Night

**Saturday, December 21st
at 5:00 PM**

**St. John Lutheran Church
Williston, OH**

A Service of Hope is a special service of comfort and hope for those who experience pain mixed with the joy of Christmas. It's a time to recognize that Christmas can be a bittersweet time of year.

Come.

Find peace through silent reflection, prayer, scripture and communion.

Join us as we remember that God is with us in our times of joy and pain.

Everyone is welcome.

Contact St. John at 419-836-5514
for more information.

Unwrap the best Gift this Christmas!

*Come and Celebrate Christmas
with us at St. John Lutheran Church*

*Christmas Eve Services at
4:00 and 7:00 PM*

*Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
at 11:00 PM*





Council Meeting Highlights-November 21, 2019

Devotions were Psalm 46 from The Bread of Life, led by Pastor O'Brien

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm p.m. by President Rick Buhrow

***Pastor's Report:**

14 hospital/homebound visit/individual or family meetings, 4 committee/group meetings, 1 community/youth/fellowship events, 7 professional/clergy activities, 1 classes/Bible studies, 1 wedding

Thanksgiving Eve Worship

Please plan on attending the community Thanksgiving Eve worship. St. John is hosting this year. November 27 at 7:00pm with a reception to follow.

GENOA HOLIDAY PARADE.

The Genoa Area churches are going to walk (or ride) in the Genoa Holiday Parade on December 1. Participants are asked to wear Christmas pageant costumes as available. The hope is to at least in a small way, keep the message of Jesus as part of the Christmas celebration. We gather at Genoa Park at 5:00pm

Year of Service December

Our December event will be bell ringing at Miller's Market for the Salvation Army. There is a sign-up sheet at the back of the church. Spots are still available.

Year of Inviting

2020 is Year of Inviting – We will focus on Faith Practice #5, Invite others into a loving relationship with Jesus Christ. If you have any ideas about how we can lift up this faith practice, please let me know.

***Christian Community Life:** No new report. **Advent Tea** will include appetizers to the cookies and desserts on December 15.

***Evangelism:** reported the committee met on November 20 to finalize the Christmas Tree lighting. The tree was planted that morning and looks great! The tree lighting is Saturday, December 7 at 6:00pm. Everyone is asked to bring a gift for the holiday Bureau. Boxes are in the cloister and also by the office. The tree and the star have been donated. We discussed the budget for 2020.

***Parish Education:** reported grades 3 to 5 will begin using Spark as their new curriculum.

The Christmas Program will be Sunday, December 15th at 6:00pm. Practice will be Saturday, December 14 at 9:00am. The Advent tea will follow the Christmas program.

***Worship Life:** The wireless microphones have been replaced.

Decorating for Advent will be on Sunday, **November 24 at noon. All are welcome to come help!**

Worship assistance needed for all services on Christmas Eve (4:00pm, 7:00pm, and 11:00pm)

Longest night/Service of hope will be on Saturday, December 21 at 5:00pm.

***Property:** No new report. The drain in the back of the back of the church is cracked and work continues.

NEW BUSINESS: Budgets were presented and discussed. Final review approval will at the December meeting.

If any committee chair can not attend, please send a representative from your committee.

Meeting adjourned at 8:25pm with the Lord's Prayer

Committee December, 12, 2019 at 7:00pm

Next Council Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 18, 2019 at 7:00 pm.

Respectively submitted,
Marcia Morgan,
Council Secretary



faith and finances

St. John Lutheran Church Statement of Income and Expense As of October 31, 2019

	Full Year	Month to Date			Year to Date				
		Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Prior Year	% Growth
Income: *	283,000	21,492	23,041	107%	230,092	225,237	98%	229,597	-2%
* does not include memorials and other dedicated offerings									
* online giving IS included.									
Expenses:									
Benevolence	38,000	2,958	2,958	100%	30,833	30,833	100%		
Board/Ministries	14,400	1,683	928	55%	12,295	11,051	90%		
Staff Salaries	96,800	7,868	7,669	97%	79,948	78,120	98%		
Staff Benefits	56,170	4,681	4,416	94%	46,808	43,394	93%		
Operating Expenses	73,130	7,105	6,214	87%	63,324	59,358	94%		
Expense Totals	278,500	24,295	22,185	91%	233,208	222,756	96%		
Income less Expenses	4,500	(2,803)	856		(3,116)	2,481			

2019 Dedicated Fund Balances

Building/Development	6,017
Activity Center Savings	281,741
Memorials	56,591
Music Fund	2,124
Endowment Fund	112,511
Scholarship Tank	5,453
Scholarship Younger	8,000
Scholarship Johnson	33,863
Scholarship Parks	34,388
Scholarship St. John	2,034
Youth	21,777
Other	14,405
Savings	31,264
Total	610,168



2020 Offering Envelopes will be available after December 8th and will be in the Narthex.

You may have a new number for the new year so please do not use your 2019 envelopes after December 31st.

If you have any questions about your envelopes or cannot find them, please call the office and we can help you!

Thank you for your support of the ministries at St. John!

(Other includes designated offerings, Stephen Ministries, Good Samaritan Fund, etc.)

If you have questions, please contact the Board of Finance, Tim Titgemeyer, Dave Neuman or Kent Delventhal.



December Worship Assistants

SATURDAY
5:00pm—Worship

Acolytes

- 7 Ben Sommers
- 14 Aiden Johnson
- 21 David Nissen
- 28 Kennedy Donnelly

Lectors

- 7 Diane Gerkenmeyer
- 14 Ruth Petersen
- 21 Gene Bihn
- 28 Beverly Harder

Ushers

- 7 Jim & Dilly Schimming, Ron and Diane Gerkenmeyer
- 14 Allen Harder, Madelayne Saionzkowski,
Tom Truman, Jack Mathews
- 21 John & Helen Meyer, Alice Witt, Carol Vargo
- 28 Gene & Amy Bihn, **Need Two**

Communion Servers

- 7 Al Brown, Ron & Diane Gerkenmeyer
- 14 Doris Titgemeyer, Carol Vargo and Alice Witt
- 21 Gene Bihn, JoElaine Schimming, Nancy Strohscher
- 28 Wayne Bauman, Diane Gerkenmeyer, **need one**

Communion Set-up

- 7 Diane Gerkenmeyer
- 14 Carol Vargo
- 21 Traci Brown
- 28 Brenda Keeley

Door Greeters

- 7 Jo Elaine Schimming
- 14 Joni Hillman
- 21 Dean Lowe
- 28 Jack Mathews

Sound/Projector Techs

- 7 Traci Brown / Amy Bihn
- 14 Phil and JJ Milbrodt
- 21 Phil and JJ Milbrodt
- 28 Ron Gerkenmeyer/Traci Brown

*Thank you for
serving the Lord!
If you cannot make your
assignment,
please make arrange-
ments for a replacement
then let the office know as
soon as possible.*

SUNDAY
9:45 AM—Worship

Acolytes

- 1 Lindsay Cashen
- 8 Jake Titgemeyer
- 15 Megan Hoeft
- 22 Lindsey Cashen
- 29 Lucas Titgemeyer

Lectors

- 1 Roland Sandrock
- 8 Sophia Cashen
- 15 Tim Titgemeyer
- 22 Jill Kao
- 29 Cebie Titgemeyer

Ushers

- 1 Dan & Evan Kessler, Bob Kapp
- 8 Dave Neuman, Heather and Lindsey Cashen
- 15 The Titgemeyer Family
- 22 Jeff Schimming, Bob Kapp, Jennifer Delventhal
- 29 The Robert Bench Family

Communion Servers

- 1 Margaret Berger, Jane Phillips, Carole Beamer
- 8 Heather Cashen, Mike and Ann Mann
- 15 Marcia Morgan, Jean Fowler, Karolyn Jansen
- 22 Roland Sandrock, Jill Kao, Bob Kapp
- 29 Carol Jensen, Mona Vogelbacher, Tim Titgemeyer

Communion Set-up

- 1 Janice Sandrock
- 8 Heather Cashen
- 15 Diana Pfaff
- 22 Pam LaRue
- 29 Deanna Neuman

Door Greeters

- 1 Melissa Lammers
- 8 Marcia Morgan
- 15 Linda Schlievert
- 22 Margaret Berger
- 29 Karen Jeffers

Sound/Projector Techs

- 1 Andy Kessler
- 8 Paul Beamer
- 15 Joel Mann
- 22 Tim Titgemeyer
- 29 Andy Kessler

Children's Moments

- 1 Caira Goldstein
- 8 Bells
- 15 Stef Neuman
- 22 Puppets!
- 29 Caira Goldstein



**Watch for the
Christmas Eve
Services**

**Worship Assistants
Sign Up List
in the Narthex!**



**SATURDAY
5:00pm—Worship**

Acolytes

- 4 Aiden Johnson
- 11 Seidona Brossia
- 18 Shane O'Brien
- 25 Ben Sommers

Lectors

- 4 Gene Bihn
- 11 Shirley Berger
- 18 Nancy Strohscher
- 25 Doris Titgemeyer

Ushers

- 4 John and Helen Meyer
Jim and Dilly Schimming
- 11 Allen Harder, Madelayne Saionzkowski,
Tom Truman, Gene Bihn
- 18 The David Lee Family
- 25 Gene & Amy Bihn, Carol Vargo, Alice Witt

Communion Servers

- 4 Carol Vargo, Gene Bihn, Ruth Petersen
- 11 Doris Titgemeyer, JoElaine Schimming, Allen Harder
- 18 Carol Vargo, Nancy Strohscher, Al Brown
- 25 Wayne Bauman, JoElaine Schimming, Amy Schloegl

Communion Set-up

- 4 Joan Truman
- 11 Dilly Schimming
- 18 Carol Vargo
- 25 Ruth Petersen

Door Greeters

- 4 Jennifer Delventhal
- 11 Kris Lee
- 18 Dean Lowe
- 25 Arline Sabin

Sound/Projector Techs

- 4 Traci Brown / Amy Bihn
- 11 Phil and JJ Milbrodt
- 18 Traci Brown / Amy Bihn
- 25 Phil and JJ Milbrodt



**SUNDAY
9:00 Worship**

Acolytes

- 5 Megan Hoeft
- 12 Lindsay Cashen
- 19 Lucas Titgemeyer
- 26 Jacob Titgemeyer

Lectors

- 5 Melissa Lammers
- 12 Margaret Berger
- 19 Deanna Neuman
- 26 Mike Mann

Ushers

- 5 Tim Titgemeyer Family
- 12 Dave Neuman, Heather Cashen, Jeff Schimming
- 19 Dan & Evan Kessler, Bob Kapp
- 26 Bob Bench Family

Communion Servers

- 5 Karolyn Jansen, Margaret Berger, Bob Kapp
- 12 Carol Jensen, Jane Phillips, Carole Beamer
- 19 Marcia Morgan, Mona Vogelbacher, Jean Fowler
- 26 Roland Sandrock, Ann & Mike Mann

Communion Set-up

- 5 Heather Cashen
- 12 Diana Pfaff
- 19 Nancy Brittan
- 26 Janice Sandrock

Door Greeters

- 5 Debbie Wehner
- 12 Melissa Lammers
- 19 Linda Schlievert
- 26 Jennifer Delventhal

Sound/Projector Techs

- 5 Paul Beamer
- 12 Andy Kessler
- 19 Joel Mann
- 26 Tim Titgemeyer

Children's Moments


















- 5 Bells
- 12 Stef Neuman
- 19 Puppets
- 26 Caira Goldstein

*Thank you for
serving the Lord!
If you cannot
make your
assignment, please
make
arrangements for
a replacement then
let the office know
as soon as
possible.*



December



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Traditional Worship 6:00 PM Genoa Holiday Parade 6:00 PM Scout meeting	2 10:00 AM Monday Bible Study	3 10:00 AM Blankets 11:30 AM Ladies Community Bible Study 6:00 PM Rebekah Circle @ Stroschers 6:30 PM Esther Circle Sing A Long 7:30 PM Dartball-Home	4	5 1:30 PM Dorcas Circle 6:00 PM Community Christmas at St. Peter Blackberry	6 5:30 PM Scout overnighter	7  10:00 AM - 8:00 PM Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Millers 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship 6:00 PM Christmas Tree Lighting
8  8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Traditional Worship 3:00 PM Webelos 6:00 PM Scout meeting	9 10:00 AM Monday Bible Study 7:00 PM WELCA Board Meeting	10 10:00 AM Blankets 11:30 AM Ladies Community Bible Study 7:30 PM Dartball at Elmore St Paul	11	12  7:00 PM Committee Night	13 7:00 PM Scout Christmas Party  Hot Cocoa Day!	14  Program Practice 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM Christmas Pageant Rehearsal 10:00 AM Wreaths Across America Day at Allen Twp Cemetery 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship
15  Children's Christmas Program 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Traditional Worship 6:00 PM Children's Christmas Pageant & Advent Tea 6:00 PM Scout meeting	16 10:00 AM Monday Bible Study	17 10:00 AM Blankets 11:30 AM Ladies Community Bible Study	18  Church Council 7:00 PM Council Meeting	19	20  Newsletter DEADLINE Forerunner articles due!	21  Hope  5:00 PM Contemporary Worship 5:00 PM Longest Night Service of Hope
22  8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Traditional Worship 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Bells Practice for Christmas Eve 6:00 PM Scout meeting	23 10:00 AM Monday Bible Study	24  Christmas Eve Services 4 PM 7 PM 11 PM	25  Christmas Day	26  10:00 AM FORERUNNER Mail Group	27	28  LOCK In YOUTH Lock In! 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship
29  8:30 AM - 9:30 AM Sunday School for all ages 9:45 AM - 10:45 AM Traditional Worship 6:00 PM Scout meeting	30 10:00 AM Monday Bible Study	31 10:00 AM Blankets 11:30 AM Ladies Community Bible Study	1	2	3	4 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship