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St. John Lutheran Church, Williston, Ohio

Ask the Pastor

“I was having a conversation with a coworker about a topic and they told me I was wrong and the Bible verse they quoted was right, but it seems to go against a different Bible passage I was reading. Which one if us is right?”

(Note: question was edited to remove the topic to focus on the use of scripture.)

The problem with these sorts of conversations is that the Bible says a lot of different things. If you are in favor of slavery, you can find justification for it in the Bible; but if you are an abolitionist the Bible supports that too. If you believe women should be subservient to men, that’s in the Bible; but if you believe women should be empowered and equal, that’s biblical as well.

We run in to trouble when we try to read the Bible as if it were one single book (it’s not), written by one single author (it’s not), written in a single time and place (it wasn’t) and then we try to conclude that somehow all of these different biblical voices and settings and circumstances must be reconciled one single voice where every part “agrees” with every other part. The Bible just doesn’t work that way.

(Making everything “agree”, by the way, is called the “Flat Bible” approach and it’s lead to some unhealthy perceptions of God.) The truth is, when it comes to contemporary, watercooler type topics, there is almost nothing the Bible “clearly says”. Instead, the Bible represents a variety of views and perspectives about who God is and what God is like. Our challenge is to figure out which voices in the Bible we should agree with and which voices in the Bible we should be more skeptical about.

So how do we do that?

Lutherans tend to use a Christ-centric reading of the Bible. We believe Jesus is the best picture of who God is and what God is like, so we read and consider all the Bible (not just the New Testament) through the lens of Jesus. For example, Deuteronomy 6:5; “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.” Does that fit with what we know about Jesus? YES! Jesus actually quoted this verse when talking to the Pharisees. Passages about loving God are some of the ones we pay special attention to.

How about Leviticus 24:19-20; “Anyone who maims another shall suffer the same injury in return: fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; the injury inflicted is the injury to be suffered.” Does that fit with what we know about Jesus? NO! Jesus says, you may have heard this... but God wants something different (see Matthew 5).

So, passages about revenge are ones we are skeptical about. Those are pretty basic examples of course, but I hope you get the idea.

One blogger shared some tips for reading and studying the Bible. Other than thinking his last step should be the first one, I liked his list so I’ll share it with you...

“First, we need to admit to ourselves that we bring our own biases and ideas to the Scriptures when we read them.

Second, we need to accept the fact that we might be wrong about some of our assumptions about the Scriptures and what they’re saying to us.

Third, we need to admit that we might have something to learn from others who look at things from another perspective.

Fourth, we need to understand that the best way for us to look at the scriptures is through the lens of Jesus since He is the best picture we have of who God really is.”

I especially liked the part about learning from each other. Wouldn’t our Bible discussions, and really *all* our conversations, be more productive if we start them assuming we have something to learn rather than thinking we need to prove a point that we already believe and can perhaps hammer home with a few Bible verses? Proof texting all the latest issues is a misuse of the Bible and a horrible way to share our faith.

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.

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 *Remembering with Love* 
Memorials and Gifts to St. John

In Memory of Kenneth Sievert
 Mary Harmeyer
 Carol Engel
 Alice Siglar

In Memory of Milton Schimming
 Mary Schimming

In Memory of Betty Hammit
 Carol Vargo

Faith Practice
#3 Readings
PSALMS 

March 7- Psalm 48
 March 14- Psalm 49
 March 21- Psalm 50
 March 28- Psalm 51
 April 4- Psalm 52

OUR BLESSING BOX

Mini Pantry has been used quite a bit recently. To help restock we need cereal, jelly, canned meat (tuna, chicken, etc.) and personal care items (toothbrushes have been a popular item). When you are shopping this week, consider purchasing a few extra items and bringing them to the church. Thank you!



Join us
 for a free, fun filled
 afternoon
 as we gather for
**Family Movie
 Time!**

Now Showing:

SING

Who: Everyone! Bring family, bring a friend, bring a neighbor
What: A family friendly movie, candy, popcorn, beverages
When: Saturday, April 30, 2022 1:00PM
Where: St John Lutheran Church, Social Hall

Bring a chair / pillow / blanket / anything to sit on
 (we will have the standard chairs if you do not wish to bring something)



WHAT'S HAPPENING

Circle and Board Meetings

Esther Circle

2022 Meeting Dates:
 March 8th, 2pm Social Hall
 April 5th

Rebekah Circle:

2022 Meeting Dates:
 March 8th, 7pm Lounge
 April 5th

Worship Helpers Needed! Sign up in the office today!

If you would be willing to help as an usher or lector, please sig up outside the church office. Now accepting volunteers! If you have any questions please see Pastor Shawn or contact the church office.



2022 Acolyte Schedule

Saturday

March

- 5 Emma Morgan
- 12 Lindsay Krumnow
- 19 Benjamin Sommers
- 26 Olivia Martin

April

- 2 Kennedy Donnelly
- 9 Emma Morgan
- 16 Lindsay Krumnow
- 23 Benjamin Sommers
- 30 Olivia Martin

May

- 7 Kennedy Donnelly
- 14 Emma Morgan
- 21 Lindsay Krumnow
- 28 Benjamin Sommers

Sunday

March

- 6 Lucas Titgemeyer
- 13 Caleb Hays
- 20 Logan Hays
- 27 Lily Sondergeld

April

- 3 Aiden Johnson
- 10 Lucas Titgemeyer
- 17 Caleb Hays
- 24 Logan Hays
- May 1st Lily Sondergeld

May

- 8 Aiden Johnson
- 15 Lucas Titgemeyer
- 22 Caleb Hays
- 29 Logan Hays



The Forerunner
is published monthly
by St. John Lutheran Church
Williston, Ohio
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Corner of Main and Toledo St.

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Pastor Shawn O'Brien
Home Telephone:
419-972-4003

Email:
pastorobrien
@stjohnwilliston.org

Worship Hours
Saturday at 5:00 PM
Sunday Worship 9:45 AM

Deadline for the
March newsletter is
Monday, March 21 @ 9AM
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.”**



Amelia Burkey
Office

Administrator
8:30 am—2:30
pm

Mon. thru Fri.

(419) 836-5514

Email:
Office @stjohnwilliston.org

Valentine Bake Sale a Huge Success

Many Thanks to All Bakers and to the Eager St. John Buyers

“Just keep trying stuff” from our St. John Family’s “Growing as Jesus’ Disciples with Seven Faith Practices – No. 7 – ENCOURAGE spiritual growth in others.”

In keeping with the above for 2022, our WELCA ladies tried a different type of bake sale. Diane Gerkenmeyer applied for a grant from the *Thrivent Acton Team*.

Supplies for baking were purchased with these dollars. On Friday, February 11, twelve ladies (Diane Gerkenmeyer, Beverly Harder, Carolyn Lasseter, Jane Phillips, Marilyn Sandrock, JoElaine Schimming, Pat Sievert, Nancy Stroscher, Doris Titgemeyer, Diane Traver, Carol Vargo, Evalyn Witty) gathered in the church kitchen to bake. These ladies were using four ovens -- with lots of buzzers ringing all over the place!!!!!! From 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. we baked 24 dozen cookies and eight pies. In addition to the baking, individual servings were boxed up of two large pans of lasagna and two pans of macaroni and cheese (which had been previously baked). This entire process created a lot of great socializing and developed ‘camaraderie among the group’. After the work was complete lunch (pizza and salad) was served and enjoyed by all.

In addition, others brought in breads (Hawaiian, zucchini, banana, blueberry, apricot, etc.), bars, muffins and a variety of candies. We also offered for sale many, many bags of fresh popcorn (with that wonderful aroma throughout the church). We had four eight-foot tables of delicious goodies for sale.

The true success of the bake sale was having so many purchasers. It was absolutely overwhelming to have so many generous members of St. John and to see the eagerness of the buyers. St. John is truly a wonderful and very giving congregational family. Many thanks to each and every one of you!!!!

By the close of the bake sale we had SOLD OUT of EVERYTHING. Many thanks to all for your support.
.....Diane Gerkenmeyer

CONNECTING KIDS TO CHRIST

The Connection

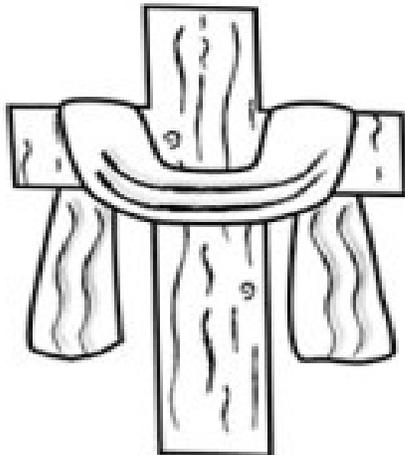
St. John Kid's Page



Jesus spent 40 days in the desert preparing for His work. During Lent we spend 40 days getting ready to celebrate Jesus' death and resurrection.

Can you find your way into the desert to be with Jesus?

- ### Lent Prayer with Gestures
- 6, 5, 4... 3, 2, 1 Count the weeks 'til Easter comes. (count on fingers)
 - We fast, we give, we always pray. (cover mouth, spread out hands, fold hands)
 - Lent means follow Jesus every day. (stand and march in place)
 - We rise to life, we die to sin (reach arms up, cross arms over chest)
 - Carry your cross. Let us begin! (cross pointer fingers, reach arms up)



Find all ten words:

- Jesus
- Lent
- Ash
- Wednesday
- Dust
- Prayer
- Alms
- Fasting
- Sacrifice
- Purple

W	J	E	P	S	A	C	T	A	P
E	Q	L	L	U	F	A	W	L	R
D	J	G	E	O	R	V	R	M	A
N	E	A	F	N	V	P	C	Q	Y
E	P	R	R	I	T	E	L	W	E
S	A	C	R	I	F	I	C	E	R
D	U	S	T	F	W	Y	R	Z	N
A	R	Y	H	V	A	L	M	S	D
Y	Z	B	J	E	S	U	S	H	U
Z	J	F	A	S	T	I	N	G	F

Unscramble these Lenten Words

TRYFO YASD _____

HSESA _____

NLTE _____

TISFGNA _____

One thing I can do during Lent to bring me closer to God...



How Long, O LORD?

A Stephen Ministry Devotion on Psalm 13

Life has been difficult these past few years. You may be like me, wondering, “How long is this going to go on?”

David asks the same kind of question in Psalm 13: “How long, O LORD? Will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me? How long must I wrestle with my thoughts and every day have sorrow in my heart?” (Psalm 13:1–2a). David’s difficulties at the time must have been going on for a while; you can hear his deep struggle each time he asks, “*How long?*”

But even though David clearly doesn’t feel it in that moment, he knows deep down that God is with him. A little later he says, “But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation” (verse 5). The phrase “unfailing love” comes from the Hebrew word *hesed*, which refers to God’s persistent, unconditional, tender love. Because of this love, David knows he can honestly express his deepest feelings, trusting that God will listen and care.

During these difficult times, I want to assure you that your prayers are heard because of God’s *hesed* for you, just as David’s were. When David rejoiced in God’s salvation, he knew of the promised Messiah, but he couldn’t yet see the full story of how Jesus would see our suffering, take on human flesh, bear our grief, and pave the way to eternal life and restoration. But we can see the full story. We can have hope in the midst of our pain because we know of Jesus’ sacrifice for us and the promise that one day there will be no disease, death, or evil. That promise encourages us as we face challenges in our lives, and it makes it possible to faithfully care for others, knowing Jesus is with us every step of the way.

Rev. Justin Schlueter
Pastoral Staff
Stephen Ministries St. Louis

Dear Lord, In the midst of our pain you are there with us. During this pandemic, we ask you to strengthen and comfort those who are lonely, grieving, anxious, or overburdened. Let our caring ministry walk alongside of anyone who is suffering. Help them to recognize and seek help from their brothers and sisters in Christ so they may face this time of trial together. We pray in Jesus’ name. Amen.

We know these can be times of anxiety and uncertainty, loneliness and pain. Your St. John Stephen Ministers are here to help.

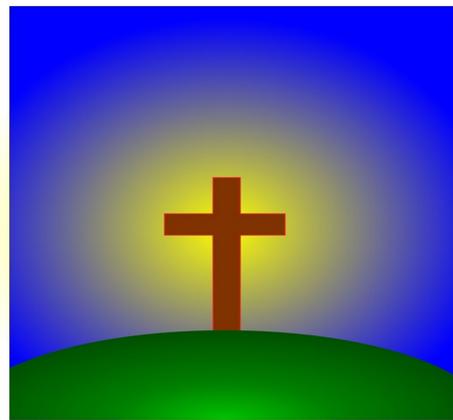
**Need to talk?
Call Pastor O’Brien or the church office at 419-836-5514 and we will put you in contact with one of your St. John Stephen Ministers.**

March Stewardship

Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes, receives and cultivates God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.

March Stewardship Prayer

Oh Lord, giver of life and source of our freedom, we are reminded that Yours is "the earth in its fullness; the world and those who dwell in it." We know that it is from your hands that we have received all we have and are and will be. Gracious and loving God, we understand that you call us to be the stewards of Your abundance, the caretakers of all you have entrusted to us. Help us always to use your gifts wisely and teach us to share them generously. May our faithful stewardship bear witness to the love of Christ in our lives. We pray this with grateful hearts in Jesus' name.



The heart of a
Christian steward
is **Gratitude.**



Church Council Highlights

St. John Lutheran Church Council Meeting

Minutes – 2.17.22

Annual meeting minutes approved: Motion made by Susie Mathews & Motion seconded by Kristina Wildman

January secretary minutes approved: Motion made by Susie Mathews & Motion seconded by Kristina Wildman

Devotions led by Pastor: 37 Psalm

Pastor's Report:

Attendance:

- In person average for January 2022 - 80.3 compared to January 2021 - 43.8
- Online average for January 2022 - 93 compared to January 2021 -179.

Numbers:

- 14 hospital/homebound visit/individual/family meetings
- 5 committee/group meetings
- 5 community/youth/fellowship events
- 9 professional/clergy activities
- 4 classes/Bible studies
- 1 funeral
- 1 baptism

Funeral:

- I presided at the funeral of Ryan Ross on January 18th (St. John, Rocky Ridge)

Baptism:

- I presided at the baptism of Cody Witt on Jan 22nd

Youth Retreat:

- Tentatively scheduled for March 4-6 at Maumee Bay. We will be using the "Fall Into Lakeside" materials produced by the synod -"Holding Hope".

Installation

- Elected leaders were installed at both worship services the weekend of January 29/30.

Scheduling Conflict #1

- I have a schedule conflict for the March Church Council Meeting (March 17). It was agreed to move the meeting to March 24th.

Scheduling Conflict #2

- The April committee night meeting is scheduled for Maundy Thursday (4/14). It was agreed to let the worship service be our "devotion time" and gather in committee groups after worship.

"Let's just keep trying stuff"

- What would be a good way to have a brainstorm event where council/committee members and members of the congregation could talk about ideas for last week's committee night devotion? Causal vs effectual reasoning, kind vs wicked environments, care for the center, experiment on the edges.

Financial Secretary, Treasurer and Finance Committee Report:

Made by: Kristina Wildman and Jennifer Nelson

- Kristina - 1 month in and we are under budget as of now but averaging towards the top of budget per month.
- Kristina - Statements for the year went out before the end of the year.
- It was agreed that Pastor would put the statement of income and expenses in the monthly email to congregation members.
- Jennifer - AI and committee started the scholarship process online, due sometime in May and the committee is up and running.

Christian Community Life:

Made by: Susie Mathew

- There is no current report from the Food Pantry minutes.
- We served approximately 55 people at the Annual Congregational meeting luncheon on January 23rd.
- The committee has ordered supplies that are needed for the Shrove Tuesday Pancake dinner on March 1st. The dinner is from 4:30 to 6:30 and volunteers are still needed. Donations will be given to the Blessing Box. The box is having to be refilled every day.

Evangelism:

Made by: Melissa Hays

- Welcomed member Barb Wolf.
- Kristina got the updated directory to Amelia before Christmas, and they are working on getting it cleaned up.

Parish Education:

Made by: Kim Sommers

- Souper Bowl for Caring weekend has collected \$380.80. The money is being donated to the Genoa Food pantry. Thank you to everyone who contributed!
- Plans are being finalized for a movie night, a family friendly movie to be shown in the social hall in April. Looking at April 30th before church.
- We are beginning discussions regarding this year's VBS.

Stewardship:

Made by: Ron Gerkenmeyer

- Working on collecting addresses for the confirmation class reunion.

Church Council Highlights con't

Worship Life:

Made by: Audrey Milbrodt

- Covid precautions: mask wearing and signs, slides for projection, hand sanitizer stations, social distancing remain in effect – no changes made.
- Lent: Ash Wednesday – March 2, 2022-In Person services will be at 11 a.m. and 7 p.m. and live stream will be for the 7pm service only. Pastor will have those wanting to receive ashes come forward – he will be wearing a mask for safety precautions at that time.
- Weekly Lenten Wednesday services: These will be In Person at 11 a.m. only. The theme is “Making Change”. These will not be recorded for YouTube or FB or live stream. Lectors and Ushers will be needed for each week and sign-up sheets for these services are by the offices. Area Pastors will be bringing the message each week.
- Palms will be ordered for Palm Saturday/Sunday. It was decided to have Lilies and Hyacinths for Easter flower choices. Order forms will be available once prices are known.
- Will continue to work towards all music and singing be done live and in-person at Sunday services.
- Matthew Milbrodt will be filling in while Pastor is gone for the Wednesday Lenten service at Christ Lutheran, Dowling as well as the Saturday/Sunday services that week - the 19th and 20th of March.
- Confirmation Day Service will be May 21 or 22.

Property:

Made by: Gary Johnson

- Once again replaced magnetic relay for sanctuary heat system.
- Ordered LED tubes for continued retrofit of remaining fluorescent fixtures (had free shipping).
- Repaired non-working light fixture in social hall and upstairs men’s bathroom.
- Hoping to start the bathroom in the west end of the building next week.
- Likely over budget for March with free shipping available for bulbs now.

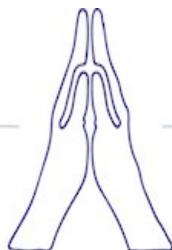
Old Business:

- Tim Titgemeyer made contact with the Synod office for constitution review and they have a point person going to be in contact soon.
- Looking to put together a committee of five people to review the constitution.
- Kristina and Diana agreed to volunteer to be a part of the committee.
- B8.07 Constitution and Bylaws shall be reviewed and/or updated every five years beginning after approval of constitution, updated in 2016.
- The current constitution was located on our website under news and publications. Found here: https://stjohnwilliston.org/news_publications/church-constitution.html
- It was mentioned that Janice Sheahan helped with the last constitution.

New Business:

- Ron Gerkenmeyer mentioned trying to get with Derek Witt to explain weather procedures
- Diana mentioned Traci Brown was maybe trying to coordinate a painting night at Brunner campus.
- Diana mentioned her son Christopher is working with Ohio Northern University’s Habitat for Humanity in Ada, OH. They are in need of kids' shoes. She plans to set up a donation box near the office to collect gently used and new shoes before the first weekend in March. Pastor will add that info to the weekly email and hope to get it in next week's bulletin.
- **Next Committee Mtg:** Thursday, March 10 @ 7pm
- **Next Council Mtg:** Thursday, March 24 @ 7pm
- **April Committee Mtg:** Will follow Maundy Thursday service, April 14th
- **April Council Meeting:** April 21st

Minutes submitted by: Tracy Orians, Council Secretary





January

Finance report

**St. John Lutheran Church
Statement of Income and Expense
As of January 31, 2022**

	Full Year Budget	Month to Date			Year to Date				
		Budget	Actual	%	Budget	Actual	%	Prior Year	% Growth
Income: *	290,000	25,462	23,388	92%	25,462	23,388	92%	18,240	28.2%
* does not include memorials and other dedicated offerings * online giving IS included.									
Expenses:									
Benevolence	38,000	2,958	2,958	100%	2,958	2,958	100%		
Board/Ministries	11,900	992	228	23%	992	228	23%		
Staff Salaries	105,500	8,897	8,746	98%	8,897	8,746	98%		
Staff Benefits	63,100	5,258	4,608	88%	5,258	4,608	88%		
Operating Expenses	71,500	8,452	8,542	101%	8,452	8,542	101%		
Expense Totals	290,000	26,557	25,083	94%	26,557	25,083	94%		
Income less Expenses		(1,095)	(1,695)		(1,095)	(1,695)			

Dedicated Fund Balances

Building/Development	5,432
Endowment Fund	124,222
Savings	48,213
Activity Center Savings	329,571
Music Fund	4,878
HVAC Fund	31,804
Future Development	38,538
Courtyard	9,260
Memorials	5,876
Youth	24,396
Good Samaritan	10,553
Scholarships	88,848
Other	12,101
Total	733,692

Online Giving

Giving made easy!

An easy, safe, convenient way to support our vision and mission – anywhere, any time!

GET STARTED!

Available on the App Store | Google play

(Other includes designated offerings, Stephen Ministries, etc.)

If you have questions, please contact the Board of Finance - Jenifer Nelson, Kent Delventhal or Kristina Wildman

Finance pg. 1

Did you know St. John offers online giving?
We process giving through VANCO, a nationally recognized leader in church giving.
It's easy, it's secure and you can get started today!
Not online? No problem! Just fill out an authorization form or see Amelia in the office.



MARCH

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Happy Birthday!

3/2

Vicki Huber
Duane Tailford
Matthew Tewers
Kristina Wildman

3/4

Sarah Nowak
Brenda Powell
Julie Stahl

3/6

Rachel Goldstein Terrell

3/7

Amanda Bartson
Stephanie George
Melissa Lammers

3/8

Rebecca Tank

3/9

Breanna Hodnett
Denise Hoefl
David Lee

3/11

Kathleen Walters

3/13

Liam Delventhal
Nolan Delventhal
Terry Gast
Annabelle George

3/15

Jill Mathews
Tyler Pietrowski

3/16

Caira Goldstein
Jonathan Milbrodt

3/17

Rylie Carr
Aidan O'Brien

3/18

Caleb Goldstein

3/19

Nicholas Traver

3/20

Autumn Jeffers
Melissa Wehner

3/21

Frances Cranfield
Nolan Sheahan

3/22

Adalynn Brandt
Phyllis Haefl

3/24

Arline Sabin
Jeffrey Smarkel

3/26

Shirley Crosskill
Kevin Ferguson

3/29

Brooke Orians
Jane Phillips
Katie Sommers
Collette Kapp

3/30

Janis Wolf

8th Karl and Roberta Orians
11th Steve and Marcia Morgan
12th Dan and Pam Berger
12th Butch and Marlene Shoalts
12th Mike and Pam Threet
19th Larry and Nancy Strohscher
27th Todd and Melissa Kapp
30th Paul and Laura Fredericksen

*Happy
Anniversary!*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1 9:00 AM Blankets Shrove Pancake Dinner 430p-630p	2 7 AM Breakfast Gathering Ash Wednesday Worship 11am and 7pm	3	4	5 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship Youth Retreat
6 8:30 AM Sunday School 9:45 AM Traditional Worship	7 10 AM Gospel Discussion	8 9:00 AM Blankets	9 7 AM Breakfast Gathering 11am Lenten Worship	10 7:00 PM Committee Night Meeting	11	12 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship
13 8:30 AM Sunday School 9:45 AM Traditional Worship	14 10 AM Gospel Discussion	15 9:00 AM Blankets	16 7 AM Breakfast Gathering 11am Lenten Worship	17	18	19 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship
20 8:30 AM Sunday School 9:45 AM Traditional Worship	21 9:00 AM Forerunner deadline! 10 AM Gospel Discussion	22 9:00 AM Blankets	23 7 AM Breakfast Gathering 11am Lenten Worship	24 7:00 PM Council Meeting	25	26 5:00 PM Contemporary Worship
27 8:30 AM Sunday School 9:45 AM Traditional Worship	28 10 AM Gospel Discussion	29 9:00 AM Blankets	30 7 AM Breakfast Gathering 11am Lenten Worship	31		

St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church
21140 W. Toledo Street
P. O. Box 235
Williston, Ohio 43468-0235

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March 2022



March 2022



In person and online!

Worship Hours at St. John
Saturday Contemporary Worship 5:00 PM
Sunday Traditional Worship 9:45 AM

Pastor Shawn O'Brien
419-972-4003 (home)

E-mail address:
pastorobrien@stjohnwilliston.org

Church Office Hours
Amelia Burkey,
Office Administrator
Monday –Friday
8:30 am —2:30 pm
Church: 419-836-5514

E-mail address:
office@stjohnwilliston.org

*Visit us on Facebook