

# The Epistle

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**St. John UCC, 409 Park Avenue, PO Box 156, Bolivar, Ohio 44612**

**FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY April 2026**

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Hello Family,

I love Spring! The world seems brighter and more colorful because the flowers blooming all around us. The days are longer and warmer and the sunshine just makes me feel better. It is also the start of baseball season and hope springs eternal that the Indians/Guardians are going to win the World Series this year (not going to happen, but I can hope). But mostly I love spring because of the hope that it brings. The greatest enemy that brings us fear, death, has been defeated by the death and resurrection of Jesus our Lord. And the Apostle Paul says that because God the Father raised His Son Jesus from the grave we have hope that He will do the same for you and me.

I think that giving hope to somebody is one of the best gifts you can offer to another person. The hope that we all need is not a wishing well hope, (like the Guardians winning the World Series) but a hope that is founded in the Word of God, His scripture. A hope that is true and just requires us to trust and wait on God's timing.

I want to be a Preacher that gives Hope, and I try to do that every Sunday, but I need your help. Recently I have been asking people what they would like or need to hear a sermon about. I think it is important for preaching to be relevant and speak to where we find ourselves in these days. It is because of this and I think the Bible is a very relevant book I want to hear what God is saying to me today through His Word. So it was suggested to me by a very wise person to ask the congregation what sermons they would like to hear. So I am asking.

What are the questions you are facing today? What causes you to feel anxious, and maybe even fearful? Is there a passage of scripture that you have read recently that has raised more questions than answers? I cannot guarantee that I will know all the answers to the questions but I am willing to try. You can email me your suggestions or questions at [pagaperks@gmail.com](mailto:pagaperks@gmail.com) or write them on a piece of paper and hand it to me or put it in the offering plate.

I believe God has brought me here to St. John's so that we might walk on this Christian journey together. Help me to preach so I can help you to grow.

-Pastor Don

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April 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> Lenten Service/Luncheon @ St. John 11:00am	<b>2</b> <b>Maundy Thursday</b> Free Community Meal @ St. Paul Lutheran Church 11:30am-1:00pm	<b>3</b> <b>Good Friday</b> Good Friday Service @ 7:00pm	<b>4</b> <b>Holy Saturday</b>
<b>5</b> <b>Easter</b> Communion 10:30am	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Guest Pastor Noah Allen 10:30am  Youth Bible Study 6:30pm	<b>13</b> Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	<b>14</b> Bible Study 10:30am or 6:30pm	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b> Free Community Meal @ St. Paul Lutheran Church 11:30am-1:00pm  Consistory Meeting 6:30pm	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Youth Bible Study 6:30pm	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Bible Study 10:30am or 6:30pm	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> Pay It Forward Day 8:00am- 12:00pm	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Youth Bible Study 6:30pm	<b>27</b> Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	<b>28</b> Bible Study 10:30am or 6:30pm  <b>Epistle Items Due</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>		

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## BIRTHDAY LIST

- April 5 – Corinne Hamilton  
April 13 – Chris Carpenter  
April 15 – Liz Snedeker  
April 16 – Mary Birk  
April 17 – Kate Hamilton  
April 22 – Becky Miller  
April 24 – Debbie Lundenberger  
April 28 – Mia Kuharich

## PRAYER LIST/CARD MINISTRY

Every week, our prayer list is updated to the best of our ability. Please notify the office if you have any additions, deletions or suggestions! Please remember those on the prayer list. “Thinking of you” cards, a note, or a telephone call means so much. Contact the church office if you need addresses or phone numbers.

### Please remember the following in your prayers:

Cathy Birk, Mary Birk, Karen Carling, Terry Carpenter, Ginny and Willis Digman, Joe Dunlevy, Kayla Jones, Missy Jones, Carol Kinsey, Bonnie Lieser, Diana Reed, Harper Szenderski,  
**College Students:** Corinne Hamilton (Savannah College of Art and Design), Leah Hamilton (University of Findlay), Maggie Hamilton (Ohio State University - ATI), Colin Kuharich (The Ohio State University), Mia Kuharich (Ohio University), Max McCoy (West Liberty University)

## BIBLE STUDY

Adult Bible Study is being held every Tuesday. Sessions will be held at 10:30am and 6:30pm. Please come when it is most convenient for you.

Cassie Brown continues to lead a Youth Bible Study every Sunday for grades 7-12. This study is held in the Parlor and begins at 6:30pm.



# The Epistle

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## HOLY WEEK/EASTER SERVICES

### Holy Week and Easter Services

Here is a list of upcoming services here.



*Come Worship With Us!*

**Lenten Service/Luncheon** – April 1st @ St. John UCC  
11:00am

**Good Friday Service** – April 3rd @ 7:00pm

**Easter Sunday Service** – April 5<sup>th</sup> @ 10:30am

## CHURCH SECURITY UPDATE

The Consistory has made a decision to take a proactive stance toward church security. They have been made aware of occurrences when the church is unlocked that strangers have entered the church, as well as neighboring churches. Due to the ongoing tensions in the country the decision has been decided to have our doors locked during all services and activities at the church. The doors will be locked 5 minutes after our worship service begins. It is suggested that if you will be late, to please let someone know so the door can be opened for you. If you have any concerns or questions about this new policy, please see a member of Consistory or Pastor Don.



## CLOTHES CLOSET



In January, February, and March we were pretty busy at the Clothes Closet despite being open only one day in January because of heavy snow. Snow also affected our first open date in February. We had about 56 customers during those three months and receipts totaling a little over \$271. This included some generous donations above the cost of the clothing purchased. We welcomed several new customers in March.

Helpers included Chris Stevenson, Deb Lundenburger, Jane Hough, Jean Gauding, Peg Lee, Lynn Rootring and Becky Wolf. I managed to show up by the end of February.

Our next open dates are April 13<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. If you have never visited the Closet, stop by to see what we do. You don't have to buy anything in order to enjoy a cup of coffee, a cookie, and some conversation.

Submitted by Cathy Fenstermaker

# The Epistle

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## PAY IT FORWARD DAY

On April 24<sup>th</sup> from 8:00am-12:00pm we will be hosting 10 students from Tusky Valley who are participating in their annual "Pay It Forward Day". Students from the district travel to numerous locations within our community to perform community service. This is the 3<sup>rd</sup> year we have participated in the event. The students clean out our Clothes Closet and do other cleaning inside and outside of the church. If you would like to lend a hand that day, please stop by!



## COFFEE HOUR

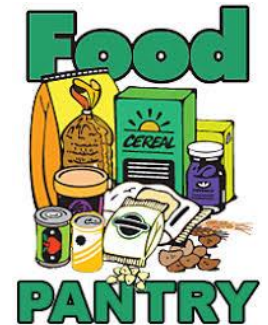


If you join us for worship, you know we normally host a coffee hour after the service. We are in need of volunteers to host this weekly time of fellowship. Please sign up on the bulletin board if you are interested!

## COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY

**St. John UCC will be collecting non-perishable food items during the month of April.**

When families request assistance during the year, the food pantry is currently giving two bags of groceries. Every month, families receive a \$25 gift card to help with perishables. They try to include the following items in the food bags: cereal, Mac & cheese, canned meat (spam, tuna, chicken stews, ham, pork), noodles/ pasta, peanut butter, jelly, vegetables, canned fruit, boxed/canned potatoes, bean products, soups, canned pasta (Ravioli, Spaghetti, etc.), pasta sauces (Hunts, etc.), ramen noodles, toothpaste, bar soap, toilet paper (usually 4 pack), shampoo, dish soap, detergent (smaller bottles), and tissues or paper towels. Extras when they have products: pasta/rice sides, jello, puddings, desserts, cookies, baked goods. By request only: diapers/wipes. **OUTDATED FOOD CANNOT BE ACCEPTED**



## THANK YOU



Dear St. John Members, Thank you for your food donation from your special Souper Bowl Sunday. The soup will help us provide good food during the winter months.

Sincerely, Bolivar UMC Mission Team, Beth Downes, Chairperson

# The Epistle

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## FINANCIAL REPORT – FEBRUARY 2026

		<u>Year-to-Date</u>
Income – February (4 Sundays)	\$ 8,073.25	\$16,755.25
Monthly Expenses	\$ (5,410.93)	\$(12,785.64)

If you would like further details and/or a copy of the complete Treasurer's Report, please feel free to contact the church office.

## MARCH 2026 CONSISTORY MEETING SUMMARY

- Consistory updated calendar April-June
- 4-1 Lenten service and luncheon
- 4-24 Reviewed list of tasks for students "Pay it Forward"
- 5-17 Spring Hike combined with youth group followed by gathering at Dale Duerr farm
- Completed communion schedule through July. Changed communion August 2 to August 9 due to Pastor Don's vacation.
- Confirmed Pastor Don's vacation dates: 4-6/4-12, 7-12/7-17 (mission trip), 7-27/8-2
- Need to confirm Noah Allen to fill in for vacation.
- Pastor Don to have "Congregation Care" training for congregation members willing to visit and support those in need.
- Discussed heating issues and repairs needed involving zone valves, leak and electrical issues discovered by Carpenter Heating and Cooling.
- Reminder April is our month for donations to the Food Pantry.
- Next Consistory meeting 4-16 (changed due to Pastor Don's vacation)

## CHURCH INFORMATION

**Help us keep our church roster updated. Contact the office with any address or phone changes. Thank you!**

### WORSHIP HOURS

Worship 10:30am

### LET'S COMMUNICATE

OFFICE – Kaley Hamilton, Secretary 330-874-2822

### PASTOR

Pastor Don Perks

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

9:30AM Sept-May

EMAIL – [stjohnsect@aol.com](mailto:stjohnsect@aol.com)

740-310-4557

WEBSITE – [www.stjohnbolivar.org](http://www.stjohnbolivar.org)

[papaperks@gmail.com](mailto:papaperks@gmail.com)

**If you know someone interested in receiving the Epistle by mail or email or if you no longer are interested in receiving the Epistle, please email [stjohnsect@aol.com](mailto:stjohnsect@aol.com) and you will be removed from our list.**