

The Epistle

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

FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY December 2022

Greetings to St. John friends and families,

Happy Thanksgiving! We all know what comes after that big day. We begin gearing up for Christmas. Churches and families all have different traditions when it comes to celebrating the birth of Jesus. Growing up, our family was firmly in the camp that we did not see our Christmas tree decorated and lit until Christmas morning. But, we had neighbors and a few relatives who had their trees up much earlier. Some children received their Christmas gifts on Christmas Eve. I remember one year neighbors down the street using a new sled on Christmas Eve. I was absolutely sure that what they did was cheating. But, now I'm not sure. Many churches have Christmas pageants on Christmas Eve that depict the wise men bringing their gifts to Jesus. Like I said, people have different traditions to celebrate Christmas.

It is also true that churches have different traditions that have developed over the years to celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas. At St. John Church, we are presently fully decorated with trees, lights, Angels, an advent wreath and much more. At 409 Park Ave., it's beginning to look a lot like Christmas. Our sanctuary has been transformed once again.

When I was in high school a movie came out that was a spoof on westerns. It was called Blazing Saddles. While the critics did not care for it at all, it was a box office hit. Towards the end of the movie the town was going to be ruined thus they devised a plan to build an exact copy of their town to trap the bad guys who were coming. They only had a few days to make this happen, but they were able to pull it off. A perfect copy was made that faced only one street. It had a saloon, a barbershop, a blacksmith, a general store and these were exact replicas of Rock Ridge. But as they sat back and looked at what they have created it only took a few moments to realize something was missing. It was the people. So they quickly created perfect carbon copy stand up figures to have in the town to further fool the bad guys. The stage was set. It worked.

While our church is decorated and plans are finalized for our first 9 PM Christmas Eve service, there is something missing. That something is the people. The people are what make the church real. The members and friends of our church along with anyone else who wants to celebrate the birth of Jesus on Christmas Eve need to be present. Without the people, all the decorations are for nothing. It's as if we have empty Christmas presents under our tree. I am also hopeful that you will choose to be present at our four Advent services leading up to this special celebration. Come to celebrate the greatest gift of all.

Let us bring our anticipation and hopes together this year at the church we all make up. St. John United Church of Christ.

On behalf of my wife Kathy and myself I want to wish all a very Merry Christmas.

Pastor Jeff

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December 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm
4 2 nd Sunday of Advent Communion 10:30am	5	6 Community Advent Service @ St. Paul Lutheran Church 7:00pm	7	8 Consistory Meeting 6:30pm	9	10
11 3 rd Sunday of Advent	12 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	13	14	15 Community Meal @ St. Paul Lutheran 11:30am-1:00pm	16	17
18 4 th Sunday of Advent	19	20	21	22 Epistle Items Due	23	24 Christmas Eve Service @ 9:00pm
25 Christmas Day No Worship Service	26	27	28	29	30	31 New Year's Eve

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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:

Continued Prayers: Bob and Joyclin Ely, Missy Jones
Cancer: Missy Horn, Cindy Kirkbride, Holly Myers

AFFORDABLE CHRISTMAS

Once again, the Tusky Valley Ministerial Association has partnered with the Tusky Valley Schools Affordable Christmas project. On December 3rd, the event will take place. Invited families will be able to shop for affordable Christmas gifts at Tusky Valley Intermediate School, pick up free groceries and gift cards at the Bolivar UMC and shop at the Clothes Closet here at St. John UCC. A HUGE thank you goes to Chris Stevenson and the Christmas Committee for all of the hard work throughout the year in raising money to purchase the gift cards to be distributed to families. Also, a thank you goes to all who donated and purchased items at the Basement Sale.



CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

This year, there is a choice of two services. The first service will be held at Zoar UCC at 7:00pm. The second service will be held at St. John UCC at 9:00pm. We hope you will attend one of these special candlelit services. There will be NO worship service held on Sunday, December 25th at either church, so families may be together to celebrate at home.



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THANK YOU

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Hanging of the Greens and the lunch on Sunday November 20th. We enjoyed a delicious lunch, craft projects and everyone helped out decorating the church for the Christmas season. Thank you to EVERYONE who played a part in this day!



Dear St. John UCC and Community, We enjoyed the delicious Thanksgiving dinner that was delivered to us. It was very tasty. We thank all the people who helped make it so very much like Thanksgiving. We thank you again. From, Bob and Joyclin Ely

Dear Congregation, We very much appreciate your generous donation of \$100 to the Friends of the Homeless of Tuscarawas County. Your faithful support of the shelter allows us to provide needed services to our guests as they continue their journey to independent living. Thank you and God bless, Calvin A. White, Executive Director

St. John UCC, Thank you for contributing to the Christian Outreach Food Pantry. We appreciate your support of \$200. Blessings, Janice Currance, Treasurer

CLOTHES CLOSET



We were open twice in October and once in November. Our helpers included Becky M. and Becky W., Chris, Jean, Cathy, Lynn, Birdie, and Jane Hough. On October 24, after closing the Closet we all went to the Towpath for lunch. Once or twice a year we reward ourselves with a social gathering, although the Clothes Closet itself is often a social gathering. We served hot cider and powdered doughnuts to our guests at the end of October. In October, we had nine customers and a little over \$25 in receipts. In November, we had seven customers and took in a little over \$33 dollars.

In December, we will be open on two days. Saturday, December 3rd we will be open from 9:00am to 12:00pm (or 1:00 pm depending on how busy we are) to coordinate with the TV Affordable Christmas project at the Bolivar Intermediate School. We usually have a lot of new customers on that day. In January, we will open on the 9th and the 23rd.

Please come to shop or visit and have a cup of coffee with us. Let us know if you would like a flyer to hand out to a friend or neighbor.

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AMAZON SMILE

It was suggested by a member of the congregation to start an Amazon Smile account. Below is more information on this program. If you have any additional questions, please call the church office.

What is the AmazonSmile Foundation?

The AmazonSmile Foundation is a 501(c)(3) private foundation created by Amazon to administer the AmazonSmile program. All donation amounts generated by the AmazonSmile program are remitted to the AmazonSmile Foundation. In turn, the AmazonSmile Foundation donates those amounts to the charitable organizations selected by our customers. Amazon pays all expenses of the AmazonSmile Foundation; they are not deducted from the donation amounts generated by purchases on AmazonSmile.

How does AmazonSmile work?

When first visiting AmazonSmile, customers are prompted to select a charitable organization from over one million eligible organizations. In order to browse or shop at AmazonSmile, customers must first select a charitable organization. For eligible purchases at AmazonSmile, the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate 0.5% of the purchase price to the customer's selected charitable organization.

How does my organization receive the donations?

Each quarter, the AmazonSmile Foundation makes donations to eligible charitable organizations by electronic funds transfer. Donations will be transferred approximately 45 days after the end of each calendar quarter. To account for Product returns, a portion of the quarterly donations will be withheld until the next donation cycle, subject to any reduction due to returns from prior quarters.

To choose St. John United Church of Christ as your preferred charitable organization, please visit this site to set your account to automatically donate.

<https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1559832>

CONSISTORY MEETING SUMMARY

The Consistory and Pastor Jeff met on October 13th. Pastor Jeff spoke about his Continuing Education trip to Myrtle Beach. He announced his vacation 10/18-10/28 and Rev. Keith Stuart will be serving. Old business discussed was that Bridges Excavating has provided an estimate for combining water lines. Their estimate was accepted. The carpeting and trim work at the handicapped entry and social hall is being completed. New business discussed was having the youth select different missions for the church to donate to. Building and Grounds committee will be asked to have gutters cleaned and replacing broken glass in kitchen. The Congregational meeting will be held on November 20th to approve the budget and the Constitution revisions. Joclyn Kocher will provide a meal after the meeting. Hanging of the Greens will be held following lunch. A budget meeting will be held on November 3rd. St. John will be providing pies, along with Zoar, this year for the Thanksgiving meal giveaway. It was discussed making a yearly list of dates for annual events to provide to congregation to encourage commitment to attend.

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FINANCIAL REPORT – October 2022

<u>October Income</u>				<u>Year-to-Date</u>
10/02/22	\$ 1,237.00	Income	\$ 6,430.51	\$ 62,075.13
10/09/22	\$ 1,205.00	Expenses	<u>\$(8,312.95)</u>	<u>\$(71,462.28)</u>
10/16/22	\$ 1,577.00			
10/23/22	\$ 1,080.00			
<u>10/30/22</u>	<u>\$ 1,331.51</u>			
Total	\$ 6,430.51	Total	\$ (1,882.44)	\$ (9,387.15)

If you would like further details, please feel free to contact the church office.

CHURCH INFORMATION

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

WORSHIP HOURS

Sunday School (Sept-May)
9:30am – Adults and Children
Worship 10:45am

PASTOR

Pastor Jeff Shultz
330-844-1377

LET'S COMMUNICATE

OFFICE – 330-874-2822
EMAIL – stjohnsect@aol.com
WEBSITE – www.stjohnbolivar.org

OFFICE HOURS

Kaley Hamilton, Secretary (Tues-Thurs)
9:00am-12:00pm