

The Epistle

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

FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY January 2022

Merry Christmas members and friends of St. John Church,

This is truly a wonderful time of the year. Homes are decorated, gifts have been purchased, plans have been made to meet with family and friends, and in churches everywhere we will sing of Jesus' birth. I focus primarily on the last part about gathering in churches and singing of Jesus' birth. When I look out in the congregation on Christmas Eve as well as the Sunday's leading up to and following Christmas, I give thanks for each person who was still able and chooses to attend church with others who believe as they believe.

At the same time I am thankful however, I'm also looking out and seeing many empty seats. So many people have drifted away from the church, from our church. A few have begun attending churches elsewhere which is perfectly fine. Many churches are able to guide people along their faith journey. But the larger percentage of people who no longer come to our church are likely not attending any church at this time. I'm afraid that they haven't just drifted away from our church, but have also drifted away from God.

The church exists today to be God's witness to those who have not heard the good news. But what happens when someone has heard the good news and responded by being a part of the church and is no longer choosing to be a part of the church? I believe that we are challenged in 2022 to increase our witness and impact in the Bolivar community, not to call attention to what we are doing, but to what God is doing through us. Our clothes closet ministry impacts many people with affordable clothing. In the year ahead we need to be looking for other opportunities to share the love of God with people in new and exciting ways. I am open to any suggestions from anyone who is reading this newsletter.

At the same time, as we welcome suggestions for ministry opportunities we will be having a Wednesday evening fellowship, discussion and Bible study in the parlor at 7pm. I hope that many folks who attend our church will choose to be a part of this and to also invite friends or extended family to join us. I am also open to other small group opportunities to help build working relationships to better serve our Lord and Savior.

I want to take a moment to thank so many of you for your generosity, cards, and kindness to me and my family during 2021 and especially this holiday season. I look forward to serving God and St. John for many years to come.

Looking forward to the year ahead, Pastor Jeff

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January 2022						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 New Year's Day
2 Altar Communion 10:30am	3	4	5 Fellowship Bible Study 7:00pm	6 Epiphany	7 <i>Lindsay Goudy</i>	8
9 Adult Sunday School starts 9:30am	10 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	11	12 Fellowship Bible Study 7:00pm	13 Consistory Meeting 6:30pm	14	15 <i>Beth Carpenter</i>
16 <i>Virginia Regula</i>	17 <i>Don Baad</i>	18	19 Fellowship Bible Study 7:00pm	20	21	22
23 Annual Congregational Meeting 11:30am	24 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	25 Epistle Items Due	26 Fellowship Bible Study 7:00pm	27 <i>Zach Brinkman</i>	28 <i>Rod Cropper</i>	29
30 <i>Ann Scott</i>	31	Birthdays are listed in italics				

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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! Remember the shut-ins and 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:

All frontline/healthcare workers,

Nila Baad, Bob and Joyclin Ely, John Fenstermaker, Pam Farnsworth, Nina Gaut, Barb Goldsmith, Missy Jones, Matt McNutt, Holly Myers, George & Lynn Rootring, Crystal Weaver, Dave Whitting

CLOTHES CLOSET



In November, the Clothes Closet welcomed six customers and had receipts of a little over thirteen dollars. We were open only one day in November and workers included Cathy, Jane, Birdie, Becky M. Jean Gauding, and Chris S.

In December, we were open twice and had a total of 23 customers and receipts of almost \$145. We were open on the Saturday of the Affordable Christmas Project coordinated by Tusky Valley Schools and had several new customers on that date. Becky Wolf, Kaley and Cathy were the workers. Mr. Murphy, the school Superintendent, stopped by to visit and thank us for being open for the people who were participating in the Affordable Christmas at the Bolivar Intermediate School. Workers on our regular open date December 13th included Jean, Chris, Becky M. and Cathy.

Our next open dates will be January 10 and 24.

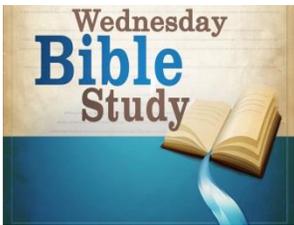
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ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School will begin on Sunday, January 9th at 9:30am. Please join us in the parlor as we plan this new class.



FELLOWSHIP BIBLE STUDY



On January 5th at 7:00pm St. John UCC will begin a new Adult Bible Study, facilitated by Pastor Jeff. This group will meet in the parlor every Wednesday evening for discussion and fellowship. The first meeting will be an organizational one, so plan on attending and offering any ideas or suggestions to the group.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

The annual Congregational Meeting will be held on January 23, 2022. We will meet after worship service for this meeting to go over the annual report.

THANK YOU

Thank you to the congregation for the gift card given to me for Christmas. It was really appreciated. From, Barb Norman

St. John UCC, We very much appreciate your generous donation of \$100 which will help provide for the shelter guests and allow us to continue our mission to serve those in need of our communities support. May you have a blessed and joyous holiday season!

From, Friends of the Homeless



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CONSISTORY MEETING SUMMARY

Consistory and Pastor Jeff met on November 11, 2021. Old business discussed was the success of the Basement Sale. We raised almost \$1100 to purchase gift cards to give out at Tusky Valley Affordable Christmas. All remaining items were donated to Harvest Thrift Store. The Hayride on Oct. 24th was also successful with 43 in attendance. Sam Stohlmiller from Zoar UCC has fixed the snowblower and mower. New business included increasing the budget for outreach/growth to \$1000. We will also increase giving to OCWM by \$500. Money will also be used for our upcoming anniversary celebration in 2022. Thanksgiving meals are being distributed on Nov. 21st. Our church, along with 2 others are donating the pies. A donation of \$500 to Share a Christmas was approved. Community Advent Service will be held at St. Paul Lutheran Church on Dec. 8th.

FINANCIAL REPORT – NOVEMBER 2021

<u>November Income</u>			<u>Year-to-Date</u>
11/07/2021	\$ 1,815.00	Income	\$ 74,180.65
11/14/2021	\$ 1,877.00	Expenses	<u>\$(70,193.98)</u>
11/21/2021	\$ 1,302.00		
11/26/2021	\$ 660.00	Transfer MMA	
<u>11/28/2021</u>	<u>\$ 1,467.00</u>		
Total	\$ 7,121.00	Total	\$ 3,986.67
Christmas 2021		(34 Gift Cards on Hand)	
Balance as of 11/30/2021			\$ 273.42
Deposit-Basement Sale		\$ 1,043.40	
Deposit-Basement Sale		\$ 185.00	
<u>Dollar General-66 gift cards</u>	<u>\$(660.00)</u>		
11/30/21 Total Deposits		\$ 1,228.40	
11/30/21 Total Expenditures	\$(660.00)		
11/30/21 Balance on Hand			\$ 841.82

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