

The Epistle

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

FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY May 2022

200th ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

We are excited to announce that 2022 marks the 200th anniversary of St. John UCC in Bolivar. To celebrate this milestone, we are planning several events throughout the spring and summer. Our first event will take place on May 15th. We will hold a special worship service at 10:30am, which will be attended by past ministers who will share memories of their special time here at St. John. Noah Carpenter will be our guest organist. After the worship, there will be a lunch served. We are asking for you to RSVP for the lunch by calling the office at 330.874.2822 or by signing the sheet on the bulletin board at the church. Future events will be held on June 19th, July 17th and August 14th. Stay tuned for details!

A Short History of St. John UCC of Bolivar

Around 1819, there was a small community of settlers a short distance south of the present Bolivar. This Zutavern Community, by 1822, had a “Society of German and English Lutherans”. The Church Society met in homes until 1833 when a log church was built 2.5 miles southwest of Bolivar on the present County Road 422. Many people traveled from the new town of Bolivar to the Zutavern Church for services. In 1853, a group of members from the Bolivar vicinity left the Zutavern Church and organized an independent congregation known as the German Evangelical Lutheran Church of St. John in Bolivar which was formally incorporated in 1856. When St. John Church joined the German Evangelical Synod of North America, it changed its name to St. John Evangelical Church, the name still visible in large letters in the window over the entrance to the present building.

With the merger of the Evangelical Synod and the Reformed Church in the U.S. in 1934, St. John changed its name to St. John Evangelical and Reformed Church. Another merger came in 1957 with the Congregational Christian Churches and St. John became known as St. John United Church of Christ.

The original church was built in 1871. Later, two Sunday school rooms and a new entrance were added and in 1925, a basement was dug under the church by hand. In 1951, wings were added to the sanctuary and the basement was remodeled. The education wing, offices, additional bathrooms and a vestibule were added in 1968-1971. Extensive remodeling of the sanctuary and the basement fellowship hall and kitchen were completed in 1986. A future project to upgrade the handicap accessibility to the sanctuary and bathrooms are being looked at.

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Greetings to all,

Spring is without a doubt my favorite season of the year. What's not to love? Warmer temperatures, flowering bushes, and planting flowers to enjoy throughout the summer ahead. However, my favorite part of spring includes celebrating the story of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This year in April, I will have officiated at four funerals which included at each funeral sharing that very story. It's a great story. It's really the story of our lives too. When God sent Jesus into the world he offered us the opportunity for forgiveness and freedom from guilt for the times that we have sinned and fallen short. I so look forward to sharing this story on Easter in church as well. It's a story that each and every one of us is responsible to memorize and to be able to share with others who have not experienced the good news of Jesus' resurrection and the hope of their own resurrection after death.

The past 11 weeks since I fell and broke a few ribs, I have been very limited in my physical activities. The result is I am much weaker now than I was three months ago. The only way to address this is to begin to exercise wisely so as not to hurt myself again. I have already seen some improvement in the last few weeks. There are so many ways to regain my strength that I am being surprised at how fast things are coming back to me. However, if I were to sit as I did while my ribs were healing then my strength would certainly not return and there wouldn't be much I could do. I choose to move to gain back my strength as quickly as possible.

There are many things we can do to strengthen our faith and relationship with God. First, is to be around other Christians who have an active faith themselves. Coming to church is always my recommendation for hearing God's word, singing, and lifting our prayers and joys before our Lord. Reading the scriptures or having devotions daily keeps our faith strong and ready for whatever challenges we might face. Rest assured that in our lives each and every one of us will face challenges and loss. How we prepare for these times will determine how we overcome and move forward from those times.

It is important that we care for our physical needs as well as our spiritual needs. When someone has been in the hospital for a period of time they lose much of their physical strength and are often discharged to a place where they can receive physical therapy to gain back that strength. Sometimes they even have that therapy in their homes. It's amazing how our bodies can once again gain back the strength that we've lost. The same is true of our spiritual lives. Once someone has been away from the church for a period of time and they return, their faith comes back to them once again. Their love of God returns.

It is my hope and prayer that St. John will be a place where people can experience a renewing of faith in their lives over and over again. I thank you for your prayers and your faithfulness to our Lord and Savior as well as His church.

Pastor Jeff

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May 2022

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion 10:30am	2 <i>Carolyn Bee</i>	3	4	5	6 <i>Joclyn Kocher</i>	7
8 Mother's Day	9 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	10	11 <i>Max McCoy</i>	12 Consistory Meeting 6:30pm	13	14
15 200 th Anniversary Celebration/Luncheon 10:30am	16	17	18	19 Community Lunch @ St. Paul Lutheran 11:30am-1:00pm <i>Arline Mase</i>	20 <i>Missy Jones</i> <i>Tonya Winters</i>	21 Mother Daughter Banquet 6:00pm
22 Confirmation Class Informational Meeting/Luncheon followed by Nature Hike 11:30am	23 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	24 Epistle Items Due	25 <i>Sharon</i> <i>Marcanthony</i>	26 Ascension Day	27 <i>Janet Stewart</i>	28 <i>John Stewart</i>
29	30 Memorial Day	31	Members and friends birthdays are listed on the calendar.			

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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,

Bob and Joyclin Ely, Nina Gaut, Barb Goldsmith, Forrest Holdsworth, Maddy Jones, Missy Jones, Debbie and Randy Levengood, Darlene Martin, Matt McNutt, Holly Myers, Sharon Roberts, George Rootring, Pastor Jeff Shultz, Peter Stenz, The Family of Wanda Stucky, Dave Whitling

MOTHER DAUGHTER BANQUET



On May 21st, there will be a Mother Daughter banquet held in the fellowship hall at 6:00pm. Tickets are \$5 per person and 12 and under are free. There will be a pasta dinner served, door prizes and entertainment by Front Page Barbershop Quartet. All ladies are invited! Bring your grandmother, mom, daughter, sister or friend to join us in the food and fun. Tickets can be purchased in the church office or from Joclyn Kocher or Becky Wolf.

THANK YOU

To Pastor Jeff and to all those who made Wanda's memorial a success:
We truly love Bolivar St. John. Thank you so much. From, John Stucky



CLOSET CLOTHES



In March, the Clothes Closet held two Dollar-a-Bag sales. Twenty-six bags of clothing were sold to help reduce our winter clothing inventory. Receipts were \$27.50. Fourteen customers visited the Closet in March.

In April, we had a total of eleven customers and receipts of a little over

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thirty-nine dollars. \$148 was put aside for a bank deposit. Workers for March and April included Chris Stevenson, Becky Wolf, Cathy Fenstermaker, Jean Gauding, and Chuck F. (who filled in when we were short of helpers!)

Our next open dates will be May 9th and 23rd.

CONSISTORY MEETING SUMMARY

Consistory and Pastor Jeff met on March 10th. Pastor Jeff reported that he has 2 upcoming funerals; one in April and one in June. He will be discontinuing the Wednesday night TNT Group due to lack of participation. Old business discussed was meeting to revise/review the church constitution. Dale Duerr is handling the repair of deteriorating drywall in the social hall. He will also discuss painting in the sanctuary with the Building and Grounds Committee. The Mother Daughter Banquet will be held on May 21st. It was decided to once again participate in the Strawberry Festival parade on June 11th. Community VBS will be held July 10-14 at St. Paul Lutheran Church. Our church will provide snacks. New business discussed was Confirmation Class. It will begin in September. There will be an informational meeting for parents and children on May 22nd after church. Letters will be sent to families that have children ages 12 and up regarding the class. Lenten Service will be held on March 30th and the kitchen committee will provide a lunch. Church Anniversary Celebration dates are set for May 15th, June 19th, July 17th and August 19th with special events planned.

FINANCIAL REPORT – MARCH 2022

<u>March Income</u>			<u>Year-to-Date</u>
3/06/2022	\$ 2,565.00	Income	\$ 17,640.83
3/13/2022	\$ 597.00	Expenses	<u>\$ (21,466.42)</u>
3/20/2022	\$ 527.00		
3/27/2022	\$ 760.83		
Total	\$ 4,449.83	Total	\$ (1,987.86)
			\$ (3,825.59)

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

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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 10:30am

CHURCH STAFF

PASTOR

Pastor Jeff Shultz
(330) 844-1377

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

Kaley Hamilton

CUSTODIAN

Barb Norman

ORGANIST

Mary Birk

CHIME CHOIR DIRECTOR

Gretchen Deubner

LET'S COMMUNICATE

OFFICE – 330-874-2822

EMAIL – stjohnsect@aol.com

WEBSITE – www.stjohnbolivar.org