

The Epistle

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

FRIENDSHIP•MISSION•SPIRITUALITY September 2023

I've been thinking lately about what it means to be the people of God. The Bible uses several descriptions when referring to the church or the people of God. But one of my favorite descriptions of the people of God is found in Psalm 100:2, ***"Know that the Lord is God. It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, the sheep of His pasture."*** How do you feel about being a sheep? I don't know much about sheep, only what I've read and what I've heard from other people. But the Bible talks a lot about sheep and generally not in real positive terms. Isaiah says, "All of us like sheep have gone astray" and Jesus tells the story of the lost sheep. My favorite passage on sheep of course is found in Psalm 23.

In Psalm 23, David tells us what it is like to be a shepherd who is responsible for sheep. Sheep need a shepherd to lead them to green pastures for food, still waters to drink and even fight off their enemies to protect them. It sounds like sheep are not self-sufficient, and without a shepherd they will die from hunger, thirst or an enemy attack.

A number of years ago Donna and I visited the Holy Land of Israel. While we were there, we stood on the precipice of a mountain side staring into a valley that our guide said may have been the valley that David led his sheep through on his way from Bethlehem to Jericho. The mountainside opposite of us had a ledge that ran the entire length of the valley, but on this morning, it was covered with dark shadows from the landscape and tree tops. Our guide then shared these words, "Sheep are skittish and timid, and while walking through this valley filled with shadows of darkness, they most likely would be afraid. But sheep only have to remember one thing when they are in a dark valley. Keep your eyes on the shepherd, he knows the way through the valley."

We are living in days which appear to be filled with much darkness and uncertainty. When faced with times like this it may be easy to become anxious and fearful. Let me remind us that like sheep we need to keep our eyes on Jesus. He knows the way through whatever path we may be traveling. And like David we can also proclaim, "Yea though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will not fear, because Thou art with me O Lord."

Looking to the good Shepherd,

Pastor Don

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September 2023						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Country Breakfast 8:00am-11:00am
3 Communion	4 Labor Day	5	6	7	8	9
10 Rally Day Bowling Party @ Alley in the Valley 3:00pm	11 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	12	13	14 Consistory Meeting 6:30pm	15	16
17	18	19	20	21 Free Community Meal @ St. Paul Lutheran Church 11:30am-1:00pm	22	23
24 Guest Lay Minister Arline Mase	25 Clothes Closet 9:00am-12:00pm	26 Epistle Items Due	27	28	29	30

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BIRTHDAY LIST

September 3 – Laine Bradford
September 22 – Dale Duerr
September 22 – Dennisyn Kocher

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:

Bob and Joyclin Ely, Kate Hamilton, Sami Harris, Missy Jones, Stacie Metcalf, Clara Mae Millhorn, Pam Miller, Holly Myers, Jane Regula, Fern Stutzman, Adam Vogel

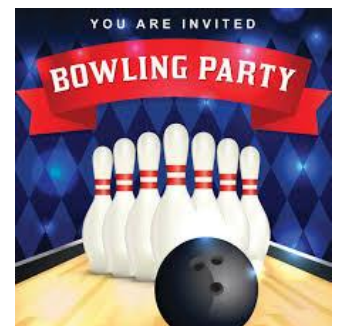
COUNTRY BREAKFAST



Our next breakfast of the summer will be held on Saturday September 2nd from 8:00am-11:00am. Breakfast will include: Scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, breakfast bakes, grits, fruit, sweets, biscuits and sausage gravy, pancakes, juice and coffee. Cost: \$9.00 ages 11 and up, \$4.00 ages 6 to 10, Under 6 – Free. All proceeds from this event benefit local mission projects.

RALLY DAY

To celebrate Rally Day this year, the church will be having a bowling party on September 10th at 3:00pm. It will be held at Alley in the Valley in East Sparta. Pizza, snacks and beverages will be provided. Everyone is welcome!! Please bring a friend!



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BASEMENT SALE

Mark your calendars for our annual basement sale. It will be held October 13, 14, 20, 21. We are accepting donations now. They can be dropped in the fellowship hall. Arrangements can be made with the church office or with Chris Stevenson for drop off. All proceeds from this event go to the Tusky Valley Affordable Christmas project which gives a “hand up, not a hand out” to families in the district to assist with their Christmas.



CLOTHES CLOSET



The Clothes Closet was open on two days in August and all nine of our official helpers showed up to work on one or both of those days. You don't have to be an official helper to come and enjoy the fellowship. You can shop, help sort clothes, or just have a cookie, some coffee, and

conversation.

In August we had nineteen customers. We had more visitors than that because many people shop together and count as one customer. Our receipts for the month totaled just under sixty dollars.

Our next open dates will be September 11 and 25. In September there will be Dollar-A-Bag sales to reduce our inventory of summer clothing before unpacking the cold weather things. (Yes, it's that time already!) On October 2, we will have a Clothes Closet sorting day to clear out the last of the warm weather clothing. We will start gathering at 9am (come when you are able) and work until we get tired. On our spring clearing day, we stayed till almost 2:30 pm.

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FINANCIAL REPORT – July 2023

<u>July Income</u>				<u>Year-to-Date</u>
7/02/23	\$ 2,040.00	Income	\$ 9,582.08	\$ 49,493.65
7/09/23	\$ 1,485.00	Expenses	<u>\$(5,016.89)</u>	<u>\$(36,756.54)</u>
7/16/23	\$ 3,490.00			
7/23/23	\$ 1,176.58			
<u>7/30/23</u>	<u>\$ 1,390.50</u>			
Total	\$ 9,582.08	Total	\$ 4,565.19	\$ 12,737.11

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

LET'S COMMUNICATE

OFFICE – Kaley Hamilton, Secretary 330-874-2822

EMAIL – stjohnsect@aol.com

WEBSITE – www.stjohnbolivar.org