


First St. John Journal



Volume 30, Issue 12

December, 2017

We have officially begun that wonderful season of waiting and watching known as Advent. Small children, of course, are waiting for Christmas Eve and the coming of jolly old St. Nicholas.

I heard about one little boy who climbed onto Santa's lap. Santa asked the usual question: "And what would you like for Christmas?"

The child stared at him open-mouthed, horrified. Then he gasped, "Didn't you get my Snapchat?"

Well, let's hope Santa consults his Snapchat account while he is deciding which toys he will be bringing this Christmas.

Hopefully we all will be awaiting the celebration of God's greatest gift to humanity--the gift of God's Son.

The next few weeks will be a time of exhausting activity--buying presents, attending parties, mailing holiday cards, etc.

One woman tells about the busy holiday season at her house. She said she and her husband, Richard, had a truly hectic season. Running out of time, she went to a stationery shop and asked them to print their signature on their Christmas cards so they wouldn't have to take the time to sign each one.

Soon they started getting cards from friends. The cards were signed things like "The Modest Morrisons," "The Clever Clarks," and "The Successful Smiths."

"What's going on here?" she asked herself. Then she looked closely at a copy of the preprinted card. In her rush, she had forgotten to spell out her husband's entire first name. So she had mailed out one hundred cards neatly imprinted with the words, "Happy Holidays from the Rich Armstrongs."

Well, whether we are named Richard or not, you and I are rich this Advent and Christmas season if our hearts are filled with the peace, love and joy represented by Bethlehem's babe. Without the Christ child's presence, however, this will be simply another hectic holiday.

There was a story in an issue of *Reader's Digest* not too long ago. It is a brief, true story from a lady named Ann Douglas Vaughan who lives in Newport News, Virginia.

Ms. Vaughn writes that when she was ten, she found a wallet. There wasn't any money in it, but even at ten years of age she knew how these things worked. She couldn't wait to return the wallet and get her reward! All day long she called the phone number she found in the brown leather wallet, but no one answered.

Finally, her dad relented and drove her to the owner's address. Once there, they found a modest housing unit with a torn screen door. Then her dad did something quite unexpected. As he rang the bell, her dad took three \$20 bills and tucked them into the empty wallet.

Ann Douglas Vaughan writes, "Turns out my reward [for returning the wallet] was getting to see one of life's true heroes in action." She was, of course, referring to her dad. In her eyes her dad was a hero because of his generosity to a stranger who genuinely needed it.

Christmas is a time for generosity. Why? Because the generosity of God was displayed at Christmas. On Christmas we celebrate the world's most important gift. **God "gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life . . ." (John 3:16).**

Dismiss it as silly sentimentalism, if you will. But in our world where billionaires live lives that would have made Solomon in all his glory envious, and in our world dominated by the pursuit of pleasure and the almighty dollar, we need the reminder of the Christmas story that the truly important things in life bear no price tags. Love for God and love for one's neighbor is all that matters in the story of the first Christmas. Everything else decays and dies but these alone are eternal. Christmas is a time for generosity.

I hope the gift of God's Son is also a reminder to us that the greatest gifts are not material. It is never the size of the gift that matters, but the love behind it. Sometimes, simply the act of showing someone they matter is the best and brightest gift.

— Pastor Rayl

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Births

8-17-17 *Jackson Ryan Metzker*, born to Ryan and Jennifer (Nowacki) Metzker.

Baptisms

11-19-17 *Jackson Ryan Metzker*, born August 17, 2017 to Ryan and Jennifer (Nowacki) Metzker. Sponsors are Shane and Courtney Boldt.

Marriages

None.

Deaths

10-25-17 Willie Moritz

Transfers To First St. John

None.

Transfers From First St. John

Norm & Sue Shank to St. Mark's Lutheran in Bowling Green, Ohio.

ELDERS FOR DECEMBER

	<u>7:45 am</u>	<u>10:15 am</u>
3rd	Tom Gaskins Terry Ruedy	Sherrie Haar Bob Haar
10th	Joanne Henningsen Jeff Ladd	Dick Haar Bob Hecklinger
17th	Kevin Ruedy Mike Winslow	Ryan Hugueley Linda Yenrick
24th	<u>One Service 10:15:</u> Tom Gaskins Terry Ruedy	

Christmas Evening Services — TBA

31st	Dick Haar Bob Hecklinger	Joanne Henningsen Jeff Ladd
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HATS, GLOVES, MITTENS & SOCKS COLLECTION

THANK YOU to all who donated hats, gloves, mittens and socks to our annual program for needy children in our area. Our collection for this year has ended. Thank you for your generosity.

CHICKEN & HAM DINNER UPDATE

Our event was a great success. We served over 736 dinners, and proceeds were about \$4,970. A huge thank you to everyone who worked so hard!



HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday, so we'll have one morning service at 10:15 am and our evening celebrations at 7:00 pm and 11:00 pm. JAM Sunday School will show a movie during the 9:00 am hour.

New Year's Eve: We will have our regular Sunday schedule at 7:45 and 10:15 am. JAM Sunday School will show a movie during the 9:00 am hour.

The church office will be closed on Christmas Day, New Year's Day, and January 2nd.. We will resume our regular Sunday schedule on January 7th.

CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Dear Church Family: On December 10th your church council will hold First St. John's annual congregation meeting after both the 7:45 am and 10:15 am church services. We have many topics to discuss and vote on that will direct your church into the future.

I ask each member to please attend one of the church services on the 10th so you can be informed, voice your questions or concerns to your church council, and vote on the issues needing your direction. Please—your attendance and voice is important to make this meeting successful. Thanks.

— *Bill Nelson, Church Council President*

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

To keep current information for the office, if your name, address or phone number changes, please notify us by faxing (419-691-7220), or mailing this form to: 2471 Seaman St./ Toledo, OH 43605 or email: office@firststjohn.com

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____



FAMILY CHRISTMAS PARTY

If you sent an RSVP for the Family Christmas party, please join us in the gym on Sunday, December 3rd at 5:00 pm. Dinner by Takacs Catering begins at 5:30 pm, followed by a children's puppet show. Then the Waite High School orchestra will perform, and our Taylor Layman will be with them. See you there!

HELP FOR LOCAL BENEVOLENCES

During Advent, we offer an opportunity for members to help fund our local benevolences such as the East Toledo Ministry, Lutheran Social Services, Feed Your Neighbor, and Genacross Lutheran Services. Special Advent envelopes can be found in the pews if you wish to donate. You can place your donation in the offering plate or mail it back to the church. Thank you.

THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY GROUP

We will meet on Thursday, Dec. 7th when Pastor Rayl returns from vacation. Change of venue: we will meet at the Black Forest Cafe on the GAF grounds at 11:00 am for a holiday lunch.



ALTAR GUILD NEWS

The last day to accept poinsettia orders is Thursday, December 7th. (See order form on page 5.) Please turn your order in to the church office by then. You also can order poinsettias in the Narthex after church on December 3rd.

The Altar Guild will meet Monday, December 11th at 6:00 pm at Beth Hugueley's home for their year-end meeting and Christmas celebration.

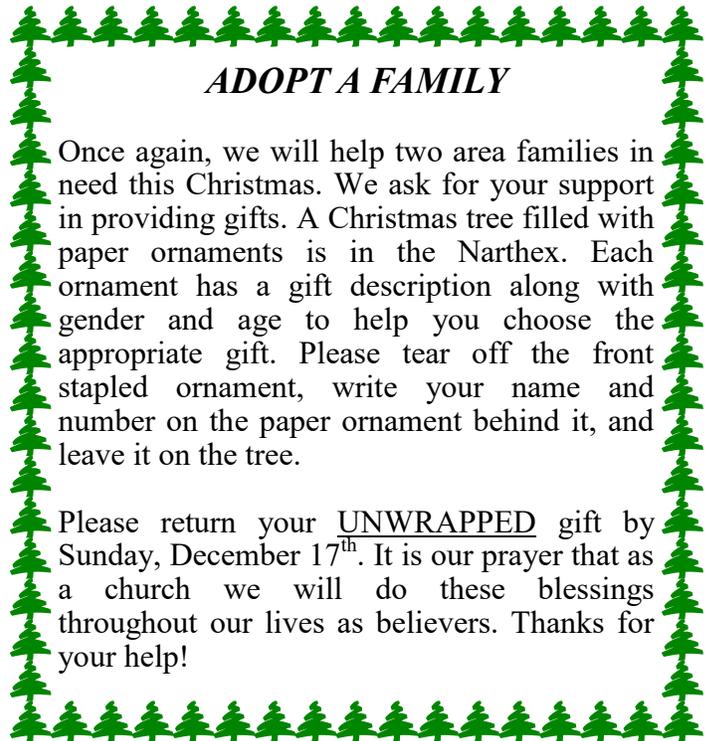
WOMEN'S CIRCLE CELEBRATIONS

Rebecca Circle: Saturday, December 2nd at noon at Firehouse Subs on Navarre Ave.

Miriam Circle: Wednesday, December 6th at 10:00 am at the Oliver House.

Ruth Circle: Tuesday, December 12th at 11:30 am at the Black Forest Café for our Christmas lunch and circle meeting.

Hannah Circle: Because of our hectic holiday schedules, our celebration is on hold until January.



ADOPT A FAMILY

Once again, we will help two area families in need this Christmas. We ask for your support in providing gifts. A Christmas tree filled with paper ornaments is in the Narthex. Each ornament has a gift description along with gender and age to help you choose the appropriate gift. Please tear off the front stapled ornament, write your name and number on the paper ornament behind it, and leave it on the tree.

Please return your UNWRAPPED gift by Sunday, December 17th. It is our prayer that as a church we will do these blessings throughout our lives as believers. Thanks for your help!

**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21st
AT NOON (no later, please)**

2018 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2018 will be in the lounge in December and January. They will be in alphabetical order on tables along the wall by the double doors. Envelopes are issued to confirmed and contributing members and, upon request, friends who worship with us. If a husband and wife share offering envelopes, the designation "M/M" and the husband's name will appear on the box. (The computer allows only one name per assigned envelope number.)

If you would like to receive envelopes or if there is a correction to your address or name, please call the church office at 419-691-7222. **Reminder:** Please do not use your 2018 envelopes until January 7th. If you want a contribution included on your 2017 statement, you must turn it in to the office by Sunday, December 31, 2017.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD UPDATE



Thank you to everyone who filled a shoebox for the Operation Christmas Child program. We collected 84 shoeboxes, and they were delivered to our drop-off point on November 19th. Great job!

First St. John Lutheran Church Prayer Chain
(As of November 28, 2017)

Crisis Prayer List: *For those who need prayers in urgent matters such as surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Will be moved to the Chronic list after the first month unless someone is contacted about special circumstances:*

**Family of Willie Moritz
Bob & Rose Ruch
Tom Smith**

On-going Concerns Prayer List: *For those who need prayers for ongoing serious situations such as cancer treatments, medical struggles, recovery and/or personal situations. Will be moved off the list after 3 months unless someone is contacted about special/continuing circumstances:*

**Maureen Albright
Karyl & Lee Antoine
Karen Bless
Jeannette Carlo
Carol Cheatham
Greg Contat
Jackie Curtis
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
Shirley Dipner
Teresa Ellis
Dorothy Felderman
Patty Gable
Kathleen Gingrich
Rachel Guido
Donna Haar
Julius Haller
Heather (no last name given)
Marcia Henninger
Rose Hensley
Tom Iserman
Mark Kieswetter
Ada Kreger
Ilean Labuhn
Kate Lajti
Scott Langlois
Janice Logsdon
Jeanette Miller
James Moore
Mary Bell Moore
Bill Morse
Beth Myers
Chuck Neal
Pam Pirolli
Hunter Potter
Gene Price
Mike Ray
Sheryl Rayl
Michael Rheinbolt & Family**

**Dr. Steve Rowe
Tom Sabin
Phyllis Schuffenecker
Connie Singlar
Joan Tilton
Tom (no last name given)
Steve Uzl
Julie Woodrum
Darlene Worz
John & Grace Yard
Olga Zimmerman**

Please check the above list and let any of the prayer chain contacts--listed in the next column--know if individuals can be moved off the list.

Prayer Chain Contacts

Carol Abbey 419-351-9795 or
cabbey@jcrinc.com

Lynn Folk	419-309-7977
Donna Koehn	419-693-5030
Ada Kreger	419-693-1549
Gloria Ross	419-836-7166



**JOIN OUR CHURCH
FAMILY!**

Pastor Rayl will conduct a New Member class in January. If you are interested in becoming a member of First St. John or just learning more about our faith and practices, please send your RSVP to Pastor Rayl either by email (pastor1@firststjohn.com), text (567-395-0143), or by contacting the church office at 419-691-7222 or office@firststjohn.com

SECRET SANTAS NEEDED!

Genacross Lutheran Services (formerly the Lutheran Home at Toledo) is seeking people to adopt a resident for Christmas. If you are interested, call Diane Cline at 419-724-1739 to get a resident's name and their wish list. Please wrap your gift, place a name tag on it, and drop it at the Activity Department.

The deadline for bringing gifts is Friday, December 15th. Thanks for helping to make a resident's holiday a little brighter.



MEMORIALS

2017 POINSETTIA SALE

Sponsored by the Altar Guild

ROOF FUND

In memory of Ellen Bick by Terry & Jane Schuetz.
In memory of Willie Moritz by Jim & Kim Cousino, Bob & Sherrie Haar, Jerry & Ginny Nissen, Ken Villhauer, Jean DeWitt, Marge Bollinger, Terry & Jane Schuetz, Ruth Cummerow, Larry & Cheryl Moritz and family, Linda Ashbaugh, Mark & Deb Ackerman, Richard & Kathy Galatocky, Paul Kuhlman, Ann Brewer, Gene & Janet Schacht, Mary & Dean Lowe, Alan & Marilyn Miller, Frank & Barb Meyers, Carolyn Lovell, Janet Morrison, Dan & Velma Koenig, Eileen Young, Bill & Donna Nelson, Kevin & Kris Ruedy, Jim Harrell, Sandra Stahl, Phil & Kathy Meeker, Esther Bell, Margie Myers and family, Jeffrey & Debra Crammond, Elaine Gladieux.

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of Willie Moritz by Penny DeWitt.

CEMETERY

In memory of Roy Moritz by Joanne Crandall.
In memory of Joyce Villhauer by Joanne Crandall.
In memory of Willie Moritz by Dwaine Betz, Dawn Peiffer.

DAY SCHOOL SCHOLARSHIP FUND

In memory of Willie Moritz by the Men's Breakfast Fellowship.

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Our next men's breakfast will be Saturday, December 2nd at 8:00 am at Bob Evans Restaurant on Navarre Ave. If you need a ride, please call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.



SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join us on Sunday, December 17th at the 10:15 service for the JAM Sunday School Christmas program.

All participants will rehearse on Saturday, December 16th at 11:00 am in the church. On the day of the program, please have your children here at 9:00 am for a quick practice before the service at 10:15. If you have questions, call Morgan Williams at 419-261-0431 or Darlene Paul at 419-691-1068.

Fill in the order blank below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship services on Christmas Eve. Place your order form in the offering plate or mail it to the church office.

Payment must accompany orders. Please make checks payable to: **First St. John Altar Guild**

Deadline for placing orders is Thursday, December 7, 2017

No. of plants @ \$9.00 each _____

Color (circle one) Red White

Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

In Honor of (Living):



Season's Greetings!

Christmas is fast approaching! I feel like I just passed out Halloween candy and attempted to buy some Thanksgiving plates and tablecloths with none to be found. Already in early November, everything was Christmas. I was at the Franklin Park Mall on Sunday afternoon (Nov. 19), and after driving around the parking lot a couple times and finally finding a place to park, I screamed to no one in particular, "I am not doing any Christmas shopping!"

I need Advent, the four weeks prior to Christmas-- a time of preparation. I remember as a child we would receive a special advent calendar from church. It contained Bible verses to read each day. During that time, we talked about why Baby Jesus came into the world. Our sins separated us from God; we lived in darkness. At church there was an Advent wreath with four candles. Each Sunday one candle was lit which represented hope, peace, love, and joy. With the lighting of each candle, the light got brighter and brighter.

So many events swirl around and darken the world we live in. At times it makes me fearful for young children growing up in an uncertain world. Just as the candles are lit each week and bring more light into the church, so we as Christians need to remember the hope the Messiah brought into the world. As we read and study God's Word, the peace He offers can reassure us that in spite of what we see, God sees the big picture-- His plan of salvation for all mankind.

We must keep God's light shining through us into the hearts of all the little children. Whether the children hear about Jesus in their homes, churches, or schools, they are our future and the future of our church. Our goal is to reach out to the children and their families in our community. Prayer is needed daily!

Through 2,000 years of history Jesus is still "*The everlasting Light, The hopes and fears of all the years, . . . met in thee tonight.*"

Merry Christmas from all the staff at First St. John Day School.

— Carol Felderman

Special Invitation

Everyone is welcome to attend the Day School children's Christmas programs on the evenings of December 12, 13, and 14. All programs are at 7:00 pm in the church sanctuary. Come and have your spirits lifted after a hectic day at home or work. Sometimes you just need a little extra time with God to get you in the Christmas spirit.

SPORTS PHOTOS NEEDED

Attention, sports fans! Bob Haar is putting the final touches on the First St. John Sports Almanac: "75 Years of First St. John Lutheran Athletic Achievement." He is short some photos of the girls' and womens' softball teams of the early 70's and the men's softball teams that played in Loop Park and Railway Park in Walbridge in the 70's and 80's. Please check your old photo albums for these and other pictures we could include. Please send them to Bob Haar or to the church office to Bob Haar's attention. Thanks!

CHRISTMAS TREE DECORATING

If you would like to help decorate, please meet in the church at 9:00 am on Saturday, December 2nd.



2018 CALENDARS

Eggleston-Meinert-Pavley donated 2018 calendars. You can pick them up in the lounge or Narthex until supplies run out.

CATECHISM CLASSES HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

No 7th grade catechism on December 24th or 31st. No 8th grade classes on December 26th or January 2nd.

2018 FLOWER SIGN UP SHEETS AVAILABLE



Altar flower sign up sheets for January through November of 2018 are in the red flower book located on the shelf under the main bulletin board in the Narthex (lobby), to the left of the main doors when you come into the church.



DAY SCHOOL IS HIRING

First St John Day School needs additional part-time staff for the 2017-2018 year. We have added more children, so we need an assistant for our 3-year-old classroom, as well as substitutes. Our children are energetic and curious, so we are looking for an energetic and nurturing individual to keep up with them. Candidates must submit to background checks. Some computer training is required. If you are interested, please send a resume to:

Carol Felderman
2471 Seaman Street
Toledo, OH, 43605

Or, if you prefer, you can email your resume to Carol at fsjdayschool@firststjohn.com or call 419-691-6480 for more information.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY ITEMS FOR DECEMBER



Our designated items for December are band aids and disposable razors. Please deposit your items in the pull-out drawer to the left of the Feed Your Neighbor bin in the Narthex (under the main bulletin board) or in the bright green bin in the lounge. PLEASE NOTE: Remember, no travel size or sample items—the families who come to this pantry need items to last them an entire month. Thank you for your generosity.

CHRISTMAS BOOKS AND DVD GIFTS AVAILABLE

Check out the Christmas Book Fair in the entrance area to find a great gift for that special child to tell the story of the very special baby who was born in Bethlehem that first Christmas morning. A portion of each purchase is donated to our Day School.



BELL CHOIR CONCERT WRAP-UP

First St. John and St. Mark's bell choirs performed a wonderful concert on November 19th for 121 people in our sanctuary. Directors Kim Fletcher and Cheri Sergent directed the two groups in 14 songs. Both choirs jointly performed the last song, which was "Faith of Our Fathers." What a great "partnering" with our sister church. Thanks to Esther Bell, Darlene Lorenzen, Chris Hunsaker, and Jane Neal for hosting the refreshments afterward.

SAVE THE DATE— CHILI MEAL & COOK-OFF

A Chili Meal and Cook-Off fundraiser for the Roof Fund will be held on Saturday, January 20th from 4:00 - 6:30 pm in the gym. This "all you can eat" dinner will include assorted varieties of chili, hot dogs, macaroni and cheese, salad, applesauce, cookies, and beverages. Tickets will be sold after worship services on December 31st, January 7th, and January 14th. You can also pay at the door. Ticket prices are: Ages 13 to adult: \$7.00, children 4-12: \$3.00, and children 3 & under: free.

Please join us for a warm January meal and, if you wish, vote for your favorite chili. ***Prizes will be awarded for the two chilis with the most votes.*** Donations of chili (in crock pots) and cookies are appreciated to help make this event a success. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Carol Haar at 419-540-2163.

CRAFT SHOW UPDATE

Thanks to all the crafters, bakers, and those who helped set up and tear down the gym. A big thanks also to those who donated baked goods and food for the lunch. We had a great turnout and may hold spring and fall shows for 2018. We had 39 vendors, and we raised \$1,299.50, which was donated entirely to the "Raise the Roof" fund. Thank you so much!



ARE YOU MISSING SOME COOK WARE?

Cake and pie pans left over from the Chicken & Ham Dinner are located on the counter by the refrigerator in the lounge.

Also, two slow cookers were left over from last year's Chili Cook-Off. Please contact the church office to claim them.

WELCA NEWS

At our General Meeting on Monday, November 20th, we approved our 2018 budget. The officers for 2018 are: Sue Ann Rogers, President; Chris Hunsaker, Vice President; Darlene Lorenzen, Secretary; and Esther Bell, Treasurer. Thanks to all who attended.

Our next WELCA Board meeting is Monday, December 18th at 6:30 pm in the lounge. All women of the church are welcome to attend.