



First St. John Journal



Volume 24, Issue 12

December, 2011

Everybody soon will be looking for that “very special gift!” But in today’s economy, it might be a bit harder to find and even more difficult to pay for this year.

But I do know of a gift that will cost you nothing. I know a gift you can share with everyone in your family, and even those outside your family. This gift has been shared around these parts now for 150 years, and probably much longer than that.

This gift will *not* make you and I look younger; it will *not* take away the wrinkles, and it will *not* affect our waistlines. But it might make us love God more, love life more, and be less afraid of, well, everything!

In 2nd Corinthians 9:15 Paul wrote: “Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!” The gift of God’s Son, Jesus Christ, is for everyone-- for hearts yearning for love and acceptance, for those looking for meaning in this short journey we call life, and for something as outrageous and incredible to grasp as eternal life with God. Jesus is God’s beautiful and incredible gift, given for all of us.

So, come and join us this busy December and receive again the greatest gift that God can offer. Come to sing, to eat, to pray, and to celebrate.

Come, all ye faithful – joyful and triumphant!

— Pastor Blohm

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE



December 18: Due to the lateness of the symphony concert and their departure, set-up for Sunday services will be extensive. To allow more time to make sure everything is back to normal in the church, we will not have a 7:45 am service. We will have Sunday School and the 10:15 service. We apologize for any disappointment.

Christmas Eve:

- 11:30 am Chapel Service
- 7:00 pm Christmas Eve Service
- 11:00 pm Christmas Eve Service

Christmas Day: Since Christmas Day falls on Sunday, we’ll have one service on Christmas Day at 10:00 am in traditional format with communion during the service.

No Sunday School Dec. 25th, Jan. 1st, or Jan. 8th. Church office will be closed on Mon., Dec. 26th and will reopen on Tues., Dec. 27th.

New Year’s Day: New Year’s Day also falls on Sunday, and we will again have one service at 10:00 am in contemporary format.

Regular **church** schedule resumes on January 8th.

NOTICE TO ALL GROUPS

Please do not schedule any activities in the church or the lounge after 2:00 pm on Friday, December 2nd or between noon and 4:30 pm on Saturday and Sunday, December 3rd and 4th. The Oregon Historical Society tour of our church will be taking place during those times.

Also, please do not schedule anything in the church on Friday, December 23rd after 6:00 pm. The Altar Guild will be decorating with poinsettias for the Christmas Eve services. Thank you.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES



Births

None.

Baptisms

11-13-11 *Sydney Kathleen Brown*, born August 7, 2010 to David and Jeanette (Tousley) Brown. Sponsors are James Tousley and Shannon Buie.

Marriages

None.

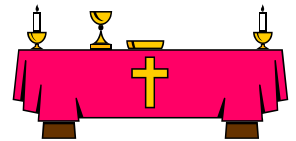
Deaths

11-8-11 Marian Chaney

Transfers To / From First St. John:

None.

ALTAR GUILD BAKE SALE & OTHER NEWS



The Altar Guild will have a bake sale on December 11th following both services in the Narthex. Stop by and get some wonderful treats and support our Altar Guild and all the work they do.

The Guild will meet on Monday, December 5th at 6:30 pm in the lounge for their year-end meeting and Christmas dinner.

JOEL HAMILTON'S CHRISTMAS CD

To those who ordered Joel Hamilton's Christmas CD last month, they have arrived and are in the church office. Please call Toni in the church office (419-691-7222) to arrange to receive your CD. Thank you for ordering; proceeds go to help the Cherry Street Mission.

WHAT'S THIS ENVELOPE FOR?

During Advent and Lent, we offer the opportunity for members to help fund our local benevolences. If you wish to participate, write a check, place it in the envelope, and either mail it back to the church or place it in the offering plate. Thank you.



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregational meeting will be Sunday, December 11th at both services. We'll vote on the 2012 budget and new council members. The proposed budget is included in this newsletter (or in a separate attachment if your newsletter is emailed). If you have questions about the budget, please call Jim Sommers at 419-691-7719 or 419-297-7420.

ELDERS FOR DECEMBER

	<u>7:45 am</u>	<u>10:15 am</u>
4th	Eric Johnson Linda Kusian	Linda Erdmann Jeff Smith
11th	Jeff Smith Jim Swanson	Mike Winslow Dick Haar
18th	No 7:45 service. See Page 1	Kevin Ruedy Bill Nelson
24th	Christmas Eve — TBA	
	<u>10:00 am</u>	
25th	Eric Johnson Linda Kusian	

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 _____

MEMORIALS

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of **Joan Bailey** by Bob & Sherrie Haar.
In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Altar Guild
by Bob & Sherrie Haar.

CHOIR

In memory of **Kay Counterman** by Richard &
Marjorie Counterman.
In memory of **Marian Chaney** by Roy & Rita
Riegle, Jerry & Ginny Nissen, Deb Lofquist, Earl
Warnke, Ernie & Marge Bollinger, Dave & Di
Habegger, Esther Bell, Chuck & Jane Neal, Mindy
Yap, William & Julie Moritz, Pastor Gerald & Ilean
Labuhn, Betty TenEyck, Bob & Sherrie Haar.

DAYSCHOOL

In memory of **Floyd Koester** by Carol Lanoie.
In memory of **Don Cousino** by Chris Johnson.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

In memory of **Maxine Holmes** by Georgia Huebner,
Heidi & John Tosnadi, Carl & Janet Morrison, Dave
Glowczewski, Ken & Janet Romstadt, Gary &
Jeaney Diefenthaler, M/M Don Meier, Jeff & Robyn
Mack and family, Lynn Balogh, Helen Doney, Jack
Billings, Michael Kulakowski, Rodney & Nancy
Clevenger, Karen Frey.

CEMETERY FUND

In memory of **Robert Brown, Jr.** by Mary Lou
Huss, Gene Hagedorn, Esther Bell.

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of **Marian Chaney** by Marilyn Cashen,
Gene Hagedorn.
In memory of **Genevieve Roecker** by Gene
Hagedorn.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of **Marian Chaney** by Rick, Annie and
Nick Strause, Tom, Sandy and Kevin Garverick,
Esther Ames, Chuck Bell, Penny DeWitt, Jean
DeWitt.
In memory of **Ross Batchman** by Mary Batchman.

LIBRARY NEWS



The library has a new Christmas book, given anonymously. **A CUP OF COMFORT** is a book of Christmas prayer edited by Susan Townsend. This is a book of prayers and stories that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas.

Thought for the day: If we take time to plan, we will enjoy the gift of God's perfect plan— Jesus.

—Marilyn Cashen

HOW TO MAKE YOUR OFFERING GIVING MUCH EASIER...

The Simply Giving program is a **simple** way of making your contributions count. If you can't make it to church-- you're on vacation, work, family events, illness, overslept, etc., your contributions will still go toward helping us maintain all the expenses needed to operate our church. Just fill out the form on the next page and put it in the offering plate or fax it (419-691-7220) to the church office.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE DECEMBER 22



DECEMBER CIRCLE NEWS

MIRIAM: We will meet on
Wednesday, December 7th at 10:00
am at the Bayberry Creek Clubhouse on Coy Rd.
for a potluck brunch.

RUTH: We will meet on Tuesday, December 6th
at 11:00 am at BJ's Hideaway Steakhouse on
Lallendorf for our Christmas lunch.

HANNAH: We will meet on Monday, December
5th at 6:30 pm at Karen Holmes' house. Bring a
snack to share.

** We did not receive news from the Rebecca
Circle in time to publish in this newsletter. Please
see your circle chairman for December activities.

Mail completed form to:
 Vanco Services, LLC
 12600 Whitewater Dr. Suite 200
 Minnetonka, MN 55343



Fax completed form to:
 952-983-8665

Member Enrollment and Authorization Form

Complete This Section for ALL Enrollments (Please Print)

1	Last Name		First Name		Middle Initial
	Mailing Address		City	State	ZIP Code
	Home Telephone Number		Work Telephone Number		
2	Check the appropriate box: <input type="checkbox"/> New enrollment/authorization <input type="checkbox"/> Change in authorized amount <input type="checkbox"/> Change in account				
3	Gifts/payments should be taken from:		REQUIRED: I authorize Thrivent Financial for Lutherans and Vanco Services, LLC to automatically withdraw contributions/tuition payments/donations from my account. I have attached a voided check or savings deposit slip. This authority will remain in effect until I give reasonable notification to terminate the authorization.		
	<input type="checkbox"/> Checking (attach a voided check) <input type="checkbox"/> Savings (attach a savings deposit slip)				
	Routing Number _____		Account Holder Signature _____		
	Valid routing # must start with 0, 1, 2, or 3				
	Account Number _____				
*** ATTACH EITHER A VOIDED CHECK OR A SAVINGS DEPOSIT SLIP ***					

Complete This Section for Lutheran Congregation Donations

5	Congregation Name		Street Address		
	City		State	ZIP Code	
	Frequency of Funds Transfer (Please check only one): <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly on Monday <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly on Friday <input type="checkbox"/> Semi-monthly (transferred on 1st and 15th of each month) <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15th		Church Fund Designations: General/Operating \$ _____ Building \$ _____ Evangelism/Outreach \$ _____ _____ \$ _____ _____ \$ _____ <div style="text-align: right;">TOTAL \$ _____</div>		Amount \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____ \$ _____
	START DATE: _____				
	Church Envelope Number: _____				

Complete This Section for Lutheran School Tuition Payments

5	School Name		Street Address		
	City		State	ZIP Code	
	Total annual tuition for all family members \$ _____ Divided by number of monthly payments (see below) Amount of each monthly payment \$ _____		Date of first payment: _____ Date of last payment: _____		Student's Tuition Number: _____
	Please contact your school for information on: • Payment duration options (e.g., 10 months or 12 months) • Date the first and last payments are due • Date during each month that the transaction will occur • Student's school tuition number				

Complete This Section for Lutheran Institution Donations

5	Institution Name		Street Address		
	City		State	ZIP Code	
	Date of Monthly Gift Transfer (Please check only one): <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 1st <input type="checkbox"/> Monthly on the 15th Amount of each monthly gift (minimum \$5) \$ _____		Date of first payment: _____ Date of last payment*: _____		* Note: If you want your gift to be given continuously until you notify us to change the amount or stop the gift, please write "CONT." as the date of the last payment.

FOR CONGREGATION/INSTITUTION OFFICE USE ONLY

Congregation/Institution Code: _____		Date: _____
Envelope/Participant Number: _____		Verifier Initials: _____



JAM (SUNDAY SCHOOL) CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join us on Sunday, December 11th at the 10:15 service for the Sunday School Christmas program. A reception will follow in the lounge.

Rehearsal will be Saturday, December 10th from 10:30 am to noon in the church.

If you have any other questions, please call Jamie Blazevich at 419-691-7222.

MEN'S MINISTRY NEWS

Hey guys, our next men's breakfast will be Saturday, December 3rd at 8:30 am at the Bayshore Supper Club on Bayshore Rd. Note the time and location change.



This is our advent breakfast, so please join us. If you need a ride, please call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.

MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGES

Eric & Tamera Hugueley
522 Quail East Dr.
Oregon, OH 43616
(Reese)

1st LT Michael R. Pavley
11 W. 11th St. Apt. 32
Columbus, GA 31901



ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY REMINDER

If you sent an RSVP for the Adult Christmas Party, please remember to join us on Sunday, December 4th at 6:00 pm in the gym. Takacs Catering will prepare a chicken paprikas dinner for us. Our musical entertainment is from a group called All About HIM, a gospel group from Perrysburg, that will sing Christmas music and lead a sing-along. Hope to see you there!

2011 POINSETTIA SALE

Sponsored by the Altar Guild

Fill in the order blank below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship services on Christmas Day. 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 Sunday, December 4, 2011.

No. of plants @ \$8.00 each _____

Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

In Honor of (Living):



Christmas Sugar Plums and Mouse Tails

From the Mouse

Thanksgiving, the Puritan religious celebration, has become a pagan holiday also. I am sure we are not all on the same page regarding the meaning, however. Christians move right into the Advent / new church year season culminating into Christmas.

Our recently celebrated “All Saints Day” and Christmas are Christianity’s answer to a couple popular pagan customs dating back to the time of Christ. Halloween’s “Day of the Dead” theme became the Christian “All Saints Day” and the “Winter Solstice” became Christmas.

The winter solstice was the beginning of a long, dark, and cold period of time at the beginning of a new year. Bringing evergreens and greenery into the homes was believed to dispel the gloom and evil spirits of the cold winter’s night.

The early Church designated December 25th to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, “The Light of the World.” Time and traditions have again blended a Christian and pagan event into one of our favorite holidays, “appealing to the innocent childlike side of our nature, which perpetuates this happiest of customs.”

Some things do not change, however. Today we are concerned about the use of live trees at Christmas. This is not a new problem. In 1755, “Forestry laws passed in this year for Salsburg, Germany, forbade the cutting of small evergreens from the forest, thus indicating that the trees’ increasing popularity was putting a strain on the natural resources of the area.”

There are several legends involving the Hessian soldiers (German mercenaries) and Christmas trees during the time period of the American Revolution. However, the tradition of a decorated tree was introduced and carried out by the Lutheran church in many German and Pennsylvania Dutch settlements. American trees were decorated with cookies, candles, fruits and homemade paper items. The custom of the decorated tree spread the fastest in regions settled by German immigrants. The southern regions such as Virginia and the Carolinas carried on the traditional English customs of feasting and decorating with greenery. Puritan New England was slow to adopt any Christmas customs.

Christmas trees became popular and accepted in the 1850’s, with the exception of a few religious denominations, some of which still ban them.

The “more mature” among us may remember the traditional German Christmas over three days. Heilige Abend, Christmas Eve, was a rather somber time to reflect, be religious, and be with family. Christmas Day was spent with family, and the 26th was a celebration with friends. Christmas Eve or Christmas Morning was gifting time.

Many of our elders were acquainted with the German Weihnachtsmann. He is an old Santa Claus alternative. I know you have seen him in better gift shops. Unlike our chubby, bright, red-coated Santa, the Weihnachtsmann is tall, somber, and thin with a dark-colored long coat without fur trim. He carries an armful of tree switches and an old tattered sack. He gives to the good and bad children on Christmas Eve night. The bad children received a lump of coal, a rotten apple or a switch. The good received a gift. I never received a lump of coal, but I have had some rotten apples and endured the switch once or twice that I can remember.

How did our founders celebrate the first Christmas? Someone suggested they sang “Silent Night.” That is probably true, but it would have been the original German. “Stille Nacht” was written for Christmas Eve in Oberndorf, Austria 1818. “Stille Nacht” was published in New York City in 1838, but was not translated to the English “Silent Night” until 1863, two years after St. John’s first Christmas.

(continued on page 7)

Christmas Sugar Plums and Mouse Tails

(continued from page 6)

We do know that electricity did not come to the church until 1918, and Christmas tree lights were purchased then. Prior to that time burning candles were used. Many chose not to have lights on live trees for fear of fire.

We still hear "Keep Christ in Christmas." The origin of this was in the 1930's when there was an effort to call Christmas "XMAS." The slogan became "Keep CHRIST in Christmas." The reason for the season!

The Sunday School presented a Christmas skit or the Christmas story with every child reciting a line or two. The little children sang "Away In The Manger," and the adults sang various carols. All were rewarded with a small box of candy and maybe an orange. Oranges were out of season, rare and expensive. As a child it was the only orange I had.

In those days one gift was all you could expect. Christmas shopping did not start until the day after Thanksgiving, the stores closed at 6 PM, and they were not open on Sunday.

There are many Christmas traditions that vary considerably by location. One tradition I hope you all are keeping is the plate of cookies and milk for Santa's stopover. Leave an extra cookie or make them crumbly so your mouse can celebrate also!

Keep Christ in Christmas – The Reason for the Season. The Light of the World.

CHICKEN & HAM DINNER UPDATE

Thank you for making our dinner a great success. We served over 650 dinners. Thanks to everyone who worked, contributed, and spread the news about our dinner. Lots of volunteers, good weather, and excellent food helped us make a profit of \$4,195.94 (\$305 of the total was from the craft and bake sale). Proceeds will help fund various projects in the church for the coming year. Thank you!!!

HOLIDAY HOME TOUR



The Oregon-Jerusalem Historical Society's 2011 Holiday Home Tour is scheduled for Saturday and Sunday, December 3 and 4 from noon to 4:00 pm both days. This year's tour will feature the "Old Eastmoreland" subdivision. This subdivision was developed in the 1920's and was one of the first in Oregon. In addition to the 6 homes being featured, the tour will include First St. John and the Lutheran Orphanage Society that are both celebrating their 150th anniversaries this year.

Tours begin at 15-minute intervals on both days; times may be scheduled by contacting Connie Isbell at 419-367-5254 or Wanda Rice at 419-691-8328. Advance tickets are \$10; tickets at the door are \$12. We look forward to seeing you for this holiday tour.



SOCKS FOR GRADE SCHOOL CHILDREN STILL NEEDED

There is still a GREAT need for socks for children in grades K – 8 – ALL SIZES NEEDED. If you can help, please place your donations in the specially marked boxes in the Narthex and/or in the lounge. Thank you.

2012 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes for 2012 will be in the lounge in December through the end of January. They will be on tables in alphabetical order. 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 number assigned.)

If you would like to receive envelopes or if there is a correction to your address or name, call the church office at 419-691-7222. *Reminder:* Please do not use your 2012 envelopes until January 1st. If you want a contribution included on your 2011 statement, you must turn it in to the office by Friday, December 30, 2011.



And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. — Luke 2:9-12

Dear Friends,

It's hard to believe Christmas is almost here! How did it creep up on us so fast? Our focus this month is on the birth of our Savior as we experience the awe and wonder of the true meaning of Christmas -- that God came to earth as the little baby Jesus to be our Savior and King. This is truly a season filled with joy and wonder! We anticipate the excitement will grow as the children learn the story of Jesus' birth and prepare for the Christmas programs they will share with their families and friends and, hopefully, some of you! They will learn Advent means "coming," and we must use the next four weeks to get ready for the special birth. They will learn the best present of all is Jesus, and that He is from a God who loves us all!

Thanks to all who helped with our Thanksgiving Feasts! Pastor Blohm, Jamie Blazeovich, Bill Caldwell, Diane Habegger, Laura DeWitt, Marge Bollinger, and Janet Fox were all on hand to help serve and clean up. Gene Hagedorn set up tables and chairs many different times...in many different ways, and to do pretty much anything else I asked him! And, as always, Toni Wilbarger assisted those who needed questions answered or assistance with the elevator. We fed almost 1,000 people again this year, and the extra hands were so appreciated.

Our Christmas programs will be in the church the evenings of December 12, 13, 14, and 15 beginning at 7:00 pm. We also have three programs during the day on the 14th and 15th. WELCA will present gift bags to the children following the program. What a wonderful way to reach out to the families of the school! Once again, thank you for your support.

We plan to carol this year at both the Lutheran Home and at the Alzheimer's Day Center. This is a gift the children love to give, and it is a moving

experience for all involved. This is part of our ministry that we pray continues to strengthen. Please keep it in your prayers.

Our focus on the true meaning of Christmas will culminate with a birthday party for Baby Jesus. A long-standing tradition at the Dayschool is the Spanish custom of La Posadas where we walk through the halls knocking on doors and looking for room for Baby Jesus. Eventually we end up in the church where a Nativity scene has been set up. We are so happy when we finally find room and are allowed to enter! We lay our gifts at the manger and sing Happy Birthday to Jesus.

By Design, a group that allows time for moms to join in fellowship, will begin the third Tuesday of January. We hope this will be rejuvenating, uplifting, fun, and enriching to all involved. Look for more information in this newsletter.

Join us in prayer that our children will follow the teachings of a God who loves them so much that He gave them His Son and that our teachers be renewed in their faith, continuing to serve God through serving children.

We, the staff of First St. John Dayschool, want to take this opportunity to wish you all a blessed and joyous Christmas season.

Merry Christmas from Us All

2012 CALENDARS AVAILABLE

New 2012 calendars from Eggleston-Meinert-Pavley are available for pick up in the lounge.

SECRET SANTA PROGRAM

The Lutheran Home needs individuals or groups to "adopt" its residents for Christmas. To obtain a resident's name and his or her wish list, contact Diane Cline at 419-693-0751. Please wrap your gift and place a name tag on it to identify who the gift is for. The deadline to return gifts to the home is Friday, December 16th. Thank you for your help.

First St. John Lutheran Church Prayer Chain

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 Ross Batchman
Tim Smith**

Chronic 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:*

**Anonymous Family
Family of Joan Bailey
Jordyn Beckhusen
Jessie Blanchong
Melissa Boos
Rosie Burtch
Emma Carpenter
Family of Don Cousino
John Deuble
Bernie Erdmann
Chad Everhardt
Jerry Gears
Pastor Brian Hodge & Family
Herman Jeskey
Kailea (no last name given)
Paul Kuhlman
Ronnie Lamantia
George "Skip" McCullough
Family of Kruse Navarre
Charles Nelms
Charlie Ohlson
Sarah Pawlaczyk
Gene Price
Cathy Redmond
Zee Robinson & Family
Family of Virginia Rowe
Hilda Saelzler
Bishop Sanchez
Keith Snider
Jodi Toth
Jon Van Sant
Bob Webb
Candy Webster
Dorothy Welniak
Terry Williams
Raetta Zeisler**

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

Prayer Chain Contacts

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

Lynn Folk 419-691-3410
Donna Koehn 419-693-5030
Ada Kreger 419-693-1549
Gloria Ross 419-836-7166



CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR THE HOMEBOUND

Poinsettias for our homebound members will be in the lounge beginning December 4th after the evening Christmas party. Please take a moment to pick up a plant and deliver it to one of our homebound members. Thank you.

NOVEMBER COUNCIL MINUTES (continued from page 12)

New Business- Jim Sommers handed out the 2012 proposed budget. He explained it in detail and also thanked the finance committee for their dedication to preparing the budget. Gary Henningsen mentioned that the Trustees can stay within their budget. Bill asked for a motion to accept the 2012 budget. Gary made a motion to accept the budget, Mike Winslow seconded the motion and the motion was passed. It will now go before the congregation for approval at the congregational meeting on December 11th.

Bill advised that one elder and the president position are still open and it is extremely important these positions be filled in order for Council to run effectively.

The chicken and ham dinner was a great success with 149 carryout and 440 dinners served.

Bill asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Gary Henningsen and Dave Warnke seconded it and the motion passed.

Respectfully submitted,
9 Brenda Fussell

MILITARY ADDRESSES

Here are the names and addresses of members, family, and friends of First St. John who serve in the military. Please remember them especially at this time of year. You can send cards or packages, and remember to pray for them, too! Thank you.

TSgt Kevin Fouty
Address temporarily unavailable

SGT Nick Grady
2711B Chow Circle
Kailua, HI 96734

Chief Petty Officer Cynthia Henderson
44425 Scobee
California, MD 20619

Chief Petty Officer Marc Le Duc
78382 Dukewood Trail
Yula, FL 32097

1st LT Michael R. Pavley
11 W. 11th St. Apt. 32
Columbus, GA 31901

Matthew Phillips
4924 Soaring Springs Ave.
Las Vegas, NV 89131

Captain Lindsey Rowland
Madison Barracks
237 Bartlett Dr.
Sackets Harbor, NY 13685

CHRISTMAS DECORATING INFO

Since the Toledo Symphony will need lots of space for the December 17th concert, our large Christmas tree cannot be put up until after the service on December 18th. The rest of the decorations will be up, along with a donated 9-foot tree that will be taken down when our regular tree goes up. We apologize for any disappointment.



TOLEDO SYMPHONY INFORMATION

The entire Toledo Symphony will perform a Christmas concert at First St John on Saturday, December 17th.

Ticket Sales: Tickets are SOLD OUT. Hope you got yours early!

How to Help: We also need volunteers to help this event go smoothly. If you can help, please contact the church office or Bill Caldwell.

This should be an exciting event and a fitting way to celebrate 150 years of First St John members' faithful service to the community and world. We hope you will be here to share it with us.



BY DESIGN...

"Don't be concerned about the outward beauty that depends on fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should be known for the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God."

— 1 Peter 3:3



By Design, a group that allows time for moms to join together in fellowship, will start on January 17th at 9:30 am in the lounge. By Design is for moms with children from newborns to age 12 or for anyone who thinks they could mentor moms of young children. Child care and breakfast will be provided.

The group meets monthly through May on the third Tuesday of each month at 9:30 am. We hope this endeavor will be rejuvenating, uplifting, fun, and enriching to all involved.

If you would like to either attend or help with this group, contact either Jamie Blazevich at 419-691-7222 or cedir@firststjohn.com OR Barb Shellhammer at 419-691-6480 or b.shellhammer@firststjohn.com



PROJECT: GIVE A BLESSING

Attention Students and Congregation:

We have an amazing opportunity to help an area family in need this Christmas. We ask for your support by providing gifts for this family. A Christmas tree filled with paper ornaments is in the Narthex. On each ornament is a detailed gift recommendation, along with gender, to help you choose the appropriate gift. Please tear off the front stapled ornament, then write your name and number on the other paper ornament and leave it on the tree.

Please return your unwrapped gift by Thursday, December 15th. It is our prayer that as a church we will do these blessings throughout our life as believers. Thank you in advance for your help!

Blessings,
Jamie Blazeovich
Christian Education Director



ATTN: CATECHISM STUDENTS

Our pizza party will be December 19th. No catechism on December 26th or January 2nd because of the holidays. We'll resume classes on January 9th.

FEED YOUR NEIGHBOR

In December we will concentrate on diapers, baby food, and formula. Of course, canned goods and other non-perishables are always needed. Please place your items in the bins in the Narthex (under the main bulletin board) and the lounge (near the double doors). No glass containers, please. Thank you for your help.



FROM THE C.E. DIRECTOR'S DESK—YOUTH ACTIVITIES FOR DECEMBER

"This is Christmas: not the tinsel, not the giving and receiving, not even the carols, but the humble heart that receives anew the wondrous gift, the Christ." -- *Frank McKibben*

Check out Romans 5:15-17 (NLT)
This scripture talks the awesome gift of Christ!

The Greatest Christmas Gift

Each year we are reminded that Christmas should not be just about giving and receiving presents. But if we really think about Christmas, it truly is all about gift giving! At Christmas we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, the greatest gift ever given, by the greatest gift-giver of all, our wonderful God and Father!

DECEMBER EVENTS

Dec. 4 - 9am Sunday School practice during Sunday School.

Dec. 10 - 10:30—12:00 Christmas Program Practice in Sanctuary.

Dec. 11 - No Sunday School. Christmas Program Performance during 10:15 service. Please arrive at 9:00 a.m.

Dec. 25 - January 8 —
No Sunday School

**Merry Christmas and
Happy New Year!**



COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES—NOVEMBER 8, 2011



The meeting was called to order by Pres. Bill Caldwell. The devotions were done by Pastor Blohm. Bill took roll call. The minutes were read and approved from the October 18 meeting.

Board of Education-Working on building a relationship with the Day School and the Youth – open to any suggestions. Also preparing for the Christmas play, which will be on December 11th at the 10:15 service.

Elders Report- Not much to report. Weddings are done for the year. There will be no Thanksgiving service. Christmas programs and historical tour are coming up. The Historical tour will be Saturday, Dec. 3rd and Sunday, Dec. 4th from noon to 4pm each day. Dayschool Christmas programs are Monday, Dec. 12th, Tuesday Dec. 13th, Wednesday, Dec. 15th, and Thursday, Dec. 16th at 7:00 pm each evening. Also, on Wednesday and Thursday of that week, there are daytime Christmas programs at 10:15 am on Wed. & Thurs., and also a 2:15 pm program on Thursday.

Property Management Report-Work needs to be done on the shingles and flat roof on the church. The work is to be completed in the next one - two weeks. The choir room wall and window repairs have been completed.

Treasurer Report/Finance Report- Lisa presented the treasurer's report. Details of the designated funds were discussed. We are still showing a shortfall in current funds of \$16,496.23. It's still possible to make up that amount with 2 months to go until year end.

Youth Report- Fifteen cars participated in Trunk or Treat. Preparing for Christmas play which will include 1-line speaking parts along with singing Christmas carols. A Thanksgiving potluck will be held on November 19

Dayschool Report-Thanksgiving Feast will begin Tuesday, Nov. 15th and run through Friday, Nov. 18th. Thank you to First Federal Bank for their contribution of paper products.

The George and Elaine Ackerman Scholarship fund has been established and will award a minimum \$1000 scholarship toward tuition for a kindergarten student in financial need every year.

The Day School Christmas programs will be held at 7:00 p.m. on December 12, 13, 14 and 15. There will be no reception in the gym this year.

WELCA has donated hats and mittens to Dayschool families.

Prayer Buddy program is going well.

Jamie is a joy to work with. Work continues on the shared ministries.

Pastor Report- Pastor Blohm reported that 6 individuals held their hands around a Gerbera daisy to use as logo for the new mom's group starting in January. There were no transfers in or out. Christmas Eve services will be at 7:00 and 11:00. Christmas day will have one traditional service at 10:00. Confirmation class continues to train with Frank on acolyte duties. LeAnn Winslow has helped also. Bernie Erdman is at Cleveland Clinic today, but we haven't heard how he is doing. Norma's brother passed away today. Please keep Norma and Bernie in your prayers.

Old Business- Bill reported that plans for window replacement in the education building and parking lot renovation have been put on hold temporarily.

Cemetery restoration is continuing as weather permits. Joanne Crandall is working on the cemetery history and inputting it into burial computer records. In the past, burials would have netted \$200-\$300 additional that would help with perpetual care. This is no longer the case, so we need to find ways to increase cash flow for perpetual care. A cemetery committee will be formed this winter.

We have received extremely generous donations for the Toledo Symphony concert. We still need volunteers to help with setting up the church prior to the concert.

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