



# First St. John Journal



Volume 25, Issue 1

January, 2012

**J**anuary, 2012 – can you believe it? Here we are, 12 years (or is it 11 years?) into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Each new year tends to remind us of years past, of the “good old days” when life was different and we were younger.

Our resident published author, office administrator, wife, and dog owner, Toni Wilbarger, recently had an article published in *The Christian Communicator*, a Christian writing magazine. Her article might help us to see things from a new and better perspective. Here is Toni’s article:

## Reasons for Joy

I once read about a woman who spent so much time on the couch that her skin fused to the cushions. Although I didn’t go that far, I did lay on my couch for many hours over several months watching TV reruns and mourning the loss of “the good old days.” I wallowed in waves of discontent.

My “good old days” seemed full of promise and excitement as I pursued my dream of writing and selling novels. I attended conferences where I met agents and editors. I mailed dozens of book proposals to publishers and agents. Sometimes those “in the know” praised my writing. But after 12 years of hard work, I had nothing to show for my efforts.

I dreaded running into acquaintances because they’d always ask, “So, how’s the writing going?” Rejection after rejection crushed my hopes. I thought about how happy I was when I started my dream and how miserable I was now. My stomach felt as if someone had punched me. I couldn’t wait to go to bed each night and escape into sleep. Finally, I gave up my dream.

But once my dream was gone, I had no idea what to do. Cleaning the house, paying the bills—was that all my life was supposed to be? If so, then my life was meaningless. I was meaningless. I was waiting for lightning to strike, for the answer to hit me between the eyes. Until it did, I was not moving from the couch.

After several months, I decided I couldn’t watch television my entire life. Another stupid TV show? Another laugh track? I turned off the TV and reached for the Bible. I wanted to read something that fit my mood, and I remembered Solomon writing in the book of Ecclesiastes that everything was meaningless. Yeah, that summed up my life.

But once I started reading, I realized Solomon’s wisdom was not confined to his proverbs. In Ecclesiastes 5:19b, 20 he writes about contentment: “To enjoy your work and accept your lot in life—that is indeed a gift from God. People who do this rarely look with sorrow on the past, for God has given them reasons for joy.”

If enjoying my work and accepting my life were gifts from God, then I desperately needed them. I asked God to help me accept the life He’d given me, to enjoy my work, and to stop looking backward with sorrow and longing. God showed me that whatever I’d accomplished and whatever I owned were gifts from Him. He’d given me good health, a loving husband, a nice home, a job, and enough money to meet my needs. That was more than many people had—more than I deserved. As I accepted those gifts and learned to focus on God, the Giver, I dwelled less on the dream I had not achieved.

Getting off the couch and asking God for help were my first steps toward contentment. I still catch myself looking backward, so I know I have more steps ahead. But I’m learning to thank God for what I have instead of torturing myself with what I don’t. When I thank Him for my life, contentment follows because I know He has given me “reasons for joy.”

## OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD UPDATE



Seventy-three boxes were collected and safely delivered to Pilgrim church on Sylvania Ave. Thanks to everyone who packed a box, prayed for the child receiving it, and to Pastor Blohm for the special blessing for all the boxes.

## MEMBER UPDATES

- Births** None.
- Baptisms**
- 11-26-11 *Madelyn Noeleen Phillips*, born September 19, 2011 to Matthew and Michelle (Habegger) Phillips. Sponsors are Brian and Denise McGee.
- 11-27-11 *Haileigh Grace Bradford*, born July 28, 2011 to Justin and Jessica (Gerrard) Bradford. Sponsors are Ashley Stewart and Jennifer Bradford.
- 12-27-11 *Marco Thomas Cervantes*, born August 30, 2009 to Rick and Alice Cervantes. Sponsors are Phil and Mary Ann Cervantes.
- Marriages** None.
- Deaths**
- 12-22-11 Steve Singlar  
12-25-11 Eleanor Habegger
- Transfers to / from First St. John:**  
None.

## COUNCIL DINNER

A dinner and brief meeting will be at Cousino's Steakhouse on Woodville Rd. on Tuesday, January 17th at 6:30 pm for all current, incoming, and outgoing council members and their spouses. Dinner is taken care of, you will only be responsible for your drinks. Please RSVP to Keith Mullen at 419-345-3474 or to the church office at 419-691-7222 by Tuesday, January 10th, or you can email the church at [office@firststjohn.com](mailto:office@firststjohn.com)

## ELECTION RESULTS



Dear Congregational Members,

The church council appreciates your time and effort in attending and voting at the congregational meeting in December. The outcome of the meeting gave approval for the budget. If anyone has additional questions or would like to further discuss the budget, please call Lisa Anderson at 419-693-1232. Thank you to everyone who ran for council. Please welcome our new and incumbent council members:

**President:** Keith Mullen

**Property Management:** Mike Folk, Dave Warnke

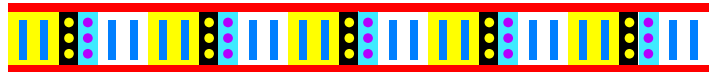
**Elders:** Al Collins, Tom Eppard, Linda Yenrick, Eric Johnson, Jason Blazeovich, and Darold Henninger (Jason & Darold are filling the 2 elder positions that went unfilled for 2011)

**Finance Committee:** Matt DeWitt, Chris Hunsaker

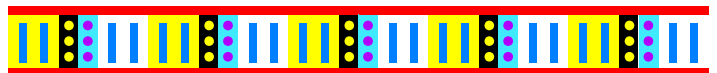
**Board of Education:** Karen Holmes

## BOARD OF MINISTRIES

Our first meeting of 2012 is on Tuesday, January 10th at 6:00 pm in the lounge.



**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE**  
*January 20th*



## ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

To keep information for office records current, please notify the office of any changes to your name, address, or phone: **Fax:** (419-691-7220) **Mail** this form to: 2471 Seaman St./ Toledo, OH 43605 or **Email:** [office@firststjohn.com](mailto:office@firststjohn.com)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_



## ALTAR GUILD NEWS

Our new officers and members for 2012 are listed below:

### Officers:

Emily Kruse	President
Sue Ann Rogers	Vice President
Susie Skorupa	Secretary
Marilyn Miller	Treasurer
Claudia Patchen	Supply Chairman
Karyl Antoine	Flower Chairman

**Members:** Wanda Rice, Joanne Crandall, Jane Schuetz, Brenda Fussell, June Might, Nancy Gallaher, Raylene Draeger, Joyce Yard

Thank you to our outgoing member Beth Hugueley. We appreciate the work you did serving your church.

## FLOWER REMINDER



Don't forget to honor your loved ones with flowers for the altar. Each Sunday you have the opportunity to place flowers on the altar. Find the red flower book in back of the church under the big bulletin board and sign up for the Sunday you want. Flower sheets for every Sunday in 2012 are in the book. Flower vases are \$15 each; you can take an envelope out of the book to use for payment.

### ELDERS FOR JANUARY

#### 10:00 am

1st	Jeff Smith
	Jason Blazeovich

#### 7:45 am

8th	Linda Yenrick
	Bill Nelson

#### 10:15 am

	Darold Henninger
	Kevin Ruedy

15th	Eric Johnson	Tom Eppard
	Jim Swanson	Linda Erdmann

22nd	Jeff Smith	Mike Winslow
	Jason Blazeovich	Al Collins

29th	Darold Henninger	Linda Yenrick
	Kevin Ruedy	Bill Nelson

## MILITARY SERVICE NOTES

Here are the names and addresses of members, family, & friends of First St. John who serve in the military. You can send cards or packages, and remember to pray for them, too!

*TSgt Kevin Fouty* is home now. Address below:  
2412 1st Ave. N.  
Great Falls, MT 59401

*SGT Nick Grady* is coming home. Thanks for your prayers.

*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

## DAVID WINSLOW MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



This scholarship helps members of First St. John who will attend college for the 2012/2013 school year. Money is supplied from proceeds of the David Winslow Memorial Golf outing held each summer, along with donations from church members. Applications are in the church office. The deadline for returning completed applications is March 30<sup>th</sup>. We must receive the applications in the church office by March 30<sup>th</sup> to be considered.

## MEMORIALS

### 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 attend or help with this group, contact Jamie Blazeovich at 419-691-7222 or [cedir@firststjohn.com](mailto:cedir@firststjohn.com) OR Barb Shellhammer at 419-691-6480 or [b.shellhammer@firststjohn.com](mailto:b.shellhammer@firststjohn.com)

DONATIONS NEEDED: *If anyone can donate biscuit cutters, beads, little bells, old keys, or buttons, please bring them to the church office by Monday, January 9th. Thank you!*



### JOIN US FOR EVENING BIBLE STUDY

Come join Pastor Blohm and a group of conscientious classmates when our Bible study resumes on Tuesday, January 10th at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome!

### OR, DURING LUNCH

Pastor Blohm also leads a Bible study at 11:00 am on Thursdays in the lounge. Bring your lunch; coffee and water are provided. Our next meeting is Thursday, January 12th.

### CHOIR FUND

In memory of Rev. Richard Rohloff by Bob & Sherrie Haar.

In memory of Marian Chaney by Ron & Joanne Koch, Dennis & Lisa Pavley, Mitzi Staskiewicz, Marjorie Knickerbocker, Elaine Gladieux, Mary Ellen Miller.

In memory of Russ Caldwell by Ruth Ziethlow.

### CURRENT FUND

In memory of Marian Chaney by Ada Kreger.

In memory of Keith Erdmann by Bernie & Linda Erdmann.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL

In memory of Joan Bailey by Carl & Janet Morrison.

In memory of Marian Chaney by Carl & Janet Morrison.

### CEMETERY FUND

In memory of Robert Brown by Peg Lentz, George & Margaret Bittner, Kiesi Owen and Francie, Oldcastle Building Envelope.

In memory of Marian Chaney by Ken & Joyce Villhauer.

### MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of Etta & Roy Rideout by Georgia Huebner.

### CHILDREN'S CHOIR

In memory of Marian Chaney by M/M James Fox.

### PRAYER CHAIN INFORMATION



If you read the Prayer Chain list (found on page 6) and see a name you know should be taken off the list, please contact the Prayer Chain Coordinator Carol Abbey at 419-351-9795 or [cabbey@jcrinc.com](mailto:cabbey@jcrinc.com) to let her know. Or, you may contact the church office at 419-691-7222. Thank you.



## QUILTING TIME!

The Quilting Group will meet each Monday at 9:30 a.m. in the lounge beginning Monday, January 9th and running through Monday, March 26th. Most of the help needed involves tying layers of a quilt together (all you need to know is how to tie a knot). Bring a sack lunch. If there is bad weather, they follow Oregon Schools for cancellations.

Most of the quilts made will be donated to Lutheran World Relief and local charities. If you would like to sew quilting blocks at home, please call Ginny Nissen at 419-698-2822. Thank you.



## ***MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP***

We will meet on January 7th at 8:00 a.m. at the Bob Evans Restaurant on Navarre Ave. Please join us for fellowship and a timely devotion. Need a ride? Call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.

## **BOARD OF MINISTRIES MEETING**

Next meeting is Tues., January 10 at 6:00 pm. Board of Ministries is for the heads of all major church groups to talk about upcoming needs and plans.

## ***WELCA NEWS***

The 2012 Rosters will be available soon in the lounge. Our next board meeting is Monday, January 16th at 6:30 pm in the lounge.

## **2011 AND 2012 CHURCH COUNCIL, WELCA, & ALTAR GUILD OFFICERS**

If you've finished your term, please turn in your church keys and access cards (for the educational building) to the office as soon as possible. If you are new to your office and need an access card and/or keys, please see Toni in the church office. **Note:** All access cards should be returned—they cannot be handed to new officers because the numbers on the back are tied to a specific person. All newly elected officers should soon be able to get keys and/or access cards from their chairmen OR contact Toni in the office.

## **J.A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS**

There will be no J.A.M. Sunday School on January 1st or January 8th (Oregon Schools are still on break). Classes will resume on Sunday, January 15th. See you then!

## ***2012 OFFERING ENVELOPES***

The 2012 offering envelopes are in the lounge through the month of January. They are listed in alphabetical order. Envelopes are prepared for confirmed members of First St. John and friends (upon request). If a husband and wife share offering envelopes, only the husband's name will appear on the envelope box.

If you cannot find your offering envelopes or if there is a correction in your address or name, please call the church at 419-691-7222 as soon as possible.

## **REBECCA CIRCLE NEWS**

Beginning in January, 2012, our regular meeting date will be the first Saturday of the month at 11:30 am. Please bring a sack lunch to these meeting. Our next meeting date, then, is Saturday, January 7<sup>th</sup>. See you there!

## ***HOMEPLATE 2012 — CALL IN YOUR RESERVATIONS NOW***



It seems too early to talk about baseball, but it's time to turn in your reservations for the Homeplate event with the Detroit Tigers. Homeplate is an annual program held just before the Tiger game where Tiger players and coaches and former Tiger stars talk about their faith in Jesus. It's truly an uplifting thing to hear how God has worked in their lives.

Homeplate 2012 will be Saturday, April 21st. The program begins at 9:30 am, and the game is at 1:05 pm when the Tigers will take on the Texas Rangers. Ticket price is \$27 per person, which includes the program, game ticket, food voucher and souvenir. We order 20 tickets, so get your RSVP in to the church office as soon as possible in order to attend.

## FIRST ST. JOHN 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:*

**Matthew Ahrens**  
**Family of Jack Allred**  
**Family of Phil Grivanos**  
**Herman Jeskey**  
**Sandy Kearney**  
**Vivian Kuhlman**  
**Sylvia Loston**  
**Laurie Madrazo**  
**Family of Renee Allred Miller**  
**Ava Morin**  
**Gary Taylor**  
**Nicki Schlegel**  
**Pat Whiteside**

**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**  
**Jordyn Beckhusen**  
**Jessie Blanchong**  
**Melissa Boos**  
**Rosie Burtch**  
**Family of Don Cousino**  
**John Deuble**  
**Bernie Erdmann**  
**Chad Everhardt**  
**Jerry Gears**  
**Pastor Brian Hodge & Family**  
**Kailea (no last name given)**  
**Ronnie Lamantia**  
**George "Skip" McCullough**  
**Family of Kruse Navarre**  
**Charles Nelms**  
**Charlie Ohlson**  
**Sarah Pawlaczyk**  
**Cathy Redmond**  
**Zee Robinson and family**  
**Hilda Saelzler**  
**Bishop Sanchez**  
**Steve & Connie Singlar**  
**Tim Smith**  
**Keith Snider**  
**Jodi Toth**  
**Family of John 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

Coordinator, 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

### DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Tired of cooking for one or eating take-out food? Just want to get out of the house? Then you might be interested in having Dinner With Friends. This is a new ministry from the Hannah Circle where you can meet at First St. John's for a light dinner in the company of your friends from First St. John. Our FREE dinners will be in January, March, May, September, and November. Our first dinner is Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 pm, and the menu will consist of non-spicy chili, cornbread, salad, dessert, and beverage. Transportation will be provided if needed.

If you would like to attend, please fill out the slip below and return it in the offering plate or mail to the church office so we know how many to plan for. Please make sure you include your phone number in case we have to cancel due to inclement weather. We look forward to seeing you!

*-- Hannah Circle Members: Karen Holmes, Kim Kwiatkowski, Debbie Smith, Janine Contat, Toni Wilbarger, Brenda Fussell, Kate Gladieux, and Karen Frey*

*Yes, I will attend the Dinner With Friends evening  
on Wednesday, January 18<sup>th</sup>*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Check here if you will need transportation:

## *From the C.E. Director's Desk*

This devotion is by Amy Wingfield who writes "Common Sense Devotions." I couldn't have written anything better. Enjoy her article:

As Christians, we believe we have new life in Christ. We put away the old self and the old ways and start living life anew. We no longer live in the flesh nor desire the worldly desires we once had. Accepting Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, the Holy Spirit lives within us and having that Spirit changes the way we feel and the way we choose to live. We no longer live for self, but live for God and obey Him out of love and gratefulness for His grace and mercy.

Today is the beginning of a brand new year. Will this also be the beginning for you in your relationship with Christ? Are there things you need to change or get right with God? Think about that today.

We were all once as dead men, but accepting Jesus Christ gives us new life. A life in Christ is so fulfilling, full of grace and mercy and hope, one cannot help but throw out the old and embrace the new life abundant in Christ. Nothing compares to the love of God and nothing compares to being alive in Christ. Embrace the new in all sense of the word. Live in the hope.

*"Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death. But this happened that we might not rely on ourselves but on God, who raises the dead. He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us."*

[2 Corinthians 1:9-10 \(NIV\)](#)

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here!"*

[2 Corinthians 5:17 \(NIV\)](#)

Thank you to all who helped with Project Give a Blessing. We collected over 60 gift cards and gave our family over 20 actual gifts. Along the way, we were also able to help random strangers. In addition to Project Give a Blessing, we also helped a local family whose house was destroyed in a fire.

Our congregation's generosity is AMAZING! We all should feel so BLESSED to be part of this wonderful church family! I look forward to 2012 and the AMAZING things our church will accomplish!!!

**We are on break until January 8 &  
will resume on January 15!**

## ***IMPORTANT NOTICE FOR ALL MEMBERS, FAMILY, & FRIENDS***

The economy has made people desperate, and they are looking to steal whatever they can. When you attend church, any meeting or event here at First St. John, please make sure your car is locked and you take all valuables with you into the building. Do not leave anything of value in your car that would be visible to potential thieves. Above all, do not leave your keys in the car, even if you're only coming in for a minute. **\*\* All services and large events will have parking lot security covered by the elders and/or council members. \*\***

Let's be vigilant and keep an eye out for one another and our belongings.

## **ZUMBA CLASSES RETURN**

Zumba classes begin again on Tuesday, January 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 pm in the gym. Classes are every Tuesday and Thursday at 6:30 in our gym. Zumba is an exercise/dance class set to a latin beat. Although it can be strenuous, you can participate at your own pace. Bring comfortable clothes and water. Freewill donation (no charge) for each class. Registration forms and waivers can be found in the lounge or the church office (this year, a waiver form must also be filled out), or you can contact the church office (419-691-7222) to have the forms sent to you. Join us!

## ***ENJOY THE CONVENIENCE OF ELECTRONIC GIVING!***

First St. John is pleased to announce that we have now expanded our electronic giving options to include an on-line method of giving. This is a way to enhance and automate your regular offering. Electronic giving is now even more convenient for you and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

To set up an electronic giving schedule you can either complete a paper authorization form or visit the church website at [firststjohn.com](http://firststjohn.com) and look for the donation link. As you contemplate future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Look for the authorization form in the lounge or at the church office. Thank you!

## “PAY IT FORWARD”

On Sunday, November 27, 2011, President Bill Caldwell explained the church had more than enough money to help with remaining 150th anniversary committee expenses, and that First St. John would like to pay it forward rather than just helping ourselves. To that end, everyone in church that day received \$10 and was given instructions to pay it forward. The only rules were you could not spend it on yourself and you could not put it back in the offering plate.

Some sent their money to various charities, including the Cherry Street Mission, Salvation Army, Oregon Food Baskets, Gideon's International (an organization that distributes Bibles around the world), The Daughter Project, the YMCA scholarship fund, STNA program scholarship at Lourdes College, and local charity events. Others put their \$10 in with some monetary donations from their friends and purchased food for the Cherry Street Mission, along with some candy canes for Christmas. Many folks added money of their own or got their friends to help, too!

Here are emails and notes that have been shared with the church office:

I was driving down Navarre Ave. going past K-Mart near Wendy's and saw a man wrapped in a blanket next to his grocery cart filled with his possessions. Another man had stopped to talk to him. As I neared the old Foodtown, I said to myself, "Turn around and go back and give that guy the \$10 in your purse." I turned and drove through the parking lot to Dustin and down to K-Mart. As I approached the man, another lady stopped and gave him some money. I walked up to the man and gave him the \$10 and he said to me, "I can't even get a motel room, I have no ID." After he said that, I was thankful to come home to a warm house and have a soft bed to sleep in that night.

Where my daughter works, they give away food to the needy every month. They were requesting peanutbutter or mac-n-cheese as their supplies were low. We purchased 55 boxes of mac-n-cheese and, to give a little holiday cheer, 55 boxes of candy canes. We gladly spent more than the two \$10 amounts we received. \*\* SIDE NOTE: Kroger was holding the 55 candy cane boxes for me. When I checked out, the cashier asked why I needed so many boxes. I shared our church's pay it forward project, and she was intrigued by the idea. She often thought about giving to a food bank, but thought some people took advantage of the program. I told her that this particular program verifies the families receiving aid are deserving and that the need is great. I overheard her sharing our church's challenge with some co-workers as I walked away. Maybe a little seed was planted from the idea our church started? Hopefully they took on the initiative!

We read an item in The Press the day after the church's wonderful gesture. It mentioned a benefit for a Sylvania family struggling with medical problems. The mother has had non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma for five years and has been in remission. During that time, her husband was diagnosed with leukemia. This past year her Lymphoma returned and she has had to undergo a stem cell transplant. They are a couple in their late 40s with three children. They certainly seemed good candidates for our gift, so we added a bit more to our \$20 and mailed it along with a note to the family. I told them they could pay it forward by keeping the faith and letting their light shine for others. (The following is a copy of the thank you note this family received.)

“Thank you so much for your generosity. I have shown many of my friends your touching card. You sent more than a gift of money. I, too, will pay it forward as soon as I can, and you can bet I will never forget what giving and loving people can do to change things for the better. Merry Christmas!



## “PAY IT FORWARD” (continued from previous page)

Our friends' daughter is suffering from a very rare type of cancer, Angiosarcoma. Because of the rarity of her disease, she has been forced to travel to Texas in order to receive treatment. Along with an additional donation, we used First St. John's "Pay it Forward" monies to help support this girl in her fight against cancer.

We always buy for a family that my husband's workplace adopts for the holidays, but this time we bought what they requested but added an extra gift as a surprise. Our son gave a \$10 tip to a waitress at Cafe Marie's.

We matched the money and sent it to a woman who could certainly use it. We soon received a thank you note saying she was literally down to her last dollar when the money arrived. I told others about her letter, and they doubled their money and sent it to her also. I received a thank you call from her.

One couple doubled their \$20 with their own money and used it to purchase socks for the Hannah's Socks collection at First St. John. Someone else bought hats and gloves and donated them to Ravens Claw in Defiance.

A friend of our grandchildren died at the age of 26, leaving a 7-month-old baby. Her husband had just lost his job. She had no life insurance because of a pre-existing heart condition. We were happy to "pay forward" to help pay her funeral expenses.

For this next story, our First St. John member did not send this in, but instead, we received this thank you note in the mail from a pay-it-forward recipient:

“On November 30th I was down to my last 23 cents. I stopped by my friend's work place just to say hello, and she said she had something for me and gave me the pay it forward gift. Oh, what a blessing, and it couldn't have come at a better time. God always takes care of His children if we just let Him. Thank you for this gift. I will pay it forward, too. 'Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. — 1 Thessalonians 5:18”

For many years I've been knitting hats, mittens, scarves & baby blankets and sending them to the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. At Christmas, I usually include some cash, so this year I added my \$10.00. I have received a thank you as their need is so great.

Our 6-year-old daughter received the \$10 and was so excited thinking about things she could do with the money. We wrote down her choices and decided that we could actually accomplish two things on her list. She was able to buy a Barbie doll for one of the families from Project Give a Blessing as well as donate the other \$5 to the collection plate at her Dad's work. They were collecting \$5 from each employee for a needy family and she was able to donate to that. It was a great lesson for a 6 year old (as well as the rest of her family) about giving!!! Thanks for the opportunity to "Pay it Forward!"

Every year, our Parents' Club operates a Santa Shop where the children can purchase items for their family for Christmas at an extremely inexpensive rate. This year, I had one little boy who was unable even to bring one dollar to shop. He did not whine nor complain. He simply walked around watching his classmates buy things for family members. The next day, I took him back to the Santa Shop. I told him he could pick out things for his mom and four siblings. He looked up at me and said, "But, Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_, I don't have any money," and started to go back to the room. I said to him, "One of Santa's elves sent us some money so that you could buy things for your family." He looked up at me and a great, big smile spread across his face, and his sad little brown eyes shone almost as bright as that first star. It is an image that I will cherish forever.

## THE MOUSE IN 2012



What a breathtaking and exciting celebration year 2011 was. After a harsh winter and a late spring, the beautiful weather at the Memorial Day Cemetery Service roused the dormant congregation of First St. John.

Volunteers are renovating our aging cemetery. More than one hundred grave stones have been cleaned, leveled and aligned. Several stones that had totally disappeared have been raised. The records are partially reviewed and computerized. You may not know that a good number of funeral sermons have been found and will be on CD soon. A treasure of genealogical information also has been gathered. These projects will be ongoing.

Our special services generated a renewal of spirit. We have shaken more hands, given a few hugs, and sung more songs with renewed enthusiasm and Christian love.

The culmination of the sesquicentennial year celebration with the appearance of the nationally renowned Toledo Symphony Orchestra prompted many to express “feelings of coming home.” WELCOME HOME.

A “well done” also should be extended by all to Bill and Cathy Caldwell for leading the 150th committee in this past year of celebration.

**Trivia 1:** All confirmations have been performed by a “called” pastor of First St. John, except one. Our first called pastor, Carl Beckel, passed away on February 20, 1894. Our second called pastor, Gideon Rausch, did not come until late in 1894. The confirmation class of 1894 was April 29th and was signed by Rev. C. Prottengeier, pastor of St. John Lutheran, South Side, 1871 - 1895.

St. John South Side at that time was a “sister” congregation like St. Paul downtown is today. Salem, sometimes referred to as the “mother” of Lutheran churches in Toledo, organized many churches in the 1860’s, since the distance of travel to Salem was a great inconvenience.

Why do we have “sister” congregations, cities and so on? Why not “brother” relationships? I suppose we have to return to our Germanic heritage. In German, the word “the” takes three different forms based on gender. Der = masculine, die = feminine and Das is neutral. We must always know the gender of the subject to be grammatically correct. The words city and church are feminine, so I suppose our German forefathers were true to “die” old traditions and used “sister” rather than “brother” relationships. After all, we were only a vote short of speaking German rather than English in this country. And did you know that President Reagan, in 1987, proclaimed October 6th as German-American Day?

**Trivia 2:** When was the largest church attendance recorded \*? The Festival of Easter on March 29, 1959, at two services totaled 1,401. Sunday School was 681. From the bulletin: WHAT DOES EASTER MEAN TO YOU? WILL YOU BE AT CHURCH NEXT SUNDAY?

The runner up was The Festival of Easter, April 17, 1960. The total for two services was 1,233 at church and 603 for Sunday School. From the bulletin: “The Ladies Aid was sponsoring a trip to Detroit to see Cinerama \*\* ‘South Sea Adventure.’”

**Trivia 3:** Since our newspapers are filled with as many or more dog than people stories, is it true that a human year is equivalent to seven dog years? If that is true, how many Mouse years equal one human year? I think it is time for this Mouse to disappear.

\* All records have not been reviewed.

\*\* Cinerama, an extreme widescreen movie projection system.

## ANNUAL CONGREGATION MEETING —DECEMBER 11, 2011

The meeting, beginning at the 7:45 service, was called to order by Pres. Bill Caldwell. Bill talked about the symphony and discussed parking and that there will be many people attending. When people are seated, please don't save seats, and please be polite to those who need seats. A coat check will be available in the basement of the church. The ladies of WELCA will have refreshments in the gym.

Bill had the ballots and the budget passed out and Lisa Anderson gave the financial report. Right now the church is \$13,000 short for the year. Better than last year. She is confident we will be able to meet these expenses by the end of this year. She thanked those who are Thrivent members. The contributions from Thrivent were about \$5000 this year. Lisa also talked about a family who has had their family home burned and a special envelope designated for funds to help them. Also, the tree in the Narthex has cards on it for another family.

She also spoke about electronic giving options. Go to the site and do an online giving, but follow the link. It should make giving easier when you are not in attendance.

She turned over the meeting to Jim Sommers. He spoke about the budget for 2012. He thanked the members for their continued support and also for making the 150<sup>th</sup> year a good one. He spoke about salaries and benefits. There is an increase in salary structure. The last two years have had no increase. This year the committee felt it was necessary to give raises. A 3% percent raise has been given to full time employees. The former youth director was getting \$22,500 plus benefits, but when the new C.E. Director came she didn't need benefits so it was given in salary. The committee will give her 1% increase. The remainder of the structure has remained the same. Increase in Social Security due to salary increases. Maintenance is staying the same for normal operations including snow removal and repairs. Some major items in the future will need to be taken care of for the church and we will need to appropriate proper funds.

Chris Hunsaker spoke for WELCA and gave a check to the church for \$5000 to be used for improvements. Jim talked about the real estate taxes. After 6 years of

working with the property and seeing it surveyed and categorized properly, we have been able to lower our taxes. The assessment now is finally correct. We received a rebate for \$3900.

Debt retirement is under way, and he reminded the congregation we have borrowed from our special funds.

He asked for any questions. Dick Crouse asked about the salary for the CE Director and stated the secretary doesn't get benefits, either.

Gave meeting back to the President. Bill spoke about the ballot. He asked for nominations from the floor and there weren't any. He told them to mark the ballots and thanked the people finishing their last terms.

There was an adjournment till next service.

Bill opened up the meeting at the 10:15 service. He asked the ushers to pass out the budget and the ballots. Bill talked about the symphony, again covering the parking, coat check, seating and the gathering afterwards.

He asked Lisa and Jim to talk about the finances and budget, repeating what was said at the first service. (See above paragraphs covering finances and giving and expenses.)

After Lisa, Jim spoke directly to the budget for 2012. He started with salaries (see paragraphs above). Again, Chris Hunsaker presented a check from WELCA to go the improvement fund. Jim re-explained the tax rebate given by Lucas County. After explaining the budget, he asked for questions. No questions were asked.

Bill explained the ballot for election of people on the various committees. He then thanked everyone who was done serving their term.

He asked for questions. None were asked. He adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Habegger, recording secretary

## FIRST ST. JOHN COUNCIL MINUTES—DECEMBER 20, 2011

President Bill Caldwell opened up the meeting. Bill Nelson led the group in devotions. Attendance was taken. Bill asked for the minutes to be approved. Dave Warnke made a motion and Matt DeWitt seconded and the motion passed.

**Elders Report** - Christmas Eve services are covered by volunteers. New schedule for 2012 is done and distributed. Bill asked the elders to keep their eyes open on both parking lots for kids trying to do damage to cars. An announcement needs to be made for people not to leave anything visible in their cars when they park in the front or back of church.

**Property Management** - Furnace is out in the parsonage. A pew needs to be replaced in the church.

**Treasurer Report** - Lisa Anderson gave the report. As of the end of November we had shortfall of \$19,000. Through mid-December we are at a \$6,000 shortfall. They are confident we will meet expenses at the end of this year. There were no questions, so Bill asked for approval of the treasurer's report. Dave Warnke made a motion and Keith Mullen seconded it and the motion passed.

**Finance Report** - Jim Sommers gave the report which echoed the report Lisa gave. They decided to make a list of local benevolences for 2012. Salem Lutheran Church, Feed Your Neighbor program, and the Lutheran Home will each get \$1,000. Mike Winslow made a motion and Chris Hunsaker seconded and motion passed.

**Youth Report / Board of Ed.** - Jamie Blazeovich left a report. The congregation gave a family over 20 gifts for the season from Project Give a Blessing. Barb Shellhammer and Jamie have been working on By Design, a new group for young moms, both in the Dayschool and the community. A blood drive is slated for April. A ladies overnighter in February is being worked on by Lori Pfeiffer and Jamie.

**Pastor Report** On January 8 there will be installation of officers. January 15 baptism for Sawyer Mullen. The 22<sup>nd</sup> at both services will be the Family Blessing Sunday.

**Old Business** – Positive comments were received about the Toledo Symphony concert. Bill

commented on the amount of help from the congregation and wants to thank them for making it all happen.

**New Business** – None.

Bill asked for a motion to adjourn. Mike Winslow made the motion and Dick Haar seconded it. Motion passed and the members stood and prayed the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,  
Diane Habegger

### INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

All newly elected and incumbent members of Church Council, WELCA, and Altar Guild should plan to attend church on Sunday, January 8th. Officers will be installed during both church services that day before beginning their 2012 service.

### CHRISTMAS DECORATION REMOVAL



The Christmas decorations will be taken down and stored on Friday, January 6<sup>th</sup> after 4:00 pm. Please do not schedule any events or meetings in the church during this time. Thank you.

### FAMILY BLESSING SUNDAY JANUARY 22, 2012

In Luke 2, Jesus is taken to the temple by Mary and Joseph and He receives a blessing from both Simeon and Anna. Blessings are very important to us.

On Sunday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> we will have the opportunity to come as a family (and yes, one person is a family in God's eyes) and receive a blessing from the pastor. You can come up with different people in your extended family (you and your spouse, you and your daughter's family, etc.) as many times as you want. What a special way to begin 2012!