



First St. John Journal



Volume 28, Issue 1

January, 2015

An unsettling anxiety, a sense of guilt, a feeling of loss—George was experiencing all of these. Raised in a Christian home, George had remained active as an adult in his parents' church. He thoroughly enjoyed sharing in the life of the congregation. But George had doubts.

George told no one about his doubts except his wife, Janette. He could confide in no one else. What would people at church think? What would the pastor think? He had never heard anybody else talk about doubt.

George is not alone. To every Christian come moments of doubt. Some live with doubt constantly. We need to approach doubt in a truthful way, realizing that God honors honesty.

Doubt has a double edge. On the one side it presents danger; on the other, opportunity. We should be thankful that we are suspicious sometimes. Otherwise we would fall prey to every dishonest salesperson, every bad investment, every religious cult. Without some skepticism we would be naïve. But we also should be wary of doubt; nourished too long it can immobilize or defeat us.

It's all right to have doubts. In times of doubt we respond as our lives have trained us. The brave soldier trembles but falls into line at the battle cry. So the seeking Christian may prove most faithful when wrestling with questions.

Jesus knew that believing would sometimes be difficult for his followers. Hear his understanding words to Thomas: "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen, and yet believe." (John 20:29)

But God can also bring blessings to the believer through the very doubt that threatens faith. For doubt often clarifies what faith is. The Danish theologian Soren Kierkegaard realized faith is not the same as logical certainty. He described faith as a leap. "When we believe, we jump out into the darkness, trusting that

God is there to catch us. Paul wrote, "We walk by faith and not by sight." (2 Corinthians 5:7)

Doubt may serve to remind us of the goodness of God. When the father of a sick boy cried, "I believe; help my unbelief!" he was crying out for stronger faith that his son might be healed (Mark 9:24). And Jesus healed the son even though the father's faith was weak. God does not cease to be God even though we doubt him.

Nevertheless, doubt is always cause for concern. It is always troublesome. But sometimes we take ourselves too seriously. Once the disciples came to Jesus asking him to increase their faith. He answered that all they needed was faith "as a mustard seed." (Luke 17:5-6). A mustard seed is not much larger than the period at the end of this sentence.

The issue here is not how much faith we have, rather that we have faith at all. As Jesus responded to the little faith of the sick boy's father, so God hears and answers even our feeblest prayers. Even through small faith God works miracles.

When doubts come, and they may, remember that God's concern for us outlasts any doubt. God still loves us in the midst of our most severe questioning. If we keep the faith, by God's grace, though it may seem feeble or even microscopic at times, we will preserve the most precious gift of all. God will use this shaky faith to work miracles, especially our salvation. Through our doubts, when honestly dealt with as a searching for truth, the Spirit may lead us by remembrance of Jesus to a surer, clearer faith.

Starting on Sunday, January 18, 2015, I will begin another Inquirer's Class during the Sunday school time between services beginning at 9:00 a.m. This would be a wonderful opportunity for anyone wishing to join the congregation and for those wishing review the major teachings and practices of the Lutheran church to get together for learning and discussion. Let me know if you would like to participate.

— Pastor Rayl

MEMBER UPDATES

Births

None of which we are aware

Baptisms

12-7-14 *Shelby LeeAnn Arbinger*, born October 2, 2014 to Michael and Cory (Lofquist) Arbinger. Sponsors are Cole Lofquist and Kristen Arbinger

Elijah Michael Donofrio, born October 17, 2014 to David and Jessica (Feher) Donofrio. Sponsors are Vincent Donofrio and Amanda Konczal.

Marriages

11-30-14 Nicholas Baron and Jessica Church

Deaths

12-10-14 Donna Cedoz

Transfers to / from First St. John:

None.

ELECTION RESULTS



Dear Congregational Members,

The church council appreciates your time 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 Jim Sommers at 419-691-7719. Thank you to everyone who ran for council. Please welcome our newly elected council members:

Property Management: Larry Paul

Elders: Linda Yenrick, Bob Haar, Sherri Haar,

Dayschool Board: Karen Holmes

Board of Education: Susan Tilton, Deb Ladd (finishing Jennifer Cromly's term)

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE

Our Bereavement Committee consists of people who serve and donate food for the bereavement luncheons held here at church. We currently need a few people to help us in these efforts. How it works is that the committee chairperson will call you when a luncheon has been scheduled to see if you are available to help.

The current group is a bit smaller than we'd like it to be. If we have more people, then we can rotate volunteers so they don't have to come for every luncheon. If you feel this is an area in which you can help (either serving or donating food), please call either our chairperson, Joyce Yard (419-698-0895) or Jane Neal (419-836-1751).

COUNCIL DINNER MEETING

A dinner and brief meeting will be held at Cousino's Steakhouse on Woodville Rd. on Wednesday, January 14th at 6:30 pm for all current, incoming, and outgoing council members and their spouses. *Please Note:* Because we are trying to cut back on church expenses, everyone will be paying for their own dinners and drinks this year.

Please RSVP to President Keith Mullen at 419-206-0203 or to the church office at 419-691-7222 by Thursday, January 8th, or email the church at: office@firststjohn.com

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

ELDERS FOR JANUARY

	<u>7:45 am</u>	<u>10:15 am</u>
4th	Darold Henninger Mike Winslow	Bill Nelson Ryan Hugueley
11th	Sherri Haar Bob Haar	Linda Yenrick Laurie Witt
18th	Dick Haar Jeff Ladd	Jeff Smith Jason Blazevich
25th	Bill Nelson Ryan Hugueley	Darold Henninger Mike Winslow

MEET OUR NEW CHILDREN'S CHOIR DIRECTOR, LENA MILLER



Lena Miller is an Oregon native. She graduated cum laude from the University of Toledo in May, where she was named an outstanding student by the College of Communication and the Arts. In her time at UT, she performed for and worked with Metropolitan Opera stars Marilyn Horne and Michael Sylvester. Most recently, she performed the role of Nella in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi during a three week opera and musical theatre program in Sansepolcro, Italy. She will reprise this role as an alumni performer with the UT Opera Ensemble in March.

Lena is currently a Music Specialist for Toledo Public Schools, where she teaches kindergarten thru grade 8 music. Lena was installed on Sunday, December 21st, and she is excited to begin her work here at First St. John!

CANCELLATION POLICY REMINDER

It's January, so inclement weather is a definite possibility. This is a brief reminder to let you know that if Lucas County is under a level 3 snow emergency on a Sunday morning, then worship services will be cancelled. Also, tune to your local TV channels 11 or 13 for notices of cancellation during other types of snow emergencies or weather.

NEW MEMBERS CLASS

Our new members class will begin on Sunday, January 18th at 9:00 am (Sunday School hour) in the Chapel. If you or someone you know would like to be a part of this class, please contact the church office.

There will be four sessions, meeting on consecutive Sundays (January 18 – February 8). Even if you're already a member, if you would like to review some of the basics of our Christian faith and Lutheran teachings you also are invited to participate. If you have any questions, please contact Pastor Rayl.



NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

January 23rd

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

Our new officers and members for 2015 are listed below:

Officers:

Emily Kruse	President
Beth Hugueley	Vice President
Joanne Crandall	Secretary
Jane Schuetz	Treasurer
Pam Beavers	Supply Chairman
Cathy Caldwell	Flower Chairman

Members: Penny DeWitt, Nancy Gallaher, Beth Hodges, Linda Kusian, Janet Morrison, Ginny Nissen, Carol Schwegler, and Joyce Yard

Alternates: Karyl Antoine, Brenda Fussell, and Claudia Patchen

Thank you to all our members. We appreciate the work you did and continue to do to serve your church.



MEMORIALS

CURRENT FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Louise & Jim Sommers, Linda Erdmann, Marge Bollinger, Elaine Gladieux, Esther Bell, Pastor Gerald & Ilean Labuhn, Jean DeWitt.

In memory of Ernie Bollinger by Elinor Ehrsam.

In memory of Bill Zeisler by Julius & Marlene Haller.

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Gene Hagedorn.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Eileen Young.

In memory of Bill Zeisler by Gloria Ross, Tom & Cindy Janvwiecki, Beatrice Hilarski, Carole Merkle, Dwaine & Dawn Betz.

In memory of Etta & Roy Rideout by Georgia Huebner.

HOMEBOUND MINISTRIES

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Bob & Sherrie Haar.

ELEVATOR FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Kevin & Gail Browning, J.M. Crossen, M/M Ruel Lieske, Angela Dunn, Pam Gilbert, Carrie & Jason Sidell, Bill & Michelle Hollister, Mark & Katie Perry, Haley Schumaker, Clark & Carol Price, Paul Kuhlman, Deb Rowland, Carl & Janet Morrison, Marilyn Cashen, Roy & Marjorie Waits, Mother of Twins Club, Mark & Deb Ackerman, Diana Burkhardt, Sherry Roessler, Sue Gerhardinger, Scott & Ann Schimming, Ralph & Ethel Mae Vogtsberger, Ronald Spahn, Dick & Laura Kohning, Ruth Vogt, Glenn Koester, Bob & Kathy Vasquez, Willie & Julie Moritz, Mary & Wayne Strassell and family.

CHOIR FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Mary Ellen Miller.

AIR CONDITIONING FUND

In memory of Virginia Wegman by Deborah Lofquist.



WELCA NEWS

The 2015 Rosters will be available soon in the lounge. Our next board meeting is Monday, January 19th at 6:30 pm.

WINSLOW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS



This scholarship helps members of First St. John who will attend college for the 2015/2016 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. Deadline for returning completed applications is March 30th. We must receive the applications in the church office by March 30th to be considered.

REMINDER TO ALL CHURCH GROUPS

When your meeting is finished, please remember to turn out the lights in the room you were using, as well as the hallway lights. Please also remember to check and make sure the lights in the restrooms are off as well. (The only lights that remain on are in the staircases by the exit doors. These are left on for security reasons.) Thank you for helping us try to save electricity.

FAMILY BLESSING SUNDAY JANUARY 11, 2015

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 11th 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 2015!



QUILTING TIME!

The Quilting Group meets each Monday at 9:30 a.m. in the lounge beginning Monday, January 5th and running through Monday, March 30th. 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 or if you have any questions, please call Ginny Nissen at 419-698-2822.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS

All newly elected and incumbent members of Church Council, WELCA, and Altar Guild should plan to attend church on Sunday, January 18th. Officers will be installed during both church services that day as they begin their 2015 service.

MEN'S BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP



Our next men's breakfast fellowship will be held on Saturday, January 3rd at 8:00 am at the Bob Evans on Navarre Ave. We have snowbirds down south, so we have plenty of room for you and a friend to join us. Any questions or if you need a ride, call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409. See you there!

ATTENTION 2014 AND 2015 CHURCH COUNCIL, WELCA, AND 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.

2015 OFFERING ENVELOPES

The 2015 offering envelopes are in the lounge through the month of January. They are arranged 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.

NEW PORTALS OF PRAYER

The January – March Portals of Prayer is now available for pick up in the lounge, Chapel, Narthex, and in the caddy through the door by the choir loft. Portals of Prayer is a daily devotional book, free to anyone who would like a copy.

THANK YOU



This past year in February, we conducted a monthly ministry focus. Church members used special envelopes in the pews to donate to several ministries, and the Women of the ELCA (WELCA) also donated to create a total amount. The following are the ministries we were able to help in 2014:

- Lutheran Social Services
- Luther Home of Mercy
- The Daughter Project
- Lutheran Outdoor Ministries in Ohio
- Cherry Street Mission Ministries
- The Sight Center
- Toledo Gospel Rescue Mission
- The Beach House
- Lutheran Homes Society
- Care-A-Van
- Good Shepherd of the Deaf Lutheran Church

Altogether, we raised nearly \$7,000 for these ministries. This represents your labors of love to help the needy in our area. WELCA joins these ministries in saying THANK YOU very much for your generosity.

FIRST ST. JOHN PRAYER CHAIN

(as of 12/27/14)

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:

Nancee Bender
Family of Bill Blowers
Family of Leslie Brandman Cousino
Dennis Eischen

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:

Betty Anderson
Fritz Babcock
Jordyn Beckhusen
Russell Bodette
Karen Burris
Gail Chaffee
Greg Contat
Robin Curtis
Tina Curtis
James & Jason Goorman
Larry Grant
Bob & Debbie Hecklinger
Gary Henningsen
Rose Hensley
Jamie Kataschae
Charles Kindle
Pastor Labuhn
Stephanie Larkins
George "Skip" McCullough
Donna Miller
Jeanette Miller
Christopher Molnar & his family
Jessica Mueller
Violet Orten
Linda Parker
Herb "Skip" Potter
Joan Probasco
Sheryl Rayl
Cindy Roecker
Nicholas Savage
Dianne Schumaker
Pat Vogelsang

Ray Walendzak
Bill Wegman
Terry Williams

Please check the list and let any of the prayer chain contacts 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



HOMEBOUND MINISTRY NEWS

Our next meeting of the Homebound Ministry teams will be Wednesday, January 14th at 4:30 pm. These teams go out each month and give communion and visit with our homebound members. If you think you may be interested in joining this ministry, please contact Pastor Rayl at 567-395-0143.

DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Dinner With Friends is back (or should we say "Breakfast" with Friends?). Join us on Wednesday, January 21st at 6:00 pm in the lounge. Menu includes breakfast casseroles, breads, coffee, and juice. Come on out to have dinner (breakfast!) with your friends from First St. John! Please RSVP using the slip below if you want to attend and place it in the offering plate or call the office at 419-691-7222. See you soon!

*Yes! I/we will attend Dinner With Friends
on January 21st*

Name _____

Phone _____

From Jamie's Desk

Happy New Year!

This devotion was taken from Daily-Devotions.com and I couldn't have written anything better. Enjoy this article.

As we embark on the New Year may we be remind of these simple instructions found in 1 Thessalonians Chapter 5:

- Rejoice all the time.
- Pray without stopping.
- Give thanks in everything.
- Don't quench the Holy Spirit.
- Don't despise prophecies.
- Test everything and hold onto what is good.
- Stay away from every form of evil.

The result of following these instructions (which only can be done while allowing the Holy Spirit to live them out through you) is found in verse 23: amazing peace. As we express our joy and thankfulness to God and stay in touch with Him continually, we will be transformed and will become the better person that He wants to change us into throughout this coming year.

"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. Your generosity as a congregation is AMAZING! We all should feel so BLESSED to be part of this wonderful church family!

Thank you to all who helped with our annual Christmas program called "A Radio Show Christmas." Special acknowledgments go to:

Jane Neal - For ironing all the beautiful angel robes

Toni Wilbarger - Helping with the bulletins

Susie Skorupa - Sound system operator

Gene Hagedorn - Riser setups

LeAnn Winslow - Microphone tech

Lori Pfeiffer - For knowing EXACTLY what needed to be done and doing it!

JAM Teachers - Kimberly Vaculik, Sue Ann Rogers, Deb Ladd, Susan Tilton, Darlene Paul

Larry & Darlene Paul For their creativity & support

Dads & Moms - For help with setup, costumes, and your wonderful children

I look forward to 2015 and the AMAZING things our church will accomplish!!!



HELP WANTED!

Looking for a 5th-6th grade Sunday School teacher. All curriculum provided.

Please contact Jamie ASAP if you are interested.

January Class Schedules

All classes meet at 9:00 am on Sunday mornings.

Jesus And Me (JAM)

- 1/4: Loaves and Fishes
- 1/11: Prodigal Son / Lost Son
- 1/18: God Made Me and I'm Special
- 1/25: Samson

7th Grade

- 1/4: The Fourth Commandment
- 1/11: The Fifth Commandment
- 1/18: Faith Testimony
- 1/25: The Sixth Commandment

8th Grade

- 1/4: The Fourth Petition
- 1/11: The Fifth Petition
- 1/18: Faith Testimony
- 1/25: The Sixth Petition

FIRST ST. JOHN COUNCIL MINUTES—DECEMBER 9, 2014

President Keith Mullen opened the Tuesday, December 9, 2014 meeting. Pastor led the group in devotions.

Secretary's Minutes - Minutes from the November meeting were read. A motion was made by Dave Warnke, seconded by John Spoerl, to accept the minutes. Motion passed.

Sunday School - No one in attendance. Chris Hunsaker gave the report. December 14 is the Christmas play. December 21-28 is our break. Operation Christmas Child went well...we had 61 boxes. A donut party was held last week to celebrate the collection.

For those participating in Project Give-A-Blessing, their unwrapped gifts need to be at church by noon on December 16.

By Design will meet on December 17 at 9:30 AM for a white elephant gift exchange party.

Sunday school needs volunteers; sign up sheets are posted.

Elder's Report - Bill reported they are very busy with weddings and Dayschool/Sunday School events. They also have volunteer elders lined up for the Dayschool Christmas programs.

Property Mgmt. - Repair work was done in the Dayschool and church. A circulation pump was fixed and a door replaced. The slop sink was removed in the basement, and a new one will be installed. In the gym ladies room, a few toilets and sinks were replaced or repaired.

Drawings were made of the electrical system and placed on a computer jump drive.

Lawn care options were looked into, and they plan on presenting this to the council in January. Anyone with suggestions of a lawn company can present the information to the committee. Jim Sommers suggested the cemetery fund help pay for the lawn care. Mike stated they were looking into it.

Per Jim Sommers, during the chicken and ham dinner, it was discovered our heat was not working. A pump was broken and this was fixed. The cost was over \$4400 and a reduction of over \$900 was made on this bill. The new bill will be around \$3500.

The front door of the church needs some repair. This will be looked into.

Treasurer/Finance Report - Mike Winslow motioned we approve the treasurer's report. Dave Warnke seconded. Motion passed.

Bill Nelson motioned for the benevolence distribution to be made as written. Eric Johnson seconded. Motion passed.

Jim Sommers reported that our insurance policy total came in under what it was last year. Reductions were made due to revamping the plan and choosing a higher deductible. Darold Henninger asked if we looked into new health insurance as those costs went up 15%. Jim looked into this already and there was not much of a difference in cost between plans.

Dayschool - No one in attendance. Pastor gave the report. Dayschool needs volunteers for their Christmas programs. Sign up sheets are in the Narthex. Over 800 people attended the feasts in November.

Barb has begun to get inquiries for next school year. A raffle was held for an iPad mini with the monies going to the playground fund.

The classes are caroling at the Lutheran Home this week. The Happy Birthday Jesus celebrations (Los Posadas) will be this Thursday and Friday.

A year end Christmas appeal is being held for the parents, inviting them to make a contribution to the school. Funds for the playground and technology are needed.

Barb thanked the anonymous seamstress who helped with their costumes for the Christmas programs.

Pastor's Report - We had a wedding for Nick Barron and Jessica Church, a funeral for Ginny Wegman, and two baptisms last weekend for Shelby Arbinger and Elijah Donofrio. Staff meetings are being held every other Tuesday.

The Constitution was shipped out to the Synod and the comments back have been "excellent." It will be up for approval at the next meeting of the Synod Council in February.

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CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES

(continued from page 8)

Pastor's Report (continued) - The Christmas program is this Sunday with the Wise Men bringing gifts for the Personal Needs Pantry to the altar steps. Christmas Eve is the perfect time to bring guests to church.

The music director position has one applicant so far. She was met with last week. An ad is in the Blade and Monster.com, as well as the Metro.

The organ stopped working last Sunday. The system was cleaned but it will need to be serviced as it is still a 3.5 floppy disc.

The green poinsettias in front of the altar are from Gene Hagedorn-- he took leftover ones from last year and replanted them.

Old Business - None at this time

New Business - The next meeting will be in January at Cousino's Steakhouse. Spouses are also invited. Council members are asked to pay for their own meals.

A member suggested the program 101 Ways as another option through Thrivent to ask for money on certain projects.

Luann Spoerl motioned we adjourn the meeting. John Spoerl seconded. Meeting adjourned at 8:53 by Keith.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn Folk
Council Secretary

ATTENTION THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY MEMBERS

We will begin meeting again on Thursday, January 8th at 11:00 am. Please mark your calendars. Everyone is welcome!

MEMBER ADDRESS CHANGES



Please use the form on the back of the first page to notify the church office of your change of address. The church pays a fee each time the post office sends mail back. You can also call the office at 419-691-7222 or email: office@firststjohn.com

Patrick & Jen Martin
657 Oakcrest Dr.
Wadsworth, OH 44281

Matthew Phillips
5668 Stony Creek Way
Marysville, CA 95901

Sue Ann Rogers
429 Reineck Dr.
Toledo, OH 43605

Laurence & Julie St. John
804 Elk Ridge Rd.
Northwood, OH 43619

REMINDER: FEED YOUR NEIGHBOR & PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

These two ministries are always in need of donations for the needy in the area (not just at Christmas). Feed Your Neighbor accepts donations of non-perishable food items (no glass jars, please, as they may break in transporting them to the distribution center).

The Personal Needs Pantry distributes toiletries and cleaning supplies including shampoo, deodorant, body soap, lotion, toothbrushes and toothpaste, sanitary items, and toilet paper, tissues, dish and laundry soap, and fabric softener sheets. Please donate only full size products since these must last an entire month.

Bins for placing your donations are in the Narthex under the main bulletin board and by the double doors of the lounge (dark blue bin for Feed Your Neighbor, bright green bin for Persona Needs Pantry). Thank you for remembering these ministries.