
◆ First St. John Journal ◆

Volume 28, Issue 11

November, 2015

A few years ago, an American and a British journalist were discussing Thanksgiving on a British radio program. The American asked if Thanksgiving was celebrated in the United Kingdom.

“Yes,” the British journalist replied, “but we celebrate it on the 6th of September.”

“Why then?” asked the American.

“That’s when you chaps left,” the Brit answered good naturedly.

Well, it is true that Thanksgiving is celebrated as a national holiday primarily in the U.S. and Canada, two former British colonies.

Thanksgiving in the U.S. is usually traced to 1621 when a Pilgrim leader, William Bradford, proclaimed a day of feasting to commemorate the first harvest after a long year of suffering. What you may not know is that, as the colonies grew more prosperous, the people forgot all about Thanksgiving and the meaning it held for their ancestors. For generations Thanksgiving was celebrated sporadically, if at all, with no set date.

Then in 1822 Sarah Hale, a young widow from New Hampshire, decided to revive this important celebration. Sarah, a mother of five children and an editor of a women’s magazine, began a 40-year campaign of writing editorials and letters to governors and presidents to get Thanksgiving officially recognized as a national holiday. Three presidents turned her down. Her obsession became a reality, however, when in 1863 President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed the last Thursday in November as an annual celebration of Thanksgiving.

It’s interesting that it was Lincoln who responded to Sarah’s request. His own life was at a very low ebb at the time. The country was literally falling apart, and Lincoln’s political future looked bleak. “Many of the members of his own cabinet openly despised him, and joked about him in public. His wife had been investigated as a possible traitor, a process which Lincoln personally found to be bitterly wounding. In the face of such personal and national circumstances, Lincoln’s call for a day of prayer would have made sense. But Thanksgiving? At a time like that? What must he have been thinking of?” No wonder historians count Lincoln as one of our truly great presidents.

There is something healthy about giving thanks.

Giving thanks reminds us how blessed we are. As some anonymous author has written:

“If you woke up this morning and were able to hear the birds sing, use your vocal cords to utter human sounds, walk to the breakfast table on two good legs, and read the newspaper with two good eyes . . . you are more blessed than millions of those who could not do these simple

things.

“If you have never experienced the danger of battle, the loneliness of imprisonment, the agony of torture, or the pangs of starvation . . . you are ahead of 500 million people in the world.

“If you can attend a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death . . . you are more blessed than three billion people in the world.

“If you have food in the refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof overhead and a place to sleep . . . you are richer than 75% of this world.

“If you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish some place . . . you are among the top 8% of the world’s wealthy.

“If you are over thirty and either of your parents is still alive you are very rare. Over a billion people are orphans by then.

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CHICKEN AND HAM DINNER ***Don’t Forget the Craft and Bake Sale!***

Saturday, November 7th
4:00 pm —7:00 pm

Take Out Available!
Tickets available at the door!

Ticket Prices are \$10.00 for Adults, \$4.00 for children ages 3 - 12, and free for children 2 and under.

Don’t forget to stop by the lounge during the dinner. You can view and buy beautiful craft items. Bake sale items also will be available.

NEEDED: CHURCH TREASURER/ BUSINESS MANAGER

Both Lisa Anderson and Jim Sommers are stepping down as church treasurer and assistant treasurer. We are now looking for someone to take over. Persons interested must be available to coordinate inspections, following up with business calls during the workday, process weekly payables, maintain risk management policies, and coordinate monthly reconciliation and reporting.

Lisa and Jim will train you if you are interested. Please prayerfully consider your skills and availability, and if this is something you feel God is calling you to try, you can call the church office at 419-691-7222 or Lisa Anderson at 419-392-3712.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AND CATECHSIM

We will not have catechism on Wed., Nov. 25th, nor will we have Sunday School on Nov. 29th. We will resume catechism on Wed., Dec. 2nd and JAM on Dec. 6th.



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD DEADLINE

Operation Christmas Child is a ministry of Samaritan's Purse, which gives Christmas gifts to needy children throughout the world. Pamphlets with suggested gifts are available with empty shoeboxes (unwrapped) in the lounge, the Narthex, and in the JAM Sunday School room in the basement of the church.

Once you fill a box (or boxes), please return it to the church office with your \$7 donation for shipping NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 15th. Shoeboxes will be delivered the next day, and we cannot accept them after that date. Thank you for your generosity.

THANK YOU

Dear Friends,

On behalf of our entire family I wish to thank all of you for your kindness and generosity during the illness and death of our beloved husband, father, and grandfather, Pastor Gerald Labuhn. You proved to be true Christian friends!

— Ilean Labuhn and
Family



Member Address Changes

Ashley & Eric Frye
4326 Brown Rd.
Oregon, OH 43616
(Abigail)

Cynthia Henderson
47278 Shelby Leigh Ct.
Lexington Pk., MD 20653

WOMEN'S MEETING

The WELCA General Meeting will be Saturday, November 14th at 10:00 am in the lounge. Kendra Cashen Kec will speak about her work with troubled youth. We'll also have breakfast and election of officers. Please bring non-perishable food items to donate for Thanksgiving baskets.

REBECCA CIRCLE NEWS

Our November meeting will be Saturday, November 14th at 10:00 am (note time change). In lieu of a Bible Study, we will be present at the WELCA General Meeting.

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

PASTOR'S COLUMN

(continued from page 1)

“If you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful . . . you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.”

Giving thanks reminds us how blessed we are. This is not to say you and I do not have problems. We do, but for most of us our blessings far outweigh our burdens.

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke these magnificent words: “Do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life? And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.”

What is there about many of us that we fixate on our burdens rather than our blessings? How can we say we are people of faith when so much of our life is lived not by faith, but by fear? Giving thanks reminds us how blessed we are.

You and I have been so blessed. We need Thanksgiving to remind us of those blessings and to remind us of the source of those blessings. With thankful hearts it is important and necessary for us, as Jesus told the man healed in Mark's Gospel, to tell and show others “how much the Lord has done for you.” That way, we can keep Thanksgiving all year long..

— *Pastor Rayl*

CONSECRATION SUNDAY RESPONSE

A big thank you to everyone who participated in our Consecration Sunday event on October 18, especially to the planning committee members: Jane Neal, Bob and Sherrie Haar, Chris Hunsaker, Ryan Hugueley, Cathy Caldwell, Keith Mullen, LuAnn Spoerl, Duane Hubaker, and Jim Sommers and to our special guest leader and preacher, Pastor Peter Martyn. We are also grateful for everyone who helped with the mailings and the fantastic luncheon served after the second worship service on the 18th. Finally, a big expression of appreciation for the members who attended on Consecration Sunday and those who participated in the commitment response.

The Consecration Sunday Stewardship Program was first developed by Herb Mill in 1996, and he has revised the program two times over the years. It has been used successfully by thousands of congregations throughout the country, including hundreds of Lutheran congregations and many here in Toledo and northwest Ohio.

This has been the first experience of Consecration Sunday for the people of First St. John, and it is heartening to see the prayerful response. On our Consecration Sunday, almost 90% of the families in attendance came forward to offer their Estimate of Giving Card for Christ and His Church for 2016. The commitments from these families represent a total increase of 38% over offerings received in 2014. But most important is to see the ways in which the Holy Spirit has brought spiritual growth into our lives and the life of the congregation as we prepared and participated in Consecration Sunday.

Remember the words of the Apostle Paul: “Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance, so that by always having enough of everything, you may share abundantly in every good work.” (2 Corinthians 9:8)

MEN'S BREAKFAST

Our next meeting is Saturday, November 21st at Bob Evans on Navarre Ave. at 8:00 a.m. We have a devotion, followed by fellowship over a good breakfast. All men are invited. Call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409 if you need a ride.



ELDERS FOR NOVEMBER

	<u>7:45 am</u>	<u>10:15 am</u>
11/1	Darold Henninger Mike Winslow	Ryan Hugueley Eric Johnson
11/8	Bob Haar Sherri Haar	Linda Yenrick Laurie Witt
11/15	Dick Haar Jeff Ladd	Jeff Smith Jason Blazeovich
11/22	Ryan Hugueley Eric Johnson	Darold Henninger Mike Winslow
11/29	Linda Yenrick Laurie Witt	Bob Haar Sherri Haar

TURN BACK YOUR CLOCKS!



Daylight savings time ends November 1st. Turn your clocks back one hour before you go to bed on Saturday, October 31st.



HELP WANTED

*Do you enjoy working with children?
Are you captivated by their
smiles and stories?*

First St John Dayschool is looking for qualified early childcare employees. Hours will vary. We need substitutes for our teachers and assistants and an active individual to work closing hours from 3-6 pm. You need to be at least 18 years of age, but even at 60 we welcome caring individuals. All employees need to be fingerprinted, and complete a background check and other paperwork as required by Ohio Jobs and Services.

Visit our website at www.firststjohndayschool.org to find out more about us. For more information contact Carol Felderman at 419-691-6480 or email a resume to fsjdayschool@firststjohn.com



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

The Dayschool is preparing for its annual Thanksgiving Feasts. If you have time and would like to help prepare and serve, volunteers are needed and appreciated. Help is needed Monday through Thursday (November 16-19) between the hours of 9 and 4. Please call the school office at 419-691-6480 if you can help. The children prepare all the food. Our menu includes "stone" soup, pumpkin bread, fruit kabobs, and cornucopias. This is a great opportunity to mingle with the parents of the school and give them a glimpse of the friendly, family atmosphere of First St. John.



DINNER WITH FRIENDS

Join us on Wed., Nov. 18th at 6:00 pm in the lounge. The menu includes a potato bar, salad, and dessert. So we know how many to plan for, please RSVP using the slip below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office. Or, you can call the office at 419-691-7222.

*Yes! I/we will attend Dinner With Friends
on November 18th.*

Names: _____

Phone: _____

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES

Births

10-3-15 *Adeline Sue Vaculik*, born to Tom and Kimberly Vaculik

Baptisms

None.

Marriages

10-10-15 Kaneil Holston and Sandhya Joshi

Deaths

10-7-15 Debbie Hecklinger

10-25-15 Leona Arnold

Transfers to First St. John:

Carol Haar from Reformation Lutheran Church in Toledo.

Transfers from First St. John:

None.

MEMORIALS

CURRENT FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Troy & Lisa Anderson.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Louise & Jim Sommers, William & Julie Moritz, William & Terri Hamilton, Marilyn Kozma, Todd & Susan Rathke, Elinor Ehrsam and family, Jeff Moritz, Paul Kuhlman, Larry & Darlene Paul, Ada Kreger, Karen Frey, Esther Bell.

DEBT RETIREMENT

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Jean Garey, Russ & Chris Hunsaker.

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Gene Hagedorn, Hilda Saelzler.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Gene Hagedorn, Bill & Cathy Caldwell, Scott & Shelly Juhasz and family.

AIR CONDITIONING

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Duane & Mary Hubaker.

CEMETERY FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Carl & Janet Morrison, Olga Zimmerman, Tom & Janet Eppard, Gary & Joanne Henningsen, Ada Kreger, Keith & Kim Kwiatkowski and family, Ken & Joyce Villhauer, Glenn Koester, Norman & Phyllis Schuffenecker, M/M William Nelson and family, Hank & Joanne Schumaker, Veneta Oberhaus, Neal & Rita Carter, Jerry & Ginny Nissen, Chuck & Jane Neal, Ralph & Ethel Mae Vogtsberger, Larry & Darlene Paul, Jean DeWitt, Terry & Jane Schuetz, Esther Bell, Roy & Rita Reigle, Elaine Gladieux, Pam, Barry, Jason & Heather Klatt, Tom & LuAnn Schuffenecker, Marge Bollinger, Ilean Labuhn, Chuck Bell, Nancy Gallaher, Ruth Cummerow.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Jerry & Ginny Nissen, Ken & Joyce Villhauer, Bob & Sherrie Haar, Norman & Phyllis Schuffenecker, Paul & Cathy Ackerman, Dave & Jean Wietelmann, Gary & Joanne Henningsen, Shanna & Keith King, Donna Henningsen, Glenn Koester, M/M John Spoerl,

Dan & Joyce Martin and family, Carl & Janet Morrison, Gloria Ross, Troy & Lisa Anderson and family, Eric & Cindy Johnson, Phyllis & Charlie Bickford, Jim & Dianne Schumaker, Terry & Jane Schuetz, Sandy Stahl, Marge Bollinger, Joanne Crandall, Bill & Rose Kusian, Mark & Deb Ackerman, Martha Hecklinger, Chuck & Jane Neal, B.J. Searles, Ralph & Ethel Mae Vogtsberger, Jim Harrell, Jim Harrell and family, Martha Kuhn and family, John Hansen, Susan Hansen, Marvin & Carol Keller, Joe & Jodi Upham and Ian, Cyndi Henderson and Jordan & Lucas, Todd Wilson & Debbie.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by M/M Richard Haar, Carlene Trost, Jim & Janet Fox, Marilyn Cashen.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Jim & Janet Fox.

BEREAVEMENT COMMITTEE

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Onda, Labuhn, Rankin & Boggs Assoc.

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Penny DeWitt.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Penny DeWitt, Gary & Linda Kusian, Bryan Kusian, Jon & Melissa Lang, Jean DeWitt, Gene & Janet Schacht.

SOUND SYSTEM/MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Chuck & Betty Hyre.

QUILTERS

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Eileen Young.

CHOIR FUND

In memory of **Pastor Gerald Labuhn** by Mary Ellen Miller, Jeanette Dotson.

In memory of **Harry Myrice** by Mary Ellen Miller.

In memory of **Debra Hecklinger** by Ron & Joanne Koch, Mary Ellen Miller.

Being Thankful

God gave to us a gift through Jesus Christ. Recognizing God's grace causes us to have a thankful attitude. "All this is for your benefit, so that the grace that is reaching more and more people may cause thanksgiving to overflow to the glory of God." -- 2 Corinthians 4:15

"Thirty Days of Giving Thanks!" Challenge

It's simple. Take a moment each day in November and thank someone in your life. Send a text, make a call, leave a post-it, write an old fashioned letter...Make eye contact. Smile. And say thanks. It doesn't matter how you thank them. Simply think of someone in your life - each day - and tell them why you are thankful for them.

Thank thirty people in thirty days.

Can't think of thirty? Look more closely at the people you encounter. The postman. The barista. The friendly teller at the bank. Your neighbor down the street. Is there a local store owner who makes you feel welcome every time you shop? How about someone you work with that makes you laugh? Do you have a favorite hair stylist, massage therapist, or yoga teacher? Have you told your best friend how much you appreciate their friendship? Did you ever thank your favorite teacher? Has anyone helped change the course of your life? What about someone you are really close to - like your kids or spouse - when's the last time you thanked them? Taken from the website:

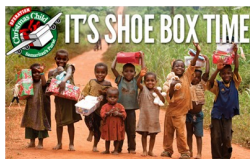
www.afreespiritlife.com/the-giving-thanks-challenge/



We are so thankful for all our volunteers and those who donated their time, money and/or candy to our 2015

Trunk or Treat. We had a GREAT turnout— 17 cars and over 70 children that participated. We have the best people here at First St. John Lutheran Church and Dayschool!!

Our Christmas Play for this year will be December 13, 2015 during the 10:15 service. Parts will be handed out shortly. Dates and times for practices will be announced once all the parts are handed out.



Did someone say "Christmas?!"

It is time to start collecting for Operation Christmas Child, so get those shoeboxes ready!

Since 1993, more than 100 million boys and girls in over 130 countries have experienced God's love through the power of simple shoebox gifts from Operation Christmas Child. Samaritan's Purse works with local churches and ministry partners to deliver the gifts and share the life-changing Good News of Jesus Christ.

A flyer with all the details will be attached to this email (if you receive your newsletter in this manner). We will have additional brochures by the empty shoeboxes that are available in the JAM room, lounge, and Narthex.

November Class Notice

***** There will be no JAM on November 29th. We will resume again on December 6th. *****



***COUNCIL MINUTES
(continued from page 10)***

Old Business: The Christmas tree will go up in the church the day after Thanksgiving.

New Business: None.

A motion to adjourn was made by Lori Pfeiffer and seconded by Mike Winslow. Motion carried.

Pastor Rayl led us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,
Keith Mullen
Council President



HATS, MITTENS, SOCKS AND BOOTS COLLECTION

We will collect winter wear for local children throughout the entire month of November. We need hat and mitten sizes 0 through adult for a local elementary school. We also are collecting toddler and preschool size socks and boots for the Toledo Day Nursery. Place your donations in the specially marked boxes in the Narthex and/or the lounge. Thank you.

NOVEMBER'S MINISTRY OUTREACH

Our ministry outreach for November is the ELCA's World Hunger Appeal. More than 800 million people — that's 1 in 8 people in our world today — are hungry. In the United States, more than 50 million people do not know where their next meal will come from. Over 46 million Americans are living in poverty.

As Christian people, we are called to respond. If you choose to support this ministry, please use the special envelopes in the pews and place it in the offering plate. Thank you for your help.

ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY



Join us on Sunday, December 6th at 6:00 pm in the gym for our annual adult Christmas party. Takacs Catering will prepare the dinner for us. The evening's entertainment is by "Collaboration," a choral group directed by Mark Hettrick. No charge, but a free will offering will be taken to help defer the cost of food. So we can know how many dinners to order, please fill out the RSVP slip below and return it to the office, place it in the offering plate, or call the office. Thanks, and we hope to see you there!

I/we will attend the Christmas Party on Dec. 6th

Name(s): _____

Phone: _____

WE REMEMBER...



On All Saints Sunday, November 1st, we remember the saints of First St. John who entered the Church Triumphant during the past year:

William J. Zeisler	3/16/1931	- 11/15/2014
Virginia L. Wegman	1/13/1933	- 11/20/2014
Donna M. Cedoz	4/18/1927	- 12/10/2014
Violet G. Orten	9/19/1924	- 12/10/2014
Raymond W. Base, Sr.	10/13/1933	- 1/22/2015
Russell O. Bodette, Sr.	6/02/1921	- 2/16/2015
Geraldine Mottmiller	7/07/1925	- 2/24/2015
Virginia L. Meyer	11/30/1927	- 3/04/2015
Julie A. Loucks	7/16/1956	- 3/10/2015
William Giles	9/01/1925	- 3/11/2015
James O. Hecklinger	5/19/1954	- 3/21/2015
Donald E. Higley	5/30/1926	- 6/05/2015
Carol S. Cousino	8/04/1942	- 6/16/2015
Lillian L. Georgeson	2/13/1927	- 6/22/2015
Rev. Gerald H. Labuhn	7/10/1928	- 9/23/2015
Debra D. Hecklinger	10/07/1949	- 9/29/2015
Leona Arnold	7/15/1921	- 10/25/2015

And we also remember these friends & family members:

Dick & Joan Bailey, Fred & Helen Bailey, Frank Beavers, Sr., Clarence & Iva Grant, Stephanie Larkins, William Mermer, Andrea Schumaker, & Tim Smith



2016 FLOWER SIGN UP SHEETS

You can now sign up for altar flowers for January through October of 2016. The sign up sheets are in the red flower book located on the shelf under the main bulletin board in the Narthex, to the left of the main doors when you come into the church.



First St. John Prayer Chain

(as of 10/27/15)



Crisis Prayer List: *For those who need prayers in urgent matters such as surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Will be moved to "Chronic Prayer List" after one month unless we're contacted about special circumstances:*

- Family of Leona Arnold**
- Chuck Bartlett**
- Family of Debbie Hecklinger**
- Jackie Hubaker**
- Robin Kovesdi**
- Family of John Marshall**
- Donald Nelson, Sr.**
- Nancy Schwab-Ketner**
- Brenda Seimet**

On-Going Concerns: *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 we're contacted about special/continuing circumstances:*

- Karyl Antoine**
- Jackie & Tina Curtis**
- Linda Delrue**
- Donna Dulbs**
- Patty Gable**
- Scott Keller**
- Connie Koch**
- Joyce Martin**
- George "Skip" McCullough**
- Jeanette Miller**
- Christopher Molnar & his family**
- Sue Momenee**
- Jessica Mueller**
- Bill Nelson**
- Pam Pirolli**
- Sheryl Rayl**
- Michael Rheinbolt & family**
- Cindy Roecker**
- Dick Ross**
- Steve Rowe**
- Charlie Sheehy**
- Lynn Mars Slaughter**
- Carter Tackman**
- John Tsaousidis**
- Pat Vogelsang**
- Raetta Zeisler**

Please check the list and notify any prayer chain contact if a name can be removed.

Prayer Chain Contacts

- Carol Abbey 351-9795 or cabbey@jcrinc.com
- Lynn Folk 691-3410
- Donna Koehn 693-5030
- Ada Kreger 693-1549
- Gloria Ross 836-7166

PRAYER BUDDIES STILL NEEDED

Since the Dayschool no longer has kindergarten, the Prayer Buddy program will continue this year for the Dayschool and JAM teachers. We need more prayer buddies to help pray for and support our school and JAM teachers throughout the school year. If you can help, contact Jamie Blazeovich at 419-691-7222 or cedir@firststjohn.com

IMPORTANT NOTE: *Don't worry about the expense—teachers are not looking for presents like little kids do. They mostly want to know someone cares and is praying for them. A simple card every now and then will be much appreciated. Thank you.*



CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual congregation meeting is on Sun., Dec. 13th following both services. We will elect council members and vote on the 2016 budget.



ELDER-BEERMAN COUPON BOOKS FOR SALE

New this year! Purchase a coupon booklet for \$5 to shop at Elder-Beerman's during its Community Days (Nov. 11-14) and receive coupons worth much more! For a complete list of what is included in the booklet, visit www.communitydayevent.com. Books are on sale in the school or church office. Our Dayschool receives the \$5 and you get 30 coupons, so you will get that money back and then some!

DAYSCHOOL NEWS

“Rejoice always, pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

“Rejoice always.” Thanksgiving is approaching and we should be thinking about everything for which we are thankful. That seems very difficult in today’s society. American news is filled with stories about broken families, violence in our schools, and corruption among our government leaders. We ask, “What is there to rejoice about?” God says we need only look at the wonderful gift He has given us.

Paul also says we should “pray constantly, give thanks in all circumstances.” We easily thank God for our wonderful family, friends and church. But how do we thank Him when things are not going well? That is not so easy. Hurting families, health issues, loss of job or income are not things we usually thank God for, but when we do and ask God to walk with us through them, we grow stronger.

James says (James 1:2-4) *“Count it all joy, my brethren, when you meet various trials, for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness. And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.”*

We do not grow in our faith when everything is moving along merrily. Instead of complaining during our struggles, we ought to view them as opportunities for growth. God sometimes needs to bring us to our knees so we will stop and give Him some time. I know from experience that my greatest spiritual growth has come only after walking through the valley. I worry about the young children growing up in our world today and pray for them. I pray they have Christian parents who value their spiritual growth as much as their academic, so their children may be perfect, lacking in nothing.

First St. John DaySchool offers your child an opportunity to grow in a Christian environment. Every day the children hear how God loves them!

If you have time and would like to help prepare and serve during our Thanksgiving feasts, volunteers are needed and appreciated. Help is needed Monday through Thursday (November 16-19) between the hours of 9 and 4. Please call the school office at 419-691-6480 if you can help.

2015 POINSETTIA SALE

Sponsored by the Altar Guild

Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship on Christmas Eve. Place this 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
Monday, December 9, 2015.**

No. of plants @ \$9.00 each _____

Color (circle one): Red White

Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

In Honor of (Living):

CHURCH COUNCIL MINUTES—OCTOBER 20, 2015

The October 20, 2015 meeting was called to order by President Keith Mullen. Pastor Rayl opened the meeting with devotion and prayer. Roll call was taken. LuAnn Spoerl made a motion to accept the minutes from the September meeting; John Spoerl seconded. Motion carried.

Director of Faith Development / Sunday School:

Jamie reported that JAM is running smoothly. We are starting to collect for Operation Christmas Child. We had 53 boxes turned in last year, so our goal is 54 boxes this year. If we reach our goal, we'll have a donut party.

Catechism is going well. A big thank you to Ryan Nelson for subbing for Pam Beavers.

High School Sunday School is going well. We are excited for growth. A big thank you to Mike Winslow for subbing for LeAnn Winslow.

Trunk or Treat was October 17th from 3—4:30 pm in the back of the church. It was a blast. Over 70 kids and 17 cars. Awesome job, FSJ! R&R Roadside gave us a discount on 20 pumpkins. The participants were overjoyed with the gesture.

We will be starting our Christmas play practice within the month. A program has been chosen, and parts will be disseminated shortly. We will practice in the gym after the children's sermon. Dates and times for practices will be announced once all parts have been handed out.

Elders: No report.

Property Management: New light bulbs were installed in the gym. The warming oven is being repaired for the Chicken & Ham dinner. Permit for parsonage removal is in the works— gas, water, and electric has been shut off. The boilers in the church will be serviced for the winter months, and there are several other small projects in the works.

Finance Committee: Chris Hunsaker reported they are preparing the budget for the 2016 church year.

Treasurer: Lisa Anderson reported we are ahead of last year and things are looking up as we near the end of 2015. A motion to accept the Finance Committee and Treasurer's report was made by Bob Haar and seconded by Mike Winslow. Motion carried.

Dayschool: Carol Felderman reported the new school year started with the same preschool staff from last year, and they recently hired Ryan Nelson, a member of First St. John. Currently, 110 children are enrolled. The school is looking for part-time child care employees to cover various hours and work as substitute teachers.

Carol and the school board are working together to rebuild relationships with the church and community, as well as the preschool and child care program. Future plans are to complete the requirements for the Child Care *Step Up to Quality* rating system in Ohio. We also are planning some special events for our 40th anniversary next year.

Current fundraising efforts cost school and church families nothing but a little time. Enroll in the Kroger Community Rewards program if you like to shop there; a percentage of your sale comes back to the school. Currently, we receive about \$100 a quarter, but that could easily be increased with your help. Clip Big G Box Tops and Campbell's labels and place them in the receptacles in the hallway. Coupon books for Elder Beerman's Community Days (Nov. 11-14) are now on sale for \$5 in the church and school offices.

Lori Pfeiffer made a motion to allow the Dayschool to have a raffle at their Thanksgiving Feast, which was seconded by Mike Winslow. Motion carried.

Pastor: Pastor Rayl reported that since the last Council meeting there have been two funerals: Pastor Gerald Labuhn and Debbie Hecklinger. There was one wedding: Joshi/Holston.

He said that Consecration Sunday, held on October 18, was a success with 88 consecration cards turned in. This represented about 90% of those families in attendance. The total dollar amount represents a 38% increase over their 2014 contributions.

He thanked the members of the planning committee (Duane Hubaker, Jim Sommers, Keith Mullen, LuAnn Spoerl, Cathy Caldwell, Bob and Sherri Haar, Ryan Hugueley, Chris Hunsacker, and Jane Neal) for their work. Finally, Pastor Rayl said Carol Haar, Dick Haar's wife, has requested her membership be transferred from Reformation Lutheran, Toledo, to First St. John. The transfer letter has been received. A motion was made by LuAnn Spoerl to accept the transfer of Carol Haar to First St. John from Reformation Lutheran in Toledo. Seconded by Bob Haar, motion carried. Welcome, Carol!