



First St. John Journal



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When the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments were stationed to praise the Lord with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, according to the directions of King David of Israel: and they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord,

“For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever toward Israel.”

And all the people responded with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. (Ezra 3:10-11)

This might seem like a strange scripture selection for a newsletter article during the COVID-19 pandemic, but I think it has some relevance for our current situation, especially when viewed in its context. The book of Ezra takes place when the Israelites have been allowed to return to Jerusalem following the long period of captivity in Babylon. When the Babylonians defeated Israel, they destroyed Jerusalem and tore down the Temple. Then they carried the Israelites off to captivity into the foreign land of Babylon. Here the people of God longed to return to their familiar homeland to rebuild the Temple and again be able to properly worship God. The crisis of The Captivity was how God’s people could sing God’s praises in a foreign land; and how can God’s people worship God without the Temple building?

The reading from Ezra describes the ecstatic joy experienced by the people when they finally were able to lay the foundation for the new Temple. This accomplishment meant a return to some form of “normalcy” for God’s people as they looked forward to having a building in which to resume their worship life.

Does any of this sound familiar? For many of us, these past months may well have felt like an experience of captivity, exile, and separation from what we consider the normal experience of worshipping the Lord.

We have been denied access to our usual space, a space in which some of us have experienced a lifetime of feeling that God is close to us and we are close to God. Like the people with Ezra, we can feel cut off and abandoned as we long for the overwhelming joy of reentering the “house of God.” And we can feel angry toward anyone who tells us we must postpone this joy.

But as the Apostle Paul affirmed for the early Christians, “We know that all things work together for good for those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28) Because of the challenges of The Captivity, the people of Israel began to realize that God is not tied to a geographic location, nor can God be contained in a building. The prophets of this period of history set off fireworks that occasionally burst forth in bright displays of the powerful and universal presence of God. This realization gets projected back in time even with the words of King Solomon as he considered the plans for the original Temple: “But who is able to build him a house, since heaven, even highest heaven, cannot contain him?” (2 Chronicles 2:6)

Finally, as with all matters of faith, we can focus on Jesus. When Jesus engages the Samaritan woman at the well, she tries to get into a discussion about the importance of having the true place of worship. As a Samaritan, she says, “Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain (Mount Gerizim), but you (Jesus as a Jew), say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” This conflict over where the people of God were to worship had gone on for centuries, resulting in hatred, prejudice and even war.

Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. . . . But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:20-24)

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PASTOR'S ARTICLE
(continued from page 1)

With one pronouncement, Jesus puts an end to such considerations by declaring that something new is now dawning because someone new has arrived. What Solomon had only whispered now bursts forth brightly in and with Jesus. Jesus is the full manifestation of the glory of God. For this reason, I have always found this an interesting and challenging concept when it comes to discussions about where, when, and how the people of God are to worship. To me it sounds like buildings are nice, convenient, and useful, but not necessarily necessary. Even the vision of the final eternal residence for God's people depicted in The Book of Revelation, declares: "I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God, the Almighty and the Lamb."

So, perhaps this period of separation from our beloved church building may be an opportunity to learn some new things about how, when, and where the people of God, the disciples of Jesus, center their faith and focus their worship. I have been learning new ways to enjoy contact and fellowship in the virtual world that our technology has created. I hope my friends at FSJ have felt some connection to our worship life through the recorded video worship services. I have suggested to some that sharing the web link is a new way to invite a friend or family member who ordinarily would not enter the doors of the building, to nonetheless experience our worship life. Some of the things that are being done in response to the new challenges probably will become permanent ways of doing things when we return to "normal."

Like everyone else, I am longing for the time when we can all come together again in one place, at one time, as one group, in order to worship, learn and celebrate together. I miss the familiar. I miss my friends. I miss my fellow members of the Body of Christ at First St. John Lutheran Church. I miss celebrating special occasions and events. I miss receiving and sharing the sacraments. And I believe with all my heart that the time will come again for this to take place. There is no doubt that having a place to assemble the members of the Body of Christ for worship, learning, serving, and fellowship is very important. It is still the best context in which to celebrate and receive the presence of Christ through the Word and Sacrament.

In fact, since the earliest days of the church after the Day of Pentecost we are told: "Day by day, as they

spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts. . ." (Acts 2:46) And, I heartily agree with the writer of Hebrews: "let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another . . ." (Hebrews 10:24-25)

To this end, we are working toward recovering and reopening at FSJ, as are other faith communities. Be assured we are moving forward. In this newsletter is information about our initial efforts in forming a taskforce to examine the issues and determine how to proceed. I am thankful for those who have agreed to join this process. We will be moving deliberately and carefully. We do not want to endanger anyone's health or safety. We want to show love and concern for our neighbor. We want to get things up and running again as soon as possible while still adhering to the established guidelines for health and safety. Important information will be shared through the newsletter, on the website, Facebook and Twitter, by telephone calls, or word of mouth; in other words, however we can.

As always, please do not hesitate to share your thoughts, concerns, or ideas, whether good, bad, positive, negative, or in between. Remember, "We Are All In This Together." **To this I will add a strong addition: "And So Is God!"**

Let us pray: *Gracious God, it is good for us to gather as your beloved in community. We treasure your presence with us in word and meal, song and prayer. Be with us in these days when gathering together as often as we would like is not possible. When we must be apart for reasons of safety, we trust that you surround us with your sheltering wings. Encourage us in connecting as we are able, reaching out to our neighbors in need, and being persistent in prayer. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our constant companion. Amen.*

THANK YOU!

Thanks to everyone for their kind thoughts and prayers on my birthday in May. They were and still are greatly appreciated. I am thankful for my family of faith at First St. John.

-- Pastor Rayl

CHURCH OFFICE TO REOPEN— PLEASE READ

Beginning Monday, June 1st the church secretary will return to the office in the Educational Building. Summer hours are from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm, Monday through Friday, until after Labor Day.

NOTE: To be compliant with state regulations for our Day School (reopening for summer camp on June 1st), we ask that you observe the following:

- ◆ Please refrain from “popping in.” If you feel you must come to the office, please call ahead at 419-691-7222 and make an appointment. If you’re coming to pick something up or drop something off, Toni will meet you at one of the doors.
- ◆ If you must come into the building, please wear a mask and sanitize your hands at the sanitizing stations near the door and remember to observe the 6-feet of distance rule.
- ◆ When you come to the church office, please knock and wait to be let in. Toni will not be wearing a mask when she is alone in her office, so knocking and waiting will allow her to put her mask on before you enter.
- ◆ Please keep the double doors between the lounge/library and the rest of the Educational building closed at all times.



JULY ELDERS SCHEDULE

We do not yet have a reopening date for church, but we will remain closed for June. When we do begin our worship, this schedule for the elders will resume at whichever date we decide to reopen (that is to say, we may not open right away in July). Remember, we will have only one service at 9:00 am each Sunday in the summer.

- 5th Darold Henninger, Kevin Ruedy
- 12th Dick Haar, Tom Eppard
- 19th Tom Gaskins, Terry Ruedy
- 26th Bob & Sherrie Haar

LATEST INFORMATION ON REOPENING



The Reopening Task Force group had its first meeting to investigate when and how we will reopen in-person worship at First St. John. At this time, we do not anticipate opening up for in-person worship until July. This will allow us time to see how the reopening of community businesses affects the number of cases in this area.

Make no mistake—we would love to have everyone back again. But we want to err on the side of caution and in love and protection for our church family. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact anyone from this committee:

Pastor Rayl	567-395-0143
Mark Ackerman	419-345-6934
Chuck & Andra Bell	419-290-4431 (Chuck) 419-350-7358 (Andra)
Matt DeWitt	419-270-9935
Beth Hugueley	419-350-0529
Keith Mullen	419-345-3474
Larry Paul	419-327-7097
Annette Slater	419-262-0880
Toni Wilbarger	419-691-7222

NO RENTALS THIS SUMMER (TABLES & CHAIRS, LOUNGE, GYM)

As we navigate the days of the COVID-19 virus, we have decided that for this summer we cannot rent the lounge or gym, nor will we be able to accommodate borrowing tables and chairs. We apologize for the inconvenience.

HOW TO GIVE YOUR OFFERING

Contributions are down from what is normal at this time of year. Please consider giving online at www.firststjohn.com and click on “Stewardship & Giving” to sign up for the Vanco program. (If you need help, please call Lisa Anderson at 419-392-3712). Or you can mail your offering: 2471 Seaman St. Toledo, OH. 43605.

If your offering checks still have not cleared, postal service delays may be the problem. We will deposit them when we receive them. We plan to restore regular mail delivery on June 1st, but keep in mind it may still be hit-or-miss for another week or so.

MEMORIALS

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of Sharon Gemuenden by Gene Hagedorn.

In memory of Chuck Neal by Gene Hagedorn.

In memory of Margie Myers by Gene Hagedorn.

DEBT FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Penny DeWitt, John Wagner.

In memory of Dorothy Zeadker by Penny DeWitt.

CHOIR FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Andy Hodges, Marge Bollinger, Eric & Cindy Johnson, James Cousino, Bill & Terri Hamilton.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal and in honor of Chuck's 80th birthday by Jane Neal.

In memory of Chuck Neal by Jean DeWitt, Ron & Becky Buehrer, Chuck & Betty Hyre, Darlene Lorenzen, Spade & Trowel Garden Club, Carlene Trost, Jerry & Ginny Nissen, Darold Henninger, Lee Wagner, Marilyn Cashen, Mary Stephenson, Alice Fork, James & Darlene Mead, Ron & Marian Gladieux, M/M Bruce Smith, Jean Snyder, Karen Frey, Dale & Jeanne Johnson, Elaine Gladieux, Larry & Darlene Paul, Marilyn Brown, Tom & Janet Eppard, Sandra Stahl, James Harrell, James & Janet Fox, Linda Stanley, Cheryl Maas, Jim & Dianne Schumaker, Kevin & Carol Abbey, LuAnn Spoerl, Terry & Jane Schuetz, Mary Ellen Miller, Don & Karen Holmes, Russ & Chris Hunsaker, Joanne Koch, Beth Lipper, Kenny & Janet Romstadt, Bill & Cathy Caldwell, David & Beth Hodges, Joan Juhasz, Glen & Marianne Susor, Frank & Pam Beavers, Gerald & Sharon Strouth, Tom & Laurie Bahnsen, Karl & Dianne Busson, Pat & Bev Toneff, Dave & Jane Nowak, Frank & Barb Meyers, Tami Heiss, Betty TenEyck, Julie Moritz, Brenda Fussell, Deborah Lofquist, Irene Meech, Steve & Simone Gall, Beth Labuhn Allen, Mary Mortemore, Henry & Joanne Schumaker, Eileen Young, Mary Hubaker, Donna Koester, Janet Morrison, Peggy Burke, Randal & Peggy Koch, Eleanor Cochenouer, Bob & Paulette Giaimo, Jeff & Deborah Ladd, Bob & Sherrie Haar, Brian & Jodi Cummerow.

In memory of Margie Myers by Elaine Gladieux, Henry & Joanne Schumaker.

In memory of Dorothy Zeadker by Bob & Paulette Giaimo.

AIR CONDITIONING FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Esther Bell.

CURRENT FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Louise Sommers, Ken Villhauer, Jim Villhauer, Sue Kimmet, Shelly Garret.

In memory of Dorothy Zeadker by Louise Sommers.

In memory of Margie Myers by Louise Sommers.

In memory of mother Anne and brother Michael Pierce by the Pierce family— Ronald & Judith Sattler, Barbara Condon, Richard & Theresa Porter, Alberta LaCourse, Robert Pierce, Ralph & Barb Pierce.

ELEVATOR FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Winnie Wohlgamuth.

In memory of Margie Myers by Winnie Wohlgamuth.

IMPROVEMENT FUND (PAINTING)

In memory of Gene Schacht by Janet Schacht, Marilyn Cashen.

In memory of Chuck Neal by Janet Schacht.

IMPROVEMENT FUND

In memory of Margie Myers by Janet Boos, Denise & Steve Zielinski, Jean & Richard Gehr, Diane & James Hayward.

In memory of Chuck Neal by Joanne Crandall.

DAY SCHOOL

In memory of Sharon Gemuenden by Eric & Cindy Johnson.

CEMETERY FUND

In memory of Chuck Neal by Norman Schumaker, Tim & Gwen Willson.

**AUGUST NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE — JULY 24th**

GENEALOGY RESEARCH

Our summer Day School is in session, so we are limiting the people in our building. Because of this, we regret we cannot accommodate any genealogy research this summer, i.e., no browsing through the historical church records. Thank you for your understanding and patience.



**GRADUATE
RECOGNITION**

With the uncertainty of our church service schedule at this time, we have postponed our graduate recognition until a later date. But we still are collecting our graduates' information for this service.

If you have a high school or college graduate in your family, please complete this form and either mail or email (office@firststjohn.com) it to the church. If you email the information, you don't need the form, unless you have scanning capability at home. Thanks!

NAME OF GRADUATE

GRADUATED FROM

DEGREE EARNED

NOTABLE ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

FUTURE PLANS (SCHOOL, WORK, ETC.):

**HELP WANTED:
MINISTER OF YOUTH AND
FAMILY**

First St. John Lutheran and Martin Luther Lutheran churches are looking for a faithful, talented disciple of Jesus Christ to fill a new position as Minister of Youth and Family at First St. John and who will also act as spiritual leader at Martin Luther. This is a shared staffing position between both congregations.

This person will demonstrate a life of faith in Jesus Christ and of active discipleship. The candidate should be an energetic self-starter with a passion for young people, with a goal of working for the youths' well-being and faith development in discovering their path of discipleship. The Minister of Youth and Family is responsible for assisting the church in planning, coordinating and promoting the youth programs of the church as well as special youth projects, assignments and events. This person needs a proven ability to relate well to young people and their families from diverse backgrounds and also have an understanding of the complexities of the challenges facing them. The candidate should have experience organizing and leading effective youth activities with proven positive outcomes.

This person needs to be able to prepare and lead worship services at Martin Luther, and provide leadership and insight for the congregation, focusing on building the congregation and their outreach within the community, in addition to ministering to the sick and shut-ins.

Previous experience as a church leader and youth worker or a person who has or is working toward a degree in church work is preferred. The position will begin ASAP. Salary is competitive, based on qualifications and experience.

For more information and a complete job description, please contact Pastor Jerald Rayl by either calling 567-395-0143, emailing him at pastor1@firststjohn.com, or reach out through our website at www.firststjohn.com.



PRAYER CHAIN CHANGES
(As of 5/29/20)



Crisis Prayer List: *This is for those who need prayers in an urgent matter such as upcoming surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Individuals will be moved to "Chronic" after the first month unless one of the prayer chain contacts is contacted about special circumstances:*

- Larry Baumer
- Family of Terry Crowell
- Lynn Denny & family
- Cory & Collin Folk
- Paulette Giaimo
- Eleanor Heckman
- Karen Krouse
- Nick Sass
- Jeff Stahl
- Katelyn Weirich
- Bill Wiener

Chronic Prayer List: *This is for those who need prayers for ongoing serious situations such as cancer treatments, ongoing medical struggles and recovery and/or personal situations. Individuals will be moved off after 3 months unless one of the prayer chain contacts has been contacted about special/continuing circumstances:*

- Lee & Karyl Antoine
- Lynn Balogh
- Karen Bless
- Mitchell Broyls
- The Burk Family
- Rosie Burtch
- Jeannette Carlo
- Pat Christy
- Greg Contat
- Marjorie Counterman
- Nancy Coy
- Dick Crouse
- Hannah Culler & Family
- Joy DeVore & Family
- Chiara Del-Mace
- Ann Dudics
- Robin Duck & Family
- Dorothy Felderman
- Sharon Grames
- Toni Henline
- Karen Huber
- Pastor Beth Huener
- Dana Justice
- Phyllis Kelly
- Mark Kieswetter
- Joanne Koch
- Tom Kohn
- Carole Kolibar
- Ada Kreger
- The Lee Family
- Heidi LeGrand

- Teresa McFarland
- Joyce Martin
- Bonnie Lutzmann
- Donald Meyer
- Donna Miller
- Jason Monti & Family
- Mary Bell Moore
- Bill Morse
- Susan Murphy
- Joyce Ostapowicz
- Pam Pirolli
- David Poore
- Mike Ray
- Courtney Reed
- Michael Rheinbolt & Family
- Steven Riegle
- Logan Roberts
- Karen Rowley
- Neil Rutledge
- Andrew Schlegel
- Connie Singlar
- Skylar (no last name given)
- LuAnn Spoerl
- Michelle Stanberry
- Diane Swartz
- Becky Thielen
- Joan Tilton
- Barb Tischinae
- Steve Uzl
- Jane Vargo
- Jim Vogelsang
- Nick Wasserman
- Barb West
- Kellyn Wyngate
- John & Grace Yard
- Raetta Zeisler

Please let one of the prayer chain contacts know if any of these individuals could be moved off the list.

Prayer Chain Contacts

Carol Abbey 419-351-9795 or cabbeyrn@aol.com

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

PORTALS OF PRAYER

Portals of Prayer devotional booklets for July-September should arrive soon, but problems with the mail may delay delivery. Also, because of the virus, we are limiting the number of people in the building while our Day School is in session. When the booklets arrive, you will have to call the office and make an appointment to pick them up. Toni will meet you at the door and hand it to you.



DAY SCHOOL NEWS

We are very excited to announce that our summer program begins June 1st! We will follow COVID-19 guidelines set by the governor's office and will make some changes, but we look forward to having lots of fun! We will be open from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm for extended care.

Our camp hours are from 9:00 am to noon for children ages 3 & 4. For children ages 5-12, camp hours are from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm. Our schedule includes Gardening Week, Cowboy Week, Science Week, Animal Week, Red, White & Blue Week (closed on July 3rd), Music Week, Cooking Week, Christmas in July, Olympics Week, Water Week, and Art Week.

We are still taking registrations for our fall program that begins on August 19th. Enrollment forms can be found on our website www.firststjohndayschool.org Or you can call the school office at 419-691-6480 for more information.

Tell your friends about our 3-star rated school. See you soon!
— Andrea Buckley

DAVID WINSLOW SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

Congratulations to Brandon DeWitt, the recipient of this year's David Winslow Memorial Scholarship. Way to go!



MEMBER UPDATES

Births

5-10-20 *Addison Anne*, born to James and Chelsea (Bell) Weber.

5-15-20 *Olivia Teal*, born to Nick and Lauren (Kirby) Paul.

Baptisms

None.

Marriages

None.

Deaths

None.

A NEW KIND OF VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL



We ARE having VBS, but it will be different this year. We again are partnering with Christ United Methodist Church, and since Christ United has an FM receiver, VBS will be in their parking lot, which will allow children and their families to gather safely from their cars. However, instead of meeting for four days in one week, we will meet *each Thursday* from 7-8 PM from June 18th through July 16th.

Our theme is "Knights of the North Castle: Quest for the King's Armor." Our new children's choir director Hilary Heisman will co-chair with Tracy Thiel from Christ United. VBS is for ages 3 through fifth grade.

To register your child(ren), you can go online to <https://form.jotform.com/201395589388068> We will try to get this link on our website soon.

Also, if you can help in any way, please email either Hilary Heisman at faith.hilary@gmail.com or Darlene Paul at jam40st.john@gmail.com See you there!

DAVID WINSLOW MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

We are planning to hold our golf tournament on Saturday, August 1st at 8:00 am (shotgun start) at the Eagle's Landing golf course. The price is \$70 per person, which includes a meal (yet to be determined). Because of COVID-19 precautions, only two people can have a cart, and only one can ride in it. To register to golf, sponsor a hole, or make a donation, please call Mike Winslow at 419-691-8430. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

All proceeds go to the Winslow Scholarship Fund at First St. John.



CHURCH DIRECTORIES

We now are delivering the directories in person to your homes. Please note that because several copies had ink-smudged covers, we will send those back and get replacements. This means we currently do not have enough for everyone. We will notify you when we get our replacements. Thank you for your continued patience.