

From the Pastor

“Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it.” - Psalm 119:140

Greetings, brothers and sisters in Christ,

“But Mom, you promised!” Children know what promises are for. They know very well how to use them. If they perceive that a promise has been given, they will hold you to it. Give your word on any particular matter, such as staying up an hour later, getting extra screen time, being allowed to have a friend come over, eating a favorite dessert—anything that benefits them, really—and you can bet your sweet bippy that they will remember it. Oh, to have such faith!

When we make a promise it is a gift of our word to the one to whom we make the promise. That one uses the promise by reminding us of what we've said. Once we've been reminded about the promises we have made, we keep our word and do as we have promised. That's how promises work. At least that's how they are supposed to work.

We all have experienced the pain of a broken promise. We've all been hurt by someone who did not follow through on their word. Each of us has also been the one to break a promise, perhaps because we made promises we could not keep due to unforeseen circumstances. Whatever the reason for a broken promise, the result is the same: pain, heartache, broken trust. Enough experiences of that can make one reluctant to place their trust in anyone. Whom can we trust to keep a promise?

God makes a lot of promises. Read through the Bible and you will find promises from cover to cover. God makes these promises to us for the same reason we make promises: that those who receive His Word will use it. We use God's promises when we, like children, remind God of what He has said. God doesn't get annoyed by our saying, “But God, you promised!” God gave His Word that we might call upon Him in every time of need.

Martin Luther observed that “prayer is really nothing more than asking God to keep His promises.” This is good news; because unlike the word of humans—a word that is tainted with sin—God's Word is trustworthy. “The promises of the Lord are promises that are pure” (Psalm 12:6). “Well tried” and “pure” are references to the smelting of precious metals. The psalmist is saying that God's Word is dependable, valuable. It's not a fake. It will not fail you.

Need we have any more encouragement to get to know God's promises better, to have them ready to use at a moment's notice, just like our children? God is faithful and will keep His Word—you can count on it!

In Christ, Pastor Mike Hughes
Email: pastormike@stjohnsstonyridge.net

P.S. – Please join me for a weekly time of prayer—“Tuesdays at Twelve”—on Zoom (only), starting Tuesday, July 7, at 12:00 pm (noon). We'll gather (virtually) for 30 minutes of prayer together. Here's the Zoom info. (NOTE: it is different from the Sunday morning worship info.):

The meeting ID is **940 7347 7343** The meeting password is **595726**

(You can access these prayer meetings by phone, too. Dial 1-312-626-6799 and follow the prompts.)

St. John's Plan for Return to In-Church Worship Services

Purpose

Due to COVID-19, in-church worship services were stopped out of love and concern for the most vulnerable among our congregation. For a variety of reasons – to be able to worship God together, to feel the support of our church family, to reach those not using technology to worship, and eventually to resume receiving the Sacraments at the altar – now is the time to start the process of returning to in-church services. The purpose of this plan is to provide a safe environment to do this.

General Comments

- 1) We will follow the directives and recommendations of Gov. Mike DeWine, Dr. Amy Acton, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Wood County Health Department. This includes the wearing of masks, safe distancing, size of gathering limitations and so forth.
- 2) All members shall make their own determination on attending in-church services. Members should consider the CDC recommendation of the most vulnerable avoiding larger gatherings at this time. The most vulnerable per CDC being those who are age 65 or older and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions such as: Chronic Lung Disease, Asthma, Serious Heart Conditions, Compromised Immune System, Severe Obesity, Diabetes, Chronic Kidney Disease undergoing Dialysis, and Liver Disease.

Worship Guidelines

1. Worship Service will continue to be streamed via Facebook, Zoom or telephone.
2. Mailing of DVD of service, Weekly Voice and/or sermon copies will be continued to those requesting.
3. Member Responsibilities for in-church Service
 - a. Please make a reservation by noon on the Wednesday before the Sunday service, providing the names of all attending. You can do this by telephone (419-837-5115); e-mail officeadmin@stjohnsstonyridge.net; website www.stjohnsstonyridge.net; or St. John's Lutheran Church – Stony Ridge, Ohio on Facebook. This allows participation in an attendance system in case of the need for a positive COVID-19 case notification. (Ohio Department of Health requirement).
 - b. Wash your hands before leaving home. Bring hand sanitizer with you to worship service, if possible.
 - c. Any person entering worship must be asymptomatic. If you are not feeling well, or have been exposed to someone who has shown symptoms of or has been diagnosed with COVID-19, please do not come to in-church services.
 - d. We encouraged worshipers to wear masks while in the building, in accordance with CDC guidelines. Wear your mask from the time you leave your vehicle until you re-enter your vehicle.
 - e. Follow social distancing guidelines, remaining 6 feet apart as you enter the building, are in the building and when exiting the building.
 - f. Follow the usher to your pew, filling Sanctuary from front to back.
 - g. Keep at least 6 feet distance between yourself and those in same pew, except family units.

Our Mission Statement: Saved by the Grace of God to Witness and to Serve Others

- h. When the service ends, leave the church from back pews first, following social distancing guidelines. If desired those sitting in front may leave the Sanctuary via the front side exit doors.
 - i. Return immediately to your vehicle. No coffee hour or fellowship will be held in the church. Once in the parking lot and maintaining distance of a car width between you, you may visit with others. Just because we are being cautious does not mean people cannot be friendly.
 - j. During the Worship Service
 - k. Bulletins will not be available. You may pick up a Weekly Voice as you depart church.
 - l. Bibles, Hymnals, envelopes, pens, children's bags, etc. are all being removed from the Sanctuary.
 - m. The congregation will not be singing. Stones of Praise will only have musicians up front (in Sanctuary) but no vocalists. Sharon (or substitute) will provide instrumental organ music from the balcony. Special instrumental music will be from the balcony.
 - n. There will not be "passing of the peace". Greet one another in ways that acknowledge each other without physical touching.
 - o. There will not be communion until further notice.
 - p. Offering plates will not be passed during the service, these will be located at the Sanctuary entrance. We encourage you to consider on-line giving.
 - q. For the time being, there will no Children's Chapel, Children's sermon, or Sunday School and the nursery will not be available.
 - r. If restroom use is necessary, please follow social distancing guidelines.
5. Building Preparation
- a. The church will receive a thorough cleaning before and after in-church worship services.
 - b. Pews will be marked off (at both ends), to maintain social distancing guidelines.
 - c. As weather permits, doors will be open before and after services to allow less hand contact.
 - d. Hand sanitizers will be located by entrances.
 - e. We are exploring the possibility of using the Parish House to handle overflow attendance. Social distancing will be maintained here, too.
 - f. Restroom doors will be propped open.
 - g. Dayschool rooms are NOT available and doors should remain closed.
 - h. The office, lounge, library, cloak room, Chapel, breezeway and kitchen are NOT available and doors should remain closed.
6. Contingency items
- a. In case of a member/guest who has attended an in-church Worship Service testing positive for COVID-19:
 - b. When the Wood County Health Department (WCHD) receives notification of any individual testing positive for COVID-19, they contact the individual and conduct an interview.
 - c. Then the WCHD will notify any individual(s) who was/were around that person, individually. Potentially this could be someone sitting close to the individual in church.
 - d. All laws regarding health confidentiality are followed.
 - e. The WCHD may contact St. John's for help in reaching individuals. Otherwise, they would not contact St. John's regarding a positive COVID-19 test.
 - f. Upon learning of a positive test, we would complete a thorough cleaning and disinfecting of the church.
 - g. In-church Worship Services would continue unless directed differently by the WCHD.
7. Re-evaluate procedures and revise as necessary.

July 2020

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WORSHIP LIVE ONLINE – Sundays at 10:00 AM

(June 9, 2020)

Zoom Meeting: You can worship live with us by participating in a Zoom meeting we have set

up. You can access these meetings by going to our **website** (www.stjohnstonyridge.net), clicking the tab “What’s Happening,” and then clicking the “Link to Sunday Morning Worship,” and following the instructions to get you on a Zoom meeting.

The meeting ID is **994 9242 0345**.

The meeting password is **971198**.

[You will also be asked to enter your email address and your name.]

Additionally, you can access these Zoom meetings by downloading the **Zoom app** and entering the meeting ID: **994 9242 0345**. The meeting password is **971198**. [Again, you will be asked to enter your email address and name.]

PLEASE NOTE
THE CHANGE
IN TIME:
10:00 am!

Also—and this is a great option if you do not have a computer or are uncomfortable with digital media—you can also listen in on the sermon by dialing 1-312-626-6799 on your **phone** (yes, even your land line!), and entering the meeting ID: **994 9242 0345**.

Facebook Live: You can worship live on the “St. John’s Lutheran Church – Stony Ridge, OH”

Facebook page (“like” it if you haven’t already done so!).

YouTube: A recorded copy of Sunday morning online worship will be uploaded to YouTube and posted to our website, (www.stjohnstonyridge.net), early each week.

DVD: If you would like to receive a DVD of the online worship services mailed to you, please call or email us.

PASTOR MIKE’S SERMONS

If you wish to access the sermon from Sunday morning, you can receive that one of two ways:

The Preached Word Podcast: An audio recording of the sermon (only) will be made into a podcast early each week. These podcasts will be posted to St. John’s **Facebook** page. You can also find this podcast online by entering the following address into your favorite search engine: <https://www.buzzsprout.com/17770/episodes>

Printed Sermon: We’ll also send you a printed sermon by **mail**, if you so desire. If you would like to receive a printed copy of the weekly sermon, please give us a call (419-837-5115) or email us (officeadmin@StJohnsStonyRidge.net).

EMAIL DEVOTIONS

Pastor Mike has started sending email devotions, and you can sign up to have these delivered straight to your inbox. He'll be sending a couple emails a month. Sign up today by sending an email to: officeadmin@StJohnsStonyRidge.net and tell us "I want email devotions!"

OFFICE HOURS

We are gradually working toward establishing regular office hours: Monday—Friday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. when Rachael Swartz, our church office administrator will be in to answer phone calls, emails, etc. We ask that you please use these methods of communication in lieu of dropping by the office, as we are still hoping to limit person-to-person contact and the potential spread of the corona virus. Thank you for your understanding in this matter.

TITHES, OFFERINGS, FINANCIAL GIFTS

Even as we resume in-person gatherings, we encourage you to look into our electronic giving program. It takes just a few minutes to set up a giving plan. To set up a recurring giving schedule or a one-time gift, visit us online at www.stjohnstonyridge.net (or scan this square with your smart phone. It will take you to St. John's website). Click on the "Give Generously" tab to enter your information and offering. Financial gifts can, of course, be sent by mail, too. We are grateful for your continued support of our ministry.



COMMITTEE MEETINGS

1. All meetings are encouraged to be held electronically through the use of email, Zoom, or any other method of communication.
2. If it is deemed that a face to face meeting must be held at the church, social distancing must be followed.
3. All areas of the building visited by anyone must be cleaned by members of the group holding the meeting.
4. Cleaning procedures, materials and instructions for use will be provided by the church.
5. Please contact the church office to schedule your meeting and receive further instructions.
6. Special projects of committees (like Prayer and Retreat Men's steak roast or Fall retreat, etc.) will be on hold until fall. Will reevaluate State and Health Department guidelines at that time before decision to proceed or cancel.

Shared Bounty:

Our Shared Bounty ministry will be suspended through August. We are not receiving donations for Shared Bounty or LWR at this time.

Food Pantry:

The new distribution method we have used in April, May, and June worked well, and we will continue to use this model (e.g., using the Parish House as a staging area for pre-packed boxes, distributing the parcels of food outside of the building, etc.).

Hilltop Christian Dayschool:

St. John's Hilltop Christian Dayschool will remain closed throughout the summer.

Use of Space by Our Neighbors:

Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) will resume meeting in July. We will not be reserving the space for any other groups or parties until further notice.

Pastoral Care Visits:

In response to the COVID-19 virus, "congregate settings" of "vulnerable populations" such as assisted living facilities, retirement homes, etc. have restricted visits with their residents. While these restrictions have loosened a bit in recent weeks, allowing for limited visits from family and clergy, we have decided to continue our temporary suspension of our Care Team visits to our care team receivers in an attempt to limit the spread of this virus.

That said, Pastor Mike is available and eager to call upon you and/or your family member. While our congregation is not receiving the Sacrament of the Altar at this time (a safety precaution born of our desire to restrict the spread of the virus and keep people safe), Pastor Mike would welcome the opportunity to read scripture, pray and visit with you or your loved one. These visits could even be in your garage, on your front lawn, or your back patio. If you would like to have Pastor Mike visit you, please call him (419-837-5115) or contact him by email at pastormike@StJohnsStonyRidge.net

PASTORAL ACTS

baptism
Lilly Bursiek

MEMORIALS

in Loving Memory of...

Doris Morlock
Thelma Schaller

Hugh Ross
Tim & Patti Bihn

John Biniker
Tim & Patti Bihn

Jean Johnson
Tim & Patti Bihn

Helen Dimick
Tim & Patti Bihn

Our Mission Statement: Saved by the Grace of God to Witness and to Serve Others

ALTAR FLOWERS

If you would like to place flowers on the altar for a Sunday service, please email or call the church office. We use two bouquets each Sunday; the cost is \$20 per vase. When you sign up to place flowers, please ensure that they are paid for by the Sunday that they are on the altar so that we can pay the monthly bill. Write "altar flowers" on your check/offering envelope. If no one signs up to place flowers, we use our church silk flowers.



GENEROUS GIVING

Financial Giving 1/1/20 - 6/30/20

General Fund Income (Year-to-Date)

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| \$173,614 | \$154,920 | (\$46,866) |

Benevolence Fund (Year-to-Date)

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| \$13,381 | \$8,150 | \$1,926 |

Improvement Fund (Year-to-Date)

| <u>Actual</u> |
|---------------|
| \$6,303 |

(Copies of current Financial Reports are in the wooden holders located to the right of the Prayer Desk in Narthex.)

THANK YOU

Thank yous were received from the following:

Genacross for the gift of \$46.06

Lutheran Social Services for the gift of \$19.96

Thank you for the prayers, the cards, and the visit from Pastor Mike with his prayers and the blanket.

Kathy Swihart

I would like to thank the Brackney family for bringing dinner to Jim and I after my recent surgery. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated!

Kathe & Jim Umbaugh