



St John's

LUTHERAN CHURCH

P.O. Box 279
5520 Fremont Pike
Stony Ridge, OH 43463

Phone: 419-837-5115

Email: officeadmin@stjohnsstonyridge.net

Pastor Howard Abts

E-mail: pastorhoward@stjohnsstonyridge.net

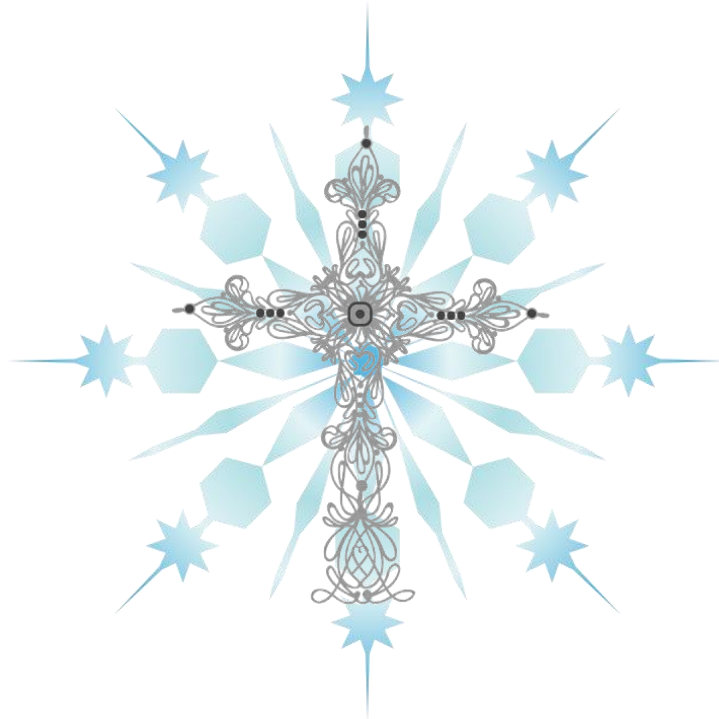
Phone: 419-382-1956

Pastor Cindy Ritter

E-mail: pastorcindy@stjohnsstonyridge.net

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JANUARY 2025





From Pastor Howard...

Sisters and brothers,

Something you haven't seen here since November: five things that are good for a congregation to do during a time of transition:

- To come to terms with its past
- To encourage new leadership to emerge
- To reconsider its identity
- To improve its relationship with the wider Church
- To prepare to welcome its next called pastor

We look at the third of them this month: "To reconsider its identity."

Someone coming into our building from the East or the West parking lot door would have a hard time missing a bulletin board on the wall of the narthex. It's the one that's usually behind a table of treats on Sunday mornings, and right now is behind a large mass of gifts we'll be giving to needy families in our neighborhood. (Those are both pretty good clues to our identity, too.) In letters almost half a foot high, it says "Saved by the Grace of God to Witness and to Serve Others."

It is what we say we are. It is what we say we are for. God, seeing value in us, has pulled us away from uselessness, and has taught us to see value in our neighbors, and to minister to their needs, spiritual and relational and physical.

I wasn't here when that Mission Statement was adopted, but I'm guessing that it emerged from a great deal of serious thought and serious discussion. Maybe something like, "We used to think we were okay because we're basically pretty good people. And we used to think we were here to make life better for ourselves. Now we know better."

Listening to conversations here, some ideas about our Mission Statement have caught my ear. One is that it's pretty old. Another is that our current Mission Statement, as good as it is, doesn't say anything about our need for spiritual growth, our need to be moving "to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ," as the author of the letter to the Ephesians puts it. Another is the question, "What does it mean to be a welcoming church?" Or, put another way, "We want to be a welcoming church, but how welcoming do we want to be? And, to whom?"

More than one person has suggested that it might be time for us to think about, and maybe adopt, a new Mission Statement. I agree. I think it might be good for us to say, "As we leave 2024 behind and enter 2025, this is who we are, and this is what we think God has in mind for us."

What do you think?

From the Council President...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We begin January with a new year full of exciting opportunities to continue to carry out God's mission in our communities, congregation, and individual lives. Throughout the new year, the transition team will continue to work diligently to engage the congregation and lay out the groundwork for the future call committee, which we hope to have in place later in the new year. Many important discussions and dialogue will occur as the team conducts its work. To jumpstart these efforts, Pastor Howard will give a special sermon on Sunday, Jan. 12th as our congregation continues our necessary discussions and reflects on same-sex marriage within the church. A discussion session in the Parish Hall will immediately follow the service, very similar to the three sessions that were held with Pastor Rich Renter at the beginning of 2024. Once again, we ask everyone to participate and to come with open hearts and minds, and to be respectful of one another as we search for the Spirit's guidance in how we treat and accept all people of God's creation. We anticipate holding similar sessions in the weeks and months to come as well.

It has been a great honor to have had the opportunity to serve as St. John's president this past year, and I would like to thank everyone for their patience and support. Please continue to keep the council and the whole congregation of St. John's in your prayers as we continue to carry out God's mission in the world.

In Christ,

Kyle Henry
Church Council President

Attention All Congregation Members!!

Our Constitution states:

"Voting members are confirmed members. Such confirmed members, during the current or preceding calendar year, shall have communed in this congregation and shall have made a contribution of record to this congregation. Members of this congregation who have satisfied these basic standards shall have the privilege of voice and vote at every regular and special meeting of the congregation."

Please make sure that you fill out a Connection Card at least once per year so that we have a record that you have communed . This ensures that you remain an active voting member.



Build a bed. Change a Life.



Yes. That outstanding local mission that we accomplished last April is making a return appearance in 2025. It will be held on Saturday, April 12th. Last year we were able to build 50 beds for children in northwest Ohio in a single morning. There were smiles on every face that took part in the project. Over 130 individuals showed up, worked, fellowshiped, talked, laughed, and built beds for kids that didn't have their own beds. It was glorious!



It wasn't just members of St. John's that contributed money and time that day. We had friends from churches all over northwest Ohio show up and they shared in the mission work that we did that day. It was such a community success, that church council decided that we will do it again, perhaps every year.

So this is a heads up! As we march into the new year, we will start collecting funds to build beds, sign people up to work that day, look for donations of food to feed our workers, volunteers to serve food to our workers, collect new twin sized bedding such as pillows, sheet sets, blankets, and comforters to lift the spirit and comfort children in our area who are not now sleeping in their own beds. Every child deserves a bed of their own.

You can donate through the offering plate by designating Build – A – Bed on your offering envelope. You can mail in a check to the office, You can donate online. You can talk to Rick Lees or Tiffany Porter. We need you to make this another successful mission event at St. John's. **YOU CAN HELP.**



SOCIAL MINISTRIES



Sunday Special...

Food Pantry ~ Sweetened and Unsweetened Cereal Shared Bounty ~ Dish Soap

The food pantry currently serves 63 families from the community.

THANK YOU.....

A BIG thank you to the Rucki family for once again overwhelming us with your generosity of 78 boxes of cereal and other items! Your family's gifts will help us to provide for many from our community!

What a gift you are to so many children around the globe! 93 shoeboxes were filled with your love!

The food pantry would like to thank so many of you for buying and filling the shopping cart each month with our "Sunday Specials". We appreciate your help to provide food for our friends in need.

A HUGE thank you to our head elf Rachel Brackney for shopping and wrapping all the gifts with the \$1670.00 proceeds from the dessert auction! Also to her elf helpers Pam & Paul Brackney for helping to make so many smile on Christmas morning. Your family is a treasure to this church. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!!!

Christy Schramm...Once again you did an AMAZING job in organizing our families for the angel tree! You have a gift of service to others and we appreciate you so much. Thank you!

We cannot thank you enough for your wonderful hearts with all of our service projects this fall!! We ask and you ALWAYS give to help provide a smile to our friends and neighbor in need! What a beautiful gift you are to not only our local friends but to children around the globe!

Please continue to pray on how you can help to ensure that a food pantry continues at St. John's with your help.

Our committee will meet as needed through the year.



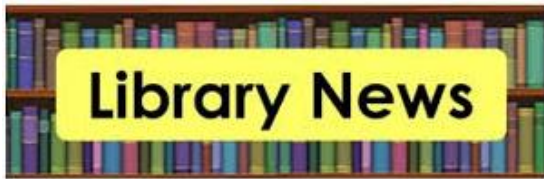
ATTENTION!!

The cost for an altar flower bouquet has changed. The new price is \$22.50 per vase.

Please check the sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you are interested in placing flowers this month!

Beginning in 2025...

you can place your Altar Flower requests online! Just go to the Home Page of our website and click on the link for 2025 Altar Flower Sign Up. Or you can call the church office at 419-837-5115.



*Come in for a visit.
Check something out.*

These are the books and CD's we have added to the church for January. Stop in and see what is new. The church library is open whenever the church is open.

Adult Books

Just a Minute - Wes Stafford
The Treasure Principle - Randy Alcorn
Ask, Thank, Tell - Charles R. Lane
Unbinding Your Soul - Martha Grace Reece

Music CDs

Arise My Love - Newsong
Positively Hits - Compilation of Christmas Hits
Make Us One - A Celebration of Gospel Music

Children's Books

B is for Bear - Priddy Books
The Berenstain Bears Go On A Ghost Wlk - Stan & Jan Berenstain
Milo's Adventures: Out of the Sea - Andrew Sautter
Calling All Pals - Kathy Broderick
Anna & Elsa All Hail the Queen - Erica David
What Would Jesus Do? - Helen Haidle
How Does Your Salad Grow? - Francie Alexander
Cars Go - Steve Light

Women of the ELCA

Comforters for Lutheran World Relief will be tied on Tuesday, January 14th from 12:00 to 2:30 in the Parish House. Please consider joining us for this important mission project. No experience necessary.

Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, January 14th-Tie Comforters (Parish House)

Tuesday, January 21st-Crafting Group (Lounge)

Donations of filler for mission comforters are always welcome, including old blankets, sheets, bedspreads, and tablecloths. These donations may be placed in the LWR box in the coatroom. Thank you in advance for your donations. If you have material you'd like to donate for the tops of comforters, donations would be greatly appreciated.



Crafting Group



The Crafting Group will meet on Tuesday, January 21st from 10:00 to 11:30 in the Lounge. Bring your latest craft project and join us for fellowship. Please see Lynda Lees if you have any questions.





A special thank you to Pastor Cindy for her visits during my illness. It was a joy to see her whether at the hospital or at home. A thank you to her for delivering the altar flowers and the beautiful blue comforter made by Donna Rolf. Also, a special thank you for the get well wishes and greetings.

~ Frank Reed

Many thanks to all for your support and encouragement while Frank was ill ~ and especially after his passing. You are a truly wonderful group of friends and it has been very comforting.

~ Maggie Reed

Thanks to everyone who helped in any way to maintain our church grounds during 2024. Whether you mowed, planted, watered, weeded, trimmed, or raked, your efforts were much appreciated.

~The Property Committee

The following Thank You was accidentally left out of the December VOICE...

Thank you to all who attended the Siberian Solstice concert on November 15th! Thanks for all the support – moving the altar, notifying Habitec, donating cookies, setting up the table of goodies during the show, and most of all, taking care of the clean-up at the end of the night. We couldn't do it without everyone's help!

~Joe and Nancy Nycz

Thank you for always thinking about us during all of the holidays. Your support means so much to us both. Wishing you all good health, countless blessings, and a peaceful festive season!

~Zahn & Kristin Hicks



January Birthdays

(Those over 74 years young!)

Earl Hagg	1/8	6505 Five Point Road, Perrysburg, 43551
Joe Nycz	1/16	426 W. College Ave. Pemberville, 43450
Tom Sevits	1/20	25703 McCutcheonville Road, Perrysburg, 43551
Joan Swartz	1/30	10765 S. Lakes Drive, Perrysburg, 43551
Carrie Mitchell	1/31	1612 N. Smith Drive, Genoa, 43430

Sunday Morning Christian Education ~ 9:00 a.m.

Sunday School

3 years old – 3rd grade

Catechism

6th, 7th, & 8th grades

4th & 5th Grade

Adult Class

WE NEED COOKIES!!!

The Fellowship Committee is asking for donations of cookies for our weekly after-service fellowship in the Narthex. You can drop them off in the kitchen with a note that says, "Cookie Hour".

Thanks!!



The St. John's Transition Team

*invites you to join in a
Congregational Discussion
in the Parish Hall*

Sunday, January 12

after worship.

Refreshments will be available.



**Please plan to attend
St. John's Annual Congregational Meeting
Sunday, January 26, 11:30 AM**



GENEROUS GIVING

Financial Giving through 12/22/2024

General Fund Income (Year-to-Date)

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
\$265,500	\$215,650	(\$49,850)

Benevolence Fund (Year-to-Date)

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
\$26,550	\$15,038	(\$11,512)

Improvement Fund (Year-to-Date)

Actual
\$15,960

(Copies of most recently approved financial reports are available in the Narthex and by request.)

Visit us online at

www.stjohnsstonyridge.net

or scan the QR code to set up electronic giving. 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.





January 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			Church 1 Office Closed 	2 8p AA (PH)	3 9a Men's Breakfast @ Panera Rt. 20	4 10a-12p Shared Bounty (PH)
5 9a Christian Ed 10a Worship	6 Reports & Financials due for Annual Report 6:30p JJJAAM Practice 7:30 Dartball (Home)	7 Noon Prayers via ZOOM 7p Committee Mtg Night #1	8 12p Lunch Bunch @ Luckey Junction	9 9a Staff Mtg (L) <i>Staff Lunch to follow</i> 6:30p Take down decorations 8p AA (PH)	10 	11 2 – 8 PM Private Event in PH
12 9a Christian Ed 10a Worship 11:30a Congregational Discussion (PH)	13 6:30p JJJAAM Practice 7:30 Dartball (Home)	14 Noon Prayers via ZOOM 12p Tie Comforters (PH) 7p Committee Mtg Night #2	15 	16 	17 	18 7:30a Food Pantry (PH)
19 9a Christian Ed 10a Worship	20 6:30p JJJAAM Practice 7:30 Dartball (Away)	21 10a Crafting Group (L) Noon Prayers via ZOOM 6:30p Exec Comm (L) 7p Church Council (L)	22 	23 8p AA (PH)	24 	25
26 9a Christian Ed 10a Worship 11:30a Annual Congregational Meeting	27 6:30p JJJAAM Practice 7:30 Dartball (Home)	28 Noon Prayers via ZOOM	29 	30 10:30a NWO Clergy Mtg. (L) 8p AA (PH)	31 	

Committee Meetings: Please schedule all meetings with the office administrator so the proper room is reserved to accommodate all groups. Call 419-837-5115 or email officeadministrator@stjohnsstonyridge.net.