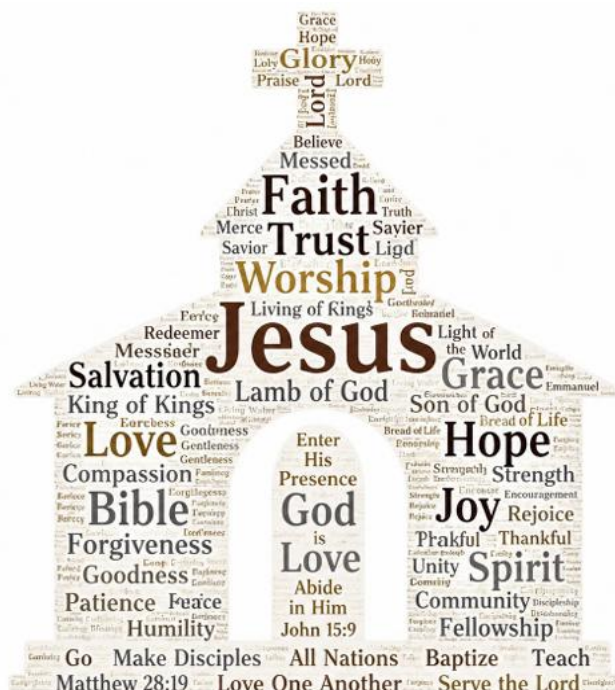




Pastor Cindy Ritter
E-mail: pastorcindy@stjohnsstonyridge.net

1 John 4:19

August 2026





St John's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

AUGUST, 2026

The VOICE Newsletter

Page 2

From Pastor Howard...

Toward the end of March, in our daily reading of the Bible, Sarah and I came to a section that I do not love. It's in the book of Joshua, and it tells how the land of Israel is to be divided among the twelve tribes of Israel who are about to invade it: seven pages or so consisting mostly of the names of the towns in the territory each tribe will seize. Breaking the monotony of that section, though, is a passage that I like very much:

Then the Lord spoke to Joshua, saying, "Say to the Israelites: Appoint the cities of refuge, of which I spoke to you through Moses, so that anyone who kills a person without intent or by mistake may flee there; they shall be for you a refuge from the avenger of blood. The slayer shall flee to one of these cities and shall stand at the entrance of the gate of the city and explain the case to the elders of that city; then the fugitive shall be taken into the city and given a place and shall remain with them. And if the avenger of blood is in pursuit, they shall not give up the slayer because the neighbor was killed by mistake, there having been no enmity between them before. The slayer shall remain in that city until there is a trial before the congregation, until the death of the one who is high priest at the time; then the slayer may return home, to the town in which the deed was done." (Joshua 20.1-6)

Cities of refuge have already been mentioned in more than a dozen other places in Numbers and Deuteronomy, but this is an explanation of how the city is to respond when someone shows up, out of breath, and says "Please let me in! I killed someone accidentally, and a member of his family is chasing me to get revenge!"

Those in authority in that city are to let him in, and to see that his needs are met.

This is a provision for someone who has messed up horribly. He has accidentally killed someone, someone with whom he was likely on good terms. Two neighbors are working together quarrying stone, say, or cutting timber, or fishing in tippy boats, or engaging in some other kind of hazardous work. One of them has a lapse of attention, or a moment of carelessness, and the other is fatally injured.

God's charge to Noah after the flood is cut and dried: "Whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person's blood be shed, for in his own image God made humans." (This is a favorite text of many who favor capital punishment for people who are Not Like Us.) There is no room for flexibility in it. If it were applied in every case, though, with no regard for the killer's intent, many a tragedy would be doubled. So, God does a little tweaking, and says, "well, maybe not in every case, then."

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I have messed up horribly. Not horribly enough to have killed anyone that I know of, but I have harmed other people, carelessly, without meaning to, and probably sometimes without even being aware of it. Except for the awful feeling in the pit of my stomach, when I knew about it, and maybe the reproach of the victim, I have escaped punishment. The penalty, if there was one, did not fit the crime.

All my life, the church has been for me a "city of refuge," reassuring me that God does not think I should be punished for every bit of harm I have done. God thinks I should be forgiven. In the last couple of years, St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church has been a city of refuge for me.

In our congregation, and all around us, there are lots of people who have messed up horribly, who carry a load of guilt with them everywhere they go. Could there be any higher calling for us than to reassure them that God does not think they ought to be punished? We are "saved by the grace of God," not by having been found innocent, but by having the charges against us dropped. We are "saved by the grace of God to witness" that the kingdom of God has nothing to do with getting even, but is about reconciliation. We are "saved by the grace of God to witness and to serve others" through Shared Bounty and the Food Pantry and building beds and rising against hunger, and, maybe as important as any of these, by being a place of refuge.

What do you think?

From the Council President...

The summer is more than half over, and many are planning for changes in the fall. Schools will begin their new year soon, as will our Dayschool and Christian Education program. We also now move into the next phase of our Call process. The Call Committee recently completed the review and completion of our Ministry Site Profile (MSP). The MSP explains who we are through demographics, statistics, and budget summary. It discusses the trends in our community and how we interact with our community through programs, goals, and partnerships. It explains our purpose, giftedness, mission, and challenges. It describes the type of leader we need and seek and our expectations from our next Pastor. It explains how we will work with and support our pastor. The MSP is thorough, detailed, an honest look at us, and took a lot of time and effort on the part of the Call Committee to complete. Council is thankful for the committee's diligence and prayerful consideration.

The MSP will now be made available by the Synod office and staff to pastors, some of whom already know about us and others who have had little or no interaction or knowledge of us. Some pastors may already have an interest in being available to a new call, while others have not thought about the possibility of a new call. The Synod Staff and our Call Facilitator will work together in the discernment and candidate

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identification process. Our Call Committee will be ready to interview and consider candidates who are presented to us. We ask the Holy Spirit to intervene and to give a nudge if necessary to that individual who may be the right person for St. John's, whether or not he or she thinks it is time for a move. Please pray for the Holy Spirit's guidance to possible candidates, to Synod Staff, to our Call Committee, and to all of St. John's.

In Christ,
John Henry



August Birthdays

(Those over 74 years young!)

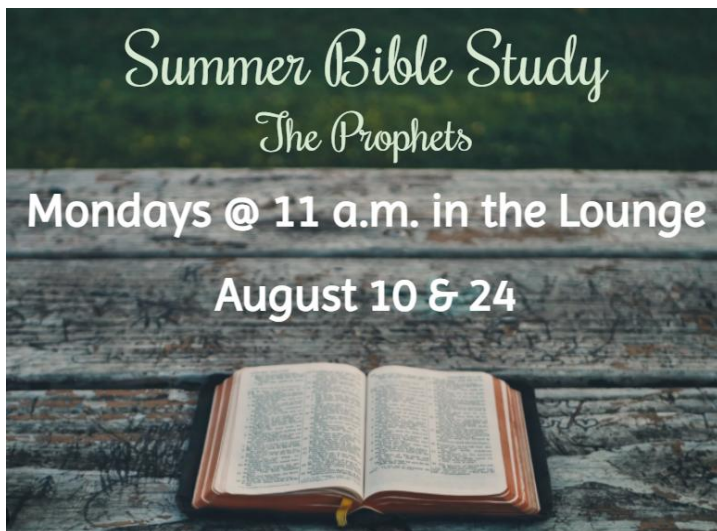
Aug 2	Ed Cochrane	809 Rose Court, Pemberville, 43450
Aug 4	Alma Camp	19970 State Route 199, Pemberville, 43450
Aug 5	Claire Schober	3993 Wallingford Ct., Genoa, 43430-9601
Aug 5	Sally Welch	9867 Wethersfield Road, Perrysburg, 43551
Aug 7	Paul Bamford	14 Santus Drive, Rossford, 43460
Aug 19	Bill Staib	5474 Wagoner Road, Walbridge, 43465
Aug 23	Kathleen Holzman	29217 Bates Road, Perrysburg, 43551-3806
Aug 30	Dave Massey	20850 Lemoyne Road, Luckey, 43443
Aug 31	Roger Ramsey	8654 Taylor May Road, Chagrin Falls, 44023
Aug 31	Donna Westrick	4300 Fremont Pike, Lot 14, Perrysburg, 43551



*Attention St. John's
Committees and Families*

We need help with set up/clean up of Cookie Hour for **August**. Cookies are in the kitchen freezer. A sign-up sheet is hanging on the bulletin board. Please consider helping with a Sunday for this fellowship!

Thanks!



SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Sunday Special...



Food Pantry ~ • any cereal

• jars of turkey gravy • boxed stuffing

Shared Bounty ~ • toothpaste • hand soap

St. John's Lutheran Church Food Pantry Mission Statement

"Believing that no man, woman or child should face food insecurity, our mission is to provide nourishing foods, free of charge, to meet the needs of those facing this insecurity in our community and in our neighboring communities."

It has been just over a year since I became the coordinator for St John's Food Pantry. Needless to say, I have learned a lot in that time but know there is always more to learn. Thankfully Jerri Reitzel has continued to volunteer behind the scenes at our food pantry and is always available to me for questions – of which there have been many. I have always believed you never really know what someone else does in their job until you do it yourself, and boy is that true in this

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case. We all should realize St. John's had a real gem in Jerri as she led the food pantry for so many years and built it into what it is today. But I am proud to say, with the help of many volunteers (too many to name because I would probably miss someone) we have continued to accomplish the most important thing and that is we have continued to support our neighbors, young to older, with a good supply of groceries each month. I hear over and over again thanks from these neighbors.

Let me tell you a bit about the food pantry. At this time, we have a roster of nearly 70 families that may come on the 3rd Saturday of the month to receive groceries and produce. Being ready for this doesn't just magically happen – volunteers have to order food items from the food banks, take delivery of those items, correctly date and store the items, determine items to be given each month and stock shelves accordingly, pack parcels of items to be given, prepare produce to distribute, and finally distribute to our neighbors, oh and the never ending clean up! During the holidays, in addition to the usual groceries, we add to their parcels all the fixings for a complete holiday meal including a turkey or ham. We usually add 5 – 10 more families in those months. During the summer months, the families with children receive a "Summer Box" of additional kid favorite foods to help offset the foods they are not receiving at school. We also give a "Birthday Bag" to the children – this contains a cake and brownie mix, frosting, birthday plates and napkins, birthday banner and pencils, etc.

I have mentioned the volunteers, and they are the backbone of our pantry. For the first 6 months of this year, we have averaged 27 different volunteers working each month. Some are only able to help once during the month – others several times a month, but each is very important to helping us accomplish our mission. These volunteers have given nearly 1,000 hours in these 6 months. But with that said – WE CAN ALWAYS USE MORE VOLUNTEERS, SO PLEASE CONSIDER JOINING US.

I do have many THANK YOUS I would like to share:

1. Obviously, to all of the volunteers – couldn't do this without you.
2. To our congregation for approving the air conditioning in the food pantry rooms. Last summer these rooms averaged 83 degrees. They are 70 – 73 degrees now – not only are these temps easier for the volunteers to work in but these are appropriate temps for the storage of dry food items.
3. To the Perrysburg Rotary Club and The Perrysburg Rotary Community Foundation, for their grant to be used to purchase a freezer for our food pantry and then additional funds to help stock the freezer. The freezer has been purchased and delivered. It should soon be in place for use in the east wing of the parish house.
4. To Thrivent Financial, for their grants of Action Funds to be used to help supply the "Birthday Bags" and "Summer Boxes".

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5. To Toledo Northwestern Ohio and Seagate Food Banks for providing food items free or at significantly reduced cost so we can serve our neighbors the variety of food items we do.
6. To Main Street Church, Christ Lutheran Church (Dowling), Zion Lutheran Church (Latcha), Bethlehem Lutheran Church (Northwood), and Cleveland Cliffs for food and/or financial contributions.
7. To Amanda Cajka, her staffs and the Sunday School students and Vacation Bible School attendees for decorating the "Birthday Bags" and collecting items to put in them.
8. And again, to our congregation for the food items that seem to just appear in the shopping cart in the cloak room as well as your financial contributions.

St. John's food pantry has a long history of feeding our neighbors, dating back to 1985. Unfortunately, the need for this is continuing today into tomorrow. Your support remains very important – whether it is donating food items, financial, the giving of time or a prayer – all are needed, welcomed and appreciated.

Blessings to all, Susie Bame

A Half-Century of Caring



Since 1975, churches worldwide have been using Stephen Ministry to offer one-to-one support to people who are facing difficult times in life, connecting them with well-trained lay congregation members called Stephen Ministers.

When you're facing the loss of a loved one, divorce, job loss, medical crisis, or another challenging life situation, a Stephen Minister is equipped to walk alongside you and help you carry those burdens. They provide a non-judgmental presence, a patient listening ear, and an intentional focus on you and your needs.

We all need help at times, and Stephen Ministers are there for those moments. Hundreds of thousands of people have experienced Christ's healing love through a Stephen Minister over the past five decades.

If you're going through a tough time, you don't have to handle it alone. Give yourself the gift of a Stephen Minister.

To learn more and/or request a Stephen Minister, contact Clyde Bame @ 419-874-8175, Joe Nycz @ 419-575-3895, or Nancy Nycz @ 419-349-1932.

A Thank You to our Call Committee

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Call Committee for the time, dedication, prayer, and thoughtful work you have invested in the search for our next pastor. We are deeply grateful for your faithful service and commitment to seeking God's guidance throughout this important process. Please know that you remain in our prayers as you continue this journey.

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." — Proverbs 3:5–6

May God continue to bless you with wisdom, discernment, patience, and encouragement as he leads you in this important ministry.



Thank you to St. John's congregation, staff, and volunteers for your support of this year's Vacation Bible School. We had a great week at Rainforest Falls exploring the nature of God. This year, we had 28 children in attendance, and we couldn't have done it without your support!

Thank you!
Amanda Cajka

St. John's Hilltop Dayschool



St. John's Hilltop Day School

As another wonderful summer comes to a close, we want to take a moment to reflect on all of the fun, learning, and memories we've shared over the past few months. From exciting activities and outdoor adventures to creative projects and new friendships, our children have made this summer one to remember. Thank you to all of our families for making our summer program such a success!

As we begin looking ahead to the new school year, we are excited to welcome both our returning families and those joining the St. John's Hilltop family for the very first time. We are thrilled to share that our enrollment has grown to 34 students, and we anticipate welcoming even more children as the school year progresses.

We are truly grateful for the trust you place in us and are excited for another year of learning, growth, and discovery.

Meet Our Teaching Team

We are blessed with a dedicated team of educators who are passionate about creating a safe, nurturing, and engaging learning environment for every child.

- Miss Taylor Hannan - Lead Preschool Teacher
- Miss Erin Perry - Lead Pre-K Teacher
- Mr. Thomas Brock - Grade School Teacher

We are currently in the process of hiring a Lead Toddler Teacher. We have extended an offer to a qualified candidate and are looking forward to confirming that position soon. We are excited to introduce our newest team member as soon as everything is finalized.



Important Dates

- August 18 | 6:00-7:00 p.m. - Parent Meeting
- August 24 | 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m. - Meet & Greet with Families
- August 31 - First Day of School!

We can't wait to welcome everyone back and kick off another amazing year of learning, faith, and fun together!



GENEROUS GIVING

Financial Giving through 7/26/2026

General Fund Income (*Year-to-Date*)

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
\$102,920	\$132,647	\$29,727

Benevolence Fund (*Year-to-Date*)

<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
\$15,300	\$10,261	(\$5,039)

Improvement Fund (*Year-to-Date*)

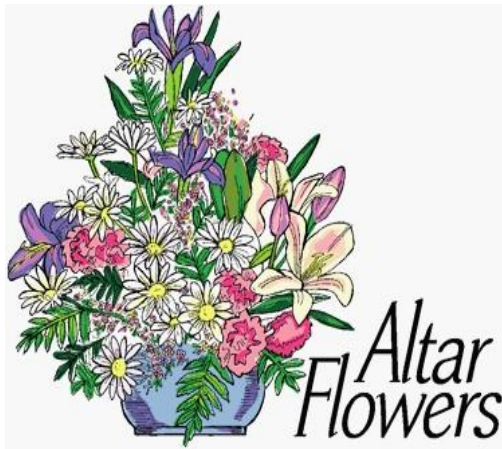
Actual
\$19,267

(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.



Please check the sign-up sheet in the Narthex if you are interested in placing flowers this month! *The cost for flowers has gone up to \$25 per vase.*

You can place your *2026 Altar Flower* requests online! Just go to the Home Page of our website and click on the link for 2026 Altar Flower Sign Up. You can also scan this QR code or call the church office at 419-837-5115.



UPCOMING EVENTS AND HAPPENINGS

AUG 1 - Shared Bounty - 10 AM to NOON - Parish Hall

AUG 1 - Private Event - 12:30 PM - Parish Hall

AUG 7 - Men's Breakfast - 9 AM - Panera on Rt. 20 in Perrysburg

AUG 15 - Food Pantry - 7:30 AM - Parish Hall

AUG 18 - Dayschool Extended Care begins

AUG 19 - Dayschool Parent Meeting - 6 PM - Sanctuary

AUG 23 - Private Event - Noon - Parish Hall

AUG 24 - Dayschool Meet & Greet - Drop in from 9 AM - 3 PM in classrooms

AUG 29 - Private Event - 8:30 AM - Parish Hall

AUG 30 - Private Event - Noon - Parish Hall

AUG 31 - Dayschool 1st Day of Fall Session

SEP 5 - Shared Bounty - 10 AM to NOON - Parish Hall

SEP 7 - Labor Day Holiday - Church Office Closed

SEP 11-13 - Fall Camping at Sauder Village (see Pustays or Orths for more information)

SEP 13 - Rally Day

Women of the ELCA

***PLEASE NOTE: WE WILL NOT BE TYING COMFORTERS IN AUGUST. WE WILL MEET AGAIN ON TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15th. PLEASE NOTE THE CHANGE IN OUR REGULAR SCHEDULE.**

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.

***PLEASE NOTE: THE CRAFTING GROUP WILL SUSPEND FOR THE SUMMER. WE WILL MEET AGAIN ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21st.**



is collecting
the following
for August:

- cereal (any kind)
- jars of turkey gravy
- boxed stuffing

PRAYERS AT NOON

Every Tuesday

Online and in person (Chapel)

***Please join us whenever
you are able!***

Zoom Meeting ID: 9 4 0 7 3 4 7 7 3 4 3
Password: 5 9 5 7 2 6

New 5-week Bible Study

coming this Fall...

The Way of Love

Mondays @ 11am or 6pm

SEPT 21 & 28

OCT 5, 12 & 19

***Sign up in Narthex or
call the church office***

Sign up or call

419-837-5115 to get
a study guide.

See Pastor Cindy for
any questions.

Created by the Northwest Ohio
Synod

St. John's Fall

Camping Trip

**Sauder Village
September**

11-13

See Pustays or Orths
for more info!

PLEASE JOIN US!!

Let's Eat Lunch!

**'Ole Zim's
WAGON SHED**

Sunday, SEPT. 20

@ NOON

Sign-up Coming Soon!



August 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1 10a Shared Bounty (PH) 12:30p Private Event (PH)
2 10a Worship	3 Practice in (S) 6:30p JJJAAM 7:30p Stones	4 NOON Prayer via ZOOM or in person - Chapel 7p Comm Mtg 1	5	6 8p AA (PH)	7 9a Men's Breakfast @ Panera on Rt. 20	8
9 10a Worship	10 11a Bible Study (L) Practice in (S) 6:30p JJJAAM 7:30p Stones	11 NOON Prayer via ZOOM or in person - Chapel 7p Comm Mtg 2	12	13 9:15a Staff Meeting	14	15 7:30a Food Pantry
16 10a Worship	17 <i>Send in your SEPT VOICE articles!</i> Practice in (S) 6:30p JJJAAM 7:30p Stones	18 NOON Prayer via ZOOM or in person - Chapel 6:30p Exec Comm (L) 7p Church Council (L)	19 6p Dayschool Parent Mtg (S) 7p Dayschool Board Mtg. (L)	20 7p Stephen Ministry (L) 8p AA (PH)	21	22 12:30p Set up in PH
23 10a Worship Noon Private Event (PH)	24 Dayschool Meet & Greet 11a Bible Study (L) Practice in (S) 6:30p JJJAAM 7:30p Stones	25 NOON Prayer via ZOOM or in person - Chapel	26	27 8p AA (PH)	28 6p Set up in PH	29 8:30a Private Event (PH) 4p Set up in PH
30 10a Worship Noon Private Event (PH)	31 1st Day Fall Dayschool Practice in (S) 6:30p JJJAAM 7:30p Stones					

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.