



St. John's Lutheran

MESSENGER

A Publication of St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church located in Miamisburg, Ohio, Established in 1819 December 2020

Pastor's Pen....

*Come, thou long expected Jesus, born to set your people free;
From our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in thee.
Israel's strength and consolation, hope of all the earth thou art,
Dear desire of every nation, joy of every longing heart. ELW #254*

This beautiful hymn was written by Charles Wesley some three hundred years ago, yet surely continues to speak to us as we enter into Advent at the end of a most disruptive year.

We might be thoroughly modern people, living a lifestyle that Charles Wesley couldn't even imagine, but we still need liberation. We continue to need Jesus to set us free from our fears and sins, perhaps more than ever. Our lives have been turned upside down by a deadly virus that is currently surging, threatening to overwhelm our healthcare system with ever growing numbers of people sickened by COVID-19. Fear stalks our hearts and threatens to paralyze our outreach on Jesus' behalf.

With 250,000 fellow Americans killed by the pandemic so far, we need Christ's strength and consolation to go on, as some grieve the death of loved ones and all of us mourn the loss of a way of life we never dreamt we could lose so quickly.

As a nation, we have just come through an especially contentious election, driving the two sides even farther apart as we struggle to understand what is "fact" and what is "fantasy." We long for a break from feeling like we are on high alert 24/7. We wait for Jesus to come so that we can find our rest in him. We need Jesus to help us to remember that folks on both sides of the election results bear the image of God, to be able to see Christ in their faces and treat each other accordingly.

Advent is about hopeful expectation and waiting, looking to the arrival of the Infant King who changes and brings his joy to our longing hearts. Advent brings the anticipation of what we know is the birth of a baby who changes the whole world by becoming Emmanuel, God with us.

Let the spirit of hope fill your hearts this very unusual Advent, knowing that Jesus has already shown up and secured our eternal salvation, whether we can be together with our families and church families to celebrate the joy of his coming or not.

Finding my rest in Jesus with you,

Pastor Joan

President's Chapel Mediations

Dear Siblings in Christ,

December 1, 2020

Due to the nature of this month's most important season and to keep you closely apprised on what's going on, Pastor Joan and I are collaborating to jointly compose this December's important newsletter contribution.

We'll start out with some sad news, in that, it looks like the Covid numbers within our county are bad enough, we will not have in person Christmas Eve Service this year. In fact, it could be a couple of months before we even consider the possibility of returning to in person worship as long as our hospitals are >50% capacity and the statewide infections remain above 5000-6,000 *per day*. We both *know* what a hard message this is to read! But, fear not, we are working to put together a Christmas Eve service, *including communion* which we hope will lift your hearts as we celebrate the arrival of our Lord Jesus, our Emmanuel!

So let's talk quickly about the "logistics" of Christmas Eve. We are planning to hold Christmas Eve Service at 8pm, and we are going to ask every family member joining us to be prepared with a candle to light, a small amount of bread to consume, as well as a small serving of wine. We will have a "full communion service" with pastor consecrating our bread and wine during the service. (Hey, even God understands working through a pandemic!) We will also have special music throughout the service, and make this a special night for our church families. And we WILL close with silent night and the lighting of your candle. You can sing your lungs out at home as we play a special version of this timeless hymn.

Also, without the ability to carol or visit shut ins, we need to show them our collective support. I will ask Karen to send out a constant contact with the names and addresses of our shut-ins. Please strongly consider writing each a short Christmas card with a personal note.

After Christmas, we need to lay out what the next few months looks like for our Congregation. Pastor will be off the Sunday after Christmas, so we will prepare a really cool "Christmas Music and Celebration" around the world themed service. We'll record it if you miss it in real time on the website.

So when will we return to in person church? We will carefully monitor the Montgomery County COVID numbers and once we drop out of purple for at least 3 straight weeks, Council will reexamine and vote on returning to our Sanctuary.

Before all that, though, there are things we need to do as a Congregation as we move into the next Calendar year. Planning for 2021 budget will be a bit of a guessing game regarding income and expenses, but our Financial Management team is up to the challenge and we'll do our best to be realistic. Once council looks at and approves this draft budget, the congregation will vote on it in late January 2021 in a virtual Congregational meeting after church service. Part of this meeting will be devoted to replacing Council members rotating off. Third, Council will begin the process of setting up a "Call" committee to assess our Congregation's desires regarding our next Pastor and starting the process of looking for a suitable candidate.

Lastly – The Christmas forest was a rousing success. Looks like most of the items have been picked up, watch your email for final updates. **Just as a reminder, make sure your Christmas Forest gift is wrapped and delivered during Business hours (9-12 am Mon-Thursday) at the church office no later than December 15, 2020.** Our helping hands drive looks very strong; we'll announce our total HH contribution as part of Christmas eve service. We won't be bringing Gold, Frankincense or Myrrh to Miamisburg, but I'm sure those who experience food insecurity will be very grateful for our food contributions.

The President's mailbox is always open (president@stjohnsmiamisburg.org) if you have questions or comments. In Christ's Love, Brian Kent and Pastor Joan Armstrong

Budget Report for October 2020

Balance beginning of October:		\$6,235.26
Income Towards Budget for October:		\$ 6,585.02
Expenses Against Budget for October:		
Outreach	\$84.00	
Staff	\$4,312.30	
Facility Upkeep/Administration	\$477.46	
Utilities	\$522.91	
Committees	\$109.06	
		\$5,505.73
Monthly Budget Balance (income - expenses):		\$ 1,079.29
Year-to-Date Balance end of October:		\$7,314.55

Description of categories:

- Outreach:** Benevolence, special benevolence.
- Staff:** Pastor's pay and expenses, staff salaries and benefits, FICA, worker's comp.
- Facility Upkeep/Administration:** Maintenance/repair and office expenses.
- Committees:** Discipleship, Learning, Worship & Music.
- Utilities:** Gas, electricity, water and trash services.



- December 1
Eva Mae Cox
Beth Knight
- December 4
Ryley Lamb
- December 5
Robert Holt
- December 11
Mary Wilson
- December 13
Jesse Ñauta
- December 19
Harley Lamb
Sondy Johnson
- December 27
Pat McGraw
- December 30
Bailey Smith

Congregational Contacts

Pastor Joan Armstrong Interim Pastor 724-954-6717

Council Members		*Executive Committee
Brian Kent	*President	937-885-3529/937-572-3025
David Heltter	*Vice President	937-694-4321
Linda Kent	*Church Treasurer	937-885-3529/937-572-7815
Cathy Zimmer	*Secretary	937-212-9283
Judy Kuemmel	*Financial Secretary	937-321-1198
Bruce Holtzman		937-603-9198
Don Pabst		937-470-2404

Organizations, Boards and Staff		
Karen Doyle	Church Secretary/Messenger Editor	937-866-3780
Tom Hoffman	Board of Trustees Chairman	937-859-8871/937-654-1218
Cheryl Page	Discipleship Committee Chairman	937-602-7952
Cheryl Page	Personnel Committee Chairman	937-602-7952
Brook Ñauta	Learning Committee Chair	513-217-0564/937-367-1473
Ida Geary	WELCA President	937-626-7765
Doug McCabe	Organist	937-866-8669
Nancy McCabe	Choir Director	937-866-8669
Brook Ñauta	Children's Choir	513-217-0564/937-367-1473

Christian Education		
Barb Hoffman	Pre-k through 1 st Grade	937-859-8871/937-231-6341
Brook Ñauta	2 nd Grade through 6 th Grade	513-217-0564/937-367-1473
Robin Skelding	Confirmation	937-748-5405

Ministry Contacts		
Nancy McCabe	Prayer Chain	937-866-8669
Kim Naylor	Son-Rise Breakfast @ First Lutheran	937-903-8638



- December 14
David & Cheryl Page
- December 18
Gary & Debbie Ball



St. John's Lutheran

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TAX BENEFIT FOR CHARITABLE DONATIONS



The CARES Act includes a one-time deduction of up to \$300 for gifts made to charitable organizations for individuals who do not itemize their deductions. This is a new credit for tax returns filed for 2020 and beyond, so don't miss your opportunity to get a little break on your taxes by being charitable this year!

*The office will be closed
Thursday, December 24th thru Friday,
January 1st
for the holidays.*

