
☘ First St. John Journal ☘

Volume 39, Issue 3

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“For this reason it depends on faith, in order that the promise may rest on grace and be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (for he is the father of all of us, . . . Hoping against hope, he believed that he would become “the father of many nations,” according to what was said, “So numerous shall your descendants be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was already as good as dead (for he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, being fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. Therefore his faith ‘was reckoned to him as righteousness.”
(Romans 4:16, 18-22)

Paul tells us that Abraham hoped “against hope” (Romans 4:18). Many of us know this feeling. The injustices in our world, the damage we see in the environment, and the wounds we bear in our own souls can all seem like too much. The promises of redemption poured out in baptism sometimes seem so far away.

Amid this reality, we hear Jesus teach that he “must” suffer, die, and rise again. (Mark 8:31ff) To Peter this sounded like foolishness. If the Messiah were rejected, how could the salvation they longed for ever come? But Jesus insists that to deny this is to reject “the things of God.” Why must it be so?

Because of God’s great love. Jesus must suffer because he will do everything that needs to be done to rescue God’s world from sin and death. He will endure rejection, torture, and even death. He “must” do this because the world’s brokenness is that deep. We don’t need better teaching or stronger motivation. We need rescue from powers greater than ourselves. He will bear the burden of sin and death in his body to release us from their grasp. Love drives him to this full extent of mercy.

Jesus bathes us in the waters of salvation and defends us from danger. He feeds us at the table of mercy and carries us tenderly into abundant life. We are protected, healed, and loved by the One who

created the cosmos, who possesses power to destroy any earthly power, yet who “gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless” (Isaiah 40:29).

Every Sunday, we return to the waters of baptism because we can never have too many reminders that we are loved by God. When times get tough, we can trust in the promises of God made to us in baptism. This is a flood that saves us. These waters bring new life out of death. God’s love will stop at nothing.

And in the mystery of God’s grace, Jesus will die. But he will be raised again. And his death and resurrection set us free from sin and death’s power. We can hope, even in the most hopeless of circumstances, because Jesus has passed through all the evils that threaten us and emerged triumphant. In Jesus, our sins are forgiven, the world’s injustices will not last forever, and everything broken will be made gloriously new. Until then, he gathers us around the life-giving word and gives himself to us in a holy meal. He leads us on our cross-shaped journeys of dying to sin to discover true life. And he sends us forth to share the good news of God’s mercy with a world longing for hope.

~ Pastor Rayl

LENTEN & HOLY WEEK SERVICES



Here is the schedule for our upcoming Lent services.

Mar 4 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 11 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 18 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 25 th	Lenten Services	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
Mar 29 th	Palm Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am
April 2 nd	Maundy Thursday	11:00 am, 7:00 pm
April 3 rd	Good Friday	12:00 pm
April 5 th	Easter Sunday	8:00 am, 10:30 am

ELDERS FOR MARCH

8:00 am

1st Sherrie Haar
Bob Haar

8th Ted Hagedorn
Jeff Smith

15th Bill Nelson
Matt Miller

22rd Sherrie Haar
Bob Haar

29th Ted Hagedorn
Jeff Smith

10:30 am

Bill Nelson
Matt Miller

Sherrie Haar
Bob Haar

John Roth
Bob Haar

Kevin Ruedy
Mike Winslow

Sherrie Haar
Bob Haar



REMINDER— CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS!

Move your clocks ahead one hour on Sunday, March 8th at 2:00 am (or when you go to bed on Saturday, March 7th).



WINSLOW SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS DUE

This scholarship helps members of First St. John attending college for the 2026/2027 year. Applications are in the church office; they must be completed and returned to the church office by March 30th to be considered. If you want one emailed to you, please contact the church office at office@firststjohn.com

CHAPEL COMMUNION NOTICE

Our next Chapel Communion will be held on Sunday, March 8th at 2:00 pm in our chapel which is located on the second floor of the educational building. All our welcome to come!



CIRCLE NEWS

REBECCA CIRCLE will meet on March 7th @ 11:30 in the lounge.

RUTH CIRCLE will not meet in March.

MIRIAM CIRCLE will meet on Wednesday, March 4th @ 9:30 am in the lounge.

HANNAH CIRCLE will meet on Monday, March 9th @ 6:30 pm at Luckies Barn & Grill.

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Please join us each Sunday at 9:15 am for Adult Bible Study in the lounge. We will look at the gospel lesson for that Sunday and examine its background, context, and relevance to today's times. Coffee, tea, and sweet breakfast treats will be provided, so join us every Sunday.



MEMBER UPDATES

Births
None.

Baptisms
None.

Marriages
None.

Deaths
None.

Transfers to First St. John
Clyde & Debbie Reynolds

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

To keep our records current, please notify us if your address or phone number changes by faxing (419-691-7220), mailing this form to 2471 Seaman St., Toledo, OH 43605, or emailing office@firststjohn.com

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

MEMORIALS

DAY SCHOOL

In memory of Craig Pym by Bob & Sherrie Haar

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

In memory of John Schwegler by Bob & Sherrie Haar, Rebecca Circle, Jane & Terry Schuetz.

In memory of Joan & Dick Bailey and Lola & Ken Abbey by Carol & Kevin Abbey.

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of John Schwegler by Penny DeWitt.

CEMETERY FUNDS

In memory of John Schwegler by Bill & Cathy Caldwell.

SPECIAL MUSIC FUNDS

In memory of John Schwegler by Joan Probasco.

In memory of Craig Pym by Penny DeWitt.

In memory of Antonio DeLeon by Penny DeWitt.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of John Schwegler by Janet Morrison, James & Judith Pilewski, James & Dianne Schumaker, Dennis & Debra Diehlman, Tom & Janet Eppard, Sandra Wesolowski, Donald & Sarianne Petroff, John & Karen Brossia, Janet Schacht, Gene & Bill Brossia, Sharon & Stephen Delventhal, Ronald & Dianne Gerkenmeyer, M/M Arnold Brossia, James Cousin, Elaine Hanely, Cynthia Georgi, Kevin & Carol Abbey, Russ & Chris Hunsaker, Lisa & Cassey Conine, Deb Harmeyer, John Harmeyer, Larry & Darlene Paul, Darrel & Diane Traver, M/M Richard Haar, Cindy & Eric Johnson, Dick & Jean Schneider, Kim & Jeff Kruse, Tom & Mary Ann Bell, Dave & Kim Kissel, Gloria Ross, Kathy Church, Marge Bollinger, John & Terrie Gibbons.

MEMORIALS

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of John Schwegler by Cliff Bury, Kevin & Jennifer Nelson, M/M Calvin Nelson, Ron & Brenda Fussell, Bill & Donna Nelson, Dan & Joan Nelson, Rich & Barb Gottschold, Alan Schimming, Sandy Gill, Deborah Lofquist.



PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY MARCH FOCUS

Our designated item in March is toilet paper. Bins for collecting items are under the main board in the Narthex (the left pull-out bin) or the bright green bin in the lounge. Thank you for your help.

DARTBALL TOURNAMENT

The annual Dartball tournament will take place on Monday, March 2nd at First St. John at 7:00 pm. Seed drawings between 6:30-6:45 pm. Also be sure to bring money to the tournament to pay for tickets to the Dartball Banquet at Prince of Peace on Monday, April 20th at 6:30 pm. Tickets are \$16. See Ron Wells of Prince of Peace at the tournament to buy your tickets. Ticket money is due at the tournament.

If any questions, reach out to Bill Nelson (419) 836-4165, or Bob Haar (419) 250-9409.



SOCKS FOR SALEM

The Quilting group collected socks for Salem Lutheran Church's neighborhood ministries during the month of February as they have done in the past. This year they collected 123 pairs of socks for Salem Lutheran! This donation will go a long way to help Salem Lutheran help the homeless and needy in our community! THANKS TO ALL!

OPEN HOUSE

DAY SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

Day School Open House will be Thursday, March 12th from 6:00-7:30 pm. Come out to meet our teachers and see the classrooms. Invite friends with young children who may be looking for a Christian school.

Fall registration for the 2026/2027 school year has already begun. If you can't attend the open house, please call the school at 419-691-6480 with questions and/or to schedule a tour.

DAY SCHOOL

March comes in like a lion and goes out like a lamb. The Day School students are ready for the warm weather so they can spend more time outside.

We are now fully rolling with our registration for the 2026-2027 school year. Classes are slowly starting to fill up, and we are looking forward to meeting new faces. The school will be hosting an Open House on Thursday, March 12th from 6:00-7:30 pm. This is a great opportunity to see the classrooms and meet the teachers. If you know any prospective families, please invite them to the open house or have them call 419-691-6480 for a private tour.

Although the weather may be chilly outside, we are getting ready for our new summer program. This year we are offering a day camp with an extended care option. Whether you need child care or have kids looking for something to do, our summer program will fit the bill. We are accepting children ages 3-10. For more information, just go to the Day School's website at www.firststjohndayschool.org

— *Andrea Buckley*



CEMETERY CLEAN UP

We will have our semi-annual cemetery clean up on Saturday, **March 21st** at 9:30 am. Volunteers are needed—the more hands we have, the quicker we finish! Please remove anything from a grave that you would like to keep—older decorations, grave blankets, and especially anything from Christmas—*before* March 20th. If interested in helping, reach out to Jessica in the church office, or Bill Caldwell.

FIRST ST. JOHN ALTAR GUILD EASTER FLOWER SALE



It's time to buy flowers that will decorate the church on Easter Sunday. The price is \$15.00 per plant. You can choose an Easter lily, yellow daffodil, hyacinth and/or tulip plant. **The last day to order is March 22nd.**

Please complete the order blank below and place it in the offering plate or mail it to the church office: 2471 Seaman St., Toledo, OH 43605. Please make checks payable to: *First St. John Lutheran Church*. Payment must accompany orders.

The deadline for ordering is Sunday, March 22nd

No. of plants @ \$15.00 each: _____

Enclosed: \$ _____

Type of plant(s): _____
(lily, daffodil, hyacinth, tulip)

Name: _____

Phone: _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

In Honor of (Living): _____

First St. John Prayer Chain (as of March 1, 2026)

Critical/New Prayer List: *For those who need prayers in urgent matters such as surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Will be moved to the Chronic list after the first month unless someone is contacted about special circumstances:*

**Family of Craig Pym
Family of John Schwegler
Karen Bless
Jill Cousino
Deb Ackerman
Duke Dawkins**

On-going Concerns Prayer List: *For those who need prayers for ongoing serious situations such as cancer treatments, medical struggles, recovery and/or personal situations. Will be moved off the list after 3 months unless someone is contacted about special/continuing circumstances:*

Betty Anderson
Peggy Burke
Marjorie Counterman
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
Bob Hecklinger
Holly Henneman
Gary Henningsen
Mary Ellen Miller
Danielle Riegle
Connie Singlar
Steve Welling
Raetta Winslow
Rita Riegle
John Rowley

Please check the list and let any of the prayer chain contacts-listed in the next column-know if individuals can be moved off the list.

Prayer Chain Contacts

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

Lynn Folk	419-309-7977
Donna Koehn	
Darlene Lorenzen	419-351-6293
Gloria Ross	419-836-7166

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

A finance meeting will be held on March 10th. The finance committee will be meeting on the 2nd Tuesday of every month at 6:30 pm in the finance room. This will give us a week to review prior month financial report and discuss any pending and future expenses prior to Council meeting.

WELCA NEWS



Good morning! Welcome to March, Spring is just around the corner!! The Board met on February 16th, with 6 members present.

Chris Hunsaker will check on the plants we are having in late April. You will be able to purchase vegetable plants, hanging baskets, and flowers. They will be in on time for Mother's Day. More details will be in April's newsletter.

Chris Hunsaker also called Sailors & Soldiers Caring Facility to see if they could use some quilts. They were very appreciative to receive them. Chris delivered 20 quilts.

Instead of the Collectable Treasures we had planned for in August, we came up with something different. The Board will let you know in the July Newsletter.

Our next meeting scheduled is March 14th in the lounge at 6:30 pm. "All women of the church are invited to attend. ~Have a safe and Happy St. Patrick's Day!"

—WELCA President, Sue Ann Rogers

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

Throughout January and February we collected money and canned goods to help the Lutheran Social Services (LSS) Food Pantry program. LSS provides food for over 15,000 people each year. This program is supported entirely by donations of food and money from local congregations.

As of this printing, we collected just over 120 product donations. Products will be delivered to LSS and a donation check will be dropped off soon.

Thanks again for your generous donations!



KROGER COMMUNITY REWARD PROGRAM

Did you know you can support First St. John just by shopping at Kroger! This past quarter we earned \$63.96 in rewards donated to the church!

This program makes fundraising easy by donating to local organizations based on the shopping you do every day. Once you link your Kroger Card to an organization, all you have to do is shop at Kroger and swipe or enter your Shopper's Card. Here's how it works:

1. Create or sign into your online rewards account on Kroger.com
2. Make sure your Kroger Reward Card account is attached to your online account.
3. Under the Kroger Community Rewards Screen, search for First St. John Lutheran, or enter the NPO # WM368.
4. Select the organization and click 'Save'. You are all set! The selected organization will now show on the Kroger Community Reward Page!

QUILTING MINISTRY



The Quilting Group meets Mondays at 9:30 am in the lounge beginning January 8th and running through March. Most of the help needed involves tying layers of a quilt together (you just need to know how to tie a knot). Bring a sack lunch. If there is bad weather, they follow Oregon Schools for cancellations.

Many of the quilts will be donated to local charities. If you would like to sew quilting blocks at home or if you have any questions, please call Penny DeWitt at 419-215-1072. Thank you.

2026 WELCA ROSTER

The 2026 roster for the Women of the ELCA at First St. John is now available. The roster contains a list of members in each circle, Altar Guild, and Bereavement Committee, along with a calendar of events.

Pick up a copy on the long table in the lounge after church services.

BORROWING TABLES AND CHAIRS



We offer the use of the tables and chairs in the parsonage garage (not from the gym, please) as needed for summer events. Please call Jessica in the church office at 419-691-7222 ahead of time to reserve them. Thank you.



J.A.M SUNDAY SCHOOL UPCOMING EVENTS

On Sunday, March 15^h JAM will host an Easter Egg Hunt for the children. If you are able to donate candy to fill the eggs, please drop donations off in the lounge or the church office by March 13th.

As a reminder J.A.M. (Jesus and Me) Sunday School meets each Sunday at 9:15 am in the basement of the church. Children ages 3 to 5th grade are welcome to attend!

Prayer Buddy Eggs



Once again, the Day School is offering Prayer Buddy Eggs to the congregation. This is a great way to connect with the Day School children and spread God's love. In the Narthex (lobby) is a box of eggs to choose from. Each egg has been assigned to a teacher or a child at the Day School. We ask that during this Lenten season you take some time to pray for this child or staff member and their path towards Christ. Please fill this egg with a written prayer or words of encouragement and a small toy or candy to help celebrate the joy of Easter and remind them that Jesus died to save us all. Feel free to decorate the egg as long as we can read the child's name at the bottom. They will need to be returned by March 21st. There will be a box at the back of the church in the Narthex.

If you cannot fill an egg, please say a prayer for the staff and students at the Day School during this blessed time of year. You can also provide a monetary donation, Easter candy or small toy, or an item from our Amazon wish list to the box to help us fill eggs. Thank you.

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE MARCH 20st

MARCH DARTBALL

The Dartball Season continues with home games hosted in the gym. All game start at 7:30pm. Upcoming dates for March are:

March 16th: St. Petri @ 1st St. John #1
St. Mark @ 1st St. John #2

March 30th: 1st St. John #1 @ St. Lucas
1st St. John #2 @ Messiah

*Remember we are playing makeup games on **Monday, March 9th**, unless you have made arrangements to play on another Monday night.

Please mark your calendars. If any questions, reach out to Bill Nelson (419) 836-4165, or Bob Haar (419) 250-9409.

HOMEBOUND COMMUNION

If you or a loved one would like a homebound communion visit, please call the church office. Bob Haar is temporarily communing the homebound at their request, and he will call you to set up an appointment.



ORDERING ALTAR FLOWERS

If you'd like to place flowers on the altar in honor or memory of someone, the sign up sheets are in the red flower book in back of the church under the main bulletin board. You can sign up for the Sunday you choose. Flower vases are \$15 each; you can use an envelope out of the book for payment. Either place it in the small box on the wall next to the bulletin board, drop it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office. Can't make it to in-person worship? You can call the church office to request a date for flowers, and Jessica will sign up for you.

PORTALS OF PRAYER

The Portals of Prayer devotional booklets for April through June will be ready for pick up in the Narthex and lounge on March 15th.

WEEKLY BULLETIN DEADLINE

News

As a reminder, please try to submit all weekly bulletin announcements no later than **Wednesday** each week for the upcoming Sunday.

MUD HENS TICKETS



Baseball season is almost upon us and soon the sound of "Play Ball" will be heard at Fifth Third Field. Mark your calendars for Sunday, May 31st. Our church family will have another opportunity hopefully without rain this time to cheer on the Toledo Mud Hens. Tickets are \$11.00. Please let Bob Haar know if you're going and how many tickets you need. We are limited to 30 tickets. Any questions please call Bob at 419-250-9409.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

We will meet on March 14th at 8:30 am at American Table restaurant on Wheeling Street. Please join us, there's always room for more.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY **JANUARY UPDATE**

In January we served 55 adults and 26 children. FSJ volunteers served 24 hours of time to make sure the pantry runs smoothly.

JANUARY STATS:

987 - NUMBER OF ITEMS DISTRIBUTED
81 - TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED
\$526.50 - ESTIMATED PRODUCT COST
24 - VOLUNTEER HOURS
3 - DISTRIBUTION WEEKS

THANK YOU TO ALL WHO HAVE DONATED ITEMS OR TIME! WE ARE SERVING AN IMPORTANT NEED IN OUR COMMUNITY!

High Need items = Laundry Detergent & Toilet Paper

