



First St. John Journal



Volume 39, Issue 4

April, 2026

Our time of tears throughout Lent will come to a happy ending with tears of joy over the Resurrection on Easter Sunday. A father took his little boy to a pet shop to pick out a puppy for his birthday present. For half an hour he looked at the assortment in the window. “Decided which one you want?” asked his Daddy. “Yes,” the little fellow replied, pointing to one that was enthusiastically wagging his tail. “I want the one with the happy ending.” For all the tears of sorrow, disappointment, and tragedy of Lent, Easter is a Happy Ending to this season. Christ’s glorious resurrection has turned them into tears of joy. Tears on Easter? Yes, tears of a happy ending to sin, sorrow, death, and tragedy. Now we can say “HAPPY EASTER” and really mean it!

Getting to know the truth is reason for rejoicing. On Easter day, we rejoice with tears of joy because we have the truth in the Risen Christ; for the whole Christian faith ultimately rests on the resurrection. That the One who was crucified is also the One who is risen from the dead. If Christ did not rise from the dead, our faith would be in vain (1 Corinthians 15:14ff)

The Resurrection gives us the truth that God can be trusted. It tells us positively that God is in control of the world and our lives. It was God who raised Jesus. It was God who did what no human could—He rolled the stone away from the tomb. On Good Friday we wondered where God was, that He would allow his Son to be crucified. Even Jesus in the moment of supreme obedience and sacrifice cried out, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?” And in so doing, Jesus gave voice to the deepest and ultimate question of our shared human experience, even if it is unexpressed except in “sighs too deep for words.”

Praise God that in the light of Easter, we now know that God was in the shadows, suffering and dying in Jesus. Behind the overcast sky of doubt and tribulation the sun of God shines, and one day the sun of God’s love and presence will shine through. As the Gospel according to John declares, “The Light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it.”

The reality of God’s living and abiding love is witnessed in the Resurrection. How happy we are to know that God lives and reigns!

Easter, moreover, gives us the truth of Jesus. Is He or is He not God’s Son, the Messiah, the Redeemer, and our Savior? When he suffered and died on a cross like the two thieves, we may have doubted his words were true. He said, “The Father and I are one,” and “I am the way, the truth, and the life.” Now we know His words are solid truth. No other person was raised to new life from the dead. No other religious leader, no wise sage, no ruler with power had that experience. Of all the billions of people that have lived, only one was raised to new life from the dead. Jesus, for a fact, is God’s only Son. He does have the authority to forgive our sins, and He does have the power to save us. Oh, what wonderful truth that rejoices the heart! Now I know that my Redeemer lives, and I am sure I can put my whole trust in Him for eternal life.

Rejoice in the truth that the final outcome is good. Out of death will come life. At present, you may have troubles and tragedy. Your situation may seem hopeless. But the Resurrection gives us the truth that the tomb of death will open. Justice will one day prevail. Morning will follow the night. “Those who sow in tears, will reap with shouts of joy” (Psalm 126:5). This is most certainly true. With tears of joy in your eyes, you can live with hope in "hopeless" circumstances. You can base your life on it.

-- Pastor Rayl

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Here is the schedule for our upcoming Holy Week services.

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

CHAPEL COMMUNION NOTICE

Our next Chapel Communion will be held on Sunday, April 12th at 2:00 pm in our chapel which is located on the second floor of the educational building. All our welcome to come!

MEMBER UPDATES

Births

None.

Baptisms

None.

Marriages

None.

Deaths

2-26-26 Betty Anderson

3-14-26 Raymond Cousino, Sr.

3-23-26 Eileen Young

Transfers to First St. John

Scott & Kristi Schmidt from Zion Lutheran Church.

APRIL ELDER SCHEDULE

5 th	8:00 am	10:30
	John Roth Matt Miller	Bill Nelson Bob Haar
12 th	Kevin Ruedy Matt Miller	Sherrie Haar Bob Haar
	19 th	Ted Hagedorn Jeff Smith
26 th	Bill Nelson Matt Miller	John Roth Bob Haar

WEEKLY BULLETIN DEADLINE



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

Please make sure you send your items to Jessica via email at office@firststjohn.com, or you can drop off a typed or hand written request as well.

SPECIAL MUSIC FUND

A special music fund was created specifically to support the talented musicians invited to play at our church. Money from this fund will be used at the discretion of Dr. Tony, our Church Musician, when securing guest musicians. To contribute, donate cash or checks made out to First St John Lutheran Church and simply indicate on your envelope and/or check memo line, that your contribution is to be directed to the Special Music Fund.

CIRCLE NEWS



REBECCA CIRCLE will meet on Saturday, April 4th @ 11:30 am in the lounge.

RUTH CIRCLE will meet on Tuesday, April 1st @ 11:00 am in the lounge.

MIRIAM CIRCLE will meet on Wednesday, April 1st @ 9:30 am in the lounge.

HANNAH CIRCLE will meet later in April after Easter. Date TBD.



**NEWSLETTER DEADLINE
APRIL 22nd**

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

To keep current information for office records, if your name, address or phone number changes, please notify us by calling (419-691-7222), emailing office@firststjohn.com or mailing this form to: 2471 Seaman St./ Toledo, OH 43605.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

First St. John Prayer Chain (as of 3/30/26)

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:*

Karen Herrera
Kate Gladieux
Ron Robeson

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:*

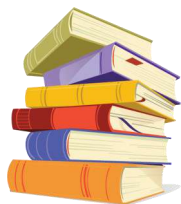
Owen Baker
Deb Ackerman
Karen Bless
Marjorie Counterman
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
John Rowley
Gary Henningsen
Connie Singlar
Raetta Zeisler

Please check the list and let any of the prayer chain contacts know if individuals can be moved off the list.

Prayer Chain Contacts

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

Darlene Lorenzen 419-351-6293
Gloria Ross 419-836-7166
Church Office 419-691-7222



CHURCH LIBRARY REFRESH

Did you know we have a 'free-to-you' resource of Christian reading material in our church lounge? This includes fiction, non-fiction, devotionals, and even movies. We currently are in the process of refreshing our library located in the church lounge. We have a wealth of books available for you to borrow and we have recently added some new titles! Our library uses a card checkout system, and the instructions for borrowing are located on the shelf, along with the new titles available for ease of viewing. Once you sign a book out, we just ask that you return it within one month (or preferably two weeks) so others may enjoy it as well. Over the next few months, we will continue to add new titles and organize the library. If you have any questions or comments, please reach out to Emily Kruse (419-654-2842).

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY JANUARY - MARCH UPDATE

During the months of January, February, and March, we served 410 people.
Here is a breakdown of our #s for the month!

JANUARY- MARCH STATS:

410- TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED
4,766- TOTAL PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED
\$3,664.17- ESTIMATED PRODUCT COST
\$8.94- ESTIMATED COST PER PERSON

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

MONTHLY MINISTRY OUTREACH

Our monthly ministry outreach for April is *Luther Home of Mercy*, an organization that works with those who have developmental disabilities. If you want to help, place your check in the envelopes from the pew caddies and place them in the offering plate.

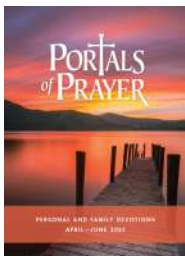


SOCKS FOR SALEM

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 **152** 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!

FEED YOUR NEIGHBOR

As a reminder, they do not accept glass jars, but any canned or boxed non-perishables are welcome! Some major needs are canned meats (Tuna, Chicken, Spam), Canned Fruits or Vegetables, Canned Soups, or ravioli, Ramen, Crackers, Ketchup, mustard, Mayo and pasta. You can place any items in the grocery cart located in the Narthex or the pull out drawer, or tub in the lounge. Thanks for your generosity in helping our community!



PORTALS OF PRAYER

Portals of Prayer devotional booklets (regular or large print) for April - June are available for pick up in the lounge and Narthex (lobby). You can also stop by the church office during the week. Feel free to take extra to deliver to members who cannot attend worship.

ALTAR GUILD MEETING

Our next meeting will be Monday, May 4th at 6:30 pm in the lounge.

WELCA NEWS



Happy Easter to all!

Our next meeting will be April 20st at 6:30 pm in the lounge. All women of the church are invited to join us. Until then...


He is Risen!! He is Risen indeed!

~President
Sue Ann Rogers



PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

Our designated item for April is facial tissues (no travel sizes, please). You can place your donations either in the bright green bin in the lounge or the far left bin under the main bulletin board in the Narthex (lobby). Thank you for your help!



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.

HOLY COMMUNION RECORD

Envelope no. _____ Date _____

Name _____

Address _____

Desire pastor to call I am a visitor

Home congregation _____

Address _____

Please return this card as a record of your Communion

COMMUNION CARDS

Each year we file a report with the ELCA, and there's a question about the number of active members we have. One requirement for active membership is communion attendance, so that's why we ask you to fill out communion cards. Please consider signing a communion card if you have not done so in the past so we can report more accurately to the synod. You can write confirmed members of an entire family on one card. No address or envelope number is needed unless you've changed your address recently. Please list only confirmed members. Thank you!

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. The game is at 2:00 pm and gates open at 1:00 pm. 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.

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.



FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST

Our next Fellowship Breakfast will be Saturday, April 11th at 8:30 am at the American Table restaurant on Wheeling in Oregon. We have room for more at the table, so please join us!

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.

APRIL DARTBALL

Congratulations to Trinity Dartball Team. They finished first in the Tim Steele Memorial Tournament. 1st St. John #2 finished second and St. Lucas finished third.

Upcoming dates for April are:

April 6th: 1st St. John #2 @ 1st St. John #1

The Dartball Banquet will be at Prince of Peace on Monday, April 20th at 6:30 pm.

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

TOLEDO LUTHERAN DARTBALL STANDINGS

TEAM	W	L
St. Lucas	28	11
St. Mark	26	13
Trinity	24	15
1st St. John #2	19	20
1st St. John #1	18	21
Prince of Peace	17	22
Messiah	12	27
St. Petri	12	27

MEMORIALS

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of **Betty Anderson** by Penny DeWitt.

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.

FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING

A finance meeting will be held on April 14th. 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.

QUILTING NEWS



We've finished our sessions for the year, and we made 79 quilts to be distributed this fall. Thank you to all who pinned, tied and sewed quilts, whether you came to church or worked on quilts at home.

Our quilts will be donated to several charities, including Family House, Soldiers & Sailors Home, St. Paul's Community Center, Mom's House, and Bethany House.

We look forward to displaying the quilts on Mother's Day and at Harvest Festival this year during church.





Prayer Buddy Eggs

The Day School would like to thank everyone who participated in the Prayer Buddy Egg event. It is so important for our students to know the true meaning of Easter and to be reminded that they have a congregation behind them that prays for them and is eager to spread God's love.



DAY SCHOOL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY

The 2026/2027 school year will be the Day School's 50th anniversary! So many children have passed through our doors, and I hope that we have successfully planted the seeds of God's love in those little hearts. On Sunday, September 13th the church and the Day School will be hosting a celebration at Oak Shade Grove. It will include an outdoor church service, BBQ, family activities and competitions and a free concert featuring Yancy, a nationally known children's Christian singer/songwriter. This event will be for church members, alumni, neighboring church parishoners and the community. After Easter, the Day School will be organizing volunteers for this amazing event. Mark your calendar and get ready to praise God in celebration of 50 years of this amazing ministry.

LORD, WE CELEBRATE THE JOY OF EASTER, A TIME OF NEW BEGINNINGS AND HOPE. HELP US TO REMEMBER THAT JESUS DIED FOR US AND ROSE AGAIN, GIVING US A CHANCE TO LIVE A LIFE FULL OF LOVE AND KINDNESS



DAY SCHOOL NEWS

We are now entering the final stretch of the year. Some of our children will be moving on to the Pre-kindergarten class and others will be heading in a variety of directions for kindergarten. But before that time gets here we must focus on finishing this year. There are still many activities being planned throughout April and May.

The springtime brings many changes as we look around outside and see the new growth with the blooming flowers and trees. I am just as amazed at the growth I see in the classrooms. The children recite facts that they remember their teacher telling them in the classrooms. They are still learning and growing physically, academically and spiritually. They are truly like little sponges; this is the best time to give them as many learning opportunities as possible.

We are planning on having our summer program this year. As we did last year, the Day School will be offering week long summer camps throughout the summer. There are options for families who need childcare as well as families looking for fun activities and fellowship for their children. We had a great time last summer and look forward to another great camp season. Registration and themes are posted on the school website. www.firststjohndayschool.org

Registration is also underway for the 2026/2027 school year. We look forward to meeting new families and welcoming back old friends. Please go to our website, or contact the school office for more information. Contributing church members qualify for free registration fees.

— *Andrea Buckley*