



First St. John Journal



Volume 39, Issue 8

August, 2026



On July 20th-23rd we hosted 'Rainforest Falls: Exploring the Nature of God' themed VBS and what an incredible week it was! We welcomed approximately 50 children each evening along with 25+

amazing volunteers, making this one of our largest Vacation Bible School events in many years. In fact, we had planned for around 50 children and were blessed to reach capacity, eventually having to close registration! It certainly leaves us wondering what God might do if we pray, prepare, and dream even bigger for next year.

Each evening began with a delicious dinner prepared and served by our wonderful volunteers for both the children and volunteer team. After dinner, everyone gathered in the church sanctuary for our energetic Sing & Play opening celebration. The sanctuary had been transformed into a beautiful rainforest, thanks to the incredible artistic talent and countless hours of work from our resident artist and volunteer, Nick Miller, and our decorating crew. From the vibrant decorations to the exciting music and welcoming atmosphere, the rainforest truly came to life and helped set the stage for an unforgettable week.

Throughout the week, the children discovered four important truths about God through Bible stories, games, crafts, science activities, music, and plenty of laughter. On Day One, we learned "God is our Creator" from Psalm 103:22, reminding us that everything God made reflects His greatness and care. On Day Two, we explored Psalm 139 and learned that "God Knows Everything." The children were encouraged by knowing that God knows them completely, loves them deeply, and is always with them. Day Three focused on the story of David from 1 Samuel 23-24, teaching us that "God is Our Safe Place." Even during difficult and scary times, we can trust God to protect and guide us. Finally, on Day Four, we celebrated the greatest truth of all: "God is Love." Through Luke 22:39-

24:12, we remembered Jesus' sacrifice, His resurrection, and the incredible love He demonstrated for each one of us.

This year, we also introduced something new by inviting all of our VBS families back for a VBS Celebration Sunday. It was a wonderful opportunity to worship together as the children shared several of the songs they learned throughout the week with the congregation. Following the service, families enjoyed fellowship with a hot dog and chips lunch while the kids had a blast playing on a giant bounce house and water slide. We were thrilled to welcome an additional 20-30 children and family members back to celebrate everything God had done during VBS.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to everyone who donated food, supplies, cash, gift cards, decorations, and countless hours of their time to make Rainforest Falls VBS possible. Your generosity helped provide meals, create an incredible environment, and ensure every child had a memorable experience. We are also deeply grateful to every volunteer who served so faithfully throughout the week. Whether you taught lessons, led music, prepared food, decorated, registered families, supervised games and crafts, or simply offered a welcoming smile, your service made an eternal impact. We certainly hope even more will be inspired to take an active part as a supporter or volunteer next year!

Finally, thank you to all of the parents who entrusted us with your children throughout the week. It is a privilege we never take for granted. Our prayer is that every child left Rainforest Falls knowing that God is our Creator, God knows everything, God is our safe place, and above all, God is Love. As we reflect on an amazing week at Rainforest Falls VBS, we give God all the glory for the lives touched and look forward with excitement to what He has in store for VBS next year!

~ Jennifer Hess

MEMBER UPDATES

Births

None.

Baptisms

6-21-26 LeRoy Maxwell Schwiefert II,
born to Max & Bianca Schwiefert.

Marriages

None.

Deaths

7-9-26 Mary Ellen Miller

Transfers to/from First St. John

None.

SUMMER MEETINGS FOR CIRCLE MEMBERS

RUTH CIRCLE will meet on Tuesday, August 4th at 11:30 am at Star Diner on Navarre Avenue.

REBECCA CIRCLE will meet on Saturday, August 1st at 11:30 am in the lounge.

MIRIAM CIRCLE will not meet this month. Next meeting will be Wednesday, September 3rd at 9:30 am in the lounge.

HANNAH CIRCLE will not meet in August. See everyone again in the Fall!



BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP FOR AUGUST

The next Fellowship Breakfast will be held on Saturday, August 8th at 8:30 am at the American Table restaurant on Wheeling. Join us for a devotion, breakfast, and fellowship. For more information, please call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.

HOMEBOUND COMMUNION

If you or a loved one would like a homebound communion visit, please call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409. Bob Haar is temporarily communing the homebound at their request, and he will call you to set up an appointment.

ALTAR GUILD NEWS

Our next meeting will be Tuesday, September 1st at 6:30 pm in the lounge.



WEEKLY BULLETIN DEADLINE

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

**SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE—AUGUST 20th**

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School will begin again in the Fall. The start date will be announced in the upcoming newsletter. We will explore the New Testament. Please join us every Sunday for coffee, donuts, and good biblical conversation and learning.

J.A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School will resume on September 13th at 9:15 am. Please join us for donuts as we celebrate the start of a new year together. We look forward to seeing you!

ADDRESS CHANGES/CORRECTIONS

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

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____



ATTENTION, WELCA BOARD

Our next meeting will be Monday, August 17th, 2026 at 6:30pm in the lounge.

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.



LAYETTE MINISTRY COLLECTION

The Women of the ELCA (WELCA) are collecting baby care items to make up kits that will be sent to needy families. If you would like to donate, there will be a collection box in the lounge, or you can bring them to the church office. Here are the items we need:

- lightweight cotton t-shirts (no onesies) *
- long or short-sleeved gowns or sleepers (without feet) *
- receiving blankets, medium weight cotton or flannel, or crocheted or knitted with light weight yarn, between 36" and 52" square
- cloth diapers, flat fold preferred
- jacket, sweater, or sweatshirt with a hood, or include baby cap *
- pairs of socks
- hand towel, dark color recommended
- bath size bars of gentle soap equaling 8 to 9 oz., any brand, in original wrapping (no mini or hotel size bars)
- diaper pins or large safety pins

*** Clothing sizes can be up to 24 months**



SAVE THE DATE!

We will return to two services on September 13th at 8 am and 10:30 am. Watch upcoming newsletter and announcements for more info.

ELDERS FOR AUGUST



In August, we will continue our summer worship services at 9:00 am. We will return to our regular schedule on September 13th.

2 nd	Bill Nelson, Matt Miller
9 th	Kevin Ruedy, Mike Winslow
16 th	Ted Hagedorn, Jeff Smith
23 rd	Sherrie Haar, Bob Haar
30 th	John Roth, Bob Haar



PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

August's focus item is bar soap. Reminder: Items should last the individual for a month, so please, no travel or hotel sizes. You can deposit items in either the bright green bin in the lounge or the left pull-out drawer next to the Feed Your Neighbor bins in the Narthex under the main bulletin board. We also continue to have a high need for paper products (toilet paper, tissues, and paper towels) and laundry detergent.

ORDERING ALTAR FLOWERS



If you would like to place flowers on the altar to honor or remember a loved one, you can use the red sign up book under the main bulletin board in the Narthex (lobby). Just find the Sunday you'd like and jot down the needed information.

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. We need at least two vases each week. If no one signs up, the Altar Guild has to buy the flowers themselves and, unfortunately, they have limited funds. Thanks for your help!

MEMORIALS (as of 7/31/26)

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of **Karen Bless** by Tom & Janet Eppard.
In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Bill & Cathy Caldwell, Gene Hagedorn.

ALTAR GUILD

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Sandra Stahl.

DEBT FUND

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Penny DeWitt.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Terry & Jane Schuetz, Janet Fox, Donna Koester, Darla & Wayne Dreier, David & Caroline Yenrick.

MEMORIAL FUND

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Carolyn Korek, Jim & Dianne Schumaker, Dan & Beth Hugueley, Marge Bollinger, Mike & Donna Winslow, Ray & Janet Schmidt, Bill & Donna Nelson, Elaine Cutcher, Joanne Crandall, Dennis & Lisa Pavley, Eric & Cindy Johnson, Russ & Chris Hunsaker, Mark & Deb Ackerman, Dennis & Karensue Kelley, George & Diane Jones III, Bob Hecklinger, Elaine Gladieux, Tim & Linda Yenrick, Deb Rowland, Joan Chapman, Gary & Joanne Henningsen, Sandy Hecklinger, Diane Bunge, Carol Schwegler, Rick & Cathy Hecklinger, Deb & James Brown, Carlene Trost, Louise Diersch, Henri & Cheryl Lavimodiere, Ivan & Amie Myers, Joanne Luoma, Margaret Mittendorf, Tom & Janet Eppard, Troy & Lisa Anderson, Dennis & Sue Bihn, Father John Stites, Greg Dunn, Caroline Piepkow, Bob & Sherrie Haar, Janet Morrison.

QUILTERS

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Bill & Terri Hamilton, Dwight & Shannan Paul.

SPECIAL MUSIC

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by Mary Ellen Miller, Esther Bell, Sue Ann Rogers.

CURRENT FUND

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** by James Cousino, Kevin & Carol Abbey, Craig & Deborah Shaw, Jeff & Deborah Smith.
In memory of **Jill Cousino**, by Jeff & Deborah Smith.

MONTHLY MINISTRY OUTREACH

LUTHERAN DISASTER RESPONSE

The ministry outreach for August is **Lutheran Disaster Response** which shares God's hope, healing and renewal with people whose lives have been disrupted by disasters in the United States and around the world. Special green envelopes will be in the pews for you to donate.

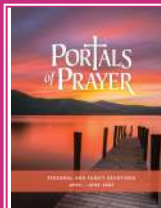
PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY UPDATE

January through June, we served 759 men, women, and children. 12 FSJ volunteers served their time to make sure the pantry ran smoothly.

JANUARY- JULY STATS:

759 – TOTAL PEOPLE SERVED
12 – TOTAL VOLUNTEERS
9,013 – TOTAL PRODUCTS DISTRIBUTED
\$7,055.84 – ESTIMATED PRODUCT COST
\$9.30 – ESTIMATED COST PER PERSON
\$6,283.03 – PANTRY BALANCE JAN 1, 2026
\$4,796.80 – PANTRY BALANCE JUNE 30, 2026

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



PORTALS OF PRAYER

The Portals of Prayer devotional booklets for July through September are still available. You can find them in the lounge, the Narthex (lobby), the caddy outside the choir loft, or in the church office.

First St. John Lutheran Prayer Chain (as of 8-1-26)

Crisis Prayer List

For those individuals who need our prayers in urgent matters such as upcoming surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Individuals will be moved to the chronic list after one month unless a prayer chain contact is notified:

Bob Vergiels
Janet Morrison
Family of Staff Sgt. Nicole Cisternas
Family of Mary Ellen Miller
Winnie Wohlgamuth & others affected by flooding
Carlene Trost

Ongoing Concerns Prayer List

For those individuals who need our prayers for ongoing serious situations such as cancer treatments, medical struggles and recovery and/or personal situations. Individuals will be moved off after three months unless a prayer chain contact has been notified:

Peggy Burke
Marjorie Counterman
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
Bob Hecklinger
Gary Henningsen
Danielle Riegle
Rita Riegle
Raetta Zeisler
Ron Robeson
Diana McGovern
Karen & Tony Herrera
Owen Baker
John Rowley
Connie Singlar
Steve Welling
Sue Goorman
Karyl Antoine
Vickie Berrier
B.J. King

Check the list and let a prayer chain contact know if someone can be moved off the list.

Prayer Chain Contacts

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

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

RED ROBIN FUNDRAISER

WELCA is sponsoring a fundraiser at Red Robin on Thursday, August 13th. Show the flyer or simply mention the fundraiser to your server to have your sales counted. You may also order online and pick-up. Red Robin will give 20% of food sales back to First St. John.



**20% OF FOOD SALES*
BACK TO**

**FIRST ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN CHURCH**

Show this flyer or simply mention the fundraiser to your server to have your sales counted.

FUNDRAISER DETAILS

9854 Olde US 20, Rossford, OH 43460

August 13, 2026*

If ordering online, please follow these instructions:

- 1 Start your order at redrobin.com/order and select the restaurant above.
- 2 In the menu, go to the category labeled "Fundraisers (To-Go Only)" and click on that item.
- 3 Click the "add" button, and then "add to bag."
- 4 Add your meal items and check out.
- 5 Arrive at Red Robin, come in, say hi, grab your food and be on your way! If your location has curbside pick-up, we can bring it to your car too!

*Fundraiser during restaurant operating hours. Visit redrobin.com and find this location to view hours. Donation based on all eligible net dine-in and to-go food sales only. Excludes sales from catering (at select locations), 3rd party ordering and delivery sites, alcohol, gift cards, retail, tax and gratuity. Offer void if flyer is distributed in or near the restaurant during fundraiser day & hours.

Red Robin



Greetings from the Day School! The summer has been flying by and we are having a great time with our summer program. I am so grateful that our summer camp has been such a success, and that we have gotten to know so many new families. We are preparing for our new school year to begin. The first day of school will be August 26th.

We will also be hosting a back to school night/open house on August 21st from 4:00-7:30 pm. This will give students and their families a chance to meet the teachers, see the classrooms and to have some fun before school starts.

If you or anyone you know is looking for child care or preschool this fall, classes are filling up quickly. Registration information can be found on our website at www.firststjohndayschool.org

Our fall classes are as follows:

- **3-year-old preschool:** Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm with the option for extended care hours.
- **3-year-old preschool:** Tuesday and Thursday mornings from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm with the option for extended care hours.
- **4-year-old preschool:** Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm with the option for extended care hours.
- **4-year-old preschool:** Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings from 9:00 am – 12:00 pm with the option for extended care hours.
- Our **Beginnergarten** program is for 5 year olds who have missed the kindergarten cutoff date for the public schools, or who need an extra year before kindergarten. Beginnergarten hours are Monday through Friday from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm with the option for extended care hours.

If you need additional information or have any questions, please call me at 419-691-6480.

— *Andrea Buckley*

“BEGINDERGARTEN”



Our Beginnergarten class is for kids who will be five years old by November 1st. It runs 9:00 am to 3:00 pm, Monday to Friday. On site before-and-after-school care also is available.

This program helps students who may have missed the age requirement of their public school, but who have already been through two years of preschool. Increasing academic demands for kindergarten students means public schools have less time to nurture social and emotional skills. So we offer more academics than regular pre-k programs, but also include play, which is important for little ones. Call Andrea Buckley at 419-691-6480 if interested.

