
◆ First St. John Journal ◆

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Shining Our Light Together: Friends & Family Dinner Celebrates Community, Discipleship, and the Great “I AM”

“Whatever is meant to happen will.” When we step out in faith to serve our community, these words remind us that the ultimate results rest in God’s hands. Our role as a church family is to be obedient to the calling of discipleship and to build a vibrant community where everyone feels loved, valued, and remembered. On Sunday, August 16th, 2026, First St. John Lutheran Church and Day School experienced a beautiful reflection of this mission at our Friends & Family Fellowship Dinner. 80 members and friends gathered to enjoy one another’s company, renew our commitment to Christian growth, and celebrate our ongoing Outreach efforts. Following a blessing by Pastor Rayl, attendees enjoyed a scrumptious catered dinner from Shorty’s BBQ featuring pulled pork and chicken, baked beans, mac and cheese, coleslaw, cornbread, rolls, gelatin sides, and cake. The room buzzed with wonderful dinner conversation, set to a beautiful recording of Dr. Tony’s music.

A Celebration of Time, Talent, and Inreach

Outreach can often be a difficult ministry to measure by immediate success, as results are rarely instantaneous. However, scripture teaches us the profound value of community and looking after one another. By stepping into the role of loving our neighbors, we become the physical hands and feet of Christ, helping those who may feel overwhelmed, unloved, or unworthy to experience God’s grace in a tangible way. Whether it is providing beautiful Sunday services, visiting the sick, or simply welcoming a neighbor with a friendly smile, our collective personality goes a long way in showing God’s love.

We want to extend a deep sincere thank you to everyone who has given so generously of their time and talent over the last six months to bring our outreach ideas to life. Your willingness to serve has profoundly impacted the hearts of those involved and those served. We especially celebrate the dozen individuals who have stepped up to steer our committee, and the roughly 30 members, and the entire congregation for lifting these efforts up in prayer. Through your incredible generosity, we raised \$1,430 in free-will offerings during the evening.

The Road Ahead: Reaching Our Neighbors

True discipleship is an ongoing journey. Our next step is to continue reaching out to our missed members to ensure everyone is enveloped in God’s care, letting them know: *“God Loves You and You Are Missed”*

At the same time, we are launching an ambitious neighborhood outreach campaign to share this exact message with residents in our surrounding community:

Mid-September: We plan to send out 2,500 postcards to the 43605 and 43616 ZIP codes.

Quarterly Next Year: We will utilize Valpak mailings to reach 20,000 residents each quarter for the next year.

Our ultimate goal is to establish a steady, faithful source of connection for people touched by these mailings to find a home in a community of believers—whether at First St. John or any local church. If even one more soul gets to heaven, every single effort will have been worth it.

We invite everyone to review the “Find Your Place at First St. John” flyers distributed at the dinner. Whether you are a lifelong member or new to our family, please use these flyers to suggest new activities, share Facebook, or check the box to help us contact members we haven’t seen in awhile. Adjusting our methods requires listening to our members, taking action, and refusing to give up on the mission. It is a tall order, but nothing is too difficult for the great “I AM”. Our God is awesome and alive, and our ministry will continue to thrive as we move forward together in faith.

~Bob Kinsey

RETURN TO FALL/WINTER SERVICE SCHEDULE

We will return to two services on September 13th at 8:00 am and 10:30 am. Please plan to join us on Sunday at either service.

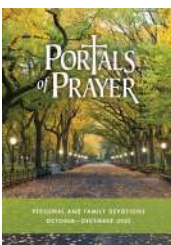


ELDERS FOR SEPTEMBER

9/6	9:00 am Bob Haar Sherrie Haar	
9/13	8:00 am Ted Hagedorn Jeff Smith	10:30 am Bill Nelson Matt Miller
9/20	Bill Nelson Matt Miller	John Roth Bob Haar
9/27	Bob Haar Sherrie Haar	Kevin Ruedy Mike Winslow

PORTALS OF PRAYER

Portals of Prayer devotional booklets in large or small print for October through December can be picked up in mid September. You can find these in the Narthex (lobby), lounge, or the small caddy by the choir loft.



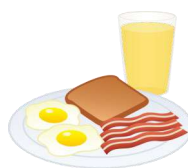
WINSLOW MEMORIAL GOLF WRAP-UP

Thanks to all who helped out or donated to our annual David Winslow Memorial Golf Scrambles outing, which was held on August 1st. We raised \$3750 for the Winslow Scholarship fund. We'll see everyone next year, the first Saturday in August!



BORROWING TABLES AND CHAIRS

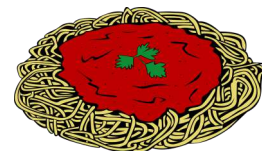
We offer the use of the tables and chairs in the parsonage garage (not from the gym, please) as needed for events. Please call Jessica in the church office at 419-691-7222 ahead of time to reserve them. Thank you.



BREAKFAST FELLOWSHIP

The next Fellowship Breakfast will be held on Saturday, September 5th at 8:30 am at the Bob Evans on Navarre Avenue. Join us for a devotion, breakfast, and fellowship. For more information, please call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.

WELCA SPAGHETTI DINNER FUNDRAISER



The women of WELCA will be hosting a Spaghetti dinner on Saturday, October 3rd from 4-6:00 pm. Tickets will be \$10 for adults, and \$8 for children aged 5 or older. Children under 5 years old will be free. We will serve spaghetti, salad, garlic toast, and a cookie or brownie. Dinners will be available for dine in or carryout.



ATTENTION ALTAR GUILD

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

SOUND BOARD

Help is needed to run the sound board. If you would like to volunteer, please call the church office at 419-691-7222 or send email to office@firststjohn.com.

**OCTOBER NEWSLETTER
DEADLINE—SEPTEMBER 21st**

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 _____



WELCA NEWS

Can you believe we are in September already! Hope everyone had a good summer!

The Board met on August 17th in the Lounge. Six members were present. Bill Hamilton went over a few things with the Board with some ideas and our input.

The Red Robin Fundraiser was a success for the first one. Total sales were \$1,627, with a profit of \$330.71. Thank you everyone who went to Red Robin to support the WELCA fundraiser.

Our precious Esther Bell is stepping down from the Board as Treasurer as of December 31st of this year. We are looking for a Treasurer to take her position. Esther will be missed, but a new chapter awaits her.

Our annual Spaghetti Dinner will be Saturday, October 3rd from 4-6 pm in the Fellowship Hall upstairs. Dine in or carry out. We will have girls running up to get your to go orders for you. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for children aged 5 or older, children under age 5 are free.

We are making some changes in our budget for next year. Our new budget will take place in our October meeting.

More to come in the next months newsletter. Until then have a great September.

Our next meeting will be Monday, September 21st in the lounge at 6:30 pm. All women of the church are invited to come. We would love your input. See you September 21st!!

— Sue Ann Rogers, President

DARTBALL STARTS SOON!



Dartball season is almost upon us. Teams meet every other Monday night starting on September 28th at 7:30 pm in the church gym. On Monday, September 21st we will have a dartball practice up in Founder's Hall (gym) before the season starts at 6:30 pm, so come check it out! For more information call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409. It is easy, fun and fellowship. No experience required. Please join us.

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.



FIRST ST. JOHN BELL CHOIR

Our fabulous Bell Choir is looking for people to join us starting September 14th in the church at 5:30 pm. We will give you instructions on how to hold and ring the bell. Come and give it a try! Contact Cheri Sergent for any questions at (419) 410-3572.



KROGER COMMUNITY REWARD PROGRAM

Did you know you can support First St. John just by shopping at Kroger! This past quarter we earned \$60.00 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!

MEMORIALS (as of 8/26/26)

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

In memory of **Mary Ellen Miller** by Terry & Jane Schuetz, Donna Koester, Cross Creek Meadow Villas.

In honor of **Carol & Kevin Abbey's** 50th wedding anniversary by Richard & Pamela Bailey, James & Sandra Koester, Donna Koester, Richard & Kathleen Dissett, Deborah Lofquist, Lisa & Larry Grant, Jennifer & Patrick Martin, Thomas & Linda Sigurdson, Susan & William Aschemeier, Chris Kissling.

WELCA FUND

In memory of **loved ones** by Bob & Sherrie Haar.

SPECIAL MUSIC FUND

In memory of **Mary Ellen Miller** by Terry & Jane Schuetz, Louise Diersch.

ENDOWMENT FUND

In memory of **Mary Ellen Miller** by Gene Hagedorn.

CURRENT FUND

In memory of **Mary Ellen Miller** by William Welling, Larry & Darlene Paul, Esther Bell, Patrick & Linda McManhon, Chuck Bell.

In memory of **Jerry Nissen** Larry & Darlene Paul, M/M Brian Schmidlin, Sharon Traver, Russell & Linda Merekens, Randy & Peggy Koch, Becky Schardt, Janet Lohmann, Janet Mann, Tom & Janet Eppard, Chuck & Betty Hyre, Marjorie Bollinger, Jim & Dianne Schumaker, Tina Huntermark, Jane Neal, Donna Rolf, Judy & Chris Hohnberger, Donna Koester, Bruce & Shelly Speck, Ginny Nissen.

CANDY CRAWL

SAVE THE DATE:

We will once again be participating in the annual community Candy Crawl that will take place on Sunday, October 18th from 4-6pm. This event takes place yearly and is a wonderful way to connect with our community. Make sure to bring your kids to get candy at FSJ and around the community!



WOMEN'S CIRCLES IN SEPTEMBER

RUTH CIRCLE NEWS

The Ruth Circle will meet on **Tuesday, September 1st at 11:00 am** in the lounge.

MIRIAM CIRCLE

The Miriam Circle will meet **Wednesday, September 2nd at 9:30 am** in the lounge. See you then!

REBECCA CIRCLE NEWS

The Rebecca Circle will meet **Saturday, September 12th at 11:30 am** in the lounge.

HANNAH CIRCLE NEWS

The Hannah Circle will meet on **Monday, September 14th at 6:30 pm** at Debbie Smith's home.



RALLY DAY CELEBRATION!

Make sure you come on **Sunday, September 13th** for our annual Rally Day!

During the second service, the children of the Day School will be singing. We will also install and pray for the Day School and Sunday School teachers. Don't forget to bring your backpacks to church as Pastor Rayl will bless them and the students who will use them. This is a great way to start off the new school year!

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Beginning Sunday, September 20th, our Adult Sunday School group will resume. Join us every Sunday morning at 9:15 am in the lounge. Please join us every Sunday for coffee, and donuts and good biblical conversation and learning.



MEMBER UPDATES

Births

None.

Baptisms

None.

Marriages

None.

Deaths

None.

Transfers to/from First St. John

8-18-26 *Dwight & Shannan Paul*

DAY SCHOOL FUNDRAISER



On September 26th, the Day School will be hosting a Flap-jack fundraiser at Applebee's in Northwood. Come join us and let the First St. John staff and Applebee's serve you a hearty breakfast of 3 pancakes, 2 slices of bacon & your choice of beverage (coffee, soda, tea, orange juice or milk). Tickets are \$10 per person (adult and child) and can be purchased in the Day School office, church office or on the Day School website. We appreciate your support. For more information, please visit the Day School website at fsjdayschool.org or contact Andrea Buckley at fsjdayschool@firststjohn.com.



JOIN US FOR CHOIR REHEARSAL!

The choir is off to a great start! If you have ever considered joining the choir this is a great time to check it out! The next practice will be on Wednesday, September 2nd at 6:00 pm. Our choir director, Jo-Anne Chrysochoos is eager to meet you and hopes you will join her! Come make a joyful noise to the Lord!

ADULT BIBLE STUDY

Adult Bible Study, led by Pastor Rayl, will resume on Thursday, September 24th in the lounge. They will meet every Thursday at 11:00 am. The subject of the study will be determined by the class the first meeting. If you would like more information, please contact Pastor Rayl (pastor1@firststjohn.com) or by calling the church office: 419-691-7222.

BLESSING OF THE BACKPACKS

On Rally Day, September 13th during the 10:30 am service, children are invited to bring their school backpacks to the front of the sanctuary. Pastor Rayl will bless the backpacks and the students who will use them.



TEACHER INSTALLATION

As part of our Rally Day celebration on September 13th at 10:30 am, we will install both the Sunday School and Day School teachers for the new school year.



MONTHLY MINISTRY OUTREACH

First St. John Day School Scholarship Fund

Our monthly ministry outreach for September will be our very own, First St. John Day School scholarship fund!

FSJ Lutheran Day School & Child Care Center is a ministry of First St. John Lutheran Church. In cooperation with the congregation and community families, we strive to prepare our students for the academic, social, intellectual, and spiritual challenges they will face as they grow and mature. We recognize that it is a responsibility and a privilege to be entrusted by God and our school families to help guide and develop the character of each student. We believe that each child was born with a unique gift from God and that his/her needs should be met at his/her level of development. The scholarship fund helps those in need of assistance with school costs.

To support this effort, please place your check in the yellow envelopes in the pews and place it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church office at 2471 Seaman St, Toledo, OH 43605. You can also drop off a donation to Jessica in the church office.

First St. John Lutheran Prayer Chain (as of 8-30-26)

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:

Jim Guido
Bobb Vergiels

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:

Janet Morrison
Family of Staff Sgt. Nicole Cisternas
Family of Mary Ellen Miller
Peggy Burkner
Marjorie Counterman
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
Bob Hecklinger
Gary Henningsen
Danielle Riegle
John Rowley
Owen Baker
Pam Chronberger
Diana McGovern
Sue Goorman
Carlene Trost
Winnie Wohlgamuth & other affected by flooding
Tiffany
Connie Singlar
Raetta Zeisler
Rita Riegle
Steve Welling
Ron Robeson
Karen & Tony Herrera
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



DAY SCHOOL NEWS



"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

Jeremiah 29:11

School has started again and we are excited for another great year. We are so honored to be a mission of the First St. John congregation and I hope that we will continue to spread God's word to as many young children as we can. At this point we are looking forward to being able to include families and the congregation in the school again. I know that we will have some fundraising opportunities coming up as well as more performances, and just every day school activities. If you would like to help or would like to share your talents, please contact the school office. We would love to have you share in spreading God's word.

— Andrea Buckley

School Calendar 2026/2027

August 21, 2026 Meet the Teacher Night

August 26, 2026– First Day of School

September 7, 2026– Labor Day *No School*

November 25-27, 2026– Thanksgiving Break *No School*

December 21, 2026-January 1, 2027 Christmas Break
No School

January 12 & 13, 2027 Parent Teacher Conferences
(No classes; extended care still available)

January 18, 2027 MLK Day *No School*

February 1, 2027– President's Day *No School*

March 26– April 2nd, 2027– Spring Break *No School*

April TBA Teacher Work Day *No School*

May 28, 2027– Last Day of School



PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

Our focus item for September is adult and baby shampoo (no conditioners). Please place your items in the pull-out drawer to the left of the Feed Your Neighbor bin in the Narthex (under the main bulletin board) or in the bright green bin in the lounge. Thank you for supporting this ministry! Remember, no travel or sample size items—families will need these items to last an entire month.



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**

MISSION SUNDAY

Thanks to your generosity, we collected 126 non-perishable food items for the Feed Your Neighbor program. Please keep donating as hunger in Toledo, OH continues to be an ever-growing problem. We will have another Mission Sunday soon. Thanks for your support!



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.

NURSERY HELP NEEDED

The church nursery will open up again on Sunday, September 13th during the 2nd service. We are looking for people who would be interested in serving one Sunday a month during the 10:30 am service. It does require a back ground check that can be reimbursed. If interested please contact Darlene Paul or the church office (419-691-7222).



FIRST & SECOND YEAR CATECHISM

Catechism classes will begin on Sunday, September 20th. If you have a child in fifth through seventh grade, please contact Pastor Rayl. Please email any questions to Pastor Rayl at pastor1@firststjohn.com or text 567-395-0143.

J.A.M. SUNDAY SCHOOL

Please join us on September 13th to kick off Sunday School. We will welcome kids and parents with donuts. Come grow in faith, make friends, and have fun learning about Jesus!

CHAPEL COMMUNION

Chapel communion begins again on Sunday, September 13th at 2:00 pm. Note: The second Sunday of the month at 2:00 pm will be our regular schedule for Chapel Communion.