First St. John Journal

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Why Being Thankful Is a Powerful Way to Live Free

By Debbie McDaniel

"The Lord is my strength and my shield; My heart trusts in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart exults, And with my song I shall thank Him."

Psalm28:7

We have so much to be grateful for in this life, every single day. But reality is that sometimes constant life demands, battles, and worries give more room to defeat than to a heart of thanks. Or we forget, in the midst of busyness and pressures, just to pause and give thanks for all that God has done and continues to do in our lives.

Sometimes it really is a sacrifice to offer praise and thanks. We may not feel like it. We're struggling. We're weary. Or maybe, we feel like He let us down. We think God seems distant, like he's far away, or doesn't really care about what's troubling us. Painful life blows and losses might have recently sent us spiraling.

But here's what can make a lasting difference. We have a choice, every day, to give Him thanks. And with a heart of thanksgiving, we realize that no matter what we face, God doesn't just work to change our situations and help us through our problems. He does more. He changes our hearts. His power, through hearts of gratitude and focused minds on Him, releases the grip our struggles have over us. We're strengthened by His peace, refueled by His joy.

No matter what our current situation, or the struggles we may be facing, here's what choosing to be thankful does:

- It gets our eyes off ourselves, and helps us to focus back on God.
- It reminds us we're not in control, but that we serve a Mighty God who is. It keeps us in a place of humility and dependency on Him, as we recognize how much we need Him.
- It helps us to recognize we have so much to be thankful for, even all the little things, which often we may forget to thank Him for. It takes our attention off our problems and helps us instead to reflect on the goodness of His many blessings.
- It reminds us God is the Giver of all good gifts. We were never intended to be fully self-sufficient in this life. A grateful heart reminds us that ultimately God is our Provider, that all blessings and gifts are graciously given to us by His hand.
- A heart of gratitude leaves no room for complaining. For it is impossible to be truly thankful and filled with negativity and ungratefulness at the same time.
- It makes the enemy flee. The forces of darkness can't stand to be around hearts that give thanks and honor to God. Our praise and thanksgiving will make them flee.
- It opens the door for continued blessings. It invites His presence. God loves to give good gifts to His children. He delights in our thankfulness and pours out His Spirit and favor over those who give honor and gratitude to Him.

Maybe you're in a hard place right now. Maybe you feel like God has left you on your own to fend for yourself, or the battle seems too hard. Maybe there's never enough money left at the end of the month and you can't figure out how to make things work. No matter what, in it all, be assured God is with you and He cares. Choose a heart of gratefulness today. Make a list of all that God has blessed and filled your life with, that it's been easy to take for granted at times. Trust He knows what concerns you and is at work even now, to bring you through this uncertain season. Thank Him for providing all you need.

FELLOWSHIP BREAKFAST NEWS

The next fellowship breakfast will be held on Saturday, November 14th at 8:30 am at American Table on Wheeling Street. Please make plans to join us for some great food, discussion, and fellowship! All are invited!



CIRCLE INFORMATION

The next women's board meeting is Monday, Nov. 16th at 6:30 pm in the lounge. All are welcome.

Ruth Circle Meeting: Tuesday, November 3rd at 11:00 am at in the lounge.

Miriam Circle Meeting: Wednesday, November 4th at 10:00 am in the lounge.

Rebecca Circle Meeting: Saturday, November 7th at 11:30 am in the lounge.

Hannah Circle Meeting: Wednesday, November 11th at 6:30 pm at Deb Smith's house.

OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

The deadline to turn in your boxes is Sunday, November 22nd. Empty boxes with labels inside are in the lounge, the JAM room in the church basement, and outside the church office. No candy, liquids, toothpaste, war-related toys, or breakable items. You can bring your box to worship or drop it off during the week. Questions? Call Deb Ladd at 419-250-1460. Please help us share God's love with children around the world this Christmas.

FEED YOUR NEIGHBOR

With the economy struggling, people are finding it hard to put food on the table. Local food banks are struggling as well. So, our next Mission Sunday will be November 22nd. Please start bringing in non-perishable food items to the Narthex or Lounge so we can help families have food for Thanksgiving and beyond. Please, no glass jars. Canned soup is especially needed. If you have any questions, call Bob Haar at 419-250-9409.

ELDERS FOR NOVEMBER

	8:00 AM	10:30 AM
1st	Bob Haar Sherrie Haar	Kevin Ruedy Mike Winslow
8th	John Roth Bob Haar	Bill Nelson Matt Miller
15th	Ted Hagedorn Jeff Smith	Bob Haar Sherrie Haar
22nd	Kevin Ruedy Mike Winslow	Bob Haar Sherrie Haar
29th	Bill Nelson Matt Miller	John Roth Bob Haar

CANDY CRAWL UPDATE

God provided a beautiful, warm day for the Candy Crawl, and our congregation made sure we had plenty of treats to share with the community! About 150 cars drove through, averaging 2-4 children per car. A huge thank you to our congregation for always backing our projects! We are truly blessed.

FLOWER SIGN UP SHEETS

The 2027 sign up sheets for altar flowers for January through October will soon be placed in the red flower sign up book. This book is located under the main bulletin board in he narthex. Keep in mind you can also call the church office to add flowers to the schedule on the Sunday you prefer.

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, or mailing this form to: 2471 Seaman St./ Toledo, OH 43605. Email: office@firststjohn.com

Name _____

Address _____

City, State Zip _____ Phone _____

Cookie Sale!



WELCA is hosting a cookie sale fundraiser. Cookies will be sold on Sunday, December 13th after both services in the lounge.

Baked Goods Needed: If you can help by donating cookies for our sale, we'd greatly appreciate your help! Please plan to bring your baked cookies on Saturday, December 12th between 10am-12pm.

MEMBERSHIP UPDATES



Births
None.

Baptisms
10-18-26 Iris Sullivan, *born to Ashley Marie Vartorella*

Marriages
None.

Deaths
10-6-26 Janet Morrison
10-10-26 Jim Harrell

Transfers to/from First St. John
None.

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY FOCUS FOR NOVEMBER

Our November focus item is Sanitary Pads, (suggested package size 24 to 32). You can deposit items in the bright green bin in the lounge or drop them off at the office during the week. Remember, monetary donations are always welcome. Thank you!



WINTER COAT DRIVE!

We are a collection site for The East Toledo Family Center's winter coat and gear drive this year. They are especially looking for new or gently used coats (working zippers please) as last collection season the demand was higher than they were able to fulfill. They will also take new hats, and gloves, or monetary donations. A collection bins is located in the lounge. The collection will take place from now until **November 6th**.

CHRISTMAS PARTY



The church Christmas party will be on Sunday, December 6th following the the second worship service. We will be serving Ham, Baked Potato, Corn, Applesauce, Salad, Rolls & Butter, and Dessert. This year the Board is having a Lottery Tree and a Gift Card Tree (placed in picture frames) instead of baskets. If anyone would like to donate lottery tickets or gift cards please let Sue Ann Rogers know or drop off in the church office.



CHRISTMAS DECORATING

Volunteers are needed to help decorate the church for Christmas. We will meet on November 27th & 28th at 9:00 am. If you'd like to help, please call the church office at 419-691-7222. Thanks!

WEEKLY BULLETIN DEADLINE



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

DECEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE: November 20th

FIRST ST. JOHN PRAYER CHAIN
(as of 10/30/2026)

Crisis Prayer List: *For those who need prayers in urgent matters such as surgery, emergency medical care (ICU), etc. Will be moved to "Chronic Prayer List" after one month unless we're contacted about special circumstances:*

Annette Fleyberger
Family of Jim Harrell
Family of Janet Morrison
Family of Phil Cervantes
Tiffany Mrazek
Cynthia Foxbuer
Donald Nelson
Tom Tedrow

On-Going Concerns: *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 we're contacted about special/ continuing circumstances:*

Elaine Cutcher
Stephanie Paul
Randy Bless
Rick Adams
Jim Guido
Marjorie Counterman
Olivia & Delaney Dawkins
Bob Hecklinger
Gary Henningsen
John Rowley
Owen Baker
Pam Chronberger
Carlene Trost
Raetta Zeisler
Rita Riegle
Karen &Tony Herrera
Vickie Berrie
Steve Welling

Please check the list and notify any prayer chain contactifanamecanberemoved.

Prayer Chain Contacts

Carol Abbey 351-9795 or cabbeyrn@aol.com

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



WE REMEMBER…

All Saints Sunday is November 1st and we will remember the saints of First St. John who entered the Church Triumphant during the past year:

Paul Rang	*02/08/1951 - 11/25/2025*
John P. Schwegler	*11/13/1936 - 01/21/2026*
Betty J. Anderson	*10/17/1935 - 02/26/2026*
Raymond Cousino, Sr.	*02/21/1940 - 03/14/2026*
Eileen Young	*01/01/1930 - 03/23/2026*
Adelaide F. Miller	*05/10/2026 - 05/10/2026*
Jerry Nissen	*01/16/1940 - 05/27/2026*
Mary Ellen Miller	*10/11/1938 - 07/09/2026*
Janet Morrison	*09/03/1936 - 10/06/2026*
James Harrell	*06/06/1929 - 10/10/2026*

And we also remember
these friends & family members:

Ken & Lola Abbey, Dick & Joan Bailey, Fred & Helen Bailey, Richard Bell, Sally Bell, Ernie Bollinger, Bonnie Campos, Sandra Counterman-Frazier, Bob DeWitt, Gary DeWitt, James Gallaher, Barbara Nissen Gilbertson, Clarence & Iva Grant, Larry Grant, Larry Haar, Judith Hirth, Floyd Hagedorn, Joanne Harrell, Rev. Gerald & Ilean Labuhn, Joyce Martin, Annette McGorty, Mariann Miller, Carl "Dutch" Morrison, Paul Mullen Sr., Chuck Neal, Cindy Perkins, Andrea Schumaker, Arnold & Edythe Scherer,Tim Smith, William Stahl, Ken Villhauer, Joyce Villhauer, David Winslow, Sharon Winslow, WilliamWinslow, Kenneth Yard.

NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS NEEDED

Please consider donating a small portion of your time to First St. John Lutheran Church. We need new members for the Elder, Property Management, and Sunday School board. Please contact Bill Hamilton at 419-205-7312 if you are interested or have questions. Please consider volunteering--our future depends on it!

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY UPDATE

JANUARY-SEPTEMBER 2026

Persons Served - 1,056

Number of Items Distributed - 12,660

Estimated Product Cost - $9,925.59

Estimated Cost per Person - $9.40

Pantry Balance Jan 1, 2026 - $6,283.03

Pantry Fund Donations - $7,898.70

Pantry Product Expense - $8,456.35

Pantry Balance Sep 30, 2026 - $5,725.38



DAY SCHOOL NEWS

The holiday season will soon begin, and we are busy at the Day School with holiday parties and events. The students are working hard learning their holiday songs and practicing for their Thanksgiving Feasts and Christmas progrmas.

As the school year progresses, each student is learning new things and enjoying new friends and experiences.

Each November the children and families gather together for our annual Thanksgiving Feasts. If you would like to help prepare and serve during our Feasts, volunteers are needed and appreciated. Help is needed Monday thru Thursday (November 16-19) between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm. Please call the school office at 419-691-6480 if you are interested.

— Andrea Buckley

2026 POINSETTIA SALE

Sponsored by the Altar Guild

Fill in the form below to place your order for poinsettias to be used during worship at Christmas time. You can place this form with payment in the offering plate, drop it off at the church office during the week, or mail it in. Payment must accompany orders. Please make checks payable to:

FirstSt. John Lutheran Church

Deadline for placing orders is Sunday, December 13, 2026.

No. of plants @ $15.00 each _____

Color (circle one): **Red** **White**

Name _____

Address _____

_____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Phone _____

In Loving Memory of (Deceased):

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

In Honor of (Living):

_____

_____

_____

_____

MEMORIALS

PERSONAL NEEDS PANTRY

In memory of **Lois Blair** by Terry & Jane Schuetz.

2027 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Offering envelopes are available for pick up. They are located in the church lounge. Even if you contribute using Vanco, you will still get envelopes to be used for special services or other donations if requested.



WELCA NEWS

The Board met on October 19th at 6:30 pm in the lounge. We discussed the final events coming up in December.

The Family Christmas party will be held on Sunday, December 6th in the Fellowship Hall upstairs following the 2nd Worship Service. We will be serving Ham, Baked Potato, Corn, Applesauce, Salad, Rolls & Butter, and Dessert. This year the Board is having a Lottery tree and a Gift Card Tree, instead of baskets. We are being creative on the Cards and Tickets on how they will be presented. If anyone would like to donate lottery tickets or gift cards please let Sue Ann Rogers know or drop it off in the church office.

Our very own Dr. Tony and Jo-Anne will be performing this year after dinner. Can't wait to hear what the two of them have in store for us!

We will also have a Cookie Sale on December 13th, after both services in the lounge. If you wish to donate cookies, please bring them in only on Saturday December 12th between 10 am and noon. Thank you to all who will donate cookies this year.

Our next meeting will be November 16th in the lounge at 6:30 pm. All Women of First St. John are invited to attend. Everyone have a Safe and Happy Thanksgiving!!

— President, Sue Ann Rogers

SAVE YOUR POP TABS

We are collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Northwest Ohio and we'd love your help! Save the pull tabs from your aluminum beverage cans. Bring them into the office or drop them in the collection box located in the lounge. Collection will go from now until March 15th.