

*St. John's Evangelical Church
211 E. Carrol Street
Kenton, Ohio 43326
(Non Profit Organization)*

**Do Not Delay
Dated Material**



St. John's Evangelical Church Newsletter

February 2021

211 E. Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326
Church Phone: 419-673-7278
Pastor Randall cell: 724-290-3651

Rev. Dr. Randall J. Forester, Senior Pastor
Website: www.stjohnskenton.org
Email: stjohnskenton@gmail.com

Ash Wednesday Service—February 17 at 7:00 PM

Lent is a season of fasting, but we want to make sure our fasting is true and right (see Isaiah 58). As such, our Ash Wednesday will have three occasions where we may come before the altar. First, we may come to receive the ashes for we are sinners, the sin is the penalty for death, and that sin led the Son of God to the Cross. It will be a time for somber reflection.

Then, we may come forward to partake of Holy Communion where we remember that the penalty for our sin has been paid, there is a remedy, and we are called to receive that gift.

Lastly, we may come to receive anointing. Ash Wednesday marks the start of a penitential time in the life of the Church, but we are going to fulfill Jesus' command in Matthew 6:16-18. We are not going to show the world a disfigured face. We are going forth under the anointing of God, showing forth the glow of His Holy Spirit, and allow the joy of the Lord to be our guide and fulfillment even while we commit to fast and pray.

COVID precautions will be in place to make this evening as safe as possible. Thank you for your understanding and as always, if you are uncomfortable to come forward, please feel free to remain in your seat.



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

211 East Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326

REV. DR. RANDALL J. FORESTER, PASTOR & TEACHER

Phone: 419-673-7278 (o)

Phone: 724-290-3651 (c)

FEBRUARY 2021

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

Much has been made about the psychological toll of the pandemic. With increased isolation, mental health markers have deteriorated while stress levels increased. When looking at people's face swathed in bands of cloth, we have lost the ability to see one another's full humanity and their complete responses to our presence. A lot of our social cues have dissipated, and it leaves us unsure not only of the world in which we live but of the people that populate it as well. For children, this can be especially harsh. To counteract this, we are told by the experts to "smile" with our eyes—to open them ever larger as we do when we smile and laugh.

That last thought helped to germinate a thought in my mind—we always have an opportunity to do good and have an impact for the Kingdom of God. That's important because we never want to make an excuse for not doing what is right and good and true for God in these days. With COVID restrictions, it can seem like we have little opportunity to demonstrate our faith to the community and to the world.

Just a year ago, I was talking about Revive Ohio and the opportunities to join with other local churches in evangelistic outreaches to our community. I still have boxes of Bibles in my office that I purchased in anticipation of this. Revive inspires local Christians to go around their community and preach the Good News of Jesus Christ wherever they can. Their plan is Jesus' plan: we need to meet people where they are and present the saving grace to them right where they are. We need to show them Jesus' love. Sharing a Gospel presentation and sharing a Bible with them along with an invitation is one way to do that.

Now, in our socially-distanced reality, how do we do

that? When we go about with faces covered, can people hear the Gospel presentation with our muffled voices? Can people see our eyes smiling with love, or are they baffled by our appearance and awkward attempts to convey love with muted expressions and sanitized hands that are weary to contact another human being? After all, if we cannot embrace a hurting person, how will they know the love in our soul?

February is the month when our thoughts turn to love with Valentine's Day smack dab in the middle of the month. How appropriate that the day of love falls on a Sunday this year with Ash Wednesday

following three days after! As we purchase cards and gifts for those beloved by us and prepare to pursue the path of LOVE in Lent, may we consider how we demonstrate love to those around us.

We may be wary of holding large group meetings for worship and training with other churches, and we may not want to invite people to crowd into our church for a concert, a meal, or for some other event, but we need to find a way to reach others with the love of the Father found in Jesus Christ. More than just telling them, we need to show God's love to them.

With all the restrictions and concerns, we need the love of Christ to shine through us and cast away the shadows of darkness and despair, fear and frustration, hate and hurt. Now is the time for the Church to prove herself. In times of war and violence, people need peace, and we know the Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6**). In a time of suffering and deep wounds, people need healing, and we have the balm of Gilead (**Jeremiah 46:11**).



LET US NOT BE WEARY IN DOING GOOD, FOR WE WILL REAP IN DUE SEASON, IF WE DON'T GIVE UP. SO THEN, AS WE HAVE OPPORTUNITY, LET'S DO WHAT IS GOOD TOWARD ALL MEN, AND ESPECIALLY TOWARD THOSE WHO ARE OF THE HOUSEHOLD OF THE FAITH. GALATIANS 6:9-10

In 2020, we looked at how Jesus was undeterred as He went to the Cross. He lost all of His relationships, He was lied about, and He was degraded. Still, He soldiered on to save others. In the first half of this year, we are going to journey through Micah, focus on some other prophets, and discuss biblical justice. Will we be prophetic in our witness this year? Will we proclaim God's Good News to those who will listen and who will repent (turn toward God)?

Will we hear God's Word compel us to share His Word? Will we lift high the song of **Psalm 62:6**: "He [God] alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress. I will not be shaken." to a world that needs God's presence in their hearts? Will our faith come to life and be translated into works that draws other into relationship with Christ as the light draws the moth?

To do this, we have to amend our ways and change our attitudes. For too long, we have sat on the sidelines and waited for others to come to us. In our best years, we have had a handful of events and called it evangelism, or we lamented that someone else wasn't bringing the crowds in. Building the Church—and building up this church—is not someone else's duty; it is everyone's duty. Unfortunately, when it's everyone's duty, everybody looks for somebody else to step forward and do it and then nobody does it.

To change that, we need to stay steadfast in the Word. Have you maintained last month's annual request to read through the Bible. In 2020, the American Bible Society (ABS), with assistance from Harvard University's Human Flourishing Program, found a strong correlation between reading scripture and hope.

Bible reading (and other forms of community and discipleship, such as going to church or participating in a small group) seem to contribute to people's sense of well-being and happiness according to Tyler VanderWeele, director of the Human Flourishing Program at Harvard University's T.H. Chan School of Public Health. (These findings were published in October 2020's *Journal of General Internal Medi-*

**ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL
CHURCH:
MAKING AND MATURING
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST**

cine in the article, "National Well-Being Measures Before and During the COVID-19 Pandemic in Online Samples).

The most interesting data for the ABS concerned how the Bible, church, and Christian disciplines appear to help people through difficult and dark times. The connections are only correlations, which means

being an active Christian can't be proven to contribute to human flourishing. However, it does mean that the two are related in some ways—as people are more active and engaged in their Christian faith, they tend to have higher scores in what constitutes human flourishing.

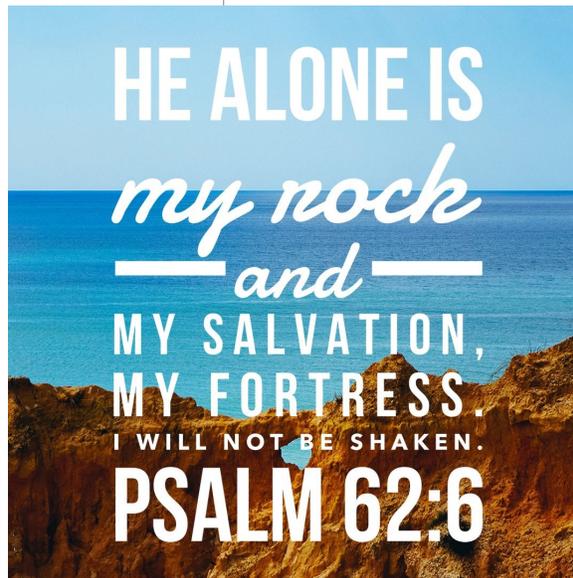
In other words, reading and studying the Bible, praying, and worshiping help make us flourish.

How much more will we flourish when we take and share that faith with others? Again, February is the month of Love, and we are to embody the Love of God as Christ did. We are to talk about it, sing about it, and study it.

We are also to put that love into practice—not when the pandemic ends, our streets are safe, and people are calmer and kinder. No, the task is at hand for us to carry out today and everyday. It is not a burden, but a joy (**Matthew 11:29-30**). Many have called God's Word His love letter to us, and now He sends us to deliver that message to His beloved children all around us. May we be couriers and carriers of this infectious Word!

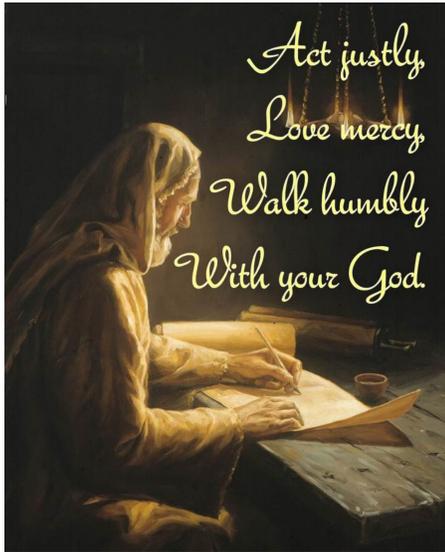
With love and faith and service,

Pastor Randall



Preaching Series

These are indeed strange and wonderful times. As we move from Epiphany to Lent, some things may seem familiar as we return to worship in the sanctuary. Some things, will be very different. For instance, Ash Wednesday will not include Payne Chapel this year. Their denomination has asked them to keep worship only online, so if they join us, it will only be online. Rev. D'Eborah Chapman has asked me to preach at a joint online service 21 March at 3 pm in the afternoon. Details will come. It will be an opportunity to join together in worship and to share our heart for a brighter tomorrow.



We have a lot for which to labor to create a more just nation and world. There are wounds and divides that need to be healed. Only God can provide that healing, but He calls upon His people to apply the salve as they bring a message of hope and redemption.

With Christ, there is always hope—hope for the sinner set free and hope for the broken to be restored. May we build up and not tear down in this season.

07 February

Scripture **Micah 4:1-5**
Matthew 11:7-15

Sermon **Walk With the Lord
Forever**

14 February

Scripture **Micah 4:6-13**
Matthew 11:1-6

Sermon **The Lame
and the Remnant**

[If you have the opportunity, I suggest you read Flannery O'Connor's "The Lame Shall Enter First."]

17 February

Ash Wednesday

Call to Worship **Joel 2:1-2**

Scripture for the Ashes **Joel 2:12-17**

Scripture for Communion
Joel 2:18-27

Sermon **Fear Not, O Land**

Scripture for Anointing **Joel 2:28-32**

21 February

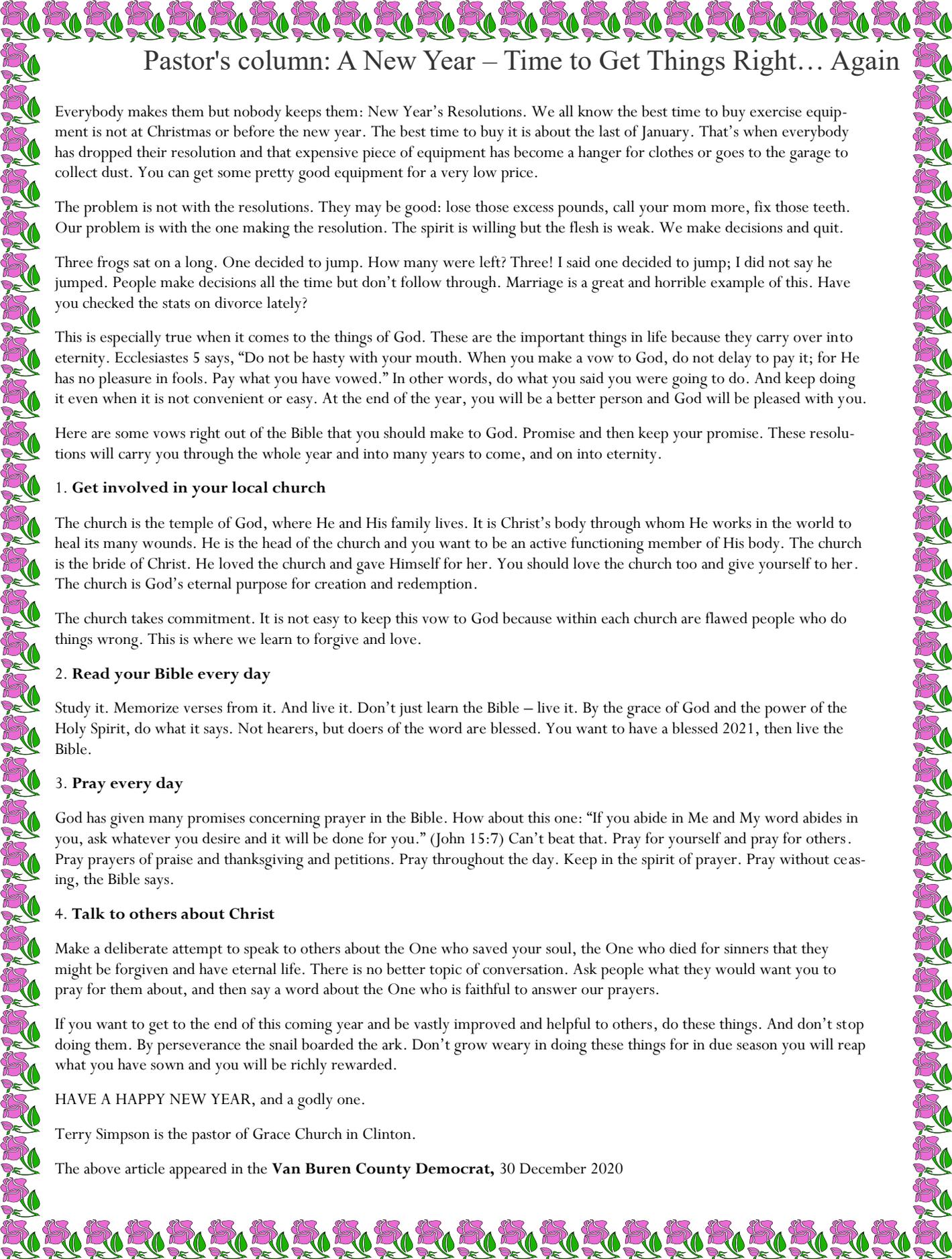
Scripture **Micah 5:1-6**
John 10:10-18

Sermon **The Good Shepherd**

28 February

Scripture **Micah 5:7-15**
II Thessalonians 1:5-12

Sermon **The Delivered Remnant**



Pastor's column: A New Year – Time to Get Things Right... Again

Everybody makes them but nobody keeps them: New Year's Resolutions. We all know the best time to buy exercise equipment is not at Christmas or before the new year. The best time to buy it is about the last of January. That's when everybody has dropped their resolution and that expensive piece of equipment has become a hanger for clothes or goes to the garage to collect dust. You can get some pretty good equipment for a very low price.

The problem is not with the resolutions. They may be good: lose those excess pounds, call your mom more, fix those teeth. Our problem is with the one making the resolution. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak. We make decisions and quit.

Three frogs sat on a log. One decided to jump. How many were left? Three! I said one decided to jump; I did not say he jumped. People make decisions all the time but don't follow through. Marriage is a great and horrible example of this. Have you checked the stats on divorce lately?

This is especially true when it comes to the things of God. These are the important things in life because they carry over into eternity. Ecclesiastes 5 says, "Do not be hasty with your mouth. When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; for He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed." In other words, do what you said you were going to do. And keep doing it even when it is not convenient or easy. At the end of the year, you will be a better person and God will be pleased with you.

Here are some vows right out of the Bible that you should make to God. Promise and then keep your promise. These resolutions will carry you through the whole year and into many years to come, and on into eternity.

1. **Get involved in your local church**

The church is the temple of God, where He and His family lives. It is Christ's body through whom He works in the world to heal its many wounds. He is the head of the church and you want to be an active functioning member of His body. The church is the bride of Christ. He loved the church and gave Himself for her. You should love the church too and give yourself to her. The church is God's eternal purpose for creation and redemption.

The church takes commitment. It is not easy to keep this vow to God because within each church are flawed people who do things wrong. This is where we learn to forgive and love.

2. **Read your Bible every day**

Study it. Memorize verses from it. And live it. Don't just learn the Bible – live it. By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit, do what it says. Not hearers, but doers of the word are blessed. You want to have a blessed 2021, then live the Bible.

3. **Pray every day**

God has given many promises concerning prayer in the Bible. How about this one: "If you abide in Me and My word abides in you, ask whatever you desire and it will be done for you." (John 15:7) Can't beat that. Pray for yourself and pray for others. Pray prayers of praise and thanksgiving and petitions. Pray throughout the day. Keep in the spirit of prayer. Pray without ceasing, the Bible says.

4. **Talk to others about Christ**

Make a deliberate attempt to speak to others about the One who saved your soul, the One who died for sinners that they might be forgiven and have eternal life. There is no better topic of conversation. Ask people what they would want you to pray for them about, and then say a word about the One who is faithful to answer our prayers.

If you want to get to the end of this coming year and be vastly improved and helpful to others, do these things. And don't stop doing them. By perseverance the snail boarded the ark. Don't grow weary in doing these things for in due season you will reap what you have sown and you will be richly rewarded.

HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR, and a godly one.

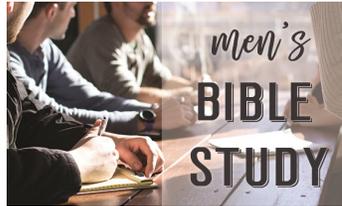
Terry Simpson is the pastor of Grace Church in Clinton.

The above article appeared in the **Van Buren County Democrat**, 30 December 2020

Upcoming Events

Community Men's Bible Study

A Community Men's Bible Study meets Saturday mornings at 7:30 am at Our Place Family Restaurant (formerly Basil's).



Community Women's Bible Study

The Women's Bible Study is currently not meeting due to Covid Concerns. We will provide updates when they are available. Thank you for your understanding and stay safe!

Confirmation Class Interest

Anyone interested in participating in a confirmation class in the fall please contact the church office or Michele Sherman.

Friday With Friends

Friday With Friends is a wonderful group of widows, widowers, and single seniors who meet twice a month for a special time of food, fellowship, and fun. We meet the first and third Fridays of every month. Please join us if you are a widow, widower, or single senior adult. This is not exclusive to St. John's, so pass the word along to someone that you know who could be blessed by this special group. For more information, contact Ethel Koch at 419-674-6344.

Forthcoming outings will be as follows:

If out of town, meet at St. John's, corner of Wayne St. and E. Carrol St. to carpool. They leave sharply at 10:45. Still eating at 11:30 am.

All luncheons are currently on hold due to Covid concerns.

Mission of the Month— Silent Night Bed Ministry

Silent Night Bed Ministry began after a Youth Mission Trip where the mission team built beds for children in Belize who never had beds before. The team soon learned that this is not an isolated problem, as we have children in our very own community who are sleeping on floors and couches every night. So the church started raising money to build beds locally and have managed to supply beds to children throughout Hardin County by working together with local agencies to help those in need.

If you would like to help build beds or make blankets for the beds, please contact the church office at 419-673-7278 or stjohnskenton@gmail.com for more information. We also need help delivering beds periodically so if you would be like to be on a contact list, please turn Thank you for your support!

Virtual Combined Worship Service w/ Payne Chapel for Black History Month

A combined virtual service is planned for March 21 at 3 pm. Watch for more details

St. John's Care Team

We have a group of people that make calls to members to try to keep in touch with each other and to just check in. If you would like to participate in any way, please let the church office know or contact Carol Wilcox. If you are not receiving a call and would like one periodically or know of someone who would, please let us know.



Wednesday Night Helpers Needed

A few additional people are needed on Wednesday evenings to help with name tags, temperature checks and any additional duties, even if it is not every week.

Church Staff:

Senior Pastor: Rev. Dr. Randall J. Forester
Youth Ministry: Michele Sherman
Financial Secretary: Kay Rush
Church Secretary: Kathy Forester
Chancel Choir Director: David Beazley
Organists: Randall S. Rogers, Teresa Broseke and Linda Zeigler
Children's Choirs Director: Hope Cauley
Bell Choir Director: Jane Baker
Technical Support: Richard Katterjohn
Historian: Gerald Pfister
Janitor: Denny Sprang



Happy Almost-Valentine's Day! If you're dreading what this holiday means for your teenager, take a deep breath. We're in this with you!

Here are a few things coming up in our ministry . . .

Due to all the rules and regulations set in place at this time. Hardin County Collective has decided to not have a Winter Retreat this year. Instead, the Youth have a challenge they have been working on to give back to the community. Its boys against girls, so I'm hoping the girls win because

Michele doesn't want a pie in the face for loosing. Hahaha! The deadline for the challenge is February 14th.

What we're Teaching this month...

Have you ever had to follow a rule that made absolutely no sense to you? Maybe it was a rule about what you could or couldn't wear, where you could or couldn't go, or who you could or couldn't spend time with. When some people think about God, that is what they think about — a list of rules miles long that don't seem important or relevant to their lives. But what if there are only two rules that matter most: love God and love others as you love yourself. In this 4-week series in the book of James, we'll discover that the right rules can set you free — and that free people don't dance with danger, make decisions that benefit others, and give up their freedoms for others.

Tip of the Month

When it comes to boundaries with your teenager, always trust, but verify. Assume your kid is making wise choices, but put boundaries and checkpoints in place so you can make sure your assumptions are correct. You can decide the checkpoints that work best for you and your kid. Just be honest and clear about what they are. Honestly builds trust, both ways.

Question on the Month

Hey parents, help us out. As the parent of a teenager, **what's one thing our church could do to better serve and help you?** Email us and let us know! michellesjyouth@gmail.com

4 Ways to Observe Lent

Lent is a season of focus and preparation. It aligns our hearts with God's heart as we approach Easter.

The following are just a few ways to focus and prepare.



Give It Up

Consider giving up something that distracts from your important relationships: like too much time on Twitter or Clash of Clans.

Maybe cut out screen usage for several hours a day.

Take a day of true rest: let go of toil for 24 hours.



Plug In

Consider adding in something that helps you connect to God.

Read a book of the Bible, a devotional, or practice Lectio Divina on a daily basis.



Serve

Start a new routine of service.

Volunteer regularly as an academic mentor, step up to volunteer in a local church, or visit a nursing home.



Share It

Make it a communal event.

Share your Lent practices with others via a small group and/or attending worship.



February 2021

Obviously, given current events, it's time to reprise some stories of real Patriots.

Listen my Children and you shall hear of the midnight ride of Paul Revere! Well, everyone knows the story about Paul Revere and his two companions who road to spread the alarm. All 3 Dawes, Prescott and Revere were captured and escaped dur-

ing that clear bright night.

But our story today concerns another ride to alarm the Militia. This ride was far more perilous than and twice as long as Revere's 20-mile ride. Listen now to the true story of Ludington's Ride

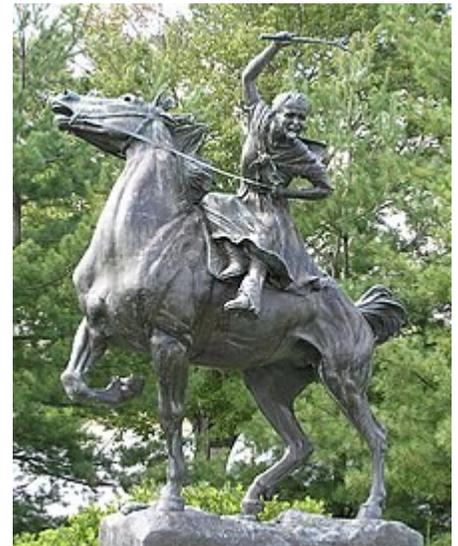
In April of 1777 British General Howe sent 2,000 troops via frigates across Long Island Sound to land in Connecticut and to destroy the Continental munitions and supplies stored in Danbury, CT. The original plan was to then march across Connecticut to the south and East damaging property in Ridgefield, Ct. and neighboring villages in NY. Since no one expected such a bold move, they reached Danbury unopposed and the small garrison of 150 Continentals took what they could save and ran for their lives. The British as night fell set about destroying, and burning 22 barns & buildings containing the military supplies & gun powder and 19 patriot homes in the town itself. In the small town of Patterson, NY, Col. Ludington saw the flames and heard the explosions. He was the head of the local Militia force of some 400 men. His 16-year-old immediately volunteered & saddled "Star", the Col's favorite horse and much to the trepidation of the Col. & his wife, headed out to sound the alarm.

A terrible storm with heavy rain and severe lightening descended on the rider. In fear of being caught by Dragoons or Tories the young Ludington Rider used cover of the storm and knowledge of every back path & road covering the towns of Carmel, Mahopac and Stormville. Perhaps the storm kept the Tories off the roads and may have helped Ludington. Having lived in that area I will tell you the terrain for horse back in that region would be difficult in good weather and almost impossible in mud & blinding rain. It was a remarkable feat of horsemanship to cover over 40 miles in over 10 hours, stopping over 180 times to knock on doors, soaked to the bone and exhausted, until all 400 men were assembled for the march.

By this time the countryside was aware of the devastation wrecked on Danbury and since the main road from Danbury led to Ridgefield. Militia's from every area hurried to cut off the British forces. General Washington put in charge of this rag tag army Benedict Arnold, who at this time was held in high regard due to his early successes.

The Battle of Ridgefield was in reality a defeat for the British as they believed the bulk of the Continental Army was descending on them. They fought a rear-guard action to escape to the safety of the shore and the frigate's cannon. As in Concord earlier the patriots fired on the British from cover at the sides of the road and when their force boarded their ships over 200 were dead including 10 officers. The Militias counted 20 killed and 40 wounded. More importantly the surrounding countryside was spared being ravaged and became an even stronger proponent of independence. General Washington was as distraught over the loss of supplies as he was pleased at the performance of the Militia's quick and brave response. As the battle was recounted, he was amazed at the bravery and skill of the Ludington Rider.

He was to give Sybil Ludington special recognition for her contribution that thwarted the British advance. You heard me correctly; the Col's child was his 16-year-old daughter! Sybil in my mind outdid Revere, Dawes and Prescott. Sybil was a very humble and modest person who continued to act as a messenger for the balance of the conflict. She never requested the honors that were given her such as the statute of a real heroine of the Revolution that stands in the square of the town named for her after her death; Ludingtonville, NY. In October 1784 she married a lawyer Edward Ogden and I would imagine had a few tales to her only son, Henry Ogden, of the most harrowing ride of the Revolution. Perhaps it inspired him to join the Army and become the officer who founded Fort Riley, KS now home of the famous 1st Infantry Division.



St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Agenda
Thursday, November 12, 2020
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER - Carol Wilcox, President

OPENING PRAYER - Pastor Randall

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - Pastor Randall

OFFICER'S REPORT

Secretary's Report - Kristi Weaver

- October 8, 2020 minutes – Motion to accept minutes and seconded, council vote, motion carried.

REPORTS

2) Finance - Russ Cahill

- Income – Down \$11,188
- Facility Rent – Down \$4,100
- Expenses are down \$19,422 for staff salaries
- Building and Ground expenses are down
- Still able to cover the expenses

3) Christian Education—Trish Wilcox & Michele Sherman

- Reports distributed for review prior to the meeting
- They are doing a fabulous job based on the conditions currently
- Trish is cancelling until December 2nd for now, youth has not decided yet. Will discuss it all later after going through agenda.

4) Women's Ministry - Carol Wilcox

- Will put out the luminaries in the near future and will need some help

5) Worship, Arts & Music - Nancy Rickenbacher

- Set with people to cover when Pastor is out
- Set up to decorate the church, but will not have lunch
- Christmas Eve is one service at 9:30

6) Personnel Committee - Jerry Pfister, chairperson

- Trish Wilcox sent in resignation, but will table it for now.
- Reviews are done, and will be reported back to Carol

7) Pastoral Relations - Carol Wilcox

- Set up for February 7th

8) Trustees—Russ Cahill, Greg Liedel, Greg Martin

- Handicap door – has been installed and is working, set on a 10 second delay which seems like enough time
- Question about the stove having air in the line, and will have to be looked at by the trustees
- Audio Visual – The new cameras that show the front of the church have been installed, they are remote controlled, so we will be able to show things on the walls
- Discussion of cameras around the church – the person that installed the audio visual will give a quote
- Bus: Bus vs Van – Insurance on the 2005 bus is \$830 a year, 2018 Chevy 12 passenger van (\$23,500) \$656 a year plus a few more quotes. Discussion of the 15 passenger van – need VIN number to get a cost on it, could put some sway bar that helps and could potentially have lower cost, but again need a VIN to get a quote. Discussion that the bus is starting to nickel and dime us, and how we do have the money to cover it, it would just have to be in the plan for the annual meeting. Discussion that we should have discussions with the Children's and Youth minister and who it effects before deciding. Have spent over \$2,500 on the bus this year. Will table for now to get the Christian Ed opinion and will discuss in December.
- Farm – Russ and Greg talked about having someone come in to look at the trees by the Salem Church

9) Missions, Evangelism - Heather Erwin/ Mark Sherman

- Met this week
- Will post about the virtual Angel Tree this year
- Have not heard from Helping Hands for Christmas
- Spent about \$4,000 of the \$6,300 to spend
- As part of the youth mission, they bought a refrigerator for the basement

10) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall

- Report distributed for review prior to meeting
- No questions noted

OLD BUSINESS:

- Safety of Church Alice Program
- Rental agreements
- Church inventory
- Committees – Budgets for next year – need to know from personnel about any salary changes
- Nominating Committee – discussing with Jerry Pfister, Terry Hord, Hal Elszesser, and Lonnie Stayman

NEW BUSINESS:

- Shannon & Bruce Donnelly removed their membership as of 10/12/20. Motion and seconded to accept, council vote, motion carried.
- Discussion about what we need to do with the Covid situation getting worse:
- Masks – need to encourage them to be worn
- Music – no group singing
- Encouraging people to stay home
- Discussion about how to have more distance – marking on cushions, using the Fellowship Hall and how you can individualize seating, temperatures,
- Communion – all in agreement to stop for now
- Discussion if any contact tracing had been done, and how people are getting the disease
- A motioned made and seconded we require the masks being worn and that we should have no singing except for special music. Discussion of who are we to infringe on the exemption per the Governor orders and how we have to decide if we want to use our exemption. It is hard because we want to do the safe thing, right thing, Discussion of singing and what is the difference if you have the mask on. Council vote, motion failed.
- A Motion made and seconded to mandate the masks only, council vote, motion failed
- Discussion that we need to encourage people to wear the mask
- Motion made and seconded that we send a one call that you stay home if you are sick and that we encourage wearing masks even when singing, council vote, motion passed
- Sunday School – no adults, 3 families are coming for Sunday School, so no issue with Sunday school
- Wednesday night – Still want to have the youth this week, but no children this week
- Heather offered to join the Christian Ed board
- Discussion of Michele's request for a training class and how it was in the proposed youth budget.
- Request was that the Pastor do a once a week prayer call

Next Meeting: December 10, 2020 7:00 PM (may be video conference)

ADJOURNMENT – Motion and seconded to adjourn, Council Vote, motion carried.

LORD'S PRAYER

Newsletter Clarification Regarding Council Meeting Minutes

I periodically receive the question as to why the council minutes printed in the newsletters are usually from the meeting two months prior. Great question! For example, the December minutes are in this month since they were not approved by the church board until the meeting in January. The January newsletter was printed at the end of December so it is available for the last Sunday of the month. Therefore, the December minutes get printed in the following newsletter, February, once they have been approved.

I must apologize, the October minutes were included two months in error, so that is why the November minutes are also in this month's edition. If you have any questions. Please feel free to ask contact the office at 419-673-7278 or stjohnskenton@gmail.com.

St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Agenda
Thursday, December 10, 2020
7:00 PM

CALL TO ORDER - Carol Wilcox, President

OPENING PRAYER - Pastor Randall

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT - Pastor Randall

OFFICER'S REPORT

Secretary's Report - Kristi Weaver

- November 12, 2020 minutes – Motion to accept minutes and seconded, council vote, motion carried.

REPORTS

2) Finance - Russ Cahill

- Summary of finances for November was very good
- Actual financial reports – Kay sent out the 2014 balances and compared the checkbook from then to now. We have made great progress at keeping the expenses down.
- Budget through - \$7,120 down in income, facility rent is down over \$4,000. Memorial donations – used for the balance on the handicap door. Total staff salaries is down \$20,886, which has helped the budget. The elevator – spent \$1,894 on inspection. Building and grounds under by \$8,800. Christian education is down about \$2,000.
- Pledges are about \$99,600 and about \$48,000 additional expected, and another \$40,000 estimate the total estimated is \$187,000. Discussion that the younger generation does not pledge.
- Current bank balance is over \$160,000
- Still working on the active member list.
- 2021 budget update – estimate giving to be down \$21,000 next year, need to put increase for Pastor's insurance as it is going up about \$10,000 a year. Also may have to figure funds in for a sabbatical, but it would be for 2022 or 2023 and we will apply for a grant. Youth have asked for some funds. \$10,000 for the HVAC on the roof. Discussion on Children's Ministry position. May need to budget for guest speakers for when the Pastor is on vacation had \$1,200 in 2020, only spent half this year. Will vote on the budget to present to congregation in January.

3) Christian Education—Michele Sherman

- Report distributed for review prior to meeting
- Question came up on the youth meeting if schooling is on-line and church is open.
- Poinsettias are ordered
- Hardin County Collective on hold right now
- Continuing to post on the Facebook page for the weekly programs

4) Women's Ministry - Toni Pfister

- Not doing anything right now

5) Worship, Arts & Music - Nancy Rickenbacher

- Christmas Eve – One 9:30 service is the suggestion, will discuss under New Business

6) Personnel Committee - Jerry Pfister, chairperson

- Meeting with Trish on her exit interview
- Reviews complete

7) Pastoral Relations - Carol Wilcox

8) Trustees—Russ Cahill, Greg Liedel, Greg Martin

- Farm - Met with the forestry people on the woods behind Salem church – 15 oak and hickory are able to be harvested. The Laubis woods on the north side of the woods, nothing recommended to be harvested. The South side of the woods - got a complete report on the woods, and it looks like it is in good shape and we do not have to harvest. We could harvest some of the hickory or red oak, but none of the white oak. There is a problem with Ash Trees. We also need to get rid of the ironwood. Concern of how to get to the woods and the liability with the ash trees. Discussion of letting members cut the ash trees for the firewood and needing them contact the church office and a permission slip.
- Audio Visual – coming tomorrow to finish the cameras in the sanctuary, got the controllers on the spotlights done. Got a quote on security cameras – 3 cameras inside, cameras outside, about \$3,300 installed. They are wired in so no batteries to mess with. Can you remotely access the hard drive – he thinks you can. Does not believe that they can zoom in. Will wait until next meeting to vote. Shawn does like when you can zoom in. Asked Shawn to give Russ some feedback to help see if we can get an idea for if it has what we need.
- Bus/van – Emailed information on the bus trade-in for a van. Brim's is selling it for what they had into it. Seat covers are not cloth or vinyl, but in-between. 2018 12 passenger van, insurance will go down. Anyone can drive it, no special license needed. 15 passenger vans would need a special license. Discussion of how to space out due to Covid, and use of booster seats. Motion and seconded to purchase the van by trading in the bus, council vote, motion carried.
- Suggestion to reduce the dumpster size or pick-up. Russ will look into it.

9) Missions, Evangelism - Heather Erwin/ Mark Sherman

- Had some funds from Welter and Kurt fund, so opted to shop for the Helping Hands families. Got gifts and clothes for 7 kids and gift cards for the families.
- Still working on the virtual Angel Tree – have 18 kids still in need of sponsoring. Will use Kurt fund money if they are not sponsored by people.
- Food for Angels for the Elderly – if we do not get back to church, then they will make a donation.
- Discussion of a way to reach out the youth and kids families since we didn't do the McDonald's and Pizza Hut this year and are not meeting right now. Ideas of movie night items, family pizza night, and gingerbread kits.

10) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall

- Report distributed for review prior to the meeting
- Discussion of visitations – takes the necessary precautions based on the hospital policies. Wants to be active with people as much as possible. Believe that the restrictions will be around for awhile.
- Sabbatical request – Wants to know so that he can plan ahead in working on getting a grant. It is in the call agreement that we allow the sabbatical. Motion made and seconded that Pastor Randall continue with going forward with sabbatical plans for 2022 or 2023 and the potential grant available, council vote, motion carried.
- Discussion of taking his time in 2021 for self-study.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Safety of Church/Alice Program - tabled
- Rental agreements - tabled
- Church inventory - tabled
- Nominating Committee – Slate is Terry Hord - Elder, Jerry Pfister - Trustee, Hal Elsasser- elder – motion made and seconded to accept slate – Council Vote, motion carried
- Motion made and seconded to accept Trish's resignation—council vote, motion carried

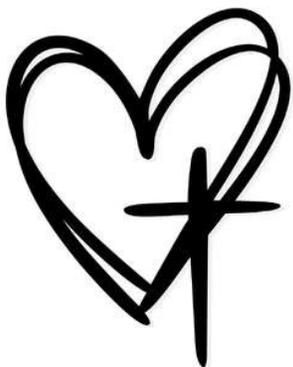
NEW BUSINESS:

- Set Annual Meeting date & time
- COVID and Robert's Rules of Order – How should the meeting be conducted? Constitution and by-laws have it listed for January. Thinking about January 17th, 24th, or 31st. Concern about needing to delay until March. Suggestion that we could send out a letter that we are suspending the by-laws and postponing the meeting until March. Discussion about scheduling it for January 31st and then pushing it back then if we need to. Shawn motioned to schedule the Annual Meeting for January 31st and then postpone if necessary, second by Russ. Discussion that we should mention that the meeting is subject to Covid restrictions, and will be at 11 after the service. Keep in mind that we need 50 + 1 for the meeting. Question of being able to use the Fellowship Hall as well to be able to accommodate everyone. Council vote – motion carried.
- Approve budget – will be done in January
- All committees- Reports due for Annual Meeting
- Care committee is reestablished – calling people and checking in

- Discussion of opening the church – did get some feedback from members, some have commented we should wait until January, some want to open now. Discussion of how some are doing mask service, and no mask service, discussion of some limiting number of people in. Discussion that school will not be back to in-person until January. Discussion that Hardin County is a hot spot right now. Suggestion is to have Christmas Eve Service. Discussion of using the Fellowship Hall. Discussion of RSVP'ing so that we can assign seats, or use ushers to seat people. Motion and seconded that we have the Christmas Eve service at 9:30 at that we usher people to their seats. Council Vote – Motion passed – Shawn and Natasha Dyer will usher, and Greg Martin will was well.
- UCC conference is recommending January 17th for Sundays. Motion made and seconded to open the church services on January 17th tentatively to reconfirm on the January 14th council meeting. Council vote, motion carried.
- Table the youth request to the January meeting after the Christian Ed Board meets. Carol to talk to Hope about scheduling a meeting.
- Christmas Bonus question – Discussion of the current staff. Motion made and seconded to give the bonuses as done in the past. Council Vote, motion carried.

Next Meeting: January 14, 2020 7:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT – Motion and seconded to adjourn, Council Vote, motion carried.
LORD'S PRAYER



FATHER'S LOVE LETTER

An intimate message from God to you.

My Child,

You may not know me, but I know everything about you. Psalm 139:1 I know when you sit down and when you rise up. Psalm 139:2 I am familiar with all your ways. Psalm 139:3 Even the very hairs on your head are numbered. Matthew 10:29-31 For you were made in my image. Genesis 1:27 In me you live and move and have your being. Acts 17:28 For you are my offspring. Acts 17:28 I knew you even before you were conceived. Jeremiah 1:4-5 I chose you when I planned creation. Ephesians 1:11-12 You were not a mistake, for all your days are written in my book. Psalm 139:15-16 I determined the exact time of your birth and where you would live. Acts 17:26 You are fearfully and wonderfully made. Psalm 139:14 I knit you together in your mother's womb. Psalm 139:13 And brought you forth on the day you were born. Psalm 71:6 I have been misrepresented by those who don't know me. John 8:41-44 I am not distant and angry, but am the complete expression of love. 1 John 4:16 And it is my desire to lavish my love on you. 1 John 3:1 Simply because you are my child and I am your Father. 1 John 3:1 I offer you more than your earthly father ever could. Matthew 7:11 For I am the perfect father. Matthew 5:48 Every good gift that you receive comes from my hand. James 1:17 For I am your provider and I meet all your needs. Matthew 6:31-33 My plan for your future has always been filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 Because I love you with an everlasting love. Jeremiah 31:3 My thoughts toward you are countless as the sand on the seashore. Psalm 139:17-18 And I rejoice over you with singing. Zephaniah 3:17 I will never stop doing good to you. Jeremiah 32:40 For you are my treasured possession. Exodus 19:5 I desire to establish you with all my heart and all my soul. Jeremiah 32:41 And I want to show you great and marvelous things. Jeremiah 33:3 If you seek me with all your heart, you will find me. Deuteronomy 4:29 Delight in me and I will give you the desires of your heart. Psalm 37:4 For it is I who gave you those desires. Philippians 2:13 I am able to do more for you than you could possibly imagine. Ephesians 3:20 For I am your greatest encourager. 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 I am also the Father who comforts you in all your troubles. 2 Corinthians 1:3-4 When you are brokenhearted, I am close to you. Psalm 34:18 As a shepherd carries a lamb, I have carried you close to my heart. Isaiah 40:11 One day I will wipe away every tear from your eyes. Revelation 21:3-4 And I'll take away all the pain you have suffered on this earth. Revelation 21:3-4 I am your Father, and I love you even as I love my son, Jesus. John 17:23 For in Jesus, my love for you is revealed. John 17:26 He is the exact representation of my being. Hebrews 1:3 He came to demonstrate that I am for you, not against you. Romans 8:31 And to tell you that I am not counting your sins. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 Jesus died so that you and I could be reconciled. 2 Corinthians 5:18-19 His death was the ultimate expression of my love for you. 1 John 4:10 I gave up everything I loved that I might gain your love. Romans 8:31-32 If you receive the gift of my son Jesus, you receive me. 1 John 2:23 And nothing will ever separate you from my love again. Romans 8:38-39 Come home and I'll throw the biggest party heaven has ever seen. Luke 15:7 I have always been Father, and will always be Father. Ephesians 3:14-15 My question is ... Will you be my child? John 1:12-13 I am waiting for you. Luke 15:11-32

*Love, Your Dad
Almighty God*

