

*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**

December 2022

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](http://www.stjohnskenton.org)  
Email: [stjohnskenton@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnskenton@gmail.com)

### **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day Services**



**Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Service  
December 24 @ 8 pm**

**All are Welcome to  
Celebrate the Birth  
of our Savior!**

"Christmas candle", © 2010 Jonas Löwgren, Flickr | CC BY

**All are Welcome to attend our  
Traditional Christmas Eve  
Candlelight Service on Saturday,  
December 24 at 8 pm in the  
sanctuary. We will continue  
celebrating the birth of our Lord  
and Savior on Sunday, Christmas  
Day, at our 10 am service. Please  
plan to attend and invite your  
friends!**

# 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)

DECEMBER 2022

## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

Last year, we were contemplating how to return to our "new normal." It was our first Christmas Eve together without restrictions. We – by that I mean our leadership and WAM (Worship, Arts, and Music committee) – wanted the worship to feel familiar, special and unique all at the same time.

We began worship in the sanctuary, which felt rather familiar. Then, we went on a journey with Mary and Joseph. Most years, that journey is figurative and imaginative as we spiritually take that journey in our heart and soul. Last year, we asked people to relocate from the sanctuary to the fellowship hall, which had been decorated with straw bales and candles. We continued worship with a children's choir, hot cocoa, and cookies.

WAM – and a few very dedicated people – created the atmosphere for that service. A lot of prayer and preparation created it. The Christmas Eve service was worshipful while it hit all the marks of being familiar, special and unique.

When we gathered to plan for this year's Christmas Eve service, we thought about replicating what we had done last year. After all, it had all the elements of nostalgia and nouveau that it ministered to the vast majority of our members and guests. Instead, we decided to go in a different direction, which is NOT to say that we cannot return to what we did last year, pick up elements from that service in future years, or have

the start of a rotation of Christmas Eve services that includes that one.

This year, the plan is to gather in the sanctuary and to stay in the sanctuary. If last year's service leaned into novelty, this one will lean into tradition. Last year, we had elements of worship that remained traditional, and this year we hope to have some more current elements incorporated into the service also.

It's not to say that this year's service is better. It's simply to say that it will be different. At the heart of it all, this year's service and last year's service have the same core – to first glorify God and then to minister to His people who gather here at St. John's Evangelical Church. For that, as a pastor, I am blessed to be surrounded by people who have a heart to fulfill those two goals.

What we do here in worship may not look like anywhere else. Again, that is not to say that it is better or worse, but it is different and unique. Doing that, we are not seeking novelty for novelty's sake. We ARE seeking to be faithful to God and to our brothers and sisters who are on this journey to Bethlehem to meet Jesus.

Our worship reflects on our history and our tradition. Our worship is impacted by people who were raised in other streams of the Christian faith and bring that with them. Our worship tries to impact those who have no or little



experience with the church. And our worship hopes to comfort those who have faithfully given themselves to serving God right here. We hope to accomplish all that while bowing before our God who gave us His only begotten Son that we might live by His Spirit now and for all eternity.

As we do all this work, I think of the Holy Family, Mary and Joseph and then Jesus. Mary and Joseph are presented to us in the Bible as faithful and holy people who wanted to honor God with their lives. They had heard the ancient prophecies, and they were entrusted to living them out. They thought they knew what it meant, but Christ's coming and Incarnation surprised them.

Sometimes, we think we have it all figured out. We think we know the right way to worship God and to give Him praise – especially as we celebrate the birth of His Son. Then, something new happens, we are surprised, and we find a new way of enjoying that moment and commemorating that event.

One of the scriptures that is read during Advent and Christmas comes from **Isaiah 43:18-19:**

“Remember not the former things,  
nor consider the things of old.  
Behold, I am doing a new thing;  
now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
and rivers in the desert.”

Traditions bless our souls by giving us a foundation and providing security. A new thing surprises us and provides a sense of wonder

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

while restoring a childlike faith within us. Both serve a purpose in our journey of faith.

Again, I am thankful for those who serve to balance the old and the new here at St. John's. I also want to encourage others to join the conversation, to help support those who do this, and to dedicate themselves to being a part of the planning, preparation,, and execution of worship and ministry here at St. John's.

With what we are attempting to do, there are times when none of us feel qualified. That is perfectly normal. Joseph and Mary probably felt overwhelmed too. Thankfully, God qualifies us. The Holy Spirit works in and through us to do His

will. All we need to bring is our faith-filled hearts that want to honor the Word, worship God, and support His people. In other words, we just need to come humbly before the Lord to worship Him and with a desire to serve His people. All the rest comes together in Christ. We witnessed that last year, and I believe we will witness it once again this year. God bless us one and all!

**With Christmas hope,  
Pastor Randall**

*God wants to do a*  
**NEW THING  
IN YOUR LIFE**



## Preaching Series

As we begin a new church year in Advent and prepare our hearts for Christmas, here are themes and scriptures for our Advent Wreath Services and the sermons. Please read these passages, meditate on them, and pray through them. These inspired words from God will help you to make greater room for Christ in your heart. As you invite Him in more fully and more deeply into your life, you will find it easier and more fulfilling to invite others to know Jesus as you do.

May this be a season of receiving Christ—a gift from the Father. May this also be a season of sharing Christ—of telling others of the wonderful and marvelous love He brings and compels us to share.

This year, Christmas Day and New Year's Day fall on Sunday. We invite you to come and to give God praise on those days. As your pastor, I hope you will come and support Dave Beazley as he delivers the message on January 1st. As always, you should come for God, but on this occasion, I ask a special indulgence on behalf of a brother in Christ and someone who diligently serves and has a message to share.

In it all, come and worship Christ our King.

27 November First Sunday of Advent  
Advent Wreath Devotional:

### **God's Love is Coming**

Christmas is God deep in the flesh.

—Martin Luther

A child is born, to us, a son is given to us.

—Isaiah 9:6, NLT

Scripture **Isaiah 2:1-5**  
**Matthew 24:36-44**

04 December Second Sunday of Advent  
Advent Wreath Devotional: Time to Wait

Jesus Christ is the condescension of divinity, and the exaltation of humanity.—Phillips Brooks

I will wait for the LORD, who is hiding His face from the house of Jacob, and I will hope in Him.

—Isaiah 8:17, NRSV

Scripture **Isaiah 11:1-10**  
**Matthew 3:1-12**

Sermon **A Better Way**



11 December Third Sunday of Advent  
Advent Wreath Devotional: Embraced at Christmas  
By His incarnation, Jesus demonstrated that our bodies are not inherently evil.

—Charles & Virginia Sell

Live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.—II Corinthians 13:11, NKJV

Scripture **Isaiah 35:1-10**  
**Matthew 11:2-11**

Sermon **Holding Fast to the Faith**

18 December Fourth Sunday of Advent  
Advent Wreath Devotional: Christmas Presence  
God entered into an ordinary home and into an ordinary family.—William Barclay

In Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.

—Psalm 16:11, NKJV

Scripture **Isaiah 7:10-17**  
**Matthew 1:18-25**

Sermon **See the Sign**

24 December Christmas Eve  
Advent Wreath Devotional:

Long Ago in Bethlehem

<sup>6</sup>While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, <sup>7</sup>and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped Him in cloths and placed Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.—Luke 2:4-7, NIV

Scripture **Isaiah 62:6-12**  
**Titus 3:4-7**  
**Luke 2:1-20**

Sermon **He Saved Us**

25 December First Sunday of Christmas  
Advent Wreath Devotional:

How Beautiful Is This Day

“What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future.”

—Agnes M. Pahro

<sup>9</sup>Break forth together into singing,  
you waste places of Jerusalem,  
for the Lord has comforted His people;  
He has redeemed Jerusalem.

—Isaiah 52:7-10, ESV

Scripture **Hebrews 1:1-4**  
**John 1:1-18**

Sermon **He Is Made Known**



# Upcoming Events



## Blanchard Place Nursing Home Ministry (First Tuesday)

Our nursing home ministry at Blanchard Place is December 6 at 1 pm. We visit Blanchard Place the first Tuesday of the month to provide a time of song, scriptures, reflections, and prayers. If you would like to participate, please contact the office. You can lead parts of the worship service, visit the residents, or come to be supportive of this outreach.



## Church Family Luncheon

We will have a Church Family Luncheon on December 11 following worship. Please plan to stay after the service for a time of food & fellowship. Food provided! Invite your friends!

## Community Hymn Sing

The Community Hymn Sing is back this year. It is Dec. 18 at 6 pm at First United Methodist Church.

## Family Gingerbread House Making

The Family Gingerbread House Making is December 21 at 6 pm in the fellowship hall. A fun filled evening with treats, hot chocolate and building gingerbread houses with not only your family but your church family! Please let us know if you plan to attend by December 16 if possible for planning.

## Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting will be January 22 immediately following the morning worship service. Please submit year end reports for the Annual Meeting Booklet by December 31 or financials by the beginning of January.

## Christmas Adopt-a-Family



St. John's is partnering once again with Helping Hands and Angel Tree Prison Ministry to make sure that the children of our community have a nice Christmas. If you are able to purchase items, please follow the instructions below and return by December 11:

- Remove the tag for the gift you select.
  - On the front of each tag you will find a number.
  - On the table is a sheet listing all the tag numbers.
  - **Please write your name beside the number on the sheet that corresponds to the number on your tag.**
  - If you able, **please wrap your gift.** But please don't let that stop you from participating! If you want to drop off your gifts unwrapped, we will wrap them prior to distributing them. Also, if you want to participate but don't want to shop, cash can be dropped off at the church office and we will do the shopping for you.
  - **Please be sure the original tag you selected or number is on the tag is somewhere on the gift! This will ensure that the gift gets to the correct person.**
- Thank you for sharing God's love by blessing these families! If you have any questions, please contact Heather (567-674-0020) or the church office.

## Upcoming Dates—Mark your Calendar

- Ag Hall of Fame Banquet:** Dec. 6 at 6:30 pm
- HCC Youth:** Dec. 11 from 4-6 pm
- Gingerbread House Making:** Dec. 21 at 6 pm
- Christmas Eve Service:** Dec. 24 at 8 pm
- Undecorate the church:** Jan. 8 following worship
- HCC Youth Lock-in:** Jan. 15-16, 12:30 pm–12:30 pm
- Annual Congregational Meeting:** Jan. 22 at 11:15 am



## Angels for the Elderly Food Drive



We will be collecting food for Angels for the Elderly again this year. Below is a suggested donation list. Please place items in the tote in the back of the sanctuary by December 18.

Sample list of items needed....

- Bottled water
- Canned vegetables - don't forget canned potatoes
- Canned fruit, canned applesauce - (or small individual containers)
- Canned soup
- Instant potatoes as well as bags of potatoes which can be divided for a few homes
- Spaghetti sauce and pasta
- Pancake mix and syrup
- Canned meats (tuna, chicken, beef stew, etc.)
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Macaroni & cheese
- Cereal and/or instant oatmeal
- Biscuit or baking mixes, especially those that only use water (don't forget Jiffy Mix)
- Boxed meals that require only water – also Tuna Helper & Hamburger Helper
- Dried beans
- Raisins - small boxes
- Jello & pudding - small pre-mixed containers also appreciated
- Chapstick, hand or body lotion, body wash
- Bars of soap
- Cough drops
- Deodorant, razors, toothbrushes & toothpaste
- Shampoo & conditioner
- Toilet paper, paper towels and facial tissue
- Laundry detergent and dish soap
- Adult disposable underwear
- Socks and gloves



## Mission of the Month— Love Inc.



Love In the Name of Christ is a Christian based service and referral agency that assists people with a variety of needs by connecting them with churches or other organizations/agencies.

The mission of Love INC is to mobilize local churches to transform lives and communities in the Name of Christ.

The organization bridges resources by working with local churches, agencies, and other community resources.

## Friday With Friends

Friday With Friends is a wonderful group of widows and widowers who meet twice a month for a special time of food, fellowship, and fun. They meet the first and third Fridays of every month. Please join them if you are a widow or widower. 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.

December 2—Skinny's (Kenton)

December 16—Moose (Kenton)

## Birthday Blessings (over 80 yrs. Young)

### December Birthdays on File:

We like to recognize members who are 80 years or older. Please contact the church office to add a name to our birthday list. Thank you so much!



December 5: Janet Jones  
128 Oak Lane Drive  
Kenton, OH 43326

December 10: Kay Rush  
16839 SR 309E  
Kenton, OH 43326

website: [stjohnskenton.org](http://stjohnskenton.org)

Facebook: St Johns Kenton, Ohio

Youtube: St. John's Evangelical Church





can you believe Christmas is only a few weeks away? We hope you and your family are looking forward to a wonderful season!

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

**Wednesday Night-** We have started a 4-week series from the Gospels on Christmas. Why are there so many Christmas songs about angels? Because angels show up all throughout the Christmas story with great news! In this four-week series, kids will explore the foundational stories of Jesus’ birth with a focus on the angels who were there to witness them! From the city where Jesus was born, to the cities we live in today, the angels’ message is just as important now as it was then! **Jesus is God’s plan, calms our fears, makes everything new, and is God’s love for everyone.** This group will be on break December 21<sup>st</sup>- January 11<sup>th</sup>. They will return January 18<sup>th</sup>.

**Hardin County Collective-** At last month’s Commando Church we had a total of 32 Youth attend. It was a great turn out, for fun, food, and fellowship together. Our next get together will be here at St. Johns on December 11<sup>th</sup>. We will be having pizza, games, and decorating Christmas cookies. There is a time change, it will be a little earlier than past events. 4-6PM

**Sunday School-** For the month of December, class will be December 4<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. If these dates change, it will be sent out on the Parent Remind App.

**Annual Gingerbread House-Making Party-** will be Wednesday, December 21<sup>st</sup> @6pm. Bring your family in for a new Christmas tradition. We will have snacks, games, crafts, hot coco and of course each family will get a house to decorate together. Please RSVP to this event by December 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Volunteers NEEDED**

**Wednesdays-** We have separated into 2 classrooms!! YAY!! We have a class for kindergarten-3<sup>rd</sup> grade and then we have 4<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> next door. We would love to separate into 3 classes. We have the teachers, but we need more volunteers to be present in the classroom to follow safe sanctuary procedure. Please consider coming to just share the love of Jesus with these kiddos! 😊

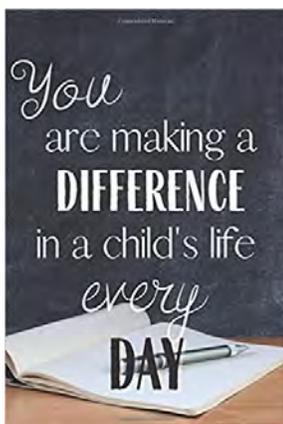
*“For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.” Ephesians 2:10*

Merry Christmas from my family to yours,  
Michele Sherman, Family Ministry



**Wednesday Kids/Youth  
Volunteers**

If you are able to help on Wednesday Nights (even if you cannot be here every week or want to be a sub), please see Michele Sherman. Please prayerfully consider coming and sharing Gods love with these Kids or Youth. Areas you can help: van driver/riders, teachers/helpers.



**Church Office Hours**

The office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:30 – 10:30 AM & 12:30-2:30 PM. If Simon Kenton has a fog/weather delay those will change as I need to report at 8:30 am. If you are not sure, please call first. Thank you for your understanding.



Rev. Katterjohn was one of our longest serving ministers and was the driving force behind building our beautiful new Church in 1903. English was obviously his second language as you will find as we go through his message below. The German language is renowned for its specificity and if you think in German, run on sentences are the result. Despite of what appears to us to be cumbersome language, look at the thoughts that underlie this remarkable piece from the Evangelical News December of 1910 by Rev. Henry Katterjohn

"A Merry Christmas to All"

"May the peace of God and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ abide with us throughout the year 1911"

"The Spirit of Christmas"

"Every festival observance is the visible sign of an invisible spirit. Through the noisy ceremonial of Independence Day runs the spirit of patriotism. The festival of the Harvest throbs with the spirit of Thanksgiving. In the observance of Lent there breathes the spirit of penitence. The spirit of Easter is hope - the blessed hope begotten in us by the resurrection of Christ from the dead.

So, there is a spirit of Christmas. There is much in the modern observance of the season to stifle it. The expenditures which many people make in the purchase of gifts exhaust their purses and strength, and the volume of shopping, increasing with every day of the preceding weeks, plays havoc with the nerves and patience of a great army of people whose business it is to minister to the thousands who throng in and out of the stores. But even these weeks with all their fret and fever, have a flavor of their own; and when at last the days of preparation are over and Christmas dawns, though we may be fagged by all we have done and endured, we feel the infection of the characteristic Christmas spirit - the spirit of kindness and goodwill. The transformations which it works, for the moment are marvelous. It stirs something of the joy and spring of youth in the aged and world-weary. It penetrates through layers of selfishness and surprises the most close-fisted old curmudgeon by the generous impulses which it awakens. It turns the hearts of adversaries, softens resentments, and makes the bearing of old grudges appear an unseemly thing. This much, at any rate, of the real Christmas spirit survives the suffocating load of commercialism with which the season has been burdened and makes the world seem fairer. To the Christian mind and heart, of course, this spirit gives to the festival its real significance. The kindness and good will with which it fills the atmosphere, as flowers fill the air with their perfume, are but the appropriate human response to the love and compassion of God in the gift of his Son. But it is the marvel of Christmas that its meaning, as a diffused influence, has penetrated the thought and feeling of Christendom that even those who are most careless of its religious significance in their absorption in other things, unconsciously come under the spell of its power, For the time, at least, they are better men and women, less selfish, more kindly, easier to live with.

As we come under the glow of this spirit and are sensible of its light and warmth, the thought naturally arises how different life would be if it stayed with us through all of the year! And why should it not? To be sure, we cannot always be living with our powers at high tension. We cannot always be thinking deeply or feeling intensely or experiencing acutely. That would be exhausting and unwholesome. But while we cannot make abiding tabernacles for ourselves out of hours of transfiguring thought, of splendid vision and exalted emotion, we can carry down with us from these altitudes what the disciples took with them from the holy mount - the power of what has been seen and felt. The vision splendid may become the master-light of all our seeing; the emotion may be transformed in to a regulative principle and rule of conduct. Indeed, the main justification of all special observances is found here - their emphasis upon a particular idea or truth and the impulse they give its progressive realization and embodiment in life and practice. So that a dream of what the world would be if the Christmas spirit were not confined to the Christmas season but spread out over the year, is, after all, not a preposterous one. It is simply a dream of the Christmas idea and meaning fulfilled. As the good will of God to men of which the angels sang on the night of the nativity, was not a momentary impulse of God's heart, a transient gleam of favor, flickering into brightness and then dying out, but an attitude in which there is no variableness, so the spirit of kindness and helpfulness and love which is abroad with each return of the Christmastide was meant to sweeten all of the days of the year.

Because we cannot make the dream a reality everywhere, we are tempted to treat it as we do other pleasant but impossible imaginings - enjoy it for a little space of time and then dismiss it from our thoughts. But if we can't make it a reality everywhere, we can somewhere. We can at once begin to make the dream a fact in our own lives. We can cultivate the Christmas spirit year-round in our home, displacing their frequent discontents, fault-findings and contentions with peace and good will. The kindness, unselfishness and consideration for others to which we are prompted at this particular season we can carry into our relations with our fellowmen in all seasons. If we cannot sow the seeds of helpfulness and love the world over, we can plant them in our own little patch and carefully nurture their springing and growth. And, after all, that is the only way to make the Christmas spirit prevail everywhere - by each one of us seeing to it that it prevails in the smaller world of his own life and practice."

I have read this over many times in the last twelve years and each time I am amazed by the intellect and pure Christianity that this man carried in his heart.

A very Merry Christmas to all my St. John's Family.

Jerry Pfister, Historian

St. John's Evangelical Church  
Church Council Minutes  
Thursday, October 13, 2022  
6:00 PM

Call to Order - Terry Hord, President

Opening Prayer

Leadership Development - Pastor Randall

Officer Reports

Secretary's Report - September 15, 2022 minutes

Motion to accept minutes and seconded, council vote, motion carried.

#### REPORTS

1) Finance - Jerry Pfister

2) Christian Education—Michele Sherman

3) Women's Ministry

4) Worship, Arts & Music—LeVern Weaver

- October 23 after church

5) Personnel Committee—Hal Elsasser

6) Pastoral Relations - Anna LaWarre (chairperson)

- Next meeting: November 13 at 9 am

7) Trustees

1. Audio Visual—Jerry Pfister

2. Van—Shane Harkenrider

3. Farm—Greg Martin

8) Missions, Evangelism - Heather Erwin

- Meeting October 16, 2022 at 9 am

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall

#### Old Business

- NCD Church Health Team Update
- Safety of Church/Alice Program – tabled
- Sign for church property
- NA Meetings (Fridays 7-8:30) Marvin Brown & Travis Bolen – Shane will have the key

#### New Business

Next Meeting: November 10, 2022 6:00 PM. Heather will not be at this meeting. She will be in Dayton.

Adjournment – Motion and seconded to adjourn, Council Vote, motion carried. Lord's Prayer

*Merry Christmas and  
Happy New Year!*

