

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 2023

211 E. Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326
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Ash Wednesday Service
February 22 at 7:00 PM
to be led by Payne Chapel

Each year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and, ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where He fasted and where Satan tempted Him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.

Ash Wednesday



*Remember that you are dust,
and to dust you shall return.*

E C C L E S I A S T E S 3 : 2 0

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

211 East Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326

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

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FEBRUARY 2023

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

Mark Twain once said, "Suppose you were an idiot. And suppose you were a member of Congress. But I repeat myself." I was trying to find a way to introduce repeating myself and thought a Mark Twain quote was better than a Mel Tillis reference. Mel Tillis may not be as widely known, but such a tact would seem inappropriate, especially in our current cultural climate. Mark Twain, on the other hand, provides low hanging fruit with a rather universally approved commentary.

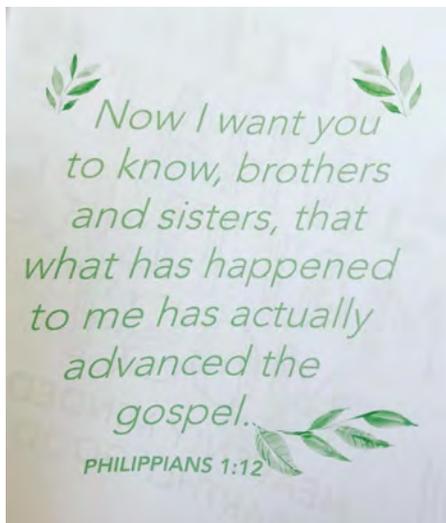
Now, to the topic at hand: like Mark Twain, I repeat myself. That's how it feels to me. The things I said when I became pastor here are still the themes I have today. The sermons I preach travel the same ground. My words I have for you this Lent are very similar to ones I have shared in years past. It all comes to loving God and loving our neighbor.

As February brings us into Lent, as we end our time in worship discussing the seven churches of Revelation, we need to look at our lives and consider where we have fallen short in those areas and repent. I have been in churches where repentance was a part of weekly worship. People were invited to confess their sins and to receive an assurance of pardon. While I appreciated those aspects of worship, I saw their danger. By simply reading words on a page and hearing a pastor proclaim, "you are forgiven," too many people thought they had done their Christian duty. By repeating the ritual, many became deaf to the words. Worse, they failed to live a transformed life, which is the goal of repentance—to live a changed life in light of God's grace.

We will never be changed until we love God more fully with all that we are and love our neighbor as ourselves (**Matthew 22:37-40**). As I have said to you before, such love is not expressed in words alone but also in actions. In this church, we are called to love the least of these in a very tangible way (see **Matthew 25:31-46**, a passage I have quoted to you many, many times.) To me, as your pastor and led by the Spirit, the future of our church lies in our evangelism and missions. And as I have said many times

before, our evangelism and missions overlap. The focus of both is to be primarily on two things: 1. our Wednesday evening outreach to children and youth; and 2. people in recovery.

Even though I have repeated this many times before, we have made limited progress through the years. We have great programs in place and wonderful dedicated volunteers and leaders, but those numbers do not truly reflect our congregation. Only a few have made the commitment. Only a few have known what it means to take God's grace (learned by loving Him and being loved by Him) and offering it to those who are most in need of it (**Mark 2:17**).



Through the years, people have given their excuses for not participating. Jesus told a parable about those who refuse to participate in His kingdom and excuse themselves and their behavior (**Luke 14:12-24**). Like Jesus, all I can do is repeat the commands of God and offer the call. It is up to the faithful to hear and respond.

I will note that one of the greatest excuses is fear. People fear not being worthy of service. They fear saying the wrong thing or hearing someone saying something inappropriate. They fear having to deal with bad behavior, witnessing someone fall away, or having to answer difficult questions. They fear getting involved in the messiness of someone else's life even though that is what Christ has done for every believer. If you have such a fear, you need to confront it this Lent. After all, John wrote in **I John 4:18**: "There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear. For fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not been perfected in love."

God will overshadow and protect us in these ministries, and I am confident of that. He will give us the power—

by His Holy Spirit—to overcome any obstacle, confront sin and brokenness with love, mercy, and grace, and He will protect our church and children as we grow together. Our heavenly Father will empower and embolden us to speak truth (with LOVE) into the lives of others as we disciple them.

In fact, as I have said previously, when we disciple others, we will find that we will grow in faith, hope, love, and charity. It's amazing how that process works, and it has proven effective through the years. It doesn't need to be packaged in some new way. It simply has to be applied. When we grow in love for God, we find ourselves loving our neighbors more. As we love and serve our neighbors, we are driven to learn more about the depths of the love of our gracious God which empowers to love our neighbors—even if they disappoint us, challenge us, or cause us to fear.

As I have repeated this message to you yet once again, I feel what Paul once felt and expounded upon to the church in Philippi. Outwardly, it didn't seem as though Paul was making headway, but still he proclaimed (as I do), "I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that what has happened to me has really served to advance the gospel" (**Philippians 1:12**). I repeat myself not to chastise you or to express my frustrations or to demonstrate my limited range as a pastor.

No, I repeat myself as I am like the rooster that sets on our church. I have a singular purpose and with it a singular song. I point to where the Spirit is moving and hope and pray that God's people notice. When starting to write this, I thought that repeating myself was a bad thing, but it truly is our calling in Christ. How often did He repeat His message of love, grace, and forgiveness to His disciples?

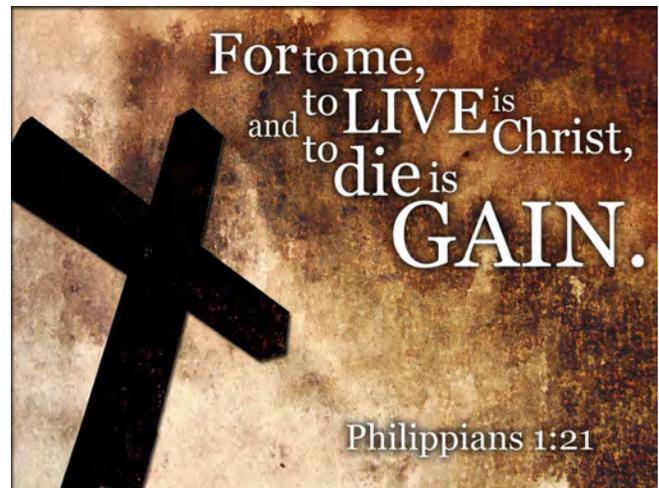


Like a rooster, sometimes I have to wait long hours in the dark and the cold—the places where it seems that nothing is occurring is ministry is constrained. But with Paul, I can say that even in those hours, the gospel is advancing in those times. As a rooster, when the sun (or the Son) breaks in, I need to give full throttled voice to His words. For a world that does not understand, my crowing may be quite annoying. For those who wish to remain in slumber, my crowing may

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

seem ill-timed. But for the believer who is searching for God's love and grace to break into this world, my crowing says, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (**Ephesians 5:14**). And when God's people grow in faith and grace and live out their God-given calling, I can rejoice with Paul for my repetitious ministry, "For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (**Philippians 1:21**).

So, my brothers and sisters, as we prepare to enter the season of Lent once again, I will encourage you, once again, to examine your heart and to measure the way you



live. Look deeply in the Word and pray faithfully in the Spirit. Know the Father's heart and the Way of Christ. Then, commit to Loving God with your whole being and your neighbor as yourself. Seek for ways to demonstrate that love in the worship that occurs in this church and the ministry of this church. Commit to the mission and evangelism of this church that God may be glorified, lives transformed, and new believers may know what salvation truly means.

May Lent be a journey to the Cross, but may it be where the power of Resurrection is known here and now.

A fellow pilgrim on the way,

Pastor Randall

Preaching Series

In February, we conclude the sermon series on the letters to the churches in **Revelation**, but that will be an appetizer to what comes next. When we gather to worship on Ash Wednesday, Payne Chapel has been asked to provide the leadership for that service. As we seek to discover a St. John's Way of Worship, I thought it would be good if we allowed others to lead us in worship and to demonstrate how they worship.

Then, we will begin our Lenten journey by examining the life of Jesus and His teachings. The people of Jesus' days often wanted one thing, but He taught that they needed something radically different. In the same way, the church in America is driven by personal wants more than spiritual needs. Even when couched in terms of spiritual needs, people often express personal desires more than a hunger for God's Word or a desire to do His will.

During this time, may we be challenged to hear the Gospel more fully and to obey more expediently for God's glory and to love our neighbor. With those two commands, Jesus summarized the Bible without putting self-fulfillment or personal desires into the equation.



The Churches of Revelation

- 05 February Sardis—Dead Church
Scripture **Matthew 10:26-33**
Revelation 3:1-6
Sermon **Hiding Behind the Mask**
- 12 February Philadelphia—
Favored Church
Scripture **27th Psalm**
Revelation 3:7-13
Sermon **Holding onto Jesus**
- 19 February Laodicea—Lukewarm Church
Scripture **Luke 19:1-10 (v 5)**
Revelation 3:14-22
Sermon **Trading Rags for Riches**



22 February Ash Wednesday

Lent: Who is this Jesus?
What Church do you want?
What Church do you need?

26 February

Scripture **Revelation 7:9-17**
Matthew 9:9-13
Sermon **Jesus, Friend of Sinners**

Upcoming Events



Blanchard Place Nursing Home Ministry (First Tuesday)

Our nursing home ministry at Blanchard Place is February 7 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.



Maundy Thursday Meal & Informal Service

On Maundy Thursday, April 6 at 6:30 pm in the fellowship, we will share a soup and bread meal followed by an informal service with communion. All are welcome and food is provided.

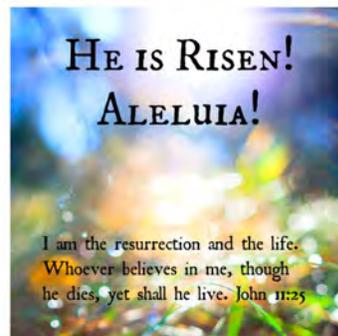


Community Sunrise Service

A Community Sunrise Service will be April 9 at 7 am at the small pavilion at Boy Scout Lake. You may want to bring your own chair. We will try to Facebook Live the service that morning.

Easter Sunday Festival Service

We will celebrate the Resurrection of our Lord with a traditional style service on Easter Sunday, April 9 at 10 am.



Celebrate Recovery Meal Sign Up

St. John's supplies a meal for Celebrate Recovery twice a month. The meals is the second and Fourth Tuesday of each month for approximately 10-15 people. If you are able to provide food, please sign-up in the back of the sanctuary. Please have the food at the church at 6 pm in the kitchenette across from the chapel. Any questions, please see Anna LaWarre or Jerry Pfister.

Mending for Missions

If you have something that needs to be mended, shortened, or taken in, Jane is sharing her gift. When the garment is finished, Jane will give you a "Mended for Missions" envelope to donate to the church. You can decide the amount you'd care to give.

Jane Wyndham, 419-767-9160.

Two Community Job Openings - Love Inc. & Lifewise Academy

Love Inc. is seeking a new Executive Director due to Sue Alger retiring after six years. Sue has offered to help train this person prior to her leaving. This is a part-time position that requires compassion of the less fortunate community members of Hardin County. A copy of the job description is posted on the bulletin board outside of the church office.

Lifewise Academy is also seeking a part-time Program Director for the Kenton area. As a Lifewise Program Director, you will demonstrate spiritual maturity and outstanding leadership abilities. Their ideal candidate is an active church member with excellent communication skills and interpersonal skills who is adept at managing a broad range of administrative tasks. A copy of the job description is on the bulletin board outside of the church office. If you are interested in this position, apply at lifewiseacademy.org/directorapplication. If you have any questions, you can also contact Pastor BJ at First Baptist Church at 419-675-9501.

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.

February 3—Skinny's (Kenton)

February 17—101 Smokehouse BBQ (Kenton)

March 3—Denny's (Findlay)

March 17—Beer Barrel Pizza (Lima)

Weekly Family Ministry Schedule

Community Men's Bible Study: Saturdays at 7:30 am in the Fellowship Hall

Community Women's Bible Study: Sundays at 9 am in the Fellowship Hall

Youth Group (Grades 6-12): Wednesdays from 5:30-7:30 pm

Wednesday Night Kids (K- Grade 5): Wednesdays from 5-7 pm.

Wednesday Bible Study: Wednesdays at 7 pm

Intercessory Prayer: 2nd & 4th Friday at Noon in the sanctuary

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 God's love with these Kids or Youth. Areas you can help: van driver/riders, teachers/helpers.

Mission of the Month— Rise FM Ohio



The station is a community-supported station, which means they rely on the generous support of families, businesses, and churches. Their focus is to provide their listeners spiritual encouragement, build relationships in the community, and see lives transformed by the Gospel message. Rise FM has been blessed to serve our area with a message of hope, outstanding music, and terrific concerts. Rise FM can now be found in these locations: 88.5 Kenton, 88.9 Bellefontaine, 88.9 Tiffin, 90.7 Mansfield, 91.1 Ashland, 102.7 Wooster and 90.1 Canton. Their office is located in Bellefontaine.

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.

Birthday Blessings (over 80 yrs. Young)

* No February Birthdays on File

For God
So loved the world
that He gave His
only
begotten
Son So
that whoever
believes
in Him shall
have everlasting
life.



John 3:16

website: stjohnskenton.org

Facebook: St Johns Kenton, Ohio

Youtube: St. John's Evangelical Church





We're looking forward to Valentine's Day, Super Bowl Sunday, and (more than anything else) a great month or ministry with you and your family!

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

February 15th - Valentines Party, Wednesday Group

February 19th - Hardin County Collective Bowling @Hillcrest Lanes 4-6 PM

February 22nd—No Wednesday Night due to Ash Wednesday Service

Wednesday Night- Kindergarten – 5th grade is finishing up their series from Matthew on Jesus' teachings. We have the whole group broken into 3 groups. We have a class for K-3rd, 4th&5th, and then Youth 6th-12th. The smaller class size helps keep things under control. We have had a steady count of a little over 20 students each Wednesday. The Youth have started a 4 week study from the prophets and gospels on justice.

Hardin County Collective- We had a blast for the overnight 24 hour mission. The Youth traveled to Kenton Nursing & Rehab and visited with the residents and handed out window clings. We also got to sing for them! Back here at the Church we built bed and made blankets for the Silent Night Bed Ministry. Sunday morning, we did meal packing. It was a great mission of doing God's work and sharing His love with others.

Sunday School- This month we will have Sunday School on the 5th & 26th, so the first and last Sunday of the month.

For those asking and wondering... Yes, I went to Orlando, Florida this past month to the Children's Pastors Conference. Thank you to council for approving my trip. This conference was way more than I thought it was going to be. You could feel God's presence as soon as you entered the building. My classes I attended gave me a lot of things to step back and think about and a lot of good resources to better our ministry here at St. John's. I met new friends, all the way from Texas and California. The biggest thing was hearing about other ministries and finding out we are all in the same boat together. There are others who go through the highs and lows with me, and to know that they are praying for our ministry, so far away, yet seem so near.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up."

Galatians 6:9-10

Please feel free to come talk to me if you have any ideas, questions, or concerns. We can only better this ministry if we work together.

Many Blessings to you all this month,
Michele



Let's go back a few years to the mid-1800s when our ancestors and founders worshiped during February. At that time the Lutheran liturgy would appear to much resemble the Roman Catholic in substance sans the emphasis on Mary and most of the saints. As near as I can decipher our early records our coming month would have been celebrated as follows:

February 2nd: "Candlemas", also known as the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple would have been celebrated with an evening service using candles to represent Christ as the light of the world and harkens back to the Christmas mystery of Light except that now, Christ, the helpless babe, is "the Light of Revelation to the Gentiles who will save His people from their sins."

Pre-Lent is three weeks before the 40-day season of Lent, which is a time of self-examination and penitence. The titles of these Sundays reflect this.

The first Sunday (this year is February 5th) is the 5th after Epiphany is known as Septuagesima. That is a Latin term that means there are approximately 70 days before Easter. On this Sunday, we read about God's grace, lest we be afraid to examine our hearts and lives during Lent. Whatever faults we admit to ourselves, they cannot distinguish us from God's love for us in Christ Jesus.

Sexagesima is the name given to the second Sunday (12th) of the month. This Latin name denotes that there are about 60 days before Easter. On this Sunday, the focus is on God's Word.

The third Sunday (19th) is known as Quinquagesima. That is a Latin term that means 50 days before Easter. It would have also been celebrated as Transfiguration Sunday. It is the Sunday before Ash Wednesday, which marks the beginning of Lent.

The altar colors are green during this season because we focus on faith development before entering Lent's deep penitence.

During this Pre-Lent season, we aim to reinforce our faith by anticipating the joy of Easter. God's unfailing love for us in Christ gives us the courage to sincerely examine ourselves. Any mistakes we see in ourselves have been paid for and forgiven by Christ. That is the Easter proclamation and will no longer exclude us from God's love for us in Jesus.

Ash Wednesday arrives this year on February 22, 46 days before Easter.

Lent alter colors are purple.

Lent starts on Ash Wednesday, as ashes are applied to the forehead to represent repentance. Lent hymns and services do not contain the joyful expression, "Alleluia." Consider fasting throughout the day. Spend your daily mealtimes praying and reading the Bible. The term "Lent" derives from the same source as one of the German words "Lenz", which means spring. When nature awakens from the end of winter, the Christian discovers newness of life in Christ, emerging from the death of sin.

On February 24th we would have celebrated the Feast of Matthias, the only Apostle chosen by the Holy Spirit. This evening service would emphasize our need to repent and follow Christ. This would be followed by a solemn meal.

Back in those days the month of February was spent in deep spiritual preparation for Communion without the celebrations of Fat Tuesday or St. Patrick's Day. Indeed, the celebration of Easter our ancestors looked forward to was truly a more joyous event than our present diluted culture presents.

Jerry Pfister, Historian

St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Minutes
Thursday, December 8, 2022
6:00 PM

Call to Order - Anna LaWarre, Vice President

Present: Jerry, Shawn, Anna, Shane, LeVern, Heather, Pastor Randall, Hal

Opening Prayer

Leadership Development - Pastor Randall

Officer Reports

Secretary's Report - November 10, 2022 minutes

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

REPORTS

1) Finance - Jerry Pfister

- Finance Budget meeting January 3, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

2) Christian Education—Michele Sherman

3) Women's Ministry

- Women's Celebration and the ag banquet went great.

4) Worship, Arts & Music—LeVern Weaver

5) Personnel Committee—Hal Elsasser

6) Pastoral Relations - Anna LaWarre

- Next meeting: February 12 at 9:15am

7) Trustees

1. Audio Visual—Jerry Pfister
2. Van—Shane Harkenrider
3. Farm—Greg Martin

8) Missions, Evangelism - Heather Erwin

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall

Old Business

- NCD Church Health Team Update

New Business

- Church Property Insurance Price Increase
- CEF request for storage space. A motion was made and seconded to use the Youth Office for CEF on condition of talking to Michele about the use. Will continue to check on annual use. Motion passed.

Correspondence: A motion was passed to remove Jeff and Vickie Beach from our membership list.

Next Meeting: January 12, 2023 6:00 PM.

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

