

*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 2023

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
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Advent & Christmas Eve Service—December 24



10 am—Morning service—Advent
8 pm—Christmas Eve Service

With Christmas Eve falling on a Sunday, the 10 am morning worship service will be the fourth week of Advent with the 8 pm service being our Traditional Christmas Eve Candlelight Service in the sanctuary. Please plan to attend and invite your friends!

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

211 East Carol Street
Kenton, OH 43326

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

Phone: 419-673-7278 (o)

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DECEMBER 2023

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

Last year, we were looking forward to celebrating a traditional Christmas Eve worship Service. After we escaped the confines of COVID restrictions, we celebrated our candle-light Christmas Eve service with a rather unique and special worship service that took us from the sanctuary to the fellowship hall, from Nazareth to Bethlehem, from the ordinary to the sacred, and from the lonely and divided places of quarantine to a place of community with a taste of home.

Then, on 24 December 2022, the weather came to us with a vengeance and caused us to sequester in place for safety's sake. So, after another year's delay, the hope is to have a return of a traditional (for us!) Christmas Eve worship service. Through all the delays and the return to a "new" normal, I have been reminded of how impatient I am, but it has also made me think of the Incarnation in a deeper way.

Too often, we as Christians reflect on the Incarnation in a rather cursory way. We think about it briefly around Christmas, but we do not give it much thought beyond that season of the year. However, the Incarnation sits at the center of our faith. Jesus, the very Son of the Father, freely chooses (not past-tense chose) to limit Himself by taking on flesh and uniting the Divine nature with humanly form.



In **Philippians 2:1-11**, we come into contact with what is known as the Christ Hymn (vv 5-11) and its implications for us as Christians. There, we are reminded about the nature of God and the heart of Jesus. He humbled Himself and made Himself nothing. He became a servant of humanity, so that we could be freed from the bonds of sin and death.

The image on this page reminds me that Jesus chose to live with us and for us. In His Incarnation, He knew in His flesh and blood what it meant to be human. No longer did He relate to us as our Creator. By taking on our humanity, He truly stepped into our world. As the infant, whose birth we celebrate at Christmas, He knew hunger and cold. He discovered what it meant to sit in His accidents and be utterly dependent on a mother's care to put fresh swaddling cloths

on His backside. He discovered what it meant to receive love from a mother's embrace and a father's guiding hand.

But the Incarnation was about more than being a little child. It became His identity for the rest of time and eternity. Ultimately, before He was exalted and given the name above all names (Philippians 2:9-10), He was humbled by death on the Cross (2:8). That image above serves to remind us that the Infant Jesus who cried for a mother's milk

would grow to be the Messiah who hung on His Cross and cried to His Father: "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (**Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46; Mark 15:34**).

Jesus' Incarnation drove Him to live for us every second of every minute of every day of His earthly life. He lived the perfect life that we could not under the Law. When He rose, He returned with a new body, but let us not lose sight of the fact that He returned with a body. He did not lay it aside just as we shall not lay aside flesh and bone one day. One day, we who believe in Him shall arise with new body (see **I Thessalonians 4:13-18**).

The Incarnation for Jesus was about playing the long game—living for us daily. May we reflect upon that reality not just as we sometimes have to delay our plans—be it personally or how as a church preparing a return to a traditional Christmas Eve worship.

May we chose to incarnate God's love for one another and for those in our community and for those in the world on a daily basis. May we not grow weary in taking up our cross daily (**Luke 9:23-27**) or in doing good (**Galatians 6:9; II Thessalonians 3:13**). May we take our cue from Christ and look to the needs and interests of others (**Philippians 2:4**) when we decide how to

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH:

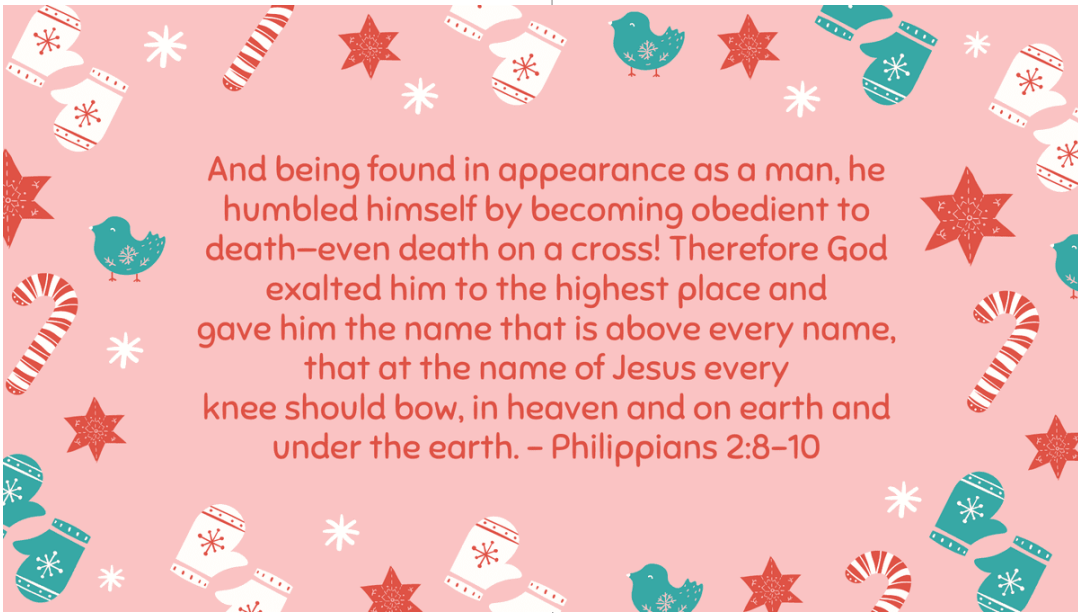
MAKING AND MATURING
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

live in this Advent and Christmas season as well in every day of our lives until Christ returns or calls us home.

Some days of our lives are filled with mundane and repetitive tasks. Some days are filled with struggles as we carry burdens for ourselves and others. Sometimes, we have a special day, which I hope you experience this Christmas season. But may we choose to live each day for

the glory of God as His Son would have us to live as led by His Holy Spirit.

May each day be a resounding "Yes" to the love of God



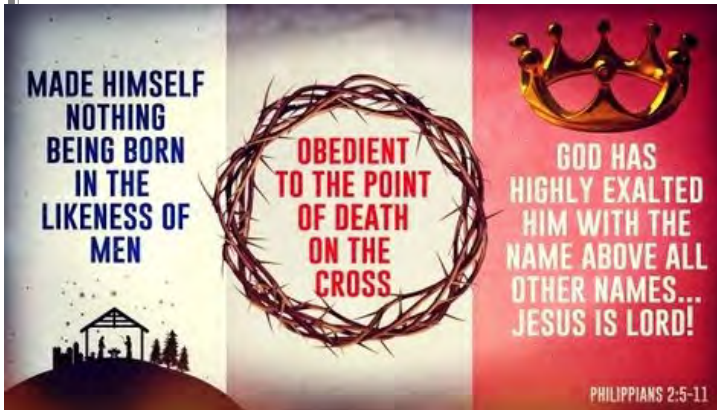
And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. – **Philippians 2:8-10**

found in Christ Jesus (**Philippians 2:2**). By making that decision each second of every minute of every hour of our lives, we will see a change in ourselves, our church, our community and our world, and oh what a gift that will be for God's glory and what transformation that will bring into our world!

With Christmas hope,
Pastor Randall

Preaching Series

As we begin a new church year in Advent and move into Christmas, we will travel through some well-worn paths of scripture and encounter ancient themes of the season. We will be connected to the ancient Church and the faith that has sustained generations, but hopefully we will experience these scriptures in fresh and new ways that will inspire us to live out our faith in this generation and carry the Good News of Christ's birth into our world.



May the celebration of Jesus' birth cause us to commit (or recommit) ourselves to living for Him and to bring His glory into the midst of our worship, and may that worship cause us to live for Him.

When we move into January, I hope to have some special services planned that may take us a bit out of our comfort zone. At the very least, I want us to experience God in a fresh way and to invite the Holy Spirit into our shared life together in a new way. My desire is that we open our hearts to what God is doing in our midst today. It may cause us to recommit ourselves to our traditions. It may cause us to step out in faith to new ways. It may lead us to something completely different. Wherever it may lead, may it lead us to discover (or rediscover) Christ in His fullness before us and may He be at the center of our worship and praise now and always.

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



- | | |
|-------------|------------------------------|
| 03 December | Advent I |
| Scripture | Isaiah 64:1-9 |
| | Mark 13:24-37 |
| Message | Stay Awake |
| 10 December | Advent II |
| Scripture | Isaiah 40:1-11 |
| | Mark 1:1-8 |
| Message | Prepare the Way |
| 17 December | Advent III |
| Scripture | Isaiah 61:1-11 |
| | John 1:19-28 |
| Message | Make Straight the Way |
| 24 December | Advent IV (10AM) |
| Scripture | II Samuel 7:1-16 |
| | Luke 1:26-38 |
| Message | Here Am I |
| 24 December | Christmas Eve (8PM) |
| Scripture | Isaiah 52:7-10 |
| | John 1:1-14 |
| Message | The Glory of God |
| 31 December | Guest speaker: Dave Beazley |



Upcoming Events



Blanchard Place Nursing Home Ministry (First Tuesday)

The First Tuesday visit to Blanchard Place is December 5. If you would like to participate, please contact the office or Janet Jones. You can lead parts of the worship service, visit the residents, or come to be supportive of this outreach.

HCC Youth Group

The Hardin County Collective Youth will meet on December 3 from 4-6 pm at St. John's for cookie decorating. All youth grade 6-12 welcome.

Christmas Poinsettias

Starting this year, we will have artificial poinsettias to decorate for Christmas. They will remain at the church, but we are asking people to sponsor them with a donation to have your memorials/honors/gifts placed in the bulletin. All proceeds from your donations will go to Salvation Army Red Kettle Drive. Salvation Army keeps 90% of your donations for use in Hardin County to help those in need. Slips will be available as before to complete with your information. We will collect Sponsorship forms until December 15. Any questions, please see Nancy Weaver or the church office.

Live Nativity- Lake of Lights

On December 9 from 6-8 pm, St. John's & Not By Choice will portray the Live Nativity at the Lake of Lights. Please contact the church office if you would like to volunteer. We need to be dressed and in place by 5:30 pm. Costumes available at the church.



**88 Keys for the
Sounds of the Seasons**
Benefit for Angels for the Elderly

PIANO

Concert

Special
Performance by:
**TERESA
SECORD
BROSEKE**

**DECEMBER 3
3:00 PM**

St. John's Church
211 E. Carrol St.
Kenton, OH 43326

Made with PosterMyWall.com



Lake of Lights Live Nativity
December 9 6-8 pm
Not by Choice & St. John's Church

Please contact
the church office
to volunteer
419-673-7278

dates
to
Remember

Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendar

First Sunday of Advent: December 3

Piano Concert: Dec. 3 at 3 pm

HCC Youth: Dec. 3 from 4-6 pm at St. John's

Live Nativity: December 9 6-8 at the Lake of Lights

Christmas Eve Service: December 24 at 8 pm

Undecorate the Church: January 7

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 1—Coonies (LaRue)

December 15—Pizza Hut (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

The Magic of
Christmas
is not in the presents
but in *His* presence

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.

Wednesday Kids 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 contact the church office or Cheryl Lee at 740-262-0939. Please prayerfully consider coming and sharing Gods love with these Kids. Areas you can help: van driver/riders, teachers and helpers for youth age.



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 25-30 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.

website: stjohnskenton.org

Facebook: St Johns Kenton, Ohio

Youtube: St. John's Evangelical Church





ABOUT THE ARCHIVES

As I look at our turbulent world, this message seems even more relevant for us as a Congregation, Community and Country today than it was over 110 years ago.

"In my study of the history of St. John's I found Rev. Katterjohn to be one of my favorite Pastors. He was a leader, kind, compassionate, ahead of his time and had a

great gift for writing. From his vantage point in December of 1910, he saw the world enveloped in a dangerous arms race in Europe, financial and government scandals at home. He was a man who saw through the clouds with hope and I give as illustration the excerpts and ending portion of following article he wrote about the Spirit of Christmas.

"The Spirit of Christmas"

".....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 diffuse 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 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 fact in our own lives. We can cultivate the Christmas spirit the year round in our homes, displacing their frequent discontents, fault-finders and contentions with peace and good will. The kindness, unselfishness and consideration for other to which we are prompted at this particular season we can carry 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."

Doesn't that last portion remind you of what you've heard from the pulpit lately?

I hope that you see in Rev. Katterjohn's thoughts the truly inspiring message of hope that I found. Let us celebrate the birth of our Savior by keeping the Christmas spirit with us always.

Merry Christmas and may the peace of Christ be with you,

Jerry Pfister, Historian



St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Minutes
Thursday, October 12, 2023
6:00 PM

Call to Order - Anna LaWarre, President
Opening Prayer— Pastor Randall
Leadership Development - Pastor Randall
Officer Reports

Secretary's Report - September 14 minutes were Motioned for Approval and seconded. Approved

REPORTS

1) Financial Report—Jerry Pfister/Kay Rush

- It was brought up that September giving was significantly below last year and we are not currently covering our operating expenses. There were a number of factors including timing of receipts by some of our significant donors. Discussion was had on the need to involve the Congregation in addressing this issue. Pastor Randall suggested using Stewardship Sunday and communicating in such way as to engage without further stressing those are already giving at significant percentages of their income. It was pointed out that we need to reemphasize the fact that the majority of our wealth shown on our balance sheet is restricted by the terms of the beneficence agreements.

The Balance Sheet does not reflect the final payment for the HVAC upgrade of \$80,000. This has reduced our accessible funding to 23% of our total assets.

2) Christian Education

- Pastor Randall commented that by the end of the month, we will have four Bible Studies ongoing at our Church.

Sunday, 9 AM-Women's Bible Study

Wednesday, 7-8 PM currently studying the works of Paul, 1st Thessalonians

Saturday 7:30-9 AM Men's Bible Study currently Luke

Saturday 9-10:30 AM The Chosen Bible study

- Our Wednesday Night Kids program has started with attendance of 4 the first night and 12 the second night (15 different children). The program has begun with only a few of the children's required paperwork in place. This is an item that needs urgent work for us to avoid legal liability. Randall stated that Cheryl Lee is doing this as a volunteer, but we do need to reimburse CEF for the materials used for the program and Cheryl's mileage. This met with unanimous agreement.

3) Women's Ministry—Kay Rush

- Kay Rush being called away, Anna Lawarre gave an update on the pending Women's Celebration and the Ag Banquet.

4) Worship, Arts & Music—LeVern Weaver

- Pastor Randall said that currently our Christmas Eve Service will be similar to last year.

5) Personnel Committee—Hal Elsasser

- Hal Elsasser said that the exit interview with Michele went well and that Autum Brown was quite willing to continue her role in the nursery.

6) Pastoral Relations- Anna LaWarre

- Anna Lawarre advised that the next meeting will be in February 2024.



Seeking part-time Family Minister/ Associate Pastor

Job title, responsibilities, and compensation will be partially determined by the education, experience, and training of the candidate. Please contact the church office with questions or interest.

7) Trustees (LeVern Weaver, Greg Martin, Richard Katterjohn)

A proposed maintenance contract from King was discussed as being more favorable to the existing timing and costs being incurred/charged by Perry. A motion was made and seconded to approve the contract. The motion carried unanimously.

- AV Report Submitted

Richard Katterjohn found a problem connecting with the projector in the Chapel when the CEF training occurred. He has fixed the situation by the purchase of an inexpensive DVD player with the proper connections. He mentioned that things were working well with Heather and Tom's help.

- Van: LeVern Weaver

LeVern Weaver said that it was running well. The question was brought up as whether it shouldn't be driven at a distance occasionally to prevent problems.

- Farm: Greg Martin

LeVern Weaver noted that the crops had yet to be taken off and manure piles are in the three fields to be spread.

- **Additional Trustee item:** In Greg's absence, Jerry mentioned that Lonnie Stayman had completed the new cross for the front of the Church. It is 11 feet tall and Greg agreed with Lonnie that it should be mounted in the ground. Lonnie treated the bottom 2.5 feet. Pastor said this would be a great thing for the Church to celebrate and suggested it be done on a Sunday morning after Greg returns. Lonnie's gift should certainly be recognized.

8) Missions, Evangelism

- Anna Lawarre advised that Trunk or Treat would be held in the South parking lot from 3 to 5 on October 28th. Forms for attending our Wednesday night program will be handed out and we will use one of the small tents and a card table with folding chairs.
- The Blessings of the Bikes will be the third Sunday in May.

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall report submitted

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Heartbeat of Hardin County contacted the Church regarding Issue 1 on the ballot to change the Ohio Constitution in regards to abortion. The question was raised whether or not to support a viewpoint as a church. Terry Hord advised against us being active as a Congregation sighting our Church's historical precedents in being above secular issues. He did urge all to vote their individual conviction.
- The Quest Credit Card has been hacked and the question arose as to who was able to address this type of issue if Kay was not available. Jerry Pfister advised that as Treasurer he was.
- The thermostats have been found to have been "messed with" by Blazé King and Denny. These are lockable units and need to be programmed, locked and labeled. There is no need to put covers on these. The program on Jerry's phone was lost on transfer to a new one. He has contacted ATR for the information to reinstall and will work with Richard to get this done.
- Thanks to Denny and Kathy for unloading and turning off the basement refrigerator.
- The resumption of use of the facility by AA on Wednesday and Friday around Noon was discussed. It was agreed that Allan Parker should be given a key and instructions. Richard will make certain that the rooms & doors around the chapel are locked prior to and after their use of that room.
- The participation in the Hardin County Collective Youth Group was discussed. Christa Quail from Kenton Methodist has invited our youth to join them for the evening meetings beginning on October 29th. We may only have two of our youth in this age group. Our attempts at securing information on the Back to School Bash have not yet been successful but we will keep trying.
- Kathy has updated the consent forms for the Wednesday Night Program and we need help getting these completed.
- Jerry Pfister brought up the issue of our banking relationship with HSLC. Kay has on numerous occasions encountered service issues. Kay and Jerry have discussed options of looking at Middlefield or Superior. The Middlefield was roundly denounced by having way too many problems by members of Council. Quest was brought up as an option but since LPL (our investment advisor & banker) is affiliated with Superior and Superior has a much higher rating it was disqualified. A motion was then made and seconded to move our account to Superior with Kay's agreement and on her timing, the motion passed unanimously.

Correspondence: none

Next Meeting: November 9 at 6 pm

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