

*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 2024

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

Community Ash Wednesday Service February 14 at 7:00 PM 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. This year, the service will be Wednesday, February 14 at 7 pm.



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 2024

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

In January, we had a series of special worship services—Communion in a different manner, a hymn-filled Sunday, a prayer service, and a healing service. As I mentioned in one of the sermons, the outline for those services came from **Mark 14:22-50**, where Jesus institutes Communion, sings a hymn with the disciples, prays in Gethsemane, and heals a man's ear (at least in **Luke's** retelling, see **Luke 22:51**). While I felt called by God to lead us in various types of worship, the style was dictated by preference. While I sought to honor the Holy Spirit's leading, I was not given a blueprint for its execution.

Sometimes, it would be nice to be like Noah and receive an exact plan. Instead, I was given a general direction. All that to say, we could build on those experiences by trying other styles of worship or those types of services in other ways (or even other times!). At the core, whatever we do as a church, and especially in regards to worship as it sets at the center of our life together, we should first and foremost be led by the Holy Spirit.

But then, secondly, what we do should be governed by a love for God and a love for one another. After all, February is the month of love with St. Valentine's Day arriving in the middle of it.

This year, Valentine's Day arrives a little before the middle as it is a Leap Year, which is an odd quirk of our calendar. Another odd quirk, this year, is that February 14th falls not only on a Wednesday, but Ash Wednesday. The early arrival of Ash Wednesday means Easter will fall on the last day of March.

At first, the calendar made me think of my preference. Personally, I most enjoy the years when Ash Wednesday falls in March and Easter comes well into April. I prefer

there to be a good space between Christmas and Lent. For me, that space feels like a nice long spiritual exhale that allows me to prepare for the journey of Lent.

While I was in seminary, I remember Ash Wednesday arriving on February 13th. A young lady was a bit upset about this. When queried, she mentioned that she had just started a relationship with another student. Their relationship was progressing, and he was planning on taking her out for a romantic, Valentine's dinner. She now had a dilemma as there would be chocolate candies and a chocolate mousse, but she could enjoy neither as she had given up chocolate for Lent. Her ethical predicament was summed up with her question: "Do I disappoint God or my boyfriend?"



Paul Francis Webster penned a song, "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing," which appeared in a movie by the same name. Along with its fullness of magnificent features (the definition of many-splendored), love carries with it a host of definitions, which elicited my classmate's quandary and my liturgical calendar preferences.

As for my classmate, she had to decide what object of her love would come first on that long ago Valentine's Day. Would it be her love of God, her boyfriend, or chocolate? As for my preference, why should Christians not begin their Lenten journey on Valentine's Day? After all, love brought Jesus to the earth to be the very Incarnation of God, and love carried Him to the Cross where He died for us that we might live for Him now and with Him in eternity. As John writes, if we are His beloved, then we should love one another for love is born of God and knows Him (**I John 4:7**).

Not to make my former classmate an easy foil for my

argument, but I want to encourage you to do more with this Lenten season than to eschew chocolate or to be like those who utilize Lent as a way to break a bad habit, lose weight, or reinvigorate failed New Year's promises. Also, don't be like me and sigh when your preferences are not met or rejoice when they are.

Instead, may we commit to utilizing these days for their intended purposes: to open our lives to the Holy Spirit that we may be conformed more fully to the image of Christ (a good summary of this may be found in **Romans**

12:1-2). Instead of treating Lent as a time of personal improvement, may we seek to emulate the Father by following in the footsteps of the Son as led by the Holy Spirit. In other words, may we seek to love by learning from the author of love. In fact, God is defined as being love (**I John 4:8**).

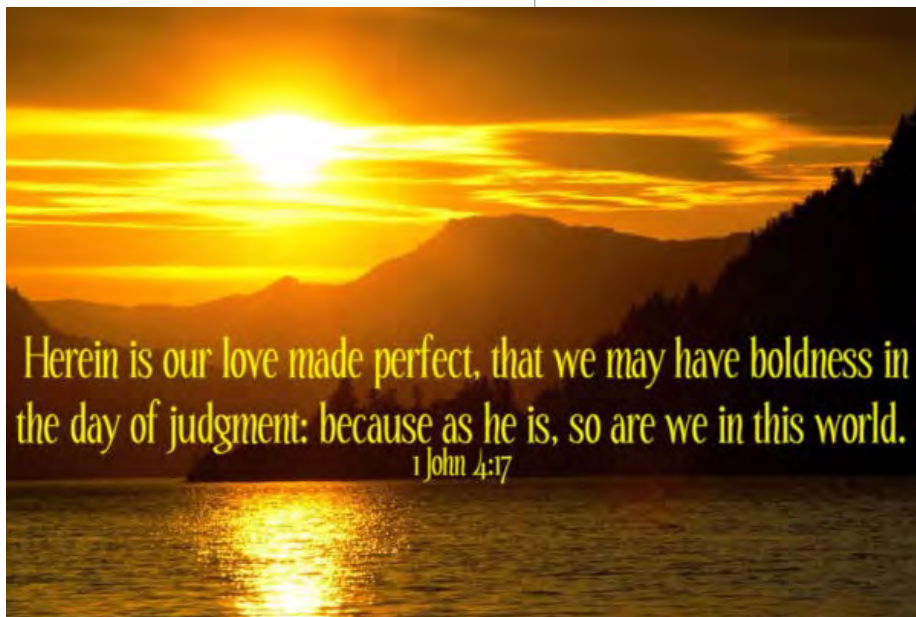
Of course, this love that comes from God transcends what we often call love. God's love is greater than my love of food (including coffee!), you my flock, this country, the Church, my children, myself and my life, and even my wife. This love is more than a feeling as it is also a commandment (**John 13:34**). As such, it is a verb as much (if not more) as it is a noun. So, yes, we may fall in love as though love is a destination, but to arrive we must love, and then love, and love some more.

So, as Lent begins on Valentine's Day, may we as a church commit to a journey of love. Just as Christ's sacrifice on the Cross is the ultimate demonstration of God's love for us, may we demonstrate our love for Him by denying ourselves and taking up our cross for Him (**Luke 9:23**). As Jesus says in that verse, may we do this daily—first

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH:

MAKING AND MATURING
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

through each day of Lent, and then, as we learn, each day of our lives.



May we follow in the footsteps of our Savior, and do this for the benefit of others. May we love in a way that impacts others and is for their benefit even if they do not receive it as such in these days (see **Romans 5:8**).

Also, Jesus' love compelled Him to be crucified publicly. What was meant to be a shameful event, He transformed into a prominent declaration of

His love. Likewise, God's love in us should give us a boldness, and we should bring God's love into the world as He would for "...as He is, so are we in this world" (**I John 4:17**).

This Lent, may your worship of God grow in intensity as it grew in diversity this January. May your love of God be reflected more intensely focused in that worship. May the love of God be poured into you more fully as you grow in His Word and are led by His Holy Spirit. May there be such an outpouring of love within this church that it impacts every member of our congregation and extends into our community and world.

This Lent, may the love of God be made more perfect: 1. in each of us as individuals, 2. within us as a church, and 3. for the glory of our Father in heaven.

With Christ-filled blessings,

Preaching Series

04 February Communion
 Scripture **I Corinthians 2:1-5**
John 16:29-33
 Message **Christus Victor**

11 February
The Underground Church in China
 Special guests:
 QianQian Jin and Dewayne Metzler
 More details on the next page



14 February Ash Wednesday 7PM
 Led by Payne Chapel

Lenten Series: **The Blessed Life**

18 February
 Scripture **Isaiah 58:6-12**
 (See **Isaiah 58:3**)
Luke 6:17-26
 (See **Luke 12:32**)
 Sermon **Blessed are the Poor**

25 February
 Scripture **Ezekiel 18:5-9**
 (See **Proverbs 22:9; 25:21;**
Deuteronomy 8:3; Exodus 16:12)
Luke 6:17-26
 (See **Luke 1:53**)
 Sermon **Blessed are the Hungry**

03 March
 Scripture **Joel 2:12-17**
 (See **Proverbs 14:13**)
Luke 6:17-26
 (See **James 4:9**)
 Sermon **Blessed are those who Weep**

10 March
 Scripture **Isaiah 37:21-32**
 (See **II Chronicles 36:15-16;**
I Samuel 17:10 (Goliath))
Luke 6:17-26
 (See **Hebrews 11:26;**
I Peter 4:14)
 Sermon **Blessed are the Excluded**

17 March
 Scripture **Jeremiah 5:25-31**
 (See **Micah 2:11; Amos 2:12; Isai-**
ah 30:10; Ezekiel 13:6)
Luke 6:24-36
 (See **Hebrews 11:26; I Peter 4:14**)
 Sermon **Woe, Woe, Whoa (Repent)**



24 March Palm Sunday
 Scripture **Isaiah 40:4-9**
Mark 11:1-11
 Sermon **Hosanna in the Highest!**

28 March Maundy Thursday 7PM
 Scripture **116th Psalm** verses **12-19**
Exodus 12:11-14
Mark 14:12-21
 Sermon **The Son of Man Goes**

29 March Good Friday—no worship service
 Noon-1PM Prayer at the altar
 6-7PM Prayer at the altar
 Passion Play online

31 March Easter Sunday
 Sunrise service 7AM, Boy Scout Lake
 Scripture **Proverbs 8:1-8**
John 20:1-18
 Sermon **Wisdom Calls, Christ Calls**

Festival Service 10AM
 Scripture **Isaiah 25:6-9**
Mark 16:1-13
 Sermon **Trembling and Astonishment**

07 April

Theme: **Open our Eyes**

08 April—total solar eclipse occurs over Kenton
 around 2PM.

The Underground Church in China

11 February

QianQian Jin and Dewayne Metzler will be our guests. They are friends of mine (Pastor Randall). They will be speaking about the Underground Church in China. During our worship service, Dewayne will provide the message concerning their deep faith in Christ and their abiding love for Jesus and His Church. Qian (pronounced Chen) will deliver the children's message. To protect them, their families, and those still in China, they cannot share openly during our service as it is broadcast to the Internet.

There will be a luncheon after worship. Around noon, they will share a presentation about the church in China. That material cannot be recorded or broadcast online. It will be shared in the Fellowship Hall. We hope you will attend and invite guests. Even if you cannot stay for the presentation, please stay for lunch.

They are planning to travel with a pastor and his wife who are from China along with a member of their church from the US. If weather permits, they will arrive here Saturday afternoon. If you would like to meet them on Saturday, please contact me, and I will see what we can arrange.

Also, they are not asking for any donations from the church. I requested that the church provide a night's stay for Dewayne and Qian. If anyone would like to help cover any other costs, it would have to be done as a donation above and beyond what you give to the church. This is my request as your pastor, and it is Dewayne's and Qian's request too. Thank you, Pastor Randall.

Holy Week Notes

HOLY



WEEK

This year, our Holy Week journey will be a bit more traditional. On Palm Sunday, we will distribute Palms. On Maundy Thursday, there will be a service with **Communion** in the sanctuary at 7PM. On Good Friday, there will be two opportunities for people to gather at the altar for prayer—from noon-1PM and 6-7PM. On Easter Sunday, sunrise service will be under the small pavilion at Boy Scout Lake at 7AM with our festival service at 10AM. If there is a desire to have an Easter Egg hunt or other activities between the services or at some other time, please feel free to contact me or to volunteer to help and lead such events through one of these committees: WAM (Worship Arts and Music), the Missions and Evangelism, or Christian Education. The Council and I want to see many activities from our past resume, and we, along with many others in our church, want to build up our church with the love of Christ and reach out to our community with that same love. To do so, it will

take the faithful commitment of us all to demonstrate that love. I am thankful for what we have to offer this year and look forward to building on that foundation. Please help if you can. As always, be supportive with your prayers and presence at the Holy Spirit enables you, prompts you, and guides you as you complete your Lenten journey.

PASTOR'S PAGE

Upcoming Events



Blanchard Place Nursing Home Ministry (First Tuesday)

The First Tuesday visit to Blanchard Place is February 6. 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—Movie Night

The Hardin County Collective Youth will meet on February 4 from 4-6:30 pm at Kenton First Methodist Church. They will be watching *The Blind and Jesus Revolution*. All youth grade 6-12 are welcome.

HCC Youth Group

MOVIE NIGHT

Free
Popcorn
Tacos, pop

Feb 4, 2024

4-6:30pm

Kenton First Methodist Church
234 N Main St, Kenton

NOW SHOWING

**The Blind
and
Jesus Revolution**

Entering the Church Building

During the wintry and potentially icy months, entrance will be available through the east and south doors. Thank you!



Free Movie Night
February 24 - 6 pm
**DO YOU
BELIEVE?**
It's the most important
question of your life!

Community Movie Night - Do You Believe?

There will be a Movie Night on February 24 at 6 pm (doors open at 5:30 pm) in the Fellowship Hall sponsored by the Missions and Evangelism Committee. Snacks & Drinks available, donations appreciated. A dozen different souls all moving in different directions, all longing for something more. As their lives unexpectedly intersect, they each are about to discover there is power in the Cross of Christ even if they don't believe it. Yet. When a local pastor is shaken to the core by the visible faith of an old street-corner preacher, he is reminded that true belief always requires action. His response ignites a faith-fueled journey that powerfully impacts everyone it touches in ways that only God could orchestrate. This stirring new film from the creators of *God's Not Dead*. More than a movie, it's a question we all must answer in our lifetimes: DO YOU BELIEVE?



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 2—101 Tavern (ada)

February 16—Skinny's (Kenton)

March 1—Eagles (Kenton)

March 15—Cracker Barrel (Findlay)

Coffee Hour Update

Due to an increase in spills and stains in the sanctuary, we are asking that all food and drink items be consumed in the lobby area before going upstairs. Thank you for your understanding.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming Events– Mark Your Calendar

HCC Youth Movie Night: Feb. 4 from 4-6:30 pm
at Kenton First Methodist Church

The Underground Church in China

10 am: Join us for worship

11 am: Luncheon

12 pm: Learn more about the
Underground Church in China

Ash Wednesday Service: Feb. 14 at 7 pm

Do You Believe Movie Night: Feb. 24 at 6 pm

Maundy Thursday Service: March 28 at 7 pm

Good Friday Prayer Time: Noon & 6 pm in the
sanctuary

Easter Sunrise Service: March 31 at 7 am at Boy
Scout Lake

Easter Festival Service: March 31 at 10 am

Bike Blessing: May 19 at 11 am

Rock the Lake: August 3

Back to School Bash & Rise FM Concert: August
17 from 4-8 pm at Wharton Park



Mission of the Month— Gideons



The Gideons International
**Spreading the
Good News**

Gideons International distributes Bibles and New Testaments around the world. Having God's Word can and does lead people to faith in Christ, and those new Christians then grow by studying their Scriptures and even use them to share their faith with others.

For this reason, they focus on distributing complete Bibles, New Testaments, or portions thereof. These copies of God's Word are printed in more than 90 languages and are either given directly to certain individuals or placed in selected public locations where large numbers of people, who may be searching for answers, will have the ability to encounter the Word of God.

Birthday Blessings (over 80 yrs. Young)

No February 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!

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





Another February is upon us and in previous articles we have discussed St. Valentine, Ash Wednesday and many events in history that have impacted our Church and Christianity in general. This year let's look at February from a slightly different angle.

The calendar used in the West is the result of extended evolution. For the most part, our calendar is the result of the influence of the Greeks and the Romans who followed them. *February* receives its name from Februa (or Februatio), an ancient purification festival held on February 15 (full moon) under the old lunar Roman calendar. The Roman god Februus received his name from this festival rather than giving his name to it. The festival was observed annually by the pagan Romans to allegedly cleanse buildings and purge the lives of people at a time when new life began to spring from the earth.

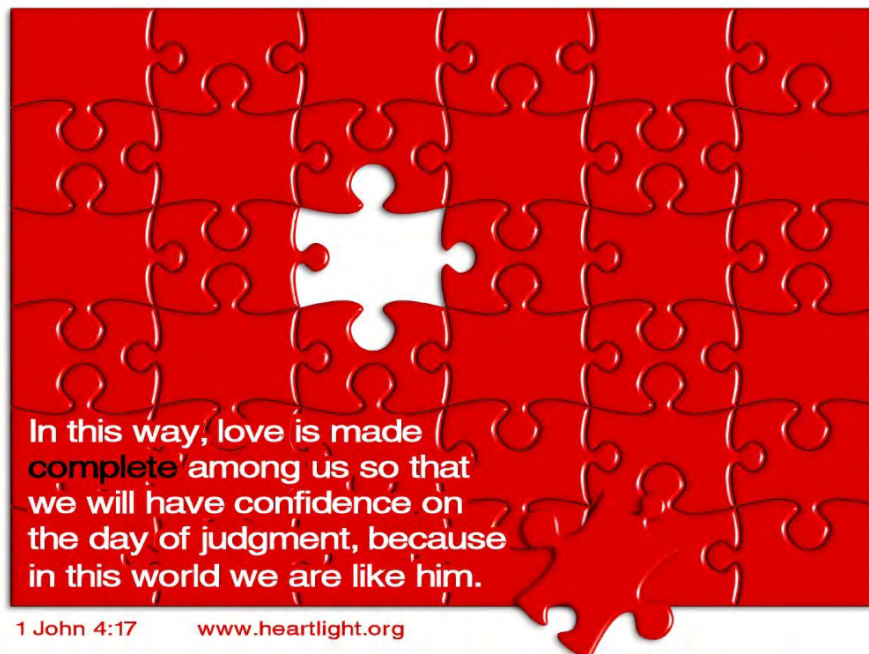
The birth flowers of February are the violet and common primrose, and amethyst—which symbolizes piety, humility, spiritual wisdom, and sincerity—is the birthstone of the month.

The first Sunday in February is National Lord's Day Observance Sunday. The sponsoring organization is The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States (LDA), an organization composed of representatives from various denominations throughout America. The LDA was founded in 1888 when representatives of six major Protestant denominations met in Washington, D.C. to organize the American Sabbath Union; this name was later changed to The Lord's Day Alliance of the United States. While contemporary evangelicalism is increasingly indifferent toward the observance of the Lord's Day, it has been the focus of considerable interest in great revivals throughout the history of the Christian Church. Even the eighteenth-century enemy of Christ, Voltaire, understood there was no hope of destroying Christianity as long as the observance of the Lord's Day stood: *"There is no hope of destroying Christianity so long as the Christian Sabbath is acknowledged as a sacred day."*
Credit-Christian Heritage Fellowship

As we partake in our Ash Wednesday service on the 14th, let us all recognize the truly great blessing we have received as we follow our Savior.

Blessings,

Jerry Pfister, Historian



Happy
NEW YEAR

St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Minutes
Thursday, December 14, 2023
6:00 PM

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

Secretary's Report - The October Secretary's report was approved as submitted. The November report was approved as amended.

REPORTS

1) Financial Report—Jerry Pfister/Kay Rush

- Jerry Pfister stated the November summary of operating income and expense was positive for November due to reduction in expenses offsetting lower income vs last year. Kay Rush commented that there were no major outlays during November which improved our cash position. We continue to not cover operating expenses with donations and require use of our reserve funds. This is a function of lower Church attendance post Covid. Our balance sheet remains strong. We will present the budget for 2024 at the January Council Meeting. We are going to be presenting a more realistic projection of income and expenses. Our main checking account has been transferred from HSLC to Superior Credit Union as approved by Council.

2) Christian Education

3) Women's Ministry—Kay Rush

- Kay Rush stated that the Ag Banquet was a success with over 145 served that evening. She commented that with the three banquets we are now serving this year, the age and lack of staffing would prohibit us from doing more. The next Women's Ministry meeting will be in January.

4) Worship, Arts & Music—LeVern Weaver

- Pastor Randall went over the preaching plans for January which included some variations in the service.

5) Personnel Committee—Hal Elsasser

6) Pastoral Relations- Anna LaWarre—next meeting in March

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

- AV Report Submitted- connectivity issues have been resolved and work on the new lap top for Pastor will take priority
- Van: LeVern Weaver—no problems reported
- Farm: Greg Martin is contacting Watkins about the renewal and will discuss at the January Council meeting.

8) Missions, Evangelism -Anna LaWarre reported that the committee had planned outreaches for the year 2024. She advised that she would provide details to Council at the next meeting but the plan includes: Movie Night, Bike Blessing, Rock the Lake support, Trunk or Treat, Angel Tree, Celebrate Recovery Meals. Pastor Randall mentioned that the Bed Ministry is on hold pending someone to take over the administration of the program.

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall report submitted

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Elders with expiring terms: Hal Elsasser, Terry Hord, Jerry Pfister
- The annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for January 28th immediately following services.
- Jerry Pfister stated he had reviewed the details of the proposed 2024 policy in light of the doubling of the deductible by Brotherhood Insurance. Our premiums are staying at the 2023 levels and provide us coverage which other insurers have declined such as for the stained-glass windows. He also mentioned being privy to experience of another missionary claim which was very large. The following year increase in that case was minor
- Pastor's Health Insurance renewal options were provided by Kathy Forester to Jerry Pfister who stated that the costs continued to be below those agreed to in the Call Agreement and were comparable to those incurred in 2023. Kay Rush and Jerry Pfister will include them in the 2024 budget as recommended.
- Kay Rush brought up the fact that during the congregational meeting Motions and seconds should be made by members of the congregation, not the members of Council. This provides for a more open process and eliminates the perception of undue control of items being brought before the Congregation for approval.

Next Meeting: January 11 at 6 pm

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

Christianity in China

The Underground Church

What does normal life look like for Chinese Christians?

How does the Chinese underground church operate under persecution?

How do missionaries reach out to the Chinese people and bring the good news to them?

How do Chinese Christians cope with strict policies in their Christian daily life?



FEBRUARY 11

10 am - Join us for Worship

11 am - Luncheon

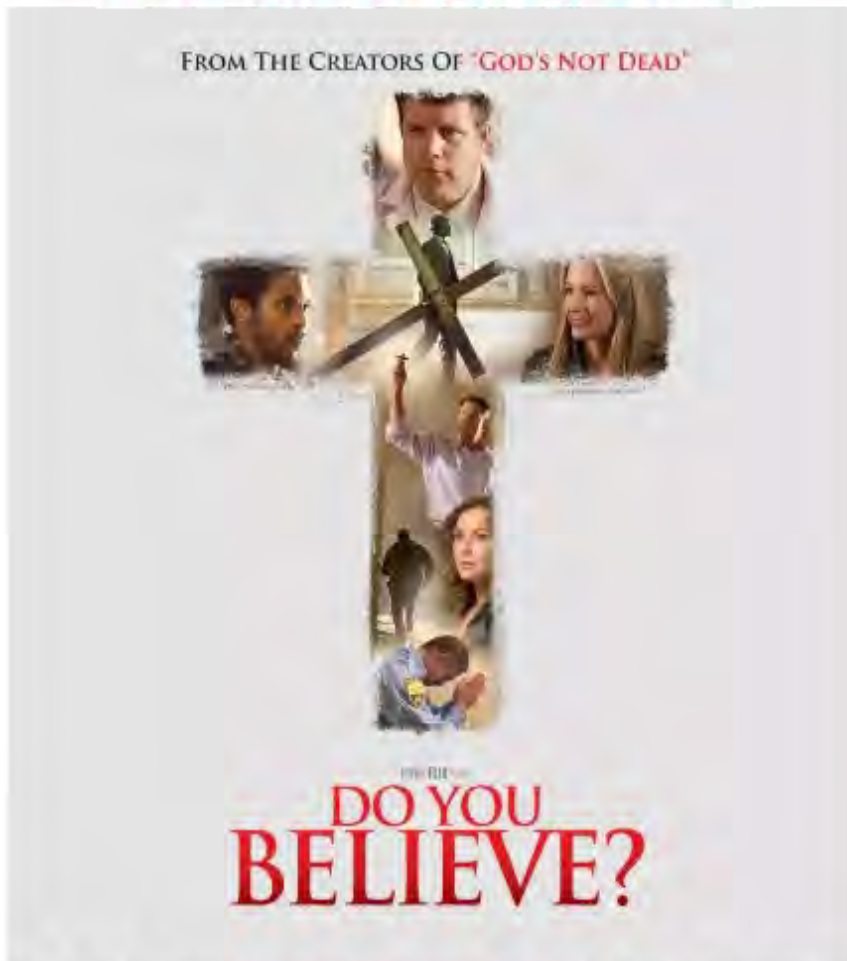
12 pm - Learn more about The Underground Church in China

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

YOU'RE INVITED TO A
FREE MOVIE NIGHT

FEBRUARY **24** AT 6:00PM

Do You Believe?



It's the most important question of your life.

Snacks: popcorn & beverages (by donation)

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