



St John's
LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Stony Ridge, OH
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2024 Memory Verse

*"So then, a sabbath rest still
remains for the people of God"*

~ Hebrews 4:9

August 2024





From Pastor Cindy...

Summer-Time Greetings Everyone!

I have a T-Shirt that says: Summer. Should. Be. Fun.

My first question for you: How is your summer fun so far? I truly hope you are finding time to do many enjoyable things with the people you love and care about the most. Time spent with those you love is a precious gift from God. Quiet time, meal time, vacation time, worship time, prayer time, outdoor time, movie time, game time, corn-on-the-cob time and family time...thank-you God.

"Serving the Lord time" is also very special to me. I am greatly blessed at this time to serve here at St. John's as your interim pastor. I am doubly-blessed because at this time I co-pastor with Pr. Howard Abts. He is a man of great faith, a person with great humor and he is filled with much wisdom & life experiences to lead ministry here during this time of transition. His gifts in ministry are different from mine and that's the beauty of us serving as co-pastors at St. John's. We bring the blessing of distinctive ministry gifts to be shared at this precious church in Stony Ridge.

In the Bible we learn that there are different kinds of gifts given to us by the Holy Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12 says there are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work. To one is given a message of wisdom, to another a message of knowledge, to another faith and to another the gifts of healing, to another miraculous powers, to another prophecy and to others the gift of speaking in tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

My next question for you: Might this be the time for us to know we all have differing gifts and for us to appreciate the gifts of others? These words from Exodus 31:3 encourage appreciation for all people and the gifts God has given them:

"I have filled him with the Spirit of God, with wisdom, with understanding, with knowledge and with all kinds of skills."

Summer...is a time for fun. And for our church leadership it is also a time of preparing for new things in our church. This is the time when we are preparing to begin "The Transition Team." A group of faith-filled and dedicated church members will lead us through specific tasks to prepare for the call committee that will be formed in the future. These tasks are:

*Appreciating our history and heritage

*Understanding who God is calling St. John's to be... Our Mission and Vision

*Looking at Leadership, Various Procedures and Gifts among us

*Connecting greater with our community and our Synod and the wider ELCA

*Preparing this congregation for a new future and new pastoral leadership

My last questions and hope for you: As a St. John's member or regular attender will you participate in the upcoming conversations and activities to prepare for the exciting future of this congregation? Will you share the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to you and be intentionally involved in the next precious chapter of this vibrant, mission focused and spiritually gifted church? Please take some time to pray to God for guidance.

"May the Lord bless and protect you;

may the Lord's face radiate with joy because of you;

may the Lord be gracious to you,

show you favor and give you peace".

Summer Peace & Joy,

Pr. Cindy Ritter

From Pastor Howard...

Brothers and Sisters,

In late April, I began inviting members of our Congregation Council to sit down for conversations with me, partly so I'd have a better understanding of the disruption St. John's has gone through lately, and how this congregation and its people have coped. I asked them to answer five questions, if it seemed good to them:

1. When, and how, did it first seem to you that things were not normal here?
2. How has this congregation's response expressed the Good News of Jesus?
3. How has your own faith grown during this time?
4. What should I know that I haven't asked about?
5. With whom else should I meet?

Most of our meetings focused on one or more of those five questions. Often, we went pretty far afield, and that was fine.

When all of the Council members who wished to had spoken with me, I extended the invitation to members of our staff. When those were done, I invited the people who'd been named when I asked, "With whom else should I meet?" Several of them responded, too. It has been a very high honor for me to be given access to the thoughts of some of your fellow St. John's people!

Now, if you're not in one of those groups, it's your turn.

There are at least two possibilities:

(continued on page 4)

A good one, I think, would be for you to speak with me, if you would like to. Here's a link to use to choose a time: <https://tinyurl.com/mr3373j7> . If you prefer, you can call during office hours and Sandy will sign you up, or you can email her ~ officeadmin@stjohnsstonridge.net ~ and she can email you the link. If the days or times listed on the sign-up sheet are not convenient for you, we can make other arrangements.

I believe an even better possibility would be for you to make an appointment, or several appointments, to speak with other members of the congregation, taking turns asking and answering these (or other) questions, especially since I will be gone for several weeks this summer. For the health of this congregation, after all, the most valuable human relationships we should be strengthening are the ones with people who will not be disappearing in a matter of months.

I think there is not one single person at St. John's who doesn't have valuable thoughts and insights to contribute.

What do you think?

Pr. H

From the Council President...

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

On behalf of Church Council, I am sharing an update regarding our next steps as a congregation in terms of forming a transition team and eventual call committee. As Pastor Howard discussed in a recent sermon, our congregation is in the midst of working through our approach to same-sex marriage within the church. Building off of the discussion sessions that were hosted by Pastor Rentner this past winter, Pastor Howard is planning on holding a new series of Bible studies and small group discussion sessions after Rally Day. These will serve to continue our open dialogue and to study and reflect upon how Jesus calls us to treat those who are different from most of us.

As these next steps in our process of moving forward consist of a transition in itself, it is finally time to begin assembling a transition team. Transition teams are part of the regular call process and serve to help guide the congregation through the period of time leading up to an eventual call committee. They are specifically tasked with reviewing and reflecting on the congregation's "missional identity, common purpose, and its shared vision." The team will likely be made up of four to six members, who will be appointed by Council to carry out these important tasks. Additional Bible studies and discussion sessions will likely be held to gather input from the congregation to review our mission and identity. The information and feedback received will eventually contribute to this church's Ministry Site Profile, which is a key element for the call process that introduces this congregation to potential call candidates.

The church council has begun the process by lifting up members for consideration to be a part of the transition team. We ask that in turn if asked, those individuals will take the time to prayerfully consider the request to serve this congregation through this important function. As I hope all of us experience, this congregation is a place where we all deeply care for one another and our mission within our community, and it is critical that we continue to do so moving forward. Jesus is in the midst of all of our lives, and we remind ourselves to be the light of Christ through our interactions with, and acceptance of, all of God's children each and every day.

As always, please reach out to me, Pastor Howard, and Pastor Cindy, or any other church council member if there are any questions or thoughts to be shared on the life of St. John's.

In Christ,

Kyle Henry
Church Council President



Thank you for the quilt.
I will use it a lot.

~ Nathan Pustay

Dear St. John's Church,

Thank you so much for the \$1,500 that you have awarded me in scholarship! It will help me out so much, so I very much appreciate it!

I am attending Ohio Northern this fall to throw for the track team and study business. I plan on using the faith I have learned at St. John's to guide me through my journey.

Sincerely, Ian Sibbersen

Our family would like to thank our church family for all the thoughts and prayers at the time of Chuck's passing. Pastor Cindy ~ thank you for your guidance during this difficult time. Church staff ~ thank you for being there with answers to all our questions and all your beautiful work done for the service and luncheon. To those who helped with the luncheon ~ it was wonderful. We are blessed to have family and friends during this time of loss. St. John's was always an important part of Chuck's life.

~ Helyn and Family

Women of the ELCA

Comforters for Lutheran World Relief will be tied on Tuesday, August 13th from 12:00 to 2:30 in the Parish House. If you are free this summer, we would really appreciate your help. There is absolutely no experience needed. We will show you just how easy it is to do. Men are welcome to join too!

Pray for Special Concerns every Monday at noon. In August, pray for students, teachers and school staff as they begin a new school year.

Dates to Remember:

Tuesday, August 13th-Tie Comforters (Parish House)

**The Crafting Group will resume in September. Watch the Voice and Weekly Voice for information.*

Donations of filler for mission comforters are always welcome, including old blankets, sheets, bedspreads, tablecloths and mattress pads. These donations may be placed in the LWR box in the coatroom. Thank you in advance for your donations. If you have material you'd like to donate for the tops of comforters, donations would be greatly appreciated.



Christ caring for people through people

STEPHEN MINISTRY

Our Stephen Ministry group has been doing a book study of The Gift of Empathy—Helping Others Feel Valued, Cared For, and Understood by Joel P. Bretscher and Kenneth G. Haugk. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. We have learned that

empathy is a skill with extraordinary potential for increasing care, deepening understanding, strengthening trust, and transforming relationships.

Here are a few bullet points that we have discovered from reading and discussing the first several chapters.

- Empathy is something we all need—and it's something we all can give.
- Your empathy can help the other person feel cared for, validated, affirmed, accepted, and understood.
- You can be a stable support for the other person, compassionately showing them they're not alone.
- You can gain communication and relational skills to become less judgmental and more caring.
- Empathy is looking at the world from someone else's perspective to experience what the person is feeling—and then expressing your understanding of those feelings to that person.
- You can express empathy in deeply caring ways without using any words at all—using appropriate body language, maintaining eye contact, showing fitting facial expressions, giving a pat on the shoulder, holding the other person's hand.

The major take-away is that empathy isn't just something you **have**—it's something you **give**.



Prayers via ZOOM

Each Tuesday at noon, we gather (virtually on Zoom) for an hour of prayer together—"Noon Prayers via ZOOM." We typically begin with a reading from scripture or an excerpt from a prayer book before checking in with one another and collecting prayer requests. We conclude our hour together with a time of prayer, in which those who wish to do so offer aloud their petitions of supplication, thanks, and praise.

Here's the Zoom information (It is different from the Sunday morning worship info.):

The meeting ID is **940 7347 7343**.
The meeting password is **595726**





SOCIAL MINISTRIES

Sunday Special...

**Food Pantry ~ boxed stuffing
and
canned sweet potatoes**

Shared Bounty ~ dish soap



In Loving Memory of...

Charles F. Kurfess

Nancy W. Rudolph

*A donation has been made to St. John's Hilltop
Dayschool in memory of Nancy McDonald, Terri
Schaller's mother*

Dwight & Bonnie Emmitt

Dave & Cathy Wagner

Shane Herman

Thomas & Debra Herma



**SATURDAY,
SEPTEMBER 14**

**@ 10A.M. IN THE
PARISH HALL**

St. John's will be taking on world hunger as part of the ELCA's *God's Work, Our Hands*™ project. We need to have 50 volunteers gather together in our Parish Hall at 10:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 14. We will be working with the Rise Against Hunger organization to pack 10,000 meals which will be distributed to specific geographic regions where access to diverse and nutritious food is limited.

HOW CAN YOU HELP??

- ✓ Contribute to this cause! We need to raise \$4,500 which will cover the cost of the meals and distribution.
- ✓ Sign up as a volunteer for our meal packing event on the sheet hanging in the Narthex. You can also visit <https://tinyurl.com/y2kth2w5> or call the church office at 419-837-5115 to sign up. Our space is limited so we will only be able to accommodate registered volunteers.
- ✓ Share this information with others who would like to be involved with this worthy cause!



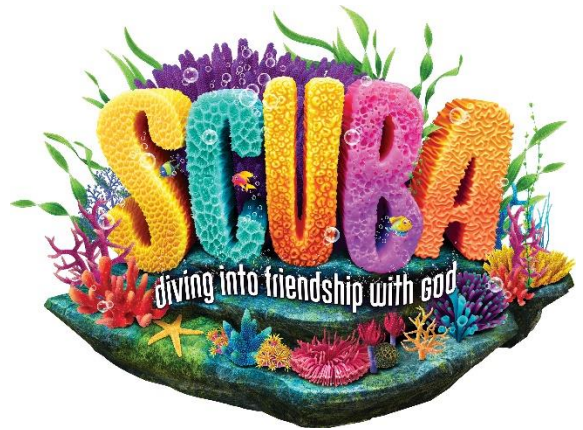
Groundskeeping Volunteers Needed

Help keep our outdoors beautiful!
See the bulletin board to sign up
for an area to maintain.

We are open to your ideas!
Contact Lyle Diefenthaler for questions.

VBS

Happenings...



Whale sighting!!

Dolphin Snacks!



Joyous opening action each morning!



Selfie Station!



August Birthdays

(Those over 74 years young!)

Ed Cochrane 8/2/1932
 Alma Camp 8/4/1942
 Claire Schober 8/5/1929
 Sally Welch 8/5/1947
 Paul Bamford 8/7/1943
 Bill Staib 8/19/1948

Sandra Toth 8/21/1946
 Kathleen Holzman 8/23/1933
 Kay Barrett 8/28/1940
 Roger Ramsey 8/31/1935
 Donna Westrick 8/31/1948



GENEROUS GIVING

Financial Giving through 7/21/2024

General Fund Income *(Year-to-Date)*

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| \$151,875 | \$135,067 | (\$16,808) |

Benevolence Fund *(Year-to-Date)*

| <u>Budget</u> | <u>Actual</u> | <u>Difference</u> |
|---------------|---------------|-------------------|
| \$15,188 | \$9,544 | (\$5,644) |

Improvement Fund *(Year-to-Date)*

Actual
\$10,785

(Copies of most recently approved financial reports are available in the Narthex and by request)

**We have extra T-Shirts
(L & XL)**

available in the church office for \$15.00 each while supplies last!!

See Sandy O. if you are interested in purchasing or call the church office 419-837-5115



Visit us online at www.stjohnstonyridge.net or scan the QR code to set up electronic giving. Click on the "Give Generously" tab to enter your information and offering. Financial gifts can, of course, be sent by mail too. We are grateful for your continued support of our ministry.



August 2024



| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|---|-----|------------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | | 1 | 2 9a Men's Breakfast @ Panera ~ Rt. 20 | 3 10a-12p Shared Bounty (PH) |
| 4 9a Adult SS 10a Worship | 5 6:30p JJJAAM Practice | 6 Noon Prayers via ZOOM 7p Committee Mtg Night #1 | 7 | 8 9a Staff Mtg. (L) 8p AA | 9 | 10 |
| 11 9a Adult SS 10a Worship | 12 6:30p JJJAAM Practice | 13 Noon Prayers via ZOOM 12p-2:30p Tie Comforters (PH) 7p Committee Mtg Night #2 | 14 | 15 8p AA | 16 | 17 7:30a Food Pantry (PH) 10a Private Event (PH) |
| 18 9a Adult SS 10a Worship | 19 6:30p JJJAAM Practice | 20 Noon Prayers via ZOOM 6:30p Exec Comm 7:00p Church Council (L) | 21 | 22 8p AA | 23 | 24 |
| 25 9a Adult SS 10a Worship | 26 6:30p JJJAAM Practice | 27 Noon Prayers via ZOOM | 28 | 29 8p AA | 30 | 31 |

Committee Meetings: Please schedule all meetings with the office administrator so the proper room is reserved to accommodate all groups. Call 419-837-5115 or email officeadministrator@stjohnsstonyridge.net.

| August 2024 | | | | Year of Rest Calendar | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|---|---|---|
| Mental | Sensory | Emotional | Social | Creative | Spiritual | Physical | |
| SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY | |
| But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and distracted by many things; there is need of only one thing. Mary has chosen the better part, which will not be taken away from her." - Luke 10:41-42 | | | | 1 Visit a park or beach. | 2 Spend time reading one of your favorite bible stories. | 3 Lower your shoulders, breath, relax your body. | |
| Therefore Eli said to Samuel, "Go, lie down; and if he calls you, you shall say, 'Speak, LORD, for your servant is listening.'" So Samuel went and lay down in his place. Now the LORD came and stood there, calling as before, "Samuel! Samuel!" And Samuel said, "Speak, for your servant is listening." - 1 Sam. 3:9-10 | 4 Meditate or sit in silence for 5 minutes. | 5 Take a walk and leave your phone at home. | 6 Journal how you are feeling. | 7 Connect with an old friend. | 8 Visit some murals or art. | 9 Spend a few minutes offering a prayer of thanksgiving. | 10 Intentionally prepare yourself to sleep. |
| Let me hear what God the LORD will speak, for he will speak peace to his people, to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts. Psalm 85:8 | 11 Pause to listen to your favorite song. | 12 Take a moment to be in a peaceful place. | 13 Do something that rejuvenates your soul. | 14 Spend time in one of your favorite places. | 15 Make something. | 16 Reflect on where you saw God today. | 17 Walk a familiar trail or labyrinth. |
| Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. Isaiah 55:2b-3a | 18 Take a moment to notice your surroundings. | 19 Smell something delightful. | 20 Call or write someone you connect with. | 21 Spend time with a loved one. | 22 Cook something you love to eat. | 23 Do something you believe in. | 24 Take a walk and listen. Note what you hear. |
| Hear this, O Job; stop and consider the wondrous works of God. Job 37:14 | 25 Pause to be present where you are. | 26 Notice the small wonders around you. | 27 Breathe deeply for 5 minutes. | 28 Give someone a genuine compliment. | 29 Tend to a garden, your flowers or an outdoor space. | 30 Watch the sun rise or set. | 31 Climb to high space and look out. |

The Fellowship Committee
 will begin meeting @ 7 p.m. on the
 2nd Tuesday of each month
 ~ starting August 6 ~
 Anyone interested is welcome to
join!

St. John's Fall
Camping Trip
Sauder Village
Campground
 See Pustays or
 Orths for more info!
PLEASE JOIN US!! **October 11-13**