

*St. John's United Church of Christ  
I-946 St. Rt. 108  
Holgate, Ohio 43527*

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**Annual Congregational Meeting January 28, 2024  
Potluck Meal after worship – Meeting to follow around 12:15 pm**

Mighty God  
**Messiah**  
Everlasting Father **PEACE**  
Wonderful Counselor  
**LOVE** Jesus Prince of Peace  
LIGHT OF THE WORLD LORD **JOY**  
**HOPE** Son **IMMANUEL**  
**GOD WITH US**

**From Pastor Jeff's desk – pages 2-3  
From Consistory President Ron – pages 4-5  
Save the Dates – page 7  
"Blue Christmas" service – page 8  
December Worship Participants – page 10  
Birthdays – pages 21 and 23**

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
26	27	28	29	30	1	2
9am - Conf church visit 9am - Sunday School 10:15am - Worship/Communion 11:30am - Confirmation II 2pm - Siberian solstice setup 7pm - Siberian Solstice Concert	6pm - Spiritual Council 6:30pm - Decorating Team - Help	SHALOM Delivery in am 4:30pm - SHALOM Food Pantry	6pm - Handbell choir practice 7pm - Choir practice	1pm - Employee Retention Credit - 6pm - Finance Team 6pm - Pastoral Relations Council		
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
12pm - FH held for Shalom Christmas			6pm - Handbell choir practice 7pm - Choir practice		6pm - Newsletter Deadline	
9am - Sunday School 10:15am - Worship	6:15pm - Deacons 7pm - Consistory	4:15pm - Shalom Christmas				
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
9am - Confirmation/SS 10am - Pastor McCarn's birthday 10:15am - Worship/kids' program 11:30am - Confirmation II		SHALOM Delivery in am 4:30pm - SHALOM Food Pantry	5pm - Final copies of newsletter to 6pm - Handbell choir practice 7pm - Choir practice	8am - Print newsletters 7pm - Blue Christmas	9am - Mail newsletters	
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Christmas Eve 10:15am - Worship 6pm - Christmas Eve	Christmas Day 10am - Fellowship Hall reserved	8:30pm - Office Closed				
31	1	2	3	4	5	6
New Year's Eve 10:15am - Worship						

# The Sentinel

St. John's United Church of Christ  
I-946 St. Rt. 108 Holgate, Ohio 43527  
DECEMBER 2023

## Please Contact us at --

Office Hours: 8-12 Monday - Friday  
Church Phone: (419) 264-4401  
Pastor: Jeff McCarn - Cell Phone 812-202-9273  
Parsonage Phone: 419-264-5201  
Parsonage Address: 13039 Co Rd J, Holgate, OH 43527  
Church e-mail: [holgateucc@metalink.net](mailto:holgateucc@metalink.net)  
Pastor e-mail: [revjmccarn@gmail.com](mailto:revjmccarn@gmail.com)  
Financial Administrator e-mail - [stjohnfinadmin@metalink.net](mailto:stjohnfinadmin@metalink.net)  
Newsletter Editor e-mail: [radurham703@bright.net](mailto:radurham703@bright.net)  
Church Website: [www.stjohnsucchohio.com](http://www.stjohnsucchohio.com)  
SHALOM Food Pantry open the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays 4:30 to 6:00 P.M.

Betty (Bob) Rettig, Admin. Asst.  
Fax: (419) 264-1460

## WORSHIP AND ACTIVITIES SCHEDULE

SUNDAY SCHOOL 9:00 A.M. – WORSHIP SERVICE 10:15 A.M.

### Wednesday Night Schedule

Bells 6:00 P.M.  
Sanctuary Choir 7:00 P.M.

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Pastor  
Jeff's  
Desk...

## Be Still

*God is our refuge and strength,  
a very present help in trouble.  
Therefore we will not fear...  
Psalm 46:1-2*

I have a challenge. Slow down. Be still. I know many of us are thinking, "Are you crazy?"

We are in the midst of celebrating Thanksgiving. An appropriate time to be thankful for the blessings God has bestowed upon us; however, many are thinking, "Do I really have something to be thankful for?" The answer to that is "Yes!" When we slow down from our daily hectic routine, we can find many blessings if we just pause and take a deep breath.

Following Thanksgiving, Christians begin Advent — a time for preparation and hope for the birth of Jesus bringing light into the darkness. There is no better time than Advent season to center our thoughts around hope. Again, we can find hope and see the blessings of light coming into our lives if we just slow down and feel the Spirit of God surrounding us.

The Spirit is like water, and we cannot live without water. How do we find the Spirit? We find the Spirit in the stillness of our lives. In 1 Kings Chapter 19, God did not come in the wind, the earthquake, nor the fire. God comes in the stillness, the calm, the silence. We can find God speaking in our stillness — offering us refuge, strength and hope.

Advent and Christmas seasons are a very busy time for people with parties to attend, gifts to buy and wrap and decorations to be put on display. However, we can still be thankful. Find hope and know that God is still our refuge and strength. I encourage each of us to find our sacred space. Stop, be still and listen for God to say, "I hereby command you: Be strong and courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

Blessings,  
Rev. Jeff McCarn



## Positive Things Seen and Heard from the Congregation and Consistory

People appreciate the chance to get to know Pastor Jeff and Bobbie over dinner at the parsonage

Grateful for the safe harvest that is underway

Leaves on the trees have been stunning this year

The enclosure for the dogs is installed - what a wonderful gift from Buckeye Builders

Glad to have the children's music in church on November 12

Appreciate hearing the bells being played on Sunday



### Note from the Office

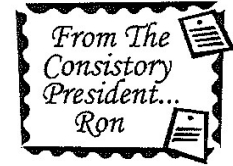
Folks are welcome to use office supplies and equipment when here at church. If you empty something or see that it is nearly empty, please leave a note so supplies can be replenished.

If something is broken, jammed or otherwise needs to be fixed, please leave a note as well.

Also, if you gift an item to the office, please let us know whether it is intended to replace something or if you had an extra and are just being generous. Many thanks!

For those watching our **worship service online**, the announcement slides and gathering music begin 15 minutes before the start of worship. You can watch our service at <https://www.facebook.com/StJohnsUCCHolgate>.

## Giving Thanks



It is the time of the year that we will be having dinners with family and friends and with this usually comes anxiety. Did I remember this? I burned the pie crust! what to wear? did I hurt somebody's feelings? are we going to be late? etc., etc. Instead of worrying and fretting, relax. Give thanks that we have the opportunity to enjoy what and who we have.

My time as a member of Consistory is coming to an end, and I thank everyone for their commitment to St. John's. Amazing things by the members of this faith family have happened in the past few years, and I feel confident that we will strive to do amazing things in the future. Thanks to all the Consistory members who tolerated me leading the meetings. Thanks to all of you who have supported the church through various means. I could go on and on forever, but I want to keep the article short and get to the thanks giving.

I give a shout out to Holgate Lumber and Buckeye Building Solutions for their donations. For those who may not know, they provided windows, east entry door, and the dog fence at the parsonage. They have also supplied equipment to assist with repairs and installation on numerous projects.

Below are some quotes that I found interesting.

### Giving Thanks: Inspiring Quotes About Thankfulness

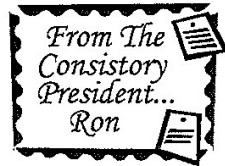
"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it." - William Arthur Ward

"Make it a habit to tell people thank you. To express your appreciation, sincerely and without the expectation of anything in return. Truly appreciate those around you, and you'll soon find many others around you. Truly appreciate life, and you'll find that you have more of it."

-Ralph Marston

*Continued On Page 5*

## Giving Thanks



*Continued From Page 4*

### Giving Thanks: Inspiring Quotes About Thankfulness

"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude." - Alfred North Whitehead

"The way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement." - Charles Schwab

"No duty is more urgent than that of returning thanks." - Unkown

"Let us be grateful to people who make us happy; they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom." - Marcel Proust

"Silent gratitude isn't very much use to anyone." - Gertrude Stein

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough, and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend." - Melody Beattie

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them."  
- John F. Kennedy

"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has." - Epictetus

The above quotes were copied from an article by Jeremy Goldman of INC." [Giving Thanks: 31 Inspiring Quotes About Thankfulness](#)

It's not just for Thanksgiving; these quotes will inspire thankfulness year-round" is the article's name.

*Ron Hoellrich, 2023 Consistory President*



## Spiritual Council

### Meeting Excerpts

November 6, 2023

Pastor: Jeff McCarn  
 Head Elder: Maggie Prigge (23) Backup Head Elder: Eric Shank (24)  
 Scribe: Bob Rettig (25) Backup Scribe: Kevin Waisner (23)  
 Communion: Greg Nelson (24) Asst. Communion: Mike Haldy (25)  
 Membership/Visitation: Eric Shank (24)

Those present: Pastor Jeff McCarn, Kevin Waisner, Erick Shank, Maggie Prigge, Greg Nelson, Mike Haldy Excused: Bob Rettig

- Meeting was called to order by Pastor Jeff.
- Mike Haldy, Elder of the Month of November, started the meeting with devotions. Maggie will be Elder for December.
- Upcoming dates and Events
  - Honor Veterans on November 12
  - Community Evening of Thanksgiving Wednesday, November 22 at 7:00 p.m. at St. Peter's Lutheran
  - Advent begins December 3
    - We will follow the lectionary during Lent
  - Communion will be celebrated on December 3 and during the Christmas Eve 6:00 p.m. worship
  - Membership exploration class will be held at 6:00 p.m. on Sunday, November 12
- Kevin gave an update re: Confirmation and their recent church visit.
- Pastor will visit with Ken Rayle later this week.
- Members will send Christmas cards with a gift card to college students and active military.
- Recently received a request to move a member to the inactive list.

### No Old Business

*Continued on Page 7*



## Spiritual Council

### Meeting Excerpts

November 6, 2023

*Continued From Page 6*

### New Business

Discussed possible plans for 2024.

Installation of Officers will be held during worship on January 14

December meeting will be reorganization.

Next meeting will be December 4 at 6:00 p.m. with incoming members encouraged to attend.

*Meeting highlights*  
*Kevin Waisner, Backup Scribe*

Don't Miss the  
**DEADLINE!**

### ATTENTION CHAIRPERSONS AND SCRIBES

The newsletter deadline for articles in the December publication of the Sentinel is moved ahead to

**Friday, December 15 at 6:00 p.m.**

This is to allow time for the newsletter to be drafted, proofed, printed and ready to mail before the holidays.  
Thank you to everyone for your cooperation.



## CONSISTORY HIGHLIGHTS

November 13, 2023

- Approved Pastor McCarn time off beginning either December 27 or 28 and returning January 4 or 5. Worship and Music will arrange for pulpit fill.
- Approved collecting for Staff Christmas gift beginning November 19 through December 17.
- Affirmed date for Installation of Officers on January 14 along with Affirmation of Covenant between Pastor and Congregation as well as reception of new members.
- Confirmed January 28 as date for Annual Congregational Meeting with potluck meal to follow. Consistory will provide meat and Fellowship Team will provide drinks.

*Respectfully submitted, Maggie Prigge*

*Blue Christmas Worship*  
*December 21, 2023*  
*7:00 p.m.*

Sometimes the holiday season magnifies grief - grief of loss, grief of change, grief of unresolved relationships. The holiday season isn't merry and bright for everyone. For some, it can be a season of stress, sadness and loneliness. Advent, Christmas and the New Year create opportunities to minister to people's spiritual, emotional and mental well-being.

While we are decorating this sacred space during this holiday season, may we all be mindful of the pain in our congregation and community. We will be making space in our spiritual practices for those who may be grieving. I invite all to attend the Blue Christmas worship service on Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 7:00 p.m. in our sanctuary to be a comfort to all.

*Rev. Jeff McCarn*



**DEACONS' BENCH**

*November 13, 2023  
Jeri Hoellrich, Scribe*

**Deacons:**

Pat Kirk (23), Ron Hoellrich (23), Jeri Hoellrich (23),  
Carol Medina (24), Kevin Vajen (24), Adam Stevenson (24)  
Chris Coppes (25), Jared Clady (25), Ben Thomas (25)

Members present: Pat Kirk (23), Ron Hoellrich (23),  
Jeri Hoellrich (23), Adam Stevenson (24), Carol Medina (24),  
Kevin Vajen (24) Jared Clady (25), Ben Thomas (25)  
Others in attendance: Pastor McCarn

Meeting was called to order by Head Deacon, Adam Stevenson.  
Discussion of notes of previous meeting reviewed and accepted.

**Old Business:**

Congregational meeting discussed

**New Business:**

Alternate phone service – not interested at this time  
Earl Mechanical (boiler startup and check) – Tabled. Requesting  
more information from Trustees.  
Orientation for new Elders and Deacons completed with one  
exception.  
Staff Christmas gift – Donation box to be put in Narhex November 19  
Christmas Eve candles will be assembled at next Deacon's December  
meeting  
An update from Finance Team was shared.  
Deacon Schedule for December See Worship Participants Page 10  
**Next Deacon's meeting** scheduled for December 11, 2023,  
at 6:15 p.m

**DECEMBER WORSHIP PARTICIPANTS**

	<b>ACOLYTES</b>	<b>DEACONS</b>
<b>Dec. 3</b>	Deacons	Kevin Vajen Ben Thomas
<b>Dec. 10</b>	Tori Kobilis	Jared Clady Ben Thomas
<b>Dec. 17</b>	Griffin Tanner	Pat Kirk Carol Medina
<b>Dec. 24</b> 10:15 a.m.	Griffin Tanner Joey Coppes	Chris Coppes Jeri Hoellrich
<b>Dec. 24</b> 6:00 p.m.	Neveah Evers Griffin Tanner	Chris Coppes Jeri Hoellrich
<b>Dec. 31</b>	Joey Coppes	Carol Medina Ron Hoellrich



**FROM  
THE SHALOM  
FOOD PANTRY**

**FROM THE PANTRY REPORT - October 2023**

**INCOME**

Income	<u>643.95</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 643.95</b>

*Submitted by Norma Nagel*



## SHALOM CHRISTMAS

As the cold weather starts to creep in, it's time to remind everyone of the Big Event at Christmas time, SHALOM CHRISTMAS. Each year we get names of families from the southern Henry County area who are seeking help with Christmas. We provide food for a Christmas dinner, a warm homemade Blanket and three gifts for each child (one toy, and a top and slacks) in the families that we help.

This year our target number is 35. That's the number of families we want to help. Thankfully our Faith Family doesn't have to shoulder this burden alone. We give thanks to the three area Catholic churches: Holgate St. Mary's, Hamler St. Paul's and Sacred Heart New Bavaria; St. Peter's Lutheran - Holgate, Pleasant Bend United Methodist Church, St. Stephen's Lutheran Hamler, and our sister church, Emmanuel's New Bavaria.

Once again, due to the faithful giving of the St. John's Faith Family, Shalom will be purchasing all the food for the families. We will depend on the Faith Family as well as the other Holgate Area churches for gifts purchased for the children of the families we will be helping.

Providing the families get their applications in early, we should have gifts tags on the board in the Narthex by Sunday, November 19. All gifts will need to be back to the church no later than Sunday, December 10 so our Christmas elves can get all the food boxed up and gifts checked-in. The giveaway will be Tuesday, December 12.

We look forward to another successful year!

*The Shalom Leadership Team*



Remember Those Who Are Ill,  
Undergoing Treatment,  
In Grief, Or Are Recovering  
With Prayers, Cards, And Visits

### *Within the Fellowship:*

**Please hold the following persons in your daily prayers...**

**Those on our hearts and minds**

- \***Jim Winnie** (Keith Winnie's father) health issues
- \***Gary Jones** recovering from shoulder surgery
- Jacob Hahn** recovering at home from back surgery
- Sue Waisner** at Vancrest for rehab after hospitalization
- Jim Waisner** Vancrest for respite care
- \***Tim Davidson** (Husband of Joan, NWOA office manager) recovering after hospitalization
- \***Kyle Keeterle** (Jenna (Clady) husband) recovering after hospitalization
- \***Steve Healy** undergoing chemo
- Rory Prigge** undergoing heart procedure and testing
- \***Mary Brubaker** chemo and radiation
- \***Jenny King** asking for prayers
- Scott Sidle** preparing for surgery  
(\*Non-member family and friends)

Other Members of our Faith Family who are dealing with illnesses

Please pray for our **members and others who are isolated at home or in care facilities**. They would welcome a phone call or card

Prayers for those who died or were displaced by earthquakes in Syria and Turkey

**Those who are anticipating procedures, testing, and/or test results, or recovering from procedure**





Remember Those Who Are Ill,  
Undergoing Treatment,  
In Grief, Or Are Recovering  
With Prayers, Cards, And Visits

*Within the Fellowship:*

- Let us pray for those of St. John's Faith Family who are dealing with health issues or other changes in their lives.
- Let us pray for the church and its leaders and people.
- Let us pray for our service men and women and their families.

*Sympathy to:*

**Keith and Kay Winnie** on the death of Keith's mother, Irene Winnie on October 22, her 100th birthday.

**Wauseon Congregational UCC** on the passing of their pastor, Bill Kerr, after a long battle with cancer. Sympathy to his wife Sandy and their family.

**Phyllis Crawford and family** on the death of Gene Crawford on October 26, 2023.



**Mateo Marcelo Santiago Solis**  
October 17, 2023

Parents: Isaac and LaTasha Solis

*Thank You*

St. John's UCC Holgate Congregation,

Your kindness is Outstanding! Our journey will be long but manageable with thoughts and prayers from you.

! ! ! ! ! Best Wishes!  
! ! ! ! ! Sincerely,  
! ! ! ! ! Tim and Joan Davidson



Remember With  
Prayers, Cards and Visits  
Those Not Always With Us  
Especially For Services

**NURSING HOMES**

**GENACROSS LUTHERAN SERVICES**, 1036 S. Perry Street, Napoleon, OH 43545

*Sue Mohr - #126*

*Gerri Ripke - #221*

**SKLD**, 28546 Starbright Blvd., Perrysburg, OH 43551

*Betty Yaichner*

**Don Huber** - Cards or notes may be sent care of his daughter Dawn Boozer, PO Box 420, Jarales, NM 87023-0420

**ASSISTED LIVING**

**GENACROSS LUTHERAN SERVICES**, 1032 S. Perry Street, Napoleon, OH 43545

□ *Gib Sonnenberg - #413*

**GEORGETOWN PLACE**, Apt. 226, 1717 Maplecrest Rd. Fort Wayne, IN 46815

*Ken Rayle*

**KINGSBURY PLACE**, 245 West Rosewood Ave., Defiance, OH 43512

*Rose Marie Durham - Apt. 142*

**VANCREST NURSING HOME**, 600 Joe E. Brown, Holgate, OH 43527

*Marlene Rettig - #13*

**Janell Honeck** - 4828 LJ Pkwy, Apt. 328, Sugar Land TX 77479

**HOME - Send a greeting to these folks or drop by and visit!**

Peggy Franz	15396 St. Rt. 281	Holgate, Ohio 43527
Herbert Fruth	13567 Co Rd. H	Holgate, Ohio 43527
Jim and Sue Waisner	1542 St. Rt. 108	Holgate, Ohio 43527
Bernard Zimmer	1040 S. Perry St. Apt. 37	Napoleon, Ohio 43545



## Annual Reports due January 14, 2024

**Written Reports** The secretary will take them early!

President of the Consistory	Spiritual Council
Consistory Actions taken and motions made in 2019	Evangelism Team
Deacons	Memorial Team
Pastor's Report	SHALOM
Sanctuary and Bell Choirs	Worship and Music
Christian Education Board	Cemetery Association
Mission and Stewardship	Trustees
Audit Team	Fellowship
	Endowment

**Financial Reports** as soon as bank statements have been balanced.  
 Sanctuary Choir Cemetery Assoc. Memorial Fund  
 Endowment Fund Bell Choir SHALOM  
 SHALOM Beverage & Recycle

If your report is already complete, please forward it to the office via email if possible, or leave it in the secretary's box.

### Carol Lulfs New Phone Contact For Funerals

I have been asked to take over in making phone calls for food for funeral dinners. Darlene has done this for many years and is ready for someone to take over. She asked me; I accepted, so here I am. If you have not been asked to donate food and would like to, call me. If you want your name removed, call me for that also. My contact info is in the church directory.

Carol Lulfs

Phone: 419-438-4104

Email: rclulfs@metalink.net

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY SEPTEMBER 2023

**ST JOHNS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**  
 Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary  
 Fund: GENERAL FUND  
 September 2023

Accounts	SEPTEMBER 2023 ACTUAL	2023 ACTUAL YTD	2023 ANNUAL BUDGET
<b>OPERATING BUDGET INCOME</b>			
Total OPERATING BUDGET INCOME	\$18,002.46	\$150,778.37	\$244,845.63
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>BUILDING &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>			
Total BUILDING & MAINTENANCE	\$2,746.79	\$29,309.14	\$45,080.00
Total MINISTRIES	\$125.46	\$3,949.91	\$6,950.00
Total MISSIONS	\$537.50	\$5,375.00	\$7,016.00
Total ADMINISTRATION	\$5,311.72	\$51,449.40	\$75,939.73
Total PASTORIAL	\$125.00	\$59,345.96	\$109,859.90
Total EXPENSES	<b>\$8,846.47</b>	<b>\$149,429.41</b>	<b>\$244,845.63</b>
Net Total	<b>\$9,155.99</b>	<b>\$1,348.96</b>	
<b>Operating Checking Account Balance as of September 30, 2023</b>			<b>\$ 25,649.74</b>
Mission of the Month: Back Bay Mission	\$	1,405.00	
SHALOM	\$	680.00	

## FINANCIAL SUMMARY OCTOBER 2023

ST. JOHNS UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Analysis of Revenues & Expenses - Summary  
Fund: GENERAL FUND  
October 2023

Accounts	OCTOBER 2023 ACTUAL	2023 ACTUAL YTD	2023 ANNUAL BUDGET
<b>OPERATING BUDGET INCOME</b>			
Total OPERATING BUDGET INCOME	\$25,985.00	\$176,763.37	\$244,845.63
<b>EXPENSES</b>			
<b>BUILDING &amp; MAINTENANCE</b>			
Total BUILDING & MAINTENANCE	\$2,515.45	\$31,924.59	\$45,080.00
Total MINISTRIES	\$156.24	\$4,106.15	\$6,950.00
Total MISSIONS	\$537.50	\$5,912.50	\$7,016.00
Total ADMINISTRATION	\$5,905.10	\$57,354.50	\$75,938.73
Total PASTORIAL	\$8,639.23	\$67,985.19	\$109,859.90
<b>Total EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$17,753.52</b>	<b>\$167,192.93</b>	<b>\$244,845.63</b>
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>\$8,231.48</b>	<b>\$9,580.44</b>	

**Operating Checking Account Balance as of October 31, 2023**      \$ 34,123.44  
 We have moved the remaining COVID19 funds to the operating checking account.  
 The balance of the Fellowship Hall AC project and the Church Heating project  
 was \$ 12,705.39 were moved to cover the moving expenses for the new pastor.

Mission of the Month: Neighbors In Need  
 SHALOM

\$ 540.00  
 \$ 890.00



Mission and  
Stewardship



### THE CHRISTMAS FUND MISSION FOR DECEMBER

*"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way  
you will fulfill the law of Christ" - Galatians 6:2*

St. John's December Mission is the Christmas Fund. This fund provides financial aid to retired and active ministers, as well as retired lay employees, their surviving spouses and children. This mission is one of the all-church missions of the UCC that we support annually. It provides bonus checks at Christmas to low-income retired clergy families and widowed spouses, supplements pensions of low-income retired clergy and widowed spouses, provides emergency grants for financial crises in the lives of active and retired clergy, and subsidizes some health plan and insurance costs for low-income retired and disabled clergy and lay employees of the Church.

The holidays pass by us quickly and expectantly. We Christians pause as we consider the gifts of the year in person and deed. The one constant in those moments is the church, which includes the pastors who followed their faith to lead the church.

The names will change over our, lifetime but stop and consider the best/worst moments of our lives and who stood alongside us as shepherds in our time of need. I see them all in my mind's eye. As Kevin and I consider where our mission money is spent this month, I will think of Jean, Jane, Dan, and the Daves. We will give to the Christmas Fund in their names honoring all the clergy who have served so faithfully.

Please consider donating to our final mission of 2023. Your contributions to this fund allow you to be a blessing for those who have served or are currently serving us in the United Church of Christ's ministry.

*Yours in Christ, Beth Waisner*



**EVANGELISM TEAM MEETING  
OCTOBER 29, 2023**

We reviewed follow-up on the stuffers used at the rummage sale to get the word out about our church.

There was followup about the participation in the Holgate Eyes to the Skies parade at the end of June and the Henry County Tomato Festival parade in August. We thank the congregation and friends for their participation in both those events by donation of candy and supplies, participating in the decorating and building of each entry for the parades, and for being a driver, rider or walker in those events.

We discussed the importance of our social media presence in reaching out to show folks who we are and how we all can be participants in making our presence known.

There was discussion about print media, and we will continue to have a presence in the Northwest Signal as a means to reach out to folks looking for a church.

Thank you to Mary Kay Altman and Christopher Clady, who have completed their terms on the evangelism team.

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***Hold the Date***  
**ANNUAL  
CONGREGATIONAL  
MEETING  
JANUARY 28, 2024**

**FOLLOWING WORSHIP  
POTLUCK MEAL  
MEAT, BREAD, AND BEVERAGES PROVIDED  
PLEASE BRING A DISH TO SHARE  
ANNUAL MEETING WILL BEGIN AFTER MEAL  
Your Presence will be especially important**



**News and Notes**

Submitted By Lucy Coppes  
October 15, 2023

Present: Pastor McCarn, Katie Borck (23), Elleigh Franz (25),  
Lucy Coppes (24) , and Diana Evers (23)

Katie opened the meeting, and Diana led devotionals from "How Great Is Our God: 100 Indescribable Devotions About God & Science."

- **Consistory:** Nominating Team has two nominations for CE Board and is still looking for a third.
- **Confirmation:** Pastor McCarn stated that it is challenging to hold the attention of the Confirmands after church, hoping to eventually return to one session per Sunday instead of splitting into two. Will be showing a DVD from Professor Greg Cary from Lancaster Seminary about Jesus.
- **Sunday School:** Sunday School is going well, most teacher spots are filled. Will order Sunday School Curriculum for Winter session at the beginning of November. Harvest Party is scheduled for October 29 during Sunday School. Kids will be allowed to wear church appropriate costumes, and CE Board will provide games, pumpkin painting and juice and snacks. Rehearsal for the Christmas Play is going well. Discussed possible teacher gifts for kids and teachers. Will continue discussion at November's meeting
- **Youth Ministry:** Youth will be singing on November 5 two songs I'm So Blessed by CAIN and God is Great (I am Unique) by Jeannie Willsamson from AriSon Records. Lucy will check with Betty about copyrights for both songs.
- **Birthdays:** Nothing new to report, cards continue to be sent to all active children at the beginning of the month.
- **Cradle Roll** - Nothing new to report.

*Continued On Page 21*



## News and Notes

Submitted By Lucy Coppes  
October 15, 2023

### Continued From Page 20

- **Pastor Notes and Observations:** Pastor McCarn introduced the concept of Messy Church and asked for CE Board to review the website (messychurch.org) to see if this is a program of interest during the summer months.
- **Next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2023,** after worship.

### Upcoming Dates

**December 3** – Worship/Communion

**December 3** - Siberian Solstice concert 7:00 p.m.

**December 17** – **Sunday School Christmas program** during worship

**December 21** – “Blue Christmas” service (see page 8 for details)

**December 24** – Regular Sunday Worship in a.m.

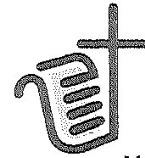
**December 24** – Christmas Eve service 6:00 p.m. – Communion and candle lighting

### Staff Christmas Appreciation

The Faith Family is invited to express their appreciation to the **paid staff with a monetary gift at Christmas.**

There are 10 staff who will share in the offering: Musicians Sheri Plotts, Sue Abshire and Lynne Long, Choir Director Greg Nelson, Custodian Dawn Fry, Media Coordinator Linda Rettig, Newsletter Editor Ruth Ann Durham, Financial Administrator Kristine Maas, Administrative Assistant Betty (Bob) Rettig, and Pastor Jeff McCarn.

Gifts can be put in the decorated box or can be included in the offering envelope, marking the amount to be designated to "Staff Christmas" through December 17.



## Pastoral Relations Council

November 9, 2023

Members Present: Pastor Jeff McCarn, Denny Behnfeldt, Franell Nelson, Bill Snyder, Amanda Rettig, Chad Lulfs, Jeri Hoellrich, Betty (Bob) Rettig

Pastor Jeff has asked that this group meet monthly for at least the first year to assure that there are no surprises. Pastoral Relations will report periodically on feedback received from the Faith Family and from Pastor Jeff. The goal is for PRC to foster two-way communication between Pastor and People. Members of the St. John's Faith Family are encouraged to provide feedback directly to Pastor Jeff or to any of the members listed above.

### Feedback so far:

- Good rapport with the kids
- Lots of energy
- People like how Pastor Jeff visits with folks before and after worship
- Both Pastor Jeff and Bobbie are so friendly – how nice of them to invite people to come to the parsonage for a meal!
- Impressed how Pastor Jeff and Bobbie both help at Shalom

The only concern voiced is that it is difficult for people in the choir loft to hear Pastor Jeff during the Prayers of the People, especially with the music playing (several people have commented that they really like the soft music during prayer). We were told that it is sometimes hard for choir members to hear the sermon too. While Pastor Jeff is somewhat soft-spoken, previous pastors have noted this problem in the chancel area, too. Installation of speakers in the chancel should help resolve the issue and will be investigated.

Pastor Jeff said that he and Bobbie are very happy at St. John's. They feel that they are being welcomed and they are excited about the future at St. John's.

Faith Family members are encouraged to provide feedback to any members of the Pastoral Relations Council to be shared at the monthly meetings. Next meeting to be at 6:00 p.m. on December 7.

*Highlights summarized by Betty (Bob) Rettig*



**EVANGELISM TEAM  
PURPOSE STATEMENT  
FOURTH ITEM**

The Evangelism Team at St. John's has been working over the past year to keep our faith family informed about the purpose statement of the team. The fourth and final point of our purpose statement is to: *plan learning opportunities to teach members and guests about the changing face of culture and society as it relates to the worshipping community today.*

As we discussed at our recent meeting, this fourth point is a challenging one! The one thing our team has been discussing, with the changing face of culture and society today, is how do we reach out to folks to let them know who we are, and that we are there for them? It keeps coming back to social media versus print media.

We do reach out to folks via print with a weekly listing in the Northwest Signal, and with advertisements at Easter and Christmas.

Over the last few years, digital social media has become a big focus. Our website and Facebook pages are out there, reaching folks both locally, regionally, and even further! As our team continues to explore this point, you can do your part to spread the good news of who we are by sharing our information via Facebook. Sharing our worship services, news, and activities can get us to folks who may be looking to explore a faith journey in their lives.

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*Members Elected at the Congregational Meeting  
November 19, 2023*

**Elders** for three year term: Kay Armbruster, Rolie Rettig

**Deacons** for three year term: Linda Arreguin, Mark Vajen,  
Janice Rettig

**CE Board** for one year term: Karen Brown

**CE Board** for three year term: Alexa Brown, Nancy Thomas

**Delegates to the Association Meeting** for one year term:  
Terry (Linda) Rettig, Tammy Vajen, Bob Rettig



*"Senior Saints" Our 80+ Members*

**William Snyder**

will celebrate his  
88th Birthday  
on December 2

14224 Co. Rd. L2  
Napoleon, OH 43545



**Roland and Janice Rettig**

will celebrate their  
63rd Wedding Anniversary  
on December 23

1162 Chelsea Ave.  
Napoleon, OH 43545

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**CHIEF RECEIPTS**

I recently submitted Chief cash register receipts in the amount of \$57,624.64. For that amount we will receive a check in the amount of \$288.12 to be donated to the Shalom Food Pantry.

Such a simple thing for a person to do is saving cash register receipts and dropping them off in the basket at church. To let you know how much we brought in this calendar year, we totaled \$864.56. We appreciate Chief for allowing us to do this as a fundraiser. Keep those receipts coming in!

*Carol Lulfs, Tabulator*



*In Loving Memory*  
**Gene A. Crawford**

June 24, 1937 - October 26, 2023

Gene Arthur Crawford, 86, of Napoleon, Ohio, died peacefully on Thursday, October 26, 2023, at CHP Defiance Area Inpatient Hospice Center with his wife by his side.

Gene was born June 24, 1937, in Napoleon, Ohio to the late Mearl and Laoretta (Plotts) Crawford. On February 15, 1959, he married Phyllis (Hoff) Crawford at St. John's United Church of Christ, Holgate.

Gene was a 1955 graduate of Napoleon High School and served in the United States Army National Guard. He has been a grain farmer for over 55 years.

Gene was a member of St. John's UCC Church, Henry County Farm Bureau, and Ohio Farm Bureau. He enjoyed polka dancing and line dancing with his wife, Phyllis.

He is also survived by his children, Jane (Toby) Runyan and Terry G. Crawford; grandchildren, Kristen (Zachary) Schmidt and Melissa (Rabih) Assaf; great grandchildren, Aleah, Aurora, Alexis, Taalia, and Ameilia; and brother and sisters-in-law, Arlene Knapp, Virginia (Robert) Gray, Junior (Mick) Hoff, and Kay (Keith) Winne.

He was also preceded in death by a brother-in-law, James Knapp, and sister-in-law Janet Hoff.

A funeral service was held on Monday, October 30 at St. John's UCC Church, Holgate. Interment was held later that day at Riverview Memory Gardens. Visitation was held on Sunday, October 29 at Rodenberger-Gray Funeral Home and Monday before the service at the church.

***Memorial Donations may be made to***  
*St. John's United Church of Christ*



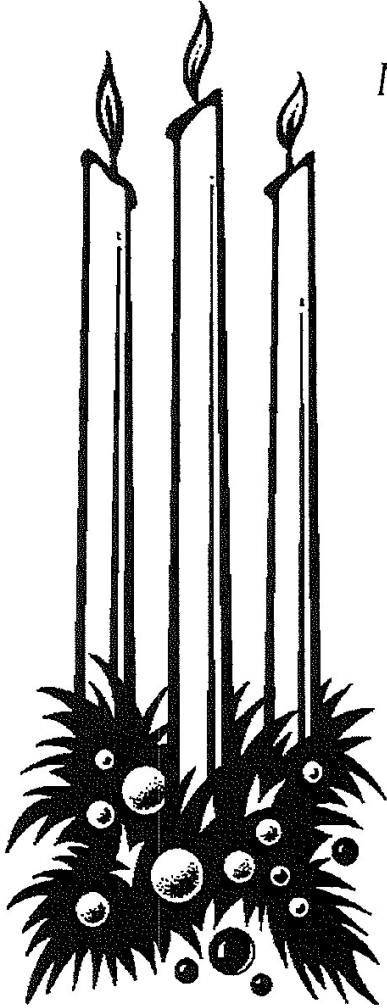
**DECEMBER**

- |                             |                           |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 12 - 1 Rob Lawson           | 12 - 19 John Hahn         |
| 12 - 1 Elizabeth Richnafsky | 12 - 19 Terry Crawford    |
| 12 - 1 Jack Clady           | 12 - 19 Emma Rees         |
| 12 - 2 Carol Medina         | 12 - 22 Sheri Plotts      |
| 12 - 2 Marsha Lambert       | 12 - 22 Keith Winnie      |
| 12 - 2 Bill Snyder          | 12 - 22 Kristi Pontious   |
| 12 - 6 Jim Rettig           | 12 - 23 Kennedy Hall      |
| 12 - 7 Joshua Bortz         | 12 - 24 Alexa Brown       |
| 12 - 8 Rachel Thomas        | 12 - 24 Hal Luebker       |
| 12 - 12 Brian Fry           | 12 - 24 Kelsey Rettig     |
| 12 - 13 Garrett Sidle       | 12 - 26 Judy English      |
| 12 - 17 Pastor Jeff McCarn  | 12 - 26 Abigail Stevenson |
|                             | 12 - 26 Lisa Haldy        |

This is the list of birthdays that are recorded in the church office. If we have missed anyone, please contact the office so we can add his or her name to our list.

If anyone, for personal reasons, does not want his or her name and birthday listed, please contact the church office and make your wishes known.

(See the Kids Corner pages for the children and youth birthdays.)



Merry Christmas  
From The Staff  
At St. John's

- Pastor Jeff McCarn
- Betty (Bob) Rettig
- Dawn Fry
- Kristine Maas
- Ruth Ann Durham
- Greg Nelson
- Sheri Plotts
- Sue Abshire
- Lynne Long
- Linda Rettig




PRAYER CHAIN  
CONTACTS

Contact the Prayer Chain if you have any needs.  
This Prayer Chain has been updated; they will  
faithfully pray for you. Contact one of the following persons:  
Betty (Don) R. at 419-264-4321 Kay A. at 419-966-2389  
Church Office at 419-264-4401

PLAN AHEAD FOR UPCOMING MEETINGS  
See Calendar on Inside Mailing Cover

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Deadline for news articles to appear in the **JANUARY**  
Newsletter is --- **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2023**  
Please leave your article in the folder in the wall file  
on the South wall (Directly across from the door)  
of the church office marked  
**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES**



**MISSIONS  
CORNER**

*December Mission*

**THE CHRISTMAS FUND**

St. John's is a member of the Northwest Ohio Association of the  
Heartland Conference United Church of Christ. Information and  
resources are available at [www.nwoa.org](http://www.nwoa.org), [www.heartlanducc.org](http://www.heartlanducc.org) and  
[www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org).



Children's Ministry



# Kid's Corner



## December

- 12 - 4 Adalynn Borck
- 12 - 7 Cassidy Houchins
- 12 - 11 Carter Franz
- 12 - 16 Emma Franz
- 12 - 23 Bradlee Roberts
- 12 - 24 Ashton Vajen
- 12 - 28 Joseph Coppes
- 12 - 30 Brantley Koketko



# Kid's Corner



## *Sunday School*

### *Crossroad Child And Family Services in Fort Wayne*

#### *Monthly Mission Donation*

Crossroad uses these items as Christmas and Birthday Gifts, Behavior Incentives, and More.

Items can be new or gently used.

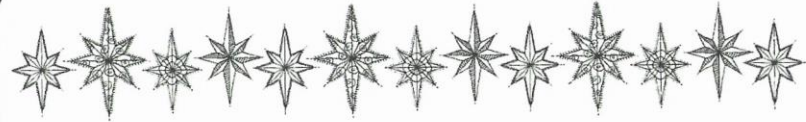
## **DECEMBER**

- \* Sketch Pads (Non-Spiral)
- \* Paints
- \* Canvas
- \* Watercolor Paper
- \* Activity Books (Crosswords, Word Search, Sudoku, Puzzle Books)

The Sunday School Sunday Morning Offering will be given to Mission-To-Go, so we can help send our congregation members on mission trips to help families who are in need.



# Kid's Corner



## *Children's Christmas Program*

*December 17, 2023*

*10:15 Worship*

### **'Twas the Night Before Christmas**

(Written by Kendra Smiley, Published by David C. Cook)

'Twas the Night Before Christmas

And all through the house

Not a creature was stirring

Not even a mouse...

Well, except for our Miss Mouse who is stirring like crazy to prepare goodies for Christmas. She is so flustered about all the work and worry it takes to get ready for Christmas that she is missing the true meaning. Please join us as our Sunday School Children show Miss Mouse the real story of 'Twas the Night Before Christmas.