



The Voice

January 2021



Dear St. Johns,

A big thank you to everyone who sent me cards, food, phone calls, and prayers. It was greatly appreciated. I'm doing better now.

-Freda Smith

Our heartfelt thanks for the beautiful lay quilt and the gift card we received. Jerry and I are blessed to be members of such a caring and loving congregation.

-Jerry and Uta

Dear St. John's Family,

We thank the quilters for the lovely Christmas Quilts. They are so soft, warm, and useful. The gift card will be used also. Getting our offering envelopes in the bag was very nice and helpful. We felt so blessed to be remembered and are very appreciative.

Blessings to all of you,
Harold and Luella Roeth

Pastor Spotlight: Rachel Patterson



Pastor Rachel grew up in Athens, Ohio where her father was a teacher in the Air Force. She was actually born at the Wright Patterson AFB, and she was baptized at the St. John's Lutheran Church in Vandalia.

From a very young age, Rachel was always playing "church". Her first Communion was a defining moment in her faith formation and set her on the path to service. When she was eight years old, the family moved to Germany where they lived near a US Air Force Base for three years. The family attended an ELCA church there. This was a wonderful experience for her.

Rachel was about twelve years old when her dad retired, and the family moved to Maryville, Tennessee. The family began attending St. Paul Lutheran Church where Rachel was later confirmed. She attended high school in Maryville and played the clarinet in the marching band. Rachel has very fond memories of playing at football games. Her high school had a

serious rivalry with a nearby school, which ended up being her future husband's school, unbeknownst to them! In addition to taking advanced classes, Rachel was also the editor of her high school newspaper. She sang in the choir and was active in theatre and musical theatre as well. It was during this time that Rachel became very involved in her church youth group, and she started really thinking about becoming a pastor.

Rachel attended the small college with Scottish roots, Presbyterian Liberal Arts College. She pursued a degree in English Literature and Psychology. What attracted Rachel to this college was the concert choir. She was part of a small, female ensemble called "The Lassies", and her soon-to-be husband sang with a group called "Off Kilter". The choir even traveled to Scotland!

Rachel was involved in many, many activities in college. She was the fiction editor of the college's literary magazine, Impressions. She was also in student government where she served as vice president of her class. She studied a little German and was in a yoga club, philosophy club, several Christian groups, and a "Sisters in Spirit" club.

Rachel met her husband, Ethan, in college even though they attended many activities in high school at the same time. Ethan is preparing to attend law school at Ohio State University in the fall of 2021. He is currently working remotely for a law firm in Georgia. Ethan has an amazing singing voice, and Rachel loves to hear him sing.

Rachel and Ethan were married at her home church of St. Paul Lutheran Church in 2015. They went to Trinity Lutheran Seminary together. Rachel's program of study included two years on campus and two years of internship. The two years of internship took Rachel to Denver, Colorado. After this, Rachel and Ethan returned to Maryville, Tennessee where she has worked as a supply pastor for several months.

Through the call process, Rachel was drawn to St. John's because of our strong commitment to family. Pastor Rachel says, "I just feel that at St. John's, there's a Christ-centered commitment to family and community that is actually very rare and one of the most beautiful things."

PRAYER LIST

HOSPITALIZED, RECOVERING AT HOME, and OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS

Dennis Schmidt	Jack Besecker	Jerry Schroeder
Darla Brumfield	Roger Colby	Marian Fenner
Judy Fletcher	Keith Fletcher	Kristin Gephart
Sally Griffin	Matthew Hahn	Erica Hollopeter
Leon Hollopeter	Ann Horman	Linda Iddings
Helen Kellar	Bill McKibben	Jim Perry
Harold Roeth	Luella Roeth	Kathy Short
Uta Schroder		

IN EXTENDED CARE

Linda Morrow (Cincinnati)
Barb Besecker (Versailles Health Care Center)

FRIENDS & RELATIVES OF MEMBERS

Paula Hahn (daughter-in-law of Richard & Gloria Hahn)
Larry & Tracy Laub (friend of Jim Perry)
Bernice Davis (cousin of Jim Perry)
Jack McCoy (friend of King family)
Howard Chaney (friend of Jim Perry)
Kathy Bless (friend of Laura Schmidt)
Mary Brady (friend of Laura Schmidt)
Gary Holfinger (son of Opal Holfinger)
Bob Bruyere (uncle of Charlie Bruyere)
Joanne Schmidt (mother of Jim Schmidt)
Owen Gauntt (friend of Dawn Flory)
Mikey Perry (friend of Jim Perry)
Bill Sherer (father of Briana King)
Toni Riley (friend of Mindy Gearhardt)
Joan Will (cancer-aunt of Laura Schmidt)
Joel Miller (Connie Adams' brother-in-law)
Mr. & Mrs. Tom Burlieson (friends of Jim Perry)
Asher Cantrell (grandson of Stephanie Wood)
Kenton Stacy (grandson of Wanda Stacy)
Michael Laub & Family (friends of Jim Perry)



FAMILY & FRIENDS IN THE ARMED FORCES

Faith King- Army- Bravo 1-134th Field Artillery, Piqua, OH
(niece of Brooks and Briana King)
Brandon Moyer – Navy, Pyndell AFB, Florida
Jon Osterman- Army
Cory Purvis- Army, Alaska (Pattie Perry's grandson)
LT Mary Strade- USS Bainbridge- deployed (sister of Laura Schmidt)
Tristin Stangel- Marines, New River Air Station, North Carolina

SCRIPTURE

Sunday, January 3, 2021

First Reading: Jeremiah 31:7-14 or
Sirach 24:1-12
Psalm: Psalm 147:12-20 or
Wisdom 10:15-21
Second Reading: Ephesians 1:3-14
Gospel: John 1:[1-9] 10-18

Sunday, January 10, 2021

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-5
Psalm: Psalm 29 (3)
Second Reading: Acts 19:1-7
Gospel: Mark 1:4-11

Sunday, January 17, 2021

First Reading: 1 Samuel 3:1-10 [11-20]
Psalm: Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18 (1)
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 6:12-20
Gospel: John 1:43-51

Sunday, January 24, 2021

First Reading: Jonah 3:1-5, 10
Psalm: Psalm 62:5-12 (6)
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 7:29-31
Gospel: Mark 1:14-20

Sunday, January 31, 2021

First Reading: Deuteronomy 18:15-20
Psalm: Psalm 111 (10)
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 8:1-13
Gospel: Mark 1:21-28

Happy Birthday

4 - Jackie Kiehl	17- Roland Kellar, Sr.
10- Karen Gearhardt	18- Pastor Stephen Nierman
11- Jennifer Colby Schoonover	21- Bill Besecker
11- Tracey Rockey	26- Elsie Smith
12- Krista Miller	30- Mindy Gearhardt
13- Nathan Davis	31- Chris Haines

"And just like that, Santa is gone until next year, but Jesus is still here with gifts that never end."

-Author Unknown



Dear Brothers and Sister in Christ,

GOODBYE AND HELLO. It is a time for me to say goodbye and to say hello and welcome to Pastor Rachel.

Friends, my time with you has been amazing and wonderful. The way you welcomed Gaile and me into your family of faith is something I will treasure and never forget. The only regret I have - because of the virus - was not to be able to visit with you folks in person. This summer and early fall, I had managed to visit a few of our seniors at home, but unfortunately, that did not last long. Still, all of those I have visited with on the phone were gracious and enjoyable to talk with. I heard some great stories/recollections from years past, current issues and challenges, good news, and more.

Your church council was a pleasure to work with, and I could not have asked for a better confidant and friend than Kevin Marten. They have served you well and faithfully.

Please know it was an absolute pleasure to spend the better part of these last eleven months with you.

And now I join with you celebrating in your new pastor and pray for Pastor Rachel and you. God guided you through the long process of the call, and now that faith and trust in God is bearing its fruits. I am excited about the future for this strong and Christ-centered congregation.

Finally, let us pray that as we enter a new year, the light of Christ guides us in our steps, and the by His grace, 2021 is a vast improvement over this year.

Dear friends, may our good and gracious Lord Jesus Christ bless you abundantly this day and always.

A fellow servant,
Pastor Jonathan Schriber



Social Ministry would like to take this opportunity to

thank the congregation for their very generous donations for the Veterans Packages and Christmas bags for the shut-ins. We received a total of \$640 to help with this ministry.



WOW!! You rock, St. John's!! You will be happy to know that we mailed 5 military packages to honor our military men and women and prepared 12 Christmas bags for our shut-ins. We cannot begin to express our thanks to the Quilting Circle for their labor of love in making the beautiful Christmas lap quilts included in the Christmas bags making this year's gift so very special! Also, a special thank you to the congregation for helping to deliver these packages to the shut-ins! Social Ministry has worked tirelessly to make sure that St. John's has been a blessing to all that were touched by the hands and feet of God. God richly and abundantly bless you all. **MERRY CHRISTMAS!!**





Christmas, Epiphany, and the Humanity of Jesus

As we close out the Christmas season and enter into Epiphany, I realize that I am facing very real epiphanies of my own. I am meeting Christ in the flesh by joining with you all in ministry through this new role proclaiming the love of God in Word and Sacrament. The beautiful connection piece that bridges Christmas into Epiphany is the humanity of Jesus and how Jesus' humanness impacts our everyday lives. By becoming human, God draws us closer to the full picture of divinity, and when we celebrate these two special seasons of Christmas and then Epiphany, we are celebrating God's nearness to us and our own eternal nearness to God!

I am beginning the new calendar year reflecting on the idea of "God with us" and how much vital meaning this idea presents for us in this time. We can rest, no matter our circumstances, trusting fully in the presence of God with us during all that we face. Through our very being, we are imbued with "the light that shines in the darkness" (John 1:5), and this light comes from God and cannot be dimmed. So, as you begin this new year with all the challenges and joys it will bring, know that you are made with both breath and light, like Jesus, and that no matter where you go or what you face, God walks with you and understands the steps. And, as so many in the past year have struggled with the pandemic—families have felt the strain of not being together for big occasions, careers and plans have been changed, and lives overall have been turned around—perhaps we can all appreciate, in a very real sense, the concept of God with us—the Word made flesh.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Rachel



The corona virus wants to kill
If it doesn't kill, it makes us ill.
But our God says, "Peace, have no fear!
"For I am always, always here!"
Take this time to stop and pray,
For God is with us come what may!
For our God never leaves us alone -
Even sheltered in our home.
God asks us to take good care -
Care for people everywhere.
Wash your hands, wear a mask,
Social distance: now our task.
How this will end? We do not know.
But God is with us as we go!!!

-By Dianne Schmidt

Two Horses

Just up the road from my home is a field with two horses in it. If you look closely, you will notice something quite amazing. Looking into the eyes of one horse will reveal that he is blind. His owner has chosen not to have him put down but has made a good home for him. If you are quiet and listening, you will hear the sound of a bell. Looking around for the source of the sound, you will see that it comes from the smaller horse in the field. Attached to her halter is a small bell. It lets her blind friend know where she is, so he can follow her. As you stand and watch these two friends, you'll see how she is always checking on him, and that he will listen for her bell and then slowly walk to where she is, trusting that she will not lead him astray. When she returns to the shelter of the barn each evening, she stops occasionally and looks back, making sure that her friend isn't too far behind to hear the bell.



Like the owner of these two horses, God does not throw us away just because we are not perfect or because we have problems or challenges. God watches over us and even brings others into our lives to help us when we are in need. Sometimes we are the blind horse being guided by the little ringing bell of those whom God places in our lives. Other times, we are the guide horse, helping others see the way. Good friends are like this. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there.

Please listen for my bell, and I'll listen for yours.

Register today for the 2021 Vibrant Church Conference courses!

Join us for the Vibrant Church Conference, a Southern Ohio Synod initiative to provide valuable training on topics currently impacting leaders and congregations. Like our 2020 course offerings, these new courses are online and are comprised of pre-recorded video sessions and Saturday morning Zoom forums to allow for questions, insights and discussion. A link to the pre-recorded videos will arrive in your email about a week prior to the scheduled Saturday discussion forums.

Check out our next **five** course offerings below and register today! You are encouraged to safely watch them as group or gather online and share your thoughts with others in your congregation prior to or after the workshops. Teamwork is critical to the success of any organization, especially during times of change. The more people you have on the same page, the better the buy in and the more quickly and effectively your church can pivot to meet the ever-changing ministry environment—now and beyond. All courses begin at 10 am on the scheduled date and will wrap up by noon.

Topics and Dates:

-January 16 “DIY Vacation Bible School”

In “D.I.Y.: V.B.S.” Pastor Hille will outline how to develop an entire week-long Vacation Bible School program in house. By picking themes that speak to your ministry, and developing Bible Studies, games, crafts, and snacks around them, Pastor Hille’s home grown approach to VBS is organic and context reflective, drawing on talents, skills and passions of congregations to create a memorial and fun experience for kids of all ages.

-February 13 “Building a Budget”

Pastor Peter Rudowski offers expert guidance on developing a budget that reflects your congregation’s values and supports its mission, and then introduces the most effective strategies for presenting the budget to your congregation in a way that encourages member engagement, participation, and support.

-April 10 “Advocacy in our Congregations”

Can we end hunger in our communities once and for all? Yes, we can, but it will require us to be advocates as well as servants in our communities. During our time, we will discuss what advocacy means for us as people of faith. Learn to be effective advocates in our congregations and communities alongside those who hunger and thirst.

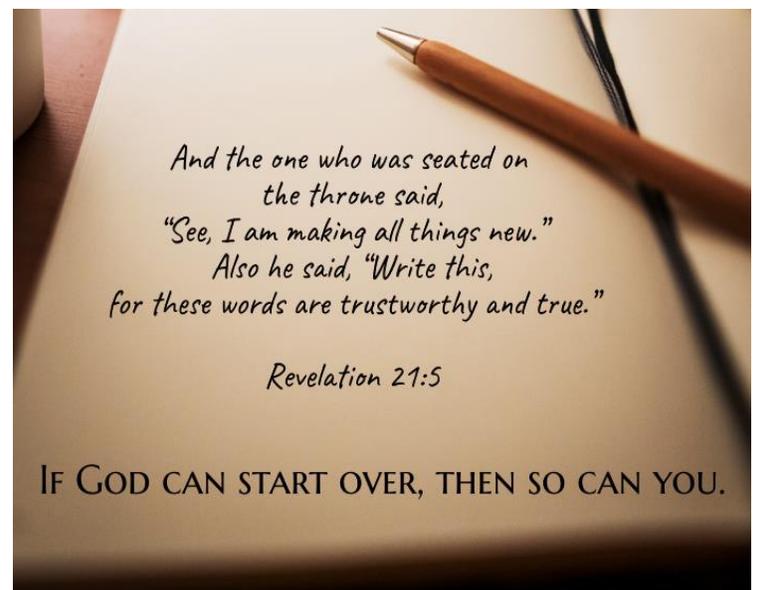
-May 15 “Dinner Church”

Dinner Church is a weekly worship where the participants sit at a table together gathered around food created to share with our neighbors. The flow of the meal is intimately linked to our Lutheran liturgy. The word become fodder for conversation, the prayers of the people rise from the concerns of our neighbors, and communion is the centerpiece of the table where we actually break bread together.

-June 19 “A Story Worth Telling”

YOU Have a Story Worth Telling. We will explore how to discover and tell our unique faith story of how God has been present in our lives. We will explore our personal stories in relationship to God's story as captured in the pages of scripture.

To register for any of the free conference courses above, visit www.southernohiosynod.org and click on “Vibrant Church Conference” under “Quick Links”.



Youth!

What a lovely program! The annual Christmas program was a hit! Although reimagined for 2020, the program offered scripture, advent insight, and traditional Christmas songs. Everyone did a great job! Special thanks to Kristen Gephardt for her accompaniment, Rachel Larson for the beautiful props, Rick Longenecker and Brooks King for sound, Kaitlyn Flory for help with music, Pastor Jon and the congregation for their support, Norma Colby for the very thoughtful goodie bags, and a special shout out to Libby Shaffer for her wonderful piano solos and singing on every song. Our participants this year in order of appearance were Lauren King, Preston King, Lillian King, Cuinn Schmidt Rockey, Cody Rohr, Mary Larson, Sophie Shaffer, and Ali Larson. Thank you again, St. John's, for the support and enthusiasm!



St. John's Lutheran Church
Council Minutes
December 9, 2020

Present: Kevin Marten, Brooks King, Mindy Gearhardt, David Larson, Chad Reese, Ann Horman, Holly Turner, Brandy Hahn, Pastor Schriber, Kaitlyn Flory, Derrek Shively
Absent: Scott Gephart

1. Devotions – Devotions were led by Pastor Schriber
2. Pastor's Report – 30 phone visits, 5 worship services, and 1 meeting. Has had some conversations via email with Pastor Rachel as she prepares to move to St. John's. Dave moves to accept the report, seconded by Mindy. Motion carried.
3. Financial Report – Personnel cost are up from the last few months due to the moving payment to Pastor Rachel. Maintenance costs are up for the upgrades to the Eagles Nest. Brandy moves to accept the report, seconded by Chad. Motion carried.
4. Committee Reports
 1. Social Committee – The committee sent out 12 Christmas baskets to shut ins, 5 packages were sent out to Veterans. The Social Committee has received a total of \$640 to help offset the costs.
 2. Stewardship – The envelopes are in the back of the church. Those envelopes that have not been picked up they will be sent to those members after the first of the year.
5. Old Business
 - a. Videoing Services – During the service there are usually at least 15 views which could translate to about 30 additional people viewing on the Sunday services.
 - b. Call Update – Synod has received all the paperwork needed for Rachel to be ordained.
 - c. Review Safety Procedures – Council reviewed the procedures and at this time did not see a need to change any of the current safety procedures.
 - d. Online giving – Dave is looking into more online giving options. Currently we have the option for the general fund, however there have been inquiries as to advent giving. Dave will look into setting this up.
6. New Business
 - a. Services
 1. Christmas Eve – Council discussed many options as to how to best serve our congregation and the possibility of having a large crowd for the Christmas Eve service. We will have service with limited seating and the service will be streamed live. A one call will go out to our members.
 2. Lessons and Carols – To adhere to our guidelines and safety protocols, we will have one person read the lessons and sing one verse of the carol. The carols will be printed in the bulletin.
 3. Pastor Rachel's First Sunday – Pastor Rachel's first Sunday will be January 3rd. Council discussed options as to how to welcome her.
 - b. Felger Fund Outreach – Mindy moves to keep the Felger Outreach Distribution the same as last year, seconded by Dave. Council discussed that due to the pandemic and that we cannot have large gatherings, council has decided to keep the outreach distribution the same as last year. The organizations that were given money from last year were: Heather Partners Free Clinic (Troy), Family Abuse Shelter (Troy), ELCA Immigration and Refugee Services, and ELCA World Hunger. Motion carried.
7. Adjournment – Holly moves to adjourn, seconded by Mindy. Motion carried. The council closes with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by,
Holly Turner