



The Voice



May 2020

Due to the public concern with COVID-19, St. John's will be temporarily suspending all church services. However, you can watch services from our Facebook page even if you do not have a Facebook account. We invite everyone to visit [Facebook.com/St.JohnsCovington](https://www.facebook.com/St.JohnsCovington) each Sunday at 10 am. Videos can be viewed any time after they are posted as well.

To the ladies of the church, especially Sandy, we are beyond grateful for the baby shower you had for us last month. From adorable decorations to amazing food, you all outdid yourselves! We appreciate all of the clothes, diapers, and assorted gifts you blessed our daughter. Levi and I always felt this church pulled on our heartstrings, and we appreciate all of the love and support our church family has provided.

*New Member Spotlight: Nessa Fay Hahn



Congratulations to Brandy, Levi, and Tyrus Hahn! We welcome the congregation's newest member with praise and thanksgiving to God.

Nessa Fay Hahn was born on April 14th, 2020 at 7:53 am. She is 8 pounds 1 ounce and 20.5 inches long.



No words can express the gratitude felt toward those who make it possible for the congregation to share in the worship service online. Many tear-filled thank you messages have been shared.

Happy Birthday

- 1 - Cody Kiehl
- 3 - Cody Rohr
- 4 - Landon Flory
- 14- Lauren King
- 16- Ann Horman

- 19- Patrick McKibben
- 22- Christina Perry
- 23- Keith Fletcher
- 24- Kaitlin Flory
- 30- Amber Stangel

PRAYER LIST

HOSPITALIZED, RECOVERING AT HOME, and OTHER PRAYER CONCERNS

| | | |
|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Marian Fenner | Jerry Schroeder | Uta Schroder |
| Phyllis Drieling | Jim Perry | Leon Hollopeter |
| Roger Colby | Jack Besecker | Erica Hollopeter |
| Judy Fletcher | Sally Griffin | Linda Iddings |
| Helen Kellar | Luella Roeth | Laura Schmidt |
| Ann Horman | Bill McKibben | Harold Roeth |
| Janice Meyer | Kathy Short | Keith Fletcher |
| Matthew Hahn | | |

IN EXTENDED CARE

Linda Morrow (Cincinnati)
 Barb Besecker (Versailles Health Care Center)
 Charlie Horman (Brookdale)

FRIENDS & RELATIVES OF MEMBERS

Paula Hahn (daughter-in-law of Richard & Gloria Hahn)
 Kennedy Kraft (granddaughter of MaryAnn Francis)
 Larry & Tracy Laub (friend of Jim Perry)
 Thelma Archer (friend of Jim Perry)
 Bernice Davis (cousin of Jim Perry)
 Marilyn Helke (friend of Colbys)
 Ethel Besecker (friend of Colbys)
 Fran Maynard (friend of Colbys)
 Jack McCoy (friend of King family)
 Darlene Wise (friend of Jim Perry)
 Bridget Simon (friend of Jim Perry)
 Mary Littlejohn (friend of Jim Perry)
 Shirley Sheffer (friend of Dawn Flory)
 Bob Bruyere (uncle of Charlie Bruyere)
 Howard Chaney (friend of Jim Perry)
 Owen Gauntt (friend of Dawn Flory)
 Joyce Gilbert (friend of Jim Perry)
 Lester Smith (friend of Jim Perry)
 Joel Miller (Connie Adams' brother-in-law)
 David Moss (friend of Levi, Brandy, & Tyrus Hahn)
 Mr. & Mrs. Tom Burlieson (friends of Jim Perry)
 Asher Cantrell (grandson of Stephanie Wood)
 Andrew Purvis (grandson of Pattie Perry)
 Joanne Schmidt (mother of Jim Schmidt)
 Kenton Stacy (grandson of Wanda Stacy)
 Joan Will (cancer-aunt of Laura Schmidt)



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)
 Jerrid Stangel- Army
 Tristin Stangel- Marines, Keesler AFB, Mississippi

SCRIPTURE

Sunday, May 3, 2020

First Reading: Acts 2:42-47
Psalm: Psalm 23 (1)
Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:19-25
Gospel: John 10:1-10

Sunday, May 10, 2020

First Reading: Acts 7:55-60
Psalm: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16 (5)
Second Reading: 1 Peter 2:2-10
Gospel: John 14:1-14

Sunday, May 17, 2020

First Reading: Acts 17:22-31
Psalm: Psalm 66:8-20 (8)
Second Reading: 1 Peter 3:13-22
Gospel: John 14:15-21

Sunday, May 24, 2020

First Reading: Acts 1:6-14
Psalm: Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 (4)
Second Reading: 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11
Gospel: John 17:1-11

Sunday, May 31, 2020

First Reading: Acts 2:1-21 or Numbers 11:24-30
Psalm: Psalm 104:24-34 (30)
Second Reading: 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13 or Acts 2:1-21
Gospel: John 20:19-23 or John 7:37-39



"I think today's gonna be one of my good days."

"What lies behind us and what lies ahead of us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us."

-Ralph Waldo Emerson



Dear Friends in Christ,

Alleluia, Christ Jesus has been raised from the dead, the tomb is empty, and life eternal is ours through the resurrection. The celebration continues.

I must say, this has been a rather unusual way to begin a pastoral relationship with a congregation. In spite of the virus, there have been blessings and opportunities to minister. I will share a few here.

First, a huge thank you to the small group that gathers as our worship team every week. Including Holy Week services, this group has lived-streamed six services so far. Kristen Gephart has played the organ and provided wonderful music to enhance the services. Kevin Marten has served as our cantor, singing the hymns and providing some powerful solos. The man behind the scenes and making this all possible is David Larson. He has overcome some technology issues to bring the services into our homes. We have also been blessed with a number of folks who have served as lectors. I appreciate the different voices they lend to the service. Everyone takes precautions and we all keep a distance. Thank you so much to these faithful servants.

These folks will continue to provide this service as long as needed. But, we long for that Sunday we can ALL gather together in the sanctuary and lift our voices in praise and worship.

I want to thank Stephanie for all of her work. She has been a tremendous help for me in trying to connect with people, getting input on bulletins, and answering all kind of questions.

With her assistance, I have made over twenty phone visits with different folks (as of April 20th). That has been a real blessing for me. I have come to know - a little bit - some wonderful people with amazing stories as they tell me a little of their lives. I look forward to being able to visit these and other folks face to face.

Finally, as you can imagine, the call process has really slowed down because of the virus. Council and the call committee will keep you updated. In the meantime, and as long as necessary, I am thrilled to serve as your interim pastor. If you need anything, please do not hesitate to call - 937-492-3467.

The blessings and peace of the risen and alive Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Pasto Jon



Evelyn L. Holfinger, 90, of Covington, passed away Thursday, April 23, 2020, at her residence.

She was born October 23, 1929, in Miami County, to the late Andrew and Florence (Fisher) Etter.

She married Robert E. Holfinger on June 6, 1953; he preceded her in death on September 24, 2014.

Evelyn will be missed and remembered by her three sons and spouses, Doyle & Connie Holfinger of Piqua, Roger & Cathy Holfinger of South Charleston, and Brian & Brenda Holfinger of Tarpon Springs, Fla.; a sister, Treva Burns of Ansonia; and a brother, Ralph & Connie Etter of Covington. She was Grandma to seven grandchildren, Jason (deceased) & Lisa Holfinger Stanaford, Dustin & Afton Holfinger, Allison & Mathew Robinson, Megan Holfinger, Kelly & Braedon Santella, Christopher Holfinger, Tamara & Franklin Hughes; 10 great-grandchildren; and her dog, Penny.

She was a 1947 graduate of Bradford High School and a longtime member of St. John's Lutheran Church of Covington, where she was active making quilts. She was a 30+ year volunteer in the Dettmer & UVMC Gift Shop. She was the last member of the Country Comfort Club and a longtime Farm Bureau member. She enjoyed camping, gardening, watching TV, and was the 'Noodle Lady' for the Concord School Carnival for many years.

Quarantine

The Latin root of the word "quarantine" is "forty". So what does the Bible say about 40?

- The flood lasted 40 days.
- 40 years Moses fled Egypt.
- 40 days Moses stayed on Mount Sinai to receive the Commandments.
- Exodus lasted 40 years.
- Jesus fasted for 40 days.

A group of theologians thinks the number 40 represents "change". It is the time of preparing a person, or people, to make a fundamental change. Whenever the number 40 appears in the Bible, there is a "change".

Please know that during this "quarantine" rivers are cleaning up, vegetation is growing, the air is becoming cleaner because of less pollution, there is less theft and murder, healing is happening, and most importantly, people are turning to Christ. The Earth is at rest for the first time in many years, and hearts are truly transforming.

Youth!

WCKD? What can kids do? What can you do during this time we cannot congregate? You can write notes to doctors and nurses, your garbage collector, or a first responder and drop them off. Drop off posters and notes of encouragement to neighbors who have



health issues and are even less able to get out than normal. You can make homemade masks and distribute them. There is already this ministry in our church. Sandy Longenecker and Krista Davis are good at this and would be a great resource if you don't know how to make them. You can YouTube a video as well. It is not as important what you do but rather that you do something to better your family, your neighborhood, or your community. Be creative! If you do anything, please send me pictures; we would love to showcase your good works!



Do you have a 2020 graduate in your house? We want to honor him or her! Please email Laura Schmidt at gardener03@yahoo.com or call her at 937-570-0034, and let her know who is graduating and from where. We would like to set up a June date to honor all our graduates at St. John's!!! Thank you in advance.

If we are able, there will be a Youth Coffee Hour on Sunday, May 10th after service. Please bring something to share as you are able.

Congratulations to Ryan Rohr for being selected as the Sentinel for the Covington High School FFA!

We are still planning (at the time of this writing) the following activities that we had in the works:



Our annual bowling party will be Sunday, June 7th at 12 pm at Troy Bowl. Bowling, shoe rental, pizza and beverage provided. If you are interested in attending, please sign up on the back bulletin board.



LaComedia presents The Little Mermaid, Saturday July 11th with a 5:30-5:45 pm arrival time. Sign up on the back bulletin board.



Are you planning on attending the tri-annual ELCA Youth Gathering "BOUNDLESS" in Minneapolis June 29-July 3, 2021? This is a life changing, faith full, spiritual adventure! You must be an incoming freshman to graduating senior on those dates. If you think you are interested, please contact Laura Schmidt so we can plan for registration (opens in September, 2020), logistics, and chaperones. Please let Laura know by July 1, 2020 if you intend to go. Laura will be attending the first 2021 Youth Gathering Information Session for leaders on the evening of May 4th (virtually, of course).

The Youth connected in a video chat toward the end of April on the 23rd. It was a nice change of pace, and everyone was happy to see each other's faces. We discussed homework, life in "Stay at Home", Easter baskets, projects we are working on, and had prayer. We certainly look forward to the time when things are back to "normal" and we can be in a room together, worship together, and HAVE FUN!!! In 1 Peter 5:10 it says, "and the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast".

Things will get better for all of us. We will be restored. **Please continue to pray for our young folk; they, like all of us, have had their worlds turned upside down, structure disintegrated, and are trying to navigate the best they can.**



Online Donations Now Available

Great news! You can now give your offering to St. John's through an online contribution system. You can access this option by visiting the church's website and selecting the "ONLINE GIVING/OFFERING" link at the top of the page, or you can go directly to the following link:

<https://www.eservicepayments.com/cgi-bin/Va>

There are a few important things to consider as you give online.

*You have the option to give using a credit/debit card or ACH transaction using your checking or savings account. You also can choose between a one-time donation or a recurring donation (weekly or monthly).

*There is a processing fee of 2.75% for **each credit/debit card transaction**. You have the option to offset this amount in order to guarantee the church will receive your full contribution. For tax purposes however, you will receive credit for the total amount you give, not the amount the church receives. Please see the following example:

- Donation of \$10
- Subtract 2.75%
- You are charged \$10
- Church receives \$9.73

You have the option to offset the processing fee. Again, see the following example

- Donation of \$10
- Add 2.75%
- You are charged \$10.28
- Church receives \$10.00

*You have three fund options, which are "general", "current", and "benevolence". If you put all of your contribution in the "general" fund, this is the same thing as not marking anything on your physical offering envelope. In this case, 90% of your contribution goes to "current" expenses, and 10% goes to "benevolence". You can also choose to give all of your money to "current" spending, all of it to "benevolence", or a combination between the two. For each section, you are entering a dollar amount, not a percentage. Please see the following for an image of what this form looks like. Here are a couple of examples of what you can do:

General Fund: \$50.00

Current: \$0.00

Benevolence: \$0.00

(90% of your contribution will go to "current", and 10% will go to "benevolence".)

General Fund: \$0.00

Current: \$25.00

Benevolence: \$25.00

(The exact dollar amounts will go "current" and "benevolence".)

General Fund: \$0.00

Current: \$50.00

Benevolence: \$0.00

(All of your contribution will go to "current", and none will go to "benevolence".)

The screenshot shows a web form titled "Donations". At the top, there is a link "Edit First Page Message" and a note: "If you've already created a profile, please 'Log In' on the right, otherwise continue." Below this is another link "Edit Funds and Fund Groups". The form contains three input fields for "General Fund:", "Current:", and "Benevolence:", each with a value of "0.00". A "Total:" label shows "\$0.00". Below the inputs is a "Donation Frequency:" dropdown menu set to "Choose One" with a link "(About recurring donations)". The "Donation Start Date:" is set to "04/16/20" with a calendar icon. A "Continue" button is at the bottom.

*In the event that you would like to make a contribution to a fund other than "general", "current", or "benevolence", you will have to provide a physical check to the church and designate that fund on your offering envelope.

If you have mailed in your contribution since church has been suspended, please note that those checks have NOT been deposited. They are locked up at the church. We also ask that you refrain from mailing physical checks to the church until further notice. You will, however, be able to provide offering through physical checks when we return to holding service.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to Dave Larson at (937) 570-0197 or davidlarson8031@gmail.com. Also, if you would like individual assistance in setting up your online giving, feel free to contact Dave.

Call Update

From Your Call Committee

We are beginning our Call Process journey at St. John's. The Call Committee was formed and is comprised of Mindy Gearhardt (Council Liaison), Delbert Kiehl, Sandy Longenecker, Tiffany Shively, Levi Hahn, Brooks King, and Betty Hollopeter and Laura Schmidt (Co-Chairs). The council completed the Congregational Profile and met with the Director of the Call Process for our synod, Pastor Abrams. He is the Assistant to the Bishop. The Call Committee also met with Pastor Abrams regarding their responsibility.

Please know that the call process is a confidential process for many reasons. Candidates' current congregations may not know they are looking to leave, and we do not want to undermine their relationship with their congregation or upset our fellow Lutherans unnecessarily.

The call committee will interview candidates presented by the Bishop. Once they feel they have a viable candidate, they will pass this candidate on to the Church Council. The Council will vet that candidate as well. Once the council is ready, it will present the candidate to the congregation for a vote. Each of these steps requires at least a two thirds positive vote.

The process can take six months to even a year to complete. We ask for your patience and your prayers. Please do not ask the call committee questions about candidates. They are bound by the process through the synod to not share information about candidates. Nothing they do is public. They have put in many hours already preparing for the course we are undertaking. We promise we will share information as we are able and keep you updated on the progress, but we are unable to share details with you about candidates, who they are, where they have served, or answer any questions.

We know the Holy Spirit has already chosen the perfect pastor for our congregation. We are just waiting to receive him or her. Thank you in advance for your prayers and support. I leave you with Jeremiah 29:11, "For surely I know the plans I have for you," says the Lord, "plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope."

St. John's Lutheran Church

Church Council Minutes
April 8, 2020

Present: Pastor Jon, Kevin Marten, Holly Turner, Scott Gephart, Mindy Gearhardt, Kaitlyn Flory, Brandy Hahn, Chad Reese, Dave Larson, Derrek Shively

1. Devotions – Pastor Jon led us in prayer.
2. Pastor's Report – Dave moves to accept Pastor's Report, seconded by Mindy. Motion carried.
3. Financial Report – Financial Reports were at the church and since no one is to be in the church, Dave will grab one and send it out via e-mail. If there is anything alarming, we will meet to discuss.
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Social Committee – Waiting till the stay at home order is lifted to continue their services.
 - b. Evangelism – We are using Facebook Live to get our worship services to out to our members and to others as people can share the service. Pastor Jon mentioned that he has had 120 views of the worship services.
5. Old Business
 - a. Call Update – The call committee had a conference call with Pastor Abrams. He spoke about the process with the call committee members. The Call Committee would like to see the Ministry Site Profile that council has worked on after it has been completed. Mindy moves to accept the Ministry Site Profile as completed on April 8, 2020, seconded by Brandy. Motion carried.
 - b. Stephanie Basement use Postponed – Due to the stay at home order, Stephanie will use the basement at later date.
 - c. Council Installation/Baptism/Confirmation/First Communion – This will be held at a later date.
 - d. Deep Cleaning of the Church – Kevin mentioned to Rick and Sandy about a deep cleaning of the church once the stay at home order has been lifted. They thought we could have a group of people (5-10) to do a deep cleaning of the church before everyone comes back.
6. New Business
 - a. On-Line Giving – David has looked into having an on-line option of giving. He and Bev have been working with IconCMO and Vanco. Because we are an ELCA church there, is no fee for the church; however, there will be a small processing fee for the transaction.
 - b. Giving – Right now, if people have sent in checks to the church, they are sitting there and not being deposited. We will make an announcement to our congregation letting them know so that they realize and can make those calculations in their budget.
 - c. Small Business Loans – Kevin informed council about some of the bail outs that are and/or will be coming such as small business loans. Some of these could possibly apply to us. As of right now, council does not feel like we need to apply for a loan because we are in a good financial standing right now.
 - d. Holy Week Services – The church will have a live Maundy Thursday and Good Friday services at 7 and Easter Sunday service at 10.
 - e. The Miami County Foundation has humanitarian grants available and they are wanting to support some other areas. Holly will ask Briana to add a link on our Facebook page letting people be aware of this.
6. Adjournment - Holly moves to adjourn, seconded by Scott. Motion carried. Council closed with the saying of the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by,
Holly Turner