



The Messenger

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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From Pastor Telloni . . .

When this article is read, we will be halfway through the Christmas season and the beginning of a new year. The celebration of our Savior's birth is in full swing during the transition from one historic year to an unknown 365 days. We should be grateful for being reminded in our communal gatherings that the Babe in the manger entered this earth in order to "save His people from their sins" (Mt. 2:21) so that we may sing with the angels each day, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom He is pleased" (Lk. 2:14)! This is God's promise and our hope! Peace in Christ to you! Now bring on 2025!

I would also like to express, on behalf of Pastor Carpenter and his family and myself, our deep thanks to the members of our family of faith who wished us a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year via cards, personal greetings, or other loving expressions and gifts. Your love and care are much appreciated. God bless us all!



Martin Luther once stated that the Holy Scriptures are the "cradle" that holds Jesus Christ so that the world may behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. The center of the proclamation of that divine Word is that the One who had to lie in a cattle's manger at birth might be lifted up on a crude cross to die in order to draw all people to Himself.

True Christians are those whom the Holy Spirit has created a "room" in their hearts for Jesus through the Word and Baptism. There was no "room" for Jesus in Bethlehem, and I would not dare to ask you, "No room for Jesus?" By definition, a Christian is one whose heart is the room where Jesus dwells and strengthens them through the Gospel so that they may worship and witness and work with their brothers and sisters in serving others in Jesus' Name and love.

Truth be told, that "room" can get crowded at times, and messy, as work and sundry activities pile up higher and higher, while our Lord gets gently pushed into some dark and lonely corner. Life happens, sort of! Every doubt or so-called duty or mundane pursuit takes up time and, before you know it, the question above is a valid one, isn't it? Where did Jesus go? Did we hear His footsteps? So, the question is posed, "No room for Jesus?"

The angels made room for a heavenly cantata above the fields to herald the holy birth. The shepherds left their flocks to make room to visit the Babe lying in the manger. The Wise Men made room for a long trek from the East to worship the newborn King. Mary and Joseph certainly made room in their lives to raise the precious Child to adulthood.

Everyone of us – yes, everyone! – struggles with time in this crazy world to make room for Him, particularly for worship and witness in God's congregation. This is why, certainly in our beloved church body, and of course the Scriptures, the call to repent of sins and the reception of the cross-earned forgiveness of sins through Jesus' own Word and Sacraments are absolutely crucial – this is the lifeblood for our hearts!

My pastoral prayer this year will be centered in the petition to the Holy Spirit that He will enlarge the rooms in the hearts of all St. John members for a strong and loving Savior to bring them His peace and power that will sustain their lives of faith, to His glory, as we await His final appearing in that hoped-for future Last Day!

We now are averaging 60-75 souls in worship each week. A total of 140 or so members come to church during the year. Our formal membership roster shows 336 communicants and 505 baptized members. Some of them are your family members or friends. The truth is that we miss their presence. We love them. We need them. How do we invite them – yes, invite, not cajole! Some may have been going to other churches, but they have not said so to us. We consider them family. We have certainly not kicked them out of the church, so to speak. It is sad that they have walked away from our fellowship by their own choice. Why? We can only assume that they have little or no room for Jesus and His Word, or they are indifferent regarding corporate worship with their spiritual family. Please pray for them – heartily!

To you, my friends, continue to be faithful as Jesus expands the room in your hearts with His rich gifts through faithful reception of His Gospel in His Holy House. The last verse of a Christmas carol I composed 22 years ago says: "God the Father, why the love To send down Jesus from above? To save a people filled with sin Who have no room for You within? It's true Your Son was born to die To end sin's reign and bring life nigh!!"

**STEWARDSHIP CORNER
A NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION**

As the new year begins, the tradition of making New Year's resolutions becomes a reality. Many people make resolutions such as losing weight, exercising, eating healthier, or saving more money. The Stewardship Board would like you to prayerfully consider including a stewardship themed resolution this year. A couple stewardship themed resolutions could include to 1) Commit to regular prayer and Bible study, 2) Increase your acts of service to your church and community, and financial offerings. It's important to start each day with prayer and thanksgiving, as we recognize the abundant blessings that God has provided to us.



Once again, I am pleased to announce, as of the time I am writing this article, that **21 giving units** have "Stepped Up" to pledge a total of **\$84,540.00** towards our ministry here at St. John's here in Massillon. If you were absent or unable to turn in your Commitment to the Lord on Consecration Sunday, please return it to the church office or drop it in Sundays offering plate so that your 2025 commitment can be recorded and included in our total. Stepping up your commitment and contributions ensure that we can continue our mission to "Restoring Broken People to Life in Christ" in ways that truly do make a difference!

May your thankfulness and trust in the Lord be reflected in your Stewardship!
- Board of Stewardship – Luther Russert, Chairman

UPCOMING SERVICES

Wednesday, January 1st
New Year's Day
The Circumcision and Name of Our Lord
Service - 10:00 am
Sermon: "His Name Is Our Name" (Luke 2:21)
... Pastor Carpenter
The Sacrament of the Body and Blood
of Jesus will be celebrated
The Adult Choir will sing a seasonal anthem

Sunday, January 5th
The Festival of the Epiphany
Divine Festival Service - 10:00 a.m.
Sermon: "An Extraordinary Star" (Matthew 2:1-12)
... Pastor Telloni
The Sacrament of the Body and Blood
of Jesus will be celebrated.
The Adult Choir will sing a seasonal anthem

LIFE WITH GOD CLASS

Will begin after the New Year! This is a 6-8 week class for those who are preparing for membership or for members reviewing our teachings. The curriculum is called "Rooted in the Faith – Living in Christ." There is a sign-up sheet posted on the front bulletin board for those interested. Pass the word on to family or friends.



Reviewing the Gospel and faith and life in Christ can can enrich your walk with HIM as His witness to others!

MONDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS

will resume on **January 6th** at **10:00 am** in Rooms 112-113. The **topic** just for that day will consider the Epiphany Story recorded in Matthew 2. A new topic will be begin



THE MEN'S FELLOWSHIP



will resume their meetings on Thursday, January 2nd, at 11 a.m., at Varieties Restaurant on Lincolnway East in Massillon.

THE MARTHA SOCIETY

will meet at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, January 14th for a "workday" to clean the kitchen. Lunch will be provided. If you would like to volunteer, see Mickey Krnach or Deb Stocker



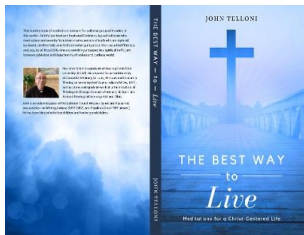
THE ST. JOHN QUILTERS



will resume on Wednesday, January 15th, from 9:30 am - 2:30 pm. If you would like to join them or have questions, please see Janet Dyer or Jeanette Tennant. Four quilts that were made by our quilting group were blessed by Pastor Carpenter on Monday, December 23rd, and were delivered to Commquest Family Living Center in Massillon. Thank you, ladies for your service!

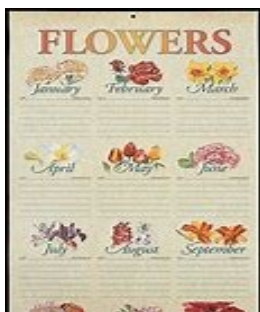
**“THE BEST WAY TO LIVE:
Meditations for a Christ-centered Life”**

by Pastor John Telsoni, is now in its 3rd Printing! If you have not purchased this book yet and desire to be strengthened in your own spiritual life – it may well fill that need. Special Prices for Members and Friends: \$12.00 per book !!! Or 2 for \$20.00 !!! – A Bargain! Cash or Check only. See Pastor Telsoni or call the church office (330-837-4645).



NEW 2025 FLOWER CHART IS POSTED!

If you want to select a date(s) for donations of flowers, please sign the list or call the Church Office (330-837-4645). **The cost for 2 vases remains \$50.00.** Donors of altar flowers should make checks payable to “St. John Lutheran Church.” **Flower Fund Envelopes are available for your convenience located under the Flower Chart or in the Narthex.**



2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES



are available on the table in the Gathering Place. Every communicant member or member couple receives a numbered offering box. If you have any questions, please contact Barb Leffler, Offering Recording Secretary.

SALARIED CUSTODIAN NEEDED

Our current custodian, Dennis Brown, Sr., is retiring soon, and so we need a new custodian. Custodial duties include, but not limited to, emptying refuse cans in all rooms, mopping, vacuuming the Sanctuary and all rooms as needed, which includes dusting shelves and ledges, cleaning bathrooms and all the public areas. There may be special events that require custodial services. 10 hours a week; days and hours are negotiable.



VOLUNTEER(S) NEEDED to shovel snow Monday through Friday in the mornings, before 9:00 a.m., this winter during church office hours.

If you are interested, please contact Steve Marker at 234-214-2607 or call the church office at 330-837-4645.

**JOYFUL HISPANIC MINISTRY CELEBRATION
AT ST. LUCAS, ST. LOUIS**

Rev. Miguel Torneire is Welcomed to the Community



This may have been the most Joyful “Pink Candle Sunday” ever at St. Lucas as we welcomed and prayed for the SELC District’s new Hispanic Missionary to the St. Louis area, Rev. Miguel Torneire and his family. Mariachi, San Pablo joined the celebration

with their uniquely uplifting music, which always points to the hope we have in Christ alone. The celebration continued with a luncheon with more music, a delicious meal, and a stubborn pinata.



Pictured above is the Torneire family, Pastor and Mrs. Larson, and Rev. Stephen Heimer, the new Manager of All-Nations Ministry for the LCMS (and trumpeter and lead singer for the Mariachis) from the center to the left. The band is on the right.

Below is the congregation celebrating Rev. Torneire and family.

