

St. John's Lutheran Church

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February 2026 Newsletter



Serving in Worship during February

Acolytes:

1: Grace Saneholtz
8: Quinn Shoup
15: Braxton Smith
18: Kenley Smith
22: Cashe Thomas

Ash Wed-7:30 pm

Lesson Readers:

1: Cole Dewire
8: Lisa Baker
15: Vonda Henry
22: Dave Jaessing

Greeters:

1: Sue Dewire & Cole Dewire, Deacons
8: Brancheau family, Deacons
15: Shoup family, Deacons
22: Ed & Ann Kidston, Deacons





February Birthdays

3 – Ed Ewers
3 – Erica Shoup
4 – Wanda Henry
5 – Janice Thompson
6 – Susan Nailor
7 – Craig Dewire
8 – Gerry Dewire
10 – Pastor Marc Lapointe
11 – Briggs Fiser
12 – Kaycee Nailor
12 – Hillary Rings

13 – Troy Eriksen
14 – Grady Hake
16 – Braysen Baker
17 – Jeanne Willson
19 – Sam Rings
21 – LoDena Woods
22 – Renae Hendricks
22 – Steve Rings
24 – Deb Clum
24 – Bev Purny
26 – Braxton Smith
26 – Kenley Smith



February Anniversaries

14 – Ric and Cindy Clark

From the Pastor's Desk

“Thy Will be done on Earth as in Heaven”

One day, while visiting with a faithful member of the church I concluded our time by saying “if prayer is supposed to be that important to our spiritual life, maybe it should take up more time in the worship service than the sermon does.” To my surprise he agreed!

Martin Luther once said “none can believe how powerful prayer is, and what it is able to effect, but those who have learned it by experience.” Sadly, not many people have truly experienced (or they’re too shy to admit it) the power of prayer. It’s a wonderful blessing that we have a prayer room in our church and an envelope filled with answered prayers.

Personally, I believe in the centrality of prayer in the believer’s life and have been privileged to witness some amazing things but nothing like the experiences of the first believers. “When they had prayed, the place in which they were gathered together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God with boldness” (Acts 4:31). In our boldness, maybe the Village of Montpelier can be shaken?

What about you? Have you experienced the power of prayer? Has your place of prayer or your prayer closet been shaken? Sadly, many of us are challenged to find time to stop, and pray as our schedules are being high jacked by the busy world in which we live. If it’s a challenge for a busy pastor, imagine what it is like for everybody else. We quickly rhyme off grace and eat. We pray on the way to work, sometimes while waiting at a red light. We pray for patience at the driver who cut us off! We pray for more time to study and worship – but what we need is less time - so that we can get home and get everything else done.

And then, when we get home, when the work day is over, we simply want to recline in our favorite chair and relax and recuperate. By the time we reach our bed at night we're too exhausted to spend time on our knees. It's almost incomprehensible how people like Luther, Wesley and Graham could spend hours each day in solitude and prayer while many of us today are counting down the minutes until we get home and have lunch.

And then, what happens when we do find time to pray? We're not sure who to pray for or what to pray for. It might shock you; some aren't even sure who to pray to. Sometimes, we mindlessly repeat grace, bedtime prayers, and the Lord's Prayer from memory or we read the names of the people from our church prayer list without concern as to why we are praying for them. And yes, I sometimes catch myself simply rushing through my prayers.

The truth is that prayer should not be minimized in this way as it is one of the most important and crucial parts of our relationship, our time of dialogue with God. When Peter and John were taken prisoner for "teaching the people and proclaiming that in Jesus there is the resurrection of the dead" (Acts 4:2) the community of believers turned to prayer.

Amazingly, every question we might have regarding prayer can be answered and those answers can all be found in the next most neglected Christian discipline – the daily reading of the Bible. The synagogue was the place of learning where Jews would gather to hear the words of scripture read aloud. The Bible teaches us that prayer was central to Jesus's ministry and prayers were also central to the church's life. Prayer must be the first and most important focus for us - His church (the body of Christ) today. Jesus also taught us to direct our prayers only to "Our Father" asking for his kingdom and will to be done in our lives. The Word of God, prayer, and worship work together hand in hand. And so, we ought to pray like those early

Christians, for the power of God the Holy Spirit to fill us and empower us to speak boldly about the love of God that unites us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Congregational Meeting POSTPONED

The congregational meeting has been postponed till Sunday, February 15 after the 10 a.m. worship service. The Annual Reports will then be received and reviewed by the congregation.

Parish Ed News!

The family night movie *King of Kings* has been postponed till Wednesday, February 4 at Bryan theater. Doors will open at 6pm and concessions will be available. The movie will begin at 6:30pm and end around 8:15. All church members are welcome so please feel free to attend with your children. Children under 10 must have a parent present. However, there are only 47 seats available. Please respond to the previously sent emails with how many seats you will need. A signup sheet will also be in the church office.

Shrove Pancakes: On Tues. Feb. 17th from 6:30-7:30 p.m. we will celebrate Fat Tuesday with pancakes, fruit, and sweets. Church members, students, family and friends are invited to attend. **Catechism students** will make, serve, and clean up the Shrove Tuesday meal. Following the meal, we will burn ashes and play games. Please bring your own games to play. There won't be any classes on Wednesday Feb. 18th! Instead, we will have **Ash Wednesday service together in the sanctuary at 6:30 p.m.**

Confirmation:

Mentors Meeting on Wed., Feb. 11, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Signup for Lenten Meals

There is a signup sheet on the bulletin board near the office for different groups to prepare and serve a meal from 6:00 to 7:15 p.m. on the following Wednesdays: Feb. 25, March 4, 11, 18, and 25 during Lent and before the Lenten service at 7:30 p.m. You won't have to cook, so join us for food and fellowship!

Your Elders Are Here for You

Please, bring any of your concerns to your elders of our church. They are Andy Carlson, Matthew Luke, Marilyn Parrish, and new elder in 2026, Vonda Henry.

The Giving Statements from 2025 are in ABC order next to the Offering envelope box by the north door.

There are still a few 2026 Church Offering envelope boxes left.

The Glenview Apartments has vacancies

We are a 62+ years old community offering clean, well-maintained homes located in Montpelier. If you know of someone wanting more information, application please have them contact Wanda Henry 419.553.9144. For questions regarding the apartments, also, consider joining us on the board, St John's has three members on the Glenview Board, Matthew Luke, Brenda Athy and Wanda Henry, feel free to speak to any of these members.

Volunteers Needed

Church Council and the Elders are looking for volunteers to fill a committee according to St. John's Constitution. Basic responsibilities are: The **Mutual Ministry Committee** shall consist of the Pastor and 4 members of the congregation. The purpose of this committee is to discuss how the Pastor and this church's services are sustaining the congregation; and in turn how this congregation is sustaining the needs of the Pastor.

Update from Pastor Philip Sandi's School in Sierra Leone, Africa (See bulletin board or Jeanne Willson for donation information) Yengesa International Academy Graduates 9



In April 2018, Rev. David Tholstrup then pastor at the St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina, met a seminarian from the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary in Columbia South Carolina. Philip Sandi was posted at the church by the seminary for field work. Philip hails from Liberia, West Africa. He had a dream to plant a church in neighboring Sierra Leone. Unlike Liberia with 86 percent Christian population, Sierra Leone has 77 percent of its population as Muslims. Philip has a very good understanding of the country having spent three years

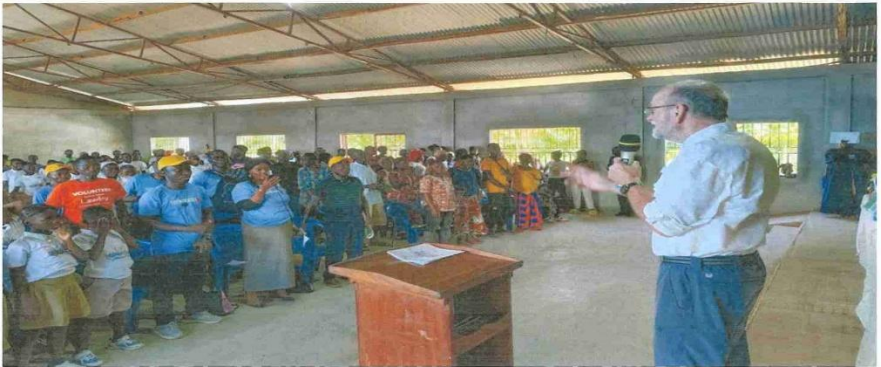
there as a refugee during the decades long Liberian civil war. Rev. Tholstrup (now retired) embraced the idea and offered moral and financial support to Philip. In 2019, the mission got underway in Yengesa, a village amidst 16 other villages in Sierra Leone, where no church has been planted. Philip decided to provide tuition and fees free education for the Muslim kids to attract their parents to the Christian faith. The first 20 children enrolled and Yengesa Mission with the Yengesa International Academy started. From the money he earned through his secular part time employment at Walmart and some support from St. Peter's Lutheran Church and few other ordinary friends, Philip was able to run the Yengesa mission while he pursued his Master's of Divinity at the Lutheran Southern Seminary in Columbia SC. Rev. David Nuotilla of the St. Jacob's Lutheran church in Chapin, SC, joined Rev. Tholstrup to support the mission. Over the years individual members from



St. John's Lutheran Church in Ohio where Philip served as intern, Saint John Lutheran Church in Danforth Illinois his first pastoral assignment, Trinity Lutheran Church in Ohio, Joy Lutheran Church in South Carolina, Joy Lutheran in Richmond and the S.E. Texas Mission District, and a lot of his non-Lutheran friends have supported the mission. Yengesa Mission



provides tuition and fees free education for mostly impoverished children in Yengesa and its surrounding villages. The school provides free books, feet wear, backpacks, uniforms and two meals daily for the students. From 20 students in 2019, the school now has a total enrollment of 200 students from grades 1-7. David and Janice Tholstrup visited Yengesa in September 2025 as guests of the Mission. The couple spent eleven days teaching the kids and the teaching staff.



David Tholstrup speaking in Yengesa

The people of Yengesa were very grateful to see David and Janice. Perhaps the first time for most of them to see a white westerner in their village. The reception was great and for eleven days the couple worked with the children. At the graduation ceremony Janice Tholstrup challenged the students to take advantage of the opportunity God has provided through the mission. We are thrilled by your courage and determination, she told the graduates. She pledged her family's continuing support to the mission. Philip Sandi was ordained on May 12, 2022 at the St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Chapin, South Carolina. He has served two congregations in the NALC, Saint John Lutheran Church in Danforth in Illinois and Peace Lutheran in Rosenberg, Texas.



See Tashia Thompson for LIFEWISE tickets!

God continues to bless the Lifewise movement in our young folks! The vision should always outpace the funding and the need is present! Someone will have a great prize in all these fantastic Montpelier businesses!!! Several of them graciously and generously donated all or part of their prize! Let me know if you want any, and know that you can be directly involved in sharing Jesus with our youth! Only 200 sold!

LIFEWISE MONTPELIER FUNDRAISER	
\$50 DONATION + 100% OF THE PROCEEDS DONATED TO LIFEWISE MONTPELIER	
Winner takes ALL 15 prizes!	
+ \$50 gift card to Marco's Pizza plus 4 Large pizzas	
\$100 gift cards to the following:	
Bill's Locker Room	Patty Cakes
Casa Del Rey	Pelits Lumber
Cookies on Demand	Main Stop
Superior Farm Supply	Miller's New Market
Two Brother's Market	Wispy Willow Farms
Kommon Kravings	
Montpelier Rotary car raffle ticket #316 + \$120 value	
\$150 Heart at Home Spa gift card + 2 months Off The Tracks Gym single membership	

LIFEWISE MONTPELIER FUNDRAISER
NAME _____
NUMBER _____
\$50 DONATION
Drawing upon sale of all tickets
200 TICKETS SOLD

LADIES, the 2026 WOTC program booklets are ready and available at each doorway.



WOTC Board Meeting: They did NOT meet on January 11, 2026

What's happening Around the NALC North West Ohio Mission District



A poster for a spaghetti dinner fundraiser. At the top is a red and white checkered banner. Below it is an illustration of a plate of spaghetti with meat sauce and a fork lifting a strand. The text "Spaghetti Dinner" is in a large, red, cursive font, and "FUNDRAISER" is in a bold, black, sans-serif font. Below this, it says "Donations go to seminary students & Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT)". The ticket prices are listed as "Tickets: \$12 Adult/ \$6 Youth". The date and time are "Friday, February 20th, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Auditorium." The options "Eat In or Carry Out" are listed. The menu is "Menu: spaghetti, garlic bread, dessert, a salad" and "Menu youth: hotdogs, mac & cheese and applesauce". At the bottom, the location is "Zion Lutheran Church | 210 N. Wayne St. | St. Marys, OH 45885 | www.zionstmarys.org". The bottom of the poster is decorated with a red and white checkered banner.

**Spaghetti Dinner
FUNDRAISER**

Donations go to seminary students & Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT)

Tickets: \$12 Adult/ \$6 Youth

Friday, February 20th, 4:30 - 6:30 p.m., in the Auditorium.

Eat In or Carry Out

Menu: spaghetti, garlic bread, dessert, a salad

Menu youth: hotdogs, mac & cheese and applesauce

Zion Lutheran Church | 210 N. Wayne St. | St. Marys, OH 45885 | www.zionstmarys.org



**St. John's Lutheran Church
Church Council Meeting
January 11, 2026**

Present: Ryan Burt, Mike Shilling, Tiffany Thomas, Jeanne Willson, Joey Burt, Brandon Shoup, Mike Timbrook, Andy Carlson, Matthew Luke, Marilyn Parrish, Lisa Baker, Kati Burt, Megan Hill, Robin Willson, Nathan Baker, Dale Gearhart, Bill Hill, Matt Sloan, Pastor Marc Lapointe, Mary Lapointe, and Brenda Athy.

1. **Meeting Called to Order:** President Ryan called the meeting to order.
2. **Approve the Agenda:** Motion to approve the agenda made by Matt and seconded by Dale. Motion approved.
3. **Opening Prayer:** Given by Pastor Marc.
4. **Devotions:** Given by Pastor Marc. President Ryan has decided to add the different boards, himself and then Pastor Marc to a list of taking turns for devotions.
5. **Approve Minutes of Last Meeting:** The December 14, 2025 Church Council meeting minutes previously emailed, were read by council members. Motion to approve the December 14, 2025 Church Council meeting minutes made by Dale and seconded by Mike T. Motions approved.
6. **Treasurer's Report:** Given by Tiffany. Copies of the December Financial Report are available on the bulletin board near the office and on the table in a yellow/orange folder by the front door entrance.)

Treasurer's Notes – December

- The Clearing Account is now back to \$0.00 after paying all Flower Invoices to Surely Daisies.
- The December offering was good and brought us closer to the end of the year expenses, but our offering numbers are down. Bill is planning a presentation during the Congregational Meeting to share more about this.

7. **Board Reports:**

- **Deacons** – given by Mike. T. Present were Joey, Brandon, and Mike T.

- There were 4 Sundays in December. The attendance for 8 a.m. services had an average of 23.5 and the 10 a.m. had an average of 66 for a total average of 90. 3 Advent services had an average attendance of 27 and 127 attended the Christmas Eve service.
- The Deacons cleaned the sidewalks and put up the Christmas decorations in December.
- **Elders** – given by Andy. Present were Andy, Marilyn and Matthew.
 - Talked about and set January and February elder assisting communion worship schedules.
 - Talked about the members who haven't come for a while and using postcards that could be sent.
 - Talked about the Healing Service which will be on January 18 and asked Pastor Marc how the elders needed to assist in it. He answered he would like the elders to assist with the praying over people.
- **Parish Ed.** – Given by Megan. Present were Lisa, Kati, Megan, and Robin.
 - The Children's Christmas Program went very well on December 21.
 - We are planning to do something at the Bryan movie theater instead of having a regular Wednesday night activity at the church. It will be open to the congregation.
 - We are planning on doing Shove or "Fat" Tuesday with pancakes on February 17, like last year.
 - We looked at confirmation and all the rest of the dates for the rest of the year.
- **Trustees** – Given by Dale. Present were Nathan, Dale, Bill, and Matt.
 - Getting new IT equipment and moving it to the basement as someone already tried to hack our internet system again.
 - Dale inquired if anyone knew where the original blueprints might be to our new building project put on hold several years ago. Bill said he had the electronic ones.

- Pastor's visa is up for renewal and will need to be done by June which will cost \$3000.
- Bill shared the he and Nathan Thompson discussed a possible change in companies concerning the church's insurance policy that needs renewal in March. Many questions were asked about certain policies we didn't have. If not approved, we might have to look into another company. More information is coming from Kannel's Insurance that we can look at. Other ideas were discussed.

8. Pastor's Report: Given by Pastor Marc.

- December was a busy month.
- We are planning for Lent which is coming up.
- We had the Northwest Mission Pastor's meeting this week. They are offering a Spaghetti Dinner fund raiser at Zion Lutheran Church in St. Mary's, Ohio on February 20th from 4:30 – 6:30 p.m. All donations are going to support seminary students at the Institute of Lutheran Theology (ILT).
- A fall event will be Walk Thru the Bible Live Event. More details later.
- NALC is trying to look at our communion practices in order to help churches without an ordained pastor receive regular communion.
- Pastor is part of a committee of pastors in the North West Ohio Mission District who are figuring how our congregation members could attend an annual family camp retreat.

9. Other Report:

WOTC - given by Brenda Athy, WOTC president.

- The WOTC January meeting got cancelled today, but are finishing up the new 2026 program booklet.
- They have decided to meet quarterly.
- She has been asked to bring up about the 8 a.m. congregation members who are feeling left out with such things as voting and would like council to come up with a solution so they can vote by leaving the ballot slip in the safe for the counting vote at the

congregational meeting after the 10 a.m. service. There was much discussion.

- She is still trying to reach more people on our church's Facebook. She is looking for ideas to post or if others want to add things to let her know. She would like those on Facebook to continue to Share and reach more people.

10. Approve All Reports: Motion to approve all reports made by Bill and seconded by Dale. Motion approved.

11. Half-Time Prayer: Given by Pastor Marc.

12. Old Business:

- President Ryan asked how the trifold brochure about our church is coming. Pastor Marc replied he is checking on who is able to print it.
- Pastor Marc shared we need to get started on our new directory. Jeanne shared that McCrae Kidston agreed to volunteer to be on the committee. Vice President Mike S. suggested using something like "Shutterfly". More discussion about how to do this. Jeanne suggested we also need updated information from the families. Vice President Mike S. suggested we just have people stop after church on several Sundays and have their pictures taken. Jeanne also requested more updated pictures for our web page.
- Discussion about an updated church delay or cancellation policy that former President Nate Thompson created and was passed out to be read. Bill and others disagreed with this policy and more discussion occurred. It was agreed to table it for later.

13. New Business:

- President Ryan asked members about their goals for the church for 2026 and bring them up at council.
- Lisa shared a member at Christmas Eve ask how they could donate an online offering. She directed them to the Facebook page, but they were unable to donate. She feels we are missing out when people are unable to give online as they don't have cash

in their pocket and want to donate. Nathan spoke we can use PayPal, but it takes a certain percentage of the donation and someone said it wasn't working right now. After discussion, council felt we should look into a better way to donate online like maybe a QR Code.

- Megan shared that Parish Ed. would like to do Shrove Tuesday and pancake night from 6:30 – 7:30 p.m. and then they would like to not have Wednesday night activity classes the next day, but instead have Ash Wednesday services start at 6:30 p.m. They hope to have better attendance if it starts earlier. Motion to approve changing Ash Wednesday service to start at 6:30 p.m. and not 7:30 p.m. made by Lisa and seconded by Robin. Motion approved.

14. Adjournment: Motion to adjourn the meeting made by Dale and seconded by Matt. Motion approved.

15. Lord's Prayer: The meeting ended with the Lord's Prayer. Next meeting is Feb. 8, 2026 at 11:30 a.m.

