

*St. John's Evangelical Church  
211 E. Carrol Street  
Kenton, Ohio 43326  
(Non Profit Organization)*

**Do Not Delay  
Dated Material**



## **St. John's Evangelical Church Newsletter**

December 2025

211 E. Carrol Street  
Kenton, OH 43326  
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### **Christmas Services**



All are welcome to join with St. John's Church & Stone Table Church for a combined Christmas Contemporary Service on Sunday, December 21 at 6 pm.



All are welcome to attend our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service on Tuesday, December 24 at 8 pm in the sanctuary. Join us as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. Please plan to attend and invite your friends!

# ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

211 East Carol Street  
Kenton, OH 43326

REV. DR. RANDALL J. FORESTER, PASTOR & TEACHER

Phone: 419-673-7278 (o)

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DECEMBER 2025

## THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: [PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org](mailto:PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org)

"Happy Birthday!" It's something many of us hear each year around our special day. In these wintry months, I think of Frosty the Snowman. In the animated shows, Frosty would exclaim, "Happy Birthday!" each time that magic hat was set atop his crown. It was silly and comical.

In December, we celebrate the birth of Jesus. He is the eternal Son of God, but two-thousand years ago He descended from the heavenly realm and was born to the Virgin Mary. As **Colossians 1:15-16** reminds us: "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together."

It is recounted that He is the firstborn of creation not in the sense that He was the first thing created. Jesus is the second person of the Trinity. As such, He is co-eternal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. However, He is the firstborn of creation in the sense that He became Incarnate. He took on flesh and united it with His divine being. Since He became God-made-flesh or God-with-us, Immanuel, He is the firstborn of all creation. In other words, He is the head over all things, has preeminence over all things, and rules all things as the rightful king of all that is, seen and unseen.

With all the majesty and wonder and power that is contained within the person of Jesus, it is a wonder that anyone could miss His radiant glory. As **Colossians 1:19** tells us: "For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell..." When we look upon Jesus, we see the fullness of the Father. Again,

He is God-made-flesh, Immanuel. There should be no doubt or equivocation. Jesus brings to us an understanding of God and His



There was a written notice above him, which read:  
**This is the King of the Jews.**

Luke 23:38 (NIV)

love for us.

As **Colossians 1:20** begins, since He contains the fullness of God within Himself, then: "[God may]...through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace..." That is why in the seasons of Advent and Christmas, we celebrate Jesus as the Prince of Peace. The war between humanity and God that began at the Fall in Garden of Eden finally has found One who will declare peace and enact it through His valiant and sacrificial efforts.

That is where the story is lost on so many. Colossians 1:20 concludes with the methodology

(Continued on page 2)

by which Jesus won the peace and our salvation: by the blood of His cross. And that is where we recoil when hearing the story. This is where eyes grow blind to the Divine being incarnate in the person Jesus. We want kings who trample on enemies and not submit to them. We want kings who crush the opposition instead of allowing the opposition to steamroll them – or worse, nail them to a Cross with nails like railroad spikes.

At Christmas, we want picture-perfect moments. We want Mary and Joseph glowing in candlelight as we look down at the infant Jesus resting on a bed of hay in a sweet manger as cattle are lowing and donkeys are braying. We don't think about the other smells and noises and amounts of methane gases. We want to hear the sweet voices of angels singing to shepherds, or their retelling of what they witnessed to a bewildered couple. We definitely do not want Simeon's words that are to come pointed at Mary in **Luke 2:35**: "... (and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Yet, this is the Savior whose birth we celebrate this December. Happy birthday seems inadequate to say to such a powerful and glory-filled being. Saying, "Happy birthday" could be as silly as a pile of snow proclaiming such words if we trivialize the story or tell only the "good" parts.

## ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH:

MAKING AND MATURING  
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

We need to remember the fullness of Christ's story as we need to recall the fullness of God's glory that dwells within Him. We need to remember as we hear Advent and Christmas scriptures from throughout the Bible and not just Gospel parts. We need to rejoice with

hymns on Christmas Eve and contemporary songs a few more eves before that. We need to remember alongside old friends and family members as well as new friends and guests.

We need there to be room for hope, peace, joy, and love to come fully into our hearts. For only when our hearts overflow with these gifts, can we truly life worship and praise to our Savior. Only then,

can we fall on bended need at the altar or beside the manger and proclaim: "Happy birthday, Jesus!"

May your Christmas be merry and bright and filled with the love of Jesus.

With Christmas hope,

*Pastor Randall*





I want to thank Kae Merold for preaching on the assigned scripture and theme for the First Sunday of Advent (30 November):

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Scripture **Isaiah 2:1-5**  
**Matthew 24:36-44**  
 Sermon **Awake, Ready, and Prepared**

Kae (and Steve) have been good friends to St. John's Evangelical Church. I have been blessed personally by their camaraderie. They are good friends in Christ and in ministry, and now, you, the saints of St. John's, have been blessed to hear her preach and have her as the pastor-on-call in my absence.

Advent and Christmas remind us that we are never alone. God is with us. After all, our Messiah is remembered in name as Immanuel—God-with-us. Even when nights are long, dark, and lonely, He is there beside us. He came low and humbly to know our lowest and humblest parts. He does not eschew them, but He embraced those parts as much as every other parts of our lives.

He went to His grave by way of the Cross to take all of our sins upon Himself. This was not a task that was foisted upon Him, but it was path He embraced. He loved us—and loves us still—with such a great love that, He who knew no sin, became sin for us.

As we will see in the first Sunday of Christmas, 28 December, He knew that tragedy would accompany His life upon this earth. When God comes into the world, sin recoils and Satan strikes. Such battles still rage as the one recounted in **Matthew 2:13-18**, but the ultimate victory still belongs to the Lord.

That is why we can celebrate. This year, in preparation for Christmas, we will host two services. Our traditional Christmas Eve service will be on the 24th at 8PM. Additionally, Stone Table Church will host a contemporary Christmas service on the 21st at 6PM. I will be preaching at that service.

Stone Table Church will begin regular worship services on 11 January at 11:15 in the Chapel. Please be mindful of that when you exit the building. We want to be good hosts as we begin a new chapter of St. John's Evangelical Church here in Kenton, Ohio.



07 December	Second Sunday of Advent
Scripture	<b>Isaiah 11:1-10</b> <b>Matthew 3:1-12</b>
Sermon	<b>We Cry Out for Peace</b>
14 December	Third Sunday of Advent
Scripture	<b>Isaiah 35:1-10</b> <b>Matthew 11:2-11</b>
Sermon	<b>How Long...How Long?</b>
21 December	Fourth Sunday of Advent
Scripture	<b>Isaiah 7:10-16</b> <b>Matthew 1:18-25</b>
Sermon	<b>God With Us</b>



21 December	w/Stone Table Church
Scripture	Contemporary Christmas Eve-ish, 6PM <b>Deuteronomy 29:29</b> <b>Philippians 2:3-8</b> <b>Luke 2:1-20</b>
Sermon	<b>Break Into Praise</b>
24 December	Christmas Eve, 8PM
Scripture	<b>97<sup>th</sup> Psalm</b> <b>Isaiah 62:6-12</b> <b>Titus 3:4-7</b> <b>Luke 2:1-20</b>
Sermon	<b>The Great Gift</b>
28 December	The First Sunday of Christmas: the Holy Innocents
Scripture	<b>Jeremiah 31:15-17</b> <b>Matthew 2:13-18</b>
Sermon	<b>So...This Is Christmas</b>

# Upcoming Events



## **Festival of Trees Allen County Museum**

A trip is planned on Saturday December 6, 2025, to go and visit the 53 Annual Christmas Tree Festival at the Allen County Museum. They will leave the church at 10 am and visit the museum and then go to lunch. The group can decide the lunch location. Sign up is in the back of the sanctuary.

## **Adopt A Family Gift Tags Available**

Tags are available on the tree in the skylight room for kid's gift requests. If you take a tag, please put your name beside that number. Please wrap them, tape the tag on the outside and return to the church no later than Sunday, December 7.

## **Bethlehem Experience & Dinner**

On December 13, we will leave the church at 3:15 pm (planning on carpooling) – tickets are for 4:00 pm at Cornerstone Baptist Church, Findlay. Planning on eating dinner afterwards. Sign-up in the back of the church if interested in going.

## **Christmas Poinsettias Sponsorship**

We will have artificial poinsettias to decorate for Christmas this year. The poinsettias are provided by the church and will remain at the church, but we are asking people to sponsor them with a donation to have your memorials/honors/gifts placed in the bulletin. Slips will be available as before to complete with your information. We will collect Sponsorship forms until December 15. Any questions, please see Nancy Weaver or the church office.

## **Planning Meeting**

Meeting December 15 at 5:30 pm in the library. They will be working on church events for the next 6 months. This is a great time to share your ideas for outings, events, and outreach. All are welcome. See Janie w/ questions.



## **Kingdom Kids Club Christmas Program**

The Christmas Program is December 17 at 5 pm. There will be a Birthday Party for Jesus in the fellowship following the program. Come out and support the kids!

## **Book Club**

The Book Club will meet December 29, at 1 pm at Peggy Cahill's house. They will study the book *The Housemaid* by Freida McFadden.

## **Silent Night Bed Ministry News**

I just wanted to give the congregation an update on the Silent Night Bed Ministry. Since we have started it back up, we have been able to provide beds, mattress covers, mattresses, sheets, a pillow, and blanket for five children. I want to thank all of the committee members and a special thanks to Jake Eikenbary who has supplied transportation for the beds.

Anna LaWarre

## **Read the Bible in A Year Small Group**

Janie would like to start a Read the Bible in a year small group. She would like to use the reading plan called the Bible Recap. They would meet once a week to talk about that week's readings. It will be a fun way to dive deeper into the Bible and learn from each other. There is a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary. If you are interested, please sign up and we will as a group decide on the day and time we meet.

## **Friday With Friends**

Friday With Friends is a wonderful group of widows and widowers who meet twice a month for a special time of food, fellowship, and fun. They meet the first and third Fridays of every month. Please join them if you are a widow or widower. This is not exclusive to St. John's, so pass the word along to someone that you know who could be blessed by this special group. For more information, contact Ethel Koch at 419-674-6344.

## **Forthcoming outings will be as follows:**

If out of town, meet at St. John's, corner of Wayne St. and E. Carrol St. to carpool. They leave sharply at 10:45. Still eating at 11:30 am.

December 5—Pizza Hut (Kenton)

December 19—Casa Lu Al (Lima)

## Afternoon Tea Party

An Afternoon Tea Party is scheduled for January 10 from 2-4 pm. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend.



We are having a luncheon following worship on February 15 in the church fellowship hall. All are invited to attend. Meal is provided, this is not a potluck. We want to just have a time of fellowship with each other. Please try to attend.

## UPCOMING Events

### Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendar

**Festival of Trees:** February 6 at 10 am  
**Bethlehem Experience:** Feb. 13 at 3:15 pm  
**KCC Christmas Program:** Dec 17 at 5 pm  
**Contemporary Christmas Service:** Dec. 21  
**Traditional Christmas Service:** Dec 24  
**Afternoon Tea Party:** Jan. 10 from 2-4 pm  
**Annual Congregational Meeting:** Jan. 25 at 11 am  
**Church Family Luncheon:** February 15 at 11:15 am

## Mission of the Month— Love Inc.



Love In the Name of Christ is a Christian based service and referral agency that assists people with a variety of needs by connecting them with churches or other organizations/agencies. The mission of Love INC is to mobilize local churches to transform lives and communities in the Name of Christ. The organization bridges resources by working with local churches, agencies, and other community resources.

## Celebrate Recovery Meal Sign Up

St. John's supplies a meal for Celebrate Recovery twice a month. The meals is the second and Fourth Tuesday of each month for approximately 25-30 people. If you are able to provide food, please sign-up in the back of the sanctuary. Please have the food at the church at 6 pm in the kitchenette across from the chapel. Any questions, please see Anna LaWarre or Jerry Pfister.



## Birthday Blessings (over 80 yrs. Young)

### December Birthdays on File:

We like to recognize members who are 80 years or older. Please contact the church office to add a name to our birthday list. Thank you so much!

December 5: Janet Jones

December 19: Kay Rush



Hello St. John's Family,

Here we are in December already. Where has 2025 gone? This year has flown by so fast. We were just talking the other day about how fast time flies as we get older. I guess this would just mean we need to make every moment count.



Kingdom kids, WOW! To say we have a great group of kids is an understatement. We started big this year and have settled into around 20 kids every week. With a big start we had some issues that took a minute to work out. We started a Bible Bucks program. Each kid earns Bible bucks for things like, participating, attending, reading aloud, praying aloud, and helping each other. They can also lose Bible bucks by, being disrespectful, disruptive, acting in an inappropriate way. We want to take the bowling in January, and this is the way they can earn their trip. The change we have seen in these kids since introducing this program has just been amazing. I see God working in these kids and they want to participate and learn like I have never seen before, and I have been doing this for almost 4 years.

We will be doing another Christmas play with the kids this year. We usually do it on their last Wednesday before Christmas break. This year it will be December 17, 2025 @ 5pm. We will have a small birthday party for Jesus in the fellowship hall after. Please plan on attending and showing these kids some love.

CR Kids, we have had the same 5 or 6 kids coming each week and we are really having some success with these kids. It is nice that the group is so small and allows us to really get to know these kids and know why they are here. In conjunction with working with the CR curriculum we have added some deeper looks into feelings, anger management and triggers, and social skills. This will help them be more rounded kids. We will be working on conflict resolutions into their lessons as well. I want them to see there are almost always other ways of dealing with life issues.

Church Growth, I have been doing a lot of research into helping our church grow. I have talked to other churches in the area and listened to what they are doing to that their congregation and new people like. I have looked at other church websites to see what they have or don't have on their websites so we can make changes to ours to make it more attractive. I will be working on many other ways to grow our church in the next few months. We are working on one thing at a time. I have a few more things I want to get started with in the new year. So, keep watching.

Richard and I will be working on the website as our first step. Keep looking for updates over the next month or two. We will be adding information on the different groups at the church such as, women's ministry, Kids and Youth, mission and evangelism, and the adult outing. If you would like to see anything on the website that is not there, please let Richard, or I know and we will add it if we can.

One new feature we have added is a Prayer request tab. This will allow someone to send a prayer request through the website to an email address that Pastor, the office, and I will have access to. We will be able to connect with people who are maybe nervous to talk in person. We will be able to access that email address 24 hours a day. Richard is working on a QR code for this prayer request page that will take someone right to the page. I will be creating a business card that we can hand out with this information on it so people will learn it is available to them.

#### Church Activities:

On December 6, we will be taking a trip to Lima to the Allen County Museum for the Festival of the trees. We wanted to do something that would support one of our own members, Sarah Rish. We will leave the church at 10 am and go to the museum for a few hours and then go to lunch somewhere. If you are interested in going, there is a sign-up sheet at the back of the sanctuary. I believe the cost is under \$10.00.

On December 13, we will be going to the Bethlehem Experience in Findlay. We will leave the church at 3:15. We will be going to the church first. Our Reservation is at 4pm. After the event we will go to dinner. The event is free. I have a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary, please sign up if you are interested.

I would like to start a Read the Bible in a Year small group. Pastor Randall always suggest we start the new year reading the Bible in a year. I found a reading plan I want to do and would like others to join me. The reading plan is called the Bible Recap. It is a workbook that asks questions about what you read that day so you can get the most out of your reading. We would meet once a week and share what we learned as a group. I have the books at the church if anyone would like to see them. I have a sign-up sheet at the back of the sanctuary for anyone interested in signing up. I also asked for suggestions on days and times to meet. Let me know if you have any questions.

On January 10, @ 2pm I will be having an Afternoon Tea. I am limiting it to 25 like I did last time. I will have a sign-up sheet in the back of the sanctuary in December so watch for it and get signed up.

We will be holding a planning meeting for the next 6 months within the next few weeks so be watching for the announcement of upcoming events. If you have any suggestions for events, please let me know. We are very open to suggestions.

God Bless,

Janie

[Familyminister.stjohns@gmail.com](mailto:Familyminister.stjohns@gmail.com)

567-674-1572

### Christianbook Giveback Program

If you order from Christianbook, please use the **Organization ID: EXAYYV** the church will receive 4% cash back on eligible purchase. You can text GIVEBACK to 95498 and register with the ID above.



### Thank You

A huge thank you to everyone who helped in any way to help St. John's send 139 shoeboxes to Operation Christmas Child. Each and everyone of you were a part in serving our Lord and Savior by being "missionaries"!

I ask God to bless each of you and may your hearts be warmed knowing that you served Him!

Merry Christmas!!!!

Thank You!

Toni Pfister, Project Leader  
Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes



### New Prayer Request Opportunity

Our website has a new feature, a Prayer Request page. Any one at any time will now be able to send a request for prayer using this link. It will come into an email that Pastor Randall, the office, and Janie will have access to 24 hours a day. We can then reach out and pray with or for the person requesting prayers based on their request. We are working on a QR code that will take you to the page and that will be put it on business cards that we can give out during outreach or to someone who we meet that may need prayer. These cards will be made available to the church to hand out as well. Please take a moment and check it out.

The New Sanctuary Christmas Decorations are given in Loving Memory of Ross & DiAnn Weaver by their children: LeVern & Nancy, Donovan & Kristi, DeWayne & Melissa, Lucille & Robert, and also including their Grandchildren and Great Grandchildren.





St. John's Evangelical Church  
Church Council Minutes  
Thursday, October 9, 2025  
6:00 PM

Call to Order - Anna LaWarre, President

Opening Prayer— Pastor Randall

Leadership Development - Pastor Randall

Officer Reports

Secretary's Report - September 11 minutes approved with corrections on meeting dates

REPORTS

1) Financial Report—Jerry Pfister/Kay Rush

- Expenses far exceeding monthly donations; church utilizing investment funds to offset shortage

2) Family Minister—Janie Risner—No Report

3) Worship, Arts & Music—Pastor

- 21<sup>st</sup> December, Contemporary Christmas Eve service with Stone Table Church
- Stone Table Church representatives coming to November meeting
- Request was made to have a music calendar provided to the office at least three-months in advance.

4) Women's Ministry—Kay Rush

5) Personnel Committee—Kay Rush

6) Pastoral Relations- Anna LaWarre—next meeting November 3

7) Trustees (LeVern Weaver, Greg Martin, Richard Katterjohn)

ATV Report Submitted –Cameras installed; hope to be integrated fully soon

Van– LeVern: Oil to be changed in the coming months. Synthetic oil allows for another year of service, but it has been two years since the last oil change.

Farm: Greg Martin—Can the elevator be removed from being on a hard-wired phone line? If so, we may be able to bundle other services. Also, we are having issues with our security system and may to look into how the phone line ties into their system.

8) Missions, Evangelism—Anna LaWarre

- 25 October-There are popcorn packages to pass out as evangelism.

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall report submitted

Old Business:

- Churches of God Update – Formal agreement needs done – asking for keys – need better communication for available spaces and guidelines—representatives to come in November; other issues need to be communicated to the ad hoc committee

New Business:

- Do we still need the fax number? Cancel the fax service.
- Scouts on Thursday will meet in the Fellowship Hall. Wednesday Bible Study to meet on Thursday. Scouts need to be reminded that no meeting should be held during Women's Celebration—20 November.
- Stewardship Committee—Missions of the Month needed for November
- There was a discussion about the church's continuing affiliation with the United Church of Christ.
- Nominating Committee: Greg (2<sup>nd</sup> term), Richard (1<sup>st</sup> term), and Kay (1<sup>st</sup> term) Jerry (2026) would like a replacement for his final year

Next Meeting: November 13, 2025 6:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT—LORD'S PRAYER