

*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

February 2026

211 E. Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326
Church Phone: 419-673-7278
Pastor Randall cell: 724-290-3651

Rev. Dr. Randall J. Forester, Senior Pastor
Website: www.stjohnskenton.org
Email: stjohnskenton@gmail.com

All are Welcome to Join Us on our Lenten Journey beginning...



Each year, Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent and is always 46 days before Easter Sunday. Lent is a 40-day season (not counting Sundays) marked by repentance, fasting, reflection, and, ultimately celebration. The 40-day period represents Christ's time of temptation in the wilderness, where He fasted and where Satan tempted Him. Lent asks believers to set aside a time each year for similar fasting, marking an intentional season of focus on Christ's life, ministry, sacrifice, and resurrection.

ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH

211 East Carrol Street
Kenton, OH 43326

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

Phone: 419-673-7278 (o)

Phone: 724-290-3651 (c)

FEBRUARY 2026

THE PASTOR'S PAGE

E-mail: PastorRandall@stjohnskenton.org

Every year, I encourage the congregation to read through the Bible. And every year, a handful of people take up the task. Usually, the first week is a joy as people reacquaint themselves with the stories of Genesis or Matthew, which are good starting points. At some point, the begats or Chronicles or endless descriptions of the Tabernacle or Levitical law causes the habit to come to a screeching halt.

It's like many resolutions that begin in the New Year. People start with a flurry of activity after boisterous

proclamations to embark on healthier habits and a more fulfilling lifestyle. Soon, the old ways seem so much better. A warm

bed beckons when the alarm sounds for the 6AM run in the cold and damp. Why call that old friend or estranged family member when a new episode of a show or podcast just dropped? Why read the Bible—even if it is the Word of God—when there's laundry to do or cat videos to watch online?

This is the time of year when many people have assigned their New Year's resolutions to the dustbin, regressed back to their former ways, and rationalized the results to soothe their troubled spirits. If this is you, don't sulk. Don't abandon your hopes for a better you in 2026. Don't stop believing in yourself. Most of all, don't quit the attempts. There is still hope.

Many people have bought into the notion that it takes 21 days to make an action into a habit. From the literature I have read, that is not true. There is no good and fast rule for how many times an action to be undertaken before it becomes habitual. Some have suggested it may take months.

For myself, reading through the Bible each year did not come naturally. I had tried on several occasions before it became a habit for me. I tried, and I failed, and I tried again, and again, and again.

Eventually, it became a part of my routine, and it has become an extension of the spiritual disciplines that keep me grounded in the faith along with

practices like prayer, fasting, and doing good works for those in need.

What created this change and commitment wasn't something magical. It was a willingness to share my goal, my progress (or lack thereof), and even my failures. In doing this, I allowed others to come alongside of me to share their habits of reading the Bible, how they struggled, and how they grew in their faith.

Too often, Christians in America make the faith about themselves personally and Jesus. They tend to forget that we are in this together and we are to encourage one another in our faith and build up one another (**I Thessalonians 5:11**).

(Continued on page 2)



That is one I am overjoyed that our family minister, Janie Risner, started the Bible Recap group here at St. John's Evangelical Church. The program provides an outline for reading, study, and reflection. Having the group meet allows participants to share their journey through the Word.

In **Deuteronomy 11:18**, we are commanded: "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes." Like many great commandments of God, this one became distorted to the point that Jesus criticized phylacteries in **Matthew 23:5**. This beautiful command about God's Word and keeping it at the front of our minds became a showy form of righteousness that was empty and devoid of meaning.

God has given us His Word that we can know Him more fully and be engaged with the world in the ways in which He would want us to. In the Word, we see how much God loves us and cares for us. It also teaches us that this love is not for us alone and not for those closest to us. It is a Gospel of peace for those who are far away as much as it is for those near to the heart of God (see **Ephesians 2:13-17**).

In the Bible, you will find the words of life, you will encounter Jesus, and you will find the keys to



ST. JOHN'S EVANGELICAL CHURCH:

MAKING AND MATURING
DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

true joy and happiness. Also, you will find surprises. Some stories—or the way they are told—may leave you with more questions than answers.

Some may challenge you. Some may force you to reexamine your life. In the end, if you persevere, you will discover your life and faith enriched.

That is why I encourage you to take up and read the Bible. In Latin, take up and read is *tolle lege*. Those words, a young Augustine heard centuries ago. He looked around, saw a Bible, and began to read the Word. Even though he had known of the Bible, as his mother was a believer, it was in that moment that he was transformed by the Word. That Augustine shaped the faith of his day and did so once again when his reflections on the faith were rediscovered in the Reformation. His taking up and reading the Bible changed the Christian faith. Who know how taking up the Word and reading it will change you, our church, and community? God does. His Word is powerful to change and shape those who encounter it for it does not return void or empty (**Isaiah 55:11**).

May you and our church know that redemptive and transforming power of God's Word as we read and apply it.

In Christ's grace,

Pastor Randall



Preaching Calendar

As I write this, it feels like Christmas has barely ended. After all, we just undecorated the church! Soon, Lent will be upon us. Quickly, we will move from thoughts of the Incarnation and celebrating the birth of Jesus to contemplating the full weight of what brought Jesus from Glory to the earth and the weight of the Cross and sin upon His back and in His flesh. Infused in the whole life of Jesus is His amazing love and grace, which will drive the messages in Lent. Jesus loved those on the margins, and we should too.

01 February

Presentation of Jesus in the Temple

Scripture **Hebrews 2:14-18**
Luke 2:22-40

Sermon **Like Us in Every Way**

08 February

Scout Sunday

Guest Speaker: Hon. Scott Barrett

15 February

Transfiguration Sunday

Scripture **Exodus 24:12-18**
Matthew 17:1-9

Sermon **Enveloped in Glory**



18 February

Ash Wednesday

Scripture **23rd Psalm**

Meditation **Yea, Though I Walk
Through the Valley of the
Shadow of Death**

Scripture **24th Psalm**

Sermon **Who Has Clean
Hands and a Pure Heart?**

Scripture **25th Psalm**

Meditation **He Leads the
Humble in What Is Right**



PAGE 3

Lenten Series:
Jesus
on the Margins

22 February

Scripture

Sermon

First Sunday of Lent

Jeremiah 31:16-24

Matthew 19:13-15

**Jesus and the
Little Children**

01 March

Scripture

Sermon

Second Sunday of Lent

Ruth 3:6-13

Matthew 9:18-26

Jesus and Women

08 March

Scripture

Sermon

Third Sunday of Lent

II Kings 5:1-14

Matthew 8:1-4

Jesus and the Lepers

15 March

Scripture

Sermon

Fourth Sunday of Lent

II Kings 17:24-33

Luke 10:25-37

**Jesus and the
Samaritans**

22 March

Scripture

Sermon

Fifth Sunday of Lent

Habakkuk 1:1-4; 2:1-4

Luke 19:1-19

Jesus and the Sinners

29 March

Scripture

Sermon

Palm Sunday

Matthew 21:1-11

Matthew 27:11-54

Behold Your King



Upcoming Events



Soup Cook-Off & Euchre/Cards Luncheon

Come out for the Soup Cook-Off, Cards, and Lunch on February 1 following the worship service. Please bring your favorite soup to share if you want to compete and everyone will vote for their favorite. We will play Euchre or any other game you would like to play and spend the afternoon in fellowship. Invite a friend or two. Great way to pass a gray cold Sunday afternoon.

Book Club

Book Club meets on February 2 at 1 pm at Janie's House. The book they are reading is called *Before the Swallows Come Back* by Fiona Curnow.



Movie Night—Joseph

Free Movie Night on February 6 at 6pm. We will be watching Joseph. Straight from the Sight & Sound vault comes JOSEPH! Filmed in front of a live audience at Sight & Sound Theatres in 2010, this exhilarating story about dreams and the power of forgiveness is one of our most beloved productions. From the fields of Canaan to the stunning palaces of Egypt, join this adventurous dreamer on a journey to discover God's plan for his life. Doors open at 5:30 movies at 6. Refreshments will be served.



Church Fellowship Luncheon

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 pot-luck. We want to just have a time of fellowship with each other. Please try to attend.



Dinner Club

The following dinner club dates have been scheduled so far for 2026:

February 28: meet at the church at 3:30 pm to go to the Belle Center Diner

March 14: at Angle Back at 11 am in Marseilles (meet at church at 10:30 am)

April 17: Cheers to You in Upper Sandusky at 6 pm. (meet at the church at 5:30 pm)

Morgan's Place Cemetery.....more than just a cemetery

Our Mission: Morgan's Place was established to assist families through the grieving process when experiencing the loss of a baby. We aid this process by memory-making, birth planning, funeral and burial services, and post-partum support groups for parents.

Our Story: *Jeremiah 1:5 Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you...*

Every baby was created with a divine purpose, not born, but created. For some families, like that of Nathan and Mollie Verdier, their children, Morgan and Marion, were given a divine purpose not to live, but to be born into the arms of Christ. It was thus revealed that their calling was to inspire the creation of Morgan's Place Cemetery.

Nathan and Mollie then began a journey to make commemoration more accessible for those who have shared their tragedy. The cemetery is named after Morgan, who lived only a few weeks in the womb in 2018. The difficult logistics of burying Morgan was not the only challenge faced by the couple. Obtaining the remains was the first, as it is not standard practice at hospitals for children under twenty weeks gestation to be released to parents for burial. The Verriers received special permission for this, aided by the advocacy of their doctor. In early 2019, they lost another child; one of a set of triplets, whom they named Marion. The Verdier family decided to dedicate 2.5 acres of their farmland not only for the burial of Morgan and Marion, but also to assist others who suffer similar losses. Everyone in the family grieves, grandparents and siblings too. Those who leave the hospital with empty arms, suffer a loss so unique and so hidden. It is really a love story, but it takes some time to be able to share. After a time, Mollie was able to do so: "Grief consumed me most days, but finally I chose to tell the love story of my babies, not for pity or comments of sympathy, but because they deserve to be acknowledged. They are my babies. The picture I hold in my mind of my beautiful family includes not only my nine children that run, but also the two that fly".

Mark Your Calendars: On April 26 there will be a speaker during worship to share information about this valuable mission opportunity. If you or someone you know has experienced a miscarriage, abortion or still birth please invite them to join you in worship. Lunch will be served after worship with opportunity to ask our speakers questions about this ministry.

New Member Class – March 8

If you are interested in becoming a member or get more information, please contact the church office, Pastor Randall, or Janie.



MomCo Mom's group

The Mom Co Mom's Group will have Morning meet-ups on the 1st and 3rd Mondays of the month at 9:30 am and the evening meet-ups will be on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month at 6 pm.

Janie is looking for volunteers to help with the meet-ups and for help with childcare. If you are interested in helping, please let her know. Moms of any age can help, these mom's need experienced moms for advice and support.



M O M C O

UPCOMING Events

Upcoming Events Mark Your Calendar

Soup Cook off & Euchre/Cards: February 1 after worship

Movie Night: February 6

Church Family Luncheon: February 15 at 11:15 am

Dinner Club: February 28 at Belle Center Diner—meet at church at 3:30 pm

New Member Class: March 8 at 2 pm

Dinner Club: March 14 at Angel Back Marseilles—Meet at church 10:30 am, lunch at 11 am

Spring Serve Day: March 15 following worship

Bring a Friend to Church & Luncheon w/Bingo: March 22 following worship

Dinner Club: April 17 at Cheers to You in Upper Sandusky—meet at church 5:30 pm dinner at 6 pm

Bike Blessing & Bike and Car Show: May 17

Rock the Lake: August 1

Back to School Bash: August 8

Fait Booth: September 8-12

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.

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)

No February 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!



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.



Mission of the Month— Scouts—Pack/Troop 121

The Scouts that are chartered through the church are the Cub Scouts (K-grade 5) and the Troop (grades 5+ who have crossed over). As the mission of the month, they will split the donations. Below is a list of some needs they will use the money for:

Any donations would help the Troop to maintain their equipment and buy needed equipment for camping and service projects. Their trailer that was basically free needs the roof resealed this year. They would also use the money for awards to recognize the Scouts achievements. They will also likely have Scouts who will need help affording summer camp. It's a lot for some families and it's an important event for Scouts to attend. Their program is giving youth the opportunity to lead their community and we appreciate all of the help that the church has given them.

The Cub Scouts Pack will also use funds for awards and camp as needed. Thank you so much for all the church has done!

Scout Master (Troop): Tim Kiper

Cub Master: (Pack) Anita Shoemaker

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.

February 6—Jac N Does (Kenton)

February 20—Salsa's (Kenton)

March 6—Midway Restaurant (Kenton)

March 20—American Table (Lima)

April 3—Golden Grill Buffet (Bellefontaine)

April 17—Bob Evans (Lima)

Hello St. John's family,

January has been a whirlwind month. We started off with a new small group study with the Bible Recap read the Bible in a year, a new Bible study with The Chosen, Both on Saturday Mornings and the new Women's Bible Study with Max Lucado's Matthew on Sunday morning. We had the Tea with a visit from Edgar Allan Poe.



With many more activities to come. I have been reminded that this just makes us a busy church and we need to focus on growth. So that is the plan for 2026. Everything we do this year will have an emphasis on growth. Growth spiritually and growth in our church. Please prayerfully consider participating and or volunteering for some of these events. It takes a church to grow a church.

Kingdom Kids: We are staying steady with the number of kids coming each week. We have about 25 kids in total each week. The kids are enjoying the lessons we are teaching and the fun they have. They are participating way better than ever before. It has been such a joy working with this group of kids. We are always looking for help on Wednesday night. We need people who will just sit with the kids at the tables for dinner or in the classroom. Helping them to find Bible verses, being an additional person in the classroom or help with craft projects. These kids really react to the attention they get from us.

Mom's Group: MomCo – we planned for our first meetup to be on January 19, but the weather had other plans. Our next meetup will be Monday, January 26 at 6pm. I cannot wait. We have had a lot of great responses to our advertising. I have finally gotten through all the training and am ready to go. This is a great program. If you are interested in being part of this group as a table assistant that would be wonderful. You do not have to have children at home to be part of our group. Grandmas and great grandmas have a lot to offer these moms. Your experience has value. You can show them that you were once where they are and your kids are grown and you survived. Sometimes that is all a mom needs to hear.

I am going to leave you with a quote... "If the nature of God is to give, then we who share in God's life through Christ are also called to give. And what we are invited to give is not our surplus but our very selves in the service of God. Giving is self-giving. And this kind of giving is always costly. For in ourselves we embrace a small dying and a very real relinquishment. This kind of giving spells grace for the other and transformation for ourselves. As such, we will gain what in other ways we would never be able to gain.

-Charles Ringma, Wash the Feet of the World with Mother Teresa

When we think of others before ourselves, when we use our time, treasures, and talents wisely for the upbuilding of the kingdom that shows our faithfulness. I am inviting you to use the gifts God has given you to help grow the church with me.

God Bless,

Janie

Laundromat Ministry



The mission committee is inviting all members to join them in the Laundromat Ministry. They have 5 opportunities, 2 hour increments, scheduled to see what the interest will be. Mary and Janice will begin by going with people at first as you will have bags to distribute that contain church info. along with laundry pods, dryer sheets and coins. A sign-up sheet is available on the welcome desk. Also indicate if you are interested with times and days that would work better for you for future dates.

Dates and time frames:

Jan. 31: S. Main St. 1-3

Feb. 2: Scioto Village 1-5

Feb. 10: Forest Court 1-3

Feb. 18: S. Main St. 1-5

Feb. 26: Seaton Kenton TBD.

Again, you will sign up for 2 hr. increments.

Spring SERVE DAY

15 | March | 2026

**Service Projects begin
after worship**

Service Projects:
Soundproofing AV Room
Cleaning the pews
Organizing Basement Storage area



Please come to church to worship even if you are
unable to partipate in any of the service projects



You're Invited

22 - MARCH 2026

10 AM

**Bring a Friend
to Church**

Sunday
*with Luncheon
& Bingo*

ST. JOHN'S CHURCH

**211 E. CARROL ST.
KENTON**

www.stjohnskenton.org

St. John's Evangelical Church
Church Council Minutes
Thursday, December 11, 2025
6:00 PM

Call to Order - Anna LaWarre, President

Opening Prayer— Pastor Randall

Leadership Development - Pastor Randall

Officer Reports

Secretary's Report - November 13 minutes approved

REPORTS

- 1) Financial Report—Jerry Pfister/Kay Rush—Motion to approve and accepted
- 2) Family Minister—Janie Risner—Purchase a table to take attendance was approved
- 3) Worship, Arts & Music—Meeting January 12 @ 5:30 pm
- 4) Women's Ministry—Kay Rush—Ag Banquet went well \$1725. Women's Ministry did a lot of good projects in 2025 and will be outline in Annual Meeting Report. Women's Celebration \$2900
- 5) Personnel Committee—Kay Rush—No report
- 6) Pastoral Relations- Anna LaWarre—next meeting March 2 at 6 pm
- 7) Trustees (LeVern Weaver, Greg Martin, Richard Katterjohn)
 - ATV—Supported Ag Banquet & Women's Celebration. Tom & Heather will be out for awhile; Report submitted
 - Van— LeVern: Oil changed and all fluids topped off
 - Farm: Greg Martin

Church Maintenance: Updating security system looking for quotes to have work completed

8) Missions, Evangelism—Anna LaWarre

- Several events planned and will be sending our postcards to gain interest

9) Pastor's Report - Pastor Randall report submitted

Old Business:

- Approve committee budgets
 - Submit Annual Meeting agenda items
- Annual meeting January 25, after church Agenda Slate of officers and Budget

NEW BUSINESS:

- All Committees - Reports due for annual meeting - All reports due by December 31
- Accept Nomination Slate of New Council Members- Current members staying Richard and Kay. Jerry and Greg still looking for replacement

Next Meeting: January 8, 2026 6:00 PM

ADJOURNMENT—LORD'S PRAYER

website: stjohnskenton.org
Facebook: St Johns Kenton, Ohio
Youtube: St. John's Evangelical Church





