



JULY 2025

THE LIGHT

**Monthly Newsletter of
St. John United Church of Christ
Strasburg, Ohio**

**ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
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**WORSHIP SERVICE 9:30 AM
ONSITE AND ONLINE
FACEBOOK
YOUTUBE
@STJOHNSTRASBURG**

SUNDAY SCHOOL - 10:45 AM

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS
TUESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY
9:00 AM - 5:00PM**

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

By Jason Rissler

As I write this article, I am getting ready for our service on Sunday to welcome new members. We celebrate this event and are grateful for the six individuals who are already an important part of our church family. Our church family and our lives are richer because they are part of us. Last year, we welcomed a total of 17 new members. We are truly blessed as a congregation.

As I met with the candidates for membership, one thing I heard them say was they were drawn to the church for its warmth and the welcome they felt. I often hear this. My family and I felt this when I first came to St. John ten years ago. It is a strength and a gift that we have to offer our neighbors. People are looking for a place to belong and to be loved.

I also find my mind thinking about who else of our neighbors, friends and family members might join us in worshiping God and loving others. Who else might God be calling or leading to our church? May we keep our arms and hearts open. May God use us and work in the hearts of our neighbors!



Pastor's Report - Pastor Jason made many home, hospital, and nursing home visits. He officiated three funerals and one wedding. We will welcome new members on June 29th. Youth service trip to Cincinnati will be July 20-24.

BOCE - Car wash raised \$1,700. Plans for summer nursery coverage were discussed. Rally Day will be September 7th, marking the beginning of Sunday School classes.

Congregational Care - The geranium sale was well received. The committee is making a list of where to find rides as well as services available in the area.

Fellowship - No Meeting

Missions - No Meeting

Finance - The annual stewardship series will begin in September.

Music and Worship - Twila Lampe will serve as interim choir director.

Outreach - No Meeting

Property - Batteries have been replaced in microphones. Power washing and mulching are completed. The deck is partially completed from south side door.

Sanctuary - The wedding display is now available for viewing right outside the Gathering Room in the nook.

Old Business - The church will be selling pies again this year at the Summer Festival.

New Business - Council heard a presentation from Jim Foltz from Radiant Art regarding the installation of protective glass over the stained glass windows on the south side of the sanctuary.

Next Council Meeting - July 17, 2025 at 6:30pm

****We communicate regularly through e-mail and text messages. If you are not receiving these and would like to, please let the church office know.**

The Strasburg American Legion will hold a Chicken BBQ on July 15th from 10:00am-12:00pm in Malcuit's parking lot.

Youth Summer Service Trip
July 20-24

Serving at Camp Washington with Washington UCC.

There will be an informational meeting on July 2 at 6:00 pm for anyone interested in being part of the trip..

Pastor Jason will be away on a sabbatical leave July 28 - August 31. Pastoral coverage is being arranged. There will be more information closer to the time.

The Board of Christian Education offers financial assistance for students K-12 who are planning to attend camp this year. Reimbursement amounts will be determined by the number of applications and available funds. If you have any questions, please see Heather Rissler.



Did you know that we have an online giving option? To give online, go to stjohnstrasburg.org or use the QR code. Thanks for your generosity!

thank you

July 2025

"I would like to thank everyone for welcoming me to your church and into your lives. I'm much appreciative for the opportunity to attend Round Lake Christian Camp."

-Gavin Cook

"Thank you everyone who brought me food and sent cards and visited me for my birthday."

-Hank Grove

Dear St John United Church of Christ,

"On behalf of World Central Kitchen, I want to thank you for choosing to donate \$728.00 in March 2025 in support of our work around the globe. We are so grateful for your help as we use the power of food to nourish the world.

Deploying our model of quick action, leveraging local resources, and adapting in real time, WCK has provided more than 450 million meals since 2010 in response to humanitarian, climate, and community crisis across the world.

We're a team of food first responders, mobilizing with the urgency of now to get meals to the people who need them most. We know that a nourishing meal in a time of crisis is so much more than a plate of food--it's hope, it's dignity, and it's a sign that someone cares.

Thank you for your belief and trust in our mission."

Sincerely,

Javier Garcia

WCK CEO

Dear St. John United Church of Christ,

"We at Tuscarawas County Council for Church and Community would like to take this time to say thank you for your generous donation to our non-profit organization. Your contribution allows us to serve those in Tuscarawas County. We appreciate you and your assistance in our efforts. Without your continued support we would not be able to serve those in our wonderful community."

Thank You,

Leslie Booth

ACOLYTES

July 06 - Malachi Parson

July 13 - Ty Palmer

July 20 - Everett Shaner

July 27 - Hudson McKenzie

LAY LEADERS

July 06 - Cheryl Feutz

July 13 - Denise Borter

July 20 - Art Lampe

July 27 - Kathy Osler

SPECIAL MUSIC

July 06 - Beth Buehler

July 13 - Paula Hixenbaugh

July 20 - Longfellow Family

July 27 - TBD

GREETERS

Vicki Hinebaugh

Elaine Scatizzi

USHERS

Robert Klingler

Sharon Klingler

Al Osler

Kathy Osler



(75 and over)

July 3 - Connie Ecenburger

July 15- John Dodds

July 16 - Mary Ellen Gurney

July 19 - Jay Huff

July 22 - Jerry Wade

July 27 - Bob Gardner

July 28 - Larry Howell



On Sunday, June 29, immediately following the morning service, there will be a short congregational meeting to discuss and vote on repairs to the outside coverings of our stained glass windows. The five small windows and the one large window on the south side of the church are in the worst disrepair, and water is leaking in and causing damage. The church council received three bids and voted to approve the expenses as well as a local vendor Radiant Art, that is located in Beach City. Radiant Art specialized in these kinds of repairs. Our plan is to repair the remainder of the stained glass window protective coverings in several future phases.

The scope of the job will be to remove the existing fascia and plexiglass. Any wood will be painted, and new fascia will be installed. A new white baked-on single glazed aluminum frame will be installed into the area of the wood frame in front of the stained glass. A total of eight individual frames will be placed over the windows. The bottom extrusion will be vented to allow ventilation between the stained glass and exterior glazing. Stainless steel screens will be used in the upper gothic arches. The exterior glazing will be 1/4" laminated glass and will be installed into the new frames. All fasteners will be stainless steel and will not be exposed. All glazing will be done with a 25+ year high grade silicone sealant.

The repair cost is \$20,000 and requires a congregational vote as it exceeds the \$6,000 limit that church council can approve without a congregational vote. The money is available in the Capital Improvement fund and excess local funds from previous years. The work can be done this fall.

To: St John United Church of Christ
From: Pastor Jason Rissler
Council President Sue Burdett
Re: Pastor Jason's Sabbatical Leave
Date: July 1, 2025

Questions and Responses Concerning Pastor Jason's Sabbatical Leave:

What is a sabbatical leave?

From the United Church of Christ statement on Pastoral Sabbatical: "Sabbath is a gift from God because rest is as important as work for the health of all creation.....Rooted in these Biblical commands for Sabbath, a sabbatical is a significant time of rest, renewal and refreshments for pastors....A sabbatical is not a vacation, but it does provide time away from the daily work of ministry. Sabbatical leave may include study or a project, but its first goal is reconnecting with one's sense of vocation through rest, reflection and prayer."

While the United Church of Christ encourages a three-month sabbatical for every five years of full-time service, Pastor Jason's Call Agreement allows a one-month sabbatical for every five years. This year on October 1, 2025, Pastor Jason will complete 10 years of service at St. John.

Why do clergy take sabbaticals?

According to 2022 stats from Barna Research Group, forty-two percent of pastors considered leaving the intensity of pastoral ministry. The top reasons stated are stress, isolation and political divisions. The Living Water Association has given attention to the health and care of pastors for this reason.

Pastor Roy Oswald has served as a resource for congregations and pastors. He lists several reasons why a congregation should encourage their pastor to take a sabbatical leave. The reasons he states are as follows:

- A sabbatical encourages longer pastorates.
- A sabbatical refocuses ministry.
- A sabbatical contributes to a pastor's spiritual growth.
- A sabbatical prevents burnout.
- A sabbatical establishes new patterns for work and self-care.
- A sabbatical promotes congregation self-sufficiency.

When is Pastor Jason's sabbatical?

Pastor Jason will begin his sabbatical on Monday, July 28. His sabbatical will conclude on Sunday, August 31. There will be five Sundays that he is away.

What will Pastor Jason do on his sabbatical?

During this month away Jason will visit family in Maine and Pennsylvania. He will take time to rest, read, pray, reflect and write. He will debrief with another pastor and professional counselor. He plans to do a study on issues related to death and dying, grieving and end of life care as this is an area of ministry that Jason has had many opportunities with and is interested in continuing to learn. He hopes to incorporate learning from our local funeral homes and directors.

On Sundays he will visit area churches as a way to grow spiritually and to learn. His family plans to attend St. John even when he is away.

Who will cover for Pastor Jason when he is away? Who do I contact?

In case of pastoral emergency, Matthew Wald and Dan and Jeanette King will be available. The church council as well as the church office has their phone numbers and can help you get in contact with them if needed.

Jason is planning the services for the five Sundays he will be away. They are as follows:

August 3 – Outdoor Worship and Church Picnic - Music Sunday with Jill Jordan Burke

August 10 – Dan and Jeanette King will lead the service.

August 17 – Dan and Jeanette King will lead the service.

August 24 – Tom Patton will bring the message.

August 31 – Music Sunday with music provided by Paula Hixenbaugh

Who will pay for the sabbatical?

Jason will receive his normal salary during his sabbatical. Funds that have already been budgeted will cover the cost for guest speakers and special music plus resources and trainings for Pastor Jason.

Looking ahead

We invite your prayers during this time for Pastor Jason and his family. Their prayer is for rest, refreshment and refocus for the days ahead. We invite your prayers for our St. John church family. We have many wonderful things happening in the life of the church and look forward to what God has in store for the next season. Let's pray for God's vision, discernment and heart for the future of St. John church.

Go in faith,

Pastor Jason
Sue Burdett

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		1:30pm - Access Solutions	5pm - BOCE	2:30pm - Action Now	Independence Day Office Closed	
9:30am - Worship	7	8	9	10	11	12
		2pm - Park Village Service	6pm - Music & Worship	11am - Michele Miller		
9:30am - Worship	13	14	15	16	17	18
		9am - Congregational Care	9:30am - Finance Mtg.	6pm - Missions Meeting 6:30pm - Church Council		8am - Social Hall Rented-Turner
	20	21	22	23	24	25
Cincinnati Youth Services Trip					Strasburg Summer Festival	
9:30am - Worship					11am - Michele Miller	2:30pm - Sauernheimer Wedding
	27	28	29	30	31	1
9:30am - Worship		Pastor Jason's Sabbatical				2