

JULY 2026

THE LIGHT

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

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK **By Jason Rissler**

The weekend we got home from our service trip to Cincinnati someone asked me about the trip. "How many souls got saved?" Interesting question. There were at least twelve. That is the twelve of us who went on the trip.

The experience jolted us out of the the comfort zone that we are so accustomed to as we witnessed and experienced the reality of so many people: poverty, drug overdoses, homelessness, broken families and lack of opportunity.

One day Bob and John installed 4 overdose emergency kits on the church property. That afternoon we witnessed Pastor Melissa administer Naloxone to a 42 year old women who overdosed in front of the church.

Experiences like this week are life changing. They help develop compassion and empathy. They save us from self focus, greed, and complacency. They challenge us to live lives that make a difference in the world.

Whether or not you are able to join a week like this, I encourage each of us to find ways to step out of our comfort zone and experience the needs of those around you. Allow God to touch your heart and commit anew to making a difference!



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WORSHIP SERVICE 9:30 AM
ONSITE AND ONLINE
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SUNDAY SCHOOL - 10:45 AM

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



Council Notes

Pastor's Report - Pastor Jason continues to make many home, nursing home and hospital visits, as well as holding services at Hennis and Park Village nursing centers. He officiated at two funerals, held a pre-marriage meeting and wedding and assisted with the Strasburg Vacation Bible School. Next year, VBS will be held at St. John. It will be the 100th anniversary of VBS in Strasburg! Pastor Jason joined the GriefShare Lunch at Pine Ridge community room and attended Miami of Ohio for the closing ceremonies of Boy's State. Tom Patton presented the sermon in his absence. Steve Chaney will preach the sermon on July 19. The Outdoor Worship Service and picnic is planned for August 2.

BOCE - No meeting

Congregational Care - No meeting

Fellowship - No meeting

Finance - Monthly reports were reviewed and approved. The theme for this year's stewardship campaign will be "We Are The Church."

Missions/Outreach - Plans are being made for the Summer Fest Pie Booth. The Dress A Child program is requesting donations.

Music and Worship - New shelves have been placed in the bell room for supplies.

Property - The vanity and countertop were installed. The leak in the narthex ceiling was repaired. Discussed kitchen renovation. Sanctuary window protective glass installation of the stained glass windows should be finished by end of July or early August.

Sanctuary - No meeting

Sound and Electronics - Nothing to report.

Old Business - Two people expressed interest in being a back-up sound person. The parking lot in the grass area is still in process.

New Business - A "Clean-Out Sale" is planned for August 7th, 8th and following worship on August 9th. Proceeds will go for kitchen/social hall renovation. Pastor will be on vacation July 20-July 31. Outdoor worship will be August 2 at 10:00 AM at the Strasburg Park Scout Pavillion.

Next Council Meeting - July 16, 2026, 6:00 pm.

**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.

On display in the Gathering Room are Bibles from our Historical Room. One is in written German. The plates which also were in the Historical Room, were a gift to the church.



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!



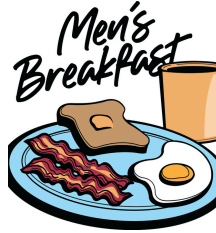
July 2026

ACOLYTES

July 5 - Hannah Rissler
July 12 - Landon Dayton
July 19 - Ty Palmer
July 26 - Nora Sexton

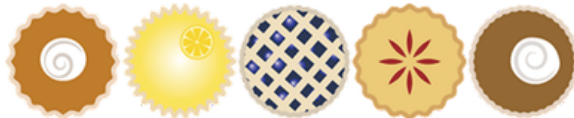
Men's Monthly Breakfast - July 10, 8:30 am

The group will meet at the church with a breakfast served. A book study of Max Lucado's, "Ten Men of the Bible: How God Used Imperfect People to Change the World" will take place.



LAY LEADERS

July 5 - Denise Borter
July 12 - Cole Hutchison
July 19 - Suzanne Black
July 26 - Abbey Hutchison



Strasburg Summer Festival Pie Tent

Friday, July 24 and Saturday, July 25

St. John will once again be hosting a PIE BOOTH at the Strasburg Summer Festival! Please consider signing up on the sheet in the Gathering Room to work in the booth for a two hour time slot. This is a good opportunity to work together, see your friends, and invite them to worship with you at St. John.

SPECIAL MUSIC

July 5 - Twila Lampe
July 12 - The Longfellow Family
July 19 - Denise Borter
July 26 - Special Music Sunday

Outdoor Worship & Church Picnic

Our Annual Outdoor Worship and Church Picnic will be August 2 at 10:30 am in the Strasburg-Franklin Park Boy Scout Pavillion. Please bring a dish to share. Hamburgers, hotdogs, place settings, and beverages will be provided. Unfortunately the service will not be livestreamed. We hope that you can attend and make some memories with your church family!



GREETERS

Sharon Klinger
Sue Lalewicz

USHERS

Bob Klinger
Sharon Klinger
Mike Lalewicz
Sue Lalewicz



Strasburg American Legion Chicken BBQ

The Strasburg American Legion will have their chicken BBQ from 10:00 AM to noon in Malcuit's Parking lot on July 12, August 9, and September 13.

3 - Connie Ecenbarger
15 - John Dodds
16 - Mary Ellen Gurney
22 - Jerry Wade
28 - Larry Howell





2026 Summer Service trip to Camp Washington, Cincinnati. Thanks to the great group of volunteers and for all those who contribute financially to make the trip possible!



2026 Strasburg Community VBS "Under the Big Top" Hosted by Strasburg UMC
We had great representation from St. John - thanks to each person!

Thank You!

Thank you so much for your thoughts and prayers during my mom's long journey of declining health and then her passing. Whether you sent a card, made a phone call, offered words of encouragement or sympathy, said a prayer, made food, sent flowers, drove to Newcomerstown or gave me a big hug, it was all greatly appreciated. Special thanks to Pastor Jason for the visits with my mom, the time spent with my family on two of your days off, and then the beautiful funeral service. You are the best! We love our church family and are so thankful for each one of you!

Kathy Osler & the family of Mary Ervin

Dear Scholarship Committee

Thank you for awarding me this scholarship. I am grateful for your generosity and support as I continue my education at the University of Mount Union.

Sincerely, Kylie McKenzie




thank you

Dear St John United Church, while I've never met you, you guys have given so generously to me. Thank you so much for your donation and kindness toward me, I can see where Derek gets it. I am so excited to be able to share all the amazing things that God will do this summer with you all.

In His Service,
Grant Squires

?? ? Bible Quiz ? ?

Jesus said that his followers are the "light of the world" (Matthew 5:14). It wouldn't do much good to hide a light under a bushel, he said. It should be put on a lamp-stand to give light in the house. Then Jesus said, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see ..."



Choose the ending of Jesus' sentence:

- A. their way and not stumble.
- B. how good and faithful you are as my servants.
- C. your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.
- D. in their darkness.

Answer: C (Matthew 5:16, NIV)



I want to thank you for sending me the party shoes. Also I want to thank all those who sent me get well cards. It made my day.

Thank you again
Linda Runk





Message from Heather Rissler

One summer, when our son Evan was almost one year old, we accepted an invitation to my aunt and uncle's farm in Maine. Knowing our wobbly toddler's avid interest in exploring beyond our tiny row house in the city, it was an easy "yes". Watching Evan cling to the sheep fence with wide-eyed wonder, crawl in the grass with their border collie, and take in all the sights and sounds of the farm with eagerness and curiosity, we knew we had found the perfect spot for a young adventurer. Since then, all of our children have returned with us many summers to spend time with my family and be refreshed by the beauty of nature unique to that part of Maine.

Last summer, when I picked up the book: ***A Shepherd looks at Psalm 23***, at the thrift store, I knew it was a dollar well spent. From the summers we spent on the farm, I had learned a little bit about shepherding, but I wanted to understand more as it relates to God's care for us, HIS sheep. Phillip Keller, the author, says: *Our Lord himself, when he was amongst us, continually used natural phenomena to explain supernatural truth in his parables. It is a sound, indisputable method, both scientifically and spiritually valid.* Keller is a perfect candidate to teach others by his first-hand experience as a sheep rancher and sheep owner. Each chapter explores in more depth, line for line, this beloved Psalm and offers a more thorough look at God's heart for us. It provides ample context for us to better understand the Shepherd (The Lord) that David describes. **If I have piqued your interest in this subject, join me this fall for a study of the book: A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23 by Phillip Keller.**

summer sermon series



This summer we have the privilege to hear sermons by those who attended the preaching class this spring. Cole Hutchison preached on June 14, and Steve Chaney will preach on July 19, and Derek Rissler mid August. We look forward to this!

Beginning June 7, Pastor Jason began preaching an 8-week summer sermon series entitled: "Stories of the Stained Glass Windows." Jason is looking at the biblical symbol on each window and talking about what the window symbolizes.

Pastor Jason will be on vacation July 20-July 31. (Pastor Matthew will provide pastoral coverage during that time.)

FULL OF TALENT

In Matthew 25:14-30, the master rewards servants who use their gifts instead of hiding them. What talents has God given you?



What you need:

- Construction paper (2 sheets)
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Glue
- Gold crayon or pen
- Black pen

What you do:

1. Fold one sheet of paper in half lengthwise. Trace your hand and lower arm so your arm touches the folded edge. Cut out the arm and hand, keeping the folded edge uncut.
2. Glue the folded hand to the other sheet of paper.
3. In gold, draw five coins in the hand. In black, write the skills and gifts God has given you.
4. Open the fold and draw 10 gold coins in the two open hands. In black, write how you can use your skills and gifts to help others and honor God.

Make a postcard puzzle

Summer is full of little moments that remind us that God is guiding each step. Like a puzzle, he brings every piece together in his time.

What you need:

- A postcard or printed picture
- Scissors
- Pencil (optional, for guiding your cuts)
- Envelope or small bag (for storing pieces)

What you do:

1. Flip your postcard over and lightly draw puzzle shapes or cut freely.
2. Cut the postcard into a mix of big and small pieces.
3. Mix up the pieces and try to put the picture back together.
4. Store the pieces in an envelope so you can use it again later.

