NOVEMBER 2026

THE LIGHT

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

ST. JOHN
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
516 N. WOOSTER AVE.
STRASBURG, OH 44680

(330) 878-5113
STJOHNUCCSTRASBURG@GMAIL.COM
WWW.STJOHNSTRASBURG.ORG

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

In Matthew 22:35-40 we read that the religious leaders once again tried to trap Jesus:

One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment.' And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on to these two commandments."

A question in our confirmation book which the adult Sunday School class is using this fall asks, "what is the mission of your church?" A mission statement according to Merriam-Webster is "a short, present-tense declaration that explains why your organization exists, what it does and who it serves."

When I think about why the Christian church exists, I think of the words of Jesus in this text. Jesus is asked what is the most important thing of all the laws and he said it is to love God and love people. Jesus sums up the mission of the church. Like the Pharisees of Jesus day, we can disagree with what is most important in the church, yet Jesus keeps things simple and says: love God and love people. All the other important things hang on these two things.

May we at St. John stay focused on these words of Jesus and may we keep things simple yet do the difficult work of Loving God and Loving People!

Council Notes

Pastor's Report - Pastor Jason met with several individuals and continues to make many home, nursing home and hospital visits, as well as holding services at Hennis and Park Village nursing centers. He also officiated at a funeral. He attended many community events such as athletic contests, pastor meetings and FCA as well as providing communion monthly to First Lutheran.

BOCE - The annual Fall party will be held on the hill on October 18th.

Congregational Care - Mums were delivered to shut-ins. Members of the congregation are encouraged to contact people who are not in church.

Fellowship - Cookies are needed for November.

Finance - We are ahead of budget for the year.

Missions/Outreach - Glow necklaces will be passed out near the library for Trick or Treat. Share a Christmas will be coordinated by Heather Spinell and Nick Haswell. Thanksgiving and Christmas gifts for Tiger Paw Packs were discussed by the committee. The Live Nativity will be held at St. John again this year.

Music and Worship - The committee is interviewing two candidates for the choir and handbell director positions. A Cantata group will be performing at St. John on Sunday, December 6. The group includes 30-40 people. The other churches in Strasburg have been contacted about music for the Community Thanksgiving Service.

Property - Otto Electric has been contacted about replacing Sanctuary lights. They have their own scaffolding which would save about $500. No action taken. The window project is nearing completion. Will be meeting with Carpenter Heating and Air Conditioning for a quote on the social hall project. Will be getting a quote for removing the drop ceiling, installing a moisture barrier, insulation and drywall and running new outlets in the social hall.

Sanctuary - Nothing to report.

Sound and Electronics - Pastor Jason needs a new headset and wireless mic in order to be heard on Sunday services.

Old Business - Synergy Signs will begin refurbishing the outdoor signs soon. Council approved and recommended the following to be voted upon as candidates for election by the congregation. For church council (3 year term) Tara Preston, Jim Rowe, Bethany Vallos; For Board of Christian Education (3 year term) Bob Hartline, Michele Pollock. New speakers and TV screens for the sanctuary were discussed and put on hold.

New Business - Council reviewed and approved the budget as presented. The budget and election meeting will be November 22. The Maxx Electric lighting estimate remains on hold. Versiti will hold a blood drive at St. John. Council approved a $500 donation from the benevolent fund to the Lions Club purchase of a vision screening device. All Saints Sunday is November 1. There will be a Thanksgiving meal at St. John on November 26. Council was given an update on Blake Yoder's Romanian Mission.
Next Council Meeting - November 19, 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.

2026 St. John UCC Fall Party on the Hill

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!

Upcoming Fall Events
November 2026

Men's Monthly Breakfast - November 13, 8:00 am

The group will meet at the church with a breakfast served. The group will study the book of James. If you haven't yet joined, this is a great time!

Senior Luncheon - November 12 @ Noon

The next Senior Luncheon is on November 12th at noon in the Social Hall. Tim Weddington will be singing 50's and 60's gospel music for us that day. The lunch plan includes Chicken Dressing Casserole, Carrots and Pumpkin Fluff. Reservations are requested by the Friday before the luncheon each month.

Speaker Series - November 12 @ 6:00 PM

The November Speaker Series speaker on November 12th will help you to better understand Medicare. Details will be provided to help you better understand the mysteries of the Medicare maize. These events are for educational purposes and no plan-specific benefits or details will be shared. For accommodations of persons with special needs at this meeting, call 330-878-5113. As you may know, open enrollment is October through December 7.

There will be no Speaker Series in December or January. Nick Alleshouse of Geib Funeral Home will provide information on how to plan your funeral home visit. His discussion will include information you need and need to be prepared for, long term care, Job and Family Services, nursing care and who is in charge and who is not.

November BIRTHDAYS

7 - Deanna Zaugg
15 - Al Osler
22 - Bonnie Goehring
25 - Stevie Yackey
27 - Joyce Hall

ACOLYTES
Nov 1 - Landon Dayton
Nov 8 - Gavin McPherson
Nov 15 - Hannah Rissler
Nov 22 - Nora Sexton
Nov 29 - Ty Palmer

LAY LEADERS
Nov 1 - Jeanette King
Nov 8 - Art Lampe
Nov 15 - Cole Hutchison
Nov 22 - Deb Burrier
Nov 29 - John Gerber

SPECIAL MUSIC
Nov 1 - Denise Borter
Nov 8 - Shirley Kuecher
Nov 15 - Handbell Choir and Chancel Choir
Nov 22 - Vickki Hinebaugh and Elaine Scatizzi
Evening Community Service Handbell Choir and Chancel Choir
Nov 29 - Joy Diehl

GREETERS
Sue Burdett
Elaine Scatizzi

USHERS
Ron Burdett
Sue Burdett
Tom Patton
Elaine Scatizzi

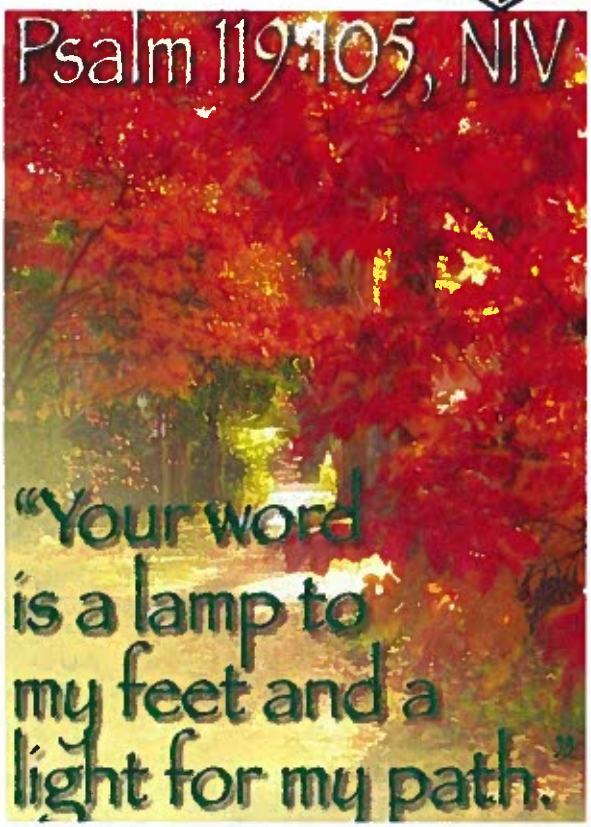
SCHOOL YEAR blessings

FCA at SHS

The Fellowship of Christian Athletes meets at Strasburg High School the 1st and 3rd Fridays at 7AM. All students are welcome to attend. The planned speakers for November are Joel Benson on the 6th and Adam Hall on the 20th.

Scout Taco Bar

The Scouts will be hosting their Taco Bar fundraiser from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM on Sunday November 15. Eat in or carry-out will be available.



Community Thanksgiving Dinner

St. John UCC is hosting a free Community Thanksgiving Dinner on November 26h at 12:00 noon. Please call the church office at 330-878-5113 by November 22 to RSVP.

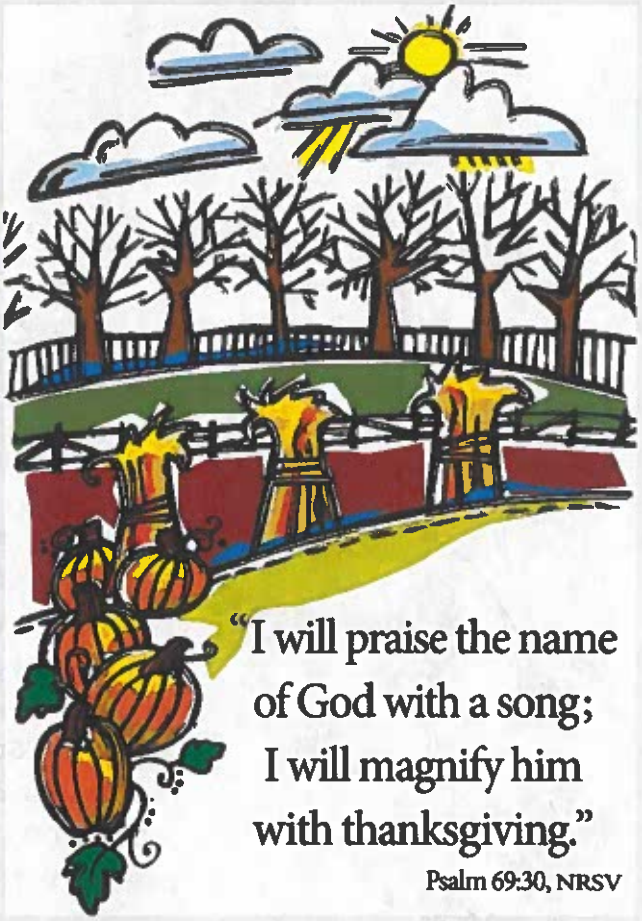
If you are willing to provide a covered dish or dessert for this event, please sign up in the Gathering Room. Any monetary donations can be dropped off at the church office.

Bible Quiz

It's intriguing to think of people in Bible times experiencing the same cycle of seasons we do. Which of these books *doesn't* mention autumn?

A. Matthew
B. Jeremiah
C. Proverbs
D. Jude

Answer: A (See Proverbs 20:4, ESV; Jeremiah 5:24; Jude 1:12



"I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify him with thanksgiving."

Psalm 69:30, NRSV

Fall back, not behind!

CHANGE YOUR CLOCKS and *join us on time for worship.*

The annual Budget and Election meeting is November 22, 2026 immediately following the worship service.

November 1st is All Saints Sunday when we will be remembering our loved ones who have passed during this past year.

Give *thanks*
in all circumstances;
for this is the
will of God
in Christ Jesus
for you.

1 Thessalonians 5:18

Dates to Remember

November 1 - All Saints Sunday
November 3 - Election Day - Remember to Vote!
November 8 - Blake Yoder will share his Romanian mission experience during the worship service
November 12 - Senior Luncheon 12:00 Noon
Speaker Series: Medicare 6:00 PM
November 15 - Scout Taco Bar following worship
GriefShare - Surviving the Holidays 2:00-4:00 PM
November 22 - Annual Budget and Election Meeting immediately following worship
November 22 - Community Thanksgiving Service 7:00 PM
November 26 - Community Thanksgiving Dinner 12:00 Noon
November 29 - Advent begins, Communion
December 6 - Christmas Cantata 2:00 PM
December 12 - Strasburg Live Nativity, Christmas in the Village 5:00 PM-7:00 PM
December 20 - Children's Christmas Program
December 21 - Blue Christmas at Strasburg UMC 7:00 PM
December 24 - Christmas Eve Service 7:00 PM

Message from Heather Rissler...

The first church that I remember was on the 77th block of Loretto Street in Philadelphia. It was where Mom and Dad were married, and I was christened. When I was five years old, I sauntered down the center aisle in a lilac chiffon dress as a flower girl in my aunt and uncle's wedding. Some of my earliest memories are in that architectural wonder with padded pews and familiar faces.

If you asked my parents how we ended up at our next church, they would tell you: "Because the people were nice." My parents may not have had acute aspirations for a new church when we left the city, simply that they wanted to be part of one.

It helps if the people are nice.

There were dozens of churches within a 10-mile radius, but there was no Rhawnhurst Presbyterian. Because of this, I have always sympathized with those who are trying to land in a new church home, knowing how far of a reach it was for my parents to find "nice people" amidst traditions that were utterly brand new to them, even leading them to reaffirm their baptism as adults.

When I was five, church was a place we went, not necessarily a family. My parents, on the other hand, were looking for that family that they left behind. Relocating leaves a merciless hole inside of a person for what feels like forever, until finally the hemorrhaging slows and healing begins.

In our new church, I learned the cheap game of appearances. I played by the rules. My faith was shallow at best. But as my home life splintered apart in my teenage years, I found stability in the rhythms we repeated Sunday after Sunday. I did them without a second thought. It was my way of life, until it was the grace that grounded me when I felt like my world was imploding. I chose to stay at a time in my life when others may have walked away.

Now fast forward to the present day, my husband and I have been in more churches than I can recall–Living room churches, basement churches, churches with worship bands, churches without any musical accompaniment, churches with gentle, gray-haired widows that passed out candy to the kids who made it through the service, churches that were hanging on by a thread, churches that were twenty people or two hundred people. **I have learned that there are no perfect churches because there are no perfect people, but Hebrews 10:25 says this:**

Do not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing,
but encourage each other all the more as you see the Day approaching.

My encouragement to you is: keep showing up and being present in faith communities. They are a stronghold of love and hope in strange, difficult times. Our highest calling is to lift Jesus higher and to love without reserve. While we can get hung up on the kind of space where this happens or the specifics, we need only to look at the early church. They gathered together, they shared everything, they ate together, and prayed together. Their common ground was Jesus, and because of this, they thrived.

THANK You!

To the congregation at St. John,
Thank you for all the kindness shown over pastor appreciation month. The kind words, notes and cards mean a lot. I am enjoying reading one encouragement a day from the encouragement jar. I am so blessed to be at St. John and working with you.
With much love,
Pastor Jason

Tuscarawas Council for Church and Community
New Philadelphia, OH 44663

Dear St. John United Church of Christ,
We at Tuscarawas County 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 of $250 allows us to continue serving those in need. We offer assistance with eviction and disconnect of utilities, gas vouchers, healthy choices for youth, Share-A-Christmas, and laundry days.
We also "Bless-A-Senior" where we provide cleaning supplies and a meal for Christmas.
We appreciate you and your assistance in our efforts.
Thank you,
Leslie Booth, Executive Director

Washington United Church of Christ
Cincinnati, OH 45225

Dear Friends,
Thank you! We have received your gift of $250, and we are grateful. It is only through the support of other churches and individuals that we can continue our mission outreach ministries.
We were able to provide youth with bookbags filled with school supplies, clothes and hygiene kits.
We started our after-school tutoring program, Homework Club. We continue to serve lunches four days a week to low-income neighbors averging 1,300 lunches a month.
And Camp Cupboard continues for "shoppers" to get food and donated clothes and household items, all free.
Thank you, on behalf of all those who will benefit from your gifts and our pastor, Rev. Melissa Stephens.
Sincerely,
Laurel Humes
Church Council

St John UCC Strasburg Holidays in United States

Nov 2026 (Eastern Time - New York

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 All Saints Sunday 9:30am - Worship - All 10:45am - Sunday School	2 1pm - Tiger Paw Packing 7pm - Scout Troop	3 6pm - Cub Scout Den	4 7:30am - Business Leader 5pm - BOCE 5:30pm - Handbell 7pm - Choir Practice	5 9:30am - A Shepherd 2pm - Kay Huff Calling 2:30pm - Action Now 6pm - Music & Worship	6 1pm - GriefShare	7
8 9:30am - Worship - 10:45am - Sunday School	9 7pm - Scout Troop	10 9am - Congregational 6pm - Cub Scout Den 6:30pm - Faith and Family	11 Food Bank Pick up Veterans Day 7:30am - Business Leader 2pm - Park Village Service 5:30pm - Handbell 7pm - Chancel Choir	12 9:30am - A Shepherd 12pm - Senior Luncheon 6pm - Life Knowledge	13 8am - Men's Breakfast 11am - Machelle Miller 1pm - GriefShare	14 Scout Taco Bar Set up 8:45am - Popcorn Pickup
15 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School 11am - Scout Taco Bar 2pm - Surviving the	16 7pm - Scout Troop	17 6pm - Cub Scout Den	18 7:30am - Business Leader 9:30am - Finance Mtg. 1:30pm - Hennis Service 5:30pm - Handbell	19 9:30am - A Shepherd 6pm - Church Council	20 1pm - GriefShare	21
22 9:30am - Worship 10:45am - Sunday School 7pm - Community	23 7pm - Scout Troop	24 6pm - Cub Scout Den	25 7:30am - Business Leader 5:30pm - Handbell	26 Charles Wahl's birthday Thanksgiving Day 12pm - Thanksgiving Meal	27 Office Closed	28
29 Advent Begins 9:30am - Worship - 10:45am - Sunday School	30 7pm - Scout Troop	1 11am - Machelle Miller 1pm - Tiger Paw Packing 6pm - Cub Scout Den	2 7:30am - Business Leader 5pm - BOCE 5:30pm - Handbell 7pm - Chancel Choir	3 2:30pm - Action Now 6pm - Music & Worship	4	5