

The Epistle

February 2025



ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
655 WAYNE AVENUE
DEFIANCE, OH 43512
www.stjohndefiance.com
419.782.5766



From the Desk of Pastor Mews

The CHRISTIAN CULTURE: “They’ll Know We Are Christians by Our Love.”

To many, February is “Love Month”, as Valentine’s Day lands smack in the middle of it. Red hearts, roses and cupids dominate February calendars in honor of ‘love’. This theme fits us, the Church. We are known by love. It’s just not words, but it forms the very basis of how we interact and care for each other through life’s journey. This interaction and basis is our culture. It’s what defines us.

DEFINITION OF CORPORATE CULTURE:

Likewise, modern American “corporate culture” has become the term that relates to the common values, beliefs and behaviors of that company or organization and how they interact with each other. The purpose of this culture is to define the organization’s core, to be successful, to build, keep and inspire members and attract new members. This definition fits beautifully with the Christian Church. Jesus forms this culture and blesses and initiates our core values. They are love, truth, grace and His Lordship.

Here are some examples of culture core values:

- The U.S. Marines state their core as “They don’t take appointments, but commitments.”
- Speedway advertises for new employees: “We’re hiring smiling faces.”
- Southwest Airlines holds to: “It takes all of us.”
- Metlife declares: “All Together Possible.”
- Even the famous TV show “Cheers” states “You want to go where everybody knows your name and you’re always glad you came.”
- We, the Church, can say: “The Communion of Saints” or “The Body of Christ.”

CULTURES WORK FOR THE GOOD:

When members of any organization hold onto and work for the goals of that culture, there can be great blessings. When those in the organization work together, pray together, forgive and care for each other, dedication to that culture and their goals increases. Others catch the passion and some might even want to join. It’s been said when employees leave their job, It’s the culture that is left, not the work.

CULTURES ARE HARD TO CHANGE:

We as humans are comfortable with traditions and habits, even when they are no longer beneficial or we lose the meaning behind them. The saying “You can’t teach a dog new tricks” has some value. Change is hard! When behaviors, philosophies and values are not the same among the members within any organization, there will be conflict. The culture can be damaged by toxic and sinful behavior toward other members, and the damage can escalate if people aren’t held accountable.

THE CHRISTIAN CULTURE IS THE ANSWER:

The Christian culture holds that we can love, forgive, care and build community in spite of disagreements and hurts. The Christian community is the only community built upon forgiveness and the hope of eternal life. Christians are called to work seeking true justice and love for all. This month, may we as God’s family work for unity, love, and grace, building the culture at St. John Lutheran Church to be the mission and house of God that He called us to be, only through the blessings of Christ’s death and resurrection: Pastor KFM



OHIO DISTRICT, PROFESSIONAL GROWTH, & COMMUNITY FROM PASTOR MEWS:

***Pastor Mews led worship on Sunday, 1/12 at Laurels and will do so on 2/16.**

***Pastor Mews attended the January NW Ohio Circuit 1 Pastor Circuit meeting on January 14 at St. John, Sherwood.**

***Pastor Mews and Elder Steve Meyer attended the NW OHIO Circuit 1 Forum on Sunday, January 19 at St. John, Sherwood to discuss Circuit and District ministry.**

***The February NW Ohio Circuit 1 meeting will be held at Christ Our Savior on February 11.**

***The OH District Convention will be held at St. John Lutheran Church in Dublin, Ohio, from July 22 to 24.**

***Pastor Mews will be attending Doxology II, “Building Community,” from February 3-5, 2025 in Northwest Indiana.**



OFFICIAL ACTS FROM PASTOR MEWS:

***Baptism of Chad M. Clark, 1/5/25 at 11:00**

***Funeral for Helen Miller on 12/2 at SJL; she died on 11/24/24**

***Memorial Service for Nate Ripke on 12/9 at SJL; he died on 11/18/24**

***Memorial service for Bill Hultz on 1/4/25 at SJL; he died on 9/7/24**

***Funeral for Marvin Steingass on 1/15/25 at SJL; he died on 1/7/25**

***Memorial Service for Holly Keeran on 1/18/25 at SJL; she died on 4/5/24**

***Marriage of George Kaiser and Sharon Flint, on 1/18/25**

***Confirmations of FALL 2024 LWG students on 1/5/25 at 11:00; Kristina Bishop,
Chad Clark, Rylee Stykemain, and Connor Stykemain,**

***Affirmation of faith; James Sisco, 12/24, and Krystle Clark, 1/5/25**



Pastor Mews' February Sermons

Feb. 1-2, 4th EPIPHANY, "Love People, Use Things"

based on the text: 1 Corinthians 12:31b-13:13 *Love / Spiritual Gifts*

Feb. 8-9, 5th EPIPHANY, "A People of Unclean Lips"

based on the text: Isaiah 6:1-8 *Law / Considerate Love*

Feb. 15-16, 6th EPIPHANY, "A Life of Glory or The Cross"

based on the text: Luke 6:17-26 *Disciples / Sin and Grace*

Feb. 22-23, 7th EPIPHANY, "The Same: Our View of Life / Death"

based on the text: 1 Corinthians 15:21-26, 30-42 *Death / Life*

Bible Study Opportunities - Led by Pastor Mews

The Reason For God

This study is based upon the NY Times best-selling book from Rev. Keller, the gifted and seasoned Christian pastor. This practical author addresses doubts from both skeptics and believers about Christianity. Using literature, real-life conversations and potent reason, this class engagingly shows how belief in God is a sound and rational one. Taught by Pastor Mews, participants will be able to give very credible arguments for pursuing the “Reason for God” with those they know and encounter who are skeptics, doubters and even atheists. The class meets Wednesdays from 2:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Fellowship Room. We invite you to join our class! All is provided.

ISAIAH

This Bible study is over the book of Isaiah and it meets from 10:00-11:30 A.M. in the Fellowship Room. The book and class theme is “To keep the people in eager anticipation of Christ!” Feel free to join us. All is provided. Our outreach ministry is to the PATH Center of Defiance.

Winter “Life with God ”

This class continues for those desiring to become communicant members of St. John Lutheran Church, those desiring to renew their faith, or those who wish to “check out” the basic teachings of Christianity and Lutheranism. We encourage every member to attend once every five years. Watch for more details or share with Pastor Mews dates and times that are best for you.



PRIVATE COMMUNION

Pastor continues to offer private Communion for anyone who wishes to have Communion. Please call the church office for an appointment.

SHUT-IN CALLS

We have around 30 people who are designated as shut-ins in our congregation. Pastor and Walt & Lorna Smith are keeping in contact with our members. If the shut-in person is comfortable having a home visit, arrangements will be made for this visit.



PASTOR’S SERMONS

If you missed a sermon, you can find it on our YouTube channel, on our webpage (www.stjohndefiance.com) and on our Podcast site. Google search: st john lutheran church defiance ohio youtube. Then subscribe to St. John channel to get notified when we are broadcasting “live”.

LINK TO OUR WEBPAGE

<https://www.stjohndefiance.com/sermons-2/>

LINK TO OUR PODCAST

<https://www.buzzsprout.com/54964>

Put your favorite podcast app on your phone and listen to the sermons any time of day. Our service is broadcast a week later on the radio on Sunday at 9:30 a.m. on WONO 1280 AM and on WZOM 105.7 FM at 8:00 a.m.

From the Desk of Kristina Phipps



Dear St. John Lutheran Families:

Welcome to the new year 2025! It was good to see members of the congregation at the School's Christmas Program back on December 13. The kids all sang so beautifully and of course were soooo cute in all their new Christmas outfits! Our staff, especially Mrs. Cavin who wrote the program and Mrs. Warncke who took charge of the music, did an awesome job putting the program together and practicing with the students daily. Mrs. Warncke even brought in a guest musician, Mr. D'Ambrosia the grandfather of one of our kindergarteners. Mr. Warncke ran the sound for us. Thank you, everyone, for all the hard work you all did to make that evening happen!

It is now official. We are re-opening second grade next year. This means for the 2025-2026 school year, our school age program will include kindergarten, first, and second grades (K-2). Registration begins on February 3. To plan more effectively for the upcoming school year, we have to have twenty school-age students minimum enrolled in K-2 by June 15, 2025. Many parochial schools across the state have a similar deadline for the same reason. More students than that would be tremendous, though! We will continue to have our Preschool and Tiger's Den open. I'm praying that the outreach we do will help these early childhood programs grow in leaps and bounds.

To begin the rebuild for our school, we are planning a major family outreach event and using funds that the endowment committee is graciously sharing with us. It's a Rodeo Round-Up with a cowboy / western theme on Saturday, March 15, 2025, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM. We will have carnival games, food, and a bouncy house for starters. We are also inviting different ministries from our church and from our community that have programs and services for families and children to host a table or at least provide us with information we can share at a community information table. If your ministry fits, please contact the school and sign up to host a table!

We will be using the mailing list procured for us by Lutheran Church Extension Fund (LCEF) from Missioninsite. With a demographic study of our area, they found 1,063 families with children aged 0 to 10. We will be including all of these families in our outreach efforts.

Here's how you can help with our outreach event.

- 1. Save the date.**
- 2. Stay tuned for flyers in the Epistle and weekly bulletins.**
- 3. Make plans to come help and / or have some fun with your kids and grandkids.**
- 4. Encourage other families with children to come check us out on March 15!**

Once again, thanks so much to everyone who has shown support for the school, whether it be a prayer, kind words or a kind act, a card, a financial donation, your time volunteering, etc! We really appreciate all you do to help us succeed!! Keep up the prayers for us, too, please!

Blessings, Kristina Phipps, Principal



ENDURE

DEBORAH S. MAXEY SCHOLARSHIP FUND
(High School Senior)
St. John Lutheran Church & School
Defiance, OH

St. John Lutheran Church and School of Defiance is establishing this Scholarship Program to support and encourage a high school senior preferably entering the field of education. It is NOT a requirement that the applicant is entering the field of education.

This Scholarship shall consist of a grant, the amount of which shall be determined annually by the Deborah S. Maxey Scholarship Committee under the following terms of agreement:

1. The student must have attended St. John Lutheran School for at least 3 years from Kindergarten to Eighth Grade.
2. The student must be a freshman this fall, enrolled and accepted in a college of their choice for an undergraduate program.

The Deborah S. Maxey Scholarship committee consists of a principal, a teacher, and a Maxey family member appointed by the chairman of the St. John Endowment Committee. The grant will be presented at the student's high school awards assembly, if possible.

This scholarship grant shall be remitted to a student upon verification of enrollment into an undergraduate program.

Application for this scholarship should be submitted by the student to the church office by April 6.

DEBORAH S. MAXEY SCHOLARSHIP FUND APPLICATION

Name in Full: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Parent(s): _____

Teacher Level Goal: [] Elementary [] Secondary or _____

College: _____

**Written Essay (250 words or fewer) *Must be submitted with application*
Topic: "What impact did being a student at St. John Lutheran have on my life?"

Date: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____



Bible Studies

SUNDAY-10:00 a.m.

**Phil Rohlf – “The Life of David”
Fellowship Room on the right**

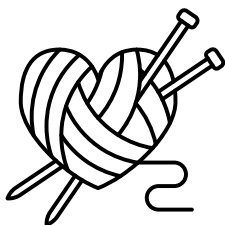
**Sandy Gyurnek – “Anxious for
Nothing” by Max Lucado
Fellowship Room on the left**

**Jeff Rohlf – “Dare To Be
Uncommon”
by Tony Dungy Adult Ed A**

**Faye Luhring - “Hebrews”
Dolena Bergman Room**



**TUESDAYS AT TEN BIBLE STUDY
meets every Tuesday
at 10:00 a.m.**



**The Women’s Knit and Study group
meets the second and fourth
Tuesdays of the month at 1:00 p.m.**



Prayer Requests

***Please let the church office know of any
prayer requests. Call 419.782.5766 or
email church.office@stjohntigers.com.
For the Prayer Chain, please contact
Judy or Penny via phone, text, or email
if you have a prayer request, an
addition, a correction, or any feedback
for the Prayer Chain Warriors to
include in their prayers. Judy Detter
(detterjudy@gmail.com), text Judy:
419.783.7032. Penny Mueller
(pennym41@gmail.com) text Penny:
419.304.5768***



***Hand Bells meet on Wednesdays at
5:45 p.m. The Senior Choir
practices every Wednesday at
6:30 p.m.***





Adult Cross Training

The Christmas decorations are put away and our homes feel like they are “back to normal”. We can breathe easier in the open spaces around us. We have a few weeks before our next season of the Church Year: Lent and Easter. In this brief time, ACT Bible Class will be studying some topics which may seem to be odd, and yet, in the anticipation of Lent, they are very fitting. February 5, we will be discussing “Spiritual Surgery” - what “pet sins” do we need to recognize and ask God to cut from our lives? February 19, we will be examining the “Strange Gifts” Jesus promises us as His followers. February 26, we will reflect on “Moving In” as God’s children. March 5, we observe Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. Please join us on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 - 8:00, as we join the Cross Training students at St John studying God’s Word. We continue to look for direction in our everyday life. All are welcome, and everything is provided. Contact Judy Detter (419)783-7932 or Penny Mueller (419)304-5768 with any questions.



WOMEN’S NIGHT

The women of St. John Lutheran are invited to attend Women’s Night on Thursday, February 13th at 6:00 p.m. at the Leisure Time Winery in Napoleon, Ohio. Please join us for an evening of fellowship and planning.

MOMS IN TOUCH



Faye Luhring invites to you join a group of ladies who pray for not only our congregation and its members, but also our community and world affairs. They meet every other Monday at 9:00 a.m. at 274 Wilson St. This month they meet February 3rd and 17th from 9 - 10 am. For more information, please call Faye at 419-782-0153.



February 2024 Food Pantry Report

For the month of February, we served 85 families or 257 people. We had one food run to Toledo. The total amount spent in February was \$1,003.32 for food. Thank you to the congregation for supporting the food pantry with food items, money and participating in the Meijer Simply Give Program.



We distributed 333 bags of food for a cost of \$4,995. According to the stats, we had 11 new families visit the pantry. Information will be published in the church bulletin and in the Epistle for the Letter Carriers' Stamp Out Hunger® Food Drive, Saturday, May 11, 2024.



The Clothes Closet

located across the street from the school, continues to provide gently used clothing at an affordable price to our community. The Clothes Closet is open on Thursdays from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Fridays from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. If you have a donation, you may drop it off on Monday or Tuesday from 8:00 to 10:00 a.m. or during the times we are open. Bring donations and come on in and do a little shopping. The CLothes Closet took in \$18,603.34 in 2024. We also helped 60 families with 110 bags of free clothing. The Clothes Closet donated \$1,000 to the Defiance Furniture Bank, \$1,000 to Operation K.A.V.I.C (Keller Assists Veterans In Crisis), and \$50 a month towards missions. We also funded the ramp out in front of the Clothes Closet. If anyone would be interested in volunteering at the Clothes Closet, please call Sharon Keller at 419.782.2639.

**VOLUNTEERS
NEEDED**

OUTREACH MINISTRY

Epistle – February 2025



Outreach Ministry seeks to share the Gospel of Christ within and outside of our walls to proclaim Jesus and the ministry of our church and school locally, nationally and globally.

Guest bags are currently being distributed to those in church attendance. Included in each bag is a note, a Bible, a mug, a refrigerator magnet and certificates for tours of the church/school as well as a free Thrivent t-shirt.

A Nativity scene was featured along with a large St. John Church and School banner at the Christmas Cruise-Thru at the Defiance County Fairgrounds. Several thousand visitors passed through the displays during the Christmas season.

The committee is now in the process of planning events for 2025.

The Outreach Ministry Committee meets on the first Tuesday of each month to plan additional opportunities to be more welcoming to worshippers and be more visible in the community. Anyone who is interested to learn more is welcome to attend.

Additional information regarding this ministry is available by contacting Mike Saxton at 419-393-2513 or Pastor Mews at 419-782-5766.



LADIES AID

Hopefully God is navigating your new beginning for this year. Our verse for this month is from Matthew 5:8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Our meeting for February is on the 27th with Donna Van Vlerah as Chair Hostess. Toilet Paper is the suggested item for the Food Pantry. We hope to see everyone at the meeting.

Ladies Aid will be doing the Lenten Meal for Ash Wednesday on March 5. Plan on coming early for the meal and then going to the Ash Wednesday service. The meal will be lasagna, salad, garlic bread and desserts. Happy Valentine's Day to everyone on February 14th.

Scouting News February 2024



The Pack has grown by four new Scouts this month! They have been working on their flag skills and what it means to respect the flag. The last meeting was about practicing flag folding and what everything on the flag means. They will be putting their flag practicing to use on Scout Sunday, February 9th, carrying the flag for the 9:00 service.

The Boy Scout Troop has been practicing their scout skills and made a pair of snowshoes for the Klondike race that was held at Camp Berry, Jan 18th. It took about three meetings to make their snow shoes, bending the wood, weaving duct tape and making a boot hold. They had several do-overs but have ended with a pretty good pair.

The Troop extends their thanks to all who have dropped off pop cans and newspapers in the garage in the south parking lot. It not only helps with their conservation project of recycling but it has also helped with the cost of their activities.

Youth and adults are always welcome to attend Pack and Troop activities to learn more about our program. Any questions can be directed to Stephanie Sindel at 419-438-8268.

CARE NOTES

There are new Care Notes available in the Bergman Resource Room:

Take One – Take Heart; Give One –
Give Hope Working Your Way Through Crisis

Additional titles have been placed in the Caring Ministry Resource Room in the Work Room. Please take one for you or give to a friend.

Notes now available:

“Angry? Lonely? Anxious? Dealing With Difficult Emotions”

“What Grieving Does to the Body”

“Living With Cancer – A Day at a Time”

“Keeping Up Your Spirits in the Hospital”

“What Everyone Should Know About Dementia”

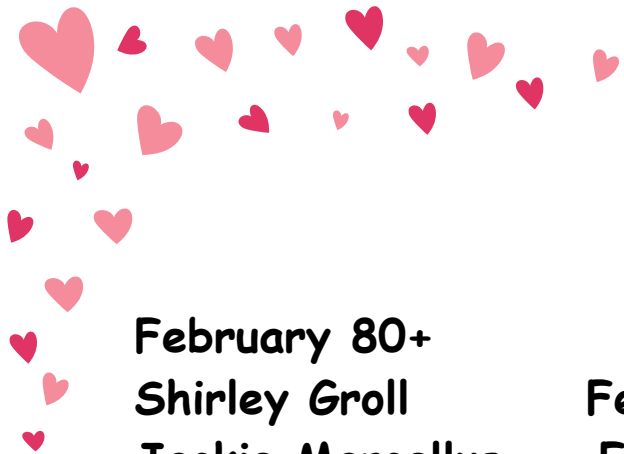
“Finding God in Pain or Illness”

“Easing the Burden of Stress”

“Parenting a Troubled Teen”

“Grieving the Loss of a Good Friend”





HAPPY BIRTHDAY

February 80+

Shirley Groll	Feb. 9th	(85)
Jackie Marcellus	Feb. 11th	(85)
Martha Tonjes	Feb. 12th	(83)
Ed McCray	Feb. 16th	(87)
Peg Miller	Feb. 19th	(80)
Sharon Boehm	Feb. 28th	(83)



HAPPY Anniversary!

40th plus

Dick & Diane Bonin	Feb. 2nd	(59)
Howard & Mary Grime	Feb. 5th	(59)
Robert & Bonnie Warncke	Feb. 10th	(63)
Mark & Kathy Reynolds	Feb. 17th	(47)
Pat & Jill McMillen	Feb. 18th	(42)
Bernard & Anna Sines	Feb. 20th	(71)
Jack & Marie Clark	Feb. 24th	(62)





WE WELCOME INTO GOD'S FAMILY THROUGH ADULT BAPTISM CHAD MICHAEL CLARK. He was baptized at the 11:00 a.m. service on Sunday, January 5th.



ADULT CONFIRMATION & REAFFIRMATION OF FAITH

We celebrate new members to our church family: Connor Jeffery Stykemain and Rylee Elizabeth Stykemain, Chad Michael Clark and Kristina Marie Bishop. They were welcomed by the Rite of Adult Confirmation on Sunday, January 5th, at the 11 a.m. service. Krystle Ann Clark (second from right) was welcomed by reaffirmation of her faith.





CONGRATULATIONS

Many thanks to Marilyn Reeb for her many years of volunteer service to the St. John Lutheran Church office. She was honored at the 5:30 church service on January 11th. She volunteered her time for over seventeen years helping to enter church attendance and TeleCare reports in the Realm system. She also helped with many other office duties during her time at St. John. God's blessings to Marilyn!



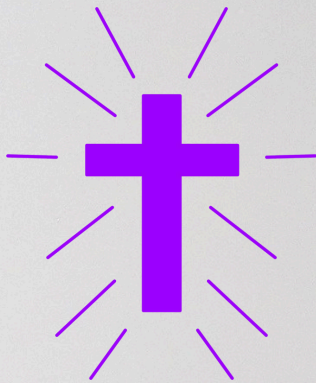
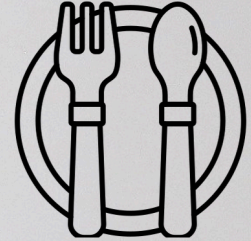
2025 Lenten Services

March 5th Ash Wednesday	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
March 12th	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
March 19th	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
March 26th	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
April 2nd	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
April 9th	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
April 17th Maundy Thursday	7:30 p.m.
April 18th Good Friday	1:00 p.m. & 7:30 p.m.
April 19th Easter Vigil	5:30 p.m.
April 20th Easter Sunday	9:00 a.m. & 11:0 a.m.

ST. JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH
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2025 LENTEN MEALS



LENT

MARCH 5TH, ASH WED. LADIES AID: LASAGNA DINNER

MARCH 12TH, 419 MINISTRY: SPAGHETTI DINNER

MARCH 19TH, YOUTH GROUP: CHICKEN SANDWICHES & CHIPS

MARCH 26TH, SCHOOL BOARD: TACO BAR

APRIL 2ND, ELDERS: SLOPPY JOE SANDWICHES & CHIPS

APRIL 9TH, BOY SCOUTS: SOUP & SANDWICH SUPPER



FEBRUARY



February

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1 COMMUNION Worship Service 5:30
2 Communion Worship: 9:00 & 11:00 am Sunday School 9:00 am Adult Bible St. 10:00 am	3 Finance 7:45 am Music Mtg 10 am Life W/ God 6:30 pm TeleCare 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm	4 Food Pantry 9 am Tuesdays @ 10 10 am Tuesdays @ 2 2 pm School Board 5:30 pm Outreach Mtg. 6:30 pm	5 Reason For God 2 pm Hand Bells 5:45 pm Senior Choir 6:30 pm Cross Tr. / ACT 6:30 pm	6 Clothes Closet 9 am Food Pantry 9 am Isaiah Bible St. 9 am Elders Mtg. 6 pm	7 Clothes Closet 10 am	8 Non-Communion Worship Service 5:30
9 Worship: 9:00 & 11:00 am Sunday School 9:00 am Adult Bible St. 10:00 am	10 Finance 9:30 am Life W/ God 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm	11 Food Pantry 9 am Tuesdays @ 10 10 am Knit & Study 1 pm	12 Endowment 10 am Reason For God 2 pm Hand Bells 5:45 pm Senior Choir 6:30 pm Cross Tr. / ACT 6:30 pm	13 Clothes Closet 9 am Food Pantry 9 am Isaiah Bible St. 9 am Women's Night 6 pm	14 Clothes Closet 10 am	15 COMMUNION Worship Service 5:30
16 Communion Worship: 9:00 & 11:00 am Sunday School 9:00 am Adult Bible St. 10:00 am	17 Finance 9:00 am Life W/ God 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm	18 Food Pantry 9 am Tuesdays @ 10 10 am Tuesdays @ 2 2 pm Trustees 6:30 pm	19 Reason For God 2 pm Hand Bells 5:45 pm Senior Choir 6:30 pm Cross Tr. / ACT 6:30 pm	20 Clothes Closet 9 am Food Pantry 9 am Isaiah Bible St. 9 am Parish Planning 6 pm	21 Clothes Closet 10 am	22 Non-Communion Worship Service 5:30
23 Worship: 9:00 & 11:00 am Sunday School 9:00 am Adult Bible St. 10:00 am	24 Finance 9:30 am Life W/ God 6:30 pm Boy Scouts 6:30 pm	25 Food Pantry 9 am Tuesdays @ 10 10 am Knit & Study 1 pm	26 Reason For God 2 pm Hand Bells 5:45 pm Senior Choir 6:30 pm Cross Tr. / ACT 6:30 pm	27 Clothes Closet 9 am Food Pantry 9 am Isaiah Bible St. 9 am Ladies Aid Mtg. 2 pm	28 Clothes Closet 10 am	MARCH 1 COMMUNION Worship Service 5:30
Communion 2			Ash Wednesday 5			Non-Communion 8

