

St. John's News

Redeeming the Times

'These are the craziest times I've ever seen,' a friend shared with me back in July. What she said might resonate with any number of us as well. Maybe you've even found yourself saying, or thinking, just as much at some point lately. When I asked her what she sees as so 'crazy,' she said this: "It's the pressure. There's so much pressure on so many people. I offer to pray with anyone and everyone I can. We need it." Amen.

There's a little phrase from Ephesians 5 that's staying with me these days. "Redeeming the times." (Ephesians 5:16) Different translations share different words here. 'Make the most of your time.' 'Make the most out of every opportunity.' 'Make every minute count.' This is one of the occasions I'm a fan of the King James Version translation. "Redeem the time." 'Redeeming the times' in which we live is a call to do good... to look at one another through a new lens... to listen to a deeper truth than what we might find in a soundbite, or a tabloid, or what the messages around us so often speak. 'Redeeming the times' calls us to be better, to be who we really are, to co-create some good with God and one another when and where it's often troubling to find much good.

Redeeming the times involves:

- Rolling up our sleeves, getting our hands dirty
- Actively involving ourselves with God's good work
- Making the world a more loving, more compassionate, Godlier place
- Putting an end to the myth that our pessimistic complaining does us any good
- Thinking globally if we wish, but always acting locally
- Being sobered by the thought that our most common sins don't usually involve doing bad things, as much as they involve ***not*** doing the good things that are possible for us.

Real redemption involves a surge of relief on both sides of an issue or division. It involves a largeness of heart, and the ability to not be stuck in the past. It involves a recognition that we need one another, we're all one enormous human family, and a recognition that God deeply desires to move us through prayer.

To redeem these times, with God's help, is to start exactly where we are, making the world a better place where we are. A more human place. A more divine place. A place where we offer our best for God and for neighbor on any God-given day. Let's then make the most of these times, these God-given days, and redeem these times listening and following the Spirit of God.

Christ's grace pervades, Pastor Matt Wheeler +



THANK YOU

From Mckenna Boling-Thank you so much for the many meaningful gifts you gave us for graduation! I will cherish them and keep them as a reminder of my wonderful church family, who have always been extremely loving and supportive! Also, thank you so much for the generous scholarship! It will be a huge help towards my tuition costs for Wittenberg! I'm beyond grateful for the memories I have from my faith journey at St. John's and I can not wait for the times we will share in the future.

From Tristan Boling-Thank you very much for the thoughtful and generous gifts you gave us. The support from the church has helped me a lot over the last several years. I will always keep these gifts close to remind me of the many great memories I have from St. John's. I can't wait to make many more in the years to come.

From Case Stevenson- Thank you sincerely for granting me the opportunity to be the recipient of your generous scholarship. A great Protestant philosopher said, "Life can only be understood backwards; but must be lived forwards." These are the words of my favorite author and public intellectual, Soren Kierkegaard. Either by coincidence, or as a sign from God, these were the same words of wisdom provided to me in Pastor Matt's congratulatory graduation letter. As the quote implies, I am not aware of what the future holds, but I am eager to bear witness to my own past as it unfolds. I will never find adequate to express how grateful I am to you all. With love and appreciation for my entire church family.

From Bell Choir Ministry-“Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all the earth.” Psalm 100:1. We are so grateful to all of those who have helped to make possible the repositioning of the pews to allow for this ministry to have a permanent place in our Sanctuary. A very heartfelt thank you to the Trustees, Bill and Gail Ebert for choosing a new seat, and Maury Gnepper.

From Jenni Miller-You have given me an incredible gift over the last four years and I am left virtually speechless. Not only did I have a house to live in because of you, but I had a *beautiful* house that became my home. I am so grateful for everyone that helped me in so many ways!

ST JOHN'S OUTDOOR FOODPANTRY

Did you know that St. John's now has an Outdoor Food Pantry (Blessing Box)? It's located by the front door of the Parish House. This has been an amazing way for us to reach out to our community and help those that are in need. We need your help to keep the pantry stocked. If you would like to contribute items remember, the station is outside and exposed to the current temperatures. It might be used by the homeless or families in need. We also will accept monetary contributions, and we'll do the shopping for you!! *Thanks for your help!!! We have currently had contact with a few of those from the community that benefit from the items in our Blessing Box.*



From Jeff- Thank you so much for this food. My name is Jeff-I am homeless with cancer. This is a blessing. Thank you so much. Keep me in your prayers.

From 2 of the "Crazy 8's" – They stopped me one morning to ask if I was the one who replenished the box. They told me a little bit about their group and how they have made a promise to only take a few items each day so there will be supplies for others. They were so grateful to St. John's for this ministry.



September Birthdays- Brent Bachelder, Chrissy Wheeler, Gail DeFrance, Casen Schwochow, Mike Warner, Angie Klotz, Caraline Schwochow, Chad Schwochow, Eleanor Boroff, McKenna Willis, Hunter Jacobs, Matt Wheeler, Lois Dickey, Ashley Kuehne, Lucy Kensler, Ken Olsen, Heidi Wheeler, Rick Myers, Rick Grine, Martha Myers, Betsy Snodgrass, Deb Wilson, Skylar Balkavec.

September Anniversaries- Bob & Becca Myers, Rick & Martha Myers, Tom & Connie Fishbaugh, Josh & Ashley Bower, Bob & Betty Kusmer, Myron & Deanna Jacobs, Josh & Pam Kensler, Gary & Bonnie Stotz, Mark & Lisa Walther.

St. John's Council Highlights- August 11th, 2021

Below is not an exhaustive list of all that was discussed, but here are a few highlights, with gratitude for all of our leadership in so many different areas of our shared work and ministry together...



Elders

- Looking forward to the 'Blessing of Backpacks' for children and youth, Sunday August 29th, 8am and 10:30am services.
- Attending the Summer Park Tour Sue Lawrence (Children's Ministry Coordinator) has been involved with throughout the summer, as well as Heather Hawn of Grace Lutheran Church, has been a highlight for families who have been able to attend.
- GriefShare continues to provide an important healing ministry this summer, and will continue with a new session in September.

Deacons

- Reading together 'Loving Jesus,' chapter 14 – a great chapter on corporate worship together and why it matters so much.
- Continuing with serving on Sunday mornings for worship.

Trustees

- Phwew! Busy worker-bees! Busy with carpet in the youth group room, the 707 Napoleon St. house, creating new space for bell choirs to gather in the sanctuary for worship, electric work in the sanctuary, the building restoration project, and much more!

Building Restoration Updates

- For the Building Restoration Project, 'Midwest Maintenance: Historic Building Restoration Services' out of Piqua, OH is the construction company the Bid Review Team is recommending for construction needs. (Does not include quite yet the roof over the sanctuary. That'll happen a little later!)
- A Line of Credit for \$500,000 to be established with Signature Bank who handles St. John's Endowment Fund to help fund the project.
- The team interviewing professional consultants for a capital appeal has been meeting and interviewing four companies this summer from various parts of the country, close to recommending a company very soon for congregational approval.

With Gratitude!

Many prayers of thanks for all of our helpers, teachers, leaders, parents, grandparents, and certainly the kids who participated in the LIFT Vacation Bible School a couple of weeks ago, July 26-28. We gathered over at Hayes Memorial UMC for VBS. New friendships were made, friendships were renewed, good learning about God's surprising grace in Christ Jesus was shared each night, and much joy in the Spirit was given and received!

Included in our prayers these days and weeks ahead...

- The family and friends of Marcia Humberger (at rest, June 7, 2021)
- The family and friends of Bob Humberger (at rest, July 3, 2021)
- The family and friends of Vivian Schwochow (at rest, July 17, 2021)
- The family and friends of Bill Kreider (at rest, December 19, 2020)
- The family and friends of Wilma Walker (at rest, July 28, 2021)
- The family and friends of Lorraine Crawford, Pastor Jody Rice's mother (at rest, July 24, 2021)

FROM THE CAPITAL CONSULTANT COMMITTEE TEAM:

Our committee continues to work diligently together in moving toward choosing the best possible consultant for the Capital Appeal of St. John's Lutheran Church. We have had four interviews over the past three weeks, one in person and three via Zoom, each being close to two hours in length. All candidates have provided us many options about how to move forward for the best results and reaching our goal. Currently the team is meeting in person,

discussing who will bring the best results for St. John's, and equally as important, who will be the best blend with our faith and you, our congregation. We will be conducting second interviews if needed over the next couple of weeks. Our intention was to have a consultant chosen by the end of August, however, we feel we will need a few extra weeks to bring the best choice to Counsel and you, our congregation, for approval. Our Team certainly appreciates your prayers and support as we move closer to presenting you the consultant that God has chosen for the betterment of St. John's Lutheran Church, now and for generations to come. We have come this far by Faith!+ 😊

Jeremiah 29:11-For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope.

Psalm 32:8-I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should go; I will counsel you with my eye upon you.

Terry Wilhelm, Chair-Vice President of Council

LUTHER LUNCH BUNCH- will meet in the back parking lot at 11:30 AM and carpool to Chateau Tebeau Winery, Helena, on Wednesday, September 15th. Call the church or Carol Franks for reservations!!

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS:

August 29: Blessing of the Backpacks and Noisy Offering for Blessings Box at both Sunday Services.



September 5: Family Sunday School **September 12:** Regular Sunday School

Dave, Pastor Matt, and I will be meeting about alternative plans if you are not yet comfortable in sending your children back to in person Sunday School. This will most likely include some online lessons and Sunday School packets you may do at home with your children. We welcome any feedback on this matter. Incidentally, if anyone needs a children's Bible to read with children or grandchildren let Sue or the office know, and I will get them to you.

Stepping Stones Bible Study: Plans are being made for the Stepping Stone Bible Study for children in grades 3 and 4 during the month of **October**. After this year, this program will be for children in third grade. A letter will be sent in mid-September to parents and children with details.



KIDS OF THE KINGDOM:

I am going to try something different and meet once a month. Here are the first four dates I have chosen. Dave is planning on helping me out this year.

September 22- Welcome Back Bash

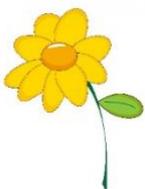
October 27- Shine With Jesus!

November 17- Let's Be Thankful!

December 15 - Jesus' Birthday Party

We will meet from 6:00-7:15 downstairs in the kitchen area. A meal will be provided beginning at 6:00 pm. Looking forward to seeing you! This program is for Grades K-6th grade. As always, we welcome your feedback with any of our programs. Let us know dates and times that work or do not work for activities.

Thank You!!



LIFT VBS: Thanks to all who helped to make our Vacation Bible School Program a success! We went to Mars and Beyond to learn about God's power and saving grace. A big shout out of thanks to Cyle who helped us set up VBS over at Hayes. He was also one of the helpers along with: Keisa, Case, Kayla, Kenzie, and Pastor Matt. And thanks to the parents and grandparents who brought the children and those who came out to visit.

LIFT SCHOOL SUPPLY GIVE-A-WAY: Since the Block Party was postponed six of us showed up at Grace Lutheran to give out bags of school supplies in a drive-through manner on Saturday, August 14. We gave out about 100 bags and had great conversations with the people coming through. Thanks to Sue and Dave from St. John's, and to Heather, Madison, Ronnie, and Pastor Mark from Grace for helping and being there. We plan to disperse the rest of the bags at the Farmer's Market and then give to the Fremont City Schools. Moving the supplies is the hardest part so a big thanks to Dave, Sue, Heather, Riley, Cyle, Case, Kenzie, Sandy, Kelsey, Caraline and Kayla for packing bags and moving them to Grace. Thanks, Chad, for bringing the kids in! I also want to thank everyone who donated supplies, and who gave monetary donations. Lynette from Share and Care shopped and donated some of the supplies, along with us receiving a Thrivent Action Grant to help with this program.

Confirmation- Confirmation Dates

Confirmation will be starting up with 7th and 8th grade youth from St. John's, St. Mark and Grace. We will be meeting the first and fourth Sundays of most months. We will also have a daylong retreat at Lakeside on Saturday, Oct. 2nd. Here are the Confirmation dates starting at 11:45 going for 90 minutes (locations will have to be decided):

9/19 - Parent get together @St. John's; 9/26 @ St. John's 10/02 - @ Lakeside ;

10/24; 11/14; 12/5; 1/2/22; 1/23; 2/6; 2/27; 3/6; 3/27; 4/3; 4/24; 5/1; 5/22 and Pentecost is 6/5

Locations will be coming later this month....



Youth and Family Ministry Team

Youth and Family Ministry Team- The first meeting is September 12th...after second service. We would WELCOME any Parents and Youth who would like to join us!!! We will be meeting quarterly Sunday mornings after the second service.

Fall Into Lakeside

On **Saturday, October 2nd** we are planning a one day get - together for our Jr. and Sr. High youth for this fall... more information coming... please mark your calendars for this event...



ZOOM BOOK STUDY - Calling ALL Jr. & Sr. High Youth!!!

Starting in **October**, we will be starting a book study on the book by Rob Bell called Velvet Elvis... Velvet Elvis is the first book from Rob Bell, the New York Times bestselling author of Love Wins. Selected as one of 2011's most influential people by Time Magazine, pastor Bell offers original and refreshingly personal perspectives on what Christianity is truly all about in Velvet Elvis. A vibrant voice for a new generation of Christians—the most recognizable Christian leader among young adults—Rob Bell inspires readers to take a fresh look at traditional questions of faith. We will be doing it Zoom style so that those who don't drive still can be involved. Please let Dave know if you are interested in doing this...Dave will get copies for those interested in doing the study... the time will be decided after we get a count of youth interested!!!





July 24th - 28th , 2022 Youth Gathering Dates

For youth going into the 8th grade - 12th graders 2022. After our initial meeting we have 6 youth 2 adult leaders who are going!!! If your youth are interested, please let me know. Dave

5th Qtr. In the Youth Room!!!

Friday, September 3rd, 9:30 - 11:30p.m. - Vs. Sandusky

Friday, September 10th, 9:30 - 11:30p.m. - Vs. Clay

September 17th, 9:30 - 11:30p.m. - Vs. St. Francis de Sales

Friday, October 15th, 9:30 - 11:30p.m. -Vs Central Catholic

Jr. and Sr. High Youth

BRING YOUR FRIENDS!!! FOOD, FUN & FELLOWSHIP!!!



Wii Bowling

Wii Bowling Buddies League – St. John's Lutheran Church- Come and have fun in the youth room... we are going to have a Wii bowling Tournament with handicap bowling... Tuesday Evenings 4:15p.m.

(Jr. & Sr. High Youth and adults)

September 7th – November 16th- Potluck on November 16th

Please sign up or call Dave..

After School Chill... 2:30 - 4:00 p.m. Monday through Thursday and 2:30 to 3:30 on Friday, the youth room will be open for Jr. and Sr. High youth to come in and study together... A place to unwind, listen to some music... A safe place for a while after school...

During regular school days....



St. Mark News!!

CONTACT St. Mark: email stmarklutheran1914@gmail.com Church phone: 567 280 9275 Office phone: 419 332 2162

KEEP IN YOUR PRAYERS Dot Filson, Rich Harder, Jennie Hill, Cathy Gibbs, Kate Hansen, Tom Longanbach, Evelyn Merrifield, Judy Molyet, Clayton Peck, Judy Rapp, and Mike Smith.

EXTEND SYMPATHY to the family and friends of William Weng, who passed away July 12, 2021, and to the family and friends of Dewella Kerns, whose funeral was held August 3, 2021.

CELEBRATE the baptism of Kellie Sue Butzier on July 11, 2021. Kellie Sue is the daughter of Britani and Matthew Butzier.



WISH HAPPY SEPTEMBER BIRTHDAY to Jordan Slaymaker – 10th; Ashlee Durst and Jennifer Hotz – 16th; Tammy Weaver – 19th; Annette Moore – 21st; Shane Pickerel – 22nd; Mathew Polter – 25th; and Patton Gibbs – 28th.

WORSHIP ASSISTANTS IN SEPTEMBER

September 5: Ushers – Margaret Wolf and Laurie Foos; Assistant – Kerri Hosang; Reader – Verna Carlo; Altar Care – Jamie Gottron

September 12: Ushers – Bud Gibbs and Mick Hill; Assistant – Karen Heater; Reader – Bud Gibbs; Altar Care – Jamie Gottron

September 19: Ushers – Ritzman Family; Assistant – Sue Peck; Reader – Sue Peck; Altar Care – Jamie Gottron

September 26: Ushers – Bud Gibbs and Mick Hill; Assistant – Karen Heater; Reader – Bud Gibbs; Altar Care – Karen Heater.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Worship - Sundays at 9:45 a.m. Communion first and third Sundays. Noisy Offering second Sunday.
Noisy offerings are currently being dedicated to youth activities.

Women's Circle - Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 6:30 p.m. Wendy Ritzman is hostess.

Worship and Music Committee - Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.

Church Council - Tuesday, September 21, 2021 at 6:30 p.m.

AA Meetings - each Wednesday at 10:00 a.m.

Blessed Bunch - will attend the Ritz Theater's production of "The Ladies of Harmony," a comedy written by area author/actor Ron Hill. The performance is at 7:30 p.m., Saturday, September 18, 2021. Tickets are \$15.00. Contact the Ritzman family for details.

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING July 20, 2021

From the Pastor

- Pastor Paul thanked the congregation for the gift presented at the baptism of his son James. It was a personalized picture frame created by In Cahoots, the craft business of Wendy Ritzman and her sister.
- Margaret Wolf will pick up the weekly bulletins prepared at Grace Lutheran Church and bring them to the church on Fridays.



From the Property Committee

- Winterich Stained Glass has agreed to inspect the building's windows, but has not set a definite time to visit.
- Work continues on repairing and preserving the fire escape door.
- Margaret Wolf is scheduling the Junk Brothers to remove the collection of discards. The charge will be \$100.00 for a full load or \$75.00 for a half load.
- Four contractors have been contacted about repairing the crack in the parking lot. However, all are busy and none have replied. This project is still a work in progress.
- The door frame on the basement's lift door came loose so that the door cannot be closed and the lift cannot be used. Haven Krauss will assess the situation. [Haven has repaired the frame.]

From the Worship and Music Committee

- The committee recommended the worship service include a third hymn, more sung liturgy, and offerings collected by the ushers during the service. [These recommendations have been put in place.]
- The LIFT Board has begun arranging pulpit exchanges among LIFT congregations.

From the Christian Education Committee

- Face – to – face in person confirmation classes will begin in the fall.

From the Fellowship and Evangelism Committee

- It was suggested that we revive the practice of having a once-a-month "coffee and donuts" time following the worship service.

Old Business

- The issue of charges for the use of St. Mark facilities has been tabled at this time. Pastor Paul will consult with other LIFT pastors about their congregations' policies.

New Business

- Congregation members have been contributing to the Bridge of Hope donation box in the church. Margaret Wolf has delivered the collection.

FROM THE CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING August 17, 2021

FROM THE PASTOR

- The LIFT congregations' pulpit exchange plans are on hold.
- The postponed LIFT Block Party will be held in October; a date has not been set.

FROM THE PROPERTY COMMITTEE

- Representatives from Winterich Stained Glass Company visited the church in July and inspected the window glass from both inside and outside. They are willing to work with us, but we need to decide whether we want a specific type of work done and on how many windows. Another option is to leave decisions to the company. The company will provide estimates based on our decisions.
- Terminex made its annual inspection. We received a good report.
- Junk Brothers removed unwanted items. The charge was \$80.00.
- Haven Krauss has been removing the outer layer of plywood from the fire escape door. The door itself seems to be solid and in good condition.

- Morelock Asphalt provided a quote for filling the big crack in the parking lot and for resealing the asphalt. Council voted to accept the bid for the repair - \$965.00 – but not for the resealing at this time - \$3,095.

FROM THE WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE

- Hymns and liturgy have been selected for September and October. Regarding the ever-changing pandemic scene, we will continue practicing safe distancing; wearing masks is optional.

FROM THE YOUTH AND CHRISTIAN EDUCATION COMMITTEE

- In-person confirmation classes will begin September 19. St. Mark, (which has four youth in Confirmation Class), St. John's, and Grace will rotate as hosts of the classes. The classes will follow the Sunday worship service. They will include lunch, lesson, activity, and closing / prayer. The host church will provide a light lunch. Council voted to pay for the lunches for the four sessions St. Mark will host.
- Four youth will attend "Fall into Lakeside" October 3. Council had already approved the \$50.00 per person cost.

FROM THE FELLOWSHIP AND EVANGELISM COMMITTEE

- The Blessed Bunch will travel to the Ritz Theater in Tiffin to watch "The Ladies of Harmony," a comedy written by area-resident Ron Hill. The date is Saturday, September 18, 2021. The play begins at 7:30 p.m.; cost is \$15.00 per ticket. The Ritzman family will coordinate the event. A date will be set for later to plan more activities.

NEW BUSINESS

- Pastor Paul reported that the LIFT Board will meet August 18 to discuss a possible Blessing of the Animals. The Pastor said he would encourage holding such a service at St. Mark. Council voted to participate in the Blessing of the Animals.

Next Council meeting is set for Tuesday, September 21 at 6:30 p.m.

LIFT News!!



Blessing of the Animals: LIFT will host an outdoor service to bless pets on Sunday, October 3 at 1 PM at St. Mark Lutheran Church (902 E. State Street). Bring your leashed pet as we celebrate all God's creatures!



LIFT Block Party Rescheduled

Because of a pretty unpleasant weather forecast on August 12th, the planned date for the Block Party, we've rescheduled the date for the LIFT Block Party: **Sunday, October 24th, 2-5pm**
Still lots of games, lots of food, lots of fun and fellowship and friendship. All are welcome!

GRIEFSHARE: FYI: A new GriefShare session will begin Sept. 12 - December 5.

BRIDGE OF HOPE COORDINATOR, Ashley Wynn, visited a migrant camp with several families. She welcomed the families to our community by giving each of them a gift basket, which included a blanket, the gospel of John in Spanish, small outdoor toys for the kids, cookies, and candies, all inside of a laundry basket. Soon after, one of the kids excitedly ran out of his house with the small water guns they had been gifted, ready to play! If you would like to give to the migrant ministry, we will be collecting blankets to pass out for when the weather gets colder. Gently used or new blankets, as well as food pantry donations, can be dropped off at Hayes Memorial UMC, Monday-Friday 10am-4pm, or Sundays before and after the services.

The following items are currently needed in the pantry:

canned meat, canned meals - ravioli, chili, canned peas, canned tomatoes, pasta sauce, dry fruit - raisins, prunes dry beans, ramen noodles, toiletry items are also welcome

Lutheran Memorial Camp News!!

Camp Boo-ther *October 1-3, 2021* at Camp Luther

Camp Boo-ther is an opportunity for all ages to trick or treat, enjoy hayrides, carve a pumpkin, make caramel apples, sit around a bonfire, and more! Take advantage of this time to relax, reconnect, and unplug as a family.

Luther Servant Weekend *October 8-10, 2021* at Camp Luther

Every year we rely on volunteers to help us prepare Camp Luther for the summer and to close it in the fall. During the weekend, there will be projects for all ages along with time for campfires and fellowship!



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From the Capital Consultant Committee Team:

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Terry Wilhelm, Chair

Vice President of Council

