**St. John’s News-February 2025**

**One Mind, One Heart, One in Christ**

*If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:1-5)*

Maybe it dawns on us as we’re eating a meal with family or friends, or while we’re at an event where we’re happy to be in one another’s company. Maybe it’s while we’re gathered for worship together, or at the game, the meeting, or receiving a phone call. There are times in our lives when we understand how important unity is. Unity is alive. It’s a gift. Unity is a blessing, one which we all desire deeply. Unity gives us a joy that can’t be matched.

Years ago, at a funeral service for a loved one, a family member who had died very suddenly, I remember receiving communion during the funeral service. I remember sensing the joy of the ‘communion of saints’ together, gathered at God’s Table, even with tears in my eyes. I remember receiving the bread and the wine with all the people gathered together. I remember grieving so much, yet I wasn’t tasting despair. I was receiving grief, but with hope. Heaven was there. And it still is here. The promise of God was one of undying love, and I knew, everything was going to be alright. The experience is still difficult to fully describe. But from that time, I somehow knew… we’re unified with the saints, in heaven and earth, with each other, at God’s Table – always.

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul is writing from prison. Paul’s life is in danger. It must have been miserable. It would be the perfect opportunity for Paul to vent and get a lot of anger off his mind. Instead, Paul writes a great deal about unity and joy throughout the letter to the church in Philippi. The tone of the letter is one of familiarity and joyful confidence. It’s a tone of appreciation for one another, mutual friendship, and joyful accompaniment. You get the sense the Gospel had turned strangers into friends – we might even say, ‘family.’

Throughout the letter though, Paul seemed concerned that there were conflicts in this young community of faith, the church in Philippi. It’s hard to tell what might have been sitting at the heart of any of those conflicts or divisions within the church of Philippi. Paul’s response though is to invite the church to take even closer to heart the promise received in the Gospel – the undying love of Christ, this saving grace shared by the cross of Christ. Have the ‘same mind as Christ’ Paul writes to the church. Paul recognizes there are forces in the mind and heart that can easily foster disunity or division. And Paul seems to be saying, ‘let yourselves be carried by something greater – something bigger than yourself.’ Be carried by the life, death, and resurrection of Christ himself.

Too often, reflecting on the life, death, and resurrection of Christ, we’re prone to think of the past. The way Paul speaks of such unity with one another in Christ, it’s a joyful invitation to befriend this holy unity in the present. Let this same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus… now, today, this moment. Be carried forward together with this joyful unity in Christ, tethered together in Gospel.

With you in Christ together,

Pastor Matt Wheeler

***February Birthdays-*** Ryker Busack, Sharon Evans, Mindy Brown, Alise Tooman, Mary Boroff, Violet

Boroff, Terry Frey, Anne Overmyer, Henry Boroff, Abby Offenburg, Mark Walther, Steve Thurn, Nancy

Whipple, Zach Baker, Trudi Tooman, Greg Lindsay, Jack Whipple, Maury Gnepper, Adrian Gulau, LaRae

Bryant, Chloe Weiker, Shari Bachelder, Amy Boling, Mike Bower, Mike Baker, Ruth Berger, Margie Fought,

Jordan Walther, Lorrie Smith, McKenna Boling, Tristan Boling, Kyle King, Cooper Schwochow.

***Anniversaries-*** Darl & Debbie Schiets, Don & Ann Bixler, Al & Alaina Fabbro, James & Trudi Tooman.

**LUTHER LUNCH BUNCH** will be having spaghetti for the **February 19th** lunch. Guests can bring sides or desserts. Everyone is welcome!!

**ST. JOHN’S WEATHER POLICY**-

\*If ***School is closed*** due to weather- *all Youth activities are cancelled.*

\*If Sandusky County is under a **Level 2**- ***the Office is closed, all activities are cancelled****.*

\*If the county is under **Level 3**- there will be

***No Worship Services****.*

**WHO ARE THE WOMEN OF THE CHURCH?**

 I was recently asked this question. Every woman of our congregation is a woman of the church.

 As a community of women, we’re created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ, and empowered by the Holy Spirit. We commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another, engage in ministry, and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, the community, and the world.

 That may sound complicated! It’s not! Remember, from our Thankoffering Service, we all are ministers. We believe in God and Jesus as our Savior. We share that belief to others when we offer friendship or support, are a listener or just present when needed, and involved in fellowship. You can do these without belonging to a circle or group. However, gathering together offers support, fellowship, and opportunities to learn more about God, and of course, have fun.

 I hold the intent that you will join other St. John’s women in fellowship either by assisting in church events / programs such as a circle Bible Study, quilt sewing, altar care, meals, etc. If you have ideas for activities (new or improved) or would like more information, please contact me – Debbie Schiets,

dschiets @yahoo.com or 419-680-8491. I look forward to hearing from you.

 **FEBRUARY DATES TO REMEMBER!!**

***February 4th*** – 6:00 PM- Executive Board Meeting ***February 9th*** – *Pick up Sub Sandwich Orders*

***February 12th***- 6:00 PM-Church Council Meeting ***February 14th -***Fund Raiser Dinner at Grace Lutheran

***February 17th*** – Presidents Day- Office Closed ***February 19th***- Luther Lunch

***February 23rd***- 12:30 PM-LIFT Board Meeting ***February 25th***- 7:00 PM- Thirsty Theologians

 5:00 PM- Dinner Church

**SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS**

**Mitten Tree**- Thanks to all who donated to our Mitten Tree. We collected 171 hats, 121 gloves and mittens, and 113 scarves. They were donated to the Fremont City Schools, Blessing Box, and Pontifex.

**Sub Sale:** You have until Sunday, February 2 to order subs. They are $6.00 each and can be picked up on Sunday, February 9th. Flyers are available in the church or you may call the office.

**LIFT NEWS: Feb. ‘25**

*LIFT (Living in Faith Together) is a collaboration of congregations in the Fremont area, including Faith, Grace, St. John’s, and St. Mark Lutheran Churches and Hayes Memorial UMC. Our mission priorities are: Being present in the community, witnessing to God’s love, hearing the needs, serving our neighbor, and striving for justice*.

**LIFT Weekly Email**

If you are interested in receiving the weekly LIFT email, please visit liftchurches.org. Once you scroll down the first page, you’ll see a box to sign up for emails. Thank You!

**LET’S BUILD BEDS FUNDRAISER-**

**Grace Lutheran Church** will host a Valentine’s Day Dinner as a Fund Raiser for the Community Mission Project, Let’s Build Beds, coming to Fremont on **September 13th**. The Dinner will be on Friday, **February 14th** at 6:00 PM. Tickets are $40/Person and $75/Couple. The menu includes, Appetizers, Homemade Lasagna, Salad, Bread, Dessert, and beverages. Tickets can be purchased at Grace Lutheran Church Office.

**BACKPACK BUDDIES NEED-*Individual servings of*** *cold cereal, Chef Boyardee, hot chocolate, chips, popcorn, goldfish, and soup.*

**February 2025**

**Newsletter**