

MARCH 1



ST JOHN LUTHERAN CHURCH

THE WEEKLY UPDATE

2026

Welcome to St. John Lutheran Church! **Today is the Second Sunday of Lent.** We are delighted to have you worship with us. All who have come to worship are heartily welcomed. Let us joyfully open our hearts to God and one another. If you'd like to connect with us, share a prayer request, or learn more about St. John, please complete a yellow communication card located on the back of the pews and place it in the offering plate.

PRAYER REQUESTS

When we pray for each other, we demonstrate Christ's love for each of us

For **Logan Rutter**, grandson of Ed and Freda Rutter, home from the hospital, doing better, recovering at home

For **Bill Meyer**, back in Fairfield Medical Center with continued health issues

For **Austin Posey**, 26-year-old friend of Sue Mason, lung cancer exploratory surgery

For **Heather Moore**, daughter-in-law of Mike & Willie Moore, dealing with a health issue

For **Alan Ott**, grandson of Michele (Mike) Moore, diagnosed with a tumor at the base of the brain

For **Karma Wisecarver**, daughter of Lee & Peggy Smith, is starting a new treatment in her cancer journey

For **Brian Fowler**, as he slowly recovers from West Nile Virus

Continued prayers for **Jim Fogle, Jon & Linda Leist, Linda Miller.**

If you have a prayer request, please reach out to Sue Mason, who will email our church members. She can be reached at: 614-260-1107 or at susiemase3@hotmail.com.

Although the church website is back up and running, note the change to the website address. It is now www.STJOHNLITHOPOLIS.COM instead of STJLITHOPOLIS.COM.

UPCOMING BIRTHDAYS



Jerry Canini	February 23
Alan Butterbaugh	March 7
Baker Dillon	March 8



The Second Sunday in Lent continues our journey toward the cross, reminding us that faith often calls us into trust beyond what we can see or control. In this season of reflection, we are invited to listen for God's promises and remain steadfast, even when the path feels uncertain. Lent calls us not only to repentance, but also to hope—trusting that God's grace is at work within us as we walk with Christ toward the promise of new life.



THE INSIDE STORY BY SALLY ACTON

Today's Opening Hymn, "Lift High the Cross", is a popular 19th century English processional hymn written in 1887 by Anglican priest George William Kitchin for a missionary festival at Winchester Cathedral. It was later revised in 1916 by Michael Newbolt. The hymn highlights the cross as a symbol of victory, salvation, and mission. The lyrics focus on Christian unity, missionary work, and the triumph of the cross, often used during Lent, Holy Week, and festivals.

Mark your calendars for **March 14, 2026**, as Country Church Promotions presents a gospel concert here at the church. More information to follow.



CALLING ALL SHOPPERS! Did you know that Kroger has a Community Rewards Program? They will send monies to St John every time you shop at any of their stores. Instructions for signing up are in a blue folder on the bulletin board in the back of the sanctuary. Please consider enrolling in this easy way to earn money for our church while doing your grocery shopping!



The **Altar Flower** chart is in the Narthex where you may sign up to place flowers on the altar. Flowers are \$35. You may leave the money in the envelope under the chart for Linda Leist. Please be sure to indicate if the flowers are for a special occasion, and let Don Hornbeck know if you would like it posted in the Bulletin.



Please place your food donation for the **Food Pantry** in the shopping cart. Thank you— everything is appreciated.



Watch Your Email – Winter is far from over, so please watch your email in case church services are canceled. Sue Mason will also text you with any closure messages.



Although the church website is back up and running, note the change to the website address. It is now www.STJOHNLITHOPOLIS.COM instead of STJLITHOPOLIS.COM.

AED Training – March 8 – immediately following church service: in conjunction with February Heart Health Month, a Bloom Township Fire EMT will come to our church to train members on the AED machine (Automated External Defibrillator). Our device is located on the right side of the wall in the gathering space outside the sanctuary entrance and it could potentially save someone's life during a sudden cardiac arrest. We would like to have at least 6 members stay for this training but the more people who know how to operate this machine, the more help we can provide to someone in distress. Please consider attending.





SUMMARY OF COUNCIL MEETING NOTES FEBRUARY 22, 2026

ATTENDEES: Sally Acton, Jonette Christy, Mike Drodofsky, Alan Fisher, Diana Johnson, Jon Leist & Sue Mason

ABSENT: Deb Canini, Jerry Canini, Briana Hart, Neil Jarvis, Amy Lytle (SAM), Charlotte Meyer

Alan Fisher opened the meeting with new council members attending. Until a council member steps up to assume the role of President, Alan will fill in as President Pro Tem. He distributed an overview of the roles of the officers and council members. He also reviewed the various council boards (trustees, deacons, parish education and stewardship); board assignments will be finalized at the next council meeting.

FINANCIALS: Alan shared an overview of the 2025 Yearly Budget; the results were very positive with the ceiling loan paid in full and year-end figures under budget. January, 2026 financials were also shared; results were slightly over budget but this was a short month with one service canceled due to weather.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Jonette Christy will follow-up on options of obtaining new Bibles for Sunday School.
- Sue Mason will work with Gina Meyers regarding our 1st Quarter contribution of \$750 from the MEF to the Shalom Food Pantry/Bloom Carroll Family partnership.

NEW BUSINESS:

- 5th Sunday = Alan identified 4 months this year with five Sundays; council will consider doing something special on these Sundays.
- Zoom Church Service = Amy Lytle has suggested we consider doing a Zoom church service when church is canceled. Amy, Don Hornbeck and Sue Mason will be meeting soon regarding social media and options can be discussed at that time.
- Easter Sunday (April 5th) = Jon Leist was asked and has agreed to provide a Children's Sermon. There will be a breakfast again this year...8:30-10:00 am. Jon and Linda will provide the meat and pancakes; members are welcome to bring other items to complete the menu; a sign-up sheet will be provided as the date nears.
- Gospel Sing = Sally informed council of the next Gospel Sing which will be held March 14 at 1:00 pm at St. John.
- Contribution Request = Sally Acton informed council of a request she received from Gunner West, a baptized and confirmed member of St. John. Gunner, an OU student, will be spending this summer overseas on a "Youth For Christ" outreach program, and is requesting funds to help with expenses. Council agreed that we should contribute; Diana Johnson suggested we use the "5th Sunday" next month (March 29) to request a dedicated offering by church members for Gunner and the church will then match those funds; council agreed.
- Snow Removal & Landscape Services = We are very fortunate to have member Brian Fowler provide these services. Although he has never requested it, it was agreed that we should pay him for his services. Sally Acton made a motion, seconded by Sue Mason, for payment of \$500 to Brian; motion passed.
- Carpet in Narthex = Sue Mason suggested we look at the carpet in the narthex, as it is stained. After discussion, it was decided that Jon Leist will research options which could include either cleaning or replacing it.
- AED training = In conjunction with February Heart Health Month, Sue Mason suggested a few members train on the use of our AED (Automated External Defibrillator). She will contact the Bloom Township Fire Dept for possible training by one of their EMT's.
- Kroger Community Rewards Program = At the recent monthly lunch, Peggy Smith reminded us of the Kroger Community Rewards Program. Monies will go to St John every time you shop at Kroger and those funds will be sent quarterly to us. Enrolling in this program will not affect your personal rewards that you receive from Kroger. Members will be reminded of this generous program.

With no further business, the meeting was closed with council members reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Sue Mason, Council Secretary



Country Church Promotions

presents

14th MARCH
2026

133 W South Street
Lithopolis, Ohio

and The Spiritual Echoes

Country Church Promotions

Country Church Promotions

Sunday, March 1, 2026
Second Sunday in Lent
ELW Holy Communion Setting Ten

GATHERING & ANNOUNCEMENTS
PRELUDE

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

In the name of the Father,
and of the ✝ Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our
hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly
love you and worthily magnify your holy name, through Jesus
Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Let us confess our sin in the presence of God and of one another.
Gracious God,

**have mercy on us. We confess that we have turned from you
and given ourselves into the power of sin. We are truly sorry
and humbly repent. In your compassion forgive us our sins,
known and unknown, things we have done and things we
have failed to do. Turn us again to you, and uphold us by
your Spirit, so that we may live and serve you in newness of
life through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.**

Amen.

God, who is rich in mercy, loved us even when we were dead in sin, and made us alive together with Christ. By grace we have been saved. In the name of ✝ Jesus Christ, our sins are forgiven. Almighty God strengthen us with power through the Holy Spirit, that Christ may live in our hearts through faith.
Amen.

GATHERING SONG (ELW 335)
Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross

1 Jesus, keep me near the cross, there's a precious fountain;
Free to all, a healing stream flows from Calv'ry's mountain.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

2 Near the cross, a trembling soul, love and mercy found me;
There the bright and morning star sheds its beams around me.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

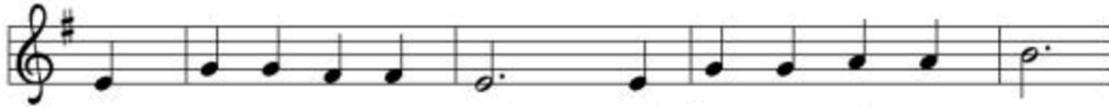
3 Near the cross! O Lamb of God, bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day with its shadow o'er me.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

4 Near the cross I'll watch and wait, hoping, trusting ever,
Till I reach the golden strand just beyond the river.
In the cross, in the cross be my glory ever;
Till my ransomed soul shall find rest beyond the river.

GREETING

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
And also with you.

Kyrie (ELW p. 203)



1 Have mer - cy on us, Lord, and hear our sol - emn prayer.
2 Have mer - cy on us, Christ, and wash a - way our sin.
3 Have mer - cy on us, Lord; make sin and shame de - part.



We come to hear your liv - ing word; it saves us from de - spair.
Pour out your grace and make us whole that new life may be - gin.
Re - new us with your sav - ing pow'r; cre - ate in us new hearts!

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Let us pray together the prayer of the day.

O God, our leader and guide, in the waters of baptism you bring us to new birth to live as your children. Strengthen our faith in your promises, that by your Spirit we may lift up your life to all the world through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING: Genesis 12:1-4a

God's call of Abram and Sarai has a clear purpose—that through them all the families of the earth would gain a blessing. As they set out on their journey, they are accompanied by promises of land, nation, and a great reputation.

A reading from Genesis.

¹ The LORD said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. ² I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. ³ I will bless those who bless you, and the one who curses you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

^{4a} So Abram went, as the LORD had told him, and Lot went with him.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

PSALM: Psalm 121

¹ I lift up my eyes to the hills;
from where is my help to come?

² **My help comes from the LORD,
the maker of heaven and earth.**

³ The LORD will not let your foot be moved
nor will the one who watches over you fall asleep.

⁴ **Behold, the keeper of Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep;**

⁵ the LORD watches over you;
the LORD is your shade at your right hand;

⁶ **the sun will not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.**

⁷ The LORD will preserve you from all evil
and will keep your life.

⁸ **The LORD will watch over your going out and your
coming in, from this time forth forevermore.**

SECOND READING: Romans 4:1-5, 13-17

In the person and example of Abraham we discover that a right relationship with God does not involve earning a reward from God but entails trusting God's promises. Abraham is the forebear and model for both Jews and Gentiles, because we too trust that ours is a God who gives life to the dead.

A reading from Romans.

¹ What then are we to say was gained by Abraham, our ancestor according to the flesh? ² For if Abraham was justified by works, he has something to boast about, but not before God.

³ For what does the scripture say? "Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as living in right relationship to God." ⁴ Now to one who works, wages are not reckoned as a gift but as something due. ⁵ But to one who does not work but trusts him who justifies the ungodly, such faith is reckoned as living correctly with God.

¹³ For the promise that he would inherit the world did not come to Abraham or to his descendants through the law but through the right relationship of faith. ¹⁴ For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. ¹⁵ For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law, neither is there transgression.

¹⁶ For this reason the promise depends on faith, in order that it may rest on grace, so that it may be guaranteed to all his descendants, not only to the adherents of the law but also to those who share the faith of Abraham (who is the father of all of us, ¹⁷ as it is written, "I have made you the father of many nations"), in the presence of the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist.

The word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION



We are turn - ing, Lord, to hear you; you are mer - ci - ful and kind -



slow to an - ger, rich in bless - ing, and with love to us in - clined.

GOSPEL: John 3:1-17

A curious Pharisee visits Jesus by night to learn from the teacher his friends reject. Jesus speaks to him about life in the Spirit and the kingdom of God.

The holy gospel according to John.

Glory to you, O Lord.

¹ Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. ² He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with that person.” ³ Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” ⁴ Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” ⁵ Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. ⁶ What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. ⁷ Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ ⁸ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” ⁹ Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” ¹⁰ Jesus answered him, “Are you the teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?”

¹¹ “Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen, yet you do not receive our testimony. ¹² If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? ¹³ No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. ¹⁴ And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, ¹⁵ that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

¹⁶ “For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

¹⁷ “Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

The gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you, O Christ.

SERMON: IF YOU KNOW, YOU KNOW

HYMN OF THE DAY (ELW 660) *Lift High the Cross*

Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

1 Come, Christians, follow where our captain trod,
Our king victorious, Christ, the Son of God.
Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

2 All newborn servants of the Crucified
Bear on their brows the seal of him who died.
Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

3 O Lord, once lifted on the glorious tree,
As thou hast promised, draw us all to thee.
Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

4 So shall our song of triumph ever be:
Praise to the Crucified for victory!
Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim
Till all the world adore his sacred name.

OUR STATEMENT OF FAITH

Let us confess our faith together using the words of
the Apostles' Creed.

**I believe in God, the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.**

**I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven,
he is seated at the right hand of the Father,
and he will come to judge the living and the dead.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

PRAYERS OF INTERCESSION

Amy: Reconciled by God's mercy and sustained by God's presence, let us pray for the world and its needs.

Reader 1: Faithful One, you renew us by grace. As you have inspired faith through the work of church artists and hymnwriters throughout the ages, give your church the means to praise your beauty today. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reader 2: Living One, you delight in this world. The sun and moon, the wind and the water declare your goodness. Preserve this earth, and protect conservationists, scientists, and all who labor in service to creation. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reader 3: Ruling One, you bless us to be a blessing. Open the hearts of all leaders to seek the flourishing of every person and lend your help to all who wait for justice, deliverance, and peace. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Amy: Compassionate One, you send your Son to save. Declare your word of acceptance to any who feel condemned and lift up any brought low by hatred and exclusion. Tend to all who are struggling with illness or loss. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reader 4: Guiding One, you watch over our going out and coming in. Bless newcomers and new members in this assembly and accompany those who have recently left this community to journey elsewhere. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Reader 5: Eternal One, you neither slumber nor sleep. Be our keeper in life and in death. Thank you for our beloved who have died, and for your promise which saves this whole world by your love. Hear us, O God.

Your mercy is great.

Amy: Receive our prayers, O God, through Jesus Christ, our strength and salvation.

Amen.

PEACE

The peace of Christ be with you always.

And also with you.

Let us share the peace of Christ with one another.

WE PREPARE FOR COMMUNION

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Lift up your hearts.

We lift them to the Lord.

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

PREFACE

It is indeed right, our duty and our joy,
that we should at all times and in all places
give thanks and praise to you, almighty and merciful God,
through our Savior Jesus Christ;
who on this day overcame death and the grave,
and by his glorious resurrection opened to us the way of
everlasting life.

And so, with all the choirs of angels,
with the church on earth and the hosts of heaven,
we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

HOLY, HOLY, HOLY (ELW p. 207)

**Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
heav'n and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest,
hosanna in the highest.**

THE WORDS OF INSTITUTION

Blessed are you, O God of the universe. Your mercy is everlasting and your faithfulness endures from age to age.

Praise to you for creating the heavens and the earth.
Praise to you for saving the earth from the waters of the flood.
Praise to you for bringing the Israelites safely through the sea.
Praise to you for leading your people through the wilderness to the land of milk and honey.
Praise to you for the words and deeds of Jesus,
your anointed one.
Praise to you for the death and resurrection of Christ.
Praise to you for your Spirit poured out on all nations.

In the night in which he was betrayed,
our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks;
broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying:
Take and eat; this is my body, given for you.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

Again, after supper, he took the cup, gave thanks,
and gave it for all to drink, saying:
This cup is the new covenant in my blood,
shed for you and for all people for the forgiveness of sin.
Do this for the remembrance of me.

With this bread and cup
we remember our Lord's passover from death to life
as we proclaim the mystery of faith:
Christ has died.
Christ is risen.
Christ will come again.

O God of resurrection and new life:
Pour out your Holy Spirit on us
and on these gifts of bread and wine.
Bless this feast.
Grace our table with your presence.
Come, Holy Spirit.

Reveal yourself to us in the breaking of the bread.
Raise us up as the body of Christ for the world.
Breathe new life into us. Send us forth,
burning with justice, peace, and love.
Come, Holy Spirit.

With your holy ones of all times and places,
with the earth and all its creatures,
with sun and moon and stars,
we praise you, O God,
blessed and holy Trinity,
now and forever.
Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO COMMUNION

Taste and see that the Lord is good.

COMMUNION SONG (ELW p. 208)

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
You suffered death our lives to save:
Have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
You set us free from guilt and grave:
Have mercy now, we pray.**

**O Lamb of God, you bear the sin of all the world away;
Eternal peace with God you made:
Give us your peace, we pray.**

SONG AFTER COMMUNION (ELW 471)

Let Us Break Bread Together

- 1 Let us break bread together on our knees;
Let us break bread together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

- 2 Let us drink wine together on our knees;
Let us drink wine together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

- 3 Let us praise God together on our knees;
Let us praise God together on our knees.
When I fall on my knees, with my face to the rising sun,
O Lord, have mercy on me.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Let us pray together.

Compassionate God, you have fed us with the bread of heaven. Sustain us in our Lenten pilgrimage: may our fasting be hunger for justice; our alms, a making of peace; and our prayer, the song of grateful hearts, through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.

Amen.

BLESSING

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord's face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✝ give you peace.

Amen.

SENDING SONG (ELW 803)
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

1 When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss
And pour contempt on all my pride.

2 Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

3 See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down.
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

4 Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

DISMISSAL

Go in peace. Share the good news.

Thanks be to God.

CONGREGATION JOINS IN SINGING

God be with you 'til we meet again,
By his counsels guide, uphold you,
With his sheep securely fold you,
God be with you 'til we meet again. Amen.

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