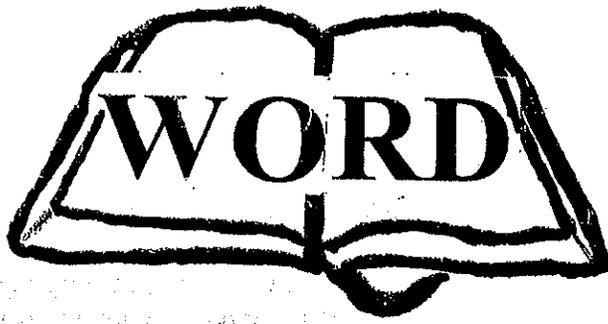


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The "Good News" and "Happenings" of
St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church

Stovertown

www.stovertownelca.com

VOL.18, No. 1

Pastor-Al Laese-740-541-2823

January 24, 2026

PERSERVERANCE.

"Continued effort to do or achieve something despite difficulties, failure, or opposition".

Perserverance is something that we face every day in our lives. Everyday there are challenges we face ,whether it is our health, our job, our family life, our faith, or even accomplishing a special goal in life such as in sports or any competition. As we encounter these challenges, let us remember that God is here to give us the will and encouragement to press on.

Meditation from the Upper Room.....
by Donald Wollenhasupt, Georgia

FINISH WELL

I've run 25 marathons, and I've enjoyed and finished strong in many of them. However, some were not so enjoyable. There was one where I struggled with considerable pain and fatigue and wondered if I could finish the race.

At the 18 mile mark, I was in so much pain that I had to slow my pace and take short breaks, But I received encouragement from one of the course volunteers and other runners experiencing similar struggles. To finish the race I needed inner strength, determination, endurance and perserverance.

When I eventually crossed the finish line, my doubts and thoughts of the struggles, aches, and pains vanished. A finisher's medal was placed around my neck. Even though I was in pain, I

was glad that I had persevered to finish the race.

The course of life and our spiritual journey can be like running a marathon—at times enjoyable and at tother times full of difficulties and uncertainty.

But with the Holy Spirit moving in us and the strength God gives, we can persevere. Then as we draw near to life's finish line, the struggles, pains, and disappointments we experienced will fade as we look to our reward—the crown of life—in heaven. .

Blessed is the one who perseveres under trial because, having stood the test, that person will receive the crown of life that the Lord has promised to those who love him

-James 1:12

OTHER BIBLE VERSES PERTAINING TO PERSERVERANCE.

Galatians 6:9—Let us Not Grow Weary
Romans 5:3-4—Rejoice in Our Sufferings
Romans 12:12---Posture Through Perserverance
("Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulations, be constant in prayer.")

VALENTINE'S DAY..... SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 14TH..

Love and relationships require perseverance. Everything that is important to us in life requires us to work at it everyday to accomplish our goal.

Keeping with the February theme of **LOVE**,
remember:

SOMEBODY LOVES YOU

By Helen Steiner Rice

Somebody loves you more than you
know.

Somebody goes with you wherever you
go.

Somebody really and truly cares

and lovingly listens to all of your
prayers...

Don't doubt for a minute that this is not
true,

For God loves His children and takes care of
them, too

And all of His treasurers are yours to
share.

If you love Him completely and show that
you care...

And if you walk in His footsteps and have faith to
believe,

There's nothing you ask for that you will
not receive!

PRODUCE MARKET REPORT.....

The Mid-Ohio Food Collective & St. John's
Lutheran Church, Stovertown continue in a
partnership to distribute food to our local
communities. We distribute the food on the third
Tuesday of each month from 9-11 AM. (THE
NEXT GIVE-A-WAY IS SCHEDULED FOR
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 17.) On October 21,
2025 we celebrated our fourth anniversary in this
project. 159 different households were served in
2025 with an average of 98 households coming to
pick up food each month. We have served people
from 4 different counties & 14 different zip codes.

The food is brought in by Mid-Ohio. In 2025
70,677 pounds of food were brought in, for an
average of 5,889 pounds per month. Any leftover
food went to The Senior Center, Eastside
Community Ministry, South Zanesville Methodist
Church & the New Covenant Church in South
Zanesville.

All this food is bagged, and distributed each
month by many wonderful volunteers.

**Remember this is God's work thru our
hands.**

-Karen Showers, Coordinator

WELCA NEWS.....

LOVE MEETING will be held on Sunday,
February 8th following worship service, The
congregation is invited for lunch and games.

PANCAKE BREAKFAST will return to
it's regular scheduled Sunday, on Sunday,
February 22, at 8:30 AM.

**BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF
FEBRUARY.....**

Birthdays:

- February 6---Jim Swingle
- 7---Leslie Williams
- 13---Sue Swingle
- 14---Curt Novaria

**LENTEN SEASON BEGINS...
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 18...**

A service will be held at 7:00PM..

**YEAR END REPORT OF PRAYER
COMMITTEE HELPING OUR
COMMUNITY.....**

This year marked our 15th anniversary of serving
our community and this year we gave out our
largest amount so far.

A list of recipients:

**St John's Lutheran Church
Council Meeting Minutes**

November 6, 2025

Council vice president Robert Pletcher opened the meeting at 7:02 P.M. Members present were Frank Dietz, Nathan Atkins, Gary Williams, Tom Gibson, Joe Pletcher, Steve Wolfe, Linda Showers and Pastor Al Laese.

Steve Wolfe led devotions with a theme of "Soldiers of darkness and light."

The minutes of the October council meeting were read by council secretary Frank Dietz. They were approved on a motion from Nathan Atkins and Gary Williams.

Pastor's report for the month of October 2025: 4 Sunday worship services and Sunday School, a hospital visit, a private communion, a graveside funeral service, a church council meeting, Pastor Laese fell on October 15 and was admitted to the hospital; he was discharged on October 16, attended a cluster meeting in Marietta October 1, 3 regular cluster meetings, and 270 miles for the month of October. The Pastor's report was approved on a motion from Tom Gibson and Joe Pletcher.

The treasurer's report for the month of October was reviewed and accepted by council on a motion by Steve Wolfe and Linda Showers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS 7:17 P.M.

Finance – Joe Pletcher read a letter from the Southern Ohio Synod Stewardship Team requesting we increase our benevolence giving during 2026. Council plans to forward this request to the "Word" and wait for congregational input at the annual meeting.

PRAYER – The Triple Nickel Country Cruise In was a huge success. 169 were registered. De-brief meeting was helpful in planning for 2026 Cruise In. The next Cruise In planning meeting will be in January 2026.

Produce – 15 volunteers served 92 households on the 4th anniversary of the Produce Market. The road closure on 555 delayed the delivery trucks arrival till 8:40 A.M.

Delores Wolfe and Vince and Linda Showers provided refreshments on the chilly and rainy day. Thank you dedicated volunteers.

Property – The Ohio Department of Natural Resources has informed the Stovertown Church that they will be using the access road at the end of the new cemetery for the abandoned coal mine reclamation project that will begin in 2026. The wood portions of the floor in the worship hall has been waxed. Estimates are being gathered for the basement recarpet project. The WELCA has volunteered to acquire kitchen and cleaning supplies for the church.

Evangelism – the Transition Team held a meeting on Wednesday November 5.

Worship and Music – There will be a Christmas Eve service at 7:00 P.M.

OLD BUSINESS

Frank Dietz and Nathan Atkins motioned to restart passing the offering plate during the special music in Sunday worship service beginning November 10. Council approved the motion.

The purchase of tables that was approved during the October council meeting came from Sam's Club at a price of \$450.

A small copier has been purchased and is ready for use in the upstairs back room.

NEW BUSINESS 8:17 P.M.

A short discussion of council member terms and the upcoming council election was held.

Frank Dietz and Nathan Atkins motioned to adjourn at 8:22 P.M.

All prayed The Lord's Prayer.

Frank Dietz - council secretary

**St John's Lutheran Church
Congregational Council Meeting Minutes**

December 4, 2025

Council Vice President, Bob Pletcher, opened the meeting at 7:09 pm. Members present: Nate Atkins, Tom Gibson, Pastor Al Laese, Joe Pletcher, Linda Showers, Gary Williams. Bob confirmed a quorum.

Devotion Tom read a poem about the importance of The Lord's Prayer

Approval of the Minutes of the November 6th, 2025 meeting was tabled – the Unapproved Minutes were not available [N. Adkins/L. Showers].

PASTOR'S REPORT – November 2025 - 3 Sunday worship services & Sunday School; 1 hospital visit with private communion; 3 Cluster meetings; 126 miles. Pastor reported that he is still not cleared to drive. [Accepted: G. Williams/J. Pletcher].

TREASURER'S REPORT – Motion: To approve, pending one correction - the recording of the income received by the Cemetery Fund/Checking Account for plots sold to non-members. [L. Showers/G. Williams].

COMMITTEE REPORTS

CEMETARY – No Report

EDUCATION – No Report

FINANCE – Finance Chr., Joe Pletcher, asked that all committees alert him to any "anticipated large expenditures" for the 2026 Budgeting Process.

PRAYER CO. – No Report

PRODUCE – Produce Chr., Gary Williams, read The Produce Market Report: Tuesday, 11/18/25 - 101 households served (including over 231 individuals & 2 new families) - 4 counties/14 zip codes; 16 volunteers – thank you all volunteers!

PROPERTY – Motion: to spend \$2200 to level the concrete walkways at the front and back entrances to the Church via Smart Level Concrete – with a 5 year warranty. [Property Chr., Nate Atkins/L. Showers]. Nate also thanked the "Snow Removal People."

WITNESS/EVANGELISM – "Breakfast With Santa" will take place on Saturday 12/20 – Karen Showers will coordinate and needs volunteers. The Ad Hoc Transition Team has met twice and is completing research, including working with the Synod staff on resources and future opportunities/options. A third meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 15th.

OLD BUSINESS [none]

NEW BUSINESS

Bob announced that the 1st meeting in January would include organizational tasks and that the new Council members and WELCA Officers would be installed the first Sunday of January. Motion: move the 1st meeting [January 1st] to Thursday January 8th [N. Atkins/J. Pletcher].

Motion to Adjourn – 8:02 pm [T. Gibson/N. Atkins]

Meeting followed by The Lord's Prayer

L. Showers - for Council Secretary, Frank Dietz

February 2026

Church-697-0202

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Pastor AI 740-541-2823	2	3	4	5 Council 7:00PM	6	7
8 Holy Communion Worship-10AM SCS-9AM WEI/CA change collection	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Worship-10AM SCS-9AM "LOVE" Meeting after church	16	17 Produce Give-a-Way 9AM	18 ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE-7PM	19	20	21
22 Worship-10AM SCS-9AM Pancake Breakfast 8:30AM	23	24	25	26	27 Vicky Thomas Secretary 740-674-6814 (cell) 740-252-1890 cabini@theorchard@yahoo.com	28



**RETURN
TO: ST. JOHN'S EV. LUTHERAN CHURCH,
STOVERTOWN
P.O. BOX 361
PHILO, OH 43771**



ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

- 2 house fires
- funeral expenses
- assistance to young mother at death of husband
- a young lady in a domestic abuse situation
- helped Eastside Ministries with hygiene supplies and warm clothing
- Our church member struggling with long term hospital stays
- helped with 15 children through Salvation Army from the Angel Tree
- a seventeen year- old boy from Angel Tree in Duncan Falls
- a family of 5 provided with Walmart gift cards for Christmas
- a small amount of change to a local ice cream truck to be used to fill in when a child came up a few cents short .

In total \$5,150 was given back to our community and we helped a total of 28 children to have a better Christmas

Our year-end give-a-ways is just one activity of The Prayer Committee. A camp-out is held in September and our Annual Car Show is held in October. None of this would be possible without the loving support of the members of this congregation.

Thanks so much. -Steve Wolfe

**MISSION STATEMENT FOR ST. JOHN'S, LUTHERAN CHURCH,
OF STOVERTOWN**

"We, the members of St. John's Lutheran Church of Stovertown, being children of God, would like to invite all to share in the good news of Jesus Christ. As witnesses of God's love and forgiveness we reach out to you".