

# The Second Sunday of Advent: Peace

Sunday, December 7th, 2025 10:30am Sermon in Music

## St. John's Christian Church

700 South Defiance St. | Archbold, Ohio 43502
"The Church on the Corner whose Cornerstone is Christ."

## Welcome! We are so glad you are here.

Welcome to SJCC! We are so glad you have chosen to join us as we worship the Lord together. We hope you feel God's love in a refreshing way. Please let one of our ushers know you're new (they may have already noticed your new face!) so they can give you a welcome bag filled with helpful information about our church. We also invite you to fill out a quick survey so we can get to know you a little better. Simply scan the QR code to the right with your phone's camera while you're waiting for worship to start!



## **Nursery Care/Diaper Changing Stations**

Nursery Care is offered during our 10:30AM service for children ages four months through preschool in the second floor room at the south stairs. Parents can register children for Nursery Care online at www.stjohnsarchbold.org/nursery or by scanning the QR code to the left before checking into the nursery for the first time. Diaper changing stations are located in the office of the Director of Youth and Young Adults and in the nursery. An usher will gladly direct you if needed!



Children's Busy Bags are located in the narthex for children ages one-year to third grade. Bags are marked by age (Pink = Ages 1-2; Green = Ages 3-5; Yellow = Grades K-3). Please be sure to return bags at the end of our service today. If you would like to mark a bag specifically for your child(ren) each week, please contact the church office.

Large Print Bulletins are available at a table in the narthex.

Hearing Assistance devices are available for use with the sanctuary sound system. Please see an usher if you'd like to check out one of these devices for our service today.





#### **WELCOME TO OUR WORSHIP OF GOD!**

#### SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT ~ SERMON IN MUSIC

Ringing of the Tower Bells and Lighting of the Altar Candles

"To the Glory of God, and for the Calling of the Faithful to Worship." (Inscribed on the Bells)

Welcome

Scripture and Prayer Isaiah 40:1-5 (p. 714)

"A Caroling Medley" Adult Bell Choir

The Nativity Scene – The Sheep

Carol Response #141, vs. 1 & 2, "O Little Town of Bethlehem"

"Peace in Christ" Jim McCurdy & Mike McRobbie

† Carols bulletin page 7, "People Look East (1928)\*

#132, "Angels We Have Heard on High" (Trumpets)

Lighting of the Advent Wreath - The Candles of Hope & Peace

Carol Response The candle of hope we light in this hour

Proclaims that the Lord is coming in power
We wait for a future now hidden from view
When Christ in his glory will make all things new

The candle of peace shines bright with God's plan The wolf will lie down and dwell with the lamb Our guns and our weapons, our hatred and war Will give way to gardens that heal and restore

"The First Noel" The Yoder Family

Carol of Praise "Holy Forever (Christmas)" Praise Team

"Little Yeshua" Jane Pearl Buckenmeyer

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"Hallelujah (Light Has Come)" Ladies Trio

Keira Christman, Buffy Riley, Jocelyn Walker

† Carol #125, vs 1-3, "Joy to the World!" (Trumpets)

Prayer of Dedication and the Sharing of Our Tithes and Offerings
Offertory

"Bells Over Bethlehem"

Scripture Reading Mark 1:1-8 (p. 990)

Meditation "Get Ready"

Advent Communion Service\*\*

"Let There Be Peace on Earth" Molly Rutledge

"Glorious Impossible" Special Guests

"Hallelujah Chorus" Lynne Christman & Buffy Riley

† Benediction

† Benediction Carol #125, v. 4, "Joy to the World!"

## \*\*We Practice Open Communion

All adults and older youth who profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are invited to commune. Grape juice is served in the trays of the cup.

At 8:00 worship, communicants will be invited to come forward in groups.

At 10:30 worship, communicants will be served in the pews, partaking at one time.

<sup>\*</sup>This early 1900's carol encourages us to cast our gaze to the eastern sky, towards the rising sun and the direction of the coming Messiah. We await his birth this advent season and we eagerly anticipate his second coming in our present day.

### SCRIPTURE READINGS

**Isaiah 40:1-5** Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. <sup>2</sup> Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins. <sup>3</sup> A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. <sup>4</sup> Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. <sup>5</sup> And the glory of the Lord will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken."

Mark 1:1-8 The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God. <sup>2</sup> It is written in Isaiah the prophet: "I will send my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way" -- <sup>3</sup> "a voice of one calling in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" <sup>4</sup> And so John came, baptizing in the desert region and preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. <sup>5</sup> The whole Judean countryside and all the people of Jerusalem went out to him. Confessing their sins, they were baptized by him in the Jordan River. <sup>6</sup> John wore clothing made of camel's hair, with a leather belt around his waist, and he ate locusts and wild honey. <sup>7</sup> And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie. <sup>8</sup> I baptize you with water, but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit."

## **DISCOVERY DAILY DEVOTIONAL** Below is the list of daily readings for this week:

Dec 07 Everlastingly Safe	Psalm 16
Dec 08 Newfound Freedom	- Acts 10:9-23a
Dec 09 Divine Appointments	Acts 10:23b-33
Dec 10 A Gentile Pentecost	- Acts 10:34-48
Dec 11 Ministry Confirmation	Acts 11:1-18
Dec 12 Tying Things Together	- Acts 11:19-30
Dec 13 Escaping Death	- Acts 12:1-19a

## PREPARE Season of Advent

Anyone who has hosted a Christmas dinner or party can tell you, there is a ton of preparation that goes into throwing these holiday celebrations. Many of us find ourselves doing lots of preparing in this busy season of lights, tinsel, and wrapping paper. Yet, what are we really preparing for? Who are we really preparing for? This Advent, hear God's call: "Prepare!" — for the coming one, Jesus. Hear this imperative as an invitation to strip away all the fuss and ready your heart and life for the change that is coming when Jesus arrives.

"Advent is an invitation to stay awake as we wait for and recognize God's in-breaking." (In-breaking – referring to the Second Coming of Christ, foretold to be a sudden, awesome arrival; while also referring to an awakening of faith in a person's heart or in the church)

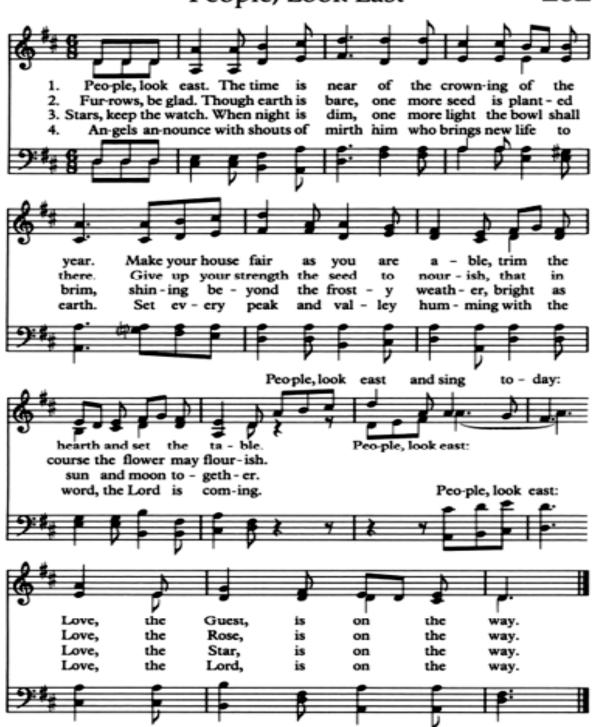
Last Sunday's "missed" sermon..."Stay Awake" ~ Mark 13:24-37 (End of the Age) Moments where God has been present in subtle or surprising ways

- Being awake to God, rather than awake to the world
- Staying awake to what God is doing
- ◆ Advent the coming revelation of God into the world and into our lives anew"
  - ♦ V. 26 ~ "At that time..."
  - ◊ V. 28 ~ "Now learn this lesson..."
  - ♦ V. 32 ~ "No one knows about..."
  - ♦ V. 35 ~ Therefore keep watch..."

Today's Lesson - "Get Ready"

To get ready is to prepare our hearts and lives for Jesus

- Mark 1:1-8 John the Baptist Prepares the Way God's preparations
- Challenge yourself to think differently about something regarding the Nativity story
- The Nativity story is focused on the baby Jesus, yet the reading from Mark 1 gives us instead a wild guy, with odd clothing and eating odd food, calling for repentance
- ◆ Being spiritually prepared a call to repentance, over and over
- Getting ready involves making a path for God in our lives



#### THE CHRISTMAS STORY SHARED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A KEY STORY CHARACTER

Joseph's Reflection

When I first heard about the baby I was angry . . . angry at Mary for getting herself pregnant, angry at God for allowing it to happen, angry at myself for being tangled up in the mess of a pregnancy scandal. I couldn't give Mary away – it would be the end of her reputation and maybe even her life. But choosing silence implicated me in her pregnancy and the disgrace I would bring to my own good name was more than I could bear. I made up my mind to quietly divorce her. It was the only scenario I thought would give each of us any hope for the future. I would not openly accuse her, but I could not claim her child as mine.

Then one night an angel appeared to me in a dream. He told me not to be afraid to marry her – that Mary was in fact telling me the truth, and that her child was God's Child. Everything changed. I understood that God had chosen my fiancé to carry the Promised Messiah . . . and that He had chosen *me* to be His earthly father.

As we neared Mary's delivery, we were alone in a new city with no place to stay. I tried to be brave for Mary's sake, but I was lost in my own fear. I'd never delivered a baby before and I wanted so desperately for everything to be right. And then Jesus came into the world perfect and beautiful. It was the greatest moment of my life . . . possibly the greatest moment of all time . . . and the world *became* right.

I first met God's Son as a tiny helpless baby in the arms of my young wife . . . needing all the care and attention this finite and incapable dad could give to Him . . . yet He is my Savior. It is one of the many complexities I am sure to encounter over the course of my changed life. I have embraced this new story I've been given with everything I am. I know I'll never compare to His Father God, but I'm going to do my best to be the father He needs here on earth.

#### THE CHRISTMAS STORY SHARED FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A KEY STORY CHARACTER

#### Mary's Reflection

I knew you belonged to more than me. The angel told me you belonged to the world. The hope of humanity. No one understood how I could have a baby- I didn't have a husband. Joseph looked at me with pain in his eyes, until the angel appeared to him. But even then, my parents, my friends - they wanted to believe me, but such a fantastic tale. Those who loved me, even they were filled with wonder - but mostly doubt. And others just thought the worst. We'd all waited so long for the Messiah. We grew up hearing the prophecies that a king would come - and I was no princess. I was such an ordinary girl. Why would God choose me, and why would he do it this way? I knew, though, and Joseph knew. He realized what a gift we had been given and he was by my side throughout that long journey back to Bethlehem.

Weary and heavy with child, I couldn't wait for a place to lay my head. The world wasn't ready for you, though. Bethlehem certainly didn't open her arms to us. All the inns were full - people coming back to their birthplace. Perplexed and aching, we found our way into a cattle stall.

Joseph looked at me as if to say, "Did we imagine the angel? Would God allow his son to be born in such a humble place?" But through that long night in the stable, only Joseph was there. As I groaned in the agony of travail, lying on straw and looking up at the stars... Seeing that one star that reminded me you were not mine. The shepherds with their stories of angels were no surprise. I listened and my heart was glad like every other mother's heart hearing her child praised. I kept all these things and pondered them in my heart. The wise men would come later from distant lands. The magi, who had followed your star worshipped and gave you gifts. Gold - a gift for a king. Frankincense - denoting worship and reverence. And myrrh - what a strange gift. Bitterness, pain, suffering - what did these have to do with you?

The savior of the world. God tried to warn me that a sword would pierce my heart, but nothing could have prepared me for the future. My son, with just the hint of curl in his hair like mine - the one I thought the world wanted - executed as a criminal. The ways of God are past our knowing. Why did he choose me? A common girl, though from the royal line of David. Through all the pain that night and all the pain that would follow, far greater than the pain of labor, I could not see God's hand, and I thought at times he had forgotten us. You never faltered. Not in the wilderness, nor in the temple, not even on the way to the cross. It was only when I saw you risen that I could comprehend what it had all meant. All those things on that first night, looking into your innocent face. Had I known then what I know now, I would have still said yes - and you would have, too. Like the pain of birth, all sorrow is as nothing for the joy that it brings forth. We come with joy!

#### SJCC WEATHER GUIDELINES

#### Weather Advisories:

#### ♦ Level 1

- ♦ Sunday Mornings The pastor will contact the congregational president and the elders for their input regarding Sunday morning cancellations.
- ♦ Wednesday Evenings The pastor will contact ministry leaders for their input regarding Wednesday evening cancellations.
- ♦ The pastor will make decisions regarding mid-week meetings and ministries.
- ◆ Level 2 All in-person activities will be canceled and a live stream service will be attempted.
- ◆ Level 3 All activities will be canceled (staff/techs not expected to get to the church for live stream).
- Cancellation decisions will be made by 7AM for 8AM worship and Sunday school, and by 9AM for 10:30AM worship.

#### Communication:

- Cancellation announcements sent to the congregation via Breeze and phone contact list.
- Cancellation announcements posted via SJCC Facebook and if possible, on the SJCC website.



#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Many thanks to all of you who offered your time to decorate the church! It was a blessing to see everyone working together to make it special for our congregation and visitors this Christmas season!
- Christmas Cheer Tags Our Christmas Cheer Trees filled with paper ornament tags are located near the Chapel and the Church Office. Items bought need to be turned into the church TODAY, Sunday, December 7<sup>th</sup>. The donations collected will be delivered to the Fulton County Fairgrounds tomorrow, Monday morning, December 8<sup>th</sup>.
- Advent Season Worship The Advent season began last, Sunday, November 30<sup>th</sup>. With the various plans for each week's service, and to have the Advent wreath and Nativity stable viewable by everyone, Pastor Erich would like to have the 8:00AM services held in the sanctuary through the Advent season.
- ◆ Life Planning will have their annual Christmas party on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup>. We will meet in the fellowship hall for appetizers and a devotional at 7:00PM. Mentors are to bring an appetizer to share and youth are to bring a "white elephant" gift for an interesting gift exchange. Hope to see everyone on Wednesday.
- ◆ GIF Gals Our next get together will be Saturday, December 13<sup>th,</sup> 12:00PM in the Christmas Room at Mom's Diner. It is a big space so there will be plenty of room if you want to bring a gal friend along! There is a signup sheet on the bulletin board.
- The Fellowship Committee is seeking volunteers to serve in 2026. Meetings are typically held on the first Monday of the month, with the first one scheduled for January 5<sup>th</sup> at 6:30 PM in the Fireside Room. Contact Gloria Lauber if you have questions or would like to volunteer.
- ◆ 2026 Offering Envelopes Offering Envelopes are ready for pickup in the sanctuary narthex. If you don't see your name, and want envelopes, please let Gloria in the church office know.
- Ruihley Park Blood Drive Tuesday, December 30<sup>th</sup>, 8:00AM 2:00PM, at the Ruihley Park Pavilion. All donors will receive a special long sleeve Red Cross T-Shirt!
- MCC Comforter Bash Wednesday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2:00PM-8:00PM at Zion Mennonite Church, Archbold. People of all ages, abilities and faith traditions will come together to knot comforters and fellowship at our annual MCC Comforter Bash. All necessary tools will be provided. Contact Chris Wyse, 419-516-4164, for any questions.

## **BUILDING PROJECT STATUS REPORT AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2025**

Highlights and Info of the Work Week

- Entrance Doors The carport door, two east doors and the south door were all worked on this past week, with final trim pieces, electrical power, locking mechanisms and caulk finished. (the south door opener still needs power as of writing this...)
- All three drinking fountains are now working and ready for use, with a bottle filler available at the unit between the south family restrooms.
- The general contractor has worked out the tariff situation with the elevator company, so the final steps of testing and inspection are being scheduled.
- Completion of the elevator is awaiting a meeting of three companies to synchronize controls and operation.
- The HVAC system ductwork was tested this past week, with some minor corrections made.
   The heating systems and controls continue to be worked on, with finishing it all up this next week.
- First and Second Floor Rooms Flooring is complete and ceiling grid is complete; with ceiling tiles to be installed and paint touched up as needed.
- Coat racks will be made in house, featuring rods for coat hangers and pegs for coat hooks.
- New signage throughout the building is in the works, identifying rooms by name and number.
- We are working with Habitec Security to upgrade the security system and to add electronic control of entrance door locking and unlocking, as well as a camera and phone extension at the south entrance. Their work will be scheduled for early January.
- Once the south accessible ramp is in place, the south entrance will be designated as the main entrance to the building Monday through Friday. All other doors will be kept locked so we gain awareness and oversight of who enters the building. There will be exceptions to this when we know an event is happening, such as the community meals and meetings in the Fireside Room.
- Sanctuary Paraments The purple, white, red and green cloths that hang on the lectern, pulpit and above the altar (called dossal cloths) Two of the dossal cloths were drycleaned and had sewing repairs done on them. It was determined that due to the condition and faded color of the cloths it was best to replace the paraments. Records of the company who provided the paraments back in the 1950's were found in the church files, so we have been working with Kanel Brothers on material, colors, sizes and costs. Kanel Brothers has started manufacturing the cloths and will send them to us as they are produced, with all paraments scheduled to be finished in late February.
- A walk-through of the project with two architects from Beilharz Architects took place this
  past week, documenting a list of items to be addressed by the contractors.

## **BULLETIN STEWARDSHIP REPORT AS OF DECEMBER 4, 2025**

Operating Fund Year to Date Report								
2025 Operating Budget	\$	437,965.00						
Total Donations	\$	332,461.73						
Total Expenses	\$	365,040.18						
Net Operating Balance	\$	(32,578.45)						
Mission Fund Year to Date Report								
2025 Mission Budget	\$	173,000.00						
Total Donations	\$	143,052.20						
Total Disbursements	\$	135,285.47						
Net Mission Balance	\$	7,766.73						
Imagine Your Faith Building Capital Campaign								
2025 Project Budget	\$	2,757,000.00						
Fund Balance (EGR)	\$	597,146.85						
Buehrer Fund Current	\$	6,649.50						
Fund Balance (F&M)	\$	96,702.57						
Expenses to Date	\$	2,054,521.02						
Total	\$	2,755,019.94						
Funds Still to be Raised Currently				1,980.06				
Funds Still to be Raised		as of 2/2/25	\$	196,763.00				
Change from 2/2/25 to 12	\$	194,782.94						

## MISSION-A-MONTH - CROSSROAD CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

For more than 135 years, Crossroad Child & Family Services in Fort Wayne, Indiana, has focused on the needs of children and families who have few alternatives. Today, they work with emotionally troubled children other providers have chosen not to work with, or have failed to help. Through many prayers and financial support, St. John's strives to help change the futures of young people. More information is available at www.crossroad-fwch.org/. You can give to Crossroad by selecting that option on your offering envelope or by selecting "Crossroad" in the "Give to" drop-down menu in Breeze's online giving feature.



# Children's Christmas Program Sunday, December 14th @ 10:30am

The children & teens of St. John's Christian Church invite you to join us as we journey to Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, all while exploring the Advent themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, & Love!

# Final Rehearsal:

All PreK - 12<sup>th</sup> Graders in the program should plan on being at the final rehearsal on Wednesday, December 10<sup>th</sup> from 6:00 - 7:30pm (9<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> grade to be dismissed at 7:00pm for Life Planning)



# WEEK OF DECEMBER 7<sup>TH</sup> AT ST. JOHN'S CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sun	8:00AM	Worship (Sanctuary)
	8:30AM	Pause for Praise (96.1 WMTR)
	9:15AM	Children's Christmas Practice / Sunday School
	10:30AM	Worship/Sermon in Music (Sanctuary and YouTube Live)
	7:00PM	Evening Advent Service
Tue	9:15AM	Bible Study (Fireside Room)
	10:30AM	Staff Meeting (Fireside Room)
	5:00PM	Community Meal (SJCC)
	6:45PM	Mission Committee (Fireside Room)
	7:00PM	Property Committee (Chapel)
Wed	6:00PM	Children's Christmas Practice (All Grades)
	6:00PM	Adult Bell Practice (Chapel)
	7:00PM	Life Planning (Gym)
	7:30PM	Adult Choir (Sanctuary)
Sat	7:40AM	Men's Prayer Breakfast (Fireside Room)
	12:00PM	GIF Gals (Mom's Diner)
Sun	8:00AM	Worship (Sanctuary)
	8:30AM	Pause for Praise (96.1 WMTR)
	9:15AM	Children arrive for sound check / Sunday School
	10:30AM	Worship/Children's Program (Sanctuary and YouTube Live)
	7:00PM	Evening Advent Service

## **TODAY'S WORSHIP SERVANTS**

Accompanist	Buffy Riley	Song Leader	David Stuckey	
Lay Reader	Avery Roth	Easy Worship	Brian Roth	
Sound	James Grime	Live Stream	Ryan Christman	
Head Usher	Brad Roth			
Ushers	Jay Riley, Aimee Roth, Avery Roth, Evy Roth			
Trumpets	Matt Hines & Anna Yoder			
Nursery	Karen Walker & Molly Rutledge			
Praise Team	Keira Christman, Lynne Christman, Buffy Riley and Bruce Wooley			

## PRAYER JOYS, CONCERNS, AND REQUESTS:

#### Please pray for...

- Sue Buehrer, dealing with some health issues, going through a series of tests, praying and waiting for test results.
- Mark & Jodi Beltz, as Jodi will be receiving monthly injections for the next year, in order to build bone and slow down bone loss; Mark's surgery went well, and he spent one night in the hospital after surgery.
- Kenny & Shirley Nafziger, brother of Judy Salisbury and Mary Ellen Johnson, are now both in a nursing home in Florida. They could use some encouragement, so if you could send a card their address is: Kenny and Shirley Nafziger, Highlands Lake Central, 4240 Lakeland Highlands Rd, Lakeland, FL 33813. Kenny and Shirley are both in room 315.
- Dave Walker, as he recovers from ankle replacement surgery on November 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Gary Mohre, father of Brittany Martinez, whose prostate surgery went well on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> and was able to return home on Dec. 4<sup>th</sup>.
- Joanie Grieser, who continues in rehab at Rupp Rehab.
- Chloe Merillat, has returned to Taylor University for the final two weeks of the semester; pray for strength and endurance as she wheels around campus, for caring and understanding friendships, and for stamina to finish her studies strong.
- Greg and Deb Weddleman, as Greg was at Toledo Hospital this past week for chemo treatment, including a spinal for chemo in his spine.
- Josie Grieser, diagnosed with MS, continues to do well and continues to work every day. She goes to Cleveland Clinic every six months for scans and infusion treatment.

#### Care Center Residents...

- Marilyn Baron, Fulton Manor, 725 S. Shoop Ave, Wauseon 43567
- ♦ Linda Hayes, 407 E Lutz Road, Room 401, Archbold, 43502
- Charlene LaFountaine, 407 E Lutz Road, Room 180, Archbold, 43502
- Mike Meyer, Fountain Park, 1391 N. Main St., Room 130, Bryan, 43506
- ♦ Dencel Miller, 407 E Lutz Road, Room 166, Archbold, 43502
- ♦ Alice Tedrow, 600 Haven Drive, Apt. 111, Archbold, 43502

## And those serving in the Armed Forces...

- ◆ Kyle Ducey, San Antonio, TX (Navy) (Son of Kelly & Betsy)
- ◆ MAJ Jared Kuntz, Hawaii (Army) (Son of Keith & Kelli)
- Taylor Pitts, Dayton, OH (Air Force) (Granddaughter of Nan Neill)
- Shayne Pitts, Middle East (Air Force) (Grandson-in-law of Nan Neill)

## St. John's Christian Church

700 S. Defiance St., Archbold, Ohio 43502 419-446-2545 † www.stjohnsarchbold.org

Pastor - Rev. Erich Christman (Cell: 419-551-0401)

Dir. of Youth & Young Adults - Jocelyn Walker (Cell: 419-575-4218)

Director of Music Ministry - Buffy Riley (Cell: 419-572-6880)

Administrative Assistant - Gloria Beck (office@stjohnsarchbold.org)