

St. John's United Church of Christ
-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-

November 30, 2025

10:00am—Worship



“As wonderful as it is to have clarity, I want to reach back to my younger self, through the years and past all the pain I put myself through. I want to go back and somehow shorten the winding road she’s starting down. I would go to the night she sat pointing at her Bible and tell her how much intrinsic value she had, just waiting to be unleashed.” Would she say yes? *Penelope Przekop*

“To falter is normal; to rise from it should become a habit. A subconscious survival skill necessary for any being to be successful.” Yes to rising? *Udayakumar D*

In this liminal time, there are so many reasons to not say yes. Yet we come from a history of people who said yes. Throughout the story of the people of God, brave and faithful, everyday people said yes to God. In Advent, these yeses are even more significant. What does it take to get to yes? Why does it matter? Why does it matter that we believe this? This is a story that we tell, that isn’t just on a page or in ancient tales, but one that lives in our bones, and calls to us to say our own yes when we are called into what God is doing now. From *The Power of Yes*

Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret, Lynn Grear

Last Sunday Attendance: 58 Offering: \$4,266.00

P.O. Box 288 – 448 Rice St. Elmore, OH 43416
Pastor—Margaret Mills
Pastor Emeritus—John W. Bock
Ministers—All the Members of St. John’s

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The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

November 30, 2025

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" - Berry

Lighting of the Candles

**Call to Worship*

One: As the sun rises on this new season, we turn within and ask God to renew hope in each one of us.

All: For the sake of my relatives and friends, proclaim with joy, "Let us go to the house of our God and find Hope within!"

One: Though the days are hard, and the news, grim, we turn to our siblings here asking them to say yes, to trust God, as we have so many times in the past.

All: For the sake of my relatives and friends, we proclaim with joy, "Peace be within the walls of this house, that our hope might spread beyond."

One: In our fears and our desperation, in our exhaustion and our pain, God wraps us in bands of hope, holding us together so we may say yes to the Word.

All: For the sake of my relatives and friends, we proclaim with joy, "I will seek all that is good within the house of God, and I will carry it with me wherever I go."

**Opening Hymn:* "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel #154

**Prayer of Invocation*

One: Emmanuel, we come here today to renew ourselves in the generosity of God's hope.

All: O come, O wisdom who from dawning day creates and shapes a new world, a new way. You at the gateways of our choices stand and guide us with your dancing, loving hand.

One: Rejoice! Rejoice! O God, amazing, wise. May we each day be open to surprise.

All: Amen

**Invocation Response*

"What Does the Lord Require of You"

**What does the Lord require of you,
What does the Lord require of you.
Justice, kindness, walk humbly with your God.
To seek justice, and love kindness,
And walk humbly with your God.
To seek justice, and love kindness,
And walk humbly with your God.**

THE LIGHTING OF THE ADVENT CANDLE

**Lighting the Candle of Hope -
The Buchanan Family**

Reader: Today, we will light the candle of Hope. We think of Hope as anticipation of something future, but in truth, Hope can be the incarnation of trust.

Reader: We hear in Isaiah 9: 6: "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Reader: We trust our Wonderful Counselor - that when we seek guidance, we will find answers. We trust that when we are exhausted, our Emmanuel will send someone to carry our burdens for awhile.

Congregation: We trust in our Beloved God, that, when everything around us seems too difficult, too broken, too devastating for us to put to rights on our own, Hope will appear, and we rush forward, arms open wide to receive grace.

Reader: As we light the candle of Hope, may it be a sign that the days of God's realm of love, justice, and mercy are surely coming.

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

A Story for All Ages:

Be Prepared

A Message for Today:

The Power of Yes: Elizabeth & Zechariah Said Yes

Luke 1: 5-25, 57-80

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

Hope is not only fuel that sustains our spirits. Hope lives within the tangible gifts we give each week to support the most vulnerable among us. In our generosity, we act on God's behalf, ensuring the needs of our community are met.

**Doxology "As With Gladness" #236 vs. 3*

As they offered gifts most rare at the manger rude and bare,
So may we with holy joy, pure and free from sin's alloy,
All our costliest treasures bring,
Christ, to you, our heavenly King.

**Prayer of Dedication (in unison)*

Beloved Creator, we offer these gifts to you in the spirit of Hope. We place our trust in you and in those who faithfully care for your people, that these gifts will be used to protect and uplift those who are in need spiritually and physically. Help us to remember our role to act as agents of your grace each and every day. Amen

WE SHARE OUR COMMON LIFE

Announcements and Concerns may be emailed to: millsm92445@gmail.com, texted to: 440-487-2549, or call into: 419-862-3511

WE REST IN PRAYER WITH GOD

Call to Prayer

We begin our prayer time today remembering that when we need guidance the most, we can turn to God in prayer. Today we are guided by Hope.

Prayer of Transformation and New Life (in unison)

God, it is not a year abundant with Hope. We are often surrounded by gloom when life is confusing and conflict is great. Our faith is rattled, and we are swallowed by shadows of fear. The world often feels like the end is near even when a new beginning is around the corner. We forget that even when shadows have lengthened, there remains a crack in the surface. Light begins to stream into our space, and warmth dances upon our hearts. When fear unnerves us, may we cling to the Hope of God's love and the possibilities of joy once again. Amen

Words of Grace

God does not turn away when we falter. We are, instead, taken in and given sanctuary so that we may revive in God's tender mercy. God will be our shelter while we rest, as well as when we are ready, once again, to greet the day with YES.

Pastoral Prayer

One: Celebrating the coming of the One who brings the reign of God to all people, let us pray for the world God loves, the Church God calls, and all the people around the world, according to their needs.

All: Hear our prayer!

Silent Prayer

The Lord's Prayer

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 sins, as we forgive those who sin against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen

Prayer Response

"Emmanuel, Emmanuel" #178

Emmanuel, Emmanuel, his name is called Emmanuel.
God with us, revealed in us, his name is called Emmanuel.

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

**Closing Hymn*

"Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" #153

**Benediction*

When we leave here today, let us carry the flame of Hope within us, no matter how small it may seem. We feed it with the knowledge that God's love is incendiary. The Spirit's breath blows through us, allowing the flames of Hope to rise and catch and give us strength all the days of our lives.

**Postlude* "Emmanuel" -Tornquist

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ELMORE KIWANIS FRUIT BASKETS If you'd like to volunteer to put together fruit baskets for the widows and widowers of our community this holiday season through the Elmore, Kiwanis, please contact Cindy Little by calling 419-344-9279 or email her at cz56small@yahoo.com. We will assemble baskets on Wednesday, December 10th from 10:00am to 12:00pm at the Elmore Library. We appreciate any and all volunteers!

HONOR WORKERS's Judy Suto will host the "Song of the Season" program with Lisa Garges on December 9th at 7:00pm. Members will address Christmas cards to shut-ins.

FAITH FORMATION NEEDS YOUR HELP! Rachel and Jamie are taking donations in the Sunday School Room for snacks (Goldfish, fruit snacks, cookies, etc.) as well as new crayons and markers. Please feel free to leave them directly in the classroom. THANK YOU!

ANNOUNCEMENTS CONT.

POINSETTIA ORDERS LAST DAY! Each plant is \$10.50 and you can find order forms on the back counter and can be returned to the church office. DEADLINE: TODAY

ANGEL TREE is up at the library if you'd like to make Christmas special for someone!!

BELL RINGERS We are still in need of 2 more bell-ringers for the Christmas season (and longer if possible)! If you enjoy hearing the bells ring on Sundays and can count, we'll teach you the rest! It's not hard and we always have fun! Please, Please consider joining us for rehearsals on Wednesday evenings at 7:30-8:30. Thank you!

ELMORE RETIREMENT VILLAGE is currently accepting applications for residency. If you are aware of anyone that is interested in living in Elmore, please feel free to have them contact Jeanette A. Buckantz, Manager, at 419-862-2408.

"OFFICE HOURS" at **Christy's** will continue on Thursdays from 9 to noon. All are welcome at the round table just inside the front door.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY resumed on November 17th. Join us at 7:00pm in the Council Room!

NEW MEMBER GATHERING A brief conversation will be held on Sunday, Dec. 7th with coffee and pastries right after church. Any who wish to join in the conversation on the history of St. John's, who we are as the UCC, and what it means to be a member of the church, feel free to join us. I look forward to gathering together.

WOMEN'S 55th ANNUAL ECUMENICAL CHRISTMAS SERVICE—OUR CHRISTMAS STAR will be held Thursday, December 4 at Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church in Genoa. Registration begins at 5:45 with service at 6:00. Soup and salad dinner provided by Our Lady of Lourdes Parish after the service. Collection to benefit Ottawa County Holiday Bureau. RSVP to secretary@ourladygenoa.org or 419-855-8501 by November 30th.

HOME COMMUNION: If you wish Pastor Margaret to bring communion to your home, please call 440-487-2549.

AA MEETING is every Thursday evening from 7:00 - 8:00. We are so glad to have them meet in our Fellowship Hall.

IN OUR PRAYERS

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU WISH TO HAVE YOUR NAME REMOVED FROM THE LIST OR IF ANYONE WISHES TO BE ADDED. PLEASE WRITE THOSE REQUESTS ON A PRAYER CARD. THANK YOU!

Bereavement: Don Hollis (friend of Bill Verbryke), Eli & Abby Wright Gerkenmyer and family for the loss of their infant daughter

Nursing Home/Rehab —Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, Nancy Weidner, Zoe Moore, Lois Rymers

Hospitalized —Rosemary Acha

At Home — Joanne Busdeker, Carlton Giesler, Doris Klaustermeyer, Cindy Calhoun, Heidi Holub, Lois Rader, Catherine Aldrich (Sue Applegate's friend), Joanne Price, Sherry Sherman (Pastor Tim's wife), McKinley Blausey, Jamie Irwin (Lois Rader's granddaughter), Dave Mate (friend of Paul Holewinski) and Debra Mate (Dave Mate's sister), Bob Hensel, Betty Walker, Helen Hollis (friends of Bill Verbryke), Ken Moore, Jerry and Dolores Beck, Janet Ottney, Paul Holewinski, Marvin Kates, Tracy Crone, Rachael (neighbor of Sue Applegate), Shawn Meager, Becky Truman, Jennifer and Joe Shamy, Saundra Shaffer, Russ Krumnow, Jim Krumnow, Jim and Jane Garner, Amy M, Lois Pelly, Loren Sampson, Jeanette Tangeman, Jeff and Nancy Wegman, Tom and Sharon Crozier, David Reimer, Troy Hensel, the Fielding family, Sharon and John Virtue, Karen Nolen (friend of Jamie Verbryke), Jeff Little, Ron Dangler

Service Men & Women: Kyle Babka, Dr. Samuel L. Preston III, Captain Benjamin Wideman