

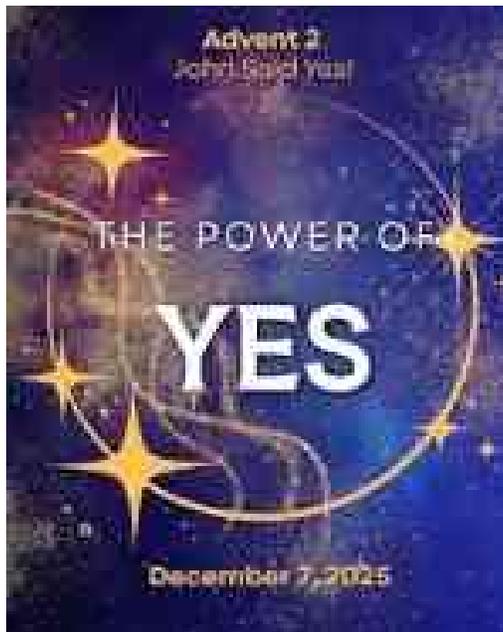
*St. John's United Church of Christ*  
-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-

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December 7, 2025

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10:00am—Worship



“The branches do not support the root. But the root supports the branches.” *Lailah Gifty Akita*

“A voice cries out in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord. Notice there isn't any punctuation because in Hebrew there isn't any in this sentence. Interpretation and translation over generations led to decisions around this verse, and that includes decisions about punctuations. General scholarly consensus has not agreed on a single way to understand this verse, but instead has two: A voice cries out in the wilderness: prepare the way of the Lord OR A voice cries out: in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord. Either one is possible, and it's an interesting exercise to read it both ways and find which one speaks to you most.” *The Power of Yes*

Wait! What? Nooooooooo!?

“Miraculous God, reveal what is possible and give us the imagination necessary to pursue it. Amen” *Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay*

**Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret, Lynn Grear**

**Last Sunday Attendance: 27    Offering: \$880.00**

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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

Church Office Hours  
Office Administrator—Erica Baker  
Office hours by appointment

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<https://www.youtube.com/@StJohnsUCCElmore>  
<https://facebook.com/StJohnsUCCElmore>



# The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

December 7, 2025

## GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

*Prelude: "I Wonder As I Wander" - Baumgartner*

*Lighting of the Candles*

*\*Call to Worship*

One: The prophet Isaiah declared that justice and peace shall come through the family of Jesse.

**All: This justice shall be for all of creation.**

One: May our beloved Emmanuel bestow upon the people justice and a peace that is ever lasting. And may the Prince of Peace rain down blessed mercy upon the people, showering the earth with righteousness and peace.

**All: Get ready! Prepare for God's peace to reign!**

*\*Opening Hymn: "Rain Down!" #444*

*\*Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

**Patient and loving God, we so easily launch ourselves in preparation for the secular festival of giving and parties and the swirl of social events, but we forget that the true preparation is the readiness of our hearts to receive you. Help us look again at our lives and turn them around so that they may be in tune with your will. We ask this in Jesus' name. 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 Peace -  
John & Carol Bock**

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

Reader: Advent reminds us that we are people who share a story, the story of Jesus, who enacts peace by judging in favor of the poor and deciding with equity for the meek of the earth. We long for the day when "the wolf shall live with the lamb, the leopard shall lie down with the kid, the calf and the lion will feed together, and a little child shall lead them." (Isaiah 11: 6)

**All: Today, we choose to live the story of peace, believing that true peace comes when we seek the flourishing of all God's creation.**

One: We light this candle to proclaim the coming of the light of God into the world. With the coming of this light there is *peace, for Christ is called "Prince of Peace."* Christ's name is also Emmanuel, "God with us." *The presence of Christ with us gives us peace day by day.*

We pray together:

**Eternal God, we thank you that through all the years you have given your peace to your people. Help us to have this peace in our lives. We pray that, in this Advent season, we may, by what we do, show your presence to the sick, to the hungry, and to the lonely, so that they too may have peace. In the name of Emmanuel. Amen**

"Emmanuel"

-Songbirds

## WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

*A Story for All Ages:*

**Are You Ready?**

*A Message for Today:*

**The Power of Yes: John Said Yes**

Isaiah 11: 1-10

Matthew 3: 1-12

## WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

*Invitation to the Offering*

Peace makes us generous. God's abundance pours through us to our neighbors, just as God's love showers us with blessing. As each of us gives what we can, we know that our community is only as resilient as our most vulnerable neighbor.

*\*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)*

**Emmanuel, hear our prayer! We bring these gifts before you to spread peace throughout our homes, our communities, and our world. On every street corner, beside rivers, lakes, oceans, at the top of your tallest mountains, and dwelling below the cliffs, your people are in need. Take these gifts to strengthen our church and bring relief to your beloved children. Amen**

## **WE SHARE OUR COMMON LIFE**

*Announcements and Concerns may be emailed to: mills92445@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 the peace brought to us by Emmanuel, God with us.

*Prayer of Transformation and New Life (in unison)*

**Gentle God, it has been too long since your people have known peace. We turn away from the ugliness hidden behind closed doors, from the ravages of war, from the famine and genocide that stalk our siblings around the world. We've lost hope, lost our faith in the possibility of a small act's power to change. We talk and talk, all the while forgetting that we are not just your mouthpiece, but your hands and feet. Remind us, redeemer, how to show up for justice. Teach us how to transform this ragged hope into peace for all.**

*Words of Grace*

God does not judge based on our insecurities, but on the promise rooted within each of us. Hope is as robust as ever when we study God's image in the mirror. Peace is not only a possibility but is the ultimate work of God's people. In faith, we rise and fall and rise again, knowing that our Redeemer will never stumble or disappoint. Praise be to God!

*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.

## **THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION**

*Sung Invitation to the Table*

(tune of "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel")

O come, O bread of life and feed us now, your sustenance and blessings to endow.

Salvation's cup we drink now with cheer, and God's abundance banishes our fear.

Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to us and all things shall be well.

(Nicole Pickens and Jonathan Williams, 2025)

*Communion Prayer*

*Breaking Bread Together*

*Please hold the bread until everyone is served.*

*Inside ring of the communion tray is grape juice.*

*You may drink the wine/juice as you are served.*

*Prayer of Thanksgiving (in unison)*

**Gracious and Eternal God, we share this meal as a symbol of Peace. In each of us, we find the beloved, the follower, the doubter, and the betrayer, and yet we know that we are welcome at this table. This meal is open to all, that it may offer sustenance as well as refuge. May we leave this table refreshed, ready to take your radical ministry of extravagant hope, everlasting peace, exuberant joy, and abundant love into the world. Amen**

## **SENT FORTH TO SERVE**

*\*Closing Hymn "Let There Be Peace on Earth" #614*

*\*Benediction*

Beyond these walls, the world needs peace. Go out taking with you the exquisite peace of Christ. Carry it boldly and spread it to all those you meet, knowing that God is within you, strengthening the light of the world. Amen.

*\*Postlude "In Excelsis Deo" - Ellis*

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**NEW MEMBER GATHERING** A brief conversation about church membership will be held TODAY right after church this morning. All are welcome.

**HONOR WORKERS's** will host "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!

**DECEMBER LOOSE OFFERING** will go to the Christmas Fund

**DECEMBER FOOD PANTRY** item of the month is tomato juice.

**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!

**"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** join us at 7:00pm in the Council Room every Monday night!

**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

**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, Sandra 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, the Fielding family, Sharon and John Virtue, Karen Nolen (friend of Jamie Verbryke), Ron Dangler, Kim Applegate, Briann, Rosemary Acha

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