



The Beacon—January 2026

As we begin this new year, I want to share with you a Daily Devotional from the United Church of Christ. The author is Jennifer Ruth Lynn Garrison and it's about Being Church – read and think about what Being Church means for us as we move into this new year.

All the paths of the Lord are steadfast love and faithfulness, for those who keep his covenant and his decrees. Psalm 25: 10 (NRSV) Earlier in the old church, stories of ancestors were created in all their grace and complication. Now the light is slanting through the windows, and the only sound is our own breath. But you are not alone. The ancestors are still present, all around you.

Wipe down the kitchen counters and take a bag of garbage out to the bin. But first, pause. Remember that with these same invisible, invaluable tasks, many generations have assured that this sacred space is kept tidy and prepared.

Turn off the lights in the hall. But first, look. On the wall there's a fuzzy, old, black-and-white photo of a Sunda school class gathered on the church steps. Notice a girl in a frilly dress is making another child giggle. Or is she crying? The photo is too blurry to tell. Remember that they also wept and laughed here.

Firmly close the sanctuary doors. But first, listen. Hear their voices. They also sang and preached and agreed to disagree here.

Too often you think you must create how to be Church from scratch. You rush around inventing programs and projects as if you invented the very idea of programs and projects. But today, stop. Pay attention.

They are here. Here to uplift and correct and watch over and pull forward. Here to tell you that in the small chores, the big feelings and every single word, you are keeping covenant with them, as they do with you. God, thank you for the steadfast love and faithfulness of our ancestors, with us still. Amen.

Our Advent series was on The Power of Yes – Elizabeth and Zechariah, John, Mary, Joseph, the Shepherds, the Magi – all said yes when called to do something God was challenging them to do. I'm thinking our ancestors here at St. John's also said yes when challenged. As we move into the New Year, will we listen for how God is calling us and will we say yes?

In this Beacon, you'll hear about a way we can say yes to the challenge of hunger around us. Souperbowl of Caring will begin on January 11 and conclude with Souperbowl Sunda on Feb. 8 with a soup potluck. There is much more about that included in this Beacon.

But for now, will we keep covenant with our ancestors? Will we listen and pay attention? Will we say yes?

Thanks to Dava Warner for her leadership on this initiative!

Blessings,
Pastor Margaret

Inside this Issue:

Pastor's Article	1
Making Music	2
Praiers/Records	3
Council Notes/ Honor Workers	4
Office Notes/ Common Grounds	5-6
Souper Bowl of Caring	7-9
Communit	10
WISE	11
Treasurer's Report	12
Calendar	13

UPCOMING LOOSE OFFERING SCHEDULE

January—Utilities for the
Need

February—Utilities for the
Need

St. John's mission...to live the love and grace of God
through redeeming faith in Jesus the Christ
by seeking justice, loving kindness and walking humbly with God.

Songbirds & Handbells -

The Songbirds and Handbells have been hard at work learning new songs for the holiday season. What a better time of year to honor our Lord with beautiful music!

Handbells require many hands, and we'd love to have you join us! So if you can count to 3, 4 or 6, please join us - we'll teach you the rest! There are a lot of bells that are still in the cases just waiting to be heard. Remember, these were bells purchased by congregation members in honor or memory of loved ones - who's ringing the bell(s) you purchased?!

Let's Make a Joyful Noise together!

Lynn Grear, Music Director
The Singers and Ringers of St. John's





Daily Prayer Requests

Nursing Home/Rehab: Mar Sue James, Al Amstutz, Nancy Weidner, Zoe Moore, Lois Rimmers

At Home — Joanne Busdeker, Carlton Giesler, Doris Klaustermeier, Cindy Calhoun, Heidi Holub, Lois Rader, Catherine Aldrich (Sue Applegate's friend), Joanne Price, Sherry Sherman (Pastor Tim's wife), McKinley Blause, Jamie Irwin (Lois Rader's granddaughter), Dave Mate (friend of Paul Holewinski) and Debra Mate (Dave Mate's sister), Bob Hensel, Bett Walker, Helen Hollis (friends of Bill Verbrake), Ken Moore, Jerry and Dolores Beck, Janet Ottne, Paul Holewinski, Marvin Kates, Tracy Crone, Rachael (neighbor of Sue Applegate), Shawn Meager, Beck Truman, Jennifer and Joe Sham, Sandra Shaffer, Russ Krumnow, Jim Krumnow, Jim and Jane Garner, Ann M., Lois Pell, 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 Verbrake), Ron Dangler, Kim Applegate, Briann, Rosemar Acha, Don Brimmer (Deb Ferguson's brother), Dolores Neeb, Nikki Christensen, Kath Wille, Sue Applegate

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

January Birthdays

Barbara Smith	1/2
Kod Kuhlman	1/2
Ken Moore	1/7
Michael Erwin	1/7
Devon Marshall	1/7
Brandi Overmeyer	1/9
Don Corbin	1/10
Carolyn Underwood	1/12
Jennifer Graham	1/13
Jacob Applegate	1/13
Brenda Roadarmel	1/20
Trent Herrig	1/21
Kaitlyn Applegate	1/24
Rebecca Wilburn	1/25
Steven Wetzel	1/25
Miles Calkins	1/25
Oliver Calkins	1/25
Russell Krumnow	1/27
Mark Heineman	1/28
Scott Giesler	1/29
Susan Millinger	1/30
Kristen Geisler	1/30
Estelle Verbrake	1/30

January Anniversaries

Don & Suzanne Applegate	1/12
Charles & Nancy Almroth	1/8
Ken & Zoe Moore	1/25
William & Barbara Schwartz	1/18
Jon & Jan James	1/7
John & Sharon Virtue	1/28



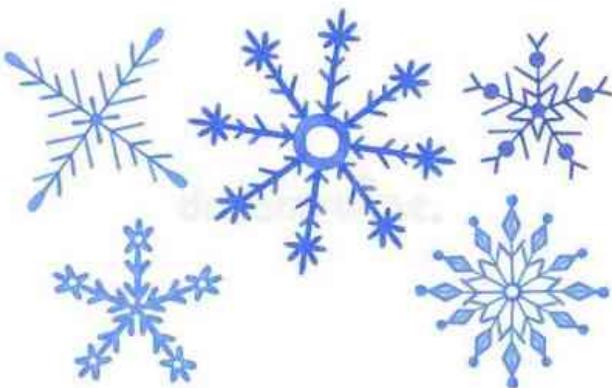
Church Council Meeting
November 2025

This was a brief meeting to approve the budget before it was presented to the congregation.

Attendants were:

- ◆ Beck Busdeker
- ◆ Ron Busdeker
- ◆ Bill Verbrake
- ◆ Dick Kuhlman
- ◆ Jim Wilburn
- ◆ Brian Holub
- ◆ Pastor Margaret

Jim made the motion to approve the budget and Bill seconded. The vote was unanimous to approve.



HONOR WORKERS TAKE A
BREAK THIS JANUARY

WHAT'S COMING UP NEXT FOR THE HONOR
WORKERS?

On February 10, 2026 at 7:00 PM, the Honor Workers will enjoy a presentation from Julie Male—Curator of Manuscripts from the Rutherford B. Hayes Museum. Hosted by Joyce Bruntz.

St. John's UCC Honor Workers

December 9, 2025

The Honor Workers met for our December meeting on the 9th. The evening began with a program from Lisa Gargas. She sang several Christmas selections and familiar tunes from the 50s and 60s.

Everyone enjoyed her talents.

The members then addressed Christmas cards for our church shut-ins and those eight and over. The eight members in attendance enjoyed a delicious dessert prepared by hostess Ruth Weis.

The meeting closed with everyone praising the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted,
Joyce Bruntz





ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNCIL MEETING 1/11 AT 7PM —This is in preparation for the upcoming **CONGREGATIONAL MEETING on JANUARY 25th** after service.

SOUPER BOWL OF CARING—Dava Warner is leading the Souper Bowl of Caring initiative at St. John's! It is a program run through a nonprofit called Tackle Hunger that focuses on mobilizing communities to fight food insecurity together. Starting January 11, Dava and our Faith Formation teachers will shine light on food insecurity and allow us to collect money and food items. Check the January Beacon for more information!

SONGBIRDS AND BELLS will be practicing Wednesday evenings. Songbirds at 6:30 and Bells at 7:30. :)

HONOR WORKERS are taking a break in January, but will be meeting again on February 10th for a presentation from Julie Male, Curator of Manuscripts from the Rutherford B. Hayes Museum.

FAITH FORMATION NEEDS YOUR HELP! Rachel and Jamie are taking donations in the Sunda 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!

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.

JANUARY & FEBRUARY LOOSE OFFERING will go to utility bills for the need.

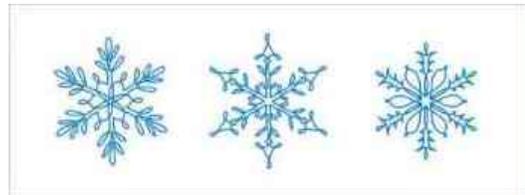
JANUARY FOOD PANTRY item of the month is peaches.

“OFFICE HOURS” AT CHRISTY’S will be held next week 1/15 (after Christy's being reopened!). Join us anytime between 9:00am and noon for good conversation, coffee, tea, or



UPCOMING IDEAS: We are a church that comes up with some creative mission ideas and I have two that we'll discuss with Council: collect plastic bags, weigh them, put in recycle containers in the groceries, send weight to a website and

the website will send us a bench when we reach 1000 lbs. Yes – I'm serious. It was shared with us at the Great Lakes Association of United Church Educators with true stories of benches being delivered. An environmental mission and a fun way to get a bench to put in our pollinator garden. An update on the pollinator garden will be shared in the spring.



Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church provides physical facilities for the Elmore Food Pantry. This public service program was originally organized by the Elmore Ministerial Association and staffed by members of local churches. The area churches contribute food items and funds. As of 2024, the Elmore Food Pantry became an outreach of Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church. The food pantry is open once a month throughout the year. In 2025, the Elmore Food Pantry provided meals for a total of 880 people and served an average of 27 households per month. That is an increase of 288 people and around 9 households per month from 2024.

In 2026, the Food Pantry will be open once per month on the second Friday of the month from 9:00am-12:00pm on the following dates:

January 9, February 13, March 13, April 10, May 8, June 12, July 10, August 14, September 11, October 9, November 13, and December 11.



Pastor Margaret has left the building...and gone to AZ!



ANNUAL COMMON GROUND ON THE BORDER EVENT: Pastor Margaret will be attending this event to be immersed in the issues of the AZ/MX border and immigration. Angela LeForce will be joining me this year as well as 8 from other churches that have gone with me in the past. We will experience a shelter, explore legal issues, work with the Green Valley Samaritans, hear speakers, visit the Jesuit Missions of the past, worship at the Good Shepherd UCC in Sahuarita, AZ and more. I'll send information back to be shared with you. I'm sure it will be very different this year. Stay tuned.

IN CASE OF A PASTORAL EMERGENCY: Contact the church office and Erica will contact the appropriate persons.



Mission Outreach Opportunity

TACKLE HUNGER

Tackle Hunger is a national nonprofit that empowers communities to fight food insecurity through youth-inspired fundraising events supporting local food charities. Born from a simple prayer in 1990, Tackle Hunger began with a single youth group inspired to turn Super Bowl weekend into a national time of giving. What started in one church in South Carolina has grown into a national movement, empowering communities across the country to fight food insecurity by supporting local charities.

Through grassroots action, youth leadership, and the iconic Souper Bowl of Caring campaign, Tackle Hunger has generated over \$220 million in food and funds— helping to ensure no one goes without a bowl of soup to eat.

Tackle Hunger's mission is simple: "Uniting all communities to tackle hunger". Tackle Hunger mobilizes local communities to fight food insecurity by empowering local action. Through grassroots fundraising and youth-inspired initiatives, they work to help food charities across the U.S. gain the resources they need to serve their neighbors in need. The organization prides itself in its ability to share nourishment, promote volunteerism, and advance sustainability. While the Souper Bowl of Caring campaign happens just once a year, during the NFL Super Bowl season, Tackle Hunger works all year round to mobilize communities to combat food insecurity - one community at a time.



Each year during the Big Game, thousands of groups and food charities across the country come together to tackle hunger through the Souper Bowl of Caring.

Whether you're organizing a food drive or benefiting from one, this national movement makes it easy for everyone to get involved—and every donation stays local.

Souper Bowl of Caring allows schools, churches, and civic organizations to meet their communities where they are. Since the mission is unite communities to tackle hunger, and all proceeds stay local, community partners can decide how much or how little they do to collect monetary and/or food donations. Churches maybe designate their standard offering one week to a local pantry. Schools may partner with a rival school for a collection during a sporting event. Community organizations may join forces to host a benefit concert or comedy night. It's completely up to the partnering group how they want to be involved and show up for their local community.



Why it matters



13.4 million children live in food insecure homes



63% of seniors visiting food banks and Meals on Wheels say they have to choose between food and medical care



1,800,530 people in Ohio are facing hunger. 517,450 of them are children.



33% of food insecure individuals won't qualify for SNAP and other federal nutrition programs

Why the Super Bowl

Super Bowl weekend is the second largest “food holiday” in the U.S., second only to Thanksgiving. Americans spend over \$17 billion on snacks for Super Bowl Sunday.

100 MILLION POUNDS OF WINGS

Americans eat more than 100 million pounds of chicken wings on Super Bowl Sunday. That's about 1.25 billion wings.

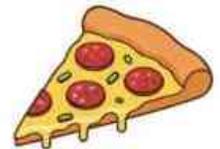


14 BILLION BURGERS

Super Bowl weekend is the second biggest grilling week of the year, only second to the 4th of July.

19.4 MILLION POUNDS OF CHIPS

This doesn't include the 4 million pounds of pretzels or the 8 million pounds of guacamole.



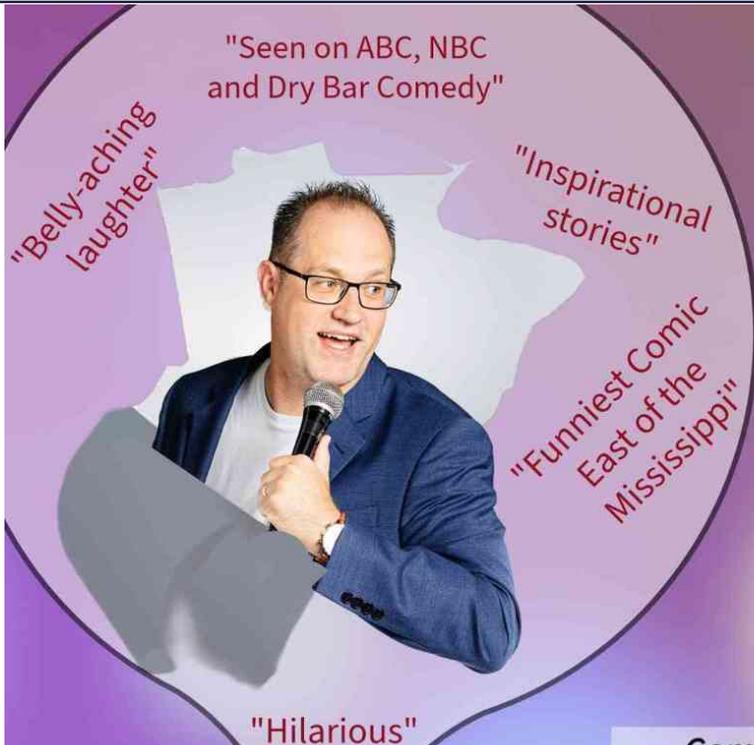
1 IN 7 ORDER TAKEOUT

60% of takeout orders are pizza making it the top Super Bowl snack.



Souper Bowl of Caring collection starts
Sunday, January 25th

Bring your food and monetary donations to church as we support our neighbors through the food pantry at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elmore.



Comedy Night and Fundraiser with

Shawn Reynolds

Friday, January 23, 2026
Our Lady of Lourdes Hall
204 Main St, Genoa OH
Doors open at 6:00 pm

Come enjoy good food and lots of laughs with Shawn Reynolds, a nationally touring, hilarious, clean comedian

Butch's Country Catering

- Chicken / Roast Beef
- Red Skin Potatoes
- Green Beans w/ Bacon
- Coffee / Tea / Water
- BYOB

- \$20 per Person
- \$35 per Couple

Sponsored By:

Moms' Group
Be-You-tiful in Christ

Benefiting youth education and retreats for our parishes

Tickets on sale through Friday, January 16, 2026

Pay Online with QR Code or by cash/check

18+ years of age

Contact Sarah at 419-707-1781



NWOA WISE RESOLUTION

WISE, UCC Mental Health Network:

Welcoming - Inclusive - Supportive - Engaged. At the Annual Meeting of the Northwest Ohio Association of the UCC, we voted the resolution printed below. It is a process to encourage congregations (and associations and conferences) to become more welcoming and supportive of those living with mental health challenges and their families. It is providing safe space for spiritual support. An opportunity to hear more about defining mental health is scheduled for January 31 at St. John's UCC in Genoa. It is designed for our church members and community with topics such as defining mental health vs. mental illness, warning signs, triggers, when/how to refer, resources, etc. More information will be coming out soon.

Northwest Ohio Association United Church of Christ

Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) Resolution



In the United Church of Christ, we affirm that no matter who you are and no matter where you are or have been on life's journey, you are welcome. This affirmation is rooted in love when Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this, everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:34-35)

The Northwest Ohio Association (NWOA) has chosen to live out this commandment by becoming a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged (WISE) association. We will establish covenantal relationships with God and individual churches within the Northwest Ohio Association, as well as with each other and ourselves.

Therefore, the NWOA agrees to live out this call of accepting all of God's beloved children by entering into a WISE covenant:

WHEREAS, the NWOA resolved to be Welcoming to people with mental health challenges to reduce the stigma that has made them feel unwelcome in the past.

WHEREAS, the NWOA resolves to be Inclusive to people with mental health challenges to ensure they fit into all association events and activities.

WHEREAS, the NWOA resolved to be Supportive of people with mental health challenges to recognize that everyone needs help at some time in their life.

WHEREAS, the NWOA resolved to be Engaged with people who have mental health challenges to learn more from them and how they can be active participants in the beloved community.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the NWOA will become a WISE Association in all activities from April 26, 2025 forward.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the NWOA will offer resources and support to congregations who choose to become WISE churches.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer's Report—December 2025

General Fund

Balance as of December 1, 2025	\$1,953.91
Income	\$21,316.00
Expenses	\$11,7877.15
Balance as of December 31, 2025	\$ 12,004.86

*** Average attendance for services in December: 52*

December Weekly Offering

December 7:	\$2,798.00
December 14:	\$6,446.50
December 21:	\$3,662.00
December 24:	\$1,716.01
December 28:	\$9,748.00

December Loose Offerings went to the Christmas Fund.

January 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wed	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 7pm: AA	2	3 Parsonage Open House
4 10:00 Worship Communion	5 7pm Bible Study	6	7 6:30 Songbirds 7:30 Bells	8 9am: Office Hours—Wild Brew 7pm: AA	9 Elmore Food Pantry	10
11 10:00 Worship Faith Formation 11:15 Fellowship Hour SOUPER BOWL FOR CARING KICKOFF 7pm: Council Meeting	12 7pm Bible Study	13	14 6:30 Songbirds 7:30 Bells	15 9am: Christy's 7pm: AA	16	17
Pastor Margaret at Annual Common Ground on the Border Event in AZ						
18 10:00 Worship	19 7pm Bible Study	20	21 6:30 Songbirds 7:30 Bells	22 9am: Christy's 7pm: AA	23	24
Pastor Margaret at Annual Common Ground on the Border Event in AZ						
25 10:00 Worship Faith Formation CONGREGATIONAL MEETING after service	26 7pm Bible Study	27	28 6:30 Songbirds 7:30 Bells	29 9am: Christy's 7pm: AA	30	31 Workshop on Mental Health, St. John's Genoa (time TBA)

THIS MONTH WE GATHER TOGETHER TO WORSHIP

in the sanctuary at 10:00 am

Fellowship Hour are held on the 2nd and 4th Sundays

*Thank You to all who are continuing their contributions to St. John's.
Church services can be found on [YouTube](#) and [St. John's Facebook page](#).*

Hard copies of the December Beacon are available by the side door of the Clinton Street entrance.



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Erica Baker

Music Director:

Lynn Grear



THE BEACON

-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-