

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

January 11, 2026

10:00am—Worship
11:15am—Fellowship
Faith Formation

The Baptism of Christ

“In the synoptic Gospels, only Matthew presents the curious dialogue between Jesus and John.” Brad Braxton

In the Epiphany season: “From the wise ones to the wedding at Cana, joy comes from recognizing and affirming the good.” Miroslav Volf

“Eternal God, at the baptism of Jesus you revealed him to be your Son, and anointed him with the Holy Spirit. Keep all who are born of water and the Spirit faithful to their calling as your people; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.”



Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret, Lynn Gear

Last Sunday Attendance: 42 **Offering:** \$3,487.00

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

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

Church Phone: 419-862-3511
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Pastor's Phone: 440-487-2549
Pastor's Email: millsm92445@gmail.com

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



The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

January 11, 2026

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "In the Bleak Midwinter with Winter Snow"
-Tornquist

Lighting of the Candles

**Call to Worship*

Centering Words (Matthew 3)

Come to the waters of baptism. Touch the Spirit's power. Feel the Spirit's loving embrace. Come and be made new.

One: Come, you who are weary, you who have been bruised by life, you whose flame has flickered in the winds of the world.

All: We come, longing to be renewed.

One: The Holy One who stretches out the heavens is stretching us now - stretching our hearts toward courage, our hands toward compassion, our lives toward gentle justice.

All: We open ourselves to be stretched into new life.

One: When Jesus was baptized, the heavens opened up, and Spirit came down like a dove; and there was a voice from heaven saying:

All: "This is my dearly loved Son, with whom I am delighted."

One: A voice from heaven says to us, as it said to Jesus: "You are my beloved." This Spirit rests upon us, too.

All: We are God's beloved, called to bring gentle justice.

One: Come, let us remember who we are.

All: Let us worship God with joy.

**Opening Hymn:* "O for a Thousand Tongues to Sing"
#96

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Most wonderful God, foolish and flawed though we are, we too delight in your beloved Son. As in his name we gather in the house of many praises, may the heavens be opened for us, that we may catch a glimpse of that Light and Love that transforms our common days with a beauty not of our making. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. 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.**

WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD

A Story for All Ages:

Water!

A Message for Today:

Chosen by God!

Isaiah 42: 1-9
Matthew 3: 13-17

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

One: Beloved of God, we remember today who we are – a people formed in water and Spirit, held in love, and called to bring gentle justice to the world. We do not give out of guilt, or out of scarcity, or because the church needs to keep the lights on. We give because love takes form in us. We give because we belong to one another. We give because our lives are woven together with all creation. Our offering is the way we say: Yes! – we will love as God's Beloved. Yes! – we will stretch our hands toward compassion. Yes! – we will join Christ in the work of healing. Let us then, bring our gifts – our time, our treasure, our commitments, our lives – with joy.

All: We give because we are God's Beloved, and we belong to one another.

**Doxology*

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Christ the Word in flesh born low.
Praise Holy Spirit evermore;
One God triune, whom we adore.

**Prayer of Dedication*

One: Holy One, Source of Living Water...
**All: We offer what we have and who we are,
with joy and trust, for the sake of your
dream of flourishing. 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

Invitation to Prayer

God's child, in whom God delights, the one blessed with the power and strength of God's Spirit, focuses us as we pray. Hear our hearts as well as our words.

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

Words of Assurance

Listen to the voice that calls forth creation, claims Jesus at his baptism and speaks to us still: "You are my beloved; receive the Holy Spirit." Rest in this assurance and live in the Spirit.

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

"Jesus, Name Above All Names" #177

Jesus name above all names,
beautiful Savior, glorious Lord.
Emmanuel, God is with us,
blessed Redeemer, Living Word.

RENEWAL OF BAPTISM

Songbirds Anthem "Child of Wonder"

Invitation

Acknowledging our Need for Renewal

Blessing the Water

The Renewal

Rejoice and be glad. Remember your baptism.

Affirmation of Calling

We are the Body of Christ—not alone, but together.
We are God's beloved. The Spirit that was in
Christ is in us.

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

**Closing Hymn* "Child of Blessing, Child of Promise"
#677

**Benediction*

May the God who called Jesus "beloved" speak blessing to you, beloved sons and daughters, and empower you to bring that good news to others who still need to hear it.

Go in peace. Walk in love!

**Postlude* "Jesus, O What a Wonderful Child"
-Traditional

ANNOUNCEMENTS

COUNCIL MEETING TONIGHT 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 Mayle, Curator of Manuscripts from the Rutherford B. Hayes Museum.

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!

PASTOR MARGARET WILL BE IN GREEN VALLEY, AZ on the annual Common Ground on the Border trip from 1/13-1/21. Please call the church office or her cell phone in case of an emergency. Pastor Dave Ferguson will be our worship leader next Sunday, 1/18. Thank you, Dave!

ANNOUNCEMENTS CONT.

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 needy.

JANUARY FOOD PANTRY item of the month is peaches.

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

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!

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, 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, Don Brimmer (Deb Ferguson’s brother), Dolores Neeb, Nikki Christensen, Kathy Willey, Sue Applegate

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

