

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

January 4, 2026

Epiphany
10:00am—Worship
Holy Communion



“The true light, which enlightens everyone, is coming into the world.” John 1: 9

This is a reminder that the Christmas season is about the light coming into the world, for the whole world. It is the kind of light that touches everyone and everything, like candles being lit one by one. Howard Thurman wrote a poem about light and candles. “I will light candles this Christmas: Candles of joy despite all sadness, candles of hope where despair keeps watch, candles of courage for fears ever present, candles of peace for tempest-tossed days, candles of grace to ease heavy burdens, candles of love to inspire all my living, candles that will burn all year long. Light candles, even today. Candles despite all that has happened. Candles to drive the darkness away, candles to represent the coming of the light, the true light for everyone, the light that has come into the world. Merry Christmas (still).”

Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret, Lynn Gear

Last Sunday Attendance: 23 Offering: \$9,748.00

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
Church Email: st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com
Pastor's Phone: 440-487-2549
Pastor's Email: millsm92445@gmail.com

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The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

January 4, 2026

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "Auld Lang Syne" by Keveren

Lighting of the Candles

**Call to Worship*

One: O Come, Let us Adore Him, Christ the Lord!

All: The star in the dark sky heralded His coming.

One: Wise Ones followed the star from distant lands seeking to find a king who would change the world, who would bring good news.

All: They came bearing gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh, costly and precious for the most precious gift of God.

One: The brightness of the star leads us!

All: We come seeking God's abiding love in this newborn baby.

One: Come, Arise! Shine! The Light has come.

All: God's Light of love is shining upon us!

**Opening Hymn:* "We Three Kings of Orient Are" #233

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Loving God, who breaks through the darkness of doubt and despair, be with us this day as we hear of the visit of the Wise Ones, who risked everything to follow a Star. Let us open our hearts, and be willing to risk receiving the gift of gracious Love that you have to offer us in the form of Jesus. May this time of worship bring us closer to you, that the good news of the birth of light and love will transform our lives. 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:

Star Words

A Message for Today:

The Power of Yes: The Wise Ones Said Yes!

Isaiah 60: 1-6

Matthew 2: 1-12

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

The Magi brought gifts to Christ at this nativity and offered their lives in worship. With thankful hearts, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to God.

**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 (in unison)*

God of light and promise, we bring our gifts to further your work in a dark world. May they bring your light to those overwhelmed by darkness, pain, and loneliness. Accept our gifts of money, time, and the gift of ourselves. Let them shine for all to see, and be brought into the sphere of your love and righteousness. 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

Isaiah proclaimed: Darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and God's glory will appear over you. Let us acknowledge the darkness in our lives and receive the light of God's mercy as we pray.

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

As certain as the dawn follows the night, so is the promise of God's love for us all. Arise and Shine. Follow the star. Find the light of the world born in Bethlehem, and be transformed from darkness into light. Amen

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.

THE SACRAMENT OF HOLY COMMUNION

Invitation to the Table

One: Here at this table and in this sanctuary, let the Divine Spark enter our lives.

All: Let the Holy Light aid us in seeing the Christ in our midst.

One: The Brightness of Jesus the Christ will illuminate our way.

All: The Radiance of the Christ will warm our hearts.

One: God is shining upon you!

All: And God's light streams upon you!

One: Open your hearts.

All: We open them to the brilliance of God.

One: Let us give thanks for the light and love of God.

All: We praise our Creator with joy and thanksgiving.

One: We invite you to the table of the Lord, our Light.

All: We know we all are welcome. Let us come together in this sacrament of love and light.

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)

God of Light and Love, we cherish this table in this season when the nights are long and cold. Through this meal, the Christ, and our neighbors; our hearts have warmed. May the comfort in our souls sustain us through winter and nudge us to create welcoming spaces for our neighbors. With gratitude, we leave here energized to kindle your love in this world. Amen

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

*Closing Hymn "Arise, Your Light Is Come" #231

**Benediction*

Go forth to spread the good news of light and love for all the world.

Go and follow the star that will guide you on your journey this week, this year, and forever.

May the blessing of the God of light rest upon you and fill you with light. Amen

*Postlude "Go Tell It On the Mountain" by Carter

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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!

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!

IN OUR PRAYERS

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” WILL BE HELD THIS WEEK (1/8) AT WILD BREW IN WOODVILLE. We'll be back at Christy's when they reopen after closing for a deep cleaning and to give staff a holiday break. Stay tuned.

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, 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, Don Brimmer (Deb Ferguson's brother), Dolores Neeb, Nikki Christensen, Mary Ann Zolman, Shirley Hensel

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

