



# The Beacon—February 2026

When Lily was 3 years old, she made a CD with her Grandpa Ed. It's called Lily's World. How lucky she was to know her grandpa and be impacted by his music. He was a gifted musician playing guitar among other instruments and writing music. One song that I love listening to is – LOVE WINS. And since it's the February Beacon and February is the month of Valentine's Day and while holding lots of meaning, we think of it as the day representing love.

Of course the Bible holds many verses on love, 132 to be exact, emphasizing its divine nature, enduring qualities, and importance in relationships, with key passages including 1 Corinthians 13: 4 - 7 (describing love's characteristics), John 3: 16 (God's great love for the world), 1 John 4: 7 - 8 (God is love and we must love one another), and John 13: 34 (Jesus' new commandment to love as He loved.) These verses highlight love as patient, kind, truthful, and essential for connecting with God and others.

Now I certainly don't equate Ed's song with scripture but it does say many of the same things – hope, light, it's up to us. I'm going to play it on Valentine's Day Sunday – as I have before. And I love Lily's 3 year old voice saying "Love Wins" after each line in the chorus. Read the words and relate them to our scriptures and our world today and contemplate how they do, in fact, relate to today. Love Wins after all.

LOVE WINS  
Ed Mills  
Lily Robison

Fear's the lack of love, no trust, no cheer  
It breeds greed and strife, no hopes of fears  
But love is greater than all, (love wins), than hate or fear (love wins).  
It cures greed and strife (love wins), brings hope and light. (love wins).

Fear is selfish and dark, won't share, don't care  
It brings hunger and strife, brings war kills life  
But love is greater than all, (love wins), than hate and fear (love wins),  
It cures greed and strife (love wins), brings hope and light (love wins).

It's all up to us, to trust and care  
Give love to all mankind, our world, our life  
Love is greater than all, (love wins), than hate and fear (love wins),  
It cures greed and strife, (love wins), brings hope and light (love wins).

Love and blessings,

Pastor Margaret

## Inside this Issue:

|                                 |     |
|---------------------------------|-----|
| Pastor's Article                | 1   |
| Making Music                    | 2   |
| Prayers/Records                 | 3   |
| Council Notes/<br>Honor Workers | 4   |
| Office Notes                    | 5   |
| Souper Bowl of<br>Caring        | 6   |
| Common<br>Grounds               | 7-9 |
| Community                       | 10  |
| OCWM                            | 11  |
| Treasurer's<br>Report           | 12  |
| Calendar                        | 13  |

## UPCOMING LOOSE OFFERING SCHEDULE

February—Utilities for the Needy



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.



**HELP WANTED!**  
**An Opportunity for YOU!**



Here it is! Your opportunity to sing and ring for Jesus! Plenty of openings are available - Choose singing or ringing - or Both! Wednesday nights 6:30-7:30 for Songbirds and 7:30 -8:30 for Bells. No experience necessary, we will show you! Come and join the FUN!

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

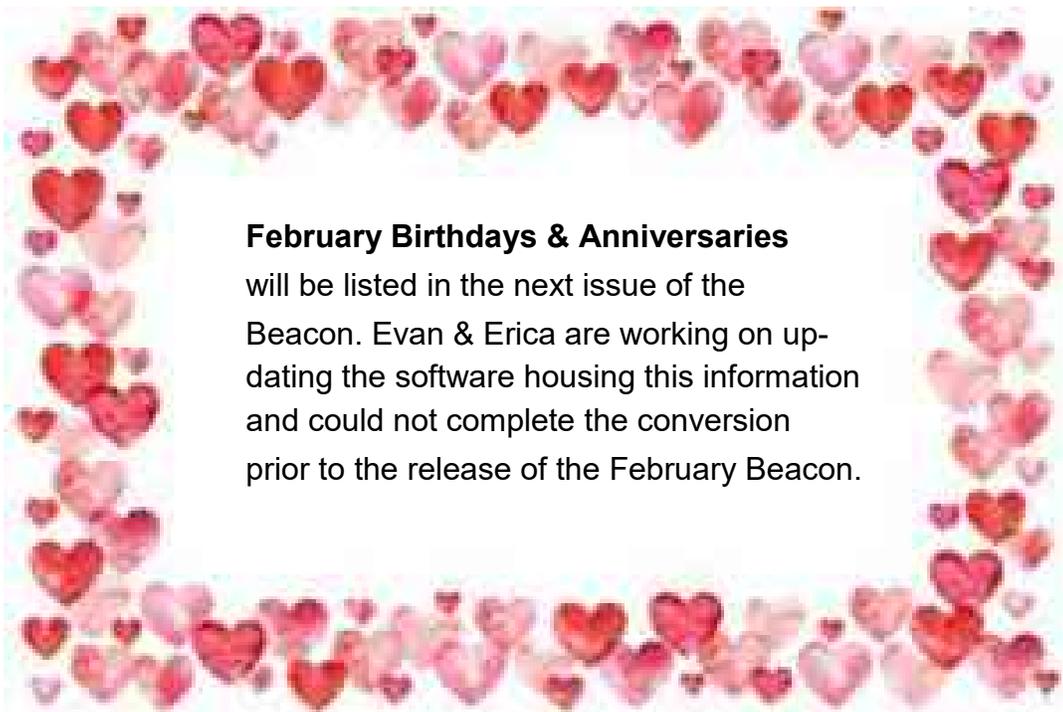


## Daily Prayer Requests

**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, Cathy Willey, Sue Applegate, Mary Ann Zolman

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



### **February Birthdays & Anniversaries**

will be listed in the next issue of the Beacon. Evan & Erica are working on updating the software housing this information and could not complete the conversion prior to the release of the February Beacon.



## Church Council Meeting January 11, 2026

Council met January 11, 2026, at 7pm. The following people attended: Pastor Margaret, Brian Holub, Jim Wilburn, Dick Kuhlman, Bill Verbryke, Ron Busdeker, Becky Busdeker and Gordon. Hille.

President, Brian Holub called the meeting to order with Pastor Margaret opening with a prayer.

Ron Busdeker presented the treasurer's report. It was noted that year end balances were down slightly from last year. Jim Wilburn moved and Bill Verbryke seconded to accept the report. Motion carried.

Jim Wilburn presented the Deacon's report. We averaged 40 in person worshippers per week. Pastor Margaret indicated she could provide numbers for those viewing the service through You Tube.

Bill Verbryke reported that the ladders to the roof are installed and have made a difference in our ability to access the roof. All looks good. Dick Kuhlman has brought forward ADA concerns for sanctuary and fellowship hall access. Restroom accessibility is a problem. Jim Wilburn moved and Pastor Margaret seconded to have Dick look into the costs involved to remedy the accessibility issues. Motion carried. Jim Wilburn reported that maintenance issues with the church and parsonage will be taken care of this week. There is a need to look into replacing our current sweepers. It has been noted that we have taken care of many large building maintenance problems over the past 10 years and we are in good shape.

Pastor Margaret inquired about Sunday School and Youth Ministry funds. Discussion was held on availability to use these funds for UCC sponsored camps. She has reported that Elmore Kiwanis are looking to start a pollinating garden and using a small portion of our property. Pastor Margaret reported that we have eight people interested in joining our congregation.

President Brian Holub reported we will wait a few weeks to bring the revised Constitution before the congregation as a few revisions are discussed. Ron Busdeker moved and Jim Wilburn seconded to designate March loose offerings and Lenten offerings to the Elmore Food Pantry which is in line with the Sunday School kickoff of Souper Bowl.

Meeting was adjourned with the Lord's Prayer.

Becky Busdeker  
Secretary



## 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 Mayle—Curator of Manuscripts from the Rutherford B. Hayes Museum. Hosted by Joyce Bruntz and all are welcome! Call or text 419-345-3160 for more information..





## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**CONGREGATIONAL MEETING HAS BEEN POSTPONED. STAY TUNED FOR DETAILS.**

**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. Dava and our Faith Formation teachers will shine light on food insecurity and allow us to collect money and food items. More info on page 6!

**SOUP POTLUCK ON SOUPER BOWL SUNDAY**, February 8th at 11:15 am. Bring your favorite soup to share and we'll have salad and desserts. There is a sign up sheet on the back counter or email your soup (well not the soup itself...) to [st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com](mailto:st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com).

**HONOR WORKERS** will be meeting again on February 10th for a presentation from Julie Mayle, Curator of Manuscripts from the Rutherford B. Hayes Museum. For more information, see page 4!

**FOOD PANTRY NEWS:** The last few months have brought many neighbors to the pantry. Just a note we served 38 families during the month of January. Thanks to everyone in the community for your generosity.

**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.

**FEBRUARY LOOSE OFFERING:** Utilities for the needy.

**FEBRUARY PANTRY ITEM:** Tuna!

**VIRTUAL ATTENDANCE:**

- January 4: 30 views
- January 11: 37 views
- January 18: 22 views
- January 25: 27 views so far!



**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 they 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 by our.... Pollinator garden. An update on the pollinator garden will be shared in the spring.

**FOOD PANTRY:** 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.

# Souper Bowl of Caring



tacklehunger.org

Souper Bowl of Caring began in a church in 1990 with a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy this Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those without a bowl of soup to eat."

Super Bowl Sunday is the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest food "holiday" in the United States, second only to Thanksgiving. While many are eating pizza, chicken wings, chips, and burgers, others simply don't even have a bowl of soup to eat. But we can change that for our neighbors.

Starting on January 25, 2026, we will be collecting both food and monetary donations to help our neighbors through the food pantry at Grace Evangelical Lutheran Church in Elmore.



## 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.

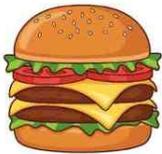
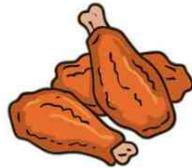


33% of food insecure individuals won't qualify for SNAP and other federal nutrition programs

## Super Bowl Food Facts

### 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.

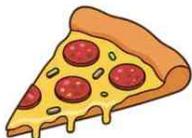


### 14 BILLION BURGERS

Super Bowl weekend is the second biggest grilling week of the year, only second to the 4<sup>th</sup> 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.

## 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.

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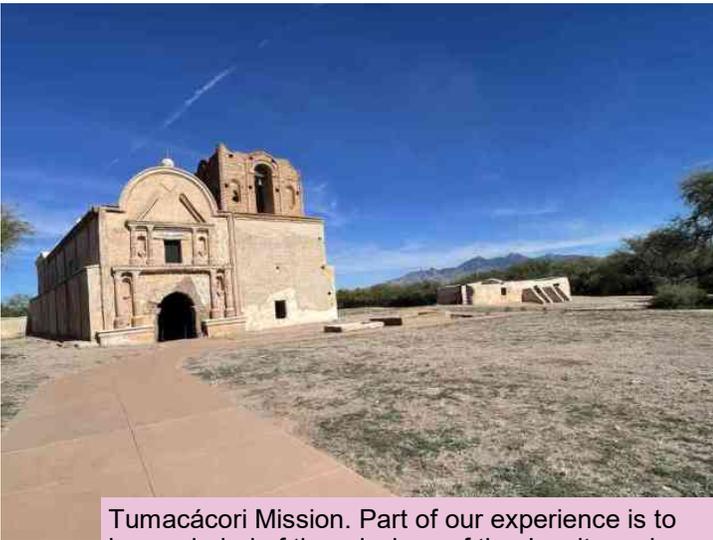
60% of takeout orders are pizza making it the top Super Bowl snack.



## COMMON GROUND ON THE BORDER:

About 16 years ago I attended an event titled Border Issues Fair at the Good Shepherd UCC in Green Valley, AZ. It was an event that brought to life the experiences of migrants and the Samaritans that helped them. It wasn't political, it was life-saving. We heard speakers, musicians, and spent time helping in the desert – water drops, searches, picking up artifacts left by migrants hurrying to safety. We went to the wall, visited a coffee co-op, and spoke with people at the shelters in both AZ and Mexico. When I returned, I told about it to the Christian Educators in the association of churches I served. They said, "Can we go with you next year?" I really hadn't planned on "next year." But I led a group to the border and the rest is history. Since those first years, the name has been changed to Common Ground at the Border but the mission is the same – to save the lives of those stranded and in trouble in the desert escaping from unspeakable harm in their countries. Then it was mostly men from Mexico and South America seeking work to send help back to their families. Now it's families from all over the world seeking asylum in a place that they think is safe. Then there was no wall – now the picture shows a different story. Then, there weren't crosses to be planted at the site of remains – now there are several thousand locations where remains have been found of men and women. Then there were nearly 200 people looking to cross every day – now, there is just a trickle but now there are 200 people who are stranded due to deportations with lack of means to get to safety having been removed from places that have been home for many years. The pictures show more than I can tell in words. The shelters still exist and we still visit them in both AZ and Mexico. The Samaritans still search and drop water. It still isn't political – it is life saving. There's so much more. I'm hopeful I can persuade Belinda to come and share pictures and stories with you again after she does a presentation at her own church. Angela LeForce went with us this year. Perhaps she'll share her experience as well. And, if you can, join us next year.

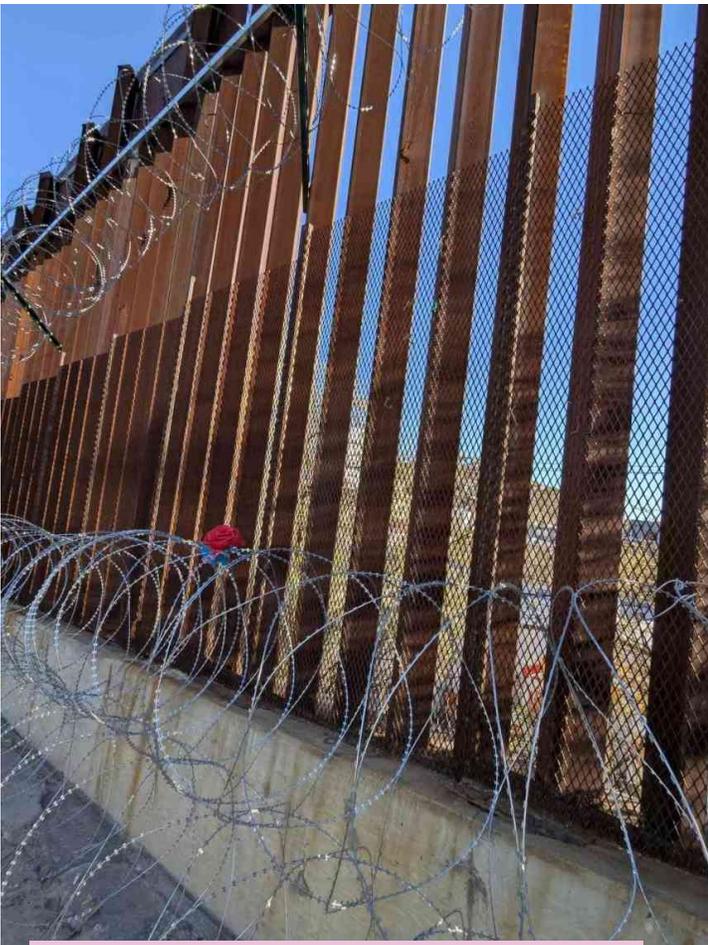
# Common Ground on the Border Photos/Recal



Tumacacori Mission. Part of our experience is to be reminded of the missions of the Jesuits and Franciscans who related to the native people in ways both good and bad.



Laws broken to build the wall that has been proven ineffective.



The wall that harms both humans and wildlife. Go to [Sierra Club](#) for more information.

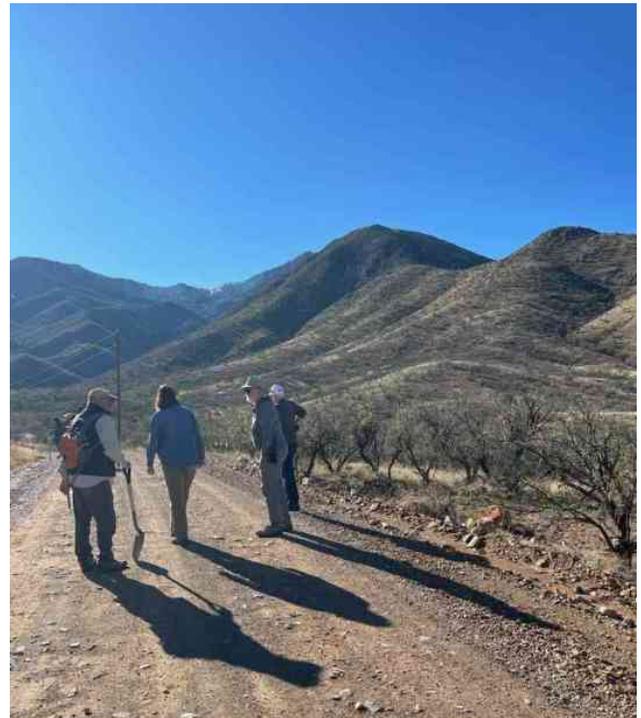


A reminder of lives lost trying to reach safety.

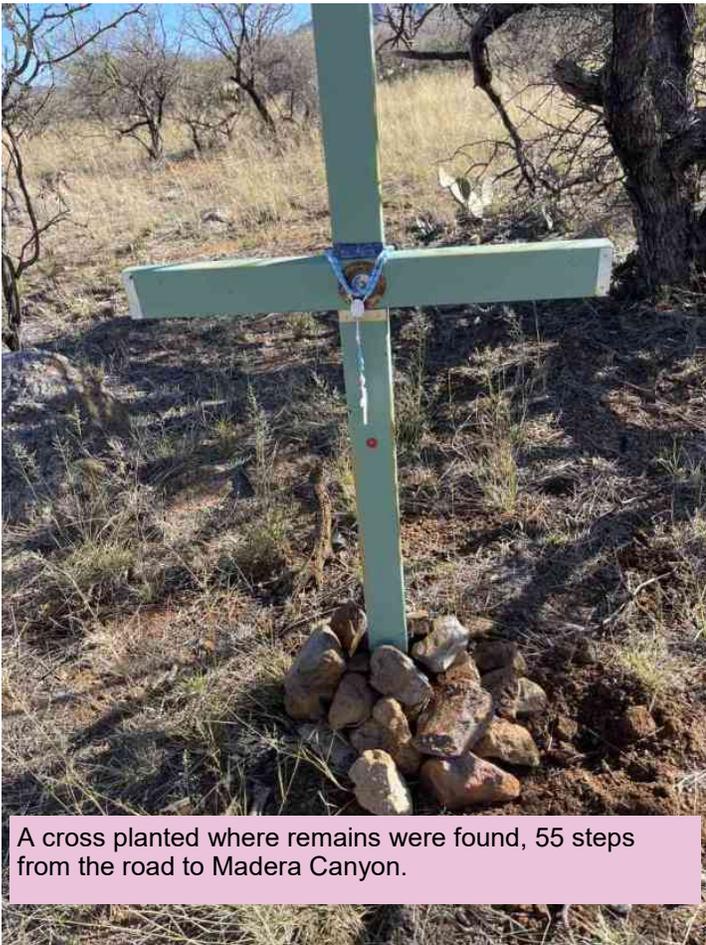
# Common Ground on the Border Photos/Recal



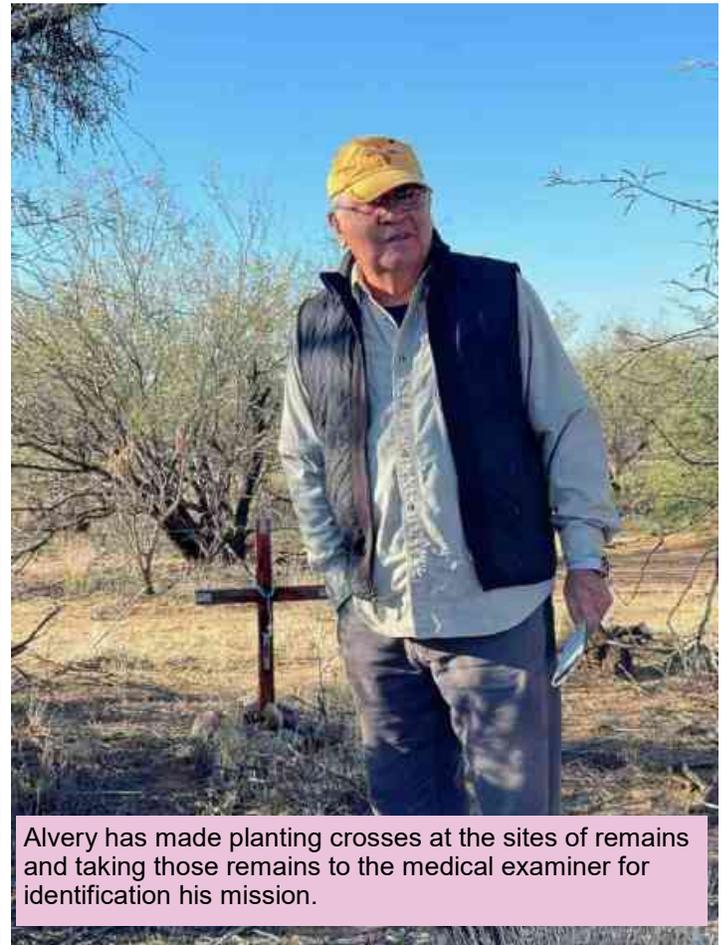
The unforgiving desert.



A group planting crosses in the mountains and desert people try to cross.



A cross planted where remains were found, 55 steps from the road to Madera Canyon.



Alvery has made planting crosses at the sites of remains and taking those remains to the medical examiner for identification his mission.



*In Honor of  
Our Lady of Lourdes*

*Sunday, February 8, 2026  
2:00 to 4:00 pm*

*(Bad Weather Date: February 15th)*

*Our Lady of Lourdes Hall Genoa, Ohio*

*All women and young ladies are invited!*

*Refreshments provided.*

*Speaker: Mr. Joseph Rigdon*

*RSVP requested but not required.*

*For more information:*

*Email: [christinadipman12@gmail.com](mailto:christinadipman12@gmail.com)*

*To RSVP Call or Text:*

*Tina Dipman (419) 376-3588 or*

*Dianna Randolph (419) 344-3190*

*Gift Baskets will be raffled during tea.*

## Our Church's Wider Mission

As we begin another year, there are offerings of the wider church that we are given the opportunity to contribute to make a difference throughout the year. Are we 5 for 5? Nearly 1,590 churches are! These congregations fully support Our Church's Wider Mission (OCWM) and all four special mission offerings. Here are the offerings:

**OCWM BASIC SUPPORT:** Provides funding from congregations for Conferences (we are in the Heartland Conference) and the national ministries of the United Church of Christ (Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, General Ministries, and Pension Boards).

**UCC SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS:** Part of OCWM, these four offerings sponsor vital ministries that bring hope to people in the U.S. and around the world.

**NEIGHBORS IN NEED:** First Sunday in October: Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts and direct service projects through grants. As we come closer to the date of the offering, you will receive information on the locations of these funds.

**THE CHRISTMAS FUND:** Fourth Sunday of Advent: The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support for those who have served the church and who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties.

**ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING:** Fourth Sunday of Lent: The UCC responds to humanitarian and development needs in the world. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. Through our work with local churches, conferences, international partners and organizations, OGHS provides sources of clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro-credit loans, advocacy, resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, emergency relief and rehabilitation as well as disaster preparedness and response.

**STRENGTHEN THE CHURCH:** Pentecost: The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the stated commitment of people across the UCC to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. Through this offering, we are building up the Body of Christ.

# 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.*

# Februar 2026

| Sunday   | Monday   | Tuesday   | Wed   | Thursday   | Friday  | Saturday  |
|--|--|---|---|--|---|---|
| 1<br>10:00 Worship<br><br>+  | 2<br>7pm Bible Study<br><br>                          | 3   | 4<br>6:30 <br>Songbirds<br>7:30 Bells    | 5<br>9am: Christy's<br>7pm: AA<br><br>    | 6   | 7   |
| 8 <b>Super Bowl Sunday</b><br>10:00 Worship<br>Communion<br>Faith Formation<br>11:15 Soup Potluck<br><br>+ | 9<br>7pm Bible Study<br><br>                          | 10<br>7pm Honor Workers<br>Hayes Museum Manuscripts | 11<br>6:30 <br>Songbirds<br>7:30 Bells   | 12<br>9am: Christy's<br>7pm: AA<br><br>   | 13<br>Elmore Food Pantry<br><br> | 14<br>Valentine's Day!<br><br> |
| 15<br>10:00 Worship<br><br>+   | 16<br>President's Day<br><br>7pm Bible Study<br><br> | 17  | 18<br>6:30 <br>Songbirds<br>7:30 Bells   | 19<br>9am: Christy's<br>7pm: AA<br><br>  | 20  | 21  |
| 22<br>10:00 Worship<br>Receiving new members<br>Faith Formation<br>11:15 Fellowship Hour<br><br>+          | 23<br>7pm Bible Study<br><br>                       | 24  | 25<br>6:30 <br>Songbirds<br>7:30 Bells | 26<br>9am: Christy's<br>7pm: AA<br><br> | 27  | 28  |
|  |  |   |   |  |   |   |

**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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Pastor Emeritus: *John W. Bock*

Administrative Assistant:

*Erica Baker*

Music Director:

*Lynn Grear*



# THE BEACON

*-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-*