

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

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March 22, 2026

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10:00am—Worship  
11:15—Fellowship  
Faith Formation  
The Fifth Sunday in Lent



“Sometimes I felt I was in the valley, not knowing where to begin to put the pieces together.”  
Amy Frykholm

“Lazarus’s story is one of grief – and hope.”  
Katie Hines-Shah

“Jesus’ question to Martha extends to all believers.” Niveen Ibrahim Sarras

“The only community prepared to face the cross and receive redemptive power is a people that lament. The social and political significance of Lent is precisely this lament – the ability to open oneself up to the pains and needs of the world.” Jennifer McBride

Breath of Life, as we walk through this season of Lent, help us to rise up from within the dark valleys in our lives. Fill us with vision, turn us toward hope, for our life is in you. Amen

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

**Last Sunday Attendance:** 39

**Offering:** \$1,713.00

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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

**Church Phone:** 419-862-3511  
**Church Email:** st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com  
**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

March 22, 2026

### GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

*Prelude:* "The Wonderful Cross" by Tomlin

*Lighting of the Candles*

*\*Call to Worship*

One: The prophet asks: Can our soul-weary bones live again?

**All: O God, you know!**

One: Can we dance again after mourning, loss and grief?

**All: O God, you know!**

One: The gift is sure and unmistakable:

**All: God's breath poured out as new life for weary souls!**

One: Let us celebrate the gift of God's new life.

**All: And come to worship God with hearts of laughter and dancing.**

*\*Opening Hymn:* "Breathe on Me, Breath of God" #461

*\*Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

**Lord God, Great I Am, you are resurrection and life. As we worship you this day show us who we are: bearers of good news, messengers of resurrection; 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.**



## THE RECEIVING OF NEW MEMBERS

*Introductions and Opening Words*

*Questions of the New Member*

- At your baptism, promises were made for you that you would follow Jesus. As you take this step today, do you believe in Jesus Christ?
- As it is your desire to become a member of this church, will you be faithful to this community?
- Will you challenge this community to be the best version of itself and to live up to the things we say we believe?
- Will you allow yourself to be changed, shaped and transformed by this community, living into your called identity as a beloved child of God?

*Words of Thanksgiving*

*\*Questions of the Congregation*

- Will you be faithful to Dava as she joins our congregation?
- Will you challenge her to be the best version of herself, and to help her live up to the things she says she believes?
- Will you allow yourselves to be changed, shaped and transformed by this new member, living into our called identity as a beloved community of God?

*\*Congregational Welcome (in unison)*

**We welcome you with joy into our community of faith. We promise that when we walk through these doors, we will treat each other like family and as beloved children of God. We believe that we are stronger united together than as individuals, so we pledge to share our support in the work to which we feel called: striving for peace and justice among all people, protecting and restoring the integrity of all God's creation, and bringing hope to those most vulnerable.**

*Words of Welcome and Proclamation*

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of St. John's United Church of Christ, and as your pastor, I extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming you into the company of this local church.

*Welcome by the President of St. John's Council - Brian Holub*

As the President of St. John's Council and on behalf of the members of St. John's United Church of Christ, I welcome you as a member of our beloved community. We promise you our friendship, support and prayers.

*To the Congregation*

Please join me in warmly welcoming Dava into our church family.

## **WE LISTEN FOR GOD'S WORD**

A Story for All Ages: **Dem Bones!**

A Message for Today: **Death, Despair, Hope!**

Ezekial 37: 1-14  
John 11: 1-45

## **WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD**

### *Invitation to the Offering*

Without the breath of God, we are dry bones, and without the Word of God, we are dust. With gratitude, let us offer ourselves and our gifts to the Lord of all life.

\*Doxology - "Alleluia" #316 vs. 4

**I will praise Him, Alleluia,  
I will praise Him, Alleluia,  
I will praise Him, Alleluia,  
I will praise Him, Alleluia.**

\*Prayer of Dedication (in unison)

**Holy God, giver of life, we thank you for raising us up and joining us together as one people, your people, flesh and bone in the body of Christ. As you have delivered us from death, use our lives to proclaim the good news of new life in Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen**

## **WE SHARE OUR COMMON LIFE**

Announcements and Concerns may be emailed to: [st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com](mailto:st.johnsuccelmore@gmail.com), texted to 440-487-2549, or call 419-862-3511 and leave a message.

## **WE REST IN PRAYER WITH GOD**

### *Invitation to Prayer*

One: Lord Jesus, during Lent, we seek spiritual renewal and a deeper connection with you. Fill us with your Holy Spirit, cleanse our hearts, and draw us closer to your love and grace.

**All: Hear our prayer!**

### *Pastoral Prayer*

### *Silent Prayer*

### *Words of Assurance*

One: O dry bones, hear the word of the Lord! If Jesus Christ dwells in you, the Spirit of God will be your life and the grace of God will be your righteousness. And if the Holy Spirit dwells in you, then God, who raised Jesus from the dead, will also give life to your mortal bodies. Friends, this is the good news of the gospel.

**All: Thanks be to God**

### *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*

"I Come to the Cross" #251

I come to the cross seeking mercy and grace;  
I come to the cross where you died in my place.  
Out of my weakness and into your strength;  
Humbly I come to the cross.

## **SENT FORTH TO SERVE**

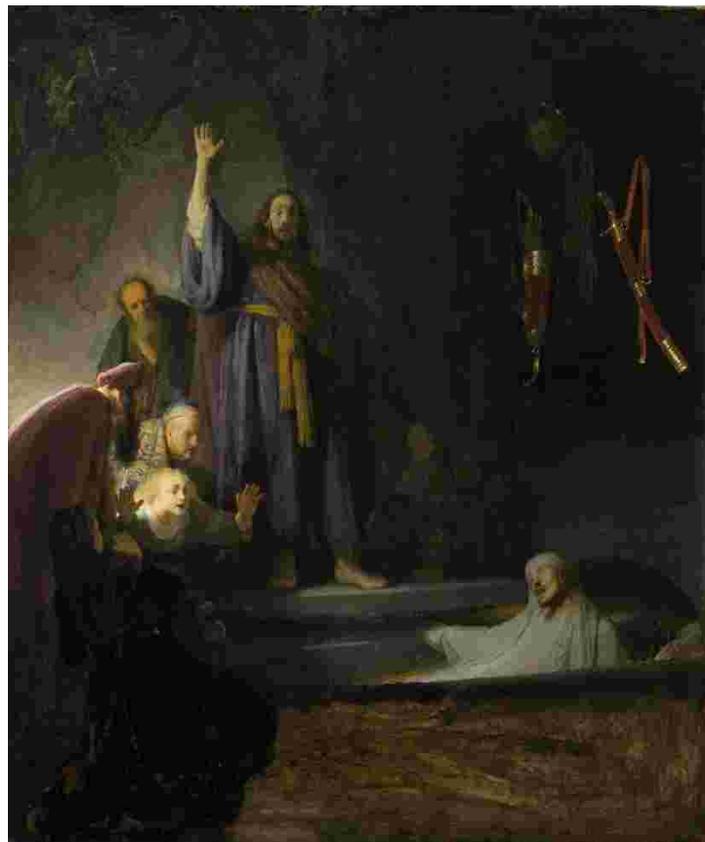
\*Closing Hymn "Christ for the World! We Sing." #561

\*Benediction

Arise, dry bones, and live!  
Come out, Lazarus, and give glory to God!

May the Lord Jesus Christ,  
who is the resurrection and the life,  
bless and keep you in this life,  
and the life to come.

\*Postlude: "Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness"  
By Hayes



## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **FIFTH AND FINAL LENTEN MEAL AND MEDITATION:**

How is this possible? Wasn't it just Ash Wednesday? Well our last Lenten Wednesday Evening meal and meditation will be on Wednesday, March 25th. Jim and Dawn Wilburn will again be preparing the meal of stuffed shells, salad and dessert. The meal will be served at 6:00, hymn singing at 6:45, and a time of meditation and reflection at 7:00 based on the last of our characters in An Unlikely Lent: Extraordinary People of the Easter Story by Rachel Billups. We'll hear of Unlikely Allies: Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. I hope to see you.

**WELCOME TO DAVA WARNER** who is joining St. John's this morning by letter of transfer from First Congregational UCC in Elyria.

**SONGBIRDS** will rehearse after the Lenten services on Wednesdays from 7:30-8:15. **BELLS** will meet after Sunday services beginning March 1 from 11:15-12:00.

**HONOR WORKERS** will be having a Memorial Service by Claudene Kuhlman on April 14 at 7:00pm. Hostess is Ruth Weis.

**"OFFICE HOURS" at Christy's** continues on Thursday mornings from 9:00 to noon. Come for conversation, food, and a beverage anytime during the morning.

**LENTEN OFFERING** will continue to be sent to the Village for their fund to help those in need to pay their utility bills.

**MARCH LOOSE OFFERING** goes to the Elmore Food Pantry.

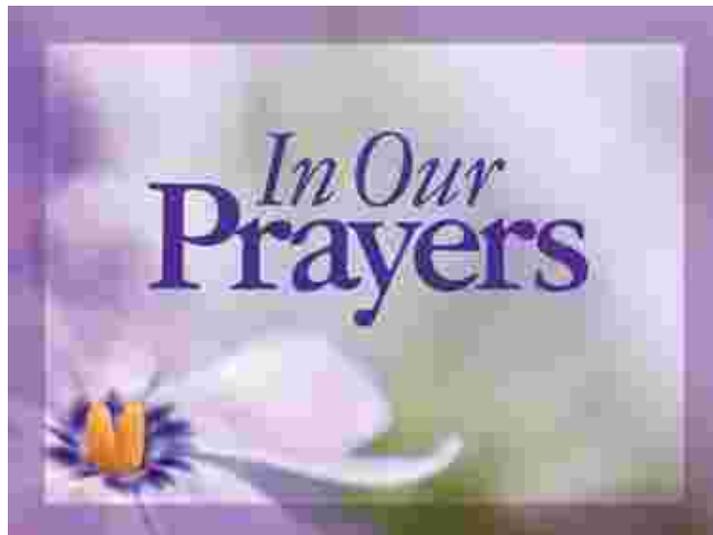
**HOME COMMUNION:** If you wish Pastor Margaret to bring communion to your home, please call 440-487-2549.

### **UPCOMING LENTEN EVENTS:**

3/25: Lenten Meal & Meditation (Jim & Dawn Wilburn)  
4/02 @ 7:00pm: Maundy Thursday service  
4/03 from 12:00pm-3:00pm—Good Friday Reflection  
4/05 @ 7:00am: Sunrise Easter Service  
@ 10:00am: Easter Worship

**MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY** All are welcome to join us Monday evenings at 7:00 in person or on Zoom. All are welcome and we are studying the life of David.

**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!

**Prayers from Congregation:** Cal Jennings, Andrew Barringer (diagnosed with ALS), Timothy (Mothman) Phillips in NICU and his family

**Hospice:** Dolores Neeb

**Bereavement:** Family of Jerry Beck

**Nursing Home/Rehab:** Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, Nancy Weidner, Zoe Moore, Lois Rymers, Sharon Crozier

**At Home:** Joanne Busdeker, Carlton Giesler, Doris Klaustermeyer, 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, Dolores Beck, Janet Ottney, Paul Holewinski, Rachael (neighbor of Sue Applegate), Jennifer and Joe Shamy, Sandra Shaffer, Russ Krumnow, Jim Krumnow, Jim and Jane Garner, Loren Sampson, Jeff and Nancy Wegman, Tom Crozier, David Reimer, the Fielding family, Sharon and John Virtue, Karen Nolen (friend of Jamie Verbryke), Kim Applegate, Briann, Rosemary Acha, Don Brimmer (Deb Ferguson's brother), Sue Applegate, Mary Ann Zolman, Phyllis Brimmer (Deb Ferguson's mother), Bob Kuhlman, Mike (Susan Cole's friend's husband), Debbie Woody (Helen Shaneck's niece), John Brindley (Erica Baker's father)

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