

St. John's United Church of Christ

-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-

July 26, 2026

10:00—Worship

11:15—Fellowship



Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret, Lynn Gear

Last Sunday Attendance: 38

Offering: \$3,438.00

www.ucceImore.org

<https://www.youtube.com/@StJohnsUCCEImore>

<https://facebook.com/StJohnsUCCEImore>



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Pastor's Phone: 440-487-2549

Pastor's Email: millsm92445@gmail.com

P.O. Box 288 – 448 Rice St. Elmore, OH
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Pastor—Margaret Mills

Pastor Emeritus—John W. Bock

Ministers—All the Members of St. John's

Church Office Hours

Office Maven—Erica Baker

Office hours by appointment



“Not one of the separations whose dark clouds we daily live under can pose a final threat to the love of God.”

Ryan Dueck

“The term ‘kingdom of heaven’ leads concrete thinkers to assume that Matthew is speaking of life after death. Actually, Matthew was speaking about being one of God’s people now.”

Carolyn C. Brown

Waiting is never easy for us. We are a culture of “instant” response. Today, God is asking us to wait; to be patient. It is not going to be easy for us to do that. Quiet your spirits and open your hearts to God’s word for you today. Lord, be with us. Help us to be ready to hear and respond to your word.

“Liberating God, we seek your journey. With parted waters, set us free. With cloud and fire, guide us. With gushing waters, quench our thirst. With food from heaven, feed us. Draw us out with joy and singing that we might know your ways.”

Psalms 105





The Order of Worship

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GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "Songs Without Words," "Opus 30," "No. 3"
by Mendelssohn: Mariah Baechle, soloist

Lighting of the Candles

Gathering Words

We gather today seeking God's will and Word for us. We gather asking to be made people who care deeply about the well-being of others. We gather hoping for courage to be yeast for the rising of hope and peace. We gather seeking to have our hearts open to God's redeeming love.. We gather to worship.

**Call to Worship*

One: Though there is strife in the world,

All: Yet will we seek God.

One: When our hearts grow heavy and the burdens are overbearing,

All: We will turn to the Lord.

One: God is with us in all things.

All: We can place our trust in the God of love and hope.

One: Come and seek, turn and trust as we worship together.

**Opening Hymn:* "When Peace Like a River" #428

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Lord, our God, where is there another God like You – a God of justice and love, who stands by every promise made to Your people, generation after generation? There is no other. You alone are God. And so we gather together to worship You: to give You thanks, to proclaim Your greatness, to sing Your praise, to seek Your face, and to celebrate Your faithful presence with us. We pray that Your Spirit would guide and inspire our worship. Open our mouths to sing and speak Your praise, open our ears to hear Your Word, open our eyes to see You at work among us, open our hearts to receive Your love. We offer ourselves to You, as we gather to worship.

**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

You Are Special!

A Message for Today

Will You Miss Out?

Genesis 29: 15-28
Psalm 105: 1-11, 45b
Matthew 13: 31-33, 44-52

Special Music

“Soul of Christ”
Teresa Wright, pianist

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

God gives us the opportunity to share from our bounty for the ministries of our church that Christ's redeeming love may be known to all people. Let us bring forward the gifts we share this day.

**Doxology - "All Things Are Yours" #687*

**All things are Yours! We make that true
When we return our gifts to you.
And so we give and so we share,
In Christ's strong name expressing care.**

**Prayer of Dedication (in unison)*

Steadfast God, as we bring these gifts today, may they bear witness to your enduring promise: that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus. Bless these offerings, that they may bring hope to the weary, peace to the troubled, and joy to the hearts of your people. Through Christ, our Redeemer and Companion, we pray. Amen

WE SHARE OUR COMMON LIFE

*Announcements and Concerns may be emailed to:
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

Be silent. Be still, be aware; for there in your own heart the Spirit is at prayer; listen and learn, open and find, hear-wisdom, Christ.

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

One: What are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? Sisters and brothers, nothing we have done, nothing we will ever do, is enough to separate us from the love of God made known in Jesus Christ. We have been heard and understood.

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 trespasses/sins/debts, as we forgive those who trespass/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 - "This Is a Time to Remember" #579

**This is a time to remember the greatness of the Lord;
God has faithfully led us as promised in the Word;
God has bountifully given the grace like freshening rain;
God has so lovingly pardoned and made us whole again.**

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

**Closing Hymn: "Sent Forth By God's Blessing" #712*

**Benediction*

Go – as seed and yeast, willing to lose your life in the larger purposes of God. Go – as fisherfolk and treasure seekers, pouring out your days in search of hidden grace. May God, who searches the heart, Jesus, whose love overcomes all division, and the Spirit, which helps us in our weakness, continue to lead you into life that you may serve with abandon and joy.

Go in peace. Walk in Love.

**Postlude: "You Are My All in All" - Jerrigan*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THANK YOU TO MARIAH BAECHLE AND TERESA WRIGHT for the special music this morning. We appreciate you sharing your gifts of music with us.

OFFERING: Since we are not passing the offering plates, you are invited to place your offering in the plates by the doors to the sanctuary. If you didn't have a chance as you entered, there are plates by the doors as you leave. Thanks for your giving.

LOOSE OFFERING: For many of us, the loose offering isn't something familiar. It began several years ago as a way to give to a benevolent institution on a regular basis. Council decides on the organization. If you have a suggestion for a location, please be in touch. May and June our loose offering went to Bistro 163. July and August we will be giving to Cherry Street Mission. In September and October – to Sunshine Communities. November we will give to Christy's and in December, to the United Church of Christ Christmas Fund. Information on these organizations will be in the September Beacon. We will share information on how to designate your giving to the loose offering if you don't have offering envelopes where the offering goes to the church. Stay tuned.

TRUE RD. CONNECTIONS AND A CHANGE OF PLANS WILL RETURN ON SEPTEMBER 20TH.

RAINBOW GIRLS CLOTHING DRIVE Reminder that Lynn's garage door is open from 9AM to 8:30PM every day (except when raining) for drop-off bags for the Rainbow Girls Clothing Drive. Clothing in bags, small housewares in boxes. 413 Toledo Street, Elmore. Or if you need pick up, just call Lynn 419-680-6196. Thanks!

PASTOR ON THE PORCH – As in the past, on summer Thursday evenings, all who wish for some conversation and sometimes light refreshments gather on the parsonage porch from 7:00 until dark or the bugs drive us off. All are welcome.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY We are studying Proverbs: "Life is about choices. How should we lead our families, how should we manage our finances, how should we handle relationships? God's Word provides the answers." All are welcome!

"OFFICE HOURS" at Christy's are back in full swing. Stop by and catch up with Pastor Margaret and enjoy some great drinks and coffee, all while supporting a cherished local business.

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.

JULY FOOD PANTRY ITEM is Mac & Cheese.

JULY LOOSE OFFERING goes to Cherry Street Mission. The Cherry Street Mission Ministries is a major faith-based non-profit in Toledo, OH., providing emergency shelter, meals and personalized care for the homeless, addiction recovery, and career training. Their main campus is located at 105 17th Street, Toledo. Thanks for your generous loose offering gifts.

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.

Bereavement: Family of Dolores Beck

Hospice: Dolores Neeb

Hospital: Jill Stinebaugh

Nursing Home/Rehab: Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, Nancy Weidner, Zoe Moore, Elizabeth Reiners (Pastor Margaret's aunt)

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, Ken Moore, Janet Ottney, Paul Holewinski, Rachael (neighbor of Sue Applegate), Jennifer and Joe Shamy, Sandra Shaffer, Russ Krumnow, Jim Krumnow, Jim and Jane Garner, Jeff and Nancy Wegman, Tom & Sharon Crozier, Sharon and John Virtue, Karen Nolen (friend of Jamie Verbryke), Kim Applegate, Briann, Phyllis Brimmer (Deb Ferguson's mother), Mike (Susan Cole's friend's husband), Kayla (Branden Rizzo's sister), Matt Karlovec, Tracey Floyd, Loren Sampson, Liliana Rankin (relative of Pastor Margaret), Rosemary Acha

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



Statement of Faith

We believe in you, O God, Eternal Spirit, God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God, and to your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being, create persons in your own image, and set before each one the ways of life and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by your righteous will declared through prophets and apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our crucified and risen Savior, you have come to us and shared our common lot, conquering sin and death and reconciling the world to yourself.

You bestow upon us your Holy Spirit, creating and renewing the church of Jesus Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into your church to accept the cost and joy of discipleship, to be your servants in the service of others, to proclaim the gospel to all the world and resist the powers of evil, to share in Christ's baptism and eat at his table, to join him in his passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust you forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace, courage in the struggle for justice and peace, your presence in trial and rejoicing, and eternal life in your realm which has no end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto you. Amen.

*The original (traditional) version of the **UCC Statement of Faith** was adopted in 1959 by General Synod and is widely regarded as one of the most significant Christian faith testimonies of the 20th century. The Statement of Faith in the Form of a Doxology was authorized by Executive Council in 1981.*

