

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

August 30, 2026

10:00—Worship



Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret Mills, Lynn Gear
Last Sunday Attendance: 41 **Offering:** \$2,260.00

www.ucceImore.org
<https://www.youtube.com/@StJohnsUCCEImore>
<https://facebook.com/StJohnsUCCEImore>



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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 Maven—Erica Baker

Office hours by appointment



“The Wilderness holds answers to more questions than we have yet learned to ask.” Nancy Newhall

“Did Moses honestly believe that he could avoid becoming involved in God’s will by feigning anonymity?” Douglas Webster

“Paul confronts a persistent barrier to true contentment: other people.” (Romans 12: 9 - 21) Erica MacCreaigh

“Following Jesus means the human things and the divine things will overlap.” Liddy Barlow

“O give thanks to the Holy One, the I Am Who I Am, who calls us together and makes God’s name known. We glory in God’s holy name! Let the hearts that seek God rejoice. O give thanks to the God of our ancestors, who lives and reigns with all generations. Sing praises to our God. Remember God’s wonderful works, saving acts, and redemptive deeds. O give thanks to our mighty and just God, who lends strength in the struggle and leads in righteousness. Seek the presence of the Holy One. Praise God!” (inspired by Psalm 105)

Holy One, lead us beyond the wilderness to reach your holy heights as a reminder that you are with us. Amen





The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

August 30, 2026

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "Here I Am, Lord" - Schutte

Lighting of the Candles

Gathering Words - An Invitation to All

Come and worship, all you who love and serve the Lord - outsiders and insiders, old-timers and new-comers, the young, old and the in-between. Come as you are, for this is God's house - a house of prayer for all people, and God welcomes each one who comes.

**Call to Worship (based on Exodus 3: 1-5; Matthew 15: 21-28)*

One: We gather together to worship the God of our fathers and mothers –

All: the God of Abraham and Sarah, of Miriam and Moses –

One: who hears the cries of the people and comes to their aid;

All: who meets us on holy ground and calls us to follow;

One: who invites us to leave our selfish ways behind, take up our cross, and discover what it means to truly live.

All: This is our God!

Let's worship together.

**Opening Hymn: "Here I Am, Lord" #559*

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Sovereign God, we delight in your presence. Your words bring joy, peace, and strength. You fill us with your Spirit and shape us in truth. Take us beyond the wilderness of our current condition. Remind us of who you are and who we are in you. Receive our praise, our curiosity, our doubts, our fears. With thanksgiving, we come to you just as we are. In hope, we bring our dreams for a better world and better lives. In awe, we recount what you have already done. In faith, we invite you to equip us as your partners in your kingdom. Set a fire for your way and your will within us as we minister in your name. 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

Paul's Rules for Getting Along

A Message for Today

Who Me? Why Me?

Exodus 3: 1-15

Romans 12: 9-21

Matthew 16: 21-28

Special Music

“We Bring the Sacrifice of Praise”

- The Songbirds

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

As a spiritual discipline, generosity demonstrates our commitment to the kingdom of God in a tangible way. When we share our resources, we proclaim our trust in God's abundant provision, our concern for the condition of our neighbors, and our responsibility for the maintenance and care of our community. Let us bring forward our generous gifts for the good work of God's church.

**Doxology - "O Bless the Gifts"*

**O bless the gifts our hands have brought;
And bless the work our hearts have planned.
Ours is the faith, the will, the thought;
The rest, O God, is in Your hand.**

**Prayer of Dedication (in unison)*

Lord of all mercy and compassion, you have blessed our lives with abundant love and gifts, so bless these gifts lovingly offered and all the people here. Help us to use these gifts for ministries of hope through our church and into our community, nation and world. 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

In love God created us, and in love God sustains us, day after day. So it is with confidence that we bring our prayers to God, knowing that we are heard, and that God will respond. So be silent. Be still. Be aware. In your own heart the Spirit is at prayer. Listen and learn. Open and find. Heart-wisdom, Christ. And so we pray.

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

Beloved, wherever we go becomes holy ground because the Holy One goes with us. Be firm in hope that the God who met Moses through a burning bush will meet us wherever we may seek strength, encouragement, and the will to live in righteousness, justice, and peace. By the grace of God, all these things are possible in and through us.

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 - "People Need the Lord" #568

**People need the Lord, people need the Lord;
When will we realize people need the Lord?**

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

**Closing Hymn: "The Summons" #350*

**Benediction*

Go boldly into the world in the confidence that God goes with you, guiding your steps in paths of peace and healing. Bring good news of God's love to all you meet. Go in peace. Walk in love. Amen

**Postlude: "Glory and Praise" - Schutte*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Graveside services for Steven Schneider will be on Wednesday, September 9th at 11:00 at the Harris Elmore Cemetery with a luncheon to follow at the church.

WELCOME BACK SUNDAY—SEPTEMBER 13: Blessing of the Backpacks and Electronic Devices, Commissioning of our Faith Formation Leaders—Jamie Verbryke and Rachel Yurista. Bring friends and neighbors for this fun Sunday.

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. 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.

UPDATE ON PLASTIC BAG COLLECTION: Keep those plastic bags coming. We only need 750 pounds more. Grab from your neighbors, steal from the recycle bins at the grocery... ok, kidding. Stay tuned for information on how we're taking the bags in fellowship hall to the recycle facilities recommended by NexTrex.

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

SONGBIRDS AND BELLS: Practice is every Wednesday. Songbirds meet at 6:30pm and Handbells meet at 7:30pm. All who are interested are welcome!

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.

BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE COLLECTION: Mission Cry out of Fowler, MI is sponsoring a Bible and Christian Literature collection. These items can be new or gently used. Grace Lutheran Church will facilitate getting them to Mission Cry who will then distribute them to places in need.

A GRIEF REFLECTION GROUP is beginning on Thursday, September 17th at 11:30am at St. John's UCC in Genoa. Rev. Dawn Balduf will facilitate the group. There are a few flyers on the back counter.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY We will resume Bible Study on the Monday after Labor Day, September 14th and we will be focusing on Acts.

"OFFICE HOURS" at Christy's Stop by and catch up with Pastor Margaret and enjoy some great pastries and coffee or tea or chai, 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.

SEPTEMBER FOOD PANTRY ITEM is tuna.

SEPTEMBER LOOSE OFFERING goes to Sunshine Communities.



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, Family of Nate Walker (Pastor Margaret's great-niece Rebecca Goetz Walker's husband), Family of Steve Schneider



Hospice: Dolores Neeb

Nursing Home/Rehab: Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, Nancy Weidner, Zoe Moore, Rev. Jim Garner

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, 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), Nan Card, Jill Stinebaugh, Rosemary Acha, Elizabeth Reiners (Pastor Margaret's aunt)

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.*

