St. John's United Church of Christ

-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-

October 18, 2026

10:00—Worship



Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret Mills, Lynn Grear

Last Sunday Attendance: 40 **Offering:** $2,828.56

www.uccelmore.org
https://www.youtube.com/@StJohnsUCCElmore
https://facebook.com/StJohnsUCCElmore



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Pastor's Phone: 440-487-2549
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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

“My whole life has been lived in-between — in between languages, in between cultures, in between countries. My life resisted the kind of easy categories that the head of state had outlined for everyone. Surely, I told myself, a nation was a community, with views that are by necessity different, often divergent, and occasionally contradictory. Surely, true allegiance meant speaking up when something wasn’t right.”

Lila Lalami

“This question is not a trick or a way of getting around the religious leaders’ question about the legitimacy and obligation to pay taxes. In his response, Jesus recognizes dual obligations. But obligation is not the same as loyalty. One may fulfill their obligations to the state while maintaining their allegiance to the realm and reign of the Holy One.”

Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

“I worship You, Almighty God, there is none like You. From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea, creation’s revealing Your majesty. From the colors of fall to the fragrance of spring, every creature unique in the song that it sings, all exclaiming: indescribable, uncontainable, You placed the stars in the sky and You know them by name. You are amazing God! All powerful, untamable; awestruck, we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim, You are amazing God. Who has told every lighting bolt where it should go, or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow? Who imagined the sun and gives source to its light, yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of night? None can fathom. Indescribable, uncontainable, You place the stars in the sky, and You know them by name. You are amazing God! All powerful, untamable; Awestruck, we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim, You are amazing God!”

Vicki Tucker Courtney

The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

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GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "Grace Alone" by Bells of St. John's

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 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. So whether you are worshiping here on site or at home… know that God's compassionate love is poured over you this day no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey.

**Call to Worship*

One: The earth has its kings, but God is ruler of all.
All: Praise God above all, the giver of life!
One: The mountains may tremble, the oceans may roar,
All: but God's presence is more powerful than the earth itself.
One: Come into God's presence, for God is among us now.
All: O God, show us your glory; we seek your ways.
One: Come to the Rock, the God of life,
for God is present now.

**Opening Hymn*: "God of Creation, All Powerful" #27

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Sovereign and Radiant God, you go before us and invite us to meet you. Today, we gather in your presence as a community. You gift us "the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places." We respond as you call us by name. We come to know you as you invite us to be known by you. Receive our worship and form us as your people in justice, truth, righteousness, compassion, and love. Be glorified among us and through us, we pray. 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 — **Okay to Question?**

Special Music — **"Indescribable" - Songbirds**

A Message for Today — **To Whom Do We Belong?**
Exodus 33: 12-23
Matthew 22: 15-22

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

The offerings we bring before God do not function as a tax. They are a gift given freely. At times, we give sacrificially. Mostly, we give from the abundance that the Holy One has seeded throughout all creation. Let us bring forward our generous gifts, hopefully, knowing that needs will be met and lives will be changed through our ministry.

**Doxology* - "I Sing Praises to Your Name" #660

I sing praises to your name, O Lord, praises to your name, O Lord
For your name is great and greatly to be praised;
I sing glory to your name, O lord, glory to your name, O Lord,
For your name is great and greatly to be praised.

**Prayer of Dedication (in unison)*

God of good and perfect gifts receive our gifts given freely and abundantly. May they contribute to a world of abundance and your kingdom come. May we experience the joy and privilege of giving as a gift in and of itself. 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

God does not regard us with partiality: but with the grace of Christ Jesus deals with each of us according to our need. With gratitude for this amazing grace, let us come to God in prayer.

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

Beloved, our God continues to do a new thing in you and will strengthen and encourage you to be bold and faithful in the journey. Receive the invitation to new and full life in Christ. We face hopelessness, fatalism, and despair every day yet God has given us wisdom to respond to life with actions to bring hopefulness, justice, and peace to all in need if we will only follow. God has given you a spirit to live in the kingdom and be ambassadors and agents of the good news for the glory of God and the good of the world.

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 - "Lord, Listen to Your Children Praying" #489

Lord, listen to your children praying,
Lord, send your Spirit in this place;
Lord, listen to your children praying,
Send us love, send us power, send us grace.

SENT FORTH TO SERVE

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

**Benediction*

Remember, you belong to the kingdom of God.
As you go, embody the good news of the Holy One in the world
May the Love of God envelop you.
May the Presence of God encourage and embolden you.
And, may the Spirit of God guide you.

**Postlude:* "Holy, Holy, Holy" by Tornquist

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FALL GATHERING: On October 25th, right after church, the Faith Formation team is hosting a trunk or treat event complete with hot dogs and a bouncy house. More information will be in the October Beacon but SAVE THE DATE.

HONOR WORKERS: The next meeting of the Honor Workers will take place on Tuesday, November 10th at 7:00pm. Join Barb Schwartz for a lesson in flower arranging!

LOOSE OFFERING: We have loose offering envelopes next to the offering plates by the doors. The loose offering that you put in the plates is not for our general operating fund but for our benevolent institutions. For October, the loose offering goes to Sunshine Communities.

SONGBIRDS AND BELLS—THIS WEEK ONLY: We will return to our regular rehearsal times on Wednesdays. 6:30 for Songbirds, 7:30 for Bells.

PASTOR ON THE PORCH: See you in the Spring!

BIBLE AND CHRISTIAN LITERATURE COLLECTION: Thank you for your participation and for spreading God's Word!

PLASTIC BAGS: Keep them coming – we are well on our way to our second 250 lbs that will take us half way to our bench.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY: We know Mondays can be long and you may not want to venture out again, but did you know you can join our Bible Study online? We offer Zoom participation, too! Just email Sharon Arndt at dsarndt@aol.com and she will send you the link!

2027 OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE AVAILABLE ON THE TABLE IN THE COUNCIL ROOM.

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.

OCTOBER FOOD PANTRY ITEM is Deodorant Soap.

OCTOBER LOOSE OFFERING goes to Sunshine Communities.

SUNSHINE COMMUNITIES (Northwest Ohio) is a non-profit based in Maumee, OH. Founded more than 75 years ago, it supports children and adults with developmental and intellectual disabilities. They provide residential care (including campus homes and neighborhood group homes), vocational training, therapeutic and clinical care, recreation, and adult day services. Also part of the Sunshine Communities is Georgette's Grounds and Gifts - a fair-trade coffee and gift shop. Sunshine Studios offers a storefront of art and classes for the community, all while employing Sunshine artists with developmental disabilities who teach about and sell their art. Both Georgette's and the Studios can be found on Conant Street in Maumee.

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.

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, Rose/Scott families for the loss of a beloved wife to a rare form of cancer, Family of Nancy Weidner

Hospice: Dolores Neeb

Hospital: David Brimmer

Nursing Home/Rehab: Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, 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, Saundra 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, Rev. Jim Garner

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.*