St. John's United Church of Christ

-Shining God's Light Where All Are Welcome-

October 25, 2026

10:00—Worship



Leading Worship: Pastor Margaret Mills, Lynn Grear

Last Sunday Attendance: 29 **Offering:** $1,220.00

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



“I’ve had students suggest that when Jesus says the greatest commandment is to love God and love neighbor, he invented this belief.”
Amy-Jill Levine

“‘Love God, love neighbor.’ Sounds simple.”
Scott Turner

“Love is that condition in which the happiness of another person is essential to your own.”
Robert A. Heinlein

“Humanity doesn’t get to decide how God shows up in the world. Nor, do we determine who is our neighbor. We are called to love all, as God loves all. That is a test from which we should not walk away.”
Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay

“Loving God, expand love in us beyond our imagination and perceived capacity! Amen”
Rev. Dr. Cheryl A. Lindsay



The Order of Worship

St. John's United Church of Christ

October 25, 2026

GOD GATHERS US TOGETHER

Prelude: "Shout to the Lord" - Zschech

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: Once upon a time a wise man offered a challenge: "What is the greatest commandment?" The calendars on our desks share a vision of greatness; bills to pay, phone calls to return, appointments to keep.

All: Love the Lord your God.

One: The cameras of our memories share what commands us: children to bathe and partners to help, parents calling and grandchildren hopeful.

All: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.

One: Still the Spirit lures us to new priorities; open spaces to experience wonder, strangers becoming friends, devotion to that which transcends.

All: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. Love your neighbor as yourself.

**Opening Hymn*: "Love Divine, All Loves Excelling" #358

**Prayer of Invocation (in unison)*

Loving God, we gather before you in praise and thanksgiving, wonder and awe, doubt and uncertainty, joy and pain. We seek your guidance and direction, assurance and challenge, correction, and encouragement. Make your presence known among us this day. Let your Spirit reign in our worship, in our hearts, and in our lives. Just your presence among us gives us comfort, strength, and joy. Help us to open our hearts to the commandments to love, even when loving is difficult. Give us the courage to be people who will commit their whole lives in your service. Be glorified in our love, O God. 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 **Jesus Loves...**

A Message for Today **Love in Action: Listen and Forgive**
Leviticus 19: 1-2, 15-18
Psalm 1
1 Thessalonians 2: 1-8
Matthew 22: 34-46

WE RESPOND TO GOD'S WORD

Invitation to the Offering

Generosity is a spiritual discipline rooted in love. When we give of ourselves in time, treasure, and talent, we make our love for God and neighbor tangible in the lives of our community. So, let our love show through the gifts we bring to the glory of God and love of all.

**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)*

Holy Love, we dedicate these gifts to you in hope and trust that, through you, our generosity makes a difference in the world. We give you thanks in advance for the fruit nurtured by this offering. As you bless these gifts, also bless the giver and those entrusted with the stewardship of these resources in your name and for your church 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

You are invited to quiet your hearts, leave the noise of the week behind, and open your minds and spirits as we come to God in prayer…

Pastoral Prayer

Silent Prayer

Words of Assurance

Beloved, God loves you and your journey. With the help of God, continue on this journey with faith, hope, trust, and love.

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:* "They'll Know We Are Christians" #595

**Benediction*

Let love be your law. Let love be your compass. Let love abound and abide.
And know that the God of love is with you and for you, now and forever.
Go in peace, walk in love and may God's peace and love surround you always.

**Postlude:* "Shout to the North" - Smith

ANNOUNCEMENTS

FALL GATHERING: If you hear unusual sounds this morning, our bouncy house is being set up, the kiddos are decorating pumpkins, and our two amazing Faith Formation leaders are taking charge of this adventure. I AM THRILLED. I hope you all will stay for hotdogs, chips, lemonade, the bouncy house, Rhett Baker's music, and trunk or treat.

NEXT WEEK NOV. 1st: Each year on All Saints Sunday, we lift up those who have died in the past year – from Nov. 1, 2025. Candles are lit, the bell is tolled, and names are read. It is a meaningful time of remembrance. Please contact the office with the names of persons you would like remembered.

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: We will return to our regular rehearsal times on Wednesdays. 6:30 for Songbirds, 7:30 for Bells.

PLASTIC BAGS: Now that we have publicity around town, we should get to our second 250 lbs which will take us half way to our bench quicker. Keep those plastic bags coming.

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.

FaCT (Faith Communities Together for a sustainable future) RECORDING AVAILABLE: The speaker, Dr. Noreen Herzfeld, Director of the Program in Benedictine Spirituality and the Environment, was our October Speakers Series guest and spoke on AI and the Environment. It was recorded and sent to all of us who registered. It is a powerful, faith filled, and scientifically accurate program that, given the Data Centers all around us, is timely. I have a copy and would like to share it with you on the stage during the fellowship hour in November. Stay tuned.

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, Paul Holewinski

Nursing Home/Rehab: Mary Sue James, Al Amstutz, Zoe Moore, Elizabeth Reiners (Pastor Margaret's aunt), 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, Ken Moore, Janet Ottney, Rachael (neighbor of Sue Applegate,), Jennifer and Joe Shamy, Saundra Shaffer, Russ Krumnow, Jim Krumnow, Jane Garner, Jeff and Nancy Wegman, Tom 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.*