



# The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

April 2026

## From the Pastor: “Not an Ending” by Molly Baskette

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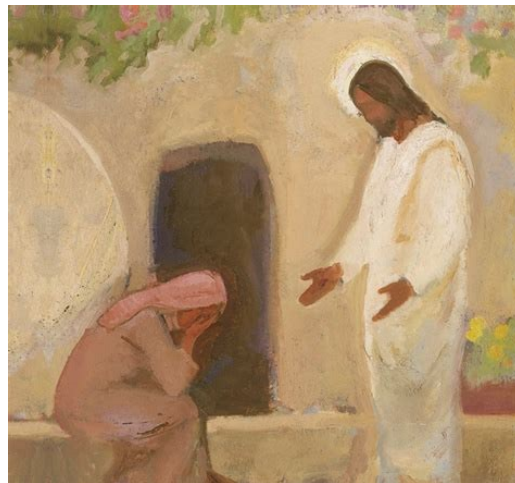
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*Jesus said to her, “Mary!” She turned and said to him in Hebrew, “Rabbouni!” Mary Magdalene went and announced to the disciples, “I have seen the Lord,” and she told them that he had said these things to her. – John 20:16-18 (NRSV)*

One of the enduring mysteries is what actually happened 2,000 years ago on that morning we now call Easter.

We have four narrators, the Gospel writers: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. They all agree

that Jesus really died. But then they diverge. Mark says the women found an empty tomb and ran away terrified, and never told a soul, which is naturally how everybody knows about it now. Matthew and Luke have slightly more optimistic accounts of Jesus coming alive again, walking, talking. John has the most to say about the resurrection, with Jesus showing off his three-day-old wounds to Thomas, cooking a fish breakfast on the beach, and going on a whistle-stop tour around Galilee.

One story, four different endings.

Here’s a shocker: Maybe the Gospel writers came up with four different endings because they were doing their best to comfort a people who needed

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## The Visitor

### From the Pastor: "Not an Ending" by Molly Baskette

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*Easter is not a history lesson with a tidy ending, but an invitation to look past death in all its disguises.*

hope, even not-quite-precise hope, even hope with a spin. Hope in any way that they could hear it.

We know about needing hope. Life is beautiful. Life is also very, very hard. Some days are years of Good Fridays that leave us broken and broken-hearted.

The 4 different Gospel narrators knew there were other versions of the story. They even borrowed from each other, like a cup of sugar between neighbors, a story just as sweet.

The authors didn't care that their Easters were different. They experienced Easter each in their own way. They weren't

trying to write endings. They were writing beginnings.

Easter is not a history lesson with a tidy ending, but an invitation to look past death in all its disguises. After every death, new things get born. Your story is not over. You are a resurrection in progress, still becoming. You may sometimes have a year of Good Fridays, but Easter will always arrive.

So as we celebrate Easter 2026, I invite you to come to worship on Sunday, April 5, at either 8:00am or 10:00am and start a new beginning, a beginning based in hope, love, and the power of the resurrection. See you there!

**-Rev. Torie**

### Heartland Conference UCC Info



*Scan the code at right with your phone camera to see online resources from the Heartland Conference, including event registration, newsletters & social media, and prayers/devotions.*

THE HEARTLAND CONFERENCE'S  
PORTAL TO MINISTRY RESOURCES!



SCAN ME

## Ministry Board of Christian Nurture

*The Ministry Board of Christian Nurture exists to encourage and nurture our members' faith by providing education and fellowship opportunities for all ages.*

The April "Soul-Full" devotional discussion group and Men's Group meetings are both postponed till April 12, due to Easter.

Start saving your quarters! Christian Nurture's annual **M&M Fundraiser** starts on April 12th and ends on May 3rd. Thank you for your support!

**Lunch Bunch** for April is still TBA. We are working on the date and restaurant. Thank you for your patience!

April Fellowship Event—**Game Night** at the Culvers', April 18 from 3-7 pm. Details TBA.

Save the date for the annual **Rummage Sale**: June 4-6 from 10 am—2 pm.

*Important Rummage Sale dates:*

May 29 - table set up

May 30 - bring items from upstairs

June 1-3 - set up/sort

Smaller items for the sale can be brought in beginning May 1 and put in the back of the Cozy Corner, or in the old counting room. Large items may be brought beginning May 29.

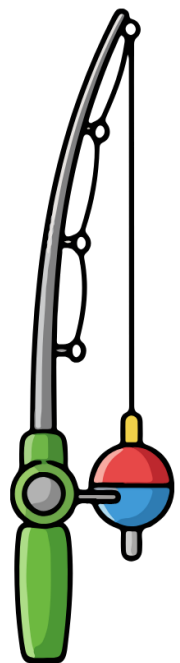
### ***Upcoming Events from the Men's Group:***

*Next Meeting:* April 12

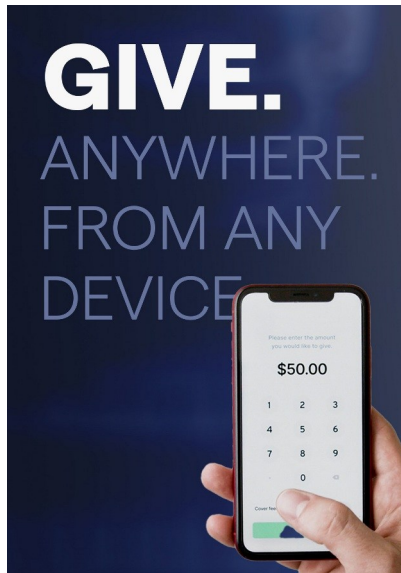
*Duck Pin Bowling* at Pins Mechanical - Weds., April 15 at 6:15 pm. Meet at Mason location for fun and fellowship time. You can bring in food. Pay for drinks/bowling on your own.

*Cat Shelter Construction* at church—Saturday, April 18 from 9 am-noon.

*Fishing Outing* - Sat., May 16. Meet at church at 9 am to car-pool to private ponds (no fishing license required.) Bring lunch/drinks and fishing gear. Depending on how the fish are biting, we will return to church sometime in the afternoon.



## Online Giving Available Now through Tithely!



We are excited to announce that our new online giving option is up and running!

Tithely Giving is an easy-to-use platform that will allow you to give online and on your phone. You can make both

one-time and recurring gifts, give with a credit/debit card or ACH transaction, and even Cover the Fees (which will help your gift go even farther!)

*You will never be forced to use online giving—we are always happy to accept cash or check.* This is simply another option to make giving to St. John easier for those who don't carry cash or physical checks anymore, or for people out of state who would like to give a memorial donation or something similar. Tithely also allows us to collect payments for events like the Women's Retreat and German Heritage Dinner.

Here's how to get started with Tithely.

### Option 1: Give on the Tithely Giving App

- Download the Tithely App from the [App Store](#) (iPhone) or [Google Play Store](#) (Android). Once you've downloaded

the app, select St. John UCC and follow the steps listed below (for using a Giving Form).

- Since this is your first time giving with Tithely, you will be prompted to create an account that you can use for all future gifts.
- The first time, you will also need to add your credit/debit card or ACH/banking info.
- Once your account has been created, you won't need to enter your personal or payment information. Just enter your PIN and give!

To make this process even easier, you can also set up a recurring gift that will automate your regular giving.

### Option 2: Give on Our Website.

- Visit [stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com/online-giving/](http://stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com/online-giving/) to access a Giving Form on our church website.

Just like on the app, you can also set up a recurring gift that makes your regular giving automatic.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Jane in the office or Kathy Culver, and we'll be happy to walk you through the system.

## Ministry Board of Elders

*The Ministry Board of Elders exists to spiritually support the body of the church by creating meaningful worship.*

St. John UCC will be taking in **new members** later this spring. If you are interested in membership, please see Rev. Torie.

Bible Study continues every Tuesday at 1 pm at the church, and every other Tuesday at 6:30 pm at Mt. View Terrace. Please see the table below for dates, times, and Scripture readings.

We will offer two **Contemporary Praise and Worship** services on Thursday, April 9 and Thursday, April 23, at 3:30pm, with Pop-Up Praise on the 9th and Mystique Smith on the 23rd. If you've wanted to give a more contemporary style of worship a try, or like singing songs that you hear on the radio (93.3 and 104.3), join us!

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### Bible Study Dates and Readings for April

Date	Scriptures	Time
April 7	Acts 2:1-14a, 22-32; Psalm 16; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31	1:00pm — St. John UCC 6:30pm — Mt. View Terrace
April 14	Acts 2:14a, 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35	1:00pm — St. John UCC
April 21	Acts 2:42-47; Psalm 23; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10	1:00pm — St. John UCC 6:30pm — Mt. View Terrace
April 28	Psalm 126; Luke 11:1-13; Matthew 7:7-11	1:00pm — St. John UCC
May 5	Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21	1:00pm — St. John UCC 6:30pm — Mt. View Terrace

## The Visitor

### Ministry Board of Property and Finance

*The Ministry Board of Property and Finance exists to be stewards of the building and finances of the church.*



Just as we expected, the weather in March was an assortment of all seasons...but that didn't stop the daffodils, hyacinths and other flowers from sprouting and blooming. The Lenten Rose are blooming terrifically. We give our thanks to Ann, a volunteer that delivers food to the church for the pantry. She is a Master Gardener and spent an entire day cutting, trimming, raking, cleaning and adding compost to the gardens...just because it was needed and she wanted to do it. What a huge improvement it made to the gardens. Please feel free to come and work in our gardens at any time as there is always a need for weeding, trimming and general landscape maintenance.



The old kitchenette outside the sanctuary has been removed. The metal cabinets, stove, sink and refrigerator were all purchased by Father Jamie at St Cecelia Parish. He will use

them at a cabin he is renovating on his property. Chris, a visitor to our church and pantry, and an electrician, offered his services and provided new wiring and electrical outlets for the new kitchenette. The new cabinetry, countertops and refrigerator will be coming soon.

We continue to monitor the moisture problems on the sanctuary walls and it appears that the outdoor sealing and caulking work has succeeded in stopping the moisture penetration. We will confirm that and start planning for repairs and painting.

Online giving has now been successfully used at our church. It has been used for offerings, signups for activities and for tickets to the German Heritage Dinner. We are happy that this is working for our members and visitors. Go to the church website ([stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.co](http://stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.co))



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## Ministry Board of Property and Finance

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m) and see all the opportunities to pay online. Many thanks to Jane and Kathy for getting this up and running. Please let us know how it worked for you.

Council is in the process of determining the future missions of the church, based upon your thoughts, feedback from the popcorn ideas, and the recommendations

from the ministry boards and staff. Knowing this will assist us in determining the possibility of expanding and/or changing the churchyard. This process is ongoing and we will keep you informed of the progress. Thanks for your prayers.

Have a peaceful and joyous Easter with your church and family friends.

Thanks and many blessings.....P&F.

## Ministry Board of Elders

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**Holy Humor Sunday** is May 3rd, with a theme of “Knock-Knock” and comic relief provided by Riff and Raff (you’ll have to attend in person to see who this is!) After worship we will have a potluck meal and the

distribution of the whipped cream pie pans to those who brought visitors during Lent (assuming we reach our goal of '26 in 26'!)

*Are we missing your birthday or anniversary?*

*Please call the office and let Jane know!*

## Celebrations in April

### *Birthdays:*

April 2 - Heidi Bothe

April 14 - Vince Front

April 15 - Rechelle Nicely

April 19 – BJ Bothe

April 25 - Diane Forster

### *Anniversaries:*

April 11 - Jan & Paul Godwin

April 11 –  
Rick and Donna Cutter

April 17 - Bob & Virgie Cutter

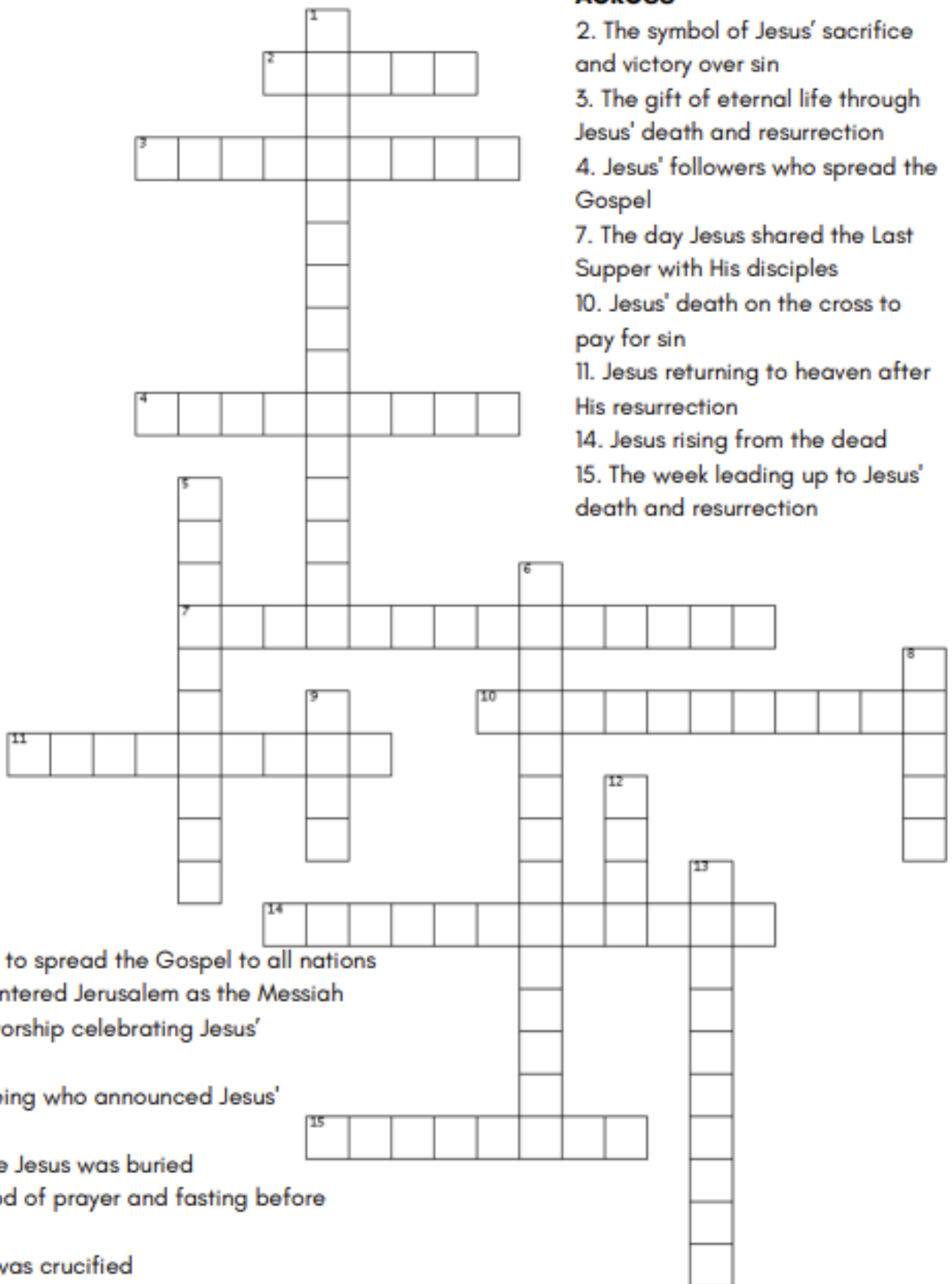
April 23 - Kathy & Steve Culver



## St. John UCC Regularly Scheduled Events

<b>Weekly</b>			
<b>Event</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Handbell Choir (Sept.-May)	Sunday	9 am	Sanctuary
Fellowship Time	Sunday	9:15 am	Cozy Corner
Worship	Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Bible Study (Afternoon)	Tuesday	1 pm	Bible Study Room
Bible Study (Evening)	Tuesday	6:30 pm	Mt. View Terrace
Chancel Choir (Sept-May)	Wednesday	6:15 pm	Choir Room
Feed My Sheep	Thursday	4:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
<b>Monthly</b>			
<b>Event</b>	<b>Day</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Location</b>
Christian Nurture	1st Tuesday	5 pm	Bible Study Room
Church Council	3rd Thursday	6 pm	Bible Study Room
Communion	1st Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Contemporary Praise & Worship	2nd and 4th Thursdays	3:30 pm	Fellowship Hall/ Courtyard
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	3rd Tuesday	2:45 pm	Church
Living Single group	2nd Wednesday	12 pm	Fellowship Hall
Lunch Bunch	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various
Men's Group	Various Sundays	11 am	Various
Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5 pm	Bible Study Room
Work-ship Day	1st Saturday	8 am	Church

# EASTER



## ACROSS

2. The symbol of Jesus' sacrifice and victory over sin
3. The gift of eternal life through Jesus' death and resurrection
4. Jesus' followers who spread the Gospel
7. The day Jesus shared the Last Supper with His disciples
10. Jesus' death on the cross to pay for sin
11. Jesus returning to heaven after His resurrection
14. Jesus rising from the dead
15. The week leading up to Jesus' death and resurrection

## DOWN

1. Jesus' command to spread the Gospel to all nations
5. The day Jesus entered Jerusalem as the Messiah
6. Early morning worship celebrating Jesus' resurrection
8. The heavenly being who announced Jesus' resurrection
9. The place where Jesus was buried
12. A 40-day period of prayer and fasting before Easter
13. The day Jesus was crucified

# Holy Week and Easter

ST. JOHN UCC



**March 29 10 am**

**Palm Sunday**

*Jesus' procession into Jerusalem  
with praise and palm branches*



**April 2 6 pm**

**Maundy Thursday**

*St. John's meal (seder-inspired)  
and worship in the upper room*



**April 3 7:30 pm**

**Good Friday**

*Tenebrae (Service of Shadows)  
recounts the crucifixion*



**April 5 8 am & 10 am**

**Easter Day**

*8 am- Sunrise Service*

*10 am- Easter Worship with bells & choir*



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