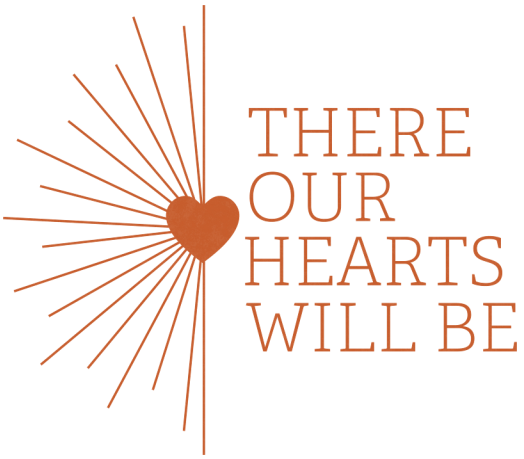
The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH October 2026

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From the Pastor: Stewardship as Spiritual Practice



Welcome to our 2026 Stewardship Campaign! The Pledge Cards have been handed out (or will be included in your White Bag!) and now is the time to prayerfully decide on what your financial contribution to the ministries of St. John UCC will be in 2027.

As you pray about this, think about this, look at numbers, see what you have planned for the year, etc., I'd like to introduce another way to think about your financial giving to the ministries of the church. Your consistent and planned giving is a true spiritual practice. Many times we may think of spiritual practices as only having something to do with prayer, or Bible reading, or attending worship. But consistently (weekly? Monthly? Annually?) giving your prayerfully revealed financial donation to the church is indeed a spiritual practice. You came about it through prayer, and you are trusting God to provide what you need so that you can honor this commitment.

And St. John UCC, while blessed with a growing Endowment, still has weekly and monthly and annual bills that need to be paid. In order to pull off the Feed My Sheep weekly Food Pantry, there is a gas bill to pay for the church van being used to pick up donated food.

(Continued on page 2)

From the Pastor: Stewardship as Spiritual Practice



Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's.

(Continued from page 1)

There are lights to be turned on and electricity to be paid, and there is Carl's time to mop the floors each week.

Weekly Sunday worship is also something that benefits from your financial support. The preparation for each Sunday includes Rev. Torie's time and Debbie's time, and of course Jane's time to create and print the bulletins. The Chancel Choir and Handbell Choirs both have set practice times, but do you know how much of Debbie's time goes into getting ready for a practice? Or to prepare the beautiful Preludes and Postludes? Salaries are the biggest 'bucket' item in our Ministry Spending Plan, and they are certainly funds well spent. But funds that need to come from you, consistently, in your spiritual practice of generously supporting the ministries of St. John UCC.

Isn't it great that our weekly offerings provide so many things here at St. John UCC, and beyond these walls into the community. Your faithful and consistent giving is indeed a wonderful way to live out our mission statement of being a disciple of Jesus Christ, who did indeed say "Give therefore to **Caesar** the things that are **Caesar's** and to God the things that are God's." May God be with us all as together we journey through this season of Stewardship!

-Rev. Torie

Celebration of Life for Pat Marshall: Sunday, Oct. 4



Our sister in faith Pat Marshall sadly died on September 23, shortly after her move to Florida. To mark her passing, we will hold a Celebration of Life for her St. John friends on Sunday, Oct. 4 after worship. (Scheduled meetings will be pushed back an hour.)

Please keep Pat's family and loved ones in your prayers as they mourn her loss.

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.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 6 at 5 pm

The **Fantastic Fall Family Fun Fest at the Front's Farm** is scheduled for Sunday, October 11, starting at 12:00 pm or whenever you get there! We'll provide the hot dogs and fixins for 'S'mores', you provide a side dish or dessert and your own beverage! This annual tradition is a nice way for Rev. Torie and Vince to share their peaceful country living with the congregation. It is 30 miles away, but there will be carpool opportunities, so don't let the distance keep you from joining in. All are welcome to come and relax, take a hike around the property or at Sycamore Park at the foot of the hill, take a hay wagon ride, maybe even sit on a horse and walk around the paddock! You can bring your own chair if you'd like but there are plenty of seating options in the back yard, around the fire pit and on the back porch. We'll have cornhole and other games available and look forward to a nice time of fellowship!

This year's **Fall Bus Trip** to Adams County is being organized by the Mermaids of the Clermont County YMCA. The trip will be Friday, October 16 - $25/person, departing from Eastgate at 9:15 am. The day includes shopping, hiking or sitting at a State Park, touring West Union's murals, and a visit to an Amish homestead.



Lunch & dinner on your own. Only two spaces remaining in the van—first come, first served.

Rev. Torie is looking for a **'co-host'** for this bus trip - someone to help with games and food, etc. If you are interested in helping out, please let her know. If there is a lot of interest in attending this day-long trip, we'll rent a second van and depart from the church (assuming we can find someone to drive it!). Sign up now and let's see what happens!

The Board of Christian Nurture invites you to an **Advent Extravaganza** on November 8 following worship. There will be Fun, Food and Surprises! Be sure to save the date.

We do need a few things from you for our craft projects: old Christmas cards, Christmas ornaments you no longer use, bits and pieces of holiday wrapping paper and ribbon. Talk to anyone on the Board for more info.

Ministry Board of Deacons

The Ministry Board of Deacons exists to serve our community in Christian love.



Next meeting: Thursday, Oct. 29 at 2:30 pm

The Ministry Board of Deacons is collecting **individually wrapped candy** for our Halloween trick-or-treaters. You are also invited to join us Halloween nite to hand it out.



Thanksgiving is fast approaching. The Deacons will be collecting **holiday food items.** Please donate:

- instant mashed potatoes
- sweet potatoes
- boxed stuffing
- gravy mixes
- boxed desserts
- noodles
- broth
- canned fruit
- holiday napkins

We appreciate your help!



It's not too early to start getting ready for Christmas! The Deacons will again help our friends have a Merry Christmas. We are collecting **stocking stuffers** for boys and girls of all ages....small toys, socks, toothbrushes, coin purses, candy, etc. We are also collecting **gifts for Moms and Dads** so that children can "shop" (at no cost) for them. If you want to know more, talk to Karen Carey. Susie K or any Deacon. Thank you in advance for your support.

Collection bins for all these items will be in the upstairs hallway!

The Ministry Board of Deacons will be providing a drop-off location for that collection of **old paint cans** that you have in your basement! We will bring them to Matthew 25 Ministries for reuse or recycling. Stay tuned for more details.

The holiday season is a busy time for the Deacons. Several holiday collections as well as our favorite celebrations are coming up. We would appreciate your support.

Karen Carey & Susie Koehler
Ministry Board of Deacons
Co-Chairs



Advocating for Change: Oct. 4 is Neighbors In Need Collection Sunday

In the letter to the Ephesians, Paul encourages the church to put on a new self and leave their old ways of being behind. This is at the heart of what he is teaching when he invites the Ephesians and all of us to "walk in love."

Whether we walk, roll, or march in love, this is still an invitation for us today to continue to seek new ways of justice together. One of the ways we do this is by supporting the Neighbors in Need offering. When you give to Neighbors in Need, you support justice and advocacy ministries throughout the United Church of Christ. Whether through our partnership with the Council for American Indian Ministries or the Neighbors in Need grant program, your gifts equip ministries that seek to transform the world into a more just, fair, and equitable place.

We have hope that the world does not have to stay as it is, but we believe that God inspires transformative action. Whether through projects seeking to increase home ownership, providing food for unhoused siblings, or addressing mental health challenges of children and youth—we seek to make the world a more just place. The world can change and through the power of the Holy Spirit we can be a part of that transformation.

Together let us advocate, act, and give generously.

Scan QR Code to Donate Now

NIN Collection Sunday is Oct. 4—you may give by cash or check at church, or scan the QR code at left to donate online!

Ministry Board of Elders

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



The Walk to Emmaus develops Christian disciples and leaders by inspiring, challenging, and equipping active adult church members for Christian action in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities.



Next meeting: Thursday, Oct. 1 at 2 pm

Please note the revised Bible study schedule for this month: There will be no evening Bible study on October 20, and neither afternoon nor evening sessions on October 27. Evening Bible Study on Oct. 13 will start at 6:15 pm.

Sunday, Oct. 4 is **World Communion Sunday**—please plan to be in worship for this celebration of Christian unity! Several of our young people will be receiving Communion with us for the first time. In addition, St. John's handbell choir and guest flutist Lucy Berz Dane will be offering special music during the service.

Rev. Torie will be out for a week in October attending the **Walk to Emmaus.** The Walk to Emmaus develops Christian disciples and leaders by inspiring, challenging, and equipping active adult church members for Christian action in their homes, churches, workplaces, and communities. It also benefits less active members who are seeking to renew a relationship with God, grow spiritually, or discover firmer foundations for their lives.

The program begins with a 72-hour short course in Christianity that is wrapped in prayer and signs of sacrificial service. It continues for the rest of participants' lives with follow-up groups that, along with the local church's robust offerings, contribute to participants' ongoing growth in grace.

If this sounds like something that might interest you, please let Rev. Torie. There are opportunities all across the country for this *(I chose Florida to participate with my friend and former church member Sue Meyer!).* Thank you to Rev. Steve for filling the pulpit on October 25! If you have any pastoral emergency needs, please contact Rev. Emily Beckering at 513-760-5884.

(Continued on page 7)

Ministry Board of Elders



(Continued from page 6)

The **SONKA Fall Meeting** is scheduled for Saturday, October 24, 9 am - 1 pm, at First UCC in North College Hill. Since Rev. Torie will be on the 'Walk to Emmaus' at that time, if anyone is available to attend and represent St. John UCC, please let her know and she'll take care of the registration.

Scripture Readings for October

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon Date
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19; Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46	September 29	October 4
John 14:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23; Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14	October 6	October 11
Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99; Joel 2:1-18; Matthew 22:15-22	October 13— Evening session begins at 6:15 pm this week	October 18
Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17; 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46	October 20— Morning session only	October 25

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.

Next meeting: Tuesday, Oct. 13 at 5 pm

Fall is here, the weather is getting cooler and we are looking forward to the beautiful change in colors of our trees. I am somewhat colorblind and always wonder how all the colors appear to those that are not colorblind. Yes, I can see most colors, but have a difficulty distinguishing between some colors. Colors to me are probably not as vivid or detailed as others. However, I am good at seeing values, or the lights and darks of colors. I have learned to deal with and accept my blessing of colorblindness, and I know that I can rely on others to help me identify and select colors, and I appreciate all the help that has been given to me in this regard.

We are again actively working on completing several projects. The sale of the parsonage continues, as we will need to go through local zoning and city council for approval of a change to residential zoning. The repair of the water damaged walls in the sanctuary is underway and will be painted after all is ready and dry. The tile backsplash in the new kitchenette is also being completed. A new positive and encouraging banner has been hung outside the church. We also recently discovered that one of our chimneys is crumbling and bricks are falling onto the playground. This is being addressed as an emergency and hopefully can be repaired shortly.

The Pohnpei UCC Church is back worshiping in our sanctuary after our worship service on Sunday. We are still working with another church who wishes to use our facilities for worship on Saturdays beginning next year. We will keep you posted.

Our Stewardship theme this year is “There Our Hearts Will Be”. There will be sermons and moments throughout October encouraging and inviting you to pledge financial help to the church. Your time, talent and financial treasure are critical to the ongoing missions and functions of the church. Your generosity is deeply appreciated.

Please enjoy this season of fall and of Halloween. As always, let us know your thoughts, concerns, and praises about the workings of the church. We continually hope to be a welcoming, safe and beautiful space to worship and gather.

Peace and love from the Board of P&F (Prayers and Faith).

Upcoming Sabbatical and Appreciation for Rev. Torie



Dear Church Family,

October is Clergy Appreciation Month! There's a card to sign for Rev. Torie in the Cozy Corner. Feel free to let her know how much you appreciate her.

Back in August, the Ministry Board of Elders asked Council to discuss and approve sabbatical time for Rev. Torie.

In our minister call agreement, we offer sabbatical leave after seven years of ministry with our church.

Rev. Torie qualifies for a sabbatical. Council has approved Feb. 15-March 15, 2027 as sabbatical time off for her to refresh and reflect on our mutual ministry in Christ.

Rev. Steve Cummins will be leading our worship services in her absence.

In Christian love,
Charlotte Bell
Council President

Are we missing your birthday or anniversary? Please call the office and let Jane know!

Birthdays in October

October 2 - Julie Kadooka
October 6 - Haven Reardon
October 9 – Carl Sebree
October 12 – Delores Osborne
October 18 - Barbara Gibler
October 19 - Rosalie Byrd
October 20 - Todd Patterson
October 24 - Nick Eddelmon
October 25 - Sherri Marshall
October 25 - Jim Stacey
October 27 - Charlotte Bell
October 28 - Brian Hall



St. John UCC Regularly Scheduled Events

Weekly			
Event	**Day**	**Time**	**Location**
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

Monthly			
Event	**Day**	**Time**	**Location**
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
Cozy Corner Café	4th Thursdays	12-3 pm	Cozy Corner
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Elders	1st Thursday	2:00 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	3rd Tuesday	2:30 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



FALL

WORD SEARCH



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WORD LIST

Level 4: Brain Buster **Directions:** → ← ↘ ↓ ↑

YELLOW	SQUIRREL	BACK TO SCHOOL	COCOA	FALLING LEAVES
NUTMEG	CHESTNUT	SCARF	GRAVY	CHILLY
END OF SUMMER	PIE SLICE	CIDER	BIRD WATCHING	HAYRIDE
FOLIAGE	RAKE	WHEAT	ORANGE	SWEATER
FLANNEL	GOURD	BOOTS	AUTUMN	ORCHARD
CARAMEL APPLE	THANKSGIVING	SPICE	SWEET POTATO	HARVEST

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Hawker UCC: My Brother's Keeper Sleeping Bag Project *Workshop*



Join us for a hands-on workshop providing handmade sleeping bags to individuals experiencing homelessness in our local community.

Event is free to attend!
Light refreshment will be available.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10
9:00 AM–12:00 NOON

1617 N. Longview St., Beavercreek, OH 45432

HAWKER UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

During the workshop, participants will:

- Learn about the need for sleeping bags in our community
- See how the sleeping bags are made and learn how to make them
- Discover how materials can be donated or obtained for the project
- Learn how sleeping bags are distributed to those who need them
- Explore ways churches, civic groups, sewing groups, and individuals can get involved

Scan and Doante Today!

Contact & RSVP to:
Hawker UCC, (937) 426-0973, office@HawkerChurch.org or
Grace Wilcox, (937) 532-5550, gracew1020@gmail.com

Affiliate of Greene Giving

Are you interested in doing a program like this at St. John? Please let Rev. Torie know!

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