



The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

May 2026

From the Pastor

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The Easter season continues through the end of May - a time of celebrating the miracle of the resurrection, and the source of our hope. As part of the celebration, we will have our Holy Humor Sunday on May 3rd, with a 'Knock-Knock' theme this year...and I'll let you ponder just what that might look like! For those of you who are new to St. John UCC and may not have heard of Holy Humor Sunday, this is something that is done in Protestant churches around the world,

usually on the 1st Sunday after Easter. The underlying premise is to provide a Sunday of joy and laughter after the somberness and lack of 'alleluias' during Lent. So come prepared to laugh, and know that it's OK to let loose with a good belly laugh on a Sunday morning in church!

After the worship service, we will gather in the courtyard to continue the festivities with the finale to our "26 in 26 Lenten Challenge." ?? of our members invited 35 guests to worship with us during the Lenten season this year, which surpassed our goal - huzzah! Everyone who invited a guest will receive one pie plate full of whipped cream to place lovingly and gently in the face of someone in Church Leadership. At the

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The Visitor

From the Pastor

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I hope that all of us will continue to reach out and invite people to join us for worship

time of the writing of this article, the Church Leaders who will be lined up in the courtyard awaiting the potential for a pie in the face include Rev. Torie, Debbie, Susie Koehler, Steve Culver, Rick Caudill, Haven Reardon, Gary Kurtz, Ron Bauer.

It does beg the question - does it take the promise of a 'pie in the face' to motivate you to invite people to worship with us?! Even without a challenge, I hope that all of us will continue to reach out and invite people to join us for worship - the

familiar faces from Thursday night, our neighbors and friends, that family member who grew up in the church and has fallen away. St. John UCC is a loving and thriving fellowship of believers, joyfully serving and feeding all in body and spirit, and in the midst of the chaos and uncertainty and evil that is so prevalent in our world, what greater gift can you share with people than the saving love of Jesus? Let's keep those invitations extending as we worship together as disciples of Jesus Christ.

-Rev. Torie

Ministry Board of Deacons

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

Hello from your Deacons! A couple of announcements for May:

We are especially in need of donations of **spaghetti and sauce**. Canned pasta such as ravioli or Spaghetti-o's would also be welcome.

The Deacons also have **hearing aid batteries** available for those who need them. They are on the table in the back of the sanctuary where the hearing devices are, near the AV Ministry setup.



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.

Just wanted to bring everyone up to date on how the Ministry Board of Christian Nurture is doing with the "Popcorn Ideas" given to us to implement. Several of the ideas were ones that we were already doing, and we have continued them since people seem to like them - Lunch Bunch and other fellowship activities after worship. We will add in a few pot-lucks later this year. And, Movie Night is something that we've offered in the past and will continue to offer several times a year.

Holding more retreats was also a suggestion, and we've already held the "Joy in the Journey" Women's Retreat in March, and are working on scheduling a follow-up mini-retreat this summer. We tied into another Popcorn Idea, that of 'card-making' with Michele Bunning, and implemented this with that retreat. We might be able to offer another card mak-

ing session in the fall – such beautiful colors we could work with!

There were a few new ideas that were suggested that we started to implement. One was a 'hiking group' or 'nature explorers group.' We initiated the 'St. John UCC Walkers' which met twice a month last fall, usually walking around Reading, but one time at Sharon Woods. The cold weather forced us to stop, but we hope to begin again either this month or next. In fact, how about meeting at 10:00 am on Thursday, May 28, and we'll see who wants to walk!

Another Popcorn idea that tied into walking, at least being physically active, was Senior Yoga/Chair Yoga. This is being offered on Thursday afternoons around 1:00 pm in the Bible Study room – have you given it a try yet?

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We are working on scheduling a follow-up mini-retreat this summer.



Ministry Board of Christian Nurture

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If you have any other ideas for our Ministry Board to consider, please let one of us know!

Game Night was another Popcorn Idea that was submitted, something we've done in the past and have resurrected with a lot of success. Once every month or so, we've been offering a Game Night (or afternoon) at someone's house, and they have all been very well attended. If you haven't attended one yet, keep your eye on the bulletin and announcements and hopefully you can join us soon. This one also ties into a suggestion for small group gatherings at people's homes, so we are meeting two needs at once!

A final idea generated in the Popcorn ideas was a breakfast before worship, periodically throughout the year. The Hospitality Group took this on and offered a lovely breakfast on Palm Sunday – hopefully you gave that a try! We'll schedule another one sometime in the upcoming months.

There were a few ideas that we were not ready to imple-

ment at this time, but are keeping on the back burner, including group painting activities, fellowship activities for younger folks and outdoor concerts. Actually, the outdoor concerts idea will be addressed in August, complete with an ice cream social, so stay tuned for information on that!

There were a few ideas that were submitted that we do not have plans to implement, including Vacation Bible School (although Rev. Torie is looking into a resource for grandparents to use with their grandkids this summer) and once a month music or lecture series.

If you have any other ideas for our Ministry Board to consider, please let one of us know!

Haven Reardon & Rev. Torie - co-chairs; Linda Clifford, Karen Caudill, Judi Montrose, Shirley Waddell



Ministry Board of Elders

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

Are you considering membership at St. John UCC? We will offer a New Member Class on Sunday, May 31 after worship, to introduce you to the church and what it means to be a member. In the liturgy for membership, potential members make these promises:

“Do you reaffirm your faith in God as your Creator, in Christ as your Redeemer, and in the Holy Spirit as your Sustainer? Do you promise to participate in the life and missions of this family of God’s people, sharing regularly in the worship of God, enlisting in the work of this congregation as it serves the community and the world, and participate in the fellowship events offered so as to strengthen your faith?”

And the promises are not limited to just the new members. Current church members also make a promise, and this is stated by all members when someone joins the church:

“We welcome you with joy as a member of this Family of Faith in this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share in the worship of our Triune God, the nurturing of our faith, and the serving our community in Christian love. May God grant that together we continue to grow in His knowledge and love and be

witnesses of our risen Lord to all we meet.”

Church membership is a wonderful thing, and we look forward to welcoming several new members in June. In the meantime, if you are prayerfully considering joining St. John UCC, please let Rev. Torie know, and make arrangements to attend the class on May 31. FYI - this class is open to everyone - so if you want to brush up on your church knowledge, please join us!!

Have you noticed a new voice in the choir? Meet Brooke Stephens, a senior at Reading High School, and the first recipient of the newly-created “Johansmann Choral Scholarship.” In our Endowment, there is a pot of money from the Rev. Johansman family, which is earmarked for seminary education at the Heartland Conference level, and music at the local church level. This music pays for new instruments such as the percussion instruments purchased over the past few years, sheet music, and special music providers. Even with this, there is still money leftover that is dedicated to music at St. John. This spring we tried out a new concept - the Johansmann Choral Scholarship - to

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Ministry Board of Elders

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build a bridge with our local high school and our choir. How many of you have said that you want younger people here at St. John? Well - please welcome Brooke! She's been a great addition to our choir AND will be joining the church as a member next month! She'll leave for school at Bowling Green State University in the fall, but is so excited to be part of the St. John UCC family and come back to sing with us while on breaks!

Holy Humor Sunday is May 3! Here's a little teaser of some of the jokes. Come to church next week for more.

Riff: Knock Knock

Raff: Who's there?

Riff: Woo

Raff: Woo who?

Riff: That's what I said when we got this gig!

Riff: Knock Knock

Raff: Who's there?

Riff: Boo

Raff: Boo who?

Riff: Oh, stop crying and open the door.

Riff: Knock Knock

Raff: Who's there?

Riff: Isaiah

Raff: Isaiah who?

Riff: Isaiah Emily plays a mean fiddle!

Scripture Readings for May

Scriptures	Date	Bible Study Times
Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; 1 Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21	May 5	1:00 pm - St. John UCC 6:30 pm - Mt. View Terrace
Acts 1:1-11; Psalm 47; Ephesians 1:15-23; Luke 24:44-53	May 12	<i>**No Bible Study this week**</i>
Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; 1 Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23	May 19	<i>**No Bible Study this week**</i>
Genesis 1:1-2:4a; Psalm 8; 2 Corinthians 13:11-13; Matthew 28:16-20	May 26	1:00 pm - St. John UCC 6:30 pm - Mt. View Terrace



COZY CORNER CAFE

Senior Food and Fellowship

12 pm - 3 pm

Last Thursday of the month,
May-October

Catered Lunch * Cards & board games

All senior citizens are welcome

Free of charge!

St. John United Church of Christ

729 Jefferson Ave.

Reading, OH 45215

513-821-1740

office@stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com

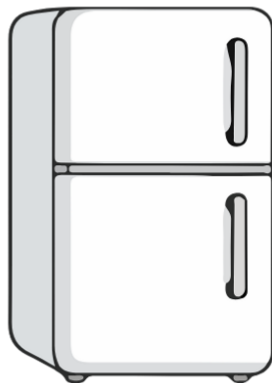


Ministry Board of Property and Finance

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



The new kitchenette outside the sanctuary has been installed and it is a beauty.



After many months of watching and waiting, we are finally ready to repair the water-damaged walls in the sanctuary. It seems that the exterior caulking and sealing of the windows has solved the moisture penetration problem. The walls appear and feel dry, even after the rains. We have contacted our local plasterer and are awaiting his appearance to do the repairs, after which the walls will be painted. Additionally, we are still searching for a structural engineer to confirm that the decorative lattice panels over the stained glass window are not structural. If confirmed, we can move forward with the design and installation of a new more-befitting lattice, which was one of the 'popcorn ideas' that we are addressing.

The new kitchenette outside the sanctuary has been installed and it is a beauty. Many thanks goes to Tom Pfennig who custom built and installed every cabinet.

New countertops and an under-counter refrigerator were also installed. Some final trim work, backsplash and paint are all that is needed to complete the project. Our thanks go to Haven for getting this needed project done. It will serve us well with activities in the Cozy Corner and as a sacristy for preparing communion.

The new front doors are on schedule to be installed on Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1st. There will be some dust and noise but the end product will be glorious in looks and function.

Along with the other boards, P&F was given the task of sorting through the "popcorn ideas" that were collected from the congregation and deciding which ones we would pursue. At this point in time we have completed the labeling of each room in the church and the implementation of online giving.

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Ministry Board of Property and Finance

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We continue to work on the trellis replacement in the sanctuary, a need for additional staff for new programs and support for Rev Torie, and a renewed courtyard and landscape.

Council has narrowed the selection of the future missions of the church, based upon your thoughts, feedback from the popcorn ideas, and the recommendations from the ministry boards and staff. Based upon a recommendation from P&F and with the agreement of Council, we have decided not to pursue a campus expansion. The details of this decision are still be-

ing formulated and the congregation will be informed when all has been resolved. Thanks for your patience.

Workshop Day is scheduled for Saturday, May 30th, your chance to help do some cleaning and repairing around the church. Details to come.

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



Based upon a recommendation from P&F and with the agreement of Council, we have decided not to pursue a campus expansion.

Celebrations in May

Birthdays:

May 2 - Susie Koehler
 May 3 - Bruce Read
 May 5 - Cindy Fuchs
 May 17 - Linda Burman
 May 30 - Shirley Waddell
 May 30 - Judi Montrose

Anniversaries:

May 23 - Debbie & Rev. Steve Cummins
 May 31 - Heidi & BJ Bothe

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

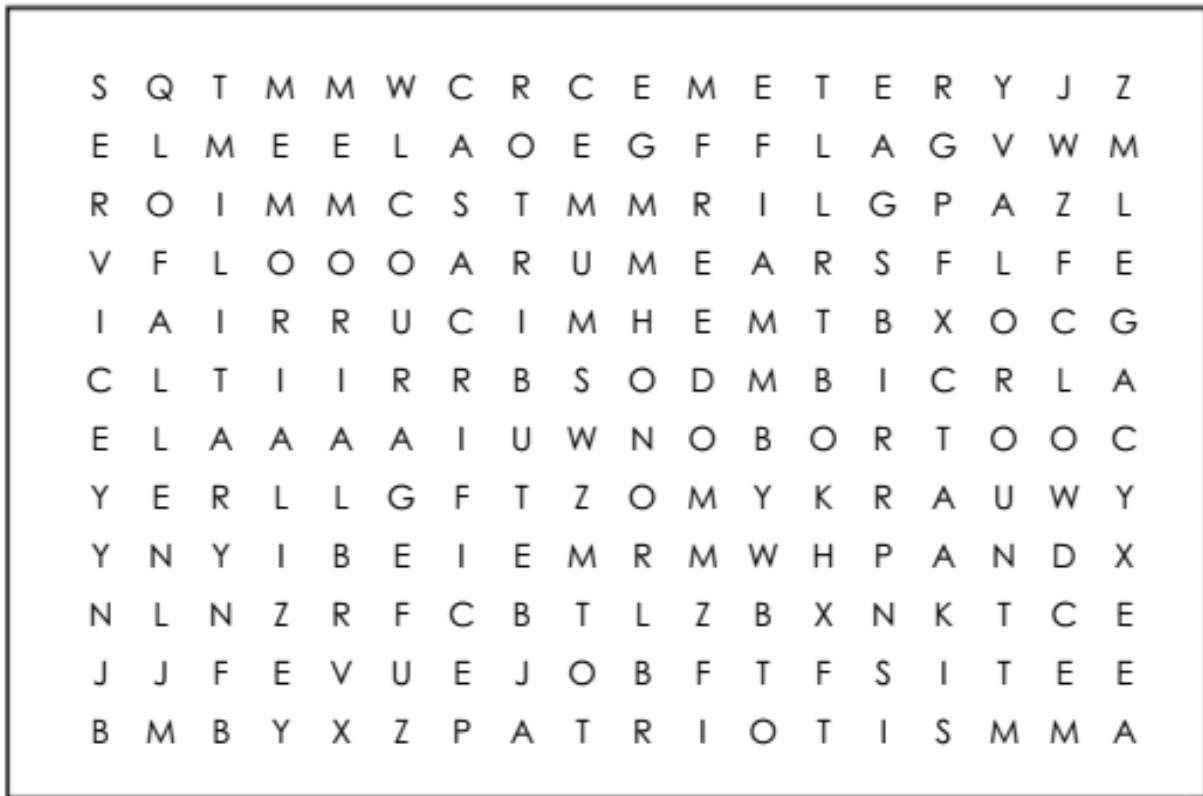


St. John UCC Regularly Scheduled Events

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
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



Memorial Day Word Search



Find the following words in the puzzle.
Words are hidden → ↓ and ↘ .

CEMETERY
COMMEMORATE
COURAGE
FALLEN
FLAG
FREEDOM
GRATITUDE

HONOR
LEGACY
MEMORIAL
MEMORIALIZE
MILITARY
PATRIOTISM
REMEMBRANCE

SACRIFICE
SERVICE
TRIBUTE
VALOR



And be sure to stay after worship for the "26 in 26" Pies in the Face!



St. John United Church of Christ

729 Jefferson Ave. • Reading, OH 45215

Phone: 513-821-1740

office@stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com

stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com

facebook.com/StJohnUCC Cincinnati/

