



The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

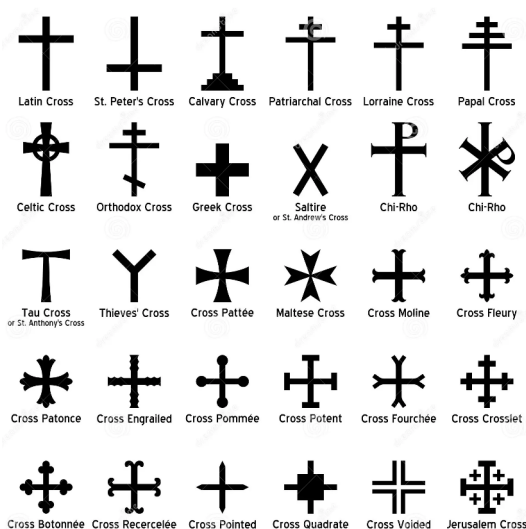
March 2024

Inside:

Holy Week and Easter Services	2
Elders	3
Deacons	4
Special Events	5
Christian Nurture	6
Birthdays	6
Property & Finance	6
Regular Events	8
Puzzle	9
German Heritage Dinner	10

From the Pastor

With Easter falling on March 31st, we have the unique opportunity to have this entire month dedicated to this season. The season of Lent, of preparation, or reflection, of repentance. The entire month, as the days grow longer (Don't forget to "Spring Ahead" on March 10!), to focus on the cross, on this one event that makes our faith different from all others.



The cross, an ancient instrument of torture, shame, and death, has taken on many dif-

ferent forms. Shown here are just a few examples of this sign of our faith. They each have their own story, their own role to play in Christianity.

The cross, as the primary sign of our faith, has been used in jewelry, in religious art, in clergy stoles and robing. The cross also lends itself for use as an illustration. The following story is from *He Set His Face to Jerusalem*, our Lenten Bible study book.

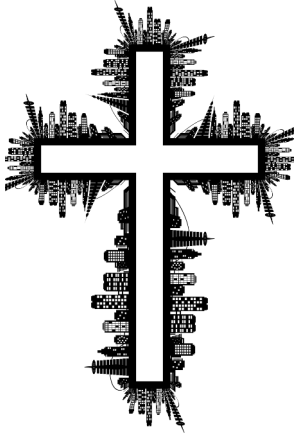
Contemplate a horizontal line representing the needs of the world. Children are sick - a need for doctors and nurses; people are hungry - a need for food; some folks are nearly naked - a need for clothing; some have never heard about the saving love of Jesus - a need for preachers. Then, crossing

(Continued on page 2)

The Visitor

From the Pastor

(Continued from page 1)



that horizontal line, visualize a vertical line: That's you, with your individual gifts and graces - uniquely you. Where the horizontal line (the needs of the world) crosses the vertical line (your unique abilities) that is where God is calling you.

God does call each one of us to use the gifts and graces given us to help build the Kingdom of

God, to reach out to those in need, to fight for justice and to spread peace. During this month of March, I invite you to contemplate all that God has given you, uniquely you. And look for that point of intersection with the needs of the world. And see just where you make a cross, and listen for just what God is calling you to do, or be, or say. And be blessed, just as you are a blessing. Amen.

See just where you make a cross, and listen for just what God is calling you to do, or be, or say.



Holy Week and Easter

ST. JOHN UCC



March 24 10 am Palm Sunday
Jesus' procession into Jerusalem with praise and palm branches



March 28 5:45 pm Maundy Thursday
St. John's meal (seder-inspired) and worship in the upper room



March 29 7:30 pm Good Friday
Tenebrae (Service of Shadows) recounts the crucifixion



March 31 8 am & 10 am Easter Day
*8 am- Sunrise Service (begins outdoors)
10 am- Easter Worship with bells & choir*

Board of Elders

Lenten observances continue in March:

- The Tuesday Bible study groups are studying the book *He Set His Face To Jerusalem*.
- Please join Rev. Steve Cummins after worship each Sunday in Lent for a study of the book of Jeremiah.
- The remaining Lenten Taizé services are March 6 and March 20 at 5:30 pm.

Welcome to Charlotte Bell, Steve Culver, & Steve Prater, who were installed at the Annual Meeting as new board members for 2024! The Elders also

thank the board members who are finishing their terms: Cindy Fuchs, Jean Pabst, Donna Ring, and Mary Lou Davis, who also served as secretary. Many thanks to them for their service.

Steve Culver will be forming a Hospitality Team with the goal of making our worship services welcoming to all current and new members. The team will coordinate with greeters and ushers, offer orientation to new members, and find new ways to make people feel at home here in the Family of Faith at St. John. If you're interested in this important work, please speak with Steve Culver.

One Great Hour of Sharing Collection - March 10



SHARE THE LIGHT—
One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)

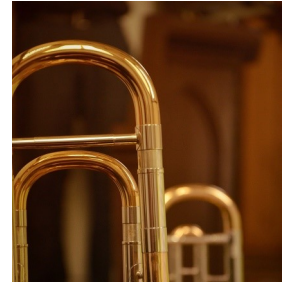
special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development

ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery.

Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs

(Continued on page 4)

Special Music For Holy Week



Several guest musicians will offer their gifts to the glory of God during our Holy Week services! The Palm Sunday music will be enhanced with brass quartet.



Julie Grasso, oboist, will play for the meditative Tenebrae service on Good Friday.

The Visitor

Board of Deacons



Your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for relief, and recovery.

Thanks to United Healthcare and Jeff Morton for the donation of \$1,500 for our “Feed My Sheep” program. We are grateful for the time and effort taken to help our program.

The church has several wheelchairs, walkers, canes, even motorized scooters that have been donated for your use. If you have need of any ambulatory assistance, please let us know. You can take these items home, or use them while you are at church - whatever is helpful to you!

Pantry Needs—In addition to packaged foods, Feed My

Sheep also needs onions and one-pound bags of rice. These foods are favorites of the Senegalese refugees who recently arrived in Lockland and have been visiting with us.

The Deacons welcome new board members Karen Carey and Joe Clay. Thank you for joining us!

Feed My Sheep is always seeking volunteers to help with food distribution on Thursday afternoons from 4:30-5:30. Come and share the love of God with our Reading neighbors in need.

One Great Hour of Sharing Collection - March 10

(Continued from page 3)

including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women’s empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of

Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place.

Please bring your gifts for One Great Hour of Sharing to be offered on March 10.



Board of Christian Nurture

A festive poster for a St. Pat's Day Baked Potato Bar. The background is white with scattered yellow and orange dots. At the top right is a green four-leaf clover. Below it is a green leprechaun hat with a yellow buckle. At the bottom right is a green pot filled with gold coins. The text is in a playful, hand-drawn style.

MARCH 17 -- 4 PM

St. Pat's Day Baked Potato Bar!

- Early Dinner -
- Games -
- Scavenger Hunt -

Sign up by the Cozy Corner!

Get the sweetest treats in town while supporting
Pilgrim United Church of Christ!

Hippity Hoppity to Fawn Candy Co. from

MARCH 11 TO MARCH 22

and 20% of your total purchase will go
to support Pilgrim Church



Fawn Candy Co.

The Visitor

Board of Christian Nurture

Save the Dates



- On April 28, St. John UCC and Pohnpei UCC will celebrate a joint worship service together at 11 am and share a potluck lunch afterward. Please sign up by the Cozy Corner to bring a main dish, side, salad, or dessert.
- May 3, 6 pm Movie Night at the church! - Movie title TBA.
- May 5, 11 am - 90th birthday party for anyone who is in their 90s or turning 90 in 2024.
- June 12 will be our next outing to La Comedia Dinner Theatre, to attend *Church Basement Ladies Plowin' Thru*. Cost is \$55 apiece, and the trip is limited to 20 people.

March Birthdays

March 8 David Escobedo-Arreola
March 11 Judi Hiatt
March 11 Donna Ring
March 14 Martha Christophel
March 27 Estelle Nierman



Board of Property and Finance

Sunday, March 10 is the beginning of Daylight Saving Time! Remember to spring forward.

It's been a long time coming, but the stained glass restoration is just around the corner. Starting April 1, Blanck Studio of Art will begin the removal of our precious Christ Ascending stained glass window. They will carefully remove the entire window from the inside and transport it to their shop in Piqua, Ohio. There they will do a total restoration of the window by disassembling it, cleaning, repairing and replacing any damaged glass, re-leading, glazing and barring (metal support rods) as needed. Once complete, they will safely transport it back to church and re-install it. The entire operation is expected to last about 8

(Continued on page 7)

Board of Property and Finance

(Continued from page 6)

weeks. The outside protective storm glass will remain in place until the restored window is put back, and then it will also be replaced with new protective glass. Curtains, banners or artwork will be installed to reduce the amount of light coming in and also so that we have something attractive to look at during church services besides attractive Don Pasqualetti. We are open to your suggestions or ideas for this “curtain”. Many thanks to those that contributed to the stained glass window fund and to the Ruth Schnier Estate for making this restoration possible.

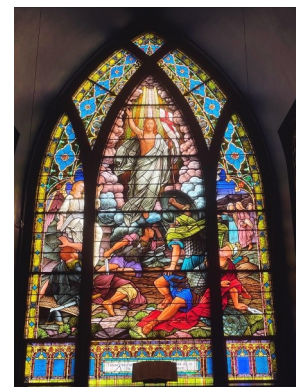
Tuck pointing of the brick is the next major project. The south side of the old church has already been tuck pointed, so all the remaining sides and towers will be done. All mortar joints will be inspected, cleaned and completely filled with new mortar so that it is flush with the surface of the brick. These areas will also be cleaned and sealed to further protect the

brick and mortar from moisture penetration. Scaffolding will be erected around the building to do this work, which is expected to last about two months. The start date has not yet been determined but we will keep you informed. With the new roof, tuck pointing and sealing we should be well protected from the elements for the coming years. We are so thankful for the Amy Wright Estate for making this work possible.

Workshop Day this month will be on Saturday, March 23 from 8am till about noon. Your help is appreciated to perform maintenance of the church.

Our walk-in freezer has seen more than its share of repairs the last few months. It took several attempts by the repair company to find and fix a leak in the refrigeration system.

We hope to see you at our Easter worship services as we lovingly gaze upon our stained glass window knowing that it will be removed for restoration the very next day. A joyous and blessed Easter to all.



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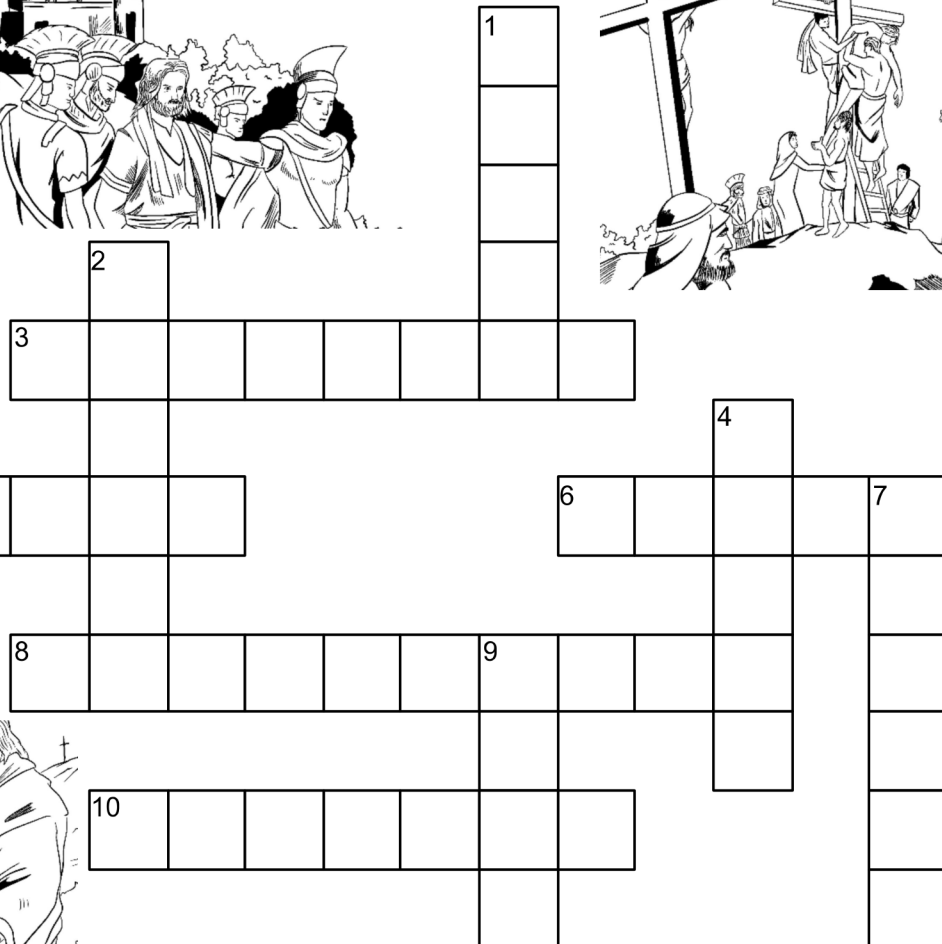


St. John UCC Regularly Scheduled Events

Weekly			
Event	Day	Time	Location
Handbell Choir	Sunday	9 am	Sanctuary
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	Wednesday	6:15 pm	Choir Room
Feed My Sheep	Thursday	4:30 pm	Outside

Monthly			
Event	Day	Time	Location
Communion	1st Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 pm	Cozy Corner
Lunch Bunch	2nd Sunday	After Worship	Various
Men's Group	Various Sundays	11 am	Various
Missionary Sewing	1st Wednesday	10 am	Fellowship Hall
Property & Finance	2nd Tuesday	5 pm	Fellowship Hall
Christian Nurture	1st Tuesday	4:30 pm	Fellowship Hall
Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	Last Thursday	6 pm	Reads' home
Church Council	3rd Thursday	6 pm	Fellowship Hall
Work-ship Day	Last Saturday	8 am	Church

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 Jesus said, "It is _____." on the cross before He died.
- 5 What is the name of the disciple who betrayed Jesus?
- 6 What did Jesus break and give to His disciples to eat during the Last Supper?
- 8 What is the name of the garden where Jesus prayed before his arrest?
- 10 What is the name of the hill where Jesus was crucified?

DOWN

- 1 What was placed in front of the tomb.
- 2 What was the name of Roman governor who found no fault in Jesus?
- 4 What is the name of the man who denied knowing Jesus three times?
- 7 What animal did Jesus ride on as he entered Jerusalem?
- 9 Which woman did Jesus ask to tell the disciples He was alive?



United in Christ's love, we seek justice for all.

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Church of Christ**

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GERMAN HERITAGE DINNER



DANCERS FOOD MUSIC



**March 9
5 PM - 7 PM**

PRIZES SPLIT-THE-POT



**Tickets on sale now -
seating is limited, buy early!**

