



# The Visitor

St. John United Church of Christ, Reading, OH

August 2025

## From the Pastor

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“Full Time Minister” - This was one of the “popcorn” ideas for the future and growth of the church. However, St. John UCC already has a full-time minister. Rev. Torie Front was called to be the minister of St. John UCC in August of 2010 – making this the 15th year of service in ministry together with this congregation.

My time for doing church work is grouped into ‘blocks’ of time, with 10 blocks of time allocated for church work each week. Currently, this is divided as follows:

- Monday – 1 block of time
- Tuesday – 3 blocks of time
- Wednesday – 1 block of time
- Thursday – 3 blocks of time
- Sunday – 1 block of time

And one block of time to use as needed for emergencies, funerals, etc. The Tuesday/Thursday blocks of time allow for ‘after-dinner’ meetings, and because many of our Thursday evening meetings have been moved to the daytime, I pick up some additional time on M/W. And while Friday is my ‘day off’ I’m always doing a little church work, at least to send out the Friday Email (when I remember to hit ‘send’!) and there is always a bit of time on Saturday to do any final prep for Sunday.

So, the next logical question is “what is considered ‘church work’?” My Call Agreement,

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## From the Pastor

*(Continued from page 1)*

created in 2010 and updated in 2023, includes these areas of responsibility:

- Worship design and implementation
- Visitation of the sick, and those that can't attend worship on Sunday mornings
- Bible Study and other faith-enhancing opportunities
- Community outreach
- Participation in meetings of the congregation, council, boards and committees
- Church members' needs for ordained officiating at funerals, weddings, baptism, communions, and other functions that benefit from her pastoral presence
- Other priorities identified by the Church Council
- Refreshing and reviving herself through periodic sabbaticals, vacation days, retreats, and educational seminars.

This brings up the question of vacation, and the church is providing for 6 weeks of vacation each year, which translates to 6 Sundays off.

What is not listed herein are set office hours. Modern day ministry does not seem to fit into specific hours and times, and as such, I do not keep regular office hours. I find myself doing more ministry

when I'm out visiting than when I'm sitting in the office. Having said that, I am available to meet with any church member at any time, in any location. With, when possible, advance notice! If, however, a set time for office hours is something that the congregation would like, I would propose Thursdays from 6:00 pm-7:30 pm. We can give that a try and see how it works.

It is an honor and privilege to serve in ministry with you. If you have any questions about the role of the full-time minister at St. John UCC, please ask me directly, or take your questions to the Ministry Board of Elders.

**In Christ,  
Rev. Torie**

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## 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.*

August is finally here, and that means that our first-ever **Summer Singing** event is here! Similar to Christmas Caroling, but in the summer and with non-Christmas music, we will load up our cars and carpool to our Saints at Home and do some singing with them. The dates and times are as follows, and the routes are posted on the sign-up sheets. Hope your schedule permits you to join us for at least one, if not all three, of our Summer Singing events!

- Sunday, August 3, 11:15 am  
(Kenwood/Blue Ash)
- Tuesday, August 5, 10 am  
(Sharonville/Forest Park)
- Thursday, August 7, 10 am (Mason)

August **Lunch Bunch** at the Silver Spring House is moved to Sunday, Aug. 17, due to the special "Listening Session" with Heartland Conference Minister Rev. Dr. David Long-Higgins on Sunday, August 10, immediately after worship (see the Elders page for more details!).

**Euchre** this month will be Tuesday, August 12, at 2:30 pm at the church. If you'd like to learn how to play, or already know how, we'd love to have you join us. The monthly euchre game was started over 13 years ago to provide some fellowship for

a new 'Saint at Home' and since then, we have played in various member's homes and retirement communities. We are currently playing at the church to accommodate someone with mobility issues. All are welcome!

Save the date for our **90th Birthdays Party** on Sunday, Sept. 14! All are invited for punch and cake to celebrate St. John members and friends who are 90 or older this year. If you or a family member are now over 90, please send in your name and photo so we can honor you at the party!



### Save the Dates

Sunday, Sept. 7—Church Picnic & Outdoor Worship

Friday, Sept. 26—Elvis Impersonator Concert

## Ministry Board of Deacons

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



The Feed My Sheep food pantry is in need of personal hygiene items, as the thermometer and the drugstore prices are both going up! Toothbrushes and toothpaste, combs, razors, deodorant, shampoo, and bath soap are especially needed. Thank you for your generosity!



*Contemporary Praise & Worship Services on the 2nd and 4th Thursdays have been lifting up our visitors and members alike! FMS participants are enjoying the music and Rev. Torie's messages. Our littlest guest was seen dancing during the music this week.*



## From the United Church of Christ: “Courage to Lead”

*This article was originally published on the UCC.org website on July 1, 2025.*

Across time and generations, the church has been a part of the ever-changing landscape filled with hopes, challenges, dreams and obstacles. People of faith have been called upon to respond to social and political crises, with the members of the church being disparate in their views and opinions on any given issue. Interpretations of scripture are impacted by experience and there, too, is a range of ways that the church finds itself wrestling with what it means to identify the sacred texts as an integral part of the faith journey. The faith journey holds no easy answers in the commitment to love God and love neighbor as Jesus commanded.

The church is not monolithic. The ability to witness the possibility of Jesus’ prayer “that they may all be one” will require transcending the diversity that is present in the church and in the world. Diversity is the church’s greatest strength and its greatest weakness. Confronted with the diversity in the church, the inclination is to take sides, to find the sameness and hold that as the value for being together. Where differences are glaring, the tensions mount, conversation is stilted or absent, and some choose to leave for places where others look like them, think the same, and where values are perceived to be similar. The attraction to others who are the same restricts the ability to learn from others whose thought and ideas may be different.

The desire for justice is the one of the places where opinions grate and the living of the gospel becomes divergent. The pursuit of justice requires the courage to lead in the church and

in communities where diversity is present. Courageous leadership is needed in the pulpit witness, in the public square, and across the opinions that are often incongruous. It will take courageous witness to be prophetic across the political chasm, to span the theological divide and to participate in building community from the mosaic of diversity among us. Courage to lead pushes beyond the comfort zones of sameness and allows for seeing the other beyond the differences that separate.

Courage is needed to take us across the divides that suggest others are not to be loved, accepted, welcomed among us. Courage is needed to be prophetic in times when the church and the gospel are being co-opted to support messages of hate and fear. Courage will lead us to the halls of justice to speak out against the injustices of this day. And it will require courage to confront and overcome the Empire and tyranny manifesting in this age. The choice to lead demands the courage for the living of these days.

Those who came before exercised courage that opened doors, demolished walls, and destroyed barriers. At a time when diversity is being decried as a problem, when the divides seem to be widening between people of faith, the courage to live love and the possibility of unity is needed. Courageous leaders are today’s prophets bringing with them word, vision and mission for the way forward.

**Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia A. Thompson**  
**UCC General Minister and President /**  
**Chief Executive Officer**

## The Visitor

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*Our next meeting will be the last Tuesday in July and we are meeting with Rev. Paul Forrey from St. Paul's in Alexandria, KY.*

### Popcorn Visioneers Committee: Your ideas at work!

First, a BIG THANK YOU for participating in the Popcorn meeting in June and also picking up a copy of all the suggestions and comments in July.

The committee met on July 8 and discussed how we want to proceed. Steve Culver took the sheets of all the responses and worked to organize them by category under the different ministry boards. (Copies of Steve's document, with the responses organized, are available in the pamphlet rack outside the sanctuary.) We will be working with the Ministry Boards and Council in the future to see what can be implemented.

Just a heads up — here's what came up and is already in progress:

- Audio/video improvements in the works
- People can't see stuff on the screen
- Sending out cards to members on birthdays
- A new electric sign in front of the church

- Microphone on children during children's chat
- Announce coffee hour
- Continue to build Thursday contemporary service
- Movie night
- Game night
- Food pantry
- Christmas time — gifts for parent in connection to Feed My Sheep
- Invite school groups to help with pantry
- Tax help for community (seasonal)
- Replace front doors

Our next meeting will be the last Tuesday in July and we are meeting with Rev. Paul Forrey from St. Paul's in Alexandria, KY. He is also bringing a woman from the congregation to share her experience with their changes. They have been working on doing visionary changes and have been successful. I'll inform you in the next *Visitor* what we have learned.

God's love and blessings to you.

**Charlotte Bell, Chair**



## Ministry Board of Elders

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

We are seeking new volunteers for the **Ushering** ministry—please see Steve Prater, Rev. Torie, or another of the Elders if you’re interested!

**Rev. David Long-Higgins**, Conference Minister of the UCC Heartland Conference, will be preaching on Sunday, August 10. He’ll also hold a Listening Session after worship to further explore the ‘popcorn’ ideas for the future of the

church. We might be offering some snacks – watch the weekly bulletin and Rev. Torie’s Friday emails for more information.

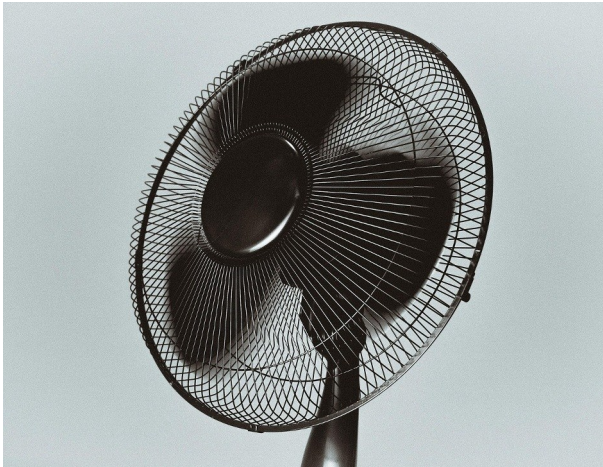
Be sure to stop by the church at 3:30 pm on the second and fourth Thursdays of the month (right before Feed My Sheep) for the **Contemporary Praise & Worship** services! We welcome Pop-Up Praise and Mystique as our guest musical artists.

## Lectionary

Scripture	Bible Study	Sermon Date
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for July 22-28	July 29	August 3
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for July 29-August 4	August 5	August 10
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for August 5-11	August 12	August 17
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for August 12-18	August 19	August 24
<i>Through the Bible in a Year</i> Readings for August 19-25	August 26	August 31

## 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.*



Even though we had a break from our meeting in July, there are always things happening around the church. Many thanks go out to all who have helped with the weeding and upkeep of the church grounds. The weeds have been relentless this year and all the landscape plantings have been flourishing with all the rains. We are still planning on re-landscaping many areas once the new sign is installed.

The new **digital sign** was expected to be installed by mid-July, however there has been some delays. We expect an update on the progress and a new date for installation. We are excited and ready!

Our next **Work-ship Day** is August 2, as we cancelled the one in June and did not do one in July. In the meantime, we are always open for anything that you would

like to do around the church.....just let us know what you want to do and we can help get you started. We appreciate any and all help.

The **new projector** for the audio/video system in the sanctuary has been installed and is quite an improvement in the brightness and clarity of the presentations. We look forward to the installation of the new speaker which should be coming soon.

We are soliciting proposals for remodeling the **kitchenette** outside the Cozy Corner. It is way past due for a total update that will make it more useful, functional and attractive.

The Rummage Sale has gracefully offered to provide the funds for the purchase of two new **window air conditioners** for the Cozy Corner and Reception rooms since the old ones have recently become inoperative. We are very thankful to them for this much-needed cooling of these rooms.

We hope that everyone is enjoying their summer. As always, give us your thoughts and prayers, and let us know how we are doing.

Peace and blessings from P&F.

### Celebrations in August

#### Birthdays

August 2 - Ed Campbell

August 13 - Garnett Geis

August 20 - Jess Feldman

August 23 - Vicki Gentry

August 26 - Julie Hauenstein

August 27 - Michele Bunning

August 27 - Pat Marshall

#### Anniversaries

August 16 -  
Sandee & Gary Kurtz

August 21 -  
Cindy & Marlin Fuchs



### Men's Group Street Feed—July 12

*Men's Group hosted their 10th annual Street Feed on July 12, distributing 119 hot dogs and 140 waters in an hour and a half!*



## 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
Communion	1st Sunday	10 am	Sanctuary
Deacons	Last Thursday	2:30 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
Christian Nurture	1st Tuesday	5 pm	Bible Study Room
Elders	2nd Thursday	2:30 pm	Bible Study Room
Euchre	3rd Tuesday	2:45 pm	Church
Church Council	3rd Thursday	6 pm	Bible Study Room
Work-ship Day	First Saturday	8 am	Church



# Summer



## Word Search

Find the words listed. Words may appear forward, backward, up, down or diagonal. Words may overlap and cross each other. When you have found a word, be sure to circle it and cross it off the list.

- AUGUST
- BACK TO SCHOOL
- BASEBALL
- BATHING SUIT
- BEACH
- CAMP
- CANOEING
- FAN
- FATHER'S DAY
- FOURTH OF JULY
- FRESH FRUIT
- GARDENING
- HEAT
- HIKING
- HOT
- ICE CREAM
- JULY
- JUNE
- MUGGY
- OUTDOORS

D	C	L	F	R	E	S	H	F	R	U	I	T	Y	N	W	N	N	C
C	K	T	M	U	G	G	Y	X	E	L	C	I	S	P	O	P	N	H
G	Z	G	N	I	E	O	N	A	C	L	J	L	R	Q	R	F	P	C
M	N	N	V	K	T	G	K	B	V	O	H	X	P	Y	L	Z	K	Y
V	J	I	H	M	T	F	A	R	A	X	U	I	Y	K	D	Z	F	L
X	R	H	L	P	N	R	P	R	L	T	C	T	G	M	V	N	O	C
T	L	E	N	I	G	T	A	T	D	N	H	T	D	G	T	O	H	Y
M	H	A	R	V	A	M	R	V	I	E	K	I	S	O	H	D	L	W
N	A	T	N	M	K	S	K	C	E	G	N	S	N	C	O	U	Y	P
Y	Y	E	B	A	S	E	B	A	L	L	E	I	S	G	J	R	M	N
L	A	T	R	Y	F	B	T	V	N	R	R	O	N	F	S	K	S	B
U	D	S	X	C	H	K	H	K	D	M	T	X	O	G	W	U	W	X
J	S	U	F	F	E	N	Y	N	L	K	N	H	H	N	S	W	I	M
S	R	G	L	X	V	C	U	R	C	H	T	I	M	Z	E	H	D	T
T	E	U	L	G	B	S	I	A	K	R	K	J	Z	N	K	Y	Q	C
R	H	A	F	N	E	Y	B	R	U	I	Z	H	U	Q	R	H	A	T
O	T	V	A	C	A	T	I	O	N	M	N	J	H	X	N	M	N	M
H	A	M	L	F	C	J	F	G	N	X	T	T	M	R	P	L	M	V
S	F	R	J	L	H	V	R	N	O	L	E	M	R	E	T	A	W	G



- PARK
- PICNIC
- POPSICLE
- SAILING
- SHORTS
- SUNDRESS
- SWIM
- TRAVEL
- VACATION
- WATERMELON

*Saints at Home*

# *Songs of Summer*

*Visit our Saints at Home and  
sing a few traditional songs with them!*

*Our songbook includes God Bless America,  
She'll Be Comin' Round the Mountain, This Little  
Light of Mine and other American favorites.*

**AUGUST 3, 11:15 AM** KENWOOD/  
BLUE ASH  
**AUGUST 5, 10 AM** SHARONVILLE/  
FOREST PARK  
**AUGUST 7, 10 AM** MASON



## **St. John United Church of Christ**

729 Jefferson Ave. • Reading, OH 45215

Phone: 513-821-1740

[stjohnuccreading49@gmail.com](mailto:stjohnuccreading49@gmail.com)

[stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com](http://stjohnunitedchurchofchrist.com)

[facebook.com/StJohnUCC Cincinnati/](https://facebook.com/StJohnUCC Cincinnati/)

