

Welcome Home!

to the Church you remember... Welcome home to....

St. John's

The 2026 January Chimes

United Church of Christ



Prayer List

General Prayers: Bill Carr, Charlie Bruah, Larry Crane, Rev. Dr. Winfield Strout, Molly Sheets, Rev. Gunnar Cerda and the family of Ed Hummel.

Homebound and Nursing Facility Residents: Jeanette Morris, Bonita Farmer, Patricia Gilbert, Paula Hatfield, Rosalie Johnson, Faith Kelly, Delores and Harold McDonald, Esther Gillham, Helen McGaughy, Mary Lou Hostetler, Lois Meyers, & Molly Sheets
Please contact Rev. Swisher if you know of any sick or hospitalized members. Remember, if you want someone on the Bea's Blessings prayer chain, you can email the office at stjohnsunited@windstream.net

Thank you for your continued support! In addition to your giving in person, by drop off, by mail, or by clicking on the donate button on the website, you can also scan this QR Code. We continue to find new ways to connect with our members and our community that are convenient, secure, helpful, and relevant to the ways in which some people prefer to donate. We thank God for our ability to offer these methods for those who may choose to use them.



Thank you!

With Gratitude...

Thank you for your contributions to New Beginnings this holiday season. Your gift has made another's holiday full of Peace and Joy.
Tricia

Thank you to our Children and Youth for their hard work and preparation to share their Christmas program "New Star" to the congregation December 14. Great job!

We would like to thank everyone for their love, support, and prayers while we cared for Julie's dad these many months and through his recent passing. Your prayers, comforting words, and acts of kindness are truly appreciated.
Julie and Ken Kroah

*IN LOVING
Memory*

Edward C. Hummel

Born: January 30, 1942

Died: December 2, 2025

A member of St. John's since 1955



January Worship Hours

8:00 a.m. Chapel Service

10:30 a.m. Traditional Sanctuary Service

Office Hours -Monday, Tuesday, & Friday: 9 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. For additional times, please call the office at (740) 323-2407 and leave a message to make an appointment or call/text Anita at 740-973-8218.
Thank you!



Happy New Year 2026!!!! We've made it to a brand new calendar full of opportunities, blessings and a clean fresh slate upon which to write our future.

Isn't that an awesome concept to think about? Our future awaits and we can help shape it.

This time of year publications, periodicals, online news outlets and television specials are consumed with year-end retrospectives and lists of the 10 Best this and 10 worst that from the year that just passed.

I never watch or read these pieces. Because I just lived through last year, I don't need to be reminded what happened and neither do you. We also don't need some pundit telling us what the best or worst of anything was...we are more than capable of making those decisions for ourselves.

Maybe that's why the Apostle Paul was so consumed with the future instead of the past. I'm sure you've noticed that theme in his writings to places like the Churches in Corinth and Philippi and Rome.

Paul exhorted the people then and all of us now with phrases like:

***You are a New creation

***Forget what is behind and embrace what is New

***Be filled with joy and peace and New Hope

All of these words and more encourage us to forget the mistakes, the mishaps, the problems and even the successes of the last 12 months and look with anticipation and hope and faith to the days ahead.

In one of the Apostle Paul's most famous writings he said, "forget the things of the past and strain forward into the future." The words "strain forward" sound strange to us today, but in Ancient Greek the phrase is directly translated "to vigorously press forward with focused intention toward a divine goal." That sounds like a great New Year's resolution, right? This is what Christian Faith is all about.

So let's leave the past behind and press on toward the future wrapped up in a time capsule called the 12 months of 2026.

And when someone asks you in the next few days about your New Year's resolution...you can say "I'm pressing forward, with focused intention toward a divine goal." Then you can follow it up with "come to Church with me next Sunday and join the exciting adventure."

Onward and Upward!

With friendship,
Pastor Steve



Youth Canned Soup Drive

February 8, 2026

Canned soups of all kinds or monetary donations
Benefits the Licking County Food Pantry

Collection bins will be in the Fellowship Room
"Vote" for your favorite team

It is our joy and honor to welcome



Rev. Joel King

Rev. Joel King, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s first cousin, will speak at the 10:30am service on January 11, 2026.

Rev. King has served in ministry for more than 33 years as both Senior Pastor and Community organizer as a member of the Board for IMPACT Columbus.

Rev. King represents Ohio on the National Martin Luther King, Jr. Day Commission based in Atlanta, Georgia, and serves on the Board of Directors for the Columbus NAACP and Vice-Chair of the Columbus Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance.

He has also served as the Chaplain for the Columbus Police and Fire Departments and currently serves as the Chaplain for the Gahanna Police Department, the community where he currently resides.



January 11, 2026

at 10:30AM

St. John's
UNITED CHURCH of CHRIST

285 W. National Dr. • 740-323-2407

www.stjohnsnewark.org



2026 Meetings

11:30AM—1:00PM

January 11, 25, February 8, 22 and March 8, 22



Happy New Year!

The book club will continue to meet each Thursday, January 8, 15, 22 and 29 at The River Road Coffee House in downtown Newark on the north side of the square. We continue with discussion and fellowship as we discuss the book "WORTH FIGHTING FOR, Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty is Trending" by John Pavlovitz. The book is available online and we welcome you to join us.



St. John's Little Free Pantry

Take what you need. Give what you can.

Our little food pantry needs your help.

To replenish our food pantry every day we need your help every week. There are collection boxes near each entrance to the Church. Keep in mind that many of the people using this pantry have limited cooking facilities. Ollie's, Dollar Tree, and Aldi's are good places to find foods at good prices.

Cans with pull tabs when possible and no glass containers! Thanks for your support!

<https://www.littlefreepantry.org/>

Camperships available for St. John's UCC Members

Although the Heartland Conference of the UCC has sold both camps previously used for outdoor ministries, camping and outdoor ministries continue through cooperation and sharing of resources with the Christian Church. Camp Christian, located in Marysville, Ohio, will be the site for UCC sponsored camps this year. A Grands and Family Camp from June 10-13, a Music, Mindfulness, Art, Dance, and Drama Camp from June 21 -27 (or a short camp from June 21-24) and Sports Camp for various ages from June 28- July 4. Also a UCC sponsored Family Camp in Dunkirk, New York, from July 5 - 11 of 2026. A scholarship fund has been donated for the purpose of assisting St John's members with the cost of camp. This is open to any member of St John's and is not based on financial need, with children and adults being eligible. These funds are not part of the church budget. No tithes or offerings are being used for this program. The funds are limited. YOU MUST REGISTER FIRST WITH THE CHURCH OFFICE BEFOR REGISTERING FOR CAMP TO BE APPROVED. The amount of funding provided would be 50-100 % based on the number of people participating. If a member takes a non-member to camp, the non-member will be covered at 100%. These funds may also be used for the Lantern Fellowship Women's retreats in the spring and fall. More information about the camp experiences may be found online through UCC Heartland Conference Outdoor Ministry or by contacting Jill Frey, Executive Director of Outdoor Ministries 740-901-0740 or jill@heartlanducc.org.



Church Council and Foundation Fund Meeting
Monday, December 15, 2025

Attending: Jeff Conner, Tim Powers, Chuck Chirdon, Frank Davis, Terry Gano, Frances Hill, Greg Crowthers, April Kinser, Gary Kinser, Ken Kroah, Julie Davis, Reverend Steve Swisher, and Kim Workman, Office Assistant.

The meeting opened with A. Kinser presenting a brief meditation on Hope, Advent, and how we might pass the message of Christ to others

Rev. Swisher reported that the Heartland Conference of the UCC is interested in establishing relationships between our churches here in the US and sister churches in Germany. Council expressed positive interest in such a program.

A church member has requested the use of the church fellowship room on Saturday, December 27, 2025, for a family get-together. This was approved.

Outside lights on the church have been repaired and exit lights and emergency lights are now LED.

A Foundation Fund was established for Beth Lee. Nameplates for Beth Lee and Larry Jones will be added.

Special mention was made of the excellent job the youth did with their program "A New Star" on Sunday, December 14, 2025. This was a snowy, cold Sunday with some confusion, but Council was very forthcoming with praise for the youth, parents, and staff who were able to provide us with a wonderful Christmas message.

Respectfully submitted,
April Kinser, Secretary Jeff Conner, President

Our next meeting will be on January 19, 2026, at 6:30 p.m. All members of St. John's are always welcome to attend.



Annual Congregational Meeting

Sunday, February 15, 2026
after the 10:30 a.m. Service.

We hope to see you at the Congregational Pot Luck and Annual Meeting.

Afternoon Circle -

would like to thank our church family for the donations of 25 hats, 51 pairs of gloves and 65 pairs of socks for the children at Ben Franklin Elementary School. When items get lost, teachers can quickly replace them from our supply to keep little hands and feet warm and cozy this winter. Thank you for your generosity.

Regular Circle meetings do not happen during January and February. But we do like to get together when we can. On our regular meeting date, January 7, we will meet for lunch at the Longhorn Restaurant in Heath near Walmart at 12 Noon. In the event of bad weather, the get-together will be cancelled.

Journey Together: Our Year of Bible Discovery

Reading the Bible in a Year as a Congregation

Fruitful Vines: 7 Reasons to Read the Bible in a Year (Excerpt 5)

by **Melissa Kruger**

Reading the Bible through in a year helps you:

Come Down From Your Theological Hobby Horse

We all have theological issues we like to emphasize. Reading the entire Bible helps each of us to stop and consider what we may be missing. Are we overemphasizing one truth while neglecting another? Are we defending a theological point that is true but in a manner that is wrong? Are we weak on a particular doctrine because we are afraid it will offend others?

The word of God sharpens our theological precision. It softens us in some areas and strengthens our resolve in others. Reading the Bible in a year guides our spiritual growth in a way that protects us from following the theological flavor of the month. It naturally corrects our rough edges of misapplication and misunderstanding.

Bible Reading Plans

are available in the Fellowship room or on our website at
www.stjohnsnewark.org.

February 22, 2026 at 9:00AM

Second Quarterly Read the Bible Q and A

We'll cover 2 Kings through Esther. Come share what you've learned, what is maybe not too clear and what surprised you. Be sure to submit your questions.

ASK THE
Pastor

If you have questions as you read the Bible this year, submit you questions to Rev. Swisher and he will answer them as time allows. You can submit your questions in the box in the Fellowship room or you can submit by email at www.stjohnsucc.ce@windstream.net.



Classes For All Ages

Starting January 4, 2026

9:00AM—10:00AM

Adult Class

“Abiding with Jesus”

Written and led by
Carl Kochendorfer

Meet in the Large Meeting Room

Elementary Class

Ages 5—12

Bible devotions, crafts & more

Meet in the BDZ Room

Youth Class

Ages 13 and up

“Mayberry Bible Study”

By Stephen Skelton
Led by Elaine Gard

In the Small Meeting Room

During the 10:30AM Worship Service

BDZ Children’s Church

Ages 5 - 12: Lessons, crafts, games

Meets in the BDZ Classroom

Ages 0—5 Cradle Roll is available

The Youth BIBLE DISCOVERY ZONE Class

Beginning Sunday, January 4, The Youth Class will begin a new study of "Mayberry Bible Study". We'll watch an episode of the old Mayberry TV series and then follow a scripture passage that goes with the episode and study how life is impacted by scripture.

The Youth Class meets during the BIBLE DISCOVERY ZONE hour (9:00 to 10:00 a.m.) every Sunday morning. Any Youth 7th grade and above is invited to join us in the Youth Class Room next to the offices.

Finances for the Month of November and Year to Date (December is not complete at the time of this mailing)

General Fund Income	November	Year to Date
Congregation giving (Faith Promise)	10,096.92	80,833.98
Income from Foundation Fund	10,500.00	115,000.00
Income from Emerson Miller Fund	3,758.33	41,341.63
Total Month & YTD Income	25,068.36	254,330.34
General Fund Expenses	\$23,926.70	\$268,326.48
Over/Under Month & YTD	\$ 1,141.66	(\$ 13,995.94) () = Negative





In Awe of God

by Denise Posie

January 5, 2025 todaydevotional.com

“You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other.”— [Deuteronomy 4:32-40](#)

I live close to Lake Michigan on the South Haven, Michigan, side. It is my favorite go-to place; sometimes I am drawn to Lake Michigan to experience God's greatness. As I stand on the shore, I sing, “How Great Is Our God,” “How Great Thou Art,” “In Christ Alone,” and “He Is Lord.” These songs are like stories that remind me who God is.

As I listen to the sounds of big waves crashing on rocks, seagulls squawking, and wind roaring, I proclaim that the God of wonders is holy. He is the Lord of heaven above and earth below. Gazing at the vastness of the sky and the lake, both perfectly blue, I am awestruck and speechless. It seems as if God's finger has blended the line where the lake meets the sky; it appears seamless.

God is present and actively working in our lives. He wants us to know that he is the Lord our God—in the past, present, and future. We praise God for letting us know him through his words, nature, works, and especially through his Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Where or when are you drawn into the awesomeness of God and reminded that the Lord is God and there is no other?

God of wonders, I am in awe of you. I praise you that you are God and there is no other. In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Amen

Inclement Weather – Stay Informed for Church Cancellations & Other Important Information

It's that time of year when the weather can cause road conditions to be dangerous. Our church policy is to close the church if the Newark area or Licking County is under a level 2 weather advisory. Please add your name and phone number to our ONE CALL NOW list to get important information and updates from St. John's by a phone message if you are not already on this list. Then put this in the offering plate or notify the office. Thank you!

New Addition: Name _____ Phone # _____



Adult Sunday School Class will start the new year off by studying “Abiding In Jesus” by our very own Carl Kochendorfer. Join Carl Sunday mornings at 9:00AM in the large meeting room for this informative study.

Youth Group will be meeting following the 10:30AM service on the 2nd and 4th Sunday of the coming months. Future service projects are TBD.



January 4, 2026 at 12:00pm. Mission trip planning meeting. Bring your curiosity, questions and helping spirit.

Collection bins will be in the Fellowship Room. “Vote” for your favorite team by placing canned soups of all kinds or monetary donations in the bins provided. This collection benefits the Licking County Food Pantry.



Sunday School Classes



Adult class – Sundays at 9:00AM

Youth Class – Sundays at 9:00AM

Bible Discovery Zone – ages 5 to 14 at 10:30AM

Cradle Roll – Available during the 11AM service

January Worship Service Duties

Ushers: Frank Davis, Jeff Conner, Terry Gano, Barry Dooley, Gary Kinser

Cradle Roll

- 4 Avery Nagel/Volunteer
- 11 Avery Nagel/Volunteer
- 18 Avery Nagel/Volunteer
- 25 Avery Nagel/Volunteer

Cantors

- 4 Julie Davis
- 11 April Kinser
- 18 Diane Reef
- 25 Todd Baldosser

Bible Discovery Zone

- 4 Julie Kroah & Pat Farley
- 11 Marla Crowthers & Youth if needed
- 18 Elaine Gard & Youth if needed
- 25 Frances Hill & Youth if needed

Sunday Sound Worship Team

- 4 Ken Kroah
- 11 Karson Ewing
- 18 Ken Kroah
- 25 Karson Ewing

Sunday Video Worship Team

- 4 Tom Lawyer
- 11 Julie Kroah
- 18 Tom Lawyer
- 25 Julie Kroah



JANUARY

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p>28 8:00am Chapel Service 10:30am Cradle Roll Available 10:30am Sanctuary Service 6:00pm Youth & Church Family Bowling</p>	29	30	31 6:00pm Private Use- Chorus Practice	1 New Year's Day Office Closed	2	3
<p>4 8:00am Chapel Service 9:00am Adult Sunday School 9:00am Bible Discovery Zone Elementary Class in BDZ Classroom 9:00am Youth Class 10:30am Bible Discovery Zone Children's Church 10:30am Sanctuary Service - Choir Sings 12:00pm Mission Trip Planning Meeting</p>	5	6 Epiphany	7 12:00pm The Afternoon Circle Lunch at Longhorn weather permitting 6:00pm Mission & Outreach Committee Meeting 6:00pm Private Use- Chorus Practice	8 Thursday Book Study- "Worth Fighting For, Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty is Trending" by John Pavlovitz at River Road Coffee on the Square	9	10
<p>11 8:00am Chapel Service 9:00am Adult Sunday School 9:00am Bible Discovery Zone Elementary Class in BDZ Classroom 9:00am Youth Class 10:30am Bible Discovery Zone Children's Church 10:30am Sanctuary Service - Guest Speaker, Rev. Joel L. King 11:30am Youth Group Meeting</p>	12	13 7:00pm Finance & Stewardship Meeting	14 10:00am Christian Education Meeting 6:00pm Private Use- Chorus Practice	15 Thursday Book Study- "Worth Fighting For, Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty is Trending" by John Pavlovitz at River Road Coffee on the Square	16	17
<p>18 8:00am Chapel Service 9:00am Adult Sunday School 9:00am Bible Discovery Zone Elementary Class in BDZ Classroom 9:00am Youth Class 10:30am Bible Discovery Zone Children's Church 10:30am Sanctuary Service</p>	19 Martin L. King, Jr. Day 6:30pm Church Council Meeting	20	21 6:00pm Private Use- Chorus Practice	22 Thursday Book Study- "Worth Fighting For, Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty is Trending" by John Pavlovitz at River Road Coffee on the Square	23	24
<p>25 8:00am Chapel Service 9:00am Adult Sunday School 9:00am Bible Discovery Zone Elementary Class in BDZ Classroom 9:00am Youth Class 10:30am Bible Discovery Zone Children's Church 10:30am Sanctuary Service 11:30am Youth Group Meeting</p>	26	27	28 6:00pm Private Use- Chorus Practice	29 Thursday Book Study- "Worth Fighting For, Finding Courage and Compassion When Cruelty is Trending" by John Pavlovitz at River Road Coffee on the Square	30	31



St. John's United Church of Christ
 285 W. National Drive
 Newark, Ohio 43055

*Rooted in the Evangelical and Reformed Traditions
 We are Sowing Seeds of Hope in a Time of Chaos
 So We May All Be One*

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Worship Services!

8:00 a.m. Chapel Service
 10:30 a.m. – Sanctuary Service
 Volume 26 Number 1

Address Service Requested



Main Office Phone 740-323-2407 www.stjohnsnewark.org	Rev. Dr. Stephen Swisher Our Minister Office 740-323-2854 stjohns.pastorstephen@gmail.com	Todd Baldosser Organist/Choir Director scarlatti35@hotmail.com
Anita Chirdon/Office Administrator Kim Workman/Office Assistant stjohnsunity@windstream.net	Mike Dooley Church Sexton 740-398-5863	Julie Kroah Christian Education Director Direct Number 740-323-2408 stjohnsucc.ce@windstream.net



LIBRARY FOCUS FOR JANUARY

The Battle Plan for Prayer by Stephan & Alex Kendrick. From basic training to targeted strategies.

War Room. DVD Prayer is a powerful weapon.

For Children

The Story of Jonah by Alice Joyce Davidson. An Alice in Bibleland book.

***** These featured books and DVD's can be found in the church library on the center shelves*****