

Let's Not Die Today, Shall We?

That same day, two of them were going to a village called Emmaus. And as they were talking about everything that had happened, Jesus came up and walked with them; but they were kept from recognizing him.

– Luke 24:13-16 (NIV, abridged)

These two disciples aren't strolling, they're fleeing. They aren't merely disappointed, they're scared to death. The Romans had executed Jesus, his followers could be next.

Given the danger, it may surprise us, who are always pondering the next best way to protect ourselves, that they so easily accept this stranger. They even ask him in to eat.

But if you've visited the Middle East, you know it's not that surprising. There's a naturalness to hospitality there, a reflex of readiness to put oneself out for another, even if it's inconvenient, costly, or unwise.

Some say this reflex is historically rooted in the region's geography. In a harsh climate with scant resources, hospitality was a necessity, not a nicety. You never turned anyone away: it could just as easily be you needing water, refuge, a bit of shade.

If that's true, hospitality isn't something you offer because you believe the stranger might turn out to be an angel (or Jesus) in disguise. No, it's a matter of survival, an acknowledgement that we're all at the mercy of harsh elements, and that if no door opens to us, despair is sure.

The wondrous thing is that sometimes, as on that evening in Emmaus, hospitality does end in recognition, revelation, and shattering joy. But it begins elsewhere, in basic human need. Without you, I die. Without me, so do you.

Let's not die today, shall we?

Please, come in.

Prayer

We're all so exposed, Jesus. Help us to keep each other from dying. Teach us to open doors.

Mary Luti is a long time seminary educator and pastor, author of *Teresa of Avila's Way* and numerous articles, and founding member of The Daughters of Abraham, a national network of interfaith women's book groups.

The Journal

September 2022



St. John's United Church of Christ

130 South Walnut Street. Troy, Ohio 45373

937-335-2028

stjohnsucctroy@gmail.com

<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsucctroyohio/>

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK



I just reread my article from the August Journal and in it I spoke of the upcoming Block Party. I said: "It will be fun, but if we stay alert, it will be much more than that." You did and it was! I was asked to be the Grill Master and from that place behind the grill, I

was in the perfect spot to watch how you all interacted with the people who came. What a variety of guests came to our party! I can't help but believe that Jesus would have felt quite comfortable with us that day! I was so proud of the way you welcomed the poor and the homeless. You really lived up to our motto: "No matter who you are or where you are on your journey, you are welcome here!"

Mary Ann and I leave for vacation on the 6th of September and will return on the 27th. We are so excited to be headed back to places in Europe we've never experienced before: Amsterdam, Brugge in Belgium, Vienna, Innsbrook, and the home of Mary Ann's ancestors: Esslingen, Germany. I have been so aware of everyone's need to find a way to take a break from the everyday stresses so the heart, body, mind, and soul can be renewed. Thank you for allowing us to take this trip. If you have needs during my absence, don't hesitate to call the office or one of the Council members.

Peace to you, Pastor Don



Church Staff

Pastor Don Crist

(607) 972-6745

decrist@earthlink.net

Office Manager

Melissa Stanley

Outside Custodian

Rob Brower

Inside Custodian

Erika Wilson

Senior Choir Director

Becky Pierce

Head Usher

Mike Beamish

Technician

Christopher Reed

Communion Elements

Joyce Heffelfinger

Sunday Money Counters

Mike Beamish

John Gibbons

Happy Birthday!

Madelyn Reed – 9/5
Spero Mengos – 9/7
Joyce Heffelfinger – 9/12
Matt Pierce – 9/14
Joan Meredith – 9/15
Traci Kropp – 9/19
Barb Gibbons – 9/21
Ruth Simpson – 9/27

Stewardship, Finance & Mission for August 2022

DATE	ATTENDANCE	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
August 7th	28	\$1,575.00
August 14th	27	\$2,012.00
August 21st	28	\$1,298.00
August 28th	30	\$2,119.75
TOTAL	113	\$7,004.75

TOTAL GIVING – Monthly Review

MONTH	TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS
January	\$9,299.65
February	\$9,860.65
March	\$9,111.39
April	\$14,426.95
May	\$11,381.65
June	\$13,770.12
July	\$8,890.00
August	\$7,004.75

I can do
ALL THINGS
through
CHRIST
Who
STRENGTHENS
ME Phil 4:13

WE MAKE IT HAPPEN HERE AT ST. JOHN'S

There's been a whirlwind of activities going on at the church and if you ever have the opportunity to stop by during the week, you'll see exactly what I mean. I want to highlight a few of these happenings, particularly those that were named as high priority in the survey completed earlier this year by the congregation.

On August 2, the church sponsored a very successful block party in conjunction with the National Night Out. There were around 70 who attended, including a great turnout from our church members. We had a bounce house, which was quite popular, hot dogs and a pot luck supper, including ice cream. A number of neighborhood moms and kids came and especially enjoyed the crafts activities. I personally was most impressed with how we welcomed them and really seemed to be present to them.



The Christian Education Team has had some important discussion around strengthening our children's education program. The kids will be using the Shine curriculum this year, which incorporates a lot of fun activities into the learning of Bible stories. We will be looking for teachers to commit to time with the children each Sunday morning. In addition, the Team and Council are exploring options for hiring a Family Ministries Director who would not only be present on Sunday mornings, but also provide family resources, reach out to children in the community, and offer extra activities during the week for kids.

The History Team has set up a display of photos in the Café. Stop in and take a look. It's fun to see how we all looked years ago. In addition, Ginny and Mike have begun interviews with some of our senior members, recording oral histories of our church, families and the local community. Eventually these will be made into a longer edited video which we'll all be able to enjoy.

Plans are in the works for our annual church picnic, for the Trick or Treat and Eat event, for repairing and repainting parts of our church building, for arts and crafts gatherings, and for the excellent Sunday School class that Mike leads every week before worship. Come join us for lively discussion and learning.

An online calendar will now be available to view on our website <https://stjohnsucctroyohio.org/>. This will be in addition to our regular calendar outside the office where we mark our scheduled events. The online calendar will allow us to see what's scheduled even when away from the church.

If you have ideas for activities or events you'd like to see happening here, please talk to one of our committee or team chairs, or to Joyce Swank. She's here to encourage you and help you with organizing and planning. She'll point you in the right direction, so your event can be as successful as possible.

Let's keep moving forward, being Beloved Community to each other and being Jesus to those around us.

The Vision Team

Mary Ann Crist, Lori Radimachir, Glenn Lytle, Chris Reed



NEARLY 1,590 UCC CHURCHES ARE!



These congregations fully support Our Church's Wider Mission. They give to Our Churches Wider Mission (OCWM) and all four special mission offerings. *Thank you to all churches that are 5 for 5!*

Get your members on board and qualify for posters that recognize your church as a 5 for 5 church. Your congregation will also be recognized at General Synod!
Order copies at uccresources.com.

OCWM BASIC SUPPORT

Provides funding from congregations for Conferences and the national ministries of the United Church of Christ (Wider Church Ministries, Local Church Ministries, Justice and Witness Ministries, General Ministries, and Pension Boards).

UCC SPECIAL MISSION OFFERINGS

Part of OCWM, these four offerings sponsor vital ministries that bring hope to people in the U.S. and around the world.

Neighbors in Need

First Sunday in October

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of this offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Fourth Sunday of Lent

The United Church of Christ responds to humanitarian and development needs in the world. Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing® carries God's message of love and hope to people in crisis. Through our work with local churches, conferences, international partners and organizations, One Great Hour of Sharing provides sources of clean water, food, education, health care, small business micro-credit loans, advocacy, resettlement for refugees and displaced persons, emergency relief and rehabilitation as well as disaster preparedness and response.

The Christmas Fund

Fourth Sunday of Advent

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties.

Strengthen the Church

Pentecost

The Strengthen the Church (STC) Offering reflects the shared commitment of people across the United Church of Christ to cooperatively build up the UCC. Conferences and the national setting equally share the gifts given by members and friends through their local congregations. The funds raised support leadership development, new churches, youth ministry, and innovation in existing congregations. By your generosity to this offering, you build up the Body of Christ.



SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Church World Service

Throughout the month of September, the Membership and Outreach Committee will be collection monetary donations for Church World Service (CWS). In America and around the world, your donation will help impoverished areas with basic needs and tools that will help them to sustain themselves and their families. During disasters, people often need blankets and much more. With our help Church World Service can be there for the long haul as families recover from disaster.

You will find envelopes for your donations on the table in the Narthex or you may add your donation to your weekly offering envelope and indicate CWS and the amount on the “other” line. If everything works as planned Maddie, Jacob and Billy will pull the wagon through the aisles on September 11th to gather your donations. Thank you.

Neighbors in Need

On Sunday, October 2nd, as part of our World Communion Sunday observance, we will be receiving our Neighbors in Need special offering. This is the fourth of five of our Special Mission Offerings through which we demonstrate our support of the success and sustainability of the United Church of Christ’s national ministries. Neighbors in Need (NIN) supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States, including projects that range from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Your gifts may be included in the special Neighbors in Need envelopes you will find in the Narthex, or you may indicate your gift on the fourth line of your regular giving envelope.

A summary of St. John's UCC August 15, 2022 council meeting

Reverend Crist reported he has received a Letter and Certificate from the United Church of Christ Headquarters stating he is now a minister of the UCC church in full standing. He also expressed his gratitude for Earl stepping into the role of church treasurer, for Melissa Stanley as our office manager, for successes of the Block Party, the first Bible Chat, and for the special summer music that Ginny has arranged. He also expressed his concern that the church needed a cohesive vision goal that is reflected everywhere in the church. The Vision Team was given the task of developing an overall church vision.

Christian Ed. reported that the Sunday School will be using the Shine curriculum, an online edition, which can be printed as needed. An interest group will meet and seriously discuss hiring a part-time Family Education/Development Minister. A job description and compensation will be spelled out to be given to Council at its next meeting.

Trustees need to hire a handyman for routine maintenance. The Trustees will bring more details (hourly rate) to the next Council meeting. Paying the handyman would come from the property maintenance account.

Event overseer. When non-church groups are using the church there needs to be someone at the church overseeing the event, pay would be \$12.00 an hr.

New Business. After some discussion, a motion was made to upgrade and reinstate our Church Windows computer program, the motion carried. This will help with record keeping and bookkeeping in the future. Ginny Beamish volunteered to head up and carry out the work involved in keeping us a 5 for 5 church in OCWM. She will also fill out the paperwork for Holiday Lights for the church

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School will resume at 9:30am on Sunday, September 11th with Mike Beamish again facilitating the discussions. Upcoming topics include the following:

September 11th: *What's in Your Closet?* – Using Our Strengths and Differences in a Beloved Church Community

September 18th: *Can I Take It Pass/Fail?* – Making Our Faith Appealing to More People

September 25th: *Eternal Life* – Showing Your Love; Sharing a Meal

October 2nd: *The Wonder of It All* – Looking Through a Wide Open Lens

ANNOUNCEMENTS

St. John's Choir

St. John's Choir will reassemble at 6:30pm Wednesday, September 7th. There is plenty of room in the front two pews on the piano side of the sanctuary, and we can easily spread to the third and fourth rows if necessary. Please join your singing friends for an hour of reviewing some old favorite tunes, and perhaps looking for a few new ones. See you then!

Women's Fellowship

On Wednesday, September 14th Women's Fellowship will meet at the church at 11:30am to then go to New Bremen Park. Please bring a brown bag lunch. We will have dessert and will be stopping at Crossway Farms on the way back.

Church Picnic

St. John's Annual Church Picnic will be held at the Troy Community Park on September 24th beginning at 3:00pm. If you want to play in the cornhole tournament, please arrive at 2:30pm. Please bring lawn chairs, your own table service, and a covered dish to share. St. John's will provide chicken, chips and water. If you want a beverage other than water, please bring that with you. Come and enjoy a fun filled afternoon with our church family!

PRAISE & PRAYER REQUESTS

Jeff Shaw: Please keep Joyce Swank and her family in prayers as they grieve her cousin. - **McKenzie Gibbons** (age 5) daughter of David and Kirsten Gibbons, granddaughter of Barb and John Gibbons had extensive throat and palate reconstruction surgery August 19th. Prayers are needed throughout her long recovery.- **Dot Thompson:** Please pray for Earl Reives' sister who home from the hospital and continuing to gain strength. - **Wayne Cunningham:** Please pray for Stephanie Strope's father. The cancer that he previously battled and defeated has metastasized into the bone and liver. He is now facing a very aggressive chemo regimen. - **Brent Adkins:** Please continue to pray for Brent's improvement. - **Fred Finney:** Please pray for Ginny Beamish's brother. He has had some complications with a heart procedure and is in the ICU at the Cleveland Clinic. - **Em Finney:** Please continue to pray for Ginny Beamish's sister, Em, as she continues to battle health issues. - **Michael Ham:** Please pray for Michael as he continues to struggle with serious health issues. - **Joe Valentine:** Please pray for Barb Bartel's son, Joe, as he continues to struggle with family issues. - **Erika, Logan and Brianna Wilson:** Please pray for Sharon's grandchildren that they may know the love, peace and grace of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Remember our homebound in your thoughts and prayers. Cards are welcome:

Barb Bartel: 4675 Orbison Rd., Troy, OH. 45373

Beulah Bowers: 1220 N. Dorset, Troy, OH 45373

Carletta Gritmaker: 2896 West Main Street, Troy, OH 45373

Joan Meredith: Garbry Ridge Room #103, 1567 Garbry Road, Piqua, OH 45356

Janet Walpole: c/o The Lindley Inn, 9000 Hocking Hills Dr, Room#144, The Plains, OH 45780 **Please note: Updates and/or amendments to the prayer list are appreciated. Typically, prayer requests will be removed after 4 weeks. If you or a loved one needs to remain on the list, please contact Betty Schaffner at 937-335-6713. Thank you.**

September 2022

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4 9:30a Worship	5 Office closed LABOR DAY	6 Office Closed	7 10a History Team Office Closed 6p Choir	8	9	10
11 9:30a Sun School 10:30a Worship	12 6:30p Trustee meeting	13	14 10a History Team 11:30a Ladies Fellowship 6p Choir	15	16	17
18 9:30a Sun School 10:30a Worship	19 6p Council Meeting	20	21 10a History Team 4:30p Ministry & Worship 6p Choir	22	23	24 3p Church Picnic at Troy Community Park
25 9:30a Sun School 10:30a Worship	26	27	28 10a History Team 6p Choir	29	30	