

Welcome Home

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



The Kingdom of Heaven is like...

When we think of the Kingdom of Heaven, we may envision a bright and beautiful place, where they have pearly white gates, where the streets are paved in gold, where everyone has a loving home, where the food is delicious and the coffee is amazing, where people are surrounded by their loved ones, where there is no more pain and suffering. The Kingdom of Heaven that we imagine would be a swanky place. Disney World would pale in comparison to the awesomeness and beauty that is, God's hangout place. The Kingdom of Heaven most certainly would be the happiest of all places.

In Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52, Jesus describes what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, but he says nothing about streets of gold and good food. Instead, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven is like a seed, a fungus, a treasure hidden, a clam byproduct, and a fishing device. I don't know about you but telling me that a place is like some yeast, which is a type of fungus—it is not your bestselling point.

It is easy to read Jesus's words and be confused, and Jesus's disciples were just as baffled and confused as we are. In many ways, Jesus sounded like Macgyver, finding purpose out of random objects. I could just imagine Jesus telling his disciples with only "one mustard seed, a lump of yeast, a hidden treasure, a pearl, and a fishing net. I am going to tell you about the secrets of the universe."



"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field."

— MATTHEW 13:44





St. John's

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



409 North Wooster Avenue
Dover, OH 44622



Sunday Morning Schedule
10:30 AM Worship



Rev. Dr. Cassandra Granados
Senior Minister



Natalie Peterman
Pastor of Congregational Life



Emaly Smallcombe
Administrative Assistant



Church Office Hours
Monday, Wednesday and Friday
10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
330-364-4458
Fax: 330-364-4459
Website: <http://doverstjohns.org>



E-mail Addresses:
natalie@doverstjohns.org
office@doverstjohns.org

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As random as Jesus may have sounded with his sermon illustrations, like most preachers, Jesus had a method to his madness. Many times, when we think of the Kingdom of Heaven, we think that it is something in the future. We think it is some place where we go after we die. However, Jesus's description of the Kingdom of Heaven was far different;

*for he describes it as something:
small, tangible, right here and right now,
wherever we are, in ways we never expect.*

Like yeast.

Like those yeast packets that you get at the grocery store. However, back in Jesus's day, the first century Jews ate unleavened bread. Yeast was considered taboo, ritually unclean, and impure. So, when Jesus says that the Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, I bet that must have sounded scandalous to hear that something taboo and completely outside of their religious community was like the Kingdom of Heaven. I bet there were some in the audience, whose eyebrows were raised, when they heard Jesus talk about yeast. Even more, the woman in the parable mixed yeast together with "3 measures of flour," which makes an extraordinary amount of bread—enough loaves to feed 100 people. Making that amount of bread is a sign of abundant generosity.



MATTHEW 13:33



"The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Blessing Box in Dover, OH: it's small, tangible, and blesses families who are struggling."

Again, Jesus describes the Kingdom of Heaven as like a mustard seed planted in a field: something small, tangible, in ways we never expect. One thing that we would never expect...is planting a tree in the middle of a corn field in Ohio. A random tree would disrupt the production of crops and disrupt the status quo. A tree also attracts birds to the middle of the field, which would seem to attract unwanted guests. However, the massive mustard tree in the middle of a field is a symbol of welcome.

Jesus's parables got me thinking about all the ways that I see the Kingdom of Heaven: in small, tangible, unexpected ways, right here and right now, outside of our church building.

Where do I see the Kingdom of Heaven? Well, like a random tree planted in a field, there is a random wooden box that is in the ground. It may not seem like much, but this box is a small symbol of welcome. This box does not ask questions or require intake information. It is just there in our north parking lot, waiting with some essentials for families in need: some clothes, soap, some toiletries, and some ingredients for making dinner. Every morning, it is faithfully filled, and by the evening, it is emptied. Families take what they need, and some leave what they can.

The ministry of our little box is like "3 measures of flour mixed with yeast." It is a sign of abundant generosity, every day.

The Kingdom of Heaven is like a Blessing Box in Dover, OH: it's small, tangible, and blesses families who are struggling. Amid a world of greed and selfishness, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a blessing box that welcomes everyone. Like yeast that leavens 3 measures of flour, our congregation's compassion and generosity helps more people than we will ever know. As a new school year begins, let us remember our little Blessing Box and the families who use it. We may never know the impact of our blessings.

*How do you see the kingdom of heaven in our world?
What small, tangible ways,
Right here and right now.
Wherever you are.
In ways you'd never expect.*

Grace & Peace,

Pastor Cassandra

September Anniversaries

Jonathan &
Bonnie Mason
9/3

William &
Linda Schilling
9/3

John &
June Wright
9/6

Nathan &
Julie Leggett
9/7

William &
Robin Swonger
9/8

Brent &
Michelle Devore
9/12

Steven &
Millie Frum
9/17

Robert &
Tammi Everett
9/18

Larry &
Kay Whitlach
9/19

Donald &
Joyce
Dummermuth
9/22

Ben &
Bobby Ballentine
9/24

Adam &
Cheryl Herman
9/25

Jeff &
Shelly Beitzel
9/27

Ronald &
Terri Smith
9/27

Don Maurer &
Margaret Ann
Brunner
9/30

Let all that you do be done in love.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:14

September BIRTHDAYS

9/1

- Glen Groh
- Andrew Klar

9/2

- Greg Herman

9/3

- Holli Immel-Keener

9/5

- James Boose
- Nicole Sears

9/6

- William Schilling

9/7

- Nathan Leggett II
- Lynne Telle
- Jennifer Turney

9/8

- Ethan Boose
- Janice Cooper
- Lindsay Pellegrino
- Christine Rossiter

9/9

- Justin Domer
- Ryan Harding
- Stephanie Ledyard
- Brad Swinderman

9/10

- Johnalee Duda
- Jennifer Immel
- Barbara Shreiner

9/11

- Helen Bierie
- Van Harmon
- Kelly Harrington

9/12

- Rachel Immel
- Jon Ladrach
- Stacey Maurer
- Thomas Paddock
- Joann Schoor
- Brooke Steiner

9/13

- Clara Clark
- Michelle Sayre
- Kelly Wallick

9/14

- Alaina Fisher
- Robert McCulloch
- Deborah Wallick

9/15

- Aaron Armstrong
- Tess Kirtz
- Hannah Klar
- Molly McCabe
- Dale Peacock
- Logan Varnes

9/16

- John Herzig
- Diane Uebel

9/17

- Rod Showers
- Samara Tschantz

9/18

- Ann Bambeck
- Amy Jo McMillen
- Matthew Shaffer

9/19

- John S. Feutz
- Grace Froman
- Michele Specht

9/20

- Kyle Swinderman

9/21

- Kaylee Kandel
- James Mervo Jr.
- Bonnie Shrock
- Hunter Smith

9/23

- Megan Floor
- Hugh Hart
- William Kelly
- Cindy Sawienck
- Jeffery Wallick

9/24

- Susan Engle
- Ray Hobson

9/25

- Tegan Courts
- Casey Fisher
- Chelsea Menapace

9/26

- Fred Herman
- Billy Hoover
- Corey Swinderman

9/27

- Robin Immel

9/28

- Marty Churnney
- Dylan Devore
- Linda Marks
- Susan Terazzi

9/29

- Matthew Hamm
- Rudy Tschantz
- Karen Wallick

9/30

- Kiley Duda
- Marcus Edwards
- Alyse Filippi
- Catherine McCulloch
- Lauren Powell

Rejoice with
those who rejoice.

Romans 12:15





ST. JOHN'S UCC

Church Council Meeting

AUGUST 11, 2026 • 7:30 PM

President Dave Gingrich called the meeting to order and lit the Christ Candle at 7:30pm, with 15 members present. Natalie Peterman gave the opening prayer. The minutes from the last meeting were approved with a notation of a typo in the Trustees' report.



TREASURER'S REPORT:

- General Fund income for the month was \$20,649
 - Expenses for the month were \$41,410
 - Resulting in a shortfall of \$20,761
- M/S/C by Rob Gump and Tim McCrate to approve the finance report.



PASTOR CASSANDRA REPORTED THE FOLLOWING (ON VACATION):

- Officiated graveside service for Bob Baker on July 31st
- Blessing of the Backpacks will be August 30th
- Praise in the Park will be September 20th
- Maternity leave November 30th through February 21st
- Working with Natalie & the Elders for coverage during her absence



NATALIE PETERMAN REPORTED ON THE FOLLOWING:

- August 13th interview with Committee on Ministry for pastor license
- Pastor Installation will be September 27th, reception to follow
- Rev. Bill Meyer will preach October 25th



SUE FERBRACHE REPORTS FOR THE ELDERS:

- Reception with cookies and beverages after Natalie's installation service
- Plans are being developed for Cassandra's maternity leave
- Natalie will be heavily involved during the absence
- Guest pastors will be secured to deliver the sermon for some services
- Calendar of activities throughout the year is being developed in conjunction with the pastoral staff
- Research is being compiled for a church-wide safety/security plan



ROB GUMP REPORTED FOR TRUSTEES:

- A temporary repair to the AC for the sanctuary has been completed, with final repairs to follow
- A plumbing leak in the Nursery, leaking into the basement, has been corrected by Peterman Plumbing
- Air conditioning unit in the basement utility room leaked, causing a "waterfall" when it was cleared. Dover/Phila Heating and Cooling fixed the problem
- Roof inspections have been completed for the insurance carrier and identified shingle damage that needs repaired at Fourth and Faith
- Project to remove the first pew on each side of the sanctuary will be completed in August, with carpet to be installed to keep the floor surface even



JEN CONKLE REPORTED FOR DEACONS:

- Ushers are secured for the month of September
- Chairs and tables at Fourth & Faith need cleaned. Requesting a group to help similar to a past project.



UPCOMING CONGREGATIONAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- FLOCK Summer Lunch Program - Mondays through August 17th
- Card Party at Fourth and Faith - August 12th (benefit cancer care bags)
- Chancel Choir practice resumes August 26th - First Sunday, September 13th
- Backpack Blessing - August 30th during worship
- Bible Study - September 1st and 15th at Fourth & Faith
- Bad Girls Book Club resumes in September - 2nd Monday monthly
- Chair Yoga resumes in September - 10am Mon/Thur at Fourth & Faith
- Needles and Hookers resumes September 14th
- Praise in the Park - September 20th at Deis Hill Park
- Craft Show and Bake Sale - November 7th at Fourth & Faith

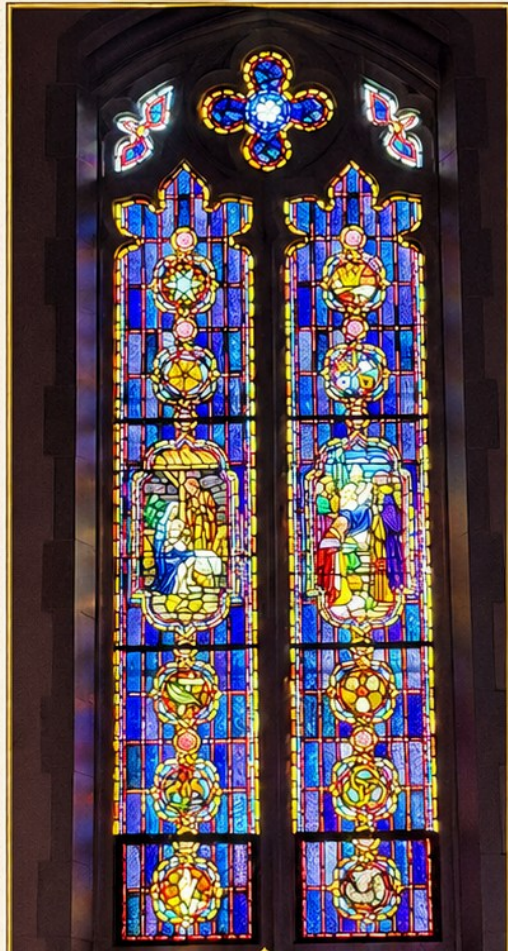


CLOSING BUSINESS:

Unfinished Business - none
New Business - none
Meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m. with the Lord's Prayer.

A Window Into Christmas & Epiphany

Discover the Meaning Behind the Symbols in Our Sanctuary Window



Our Christmas & Epiphany Window

The left panel tells the Christmas story; the right panel reflects Epiphany and the gifts of the Magi.

LOOK CLOSELY!

From the Creator's Star at the top to the symbols of the Trinity below, each detail was chosen to teach, remember and proclaim the Christian story.

CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:1-7

The Baby Jesus with Mary and Joseph in the stable at Bethlehem.



CREATOR'S STAR

The points can recall the six days of creation. It can also stand for God reminding us of his power, wisdom, majesty, love, mercy and justice. The Creator's Star is not only the first symbol to appear in the windows but it reappears in the Victory Window as the last symbol, denoting the ever present God in the life of Jesus Christ.



CHRISTMAS ROSE

The rose has many meanings in Christian symbolism. The Christmas Rose stands for the Nativity and messianic prophecy. A rose is a symbol for the Virgin Mary.



CROSS & PALM

The cross is the ultimate symbol of the church with meanings of sacrifice, triumph and victory. It is a familiar symbol for Christ. The palm can mean peace, heaven and hope.



FLOWER (IRIS)

Interpreted as an Iris, it stands for Mary, mother of Jesus. All flowers symbolize beauty and loveliness.



HAND OF GOD

The upraised hand without the three-rayed nimbus expresses the benediction. The three extended fingers suggest the Holy Trinity while the two closed fingers denote the twofold nature of the Son. This shows the Father as the One who blesses.

EPIPHANY

Matt. 2:1-12

The Magi present their gifts of a gold crown, frankincense and myrrh to the Christ Child.



CROSS & CROWN ATOP THE BIBLE

The cross and crown are symbols of the reward of the faithful in the life after death to those who believe. "Be thou faithful unto death" and I will give thee a crown of life." The open Bible symbolizes that the Word of God is accessible to all the world.



CROSSED KEYS

The gold and silver keys, with a cross above them, refer to Simon Peter. They recall his confession and our Lord's gift to Peter — the keys to the kingdom.



THREE SCALLOP SHELLS

This is the symbol for St. James the Greater. A scallop shell is a symbol for pilgrimage and stands for this apostle's zeal and missionary spirit.



THREE GOLDEN CIRCLES

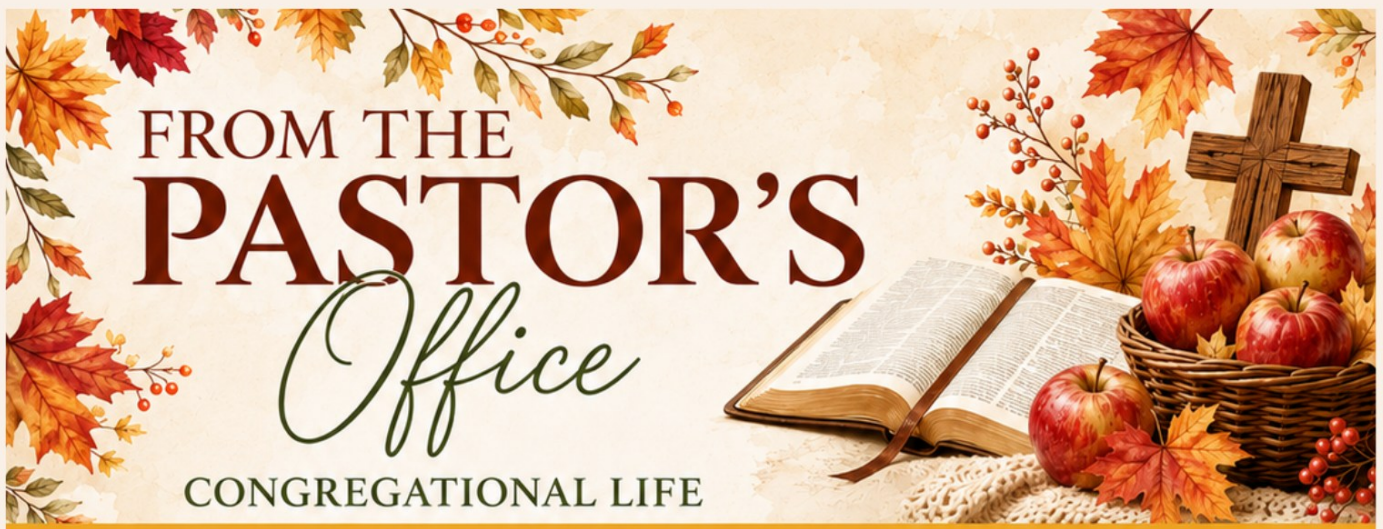
These circles of equal size and interwoven show the equality and unity of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.



THREE FISH

Another symbol of the Holy Trinity, three fish in a circle signify that man's salvation comes from a Triune God. The fish is an ancient symbol of our Lord.

*These symbols remind us of God's story — and our place in it.
May they inspire your faith today and always!*



Called to This Place

As September begins, I find myself stepping into a season of change, growth and gratitude. Over the past months, I have been balancing classes, ministry and the many moments of learning that come with serving in a new way. If I am honest, there have been times when I have felt overwhelmed and times when I have wondered if I am truly worthy enough to serve. But again and again, God has met me in those moments and reminded me that a call is not about having everything figured out, it is about being willing to listen and trust.

*"Speak, Lord,
for your servant is listening."*

1 Samuel 3:10

This month, that reminder feels especially meaningful as I look ahead to my installation on September 27th. It is a joyful milestone, but also a humbling one. When people have asked why I feel called to serve, the answer is simple, because of the people of St. John's. When I first moved to Dover, it did not feel like home. That changed when I found St. John's. In this church, I found welcome, belonging and a community where I could grow in faith and in service.



The story of Samuel has stayed with me during this season. Samuel heard God calling, but at first he did not understand what was happening. It took someone helping him recognize God's voice before he could answer. I think many of us know what that feels like. Sometimes God is at work in our lives before we fully see it. Sometimes we need others to help us notice what God is doing and to encourage us to respond.

I am grateful for the ways this congregation has helped me see more clearly, listen more closely and say yes more faithfully. Thank you for your encouragement, your prayers and the many ways you make this church a place of love and welcome. My hope is that every person who walks through our doors, whether visiting for the first time or returning as a longtime member, will feel that same sense of home.

As we begin this new season together, may we keep listening for God's voice, trusting God's leading and opening our hearts to the work God is still doing among us.

*"I will go, Lord, if you lead me.
I will hold your people in my heart."*

Here I am, Lord

Dan Schutte

Blessings,

Natalie

Pastor of Congregational Life

THANK YOU for being part of this journey with me.

God is faithful, and our best days are still ahead.

2026 FALL CALENDAR

YOUTH & FAMILY MINISTRY
DOVER ST. JOHN'S UCC



Fourth & Faith Kids (K-5): 1st Monday of the Month, meets at Fourth & Faith (5:30-7 PM)



6-12th Grade Youth Group: Second & Fourth Sunday evenings (5:30-7 PM)



These activities are open to all youth in our community, dinner is included for both groups. Families are invited to attend our church events too!



SEPTEMBER

Theme: Called Together

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

OCTOBER

Theme: Paint Tusc Pink

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

NOVEMBER

Theme: Thankful & Service

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

DECEMBER

Theme: Advent & Christmas

T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30
31				

No regular 6-12 youth group meetings in December.

LEGEND



Fourth & Faith Kids (K-5)



6-12 Youth Group



Special Events

★ UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

SEP 13

6-12 Youth Group – Called Together



SEP 14

Fourth & Faith Kids – Discovering Faith Together



SEP 20

Special Church Service – Praise in the Park at Deis Hill at 10:30 AM



SEP 27

6-12 Youth Group – Do You Believe?



OCT 4

Special Family Worship Service – Team Spirit Sunday
Wear your favorite team jersey to worship



OCT 5

Fourth & Faith Kids – Paint Tusc Pink



OCT 11

6-12 Youth Group – Paint Tusc Pink: Caring for Others



OCT 25

6-12 Youth Group – Fall Fun Night
Games, friends & more!



NOV 2

Fourth & Faith Kids – Thankful Hearts, Helping Hands



NOV 8

6-12 Youth Group – Veterans & Service Night



NOV 22

6-12 Youth Group – Friendsgiving
Invite your friends!



NOV 29

Advent Festival – First Sunday of Advent
All Church Luncheon & Youth Window Painting



DEC 6

Youth Pageant
Featuring the youth of St. John's



DEC 7

Fourth & Faith Kids
Regular session at Fourth & Faith, 5:30-7 PM, dinner included



DEC 19

Youth Live Nativity – Saturday
7:00, 7:30, 8:00 & 8:30 PM
Front Lawn of St. John's



DEC 20

Youth Live Nativity – Sunday
7:00, 7:30, 8:00 & 8:30 PM
Front Lawn of St. John's



DEC 24

Christmas Eve Worship Services 3PM & 7PM



Questions? Contact Natalie Peterman, Pastor of Congregational Life
natalie@doverstjohns.org



Elder OF THE MONTH



Dan Hurst
330-827-8217

September USHERS

- ★ **Head Usher** – Adam Herman
- 👤 **Berit McMillan**
- 👤 **Patty Feutz**
- 👤 **Marlene Tschudy**



Thank You!

A special thanks to
**Belinda Lentz, Heather Smith,
June Wright, Barb Lengler,
and Jen Conkle**

for their commitment and
dedication to serving the

Summer FLOCK Program!



Nursing Home MEMBERS



- ♥ **CJ Struhar** – *New Dawn Assisted Living*
- ♥ **Linda Schilling** – *Park Village*
- ♥ **Jim Cotton** – *Park Village Independent Living*
- ♥ **Don Page** – *Park Village New Phila*
- ♥ **Carol Sue Keener** – *Park Village New Phila*
- ♥ **Norma Haglock** – *Inn at Northwood*
- ♥ **John Bowers** – *Inn at Northwood*
- ♥ **Dotty Hartzell** – *Canton Christian Home*
- ♥ **Karen Stokey** – *Hennis*



Thank You!



A special thanks to all of our

Guest Singers

and

Organ Players

for sharing your gifts and
enriching our worship services
throughout the summer!



Your time • Your talents • Your service make a difference.

≡ *Thank you!* ≡



Fall Activities at St. John's



Join us for worship, fellowship, learning, music, and community this season!



St. John's Chancel Choir

If you enjoy praising God with singing, wonderful fellowship and laughter, St. John's Chancel Choir is just for you. We are looking for anyone that enjoys singing to join us on Wednesday evenings to be a part of this wonderful ministry at St. John's UCC. You do not have to have a solo voice to be a member of the choir. A love of singing God's praise, the ability to laugh, and a small amount of your time is all that is needed.

Our goal is to present a variety of musical styles throughout the year that not only praise God, but in some way help bring the Spirit of God into the hearts of the listeners, as well as the singers.

If you have any questions or concerns, you may contact Jeanne Baker at 330-308-9361 or talk with any choir member.

Rehearsals
begin on Wednesday,
August 26, 2026
at 7:00 PM in the choir room
on the second floor.
Our first Sunday to sing
in worship is
September 13, 2026.

We would love to have you
join us and help us keep this
wonderful ministry alive!



Chair Yoga

We will be starting Chair Yoga at 4th and Faith on September 10, 2026 at 10:00 AM, then Monday and Thursday each week after.

Bring a friend to enjoy the stretch, relaxation, and fellowship. All are welcome.

Needles and Hookers

Needles and Hookers will start back in the fall on Monday, September 14. We meet from 2:00 to 3:30 in the Fellowship Center. We would love to have new members join our group.



Adult Contemporary Class

The Adult Contemporary Class will be meeting again on September 13 at 9:00 in the Conference Room when we'll be taking about six weeks to cover Amy Jill Levine's book *Signs and Wonders*, which she describes as *A Beginner's Guide to the Miracles of Jesus*. Levine has been informative about the understandings of Jesus' actions and statements during his lifetime on earth, and the class members are looking forward to discussing her ideas in this book. Please join us on September 13 for increasing understanding of Jesus' message.



Bad Girls Book Club

After an eventful year of reading for our book club, the Bad Girls will be enjoying the summer with their own book choices. We will meet again on September 14 at 6:30 in the Conference Room when we discuss *The Nightingale* by Kristin Hannah.



Boy Scouts

Interested in joining the Boy Scouts? Local boys ages 11 and older are invited to learn more and get involved! For more information, please contact Mark Perry at 330-204-5975.



Bible Study

September 1 and 15 at 11:30 at Fourth and Faith. Any questions, contact Natalie Peterman at 330-795-6605. No matter your level of Bible knowledge or experience, all are welcome! Come learn, ask questions and grow in faith together.



Together in Faith

"Let us consider how we may
spur one another on toward love
and good deeds."
Hebrews 10:24

SEPTEMBER 2026

ST. JOHN'S UCC • MONTH AT A GLANCE

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1 Bible Study 11:30 AM F&F	2 Chancel Choir 7 PM	3	4	5
6 - Worship 10:30 AM - Communion	7 Office Closed <i>Happy Labor Day!</i> 	8 - First Day of Preschool - Elders / Trustees / Deacons 6:30 PM - Council Mtg 7:30 PM	9 - Card Party 1-4 PM F&F - Chancel Choir 7 PM	10 Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F	11 9/11 WE REMEMBER 	
13 - Contemporary Class 9 AM - Worship 10:30 AM	14 - Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F - Needles & Hookers 2 PM Fellowship Hall - Bad Girls Book Club 6:30 PM C.R.	15 Bible Study 11:30 AM F&F	16 Chancel Choir 7 PM	17 Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F	18	19
20 - Praise in the Park - Worship 10:30 AM	21 - Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F - Needles & Hookers 2 PM Fellowship Hall	22	23 Chancel Choir 7 PM	24 Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F	25	26
27 - Contemporary Class 9 AM - Worship 10:30 AM	28 - Chair Yoga 10 AM F&F - Needles & Hookers 2 PM Fellowship Hall	29	30 Chancel Choir 7 PM	 <i>A warm welcome to a new season of worship, learning, fellowship, and music.</i>		