

St. John's Welcome Home

Volume 57
Issue 1

HELLO
January

Pastor's Desk

2025 Ministry
in Review



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**St. John's
United Church of Christ**
409 North Wooster Avenue
Dover, OH 44622

Rev. Dr. Cassandra Granados
Senior Minister

Natalie Peterman
Director of Christian Education

Emaly Smallcombe
Administrative Assistant

Sunday Morning Schedule
10:30 AM Worship

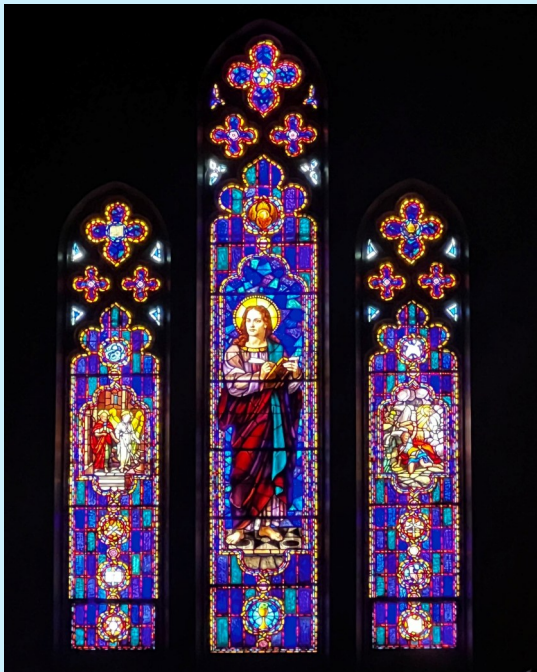
Church Office Hours
Monday through Friday
9 AM - 3 PM

Telephone answers
24 hours a day
330-364-4458

Fax: 330-364-4459

Website: <http://doverstjohns.org>

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



As we reflect on the year 2025, we are filled with gratitude for God's faithfulness among us—through moments of growth, challenge, service, and grace. We have seen lives touched, relationships strengthened, and God at work in ways both big and small. As we look ahead to 2026, we do so with hopeful hearts, trusting that the Lord is already preparing new opportunities to deepen our faith, strengthen our community, and continue sharing His love. With thanksgiving for what has been and excitement for what is to come.

We look forward to walking alongside you in the year ahead, faithfully supporting you and being there for you every step of the way.

Prayer List

- ☐ Ways to be added to the prayer list:
☐ Call Marge at 330-343-1731 or
☐ The church office at 330-364-4458
☐ Email office@doverstjohns.org

**ENCOURAGE ONE ANOTHER AND BUILD
ONE ANOTHER UP, JUST AS YOU ARE DOING.**

1 THESSALONIANS 5:11



To better serve our congregation, we now provide the contact information for the **Elder of the Month**.

This gives you an extra person to reach out to, alongside Rev. Cassandra, if you ever have a personal or family emergency.

Tim McCrate—330-243-3561
2009 Tremont Street—Dover, OH 44622

Family Members in Nursing Homes

Park Village - Linda Schilling
 Park Village Independent Living - Jim Cotton
 Park Village New Phila - Don Page
 Park Village New Phila - Carol Sue Keener
 Inn at Northwood - Norma Haglock
 New Dawn Assisted Living - Clara Struhar
 Canton Christian Home - Dotty Hartzell

BIRTHDAYS

1

Kenneth Huprich
Samantha Sayre
Zack Wallick

2

Joshua Baumberger

5

Jason Jones
Nadine Russell
Kennedy Wallick

7

Larry McMillan

8

Holly Klar
David Worth

10

Ellen Keener
Doug Peterman Jr.

11

Gavin Herman

12

Renee Ladrach
William McCrate

13

James Cox
Abby Dryden

15

Stephanie Sayre
Gale Varnes

16

John Deitrick
Joshua Devore
Jennifer Lauber
Nancy Smith

BIRTHDAYS

17

Jayne Armstrong

18

Lindsay McIlvaine

20

Judy Wherley

21

Kathleen Baker
Jim Murphy

22

Koen Schwenk

23

Sue Dummermuth
Michael Edwards

24

Gemma Dotts

25

Dan Dearth
Taylor Matthews

28

Rita Wallick

29

Adam Herman
Cooper Russell

30

Zach Meechan
Michael Smith

31

Scott Hart
David Schaar



ANNIVERSARIES

JANUARY 6TH, 2026

ROBERT & JUDY CLINTON
CELEBRATING 53 YEARS

JANUARY 21ST, 2026

DENNIS & RITA WALICK
CELEBRATING 37 YEARS

JANUARY 31ST, 2026

JEFFREY & DEBBIE WALICK
CELEBRATING 55 YEARS

We give thanks for the couples in our church family who are celebrating another year of marriage. Each shared year is a testament to faithfulness, patience, forgiveness, and love.

As you continue to walk together through life's joys and challenges, your commitment reflects God's enduring love and brings glory



St. John's UCC Church Council Meeting November 11, 2025 at 7:30 pm

Opening Prayer: Dave Gingrich opened the meeting and Reverend Cassandra Granados gave the opening prayer. There were 13 members present.

Minutes of Last Meeting: One typo was noted, approved as corrected.

Treasurer's Report:

Month of November 2025

General fund income for the month of \$16,335 is \$12,773 less than budget.

Expenses for the month of \$24,235 were under the budget by \$9,857.

Resulting shortfall for the month of \$7,900 is \$2,916 worse the budget.

November 2025 YTD

General fund income year-to-date of \$220,477 is **\$51,011 less than the budget.**

Compared to last year through the same month (center column) **income is lower by \$40,277.**

Expenses year-to-date of \$334,807 were less than budget by \$45,277.

Resulting shortfall year-to-date of \$114,331 is \$6,005 worse than the budget.

Cash

Beginning cash balance for the year was \$25,146 and ending cash is \$16,054.

We have transferred \$97,855 from investments to cover general fund expenses.

M/S/C by Sue Ferbrache and Jen Conkle

Senior Minister's Report

Reverend Cassandra's report stated:

Past Events:

Natalie Peterman, Emaly Smallcombe, and Cassandra Granados attended Kingdom Coalition's meeting on November 12th. The coalition is an ecumenical group of ministers. They had a panel of ministers discuss the importance of soul-care and sabbath, amid the busy holiday season.

Cassandra was on vacation from November 17th-23rd to celebrate her wedding anniversary and Jatin's birthday. Cassandra taught the St. John's Pre-school (4- and 5-year-olds) on November 25th. The children learned about "giving thanks" and "counting our blessings". Cassandra will teach again on December 17th.

Upcoming Events:

Christmas Candlelight services will be on December 24th at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. In lieu of a sermon during the Christmas Eve services, we will be offering an original play called, "The Perfect Present!", which offers a modern reading of Luke 2:8-20. The play is written in the couplet rhyme scheme of "Twas the Night Before Christmas".

Planning for a new membership class.

Director of CE Report

Natalie Peterman reported:

December has been a busy and meaningful month in Christian Education. We hosted our Advent Festival and an all-church luncheon with over 50 people in attendance. During the festival, the youth painted the windows in the cloister and rehearsed for the Christmas pageant. Our Family Sunday service featured the Youth Christmas Pageant, which included 13 of our church youth.

We are preparing for our two-night Live Nativity on December 20th and 21st. Our youth have also taken on the Advent lantern lighting each week and have been meeting with older members of the congregation for conversation and the symbolic lighting of the candle. Seniors, confirmands, and younger youth have all stepped in to help where needed.

Looking ahead, we already have a busy start to 2026, including:

- Confirmation beginning in January
- Homeless awareness weekend – February 14th - 15th
- Planning a youth retreat
- A special Youth Sunday honoring our seniors
- Assisting with Tuff bags – April 11th
- Summer community outreach projects

We are grateful for the continued support of the congregation as we grow our youth and family ministries.

Reports of the Boards

Elders/Sue Ferbrache reported:

- Discussed January 4th celebration of Marge Burkhardt's 70 years as our awesome organist. A reception will be held after church.
- Discussed a facilitator or two will be needed for short term Bible Studies from prepared curriculum; will request volunteers.
- Advent offering proceeds to be split between our Blessing Box and Good Bread from Good People, a Ukraine organization that offering individuals with intellectual disabilities a chance for a full life and true integration into society.

Trustees

Rob Gump reported:

- Getting quotes for heating repair in the social hall kitchen
- Downspout outside of the lounge / youth room section of the building has been replaced to eliminate leakage in the walls
- Repairs are being completed to the rain gutter at Fourth & Faith to eliminate water draining onto the sidewalk and forming ice
- Looking at an upgrade to the remote door locks for the Cloister and CE Building. The current camera / door release system is outdated and not working well. This is a security issue for the office staff to know who is requesting entry into the buildings.

Deacons

Jen Conkle reported:

- Ushers and communion servers are filled for December
- The January 4th usher and communion server training that was to be held after worship is being rescheduled

Youth Representative on Council

Nolan Peterman reported:

Busy month! Advent Festival – painted windows; youth helped with youth Sunday script and helped plan for next year.

Reports of Committees

Constitution Review Committee:

- Dave Gingrich and Sue Ferbrache presented recommended updates to the St. John's Constitution & Bylaws. The primary changes are to reduce the number of Trustees, Elders and Board of Christian Education Council positions, modify the term limits and combine some sections that were duplicated throughout the document. M/S/C by Sue Ferbrache and Holly Gonter with one abstention.
- A summary of the proposed changes will be distributed to the congregation with the notice of the Annual Congregational Meeting to be held on Sunday, January 18. Copies of the proposed revised Constitution & Bylaws will be available in the church office.



Congregational Activities

Card Party at Fourth & Faith – Dec 10 (2nd Wed monthly) – benefit Cancer Bags

Fellowship Sunday – 1st Sunday each month with season theme – January 11th.

Sunday School lesson; Fellowship; Attend worship together

Live Nativity on Front Lawn – December 20th and 21st

Christmas Eve services – 3pm and 7pm

Confirmation Classes – Jan – May (Jan 11th and Jan 25th)

Adult Contemporary Sunday School – Sundays at 9am

Bad Girls Book Club – 2nd Monday monthly

Chair Yoga – Mon & Thurs at Fourth & Faith

Baby shower for Emaly Smallcombe will be held Saturday, January 10th – all welcome!

Unfinished Business

None

New Business

The Deacons shared a list of Usher Responsibilities/Building Security. The list continues to be updated and will be reviewed with anyone wishing to serve as an usher at a meeting to be scheduled in January.

A summary of activities / accomplishments from all boards and committees, to be published in the St. John's Annual Report, need to be to Emaly as soon as possible.

Annual Congregational Meeting to be held Sunday, January 18th following worship

We need an Administrative Assistant in the church office to cover for Emaly's maternity leave during the February-April 2026 timeframe. The office is open Monday-Friday, and this temporary position may be filled by one person or shared among multiple individuals working part-time a couple of days per week. This will be a paid position, and responsibilities include answering phones, printing bulletins, news inserts, and general office duties.

Closing with the Lord's Prayer

November Financial Report

Actual Income \$16,335

Actual Expenses \$24,235

Average Worship
Attendance 94



Have a very
Merry Christmas

**YOU ARE INVITED TO A
CARD PARTY!**



**GET READY FOR AN AFTERNOON OF CARDS,
LAUGHTER, AND GOOD COMPANY!**

JAN 14, 2026 | 1-4 PM

**FOURTH & FAITH
BEV - 330-343-2231**

Confirmation Class

January 11th and 25th

Questions - Contact Natalie Peterman
at 330-795-6056



Chair Yoga
Mondays & Thursdays
10 AM at Fourth
and Faith

Adult Contemporary
Sunday School
9 AM

**Hookers and
Needles Mondays**
at 2 PM

Chancel Choir
Wednesdays at 7 PM

Handbell Choir
Sundays at 11:30 AM

IT'S A GIRL!

**Baby
Shower
for
Emaly
Smallcombe**

**SATURDAY,
JANUARY 10, 2026
1:00-3:00
ST. JOHN'S FOURTH
AND FAITH**

COME JOIN THE CELEBRATION!

**PLEASE RSVP BY JAN. 3, 2026
TO:
BEV - 330-827-2230
BARB - 330-663-6949
JEN - 330-691-1559**



Calling All Book Lovers!

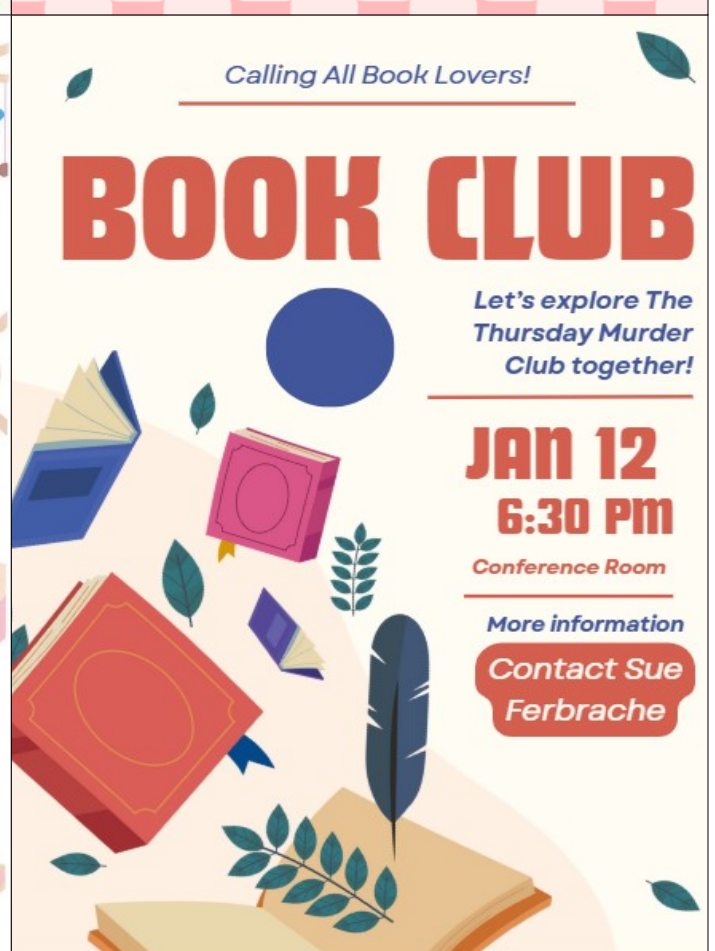
BOOK CLUB

*Let's explore The
Thursday Murder
Club together!*

**JAN 12
6:30 PM**

Conference Room

*More information
Contact Sue
Ferbrache*



Office of Christian Education

Looking Back with Gratitude, Stepping Forward with Faith

As we begin a new year together, I find myself reflecting on all that God has been doing through Christian Education at St. John's. This past year was FULL! It was full of events, conversations, service and shared moments, but more importantly, it was full of connection. We spent time raising awareness around homelessness, inviting our youth and families to look beyond themselves and notice the needs of others. Our youth group gathered regularly, not just for activities but for relationship building, laughter and faith conversations. We supported the Blessing Box, a quiet but powerful ministry that continues to offer care to our community day after day. We shared a meaningful Friendsgiving, where food and fellowship reminded us how important it is simply to sit at the table together. During Advent, our youth pageant and lantern visits brought generations together in worship. We truly had a year filled with growth, service and relationships that continue to shape our faith.

All of these moments matter. They take planning, coordination and energy. But what matters most is not the event itself, it's what we take with us afterward. The compassion that grows. The confidence our youth gain. The reminder that faith is something we live, not just something we talk about on Sunday mornings.

As January often brings talk of resolutions and fresh starts, I find myself thinking less about doing something brand new and more about taking the next faithful step. We don't need to reinvent ourselves or set impossible expectations. Instead, we are invited to trust God with where we are and listen for where God is gently leading us next. That may look like showing up more fully. It may look like serving in a new way or simply deepening an existing relationship. It may look like pausing, listening and trusting that God is already at work, even when the path ahead isn't completely clear.

As we move into this new year, my hope is that Christian Education at St. John's continues to be a place where faith is nurtured, questions are welcomed and all generations feel connected. I am deeply thankful for the youth, families, volunteers and church leaders who make this ministry possible and for the many blessings we have shared along the way.

May we step into this year with open hearts, trusting God not to make us brand new, but to walk with us as we take the next step together.

Blessings,
Natalie Peterman
Director of Christian Education

Youth Christmas Pageant & Cast Party



Live Nativity, Saturday



Live Nativity, Sunday

ADVENT 2025

Advent at St. John's was filled with light, tradition and connection, from our annual Advent Festival and window painting to meaningful lantern visits, leading us together toward the joyful celebration of Christ's birth.



Glen Groh

Mason Locke and Cole Griesen visited Glen Groh as they prepared to light the second candle of Advent, the Candle of Peace. During their visit, Glen shared stories from his years as a teacher and principal, his love of working with children and the peace he finds in nature.



Margery "Marge" Burkhart

Elle Hall and Laney Gottshall visited with Marge Burkhart as they prepared to light the first candle of Advent, the Candle of Hope. During the visit, Marge shared stories from her nearly 70 years of playing the organ at St. John's, her love for the people she has met through the church and the special role music has played in her family.



Belinda Lentz

Tori Griesen visited Belinda Lentz as she prepared to light the third candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy. During their visit, Belinda shared how the Blessing Box helps care for our community by providing food and necessities to those in need, and why this ministry is so important to St. John's. Belinda lit the Advent lantern, passing on the light later used to light the third candle of Advent, the Candle of Joy.





Dotty Hartzell

Camryn Hurst and Bridget McCrate connected with Pastor Dotty Hartzell (retired) as they prepared to light the fourth candle of Advent. During their conversation, Pastor Dotty reflected on her call to ministry, her years of service in visitation and the importance of staying connected with those who are unable to attend worship in person. Pastor Dotty lit the Advent lantern, passing on the light later used to light the Candle of Love.

Chancel Choir

Nolan Peterman visited the Chancel Choir on behalf of our youth to invite them to light the Advent lantern in honor of their faithful ministry.

The Chancel Choir is a longstanding and dedicated part of worship at St. John's, offering music every Sunday from Labor Day through Memorial Day, as well as during special services throughout the year. Many members have served in the choir for decades, sharing their gifts with care and devotion. Gavin Herman lit the Advent candles on Christmas Eve at the 7PM service, in honor of the Chancel Choir and their continued faithfulness in worship.



Handbell Choir

Scarlett Peterman and Eleanor Spinell visited the Handbell Choir and director Nancy Smith as they prepared to light the Advent Candle on Christmas Eve, 3PM service. During their visit, they learned that the Handbell Choir has been part of St. John's since 1968, with Nancy Smith being the longest-ringing member. The choir shared that their favorite part of ringing bells is making music together, bringing joy to worship and praising God through their music, a ministry rooted in togetherness and shared faith.



JANUARY

<u>Sun</u>	<u>Mon</u>	<u>Tue</u>	<u>Wed</u>	<u>Thu</u>	<u>Fri</u>	<u>Sat</u>
				1 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	2	3 RSVP deadline for baby shower
4 9:00 Adult Con- temporary Class 10:30 Worship 70th Celebration following worship	5 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	6 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos Office closes at 1	7 Choir 7 PM	8 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	9	10 Baby Shower for Emaly Smallcombe 1-3 PM at F&F
11 9:00 Adult Con- temporary Class Fellowship Sunday 10:30 Worship 11:30 Hand Bells 11:30 Confirmation Class	12 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers Bad Girls Book Club 6:30 PM 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	13 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos 6:30 PM Elders / Trustees / Deacons 7:30 PM Council Mtg Office closes at 12	14 Card Party 1-4 @ F&F Choir 7 PM	15 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	16	17
18 9:00 Adult Con- temporary Class 10:30 Worship Congregational Hand Bells 11:30	19 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	20 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos Office closes at 1	21 Choir 7 PM	22 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	23	24
25 9:00 Adult Con- temporary Class 10:30 Worship 11:30 Hand Bells 11:30 Confirmation Class	26 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F 2 PM Needles & Hookers 7 PM Boy Scouts 7 PM Al-Anon & Alateen	27 6:30 PM Cub Scouts/Webelos Office closes at 1	28 Choir 7 PM	29 10 AM Chair Yoga @ F&F	30	31 <div>48 days until Spring!</div>