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Rebekah Reece, Pianist

July 26, 2026 • 11:00 a.m.
Ninth Sunday After Pentecost

**You are invited to stand in body or in spirit*

ANNOUNCEMENTS

PRELUDE

PASSING OF THE PEACE

CALL TO WORSHIP

L: This is a place of safety. This is a time of comfort.

P: **Here and now the God who made the universe waits to embrace us.**

L: Here and now, we come to feel God's healing touch again. With all that we are- parts that are whole and parts that are broken; parts that are well and parts that are sick; parts that are joyful and parts that are in pain.

P: **With all that we are, we come to worship You, O God, for You are gracious, merciful and kind, and we long to find our rest in You. Amen**

***OPENING HYMN #41** "God Is So Good"

*** PRAYER OF INVOCATION**

Almighty God, you spoke to our ancestors long ago through Your prophets and teachers, but today You speak to us through Your Son. In the midst of life's trials and tribulations, help us keep our integrity and walk faithfully in Your ways. Help us listen to the words of Your Son and become like children again, so that we may rejoice in Your kingdom and trust in Your Spirit. **Amen.**

***PRAYER OF CONFESSION**

L; Let us open our lives to God's searching gaze.

P: **Dear God of mercy and compassion we acknowledge that we are not all that we would like to be. We carry wounds and regrets, some of which are of our own design, and some of which we have received from others. We acknowledge our failings, our bitterness and our hatred, and ask You to heal us.**

A time for silent confession.

L: Of all our sin,

P: Forgive us.

L: O God in all our weakness,

P: strengthen us, O God.

L: From all our diseases,

P: heal us, O God. Amen.

***WORDS OF ASSURANCE**

Cease your fearful worry! God's love is lavished upon you. It is always there for you, offering healing and hope. Rest in God's love. **Amen!**

INSTALLATION OF DEACONS AND ELDERS

PASTOR: Dear friends,

you have been called by God and chosen by the people of God for leadership in the church. This ministry is a blessing and a serious responsibility. It recognizes your special gifts and calls you to work among us and for us. In love, we thank you for accepting your obligation and challenge you to offer your best to the Lord, to this people, and to our ministry in the world. Live a life in Christ and make him known in your witness and your work.

Today we install Scott Benfer and Linda Wampler as Deacons, and Dena Eberhart as an Elder.

Do you this day acknowledge yourself a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ?

(Deacons/Elder Respond): **I do.**

Will you devote yourself to the service of God in the world?

(Deacons/Elder Respond): **I will.**

Will you so live that you enable this church to be a people of love and peace?

(Deacons/Elder Respond): **I will.**

Will you do all in your power to be responsible to the task for which you have been chosen?

(Deacons/Elder Respond): **I will.**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, pour out your blessings upon these your servants, who have been given particular ministries in your church. Grant them grace to give themselves wholeheartedly in your service. Keep before them the example of our Lord, who did not think first of himself, but gave himself for us all. Let them share his ministry and consecration, that they may enter into his joy. Guide them in their work. Reward their faithfulness with the knowledge that through them your purposes are accomplished; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The pastor addresses the congregation:

Dear friends, rejoice that God provides laborers for the vineyards. Will you do all you can to assist and encourage them in the responsibilities to which they have been called, giving them your cooperation, your counsel, and your prayers?

The congregation responds: **We will.**

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH *The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: And in Jesus Christ His only Son, our Lord, Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried. He descended into Hades; the third day, He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of God, the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

HYMN #42 "Seek Ye First"

ORDER OF BAPTISM

PASTOR: Members and friends in Christ, we gather now to celebrate the gift of grace in the sacrament of baptism.

PEOPLE: There is one body and one Spirit. There is one hope in God's call to us.

PASTOR: There is one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Creator of us all.

ADDRESS

PASTOR: Jesus came to John to be baptized by him. But John tried to make him change his mind. "I ought to be baptized by you," John said, yet you have come to me!" Jesus said, "Let it be so for now. For in this way, we shall do all that God requires." So John agreed. As soon as Jesus was baptized, he came up out of the water. Then heaven was opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God coming down like a dove and lighting on him.

PEOPLE: Then a voice said from heaven, "This is my own dear Son, with whom I am well pleased."

PASTOR: At another time Jesus said: Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

PASTOR: The sacrament of baptism is an outward and visible sign of the grace of God.

PEOPLE: This is the water of baptism.

Out of this water we rise with new life, forgiven of sin and one in Christ, members of Christ's body.

Pastor: Do you desire to be baptized into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

CANDIDATE: I do.

PASTOR addressing the candidate: Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?

CANDIDATE: I do.

PASTOR: Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

CANDIDATE: I do.

Pastor: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

CANDIDATE: I promise, with the help of God.

Pastor: Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?

CANDIDATE: I promise, with the help of God.

CONGREGATIONAL ASSENT

**All who are able may stand as the congregation is asked to make promises.*

PASTOR: Jesus Christ calls us to make disciples of all nations and to offer them the gift of grace in baptism. Do you, who witness and celebrate this sacrament, promise your love, support, and care to the ones about to be baptized, as they live and grow in Christ?

PEOPLE: We promise our love, support, and care.

AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

PASTOR: Do you believe in God?

PEOPLE: I believe in God.

PASTOR: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

PEOPLE: I believe in Jesus Christ.

PASTOR: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

PEOPLE: I believe in the Holy Spirit.

PRAYER OF BAPTISM

(The congregation may be seated)

PASTOR: Christ be with you.

PEOPLE: And also with you.

PASTOR: Let us pray.

We thank you, God, for the gift of creation called forth by your saving Word. Before the world had shape and form, your Spirit moved over the waters.

Out of the waters of the deep, you formed the firmament and brought forth the earth to sustain all life. In the time of Noah, you washed the earth with the waters of the flood, and your ark of salvation bore a new beginning. In the fullness of time, you sent Jesus Christ, who was nurtured in the water of Mary's womb. Jesus was baptized by John in the water of the Jordan, became living water to a woman at the Samaritan well, washed the feet of the disciples, and sent them forth to baptize all the nations by water and the Holy Spirit.

(The water may be visibly poured.)

Bless by your Holy Spirit, gracious God, this water. By your Holy Spirit save those who confess the name of Jesus Christ that sin may have no power over them. Create new life in the one / all baptized this day that she he/they may rise in Christ. Glory to you, eternal God, the one who was, and is, and shall always be, world without end. Amen.

PASTOR (addressing the candidate): Will you renounce the powers of evil and receive the freedom of new life in Christ?

CANDIDATE: I will, with the help of God.

PASTOR: Will you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

CANDIDATE: I will, with the help of God.

PASTOR: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

CANDIDATE: I do, with the help of God.

PASTOR: Do you promise, according to the grace given you in the Christian faith, to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, by celebrating Christ's presence, by furthering Christ's mission in all the world, and by offering the nurture of the Christian church?

CANDIDATE: I do with the help of God.

PASTOR: Eric Gardner, you are baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

PEOPLE: Amen.

PASTOR: The Holy Spirit be upon you, Eric Gardner, child of God, disciple of Christ, member of the church.

PRAYER FOR THE BAPTIZED

PASTOR: We give you thanks, O Holy One, mother and father of all the faithful, these your children and for the grace acknowledged here today in water and the Holy Spirit. Embrace us all as sons and daughters in the one household of your love.

Grant us grace to receive, nurture, and befriend this new member of the body of Christ. Give to the newly baptized: strength for life's journey. courage in time of suffering, the joy of faith, the freedom of love, and the hope of new life; through Jesus Christ, who makes us one. Amen.

***BAPTISM BENEDICTION**

Go in the peace of Christ.

Thanks be to God. Amen.

NEW MEMBER SERVICE

INVITATION

PASTOR: Friends in Christ, we all are received into the church through the sacrament of baptism. This person has found nurture and support in the midst of the family of Christ. Through prayer and study he has been led by the Holy Spirit to affirm his baptism and to claim in our presence his covenantal relationship with Christ and the members of the church. He is here for service to Jesus Christ, using the gifts which the Holy Spirit bestows.

God's message is near you, on your lips and in your heart, that is, the word of faith that we preach. If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, you will be saved. For it is by our faith that we are put right with God; it is by our confession that we are saved.

QUESTIONS OF THE CANDIDATE

PASTOR: Do you desire to affirm your baptism/ be baptized into the faith and family of Jesus Christ?

CANDIDATE: I do.

PASTOR: Do you renounce the powers of evil and desire the freedom of new life in Christ?

CANDIDATE: I do.

PASTOR: Do you profess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

CANDIDATE: I do.

PASTOR: Do you promise, by the grace of God, to be Christ's disciple, to follow in the way of our Savior, to resist oppression and evil, to show love and justice, and to witness to the work and word of Jesus Christ as best you are able?

CANDIDATE: I promise with the help of God.

PASTOR: Do you promise, according to the grace given you, to grow in the Christian faith and to be a faithful member of the church of Jesus Christ, celebrating Christ's presence and furthering Christ's mission in all the world?

CANDIDATE: I promise with the help of God.

***AFFIRMATION OF FAITH** *(Please stand if able)*

Let us unite with the church in all times and places in confessing our faith in the triune God.

PASTOR: Do you believe in God?

PEOPLE: I believe in God.

PASTOR: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

PEOPLE: I believe in Jesus Christ.

PASTOR: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

PEOPLE : I believe in the Holy Spirit.

(The congregation may be seated)

ADDRESS

PASTOR: By your baptism you were made one with us in the body of Christ, the church. Today we rejoice in your pilgrimage of faith which has brought you to this time and place. We give thanks for every community of faith that has been your spiritual home, and we celebrate your presence in this household of faith.

QUESTION ABOUT PARTICIPATION

PASTOR: Do you promise to participate in the life and mission of this family of God's people, sharing regularly in the worship of God and enlisting in the work of this local church as it serves this community and the world?

CANDIDATE: I promise with the help of God.

WELCOME AND RECEPTION *(Please stand if able)*

PASTOR: Let us, the members of St John's United Church of Christ express our welcome and affirm our mutual ministry in Christ.

***PEOPLE:** We welcome you with joy in the common life of this church. We promise you our friendship and prayers as we share the hopes and labors of the church of Jesus Christ. By the power of the Holy Spirit may we continue to grow together in God's knowledge and love and be witnesses of our risen Savior.

GREETING OF CHRISTIAN LOVE

In the name of Jesus Christ, and on behalf of St. John's UCC, we extend to you the hand of Christian love, welcoming *you into the company of this local church.*

(The congregation may be seated)

PRAYER

O God, we praise you for calling us to faith and for gathering us into the church, the body of Christ. We thank you for your people gathered in this local church and rejoice that you have increased our community of faith. Together may we live in the Spirit, building one another up sharing in the life and worship of the church, and serving the world for the sake of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

BENEDICTION

PASTOR: Go in the peace of Christ.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

SCRIPTURE READING

Isaiah 53: 1-12 (pg. 683)

Matthew 14: 13-21 (pg. 15)

This is the Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God. Amen.**

SERVICE OF HEALING

PEOPLE: Eternal God, in whom we live and move and have our being, Whose face is hidden from us by our sins, and whose mercy we forget in the hardness of our hearts, cleanse us, we pray, from all our offenses, and deliver us from proud thoughts and vain desires, that with lowliness and meekness we may draw near to you, trusting in Your grace, and finding in you our refuge and strength; through Jesus Christ our Savior. **Amen.**

LEADER: If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Brothers and sisters, I announce with joy that we are forgiven.

PEOPLE: Thanks be to God.

LEADER: O God of all comfort, our help in time and need, we humbly ask You in the power of Your Holy Spirit to enter and heal Your servants. Look upon each one with Your mercy; comfort each one with the assurance of Your care and goodness; save each one from temptation and despair; give each one patience under affliction; and enable each one to live the remainder of life in peace; through Jesus Christ, who came that we may have life and have it more abundantly.

PEOPLE: Amen.

ANOINTING

Eternal God, you are the Sun of Righteousness who rises with healing in your wings to put to flight all enemies that assault us. We thank you for oil, used by prophets and apostles as a sign of your grace and favor. Send your Holy Spirit on us and on this medicine of mercy that through this anointing your servants may again know the health that comes from you; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

PEOPLE: Amen.

Those who desire to be anointed by spiritual healing may come forward. If you wish for me to come to you, raise your hand or ask your neighbor to identify you for me. You may come for yourself, or you may come as a channel of God's healing power for someone else. During the anointing, we invite all people to make silent prayers for each one who is seeking God's healing.

As I anoint you, so may God grant you the powerful presence of the Holy Spirit. With infinite mercy, may God forgive your sins, release you from suffering, and restore you to health and strength. May God deliver you from all evil, preserve you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life; through Jesus Christ our Savior.

PEOPLE: Amen.

Those who seek healing may come forward at this time.

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Let us pray. We give praise and thanks to you, O God! In Jesus Christ, you have given us life; brought ministry, forgiveness, healing, and peace. You have commanded the disciples to heal the sick and continued the healing ministry among us to this day. Keep us mindful of your love and mercy that we may be faithful throughout all our days, in the name of Jesus Christ. **Amen.**

PASTORAL PRAYER / LORD'S PRAYER

Lord God, we pray at this time for any particular concerns on our hearts this day. Lord God, mend broken relationships, comfort those who live with mental distress and are in any trouble. Strengthen those who suffer and hear their prayers. Grant to everyone in distress mercy, relief and refreshment; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Give mercy to those struggling at this time to cope with long term illness or disease. Grant to all who are providing care for those living in hospitals, retirement residences, long term care facilities and at home, understanding and patience to support those who feel fear. Lord God, pour out your healing grace on all who are sick, injured or disabled that they may be made whole. Grant to them a willingness to accept the support of others who care for them and awareness of Your presence. Lord God, give to those who are dying peace and a holy death; uphold those who are grieving by the Holy Spirit. Lord God, we remember before you the homeless, the destitute, and all who have none to care for them. Help them to know the love of your Son, who for our sake become poor. Grant that we may follow Christ's lead in showing them love. Lord God, in this broken world where many are fighting for their right to be heard, valued and respected, open our minds to the truth that you created in all things being equal. Grace us with voices to advocate and speak Your truth. Lord God, make us a nation that embodies equality and strive for peace among all people. Grant to all leaders sound guidance and people fervor to see justice through Jesus Christ our Lord. Draw your Church together, into one great company of disciples, following Jesus Christ, serving him in his mission to the world and together witnessing to his love on every continent and island. Give us courage to share the gospel message. Lord God, you have heard the prayers of your faithful people. You are the Lord who does wonders. Grant us faith to believe; through Jesus Christ our Lord who taught us to pray together: **Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for Thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

INVITATION TO THE OFFERING

Another way that we become a flavorful and peaceful community is by sharing our gifts with the world. We are compassionate and generous people so let us give joyfully. **Amen.**

***OFFERING RESPONSE** “Doxology” (Hymnal, p. 625)

*DEDICATION OF OUR GIFTS

God of love, just as you speak to us through your Son, speak to your world through our gifts. May our offering receive your blessing and go forth to bring healing, life and love to a world in need. Amen.

***CLOSING HYMN #51** “Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah”

*BENEDICTION

Touched by your grace, we take your grace to the world. Healed by your love, we take your love to the world. Renewed by your Spirit, we go in the Spirit's power to be agents of your healing. **Amen.**

The United Church of Christ Service of Healing was prepared by The Rev. Kathryn Matthews. Rev. Matthews retired in 2016 after serving as the Dean of Amistad Chapel at the National Offices of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio

Thank you to our Volunteers today:

Deacon of the Month: Dena Eberhart

Lay Reader: Dena Eberhart

The Altar Flowers and Bulletins are presented by Jodie Fields in honor of Pastor Tony's 62nd Birthday. Happy Birthday, Pastor T!



SPONSORS NEEDED for flowers and bulletins. Please see the sign-up sheet in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall.

CAKE RECEPTION AFTER WORSHIP TODAY in celebration of Eric Gardner's Baptism and Membership service in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall. Please plan to stay. We'll have ice cream, too!

REMINDER: During the months of August, September, and October, while Pastor Tony is on Sabbatical, our worship services will be at **10:00 am**.

We are looking for members who are willing to serve as Worship Helpers, as well as provide our Sunday Message throughout Pastor Tony's Sabbatical. If you would be interested in helping, please see Julie Ditzler, Keith Gingrich, or Dena Eberhart. Thank you!

If you are interested in helping with the **Back-to-School Blessings** activities next month, please see the information on the bulletin board in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall.

CALLING ALL BAKERS: Next Sunday, August 2nd, we will have a Joint Communion Service with Christ UCC here at St. John's. We'll have a guest pastor joining us, and we'd like to have a time of fellowship and refreshments following the service in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall.

If you would be willing to bake a special treat to share that morning, please let Robin Gingrich or Dena Eberhart know. Thanks so much for your help, and we look forward to spending some time with everyone next week.

Our annual “*Outdoor*” Worship Service will be held on Sunday, August 16th, at 10:00 am in the Karen Light Fellowship Hall. We will plan to have a “potluck” luncheon after the service. Please plan to bring your favorite dish to share with the congregation. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board. Hope to see you there 😊



On August 30th, we will plan to have our worship service and a picnic lunch at the “middle pavilion” at Memorial Lake State Park. The service will start at 10:00 am, with lunch to be served afterwards. There is plenty of parking! Bring your lawn chair and plan to join us! If you need directions, please ask anyone from Consistory. A sign-up sheet is on the bulletin board.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Monday, July 27 th	6:30 pm	Consistory Meeting
Sunday, August 2 nd	10:00 am	Worship Service/Communion Joint Service with Christ UCC @ St. John's Refreshments to follow
Sunday, August 9 th	10:00 am	Worship Service
Sunday, August 16 th	10:00 am	Indoor “Outdoor” Worship Service Potluck Luncheon to follow
Sunday, August 23 rd	10:00 am	Worship Service
Sunday, August 30 th	10:00 am	Worship Service at Memorial Lake Lunch to follow
Monday, August 31 st	6:30 pm	Consistory Meeting



“In You, O Lord, I put my trust; Let me never be ashamed; Deliver me in Your righteousness. Bow down Your ear to me, deliver me speedily: Be my rock of refuge, A fortress of defense to save me. For you are my rock and my fortress; Therefore, for Your name’s sake, lead me and guide me.” (Psalm 31: 1-3 NKJV)

Please keep the following members and friends of St. John’s in your prayers this week:

Pat Ziegler • Millie Schriver • Randy Sweigart • Gerald Rudy • Cortney Smith • Tom Graby •
Marlene Zechman • Steve Clark • Bruce R. Shepps • Jon Olesh • Callum Quinn • Frank
Shepler • Emily Rentschler • Jean Ann and Neal Grimes • Bev Myers • Karen Metz • Harford
Overton • Jodi Checket • Reverend Tony and Jodie Fields