

The Visitor

September 2024

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 107 Issue 8

A publication of St. John's United Church of Christ

A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

We are entering into September, a time that everything seems as if it begins anew: school, new programs in church, new shows on TV or streaming (whichever device you use), beginning to get into a schedule until we arrive at the holidays.

Sometimes, we feel as if we don't want to go out, or participate, or be bothered. We have our life all wrapped up and tied in a neat knot – and we don't want to be with others – we want to be in control, because we might be afraid to venture out into what we may describe as the unknown.

I came upon a devotional that addresses this feeling; it is based on Psalm 142:

I cry aloud to the Lord; I lift up my voice to the Lord for mercy. I pour out before him my complaint; before him I tell my trouble. - Psalm 142:1-2 (NIV)

The writer reminded me that Psalm 142 is a prayer of David offered from the time “when he was in the cave.” Are you in the cave, too? Is someone else who you know there, too?

We all find our way into the cave or dark place at one time or another. We all find ourselves in places where we find no light but the match we cannot seem to find. There is a mouth to the cave, there is an exit. But is it safe to go? The responses that others offer us in our cries for assistance and laments help us to know whether or not the world outside the cave is a place where we will be embraced.

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If a cry for assistance or lament is not your song today, how can you call into a cave where someone else is waiting? If you are in the cave, where can you call knowing that your “complaint” will be honored rather than ignored? If you are part of a faith community, how can you/we help to make room for every bit of this as we minister to one another?

No matter what the people around you do, know that – cave or not – God embraces it all. I want you, my friends, to know you are honored, beloved and known – not only by myself and others, but most importantly by God.

As always – see you in Church!!

Blessings – Pastor Marty

BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS CAMPAIGN FOR ST. JOHN'S

St. John's is setting a goal of raising \$25,000 to use for buildings and grounds work at the church. The church is in need of some work like cleaning the air ducts in the sanctuary and repairing the windows in the sanctuary. Members and friends can place their donations to the campaign in the offering but it is in addition to their regular offering not a replacement. The Leadership Team will put on a celebration for the church once the goal is met. Please join us in this goal and work together to strengthen our foundation.



NOMINATIONS FOR 2025 LEADERSHIP TEAM

Nominations are open for the 2025 Leadership Team. If you or another member of St. John's would like to run for a position on the Leadership Team, please contact Past President, Laura Haas to express interest. Positions available are President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Questions about each position can be asked of current members of the Leadership Team. Please contact Laura Haas with any additional questions.



PRAYER MINISTRY-SEPTEMBER BLESSINGS

No matter how far you've walked away from God,
the return is only one step .

If you're waiting on God, do what waiters do—SERVE

Knowing the Bible is one thing, knowing the author is another.

My September To-Do List:

Count my blessings

Let go of what I can't control

Practice kindness

Listen to my heart

Just breathe.

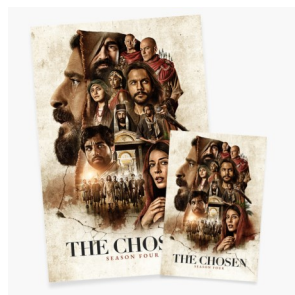


Don't forget to pray today, because God didn't forget to wake you up.

THE CHOSEN

You are invited to join a “watch and discuss” group for Season 4 of “*The Chosen*”. We will gather on the Saturdays listed below from 9:30-11:00 in the church parlor. If you have already seen this season, nothing can be better than watching it again and discussing it with others. If you haven't seen previous seasons of *The Chosen* it will be easy for you to follow and enjoy the season. All are welcome and we welcome your family and friends too!

- Saturday September 14, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday September 28, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday October 05, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday October 26, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday November 09, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday November 23, 9:30-11:00
- Saturday December 14, 9:30-11:00



NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2024

If you would like to submit an article or receive *The Visitor* via email please contact StJohnsUCC@StJohnsUCCNewport.org.

You may also visit the “News” heading on our website and fill out the appropriate form.



A digital copy of *The Visitor* can be accessed at our website: StJohnsUCCNewport.org under our “News Section.”



"THE TIMELESS COMFORT OF "LEANING ON THE EVERLASTING ARMS"



A few weeks ago we sang "Leaning On the Everlasting Arms" to close our worship service. Several people told me how much they loved the hymn and how much they enjoyed singing it.

"Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" is a beloved hymn that has brought solace and inspiration to generations of Christians. Written in 1887 by Elisha Hoffman and Anthony Showalter, this iconic song has become a staple of worship services and a source of comfort in times of need.

The hymn's enduring popularity stems from its simple yet profound message of trust and reliance on God's eternal presence. The lyrics, set to a soothing melody, assure us that we can face life's challenges with confidence, knowing that we are supported by the "everlasting arms" of our loving Creator.

Through its timeless words, "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" reminds us that we are never alone, and that God's unwavering strength and guidance are always available to us. Whether in times of joy or sorrow, this cherished hymn invites us to surrender our fears and doubts, and find peace in the embrace of our heavenly Father.

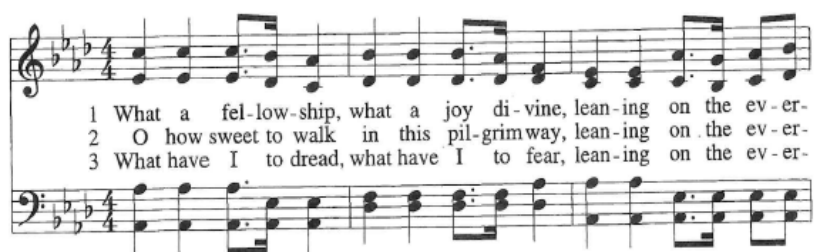
I'm so glad everyone enjoyed singing it. The old hymns truly bring us much comfort and peace.

Michael Sullivan

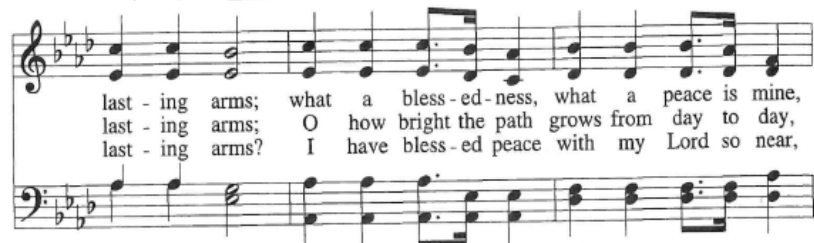
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496 Leaning on the Everlasting Arms

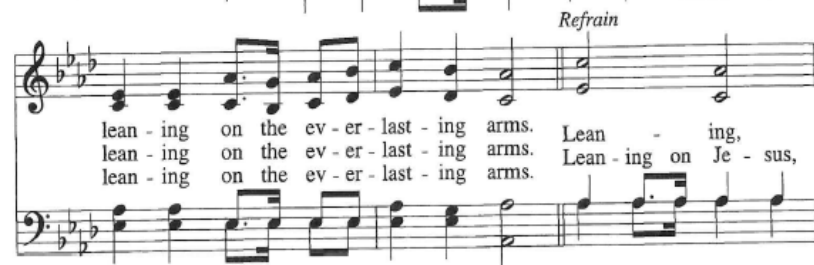


1 What a fel-low-ship, what a joy di-vine, lean-ing on the ev-er-
 2 O how sweet to walk in this pil-grim way, lean-ing on the ev-er-
 3 What have I to dread, what have I to fear, lean-ing on the ev-er-

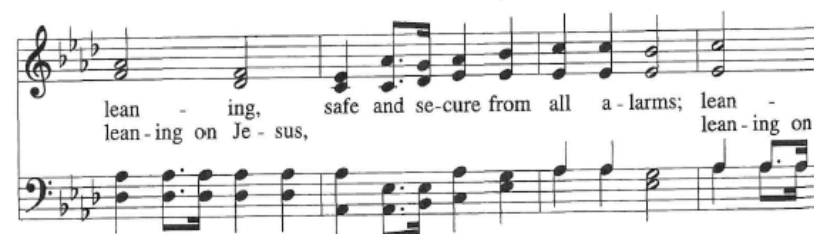


last - ing arms; what a bless-ed-ness, what a peace is mine,
 last - ing arms; O how bright the path grows from day to day,
 last - ing arms? I have bless-ed peace with my Lord so near,

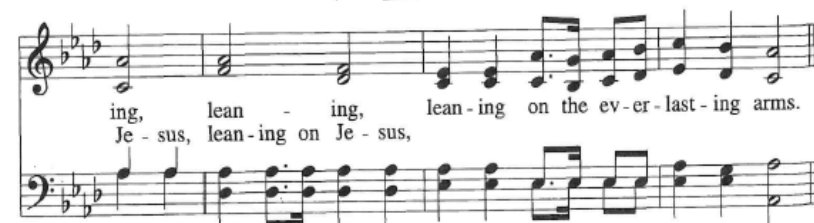
Refrain



lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing, Je - sus,
 lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms. Lean - ing on Je - sus,
 lean - ing on the ev - er - last - ing arms.



lean - ing, safe and se-cure from all a - larms; lean - ing on
 lean-ing on Je - sus, lean-ing on



ing, lean - ing, lean-ing on the ev-er-last-ing arms.
 Je - sus, lean-ing on Je - sus,

WORDS: Elisha A. Hoffman (1839-1929)
 MUSIC: Anthony J. Showalter (1858-1924)

SHOWALTER
 10.9.10.9. Ref.

“CHANCEL CHOIR WILL RETURN TO WORSHIP”

As the summer months come to a close, music lovers rejoice! Our Chancel Choir will be returning to Sunday worship.

As our choir members begin to gather once again, the air will be filled with anticipation and excitement. The rustle of sheet music, the murmur of warm-ups, and the joyful chatter of friends reunited – all signal the start of another choir season.

In addition to our faithful volunteer choir members, we will once again be welcoming back our choral scholars. Some familiar voices will return, and we will be welcoming some new faces. This year we will have singers from CCM, NKU, and Highlands High School joining us. We again must thank Mrs. Connie Haas for her tremendous support of our Choral Scholar Program in memory of her late husband, Joe Haas Sr. Without her support, this ministry would not be possible.

In addition to the music itself, the choir represents a chance for our members to forge lasting friendships, to support one another through life's ups and downs, and to find much joy in the shared passion of singing. In a world that often values individuality, the choir stands as a testament to the power of unity and collaboration.

So once again our choir will begin this musical season together, sharing and leading music with you the congregation as we worship our loving God. If you are interested in joining us, speak to Michael or Dobin for more information.

Michael Sullivan



LUNCH BUNCH
Wednesday, September 11th
12:00 p.m.-2:00p.m.
Bring Your Own Lunch
Drinks and Dessert Provided

JOIN US
For
LUNCH!



LOOKING BACK IN “THE VISITOR”: MAY 1924

The archives of St. John’s — that awesome vault at the bottom of the south staircase — has paper copies of “The Visitor” going back to 1924. Quite a find. That publication began in 1915 and was entitled on the cover “St. John’s Evangelical Protestant Church Visitor.” Cover story May 1924: Rev. Paul Reikow (in half photo portrait on cover) marking his 10th anniversary. In the shadow of our celebrating Rev. Marty’s 40th, let us look back.



Rev. Reikow, born in 1869, was much respected. A member of the church’s Ladies’ Aid Society, Louise Schroath, composed a poem to honor him. Entitled: “To Our Dear Pastor” it reads in part...

You have been with us ten faithful, diligent years / As a Messenger and a Pastor. / It was the call of God that sent you here / To serve us for our Lord and Master. / Your toils and strifes in this great work / We know are not always pleasure. / Still you are always there: you never shirk, / So we present you here with a little treasure.” The article to follow handed him a ‘generous check’ from the Society and the congregation.



His was already the second longest tenure of the 20 pastors who had served since the church’s founding in 1847. His numbers in 10 years — are you ready — 688 Baptisms, 312 Confirmands, 10,677 communicants, 1,028 weddings, and 632 funerals. He and his team were really working! Salute! His tenure was 1914-1933. He died in 1933 and rests in Evergreen Cemetery. Of note, he has two grave markers one of which with his photo is from a confirmation class. His successor — Rev. Dr. Barkhau.

SEPTEMBER SHOES AND SOCKS

During the **month of September, the 1st through the 29th**, we will be collecting (NEW) shoes and socks of all sizes and types to be donated to the Washington UCC community store. There will be tubs at each of our sanctuary entrances during the month for you to drop off your donations. If you prefer to make a donation of money we will gladly do the shopping for you, simply mark an offering envelope with "shoes and socks", and we'll be sure to purchase items on your behalf. Thank you for participating in this community service. Your support of the important work that Washington UCC does for so many people makes a difference.



NEIGHBORS IN NEED SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING

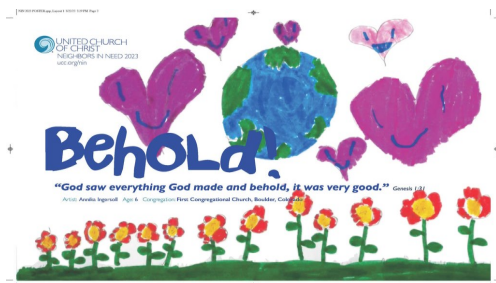
In 2024, the Neighbors in Need theme is **“Mental Health Justice For All!”** This year’s focus is on Mental Health Justice. In 2015, the General Synod of the United Church of Christ passed a resolution to become WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, and Engaged) for mental health.

A just world for all is a world where the human rights and well-being of people with mental health challenges are respected, no matter who you are or where you are in life’s mental health journey.

Please join us in promoting this year’s NIN **“Mental Health is a Universal Human Right”** campaign at your church.

As you may recall, one-third of the offering supports Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds are used by Justice and Witness Ministries to provide grants to UCC churches and organizations as well as supporting a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects.

St. John’s will collect this offering on **Sunday, October 6, 2024**, as part of World Communion Sunday. We thank you for your support and generosity.



COOKIES & LEMONADE SOCIAL

On Sunday, August 18th we had a beautiful service of worship. Pastor Marty had a wonderful message, along with beautiful music by Jean Nutgrass and Katheryn Jones. At the end of worship, our congregation recognized and honored our church staff. Then we went outside for a cookies and lemonade reception. It is so wonderful to have a loving congregation that recognizes and values it's staff. Thanks to all!!





Washington United Church of Christ

2950 Sidney Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45225

Phone (513) 541-7757 Fax (513) 541-7579

August 9, 2024

St. John's United Church of Christ
415 Park Ave.
Newport, KY 41071

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for the donation of school supplies to the Back to School ministry at Washington United Church of Christ. We are very grateful.

The school supplies helped fill backpacks that were given by other donors. We also save some supplies to use in Homework Club, our after-school tutoring program

Your gifts helped children who are directly connected to programs at Washington UCC – Summer Youth Program and Homework Club – along with other children in our low-income neighborhood.

Because of gifts like yours, these children are proud to go to school with all the supplies they need.

On their behalf, we thank you.

Sincerely,

Laurel Humes

Washington UCC Church Council
For Nancy Matthew, Back to School project chair
Rev. Melissa Stephens, Pastor

BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE

On Sunday, August 4th we concluded our “Back To School” drive to benefit Washington UCC in Cincinnati. The congregation collected school supplies such as paper, pencils, backpacks, and Crayola products. Monetary donations were also accepted. These donations will help many children to begin their school year on a positive note. Thanks to all who contributed to this worthwhile endeavor.

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these." Matthew 19:14



Updating the 2025 Church Directory

It's that time of year again and the church office will begin the process of updating our church directory. **You will only need to complete a new form if you updated or changed any information in the past year (ex. new telephone number, cancellation of landline, change of email address etc.).** Thank you for your help with this endeavor.

Family Name & Children 17 years and under: _____

Adult 1 _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday: We never reveal your age but PowerChurch requires us to enter the year you were born.

Anniversary: _____

Adult 2 _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Birthday: We never reveal your age but PowerChurch requires us to enter the year you were born.

Anniversary: _____

September Birthdays and Anniversaries

September Birthdays

September 4th: Cole Coppage
September 8th: Vickie Kennedy
September 19th: Darlene Dawson
September 21st: Josephine Fussinger
September 22nd: Steve Dawson
September 24th: Matthew Morris
September 26th: Charles Crapser
September 28th: Sheila Witte
September 30th: Wanda Quinn



September Anniversaries

September 9th: Lisa & Keith Daniels (35 years)
September 18th: Nancy & David Brinkman (42 years)
September 18th: Jenny & Shawn Williams (20 years)



St. John's would like to wish a happy birthday and happy anniversary to our friends and family celebrating during the month of September!

SEPTEMBER HOMEBOUND MEMBERS OF THE WEEK

We would like to celebrate and honor our homebound members of the week for the month of September. We appreciate and celebrate these individuals as our members of the week!

September 1st: Judy Adams
September 8th: Robert Hasse
September 15th: Norma Biery
September 22nd: John Westlund
September 29th: Betty Webster

In Loving Memory of, and In Honor of...

Food Pantry

In Loving Memory of Sue Wagner ~ Gary Wagner

Music Fund

In Loving Memory of Donna Hamilton ~ Sally Hartman

Memorial Fund

In Loving Memory of Gail Miller ~ Lois Almoslechner
In Loving Memory of Dan Grey ~ Flo Grey

Buildings & Grounds

In Loving Memory of My Brother Mark ~ Dr. Michael Hanson