

# The Visitor

## SEPTEMBER 2025

**TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES**

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### *A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer*

As I write this, I am still on my journey to fix my right knee. I have a tentative surgery date for September 16, 2025. I work at keeping a positive attitude and a “half-glass full” attitude about the situation. Part of what gets me through is prayer. I found an old article I had that talked about prayers in the Old Testament, particularly in the book of Psalms. The prayer David offered in Psalm 142 is from the time “when he was in the cave.”

*With my voice I cry to the Lord; with my voice I make supplication to the Lord. I pour out my complaint before him; I tell my trouble before him. - Psalm 142:1-2 (NRSV)*

My question to you is: Are you in the cave, too? Is someone else who you know there, too?

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

So, if a lament is not your song today, how can you call into a cave where someone else is waiting? Wanting to be heard or to be answered?

If you are in the cave where can you call knowing that your “complaint” will be heard and honored rather than ignored? If you are in church leadership, how can you help to make room for every bit of information you receive?

Continued on next page

No matter what the people around you do, know that – cave or not – God embraces us all. You, me, all of us are honored, beloved and known!

As we pray, may we ask God to set us free from our prisons. For in God, we may find true freedom, the opening of the gate, the mouth of the cave. And may we be led into the kingdom/realm of God.

Hope to see you in Church – Pastor Marty

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## PRAYER MINISTRY-SEPTEMBER BLESSINGS

Pray not only because you need something,  
but because you have a lot to be thankful for.

Today's Goals:  
Start with God  
Stay with God  
End with God.



Faith is like WiFi,  
It's invisible, but it has the power  
to connect you to what you need.

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## LIVE STREAMING NOW AVAILABLE FOR ST. JOHN'S

St. John's is excited to announce the start of our new option for online worship: **LIVE STREAMING**. Join us Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m. on our church Facebook page to join our service live as it happens. This is a great option if you are ill, out of town, or are unable to come to church but still want to experience our in-person worship. Can't attend at 10:00 a.m.? No problem! The service will be available to watch at any time on our Facebook page and will be uploaded to our YouTube page and website. We hope you can join us for worship in any format that works for you.



St. John's UCC website <https://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org>

St John's UCC YouTube Channel  
St. John's Newport UCC

St. John's UCC Facebook Page  
St. John's UCC Newport



## **WELCOME TONY!!**



Members and friends of St. John's, I want to take this opportunity to introduce to you our new choral director Tony Burdette. Many of you have already met Tony, but if you don't already know about him, he is a very prominent choral director and soloist in the greater Cincinnati area.

Tony is founder and artistic director of "Viva Voices" choral organization, a community chorus organization made up of over 100 voices. The organization consists of two adult choirs and two children's choirs. St. John's has hosted their concerts on several occasions.



Tony and I have been friends for many years and have worked together on many occasions. Tony was a frequent tenor soloist for the NKCC Messiah performances under the direction of Dr. John Westlund. He was also soloist in one of our Christmas Concerts here at church under the direction of Andrew Hon. He is very familiar with our church and with our music program.

Tony's wife, Dr. Joy Burdette is Professor of voice at NKU, his daughter Calia, is studying opera at the University of Kentucky. His son Ben will begin his studies at NKU this fall.

Tony is a wonderful person and I know you will find him to be energetic and great fun to be around. He is excited to be joining us.

Please join me in welcoming him to our staff, and to our church family.

Michael Sullivan

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## **THANK YOU JULIE & DOUG OLLIER**

St. John's would like to thank Julie and Doug Ollier for helping to spruce up the outside of the church. Julie and Doug did everything from clearing cob webs to spraying for weeds and general cleaning all around the outside of the church. Thank you Julie and Doug for all your help!!



## **CELEBRATE OUR FUNDRAISING ACCOMPLISHMENT**

Join us following worship on **Sunday, November 9th** for our buildings and grounds celebration luncheon. The Leadership Team wants to take a moment to praise the congregation for hitting our goal of \$25,000 for our buildings and grounds campaign over the past year. The luncheon will



take place in Fellowship Hall and will include pasta, salad, drinks, and desserts. Also, a free raffle will be available to everyone where all who attend will have a chance to win some nice prizes and gifts. We hope you can join us for this event as we celebrate all of you and the work that was accomplished. RSVP slips will be located in your weekly bulletin or contact the church office to reserve a spot and/or with any questions.

### **NEW HOPE PREGNANCY CENTER PROJECT**

Join us in collecting money to support New Hope Pregnancy Center. The Leadership Team has chosen New Hope for our September outreach. New Hope is proud to offer free, confidential pregnancy confirmation and support services. They provide the following services:

#### **Pregnancy Testing:**

They provide testing to confirm pregnancy and then help the patient learn what to expect during her pregnancy.

#### **Ultrasounds:**

Ultrasounds are provided so key pregnancy details can be confirmed, identifying conditions that may require medical treatment and help the patient better understand her options.

#### **Support & Education:**

After confirming the pregnancy and determining any key details and medical needs, they support the patient with parenting, adoption, or other resources and education. Even if a patient has experienced an abortion, New Hope is there to work with everyone.

During the month of September, we are inviting you to take a baby bottle bank home, (which will be available starting on August 31<sup>st</sup>) and fill it with any loose change or dollar bills. Grab that change that has collected under the sofa cushions, in the crevices of your car, or laying on the kitchen counter, all just wanting to jump into the baby bottle! Return the bottles to church by the end of the month so we can turn them over to New Hope Pregnancy Center as a gift of love, care, and compassion. New Hope has 4 neighborhood locations in Crestview Hills, Covington, Falmouth, and Vevay, Indiana.

## ‘SUPER-AGERS’ — LESSONS GLEANED

Don’t blame me, but medical literature calls those 80 years old and over ‘super-agers.’ I read some information about a 25 year study of super-agers’ that rang true. Scientists wanted to learn how the atypical segment of the study group avoided the normal age-related cognitive decline. What made them retain more of their brains.

Based on the folks I visit on behalf of St. John’s, I see those who have stayed mentally strong and those who have struggled. Though by 75, I saw myself in those I visit and in the study group of the article. It appeared in the *Journal of International Neuropsychology*. I am speaking to the choir but the study showed that brain mass remained strongest — more like those folks 50-65 years old — who stayed curious and engaged with life.

Wow! The discernible thread of life that the super-agers had was engagement. I see that in the folks of St. John’s and church life.

The mentally strong whose brain sizes remained normal — not declining — were engaged with life. Some were obese, some thin; some lived alone, others with spouse or others; some exercised, some mostly not so much; some ate their veggies and yogurt, others more McDonald’s.

The conclusions of scientists across 25 years was that those engaged with life retained more brain mass — resembling those 50-65 years old. They went out of their houses and apartments and had lunch where the hustle and bustle of life can be found, went grocery shopping, took bus tours, they called friends if not able to visit, read books and newspapers — some of which made them a bit disturbed even angry. And going to worship, bowing heads in prayer, sharing the up’s and down’s of life — such helps the brain to engage. If your own joys and sorrows are not foremost — those of others are or can be.

I see such in the 9:30 Coffee gathering (thanks Ralph for the donuts, the pre- and post-worship fellowship, the faithful crew who staff the St. John’s food pantry, Lunch Bunch, the Monday money counters, and *The Visitor* assembly crew. They may think they are just volunteering their time — Amen — but they are also helping their brains to remain vital. Science says so.

Blessings,

Pastor John



**LUNCH BUNCH**  
**Wednesday, September 10th**  
Bring your own lunch  
12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.  
Bring Your Own Lunch  
Drinks & Desserts Provided

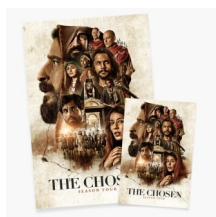
**JOIN US  
For  
LUNCH!**



### **THE CHOSEN**

You are invited to join a “watch and discuss” group for “*The Chosen*”. We will gather on the Saturdays listed below from 10-11:30am 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! Contact Laura Haas for more information.

- Saturday September 6, 10-11:30am
- Saturday September 13, 10-11:30am
- Saturday September 20, 10-11:30am
- Saturday September 27, 10-11:30am
- Saturday October 04, 10-11:30am
- Saturday October 11, 10-11:30am
- Saturday October 18, 10-11:30am
- Saturday October 25, 10-11:30am



### **Quote of the Day**

Never regret a day in your life: good days give happiness, bad days give experience, worst days give lessons, and best days give memories.

### **CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED**

The Church Office will be closed on the following day:  
Monday, September 1, 2025: Labor Day



# September Birthdays and Anniversaries

## September Birthdays

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



## September Anniversaries

September 18th: Jenny & Shawn Williams (21 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!

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## 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 7th: Bonnie Walter  
September 14th: Jean Morrow  
September 21st: Norma Biery  
September 28th: John Westlund

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## LETTERS AND CARDS FOR GARRETT CUTAJAR

One of our Choral Scholars, Garrett Cutajar is in basic training from now through the middle of December. He will return to the choir around the end of December. If you would like to send him a card or letter, his address and instructions are listed below. **Only send cards or letters.** They are not allowed to receive additional items other than what they were issued, and definitely no food/treats.

### **Front of envelope:**

PV2, Cutajar, Garrett  
Co. A 795th MP BN, PLT #2  
7676 Loyalty Loop, Bldg. 901  
Fort Leonard Wood, MO 65473

### **Back of the envelope:**

Co. A 795th MP BN, PLT #2

### **FYI**

It could take up to 2 weeks for him to receive letters. Stop mailing the last week of November. He returns the end of December.

## COOKIES & LEMONADE SOCIAL

On Sunday, August 24th we welcomed Tony Burdette as our new choral director. Tony and his wife Joy provided the music for the service. Following the service, we had a “welcome” reception in Fellowship Hall to welcome Tony to our staff. We look forward to much beautiful music as Tony leads our chancel choir in worship. Welcome Tony and Joy!!!!



### **NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE:** **WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2025**

If you would like to submit an article or receive *The Visitor* via email please contact [StJohnsUCC@StJohnsUCCNewport.org](mailto: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](http://StJohnsUCCNewport.org) under our “News Section.”



## 2025 SPECIAL MISSION OFFERING

# NEIGHBORS IN NEED



The Neighbors in Need offering supports ministries of justice and compassion, with one-third of the offering given to the Council for American Indian Ministries and the remaining two-thirds supporting UCC justice ministries.

In 2025 the Neighbors in Need Offering supported 26 grant recipients across the UCC who were engaged in projects of direct service and advocacy.

This special offering will be collected on **World Communion Sunday (October 5, 2025)**. Thank you for your support and generosity!

### HENRY HOSEA HOUSE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Good News! We have secured the 5<sup>th</sup> Friday of each month as our church's time to volunteer at Henry Hosea House. **We have a fifth Friday opening on Friday 10/31/25.** We are looking for 7 volunteers to work from **3:30-6:00 PM** to help serve dinner. If you and/or friends and family would be able to help, please text or call **Pat Goins at 859-250-2830**. We would like to make this an ongoing relationship with Henry Hosea House and really need your help to make this happen. Thank you in advance for helping with this important community outreach venture.



### ONLINE GIVING OPTIONS

For online giving, please scan the QR code.

### UPCOMING CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING

#### **Leadership Team Meeting:**

Saturday, September 13th 2025 - 12:00 p.m.  
Church Parlor

## **BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLY DRIVE**

Thanks to everyone who contributed school supplies and monetary donations for our “Back To School Supply Drive.” St. John’s collected and donated school supplies to both Newport Primary and Newport Intermediate Schools. Also, we collected and sent supplies to Washington UCC for their back to school program. Thanks to everyone who contributed and helped to make sure all of these students have a great start to their school year.



## **BACK TO SCHOOL DRIVE THANK YOU NOTE**

Dear St. John’s UCC,

Newport Primary is so grateful to have St. John’s UCC in their community! Thank you for thinking of us with the donation of supplies!! We appreciate you!



Molly Wesley  
Newport Primary School/Family Resource Coordinator

## **UPCOMING EVENT**

Trunk-or-Treat  
Saturday, October 18, 2025  
(time to be announced)





## Washington United Church of Christ

2950 Sidney Avenue, Cincinnati, OH 45225

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

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August 12, 2025

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

Dear Friends,

Thank you! We received your very generous contribution of \$580 for the Back to School ministry at Washington UCC. Thank you for your loyalty to this important program.

Your gift will provide seven students with a school uniform (if required) or school clothes, and a backpack filled with school supplies. We also added personal hygiene kits.

Because of gifts like yours, the children from low-income families connected to Washington UCC are proud to go to school with all the clothing and supplies they need.

On behalf of the children, we thank you.

Sincerely,

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

## Updating the 2026 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. Please return to the church office or place in the offering plate.

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_

# WE'RE HIRING

## OPEN POSITION

- MAINTENANCE MANAGER
- PART-TIME
- LIGHT MAINTENANCE WORK SUCH AS:  
PAINTING, CHANGING LIGHTBULBS, LIGHT  
YARD WORK, ETC.

Send Your Resume To  
[personnel@stjohnsuccnewport.org](mailto:personnel@stjohnsuccnewport.org)

Deadline to apply is  
OCTOBER 3, 2025

Get the opportunity to join  
our team and gain experience  
by working with us

Our Website :  
[www.stjohnsuccnewport.org](http://www.stjohnsuccnewport.org)

JOIN OUR  
TEAM

