

The Visitor

OCTOBER 2025

TO BE HIS LIGHT THAT TRANSFORMS LIVES

Volume 108 Issue 9

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

A Message from J. Martin Westermeyer

I'm recovering from my right knee surgery that occurred on Tuesday, September 16, 2025. I want to thank all of you who remembered me with cards, notes, emails and texts – all were and are greatly appreciated. Knowing one has support does help as one goes through the therapy and recovery process. Thank You to you all! (full disclosure – I am writing this the week before my surgery)

The following text from John was part of an article I was reading while preparing for my surgery and was on my mind:

But after his brothers had gone to the festival, [Jesus] also went ... but in secret. And there was considerable complaining about him among the crowds. While some were saying, "He is a good man," others were saying, "No, he is deceiving the crowd." - John 7:10 and 12 (NRSVUE)

Right now, my neighbor is cleaning up after working in our yards. He's running the leaf-blower and has been for a while. I can't really concentrate on anything else, so I'm pondering leaf blowers. Not their noise and toxicity or the way they dislodge leaf litter important to insects. No, I'm thinking about how tidy they leave our yards: debris-free, sharp neat edges, mulch in perfect circles around the trunks of trees – like at a park.

And my mind roamed: It's pleasing in a way, this tidiness, this clarity, this taming. Nothing unruly, no sprawl to spoil the view. Like slogans that delimit ideas, labels that delimit lives, rules that delimit behavior, theologies that square away the indescribable God. Leaf blowers, controlling the wild the way God intended. **NOT.**

Continued on next page

I mean, let's think this through. Consider Jesus: he's more like a thicket. Try to edge him, he spreads. Try to mow him, he mows you. He re-litters every path swept clean. A straight line or perfect circle he is not. No one gets him exactly. He doesn't let himself be got. Watch him long enough, you still can't put your finger on him. Listen to him long enough, you know less, not more.

And thank God for that. Because you really don't want a leaf-blowing savior, inclined to precise delineations. Better this one, inclined to ambiguity. Better this one, who never manicured a mystery, tidied a sprawling thought into a six-word meme, or defined someone without taking time to really know them. Better this one, wild and seemingly out of control.

So, I'm asking that we pray for all of us with an urge to clarify and tidy life. Relax us instead into the thicket that is Jesus, where life is at times wild, complicated, interesting, lovely, confounding, and real. And where we are loved for who we are, where we are; as children of God.

See you in Church – Pastor Marty

PRAYER MINISTRY-OCTOBER BLESSINGS

Try these four letter words–

Love

Pray

Hope

Prayer–wireless access to God with no roaming fee.

Worry is a conversation you have with yourself about the things you can not change.

Prayer is a conversation you have with God about the things He can change.



Fall leaves are beautiful!

God's blessings are breathtaking!



join us for a

Buildings & Grounds Celebration Luncheon

Sunday, November 9th | 11:30am



St. John 's UCC Fellowship Hall
Celebrating the congregation on a major
financial accomplishment



Pasta Luncheon, Raffles, Prizes, Music





TRUNK OR TREAT

Join us **Saturday, October 18, 2025 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.** as St. John's hosts a Trunk-or-Treat event. This event will take place in the parking lot of St. John's. We are asking members and friends to bring their cars and decorate them and pass out candy to children as they come to your car. Costumes are encouraged for both children and adults and there will be a winner for best costume. There will also be games and activities for kids to participate in as they make their way through the treat trail. Invite all of your children, grandchildren, and friends to join us for this fun event. If you would like to participate by providing a car or hosting an activity, please contact the church office or place your name on one of the sign-up sheets located in the church.



LUNCH BUNCH

Wednesday, October 8th

Food and drinks will be provided

12:00 p.m.-2:00 p.m.

Desserts provided

Help us celebrate Fall!!

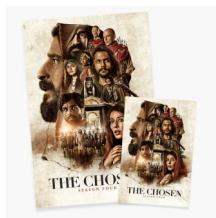
All are welcome

**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 library. 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 October 04, 10-11:30am

Saturday October 11, 10-11:30am

Saturday October 18, 10-11:30am

Saturday October 25, 10-11:30am

UPCOMING CHURCH BUSINESS MEETINGS

Leadership Team Meeting:

Saturday, October 11, 2025-12:00pm

Church Parlor

Congregational Meeting

Sunday, October 26th - 11:15 a.m.

Sanctuary after Sunday Worship

HENRY HOSEA HOUSE VOLUNTEER DAY

On Friday, August 29th a group of volunteers from St. John's took time out of their day to volunteer at the Henry Hosea House. These volunteers helped serve food to those in need in the local community that came to the center that day. We are so grateful for all of the work our volunteers do in the local community.



HENRY HOSEA HOUSE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

Good News! We have secured the 5th 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.



CARE CLOSET VOLUNTEERS

On **Saturday, November 15, 2025 from 1:00pm-3:00pm** St. John's is looking for **4-6 volunteers** to help at the Care Closet in Newport, KY. These volunteers will be responsible for sorting bags of donations that are received on a daily basis. The volunteers will help to sort incoming donations into size, gender and season, as well as shoes, toys, baby supplies, etc. The Care Closet is located at 801 York Street in Newport. If you can help with this project, please call the church office at 859-431-1818 option 3 or contact Laura Haas for more information.



THE FOOD PANTRY NEEDS YOUR HELP

The Food Pantry is asking for our help in collecting personal hygiene items for the customers that come to our Food Pantry each month. These items are desperately needed to help those in our community. The items that are needed include toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, deodorant, bar soap, and lotion. Any help with donations will be greatly appreciated. Baskets will be located at each entrance of the church for your donated items to be placed in. Thank you for your help with this project..



October Birthdays and Anniversaries

October Birthdays

October 3rd: David Stamm & Marty Westermeyer
October 5th: Jeri McLane
October 7th: Paul Bergmann
October 9th: Joan Berkemeyer
October 11th: Barbara Crapser
October 13th: Sue Williams
October 18th: Shirley Suggs
October 23rd: Tom Williams
October 24th: Ed Von Strohe
October 26th: Paige Barber
October 27th: Carol Thompson
October 28th: Jim Thompson



October Anniversaries

October 9th: Barbara & Charles Crapser (54 years)
October 10th: Christine & Jim Schwalbach (27 years)
October 23rd: Darlene & Steve Dawson (54 years)



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

OCTOBER HOMEBOUND MEMBER OF THE WEEK

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

October 5th: Joan Berkemeyer-Birthday October 9th
October 12th: Betty Webster
October 19th: Peggy Eckert
October 26th: Gayle McAtee

WORLD COMMUNION SUNDAY

World Communion Sunday offers congregations a distinctive opportunity to experience Holy Communion in the context of the global community of faith. The first Sunday of October is when Christians in every culture break bread and pour the cup to remember and affirm Christ as the Head of the Church. On that day, we recognize that we are part of the whole body of believers. Join us on **October 5th** as we celebrate World Communion Sunday.



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!

PASTOR APPRECIATION DAY

Sunday, October 12th is Pastor Appreciation Day. Take a moment and let Pastor Marty and Pastor John know how much we appreciate all that they do for St. John's and for everyone here at St. John's.



THANK YOU CAROL FICKENSCHER & MIKE HANSON

Many thanks to our favorite church decorators Carol Fickenscher and Mike Hanson who have been busy decorating our sanctuary and doorways for the fall season. Thank you Carol and Mike for always taking the time to make our sanctuary look beautiful. You are appreciated!!



ONLINE GIVING OPTION

For online giving, please scan the QR code.

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 form 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: _____

UPCOMING EVENTS AT ST. JOHN'S

Sunday, October 5th-World Communion Sunday/Neighbors in Need Special Offering/Melissa Stephens Washington UCC will be preaching

Wednesday, October 8th-Noon-2:00 p.m. Lunch Bunch

Sunday, October 12th-Pastor Appreciation Day

Saturday, October 18th-3:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. Trunk-or-Treat Event

Saturday, October 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th-10am 11:30am The Chosen

Sunday, October 26th-11:15 a.m. Congregational Meeting

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

NEXT VISITOR DEADLINE: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025

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."



August 29, 2025

St. John's United Church of Christ
415 Park Ave
Newport, KY 41071-1792

Dear Friends at St. John's United Church of Christ:

Thank you for your donation to the United Church of Christ. Your gift of \$145.00 was received on 2/18/2025.

\$145.00 California Wildfires Relief

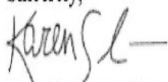
The devastation caused by the California wildfires has left countless families without homes, communities in mourning, and landscapes forever changed. Displaced families in need of shelter and necessities will receive support through your gift.

Your support can bring lasting hope to those affected by this crisis. Your gift will help provide essential resources, including emotional and spiritual support, to families in need. It will also support our long-term recovery efforts, ensuring communities can rebuild.

United in prayer, action, and giving, we stand as a people of faith in love and compassion. Thank you again for spreading God's hope, peace, and love through your financial assistance as the United Church of Christ continues to build a just world for all.

If you have questions regarding your donation, please feel free to contact us at giving@ucc.org or 1-800-846-6822.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson
General Minister and President

September 16, 2025

St. John's United Church of Christ
415 Park Ave
Newport, KY 41071-1792

Dear Friends in Christ:

Thank you for your donation to the United Church of Christ. Your gift of \$1,295.00 was received on 5/1/2025.

\$1,295.00 One Great Hour of Sharing

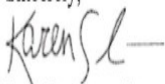
You are part of the United Church of Christ, uniting with us to give everyone a voice and working with the Holy Spirit toward a just world for all. As you stand with us, we confront the injustices of our day.

We offer extravagant welcome and radical hospitality to a world seeking lives of deeper meaning and greater value. Our churches are powerful in witness to Christ's love for all people.

Our witness matters in the world, and your witness matters in this world. With your generous gift, we can do this work.

If you have questions regarding your donation, please contact us at giving@ucc.org or 1-800-846-6822.

Sincerely,



Rev. Dr. Karen Georgia Thompson
General Minister and President