# St. John's UCC, Fullerton

575 Grape Street ✞ Whitehall PA 18052
www.stjohnsuccfullerton.org ✞ 610-264-8421

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THERE OUR HEARTS WILL BE

## We Worship, We Love, We Serve – No Matter What!

**Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost**

**October 18, 2026**
**9:30 am**

# We Worship

*We are proudly an Open & Affirming (ONA) Congregation of the Keystone Conference of the United Church of Christ!*

***You are WELCOME HERE!***

***Our Offering*** *is received as we gather for worship, with plates located on pedestals at the back. We graciously accept your gifts of praise and gratitude to God, to be presented during the service. While guests are welcome to contribute, please know there is no obligation; the financial support of St. John's is the responsibility of our congregation members.*

***Sunday Social*** *is our gathering for light refreshments and connection, visiting, making new friends, and building relationships. Join us in Fox Hall following worship each Sunday, hosted by various congregants and groups.*

***Children's Faith Formation*** *begins in the early part of our worship service in the sanctuary, including the Children's Message. Parents are asked to accompany their child if they are at the kids' table in the back. On Communion Sundays the children remain in the worship service.*

***Hymnal Abbreviations***
***WR—****Worship and Rejoice* ***NC****—New Century Hymnal*

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*** Those who are comfortably able, please stand**

**Chimes** *Bells of St. John*

**Welcome and Announcements** Rev. Steven Davis

- Oct. 18, CROP Walk, 1:30 pm
- Oct. 25, Estimate of Giving Sunday
- Nov. 1, All Saints Sunday
- Nov. 1, Samantha Kistler Ordination Service, 3:00 pm
- Nov. 14, Bazaar, 9:00 am – 2:00 pm

***Greeting and Sharing the Peace of Christ**

One: May the peace of Christ be with you.
**All: And also with you!**

**Music to Prepare our Hearts for Worship** *Joyful Proclamation*
*Kurt Meyer*
*Bells of St. John*

***Call to Worship** Liturgist: Robin Brensinger

One: When we come into the presence of God, we leave behind the proud wisdom of this world.

**All: Our faith rests on the power of God.**

One: The world looks for strength in human achievement.

**All: We look to the cross, where God's love is made known.**

One: God's Spirit searches the depths of all things and calls us into truth.

**All: Open our hearts, that we may receive the gifts of your Spirit.**

One: May we come before God, not relying on our own understanding, but trusting in God's grace.

**All: We come to worship the One whose wisdom is eternal and whose love never fails.**

***Opening Hymn: WR # 31** *I Sing the Almighty Power of God*
*Verses 1 and 2*

***Gathering Prayer** Liturgist: Robin Brensinger

**All: Holy and gracious God, we gather in a world filled with noise, opinions, and competing voices. We come carrying burdens, fears, disappointments, and questions that often seem too heavy to bear.**

**As we worship today, quiet every distraction that would keep us from hearing your voice. Open our minds to your truth, our hearts to your presence, and our spirits to your transforming power. Remind us that your strength is made perfect in weakness, your wisdom is greater than our understanding, and your love is deeper than our imagination. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.**

**Invitation to Confession** Liturgist: Robin Brensinger

One: Before the God who knows us completely and loves us unconditionally, let us confess the ways we have trusted our own wisdom more than God's guidance, our own strength more than God's grace, and our own desires more than God's will.

*Time for Silent Prayer*

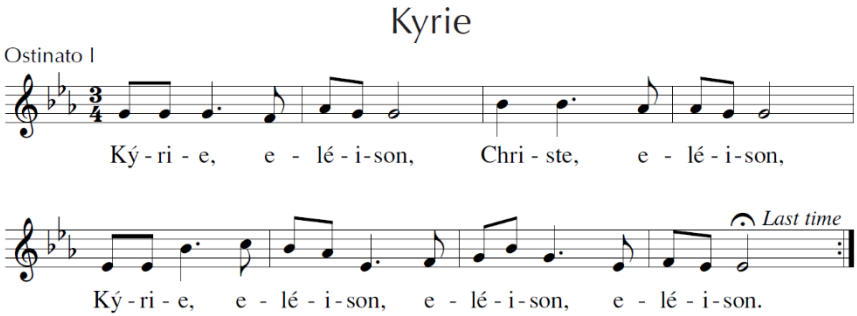
**Prayer of Confession**

**All: Merciful God, we confess that we often seek the approval of the world more than the wisdom of your Spirit. We confess that we have chosen pride over humility, self-interest over compassion, and fear over faith. We have been quick to judge and slow to listen.**

**Forgive us for the times we have ignored your voice and resisted your leading. Forgive us when we have treated the gift of your grace as something ordinary and when we have failed to see Christ in those around us.**

**Renew our minds through the power of your Spirit. Teach us once again to see the world through the eyes of Christ and to live as people shaped by your love. This we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.**

**Sung Response** *First sung by the choir, then All*




**Assurance of Forgiveness** Liturgist: Robin Brensinger

One: In Jesus Christ, the power of sin is broken, the burden of guilt is lifted, and a new life is offered to all who believe.

**All: We are not defined by our failures but by God's grace. In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven, loved, and made new. Thanks be to God!**

**Children's Message** Rev. Steve Davis and Samantha Kistler

Children and youth are welcome to come up to the chancel steps.

**Hymn:** *Eye Has Not Seen*
*Verses 1, 2, and 3*




Text: 1 Corinthians 2:9-10; Marty Haugen, b.1950
Tune: Marty Haugen, b.1950
© 1982, GIA Publications, Inc.

**Introduction to the Word of God** DonnaLee Yeatts

One: God's word inspires us and sustains us.
**All: May we build communities of generosity.**
One: God's word challenges and provokes us.
**All: May we build communities of justice.**
One: God's word renews and heals us.
**All: May we build communities of the heart.**

***Scripture Reading** *1 Corinthians 2: 1-16*
Reader: DonnaLee Yeatts

*When I came to you, brothers and sisters, I did not come proclaiming the mystery of God to you in lofty words or wisdom. For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I came to you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. My speech and my proclamation were not with plausible words of wisdom, but with a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith might rest not on human wisdom but on the power of God.*

*Yet among the mature we do speak wisdom, though it is not a wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are doomed to perish. But we speak God's wisdom, secret and hidden, which God decreed before the ages for our glory. None of the rulers of this age understood this; for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. But, as it is written,*

*"What no eye has seen, nor ear heard,*
*nor the human heart conceived,*
*what God has prepared for those who love him"—*

*these things God has revealed to us through the Spirit; for the Spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. For what human being knows what is truly human except the human spirit that is within? So also no one comprehends what is truly God's except the Spirit of God. Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that is from God, so that we may understand the gifts bestowed on us by God. And we speak of these things in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual things to those who are spiritual.*

*Those who are unspiritual do not receive the gifts of God's Spirit, for they are foolishness to them, and they are unable to understand them because they are spiritually discerned. Those who are spiritual discern all things, and they are themselves subject to no one else's scrutiny. "For who has known the mind of the Lord so as to instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*

One: The word of God for the people of God!
**All: Thanks be to God!**

**Sermon** Rev. Steve Davis
**There Our Hearts Will Be: "We Live in Hope"**

**Song of Praise** *Strength for Tomorrow, Grace for Today*
*Marty Parks*

You've been stronger than all of our weakness, you've been greater than all of our needs. You've been wiser than all our confusion, Lord, you've been all of these. You've been merciful when we have fallen, you've been gracious to hear all our pleas. You've been hope in a desperate season, Lord you've been all of these.

And as we step out in faith on this journey, we know that you'll be our comfort and stay. Lord, give us strength for tomorrow, and grace for today.

Lifting each other, sisters and brothers; forgiving as you would forgive. Loving and caring, each burden sharing; Lord, teach us how we should live.

And as we step out in faith on this journey, we know that you'll be our comfort and stay. Lord give us strength for tomorrow and grace for today. Lord, give us strength for tomorrow, and grace for today.

# We Love

**Prayers of the People/Pastoral Prayer** Rev. Steve Davis and
*(Requests shared from the entry table basket)* Samantha Kistler

**The Lord's Prayer**

**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.**
**And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**
**For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever.**
**Amen.**

**Sharing Our Experience of Generosity** DonnaLee Yeatts

**Presenting Our Gifts, Tithes and Offerings to God**




Thank you for your generosity and faithfulness in supporting the ministry of St. John's UCC!

***Doxology** *Glory to God Whose Goodness Shines on Me*

***Glory to God, whose goodness shines on me,***
***and to the Son, whose grace has pardoned me,***
***and to the Spirit, whose love has set me free.***
***As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be. Amen***

***Prayer of Dedication** Liturgist: Robin Brensinger

**All: Receive these gifts as signs of our gratitude and our desire to participate in your work in the world. Use them to bring hope where there is despair, healing where there is brokenness, justice where there is oppression, and the good news of Christ wherever hearts are longing for your presence. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.**

# We Serve

**Receiving New Persons in Covenant Relationship and Welcome**

*Samara Bush, Pat Demmy, Bob DiBruno, Don DiBruno, Lyra Gaston-Grimes, Brooke Heffelfinger, George Isleib, Sarina Milito & Klaus, Brian Roth*

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

**All: We welcome you with joy into 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.**

***Closing Hymn: WR # 63** *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*
*Verses 1 and 2*

***Benediction** Rev. Steve Davis

***Postlude** *A Joyful Trumpet*
*Patricia Lou Harris*

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**Our Worship & Faith Formation Sunday Schedule**

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**8:30 am Adult Sunday School—RM 201**
**9:30 am Worship**
**Faith Formation takes place during Worship, immediately following the Children's Sermon**
**Sunday Social follows Service downstairs in Fox Hall**

**Attendance – October 11**

Onsite – 58 Online – 36 Total – 94

**Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost, October 18**
**Lectionary Readings**
*Exodus 33:12-23 and Psalm 99*
*Isaiah 45:1-7 and Psalm 96:1-9, (10-13)*
*1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 and Matthew 22:15-22*

**Serving in Worship Leadership**

Liturgist: Robin Brensinger
Scripture Reader: DonnaLee Yeatts
Worship Tech: Bill Castello
Altar Guild: Charlotte Kerrigan
Greeter: Kim Hillegass
Ushers: Karen Stoisits and Tom Moyer
Altar Guild: Corrina Purdon

**Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost, October 25**
**Lectionary Readings**
*Deuteronomy 34:1-12 and Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17*
*Leviticus 19:1-2, 15-18 and Psalm 1*
*1 Thessalonians 2:1-8 and Matthew 22:34-46*

**Serving in Worship Leadership**

Liturgist: Regi Mohr
Scripture Reader: George Isleib
Worship Tech: Bill Castello
Greeter: Pam Repetz and Jackie Maxon
Ushers: Wayne Lichtenwalter and Charlotte Kerrigan
Altar Guild: Corrina Purdon

## IN OUR PRAYERS

Please remember in your prayers all those who are ill, in our area hospitals, or otherwise in need of prayer: Phyllis Ambearle, Gracie Arnold, Margaret & Richard Baatz, Tammy Beitzel, Rob Czekner, Marion DeMilio, Robin Dougherty, Janet & Jim Ebert, Sally Gibson, Sandy Glass, Tracey Glass, Joy & Mike Gravely, Donna Held, Rev. John & Charlee Hoff, JoAnn Hower, Barbara Jennings, Geraldine Keim, Mary Jane Kistler, Ethel Lavenburg, Dawn Luckenbill, Dale Millham, Karen Moyer, Eleanor & Joe O'Donnell, Elaine Parsons, Brenda Pascoe, Joey Raszler, Rebecca Schneck, Bobby Sherman, Bert Smith, Leona Snyder, Joan Stocker, Susan Stocker, Barry Stephens, Martha Strauss, Pat Thompson, and George Williams.

Please remember in your prayers the intentions of the members of our congregation, especially: Joel, for reuniting with his family, Staci, who is healing from a liver transplant, David Deutsch, who is going through cancer treatments, Sally Gibson, Jennifer Henninger who was diagnosed with Lung Cancer.

Continued prayers for those in our military, especially Dominic DeMilio, Kaden Rossanese, and Nathan Unger.

If you or a family member is admitted to the hospital, tell them you are a member of St. John's or **use church code 473.**

## MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH SPONSORSHIP

There are many meaningful ways to support the life and ministry of St. John's through sponsorship – helping to beautify our sanctuary with seasonal flowers given in honor or memory of a loved one, sponsoring our weekly worship bulletins, or sponsoring our monthly newsletters. Your generosity helps make the ministry of St. John's possible. You can also support our Music Ministry by sponsoring the purchase of new music, helping our choirs continue to "make a joyful noise unto the Lord." Every sponsorship, large or small, becomes a meaningful gift to our church family.

Your sponsorship is more than a contribution—it is a way to celebrate a loved one, remember someone special, support our worship, and help St. John's continue its ministry for generations to come.

Consider sponsoring today and help us continue to worship, love, serve, and make a joyful noise together!

## CHURCH CALENDAR
## OCTOBER 18 — OCTOBER 25

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Sun 10/18 | 8:15 am | Friendship Bible Class |
| | 9:30 am | Worship / New Member Receiving |
| | 10:45 am | Sunday Social |
| | 1:30 pm | CROP Walk |
| Mon 10/19 | 6:00 pm | "Fun-Raising" |
| Tue 10/20 | 10:00 am | Staff Meeting |
| Wed 10/21 | 9:00 am | Verso-Chat |
| | 12:00 pm | Painting Group |
| | 6:00 pm | Painting Group |
| | 6:00 pm | Girl Scouts |
| | 6:30 pm | Zumba |
| | 7:00 pm | SAA Recovery Group |
| Thu 10/22 | 6:30 pm | Choir Practice |
| Fri 10/23 | 5:00 pm | St. George's School |
| Sat 10/24 | 9:30 am | Zumba |
| Sun 10/25 | | PASTIE ORDERS DUE |
| | 8:15 am | Friendship Bible Class |
| | 9:30 am | Worship – Estimate of Giving Sunday |
| | 10:45 am | Sunday Social |




**“There Our Hearts Will Be”**

Generosity Reflection by
Rev. Bob Stevens

I know St. John’s Consistory members are reviewing this year’s expenses and preparing a budget for next year. Coincidentally I recently was looking over expenses for the Stevens-Boyd household. And Janet and I have been talking about our offerings and contribution to St. John’s, looking ahead to what we’ll be giving to the church next year. (We’re probably ahead of most of you in this because I’m chairing the Generosity Committee, so we’ve been talking about stewardship for a few weeks already!)

When Janet and I decided to join, we were happy to discover that St. John’s had an electronic offering system. Not every church does that, but it always made sense to us that churches should provide this for its members. Like many other people, we automate so many of our expenses: Netflix and Apple TV, gym membership, utilities, news and magazine subscriptions, etc.

That not only makes it easier for us – no checks to write! – but our church treasurer, Sue Weldner, would tell you it’s a lot easier for the church too. When the church knows we can count on regular and consistent income from our members, it is easier to budget for expenses (and pay bills).

But it’s not just for convenience’s sake that we do this. Stewardship is a spiritual practice, and generosity is an act of faith. And we figure, if we can make a financial commitment paying all those other expenses, we certainly can make a faithful commitment to contribute to our church. After all, that’s where our heart is!




*"Where your treasure is,*
*there your heart will be also."*
*- Matthew 6:21*

The Book of Proverbs may not be the first place one turns to for ideas about stewardship, philanthropy, or generosity. However, Proverbs has a lot to say about living one's best life. Too often, living a good life focuses on accumulating wealth and goods. Proverbs—and Jesus—teaches that a good life is much more than hoarding money and things.

The cycle of endless consumption and accumulation is as old as time and is evolving every minute. While corporations, advertising, and marketing strategies urge us—some would even say, compel—us to buy, buy, buy, it is human nature to question if that's all there is.

The Book of Proverbs provides answers to that question.

At the center of Proverbs is a profound and unshakable reverence for God—recognizing and acknowledging that God is the creator and sustainer of all life. Here we read that pursuing wisdom leads to longevity, wealth, esteem in the eyes of others, and a healthy respect for others. Choosing the path of wisdom leads to purpose and meaning as one moves through life.

A good life is lived in a trusting and faithful relationship with God, who blesses us with meaning and purpose, and authentic and deep relationships, as we live in humble obedience to God's teachings—lives of love, generosity, integrity, and in community. Jesus tells us, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt 6:21).

Treasure in this context, and in Proverbs 3, is not just material wealth and resources. Treasure encompasses our time, talent, skills, expertise, knowledge, presence, influence, activism, volunteerism, and more—all to be cultivated and shared generously.

**CONSIDER YOUR GIVING AS A PERCENTAGE OF YOUR MONTHLY INCOME.**

| Annual Income | Monthly Income | 2% | 3% | 4% | 5% | 10% |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20,000 | 1,667 | 33 | 50 | 67 | 83 | 167 |
| 25,000 | 2,083 | 42 | 63 | 83 | 104 | 208 |
| 30,000 | 2,500 | 50 | 75 | 100 | 125 | 250 |
| 35,000 | 2,917 | 58 | 88 | 117 | 146 | 292 |
| 40,000 | 3,333 | 67 | 100 | 133 | 167 | 333 |
| 45,000 | 3,750 | 75 | 113 | 150 | 188 | 375 |
| 50,000 | 4,167 | 83 | 125 | 167 | 208 | 417 |
| 60,000 | 5,000 | 100 | 150 | 200 | 250 | 500 |
| 75,000 | 6,250 | 125 | 188 | 250 | 313 | 625 |
| 100,000 | 8,333 | 167 | 250 | 333 | 417 | 833 |
| 125,000 | 10,417 | 208 | 313 | 417 | 521 | 1042 |
| 150,000 | 12,500 | 250 | 375 | 500 | 625 | 1250 |
| 200,000 | 16,667 | 333 | 500 | 667 | 833 | 1667 |

On average, Americans give 2% of their income to charity.
Giving even 1% more of annual income to charity would be transformative for our congregation and other organizations doing good in our community.

Our faith tells us to present our "first fruits" to God as our response to God's faithfulness. We begin with God, rather than see what is leftover. The tithe (the first 10%) is a reflection of our gratitude for God's generosity toward us in life. As we look at our generosity response, how are we demonstrating who Jesus is to us? How will the ways of Jesus become more evident through us?

## MONTHLY OFFERINGS

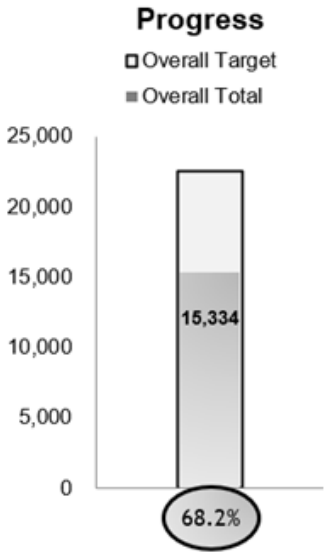
SEPTEMBER 2026

| Overall | |
|---|---|
| *Overall Target* | 22,500.00 |
| | |
| *Overall Total* | 15,334.00 |
| *Overall Percent* | 68.2% |

| Last Week | |
|---|---|
| Start: | 9/26/26 |
| End: | 10/2/26 |
| Total: | 2,421.20 |

*Amt needed to reach Target*

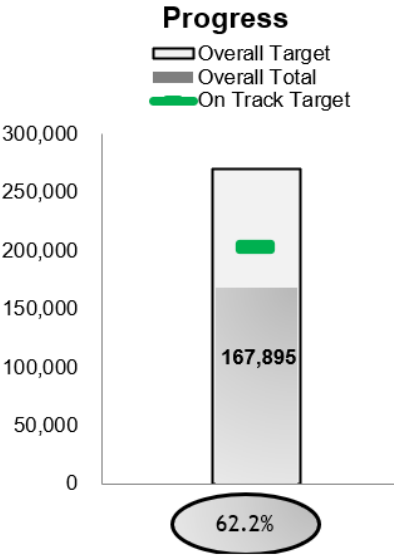
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| *SEPTEMBER 202* | 7,166.00 |




## YTD OFFERINGS

SEPTEMBER 2026

| Overall | |
|---|---|
| *Overall Target* | 270,000.00 |
| *On Track Target* | 202,500.00 |
| *Overall Total* | 167,895.23 |
| *Overall Percent* | 62.2% |



# OUR STAFF

| | |
|---|---|
| ***Senior Pastor*** | Rev. Steve Davis<br>srpastor@sjuccf.org |
| ***Director of Music*** | Patrick Sandt<br>music@sjuccf.org |
| ***Ministry Intern*** | Samantha "Sam" Kistler<br>samanthamkistler@gmail.com |
| ***Office Administrator*** | Samara "Sam" Bush<br>officesecretary@sjuccf.org |
| ***Treasurer*** | Sue Weldner<br>sbweldner@gmail.com |
| ***Financial Secretary & Coordinating Custodian*** | Michelle Gutekunst<br>financialsecretary@sjuccf.org<br>custodians@sjuccf.org |
| ***Worship-Media Tech & Connections Newsletter Editor*** | Bill Castello<br>stars@sjuccf.org<br>newsletter@sjuccf.org |
| ***Custodian*** | Christina Bach<br>ironton1@verizon.net |
| ***St. John's Christian Early Learning Center Director*** | Jazmin Smith<br>staff@stjohnslearningcenter.com<br>610-443-0254 |