

ST. JOHN'S UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

*A family rooted in Christ, growing in grace, and living in love.*

**Happy  
Halloween**

223 West College Avenue

Bluffton, OH 45817

419-358-5641

Rev. Carol Clements

(330-204-0802)



**S** serves others

**A** accepts all

**I** integrates heart and soul

**N** neutralizes fear, recognizes joy

**T** teaches God's word

**J** joins with Jesus on the journey

**O** offers support and love on our faith journeys

**H** holds out hope to all

**N** nurtures those in need

**S** shepherds friends and strangers



October, 2013

**SERENDIPITY**

ST. JOHN'S UNITED  
CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Bluffton, OH 45817  
419-358-5641

**Web Page:**

[www.blufftonstjohns.com](http://www.blufftonstjohns.com)

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330-204-0802  
StJohnPstr@aol.com

**Secretary**

Sue Hardwick

**Organists**

Sue Hardwick and  
Barbara Plaughter

**Choir Director**

Dr. Crystal Sellers Battle

**Sound Technician**

Blaine Bauman

**CONSISTORY**

**Elders**

Jenny Bracy (President)

Nancy Yeager (V.P.)

Ron Badertscher

Steve Kindle

**Deacons**

Jason Cox

Randy Cox

Pam Everett

David Herr

Matt Jordan

Roger Scoles

**Treasurer**

Ed Yeager

**Financial Secretary**

Blaine Bauman



Who woulda  
thunk it . . .

The grass is not greener on *that side* of the fence, and the grass is not greener on *this side* of the fence. The grass is greener where you *water* it. That's the key—you have to water your own lawn. You need to help things to grow where you are. Amazing things happen when you replenish, nurture, and care for that which you have been entrusted. Healthy, growing churches take work and constant attention. Here are a few suggestions to avoid the "greener grass syndrome."

**Don't compare.** Too often we spend too much time comparing what other churches have in comparison to our current situation. This can bring discontent, jealousy, or even envy.

**Don't compete.** Some snatch up statistical pages and stat sheets with the sole purpose of seeing if they are ahead of some other church in particular areas. Competition seems to discourage rather than motivate and encourage.

**Do Commit.** Commit yourself to the church. Commit yourself to building relationships, growing personally, and helping others to grow as well. Do everything in your power to make yourself healthy spiritually, because a healthy "you" will make a healthy church because healthy things grow!

How do we make ourselves spiritually healthy? Attending worship services is only a small way. The model of Jesus is small study groups where you can receive the Word, discuss it and, through group dynamics, absorb and reflect on the knowledge to make it your own. You need time for personal reflection and daily meditation, but it is within the body of believers studying the Word of God together that many "Aha!" moments can be made in your faith journey. We learn and grow with each other. Please take advantage of the "work" that comes out of Bible study and Sunday School classes and the reward of spiritual insight and community building.

A scientist proved that optical laws and our ability to perceive color make the grass at a distance look greener to the human eye than the blades of grass underneath our feet. This occurs because the blades of grass are perpendicular to the ground. In other words, because you are standing right on top of the grass, you don't see it in the same way you see grass at a distance. The bottom line is: Where we are may be greener than we think. I think that old saying captures it as well: We need to bloom where we are planted!



Participating clergy at the 140<sup>th</sup> celebration include the Revs. Judy Huber, Carol Clements, Mark Williams, Charles Jordan (guest speaker) and Don Rock.

# Our Gala Anniversary Celebration!

140 years and counting...

Dear Friends,

Our day with St. John's was both enjoyable and memorable. I personally had tears of happiness and sadness. My only regret would be that my body wouldn't let me visit with everyone. We wish we could hear Sue play and see everyone each week. St. John's did it again! Job well done. Wish I had the energy Nancy and Shirley have—they were hopping everywhere. I was proud of my confirmation class—Sally Jordan, Ronald Badertscher, Lynn Swank, and I—were present. Tina and I were just happy to see so many St. John's friends. Keep up the excellent work in the Lord.

---Helen Leatherman





## Well Wishes for A Good Time!

Pastor Carol,

Judith (Tschantz) Koepke and I enjoyed the 140<sup>th</sup> celebration! It was a grand time to reconnect with our history (we were married in St. John's on 8/10/63) and, of course, it's "home" to Judith!

The many people, the moving service (and sermon), the lovely dinner, and, of course, the catching up and fellowship time. We just wanted to say thank you for the quality efforts! Food was good and "the program" was interwoven with worship—so the Fellowship Hall experience became just that. Judith was euphoric meeting some of her friends she'd not connected with in over 50 years!

Food for the soul—and it happened at beautiful St. John's UCC. Like friend Chuck Jordan said: "Best wishes on another 140!" to which I/we say AMEN. Thank you again and blessings on your quality ministry.

*— Dr. Paul F. Koepke, UCC Retired*

Dear Duane,

I did receive a letter about the celebration. Unfortunately, I cannot attend. Please give my best to the folks in the congregation; I continue to be thankful for the time we had together. Here's a bit of family update.

Anna is 13 and will be 14 in November. She's in 8<sup>th</sup> grade and in a sparkling new school building with a new teacher. She spends about a quarter of her school day in "typical" classes and is in a special education room for the rest of the time.

Stephen is 17 and a junior. He is still trying to find his place in his studies and is excited to be involved in a video club this year.

Joseph is 19 and a sophomore at Hanover College in Indiana. He wants to be a math major with a minor in creative writing.

I recently signed my 4<sup>th</sup> one-year contract to continue as the Interim Associate pastor for Pastoral Care at Westminster Presbyterian Church in downtown Dayton.

With the kids getting older, I have been realizing that, at some point, we will not all be taking family vacations together, so this year, we went all out and headed to Scotland. We traveled on our own and stuck mainly to the highlands and the islands—a fantastic trip.

Peace,

*--John (Shonle)*

*(The family photo can be found on the back bulletin board).*



Hey Nancy and Ed!

I just had to write and tell you how very glad we were to be at the 140<sup>th</sup> celebration at St. John's on Sunday!!! WOW! It was absolutely fabulous and wonderful!! All of the committees involved did a marvelous job! (I know how much hard work and effort went into this very special event!)

The entire celebration: the church service, Sue's music, the choir, the programs, the dinner, the flowers and decorations, the mugs and pens . . . everything was extremely well done, and the church looked so beautiful! I already told you how impressed we were with the air conditioning as well as how gorgeous the church looked. I would not have missed it for anything. Ray loved it as well. Plus, there were so many former members who showed up—lots and lots of visiting. It truly was "old home week." I was worn out from visiting!

All of you who planned, prepared, cleaned, painted, shopped, cooked, served, and made the 140<sup>th</sup> celebration happen deserve a BIG THANK YOU! We thank you from the bottoms of our hearts! Job well done! Greatly appreciated!

*--Janie and Ray*





## Northwest Ohio Association Ohio Conference-United Church of Christ

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September 15, 2013

*Proclaim God's  
Word in Worship  
and  
Worshipful Ways*

*Strengthen  
our Witness  
to the Gospel  
in the World*

*Discern God's Will  
for Faithful and  
Effective Ministry*

*Manifest Faithful,  
Wise and  
Responsible  
Stewardship  
of all God's Gifts*

*Demonstrate Care,  
Compassion,  
Forgiveness  
and Accountability  
to and  
for One Another*

St. John's United Church of Christ  
223 W. College Avenue  
Bluffton, OH 45817

Dear Members and Friends of St. John's UCC,

Congratulations on the occasion of celebrating your 140<sup>th</sup> Anniversary as St. John's United Church of Christ from your Northwest Ohio Association family!

As you celebrate your 140<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a congregation, you have touched so many lives through your mission and ministry, not only in the Bluffton area, but around the world. You have witnessed to God's transforming love through Jesus Christ with generosity, compassion, and faithfulness. God has blessed you abundantly and we are appreciative that you have shared those blessings with us so that together we can do mission and ministry. Thank you!

Throughout your history there has been a spirit of Christian witness as you are guided by God from generation to generation. You have celebrated and witnessed to God's mighty deeds in your midst. Your church building has become a place of fellowship, faith formation, and worship. By your actions, you witness to the welcoming love found in the church of Jesus Christ. God's Spirit is upon you, inspiring you to be resurrection people of hope.

I regret that I am not able to be with you on Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup> as I will be in Colorado for a wedding and class reunion. My thoughts and prayers are with you and Pastor Clements as you celebrate to the honor and glory of God. Thank you for your witness and leadership to the Northwest Ohio Association family, Ohio Conference, and the United Church of Christ. God bless you always.

Sincerely,

(Rev.) Daniel L. Busch,  
Association Minister

*"Sustaining and Creating Healthy Churches in Community"*

Rev. Robin LaBolt  
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Mr. Jeremy Davies  
Vice Moderator  
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Mrs. Sharon Flickinger  
Secretary  
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Mr. Jim Henry  
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1747 Westover Lane  
Mansfield, OH 44906

# YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE



While I was going through previously used articles, and “cleaning house” I thought this would make interesting reading and am resurrecting it once again. I don’t remember where or when I originally saw and used it, so I don’t know or remember the author.

“O God! I am so tired. Aren’t I a good person? Don’t I give to the church? Don’t I help older people across the street?

So I covet my neighbor’s wife/husband! Look at her/him! Who wouldn’t! Look but don’t touch. That’s not enough?

So what if I work to live and live to work? What difference does it make as long as I remember you when the collection plate goes around?

Who cares if I go into the office or work place five days a week, sometimes Saturdays and Sundays, too? The Sabbath? I’m too busy for the Sabbath! I’m just trying to get ahead in the world. What’s wrong with that? Who needs a rest anyway? The children are fine without me. Besides, I provide for the kids and they’ve got everything they’ve ever wanted.

My mother and father and other elderly friends? I honor them, but you don’t expect me to actually visit them in the nursing home?

Why are you such a nit-picky God?

Look, I haven’t killed anyone, not really, anyway. I’ve thought about it, certainly. I know that sometimes my business and action decisions haven’t always

had a positive effect on people, but they’ll survive. That’s life, right?

[pause] What’s that? What was it Jesus said about intentions of the heart?

I’m not a bad person. I haven’t committed adultery, especially if you apply some of the newspaper accounts recently published. I don’t really steal – although my tax returns take advantage of loopholes that don’t exist. Everybody does it.

And yes, I guess I do covet my neighbor’s new riding snow blower attachment, the heated seat, pop can holder, and onboard GPS.

I wish, I wish, I wish I had a second house at the lake too. And I hate everyone who does! But who doesn’t?

Have I ever taken your name in vain? Have I ever said your name wrongly? Yes, sometimes, but only when I’m frustrated and angry and usually on the golf course or because that big fish jumped off my line. But I didn’t really mean it, really.

Details. Take a good look at the big picture, God.

I’m a good person. Just don’t look too closely at the details of my life, please.

Please, God. Not the details.”

Re-reading and writing this has made me take note of some of the things I’ve neglected. How about you?

*Pastor Don retired*

One Halloween a man was walking down the street and heard a thumping noise behind him. Looking behind him he saw a coffin following him, upright. He was a bit nervous and began walking faster. The coffin continued, “Thumpety thump, thumpety thump.” He began running but the coffin kept opening and closing “thumpety thump, thumpety thump, thump clap.” It continued and suddenly *CRASH*” it came right through the door. He ran up stairs, it was right behind him. He rushed into the bathroom, slammed the door, but the coffin broke through the door – “thumpety thump, thumpety thump *CRASH*”. Terrified the man grabbed the first thing he could, a bottle of robitussin and threw it – the coffin stopped.

[Old Barn Out Back-Joke of the week]

## AND HERE'S HOW THE INTERNET GOT STARTED . . . (ACCORDING TO *SOME* BIBLE SCHOLARS)

In ancient Israel, it came to pass that a trader by the name of Abraham Com did take unto himself a healthy, young wife by the name of Dorothy.

And Dot Com was a comely woman, large of breast, broad of shoulder, and long of leg. Indeed, she was often called Amazon Dot Com.

And she said unto Abraham, her husband, "Why dost thou travel so far from town to town with thy goods when thou canst trade without ever leaving thy tent?"

And Abraham did look at her as though she were several saddle bags short of a camel load, but simply said, "How dear?"

And Dot replied, "I will place drums in all the towns and drums in between to send messages saying what you have for sale, and they will reply telling you who hath the best price. The sale can be made on the drums and delivery made by Uriah's Pony Stable (UPS)."

Abraham thought long and decided he would let Dot have her way with the drums.

And the drums rang out and were an immediate success. Abraham sold all the goods he had at the top price—without ever having to move from his tent.

To prevent neighboring countries from overhearing what the drums were saying, Dot devised a system that only she and the drummers knew. It was known as Must Send Drum Over Sound (MSDOS), and she developed a language to transmit ideas and pictures—Hebrew To The People (HTTP).

And the young men did take to Dot Com's trading as doth the greedy horsefly takes to camel dung. They were called Nomadic Ecclesiastical Rich Dominican Sybarites, or NERDS.

They were so feverish with joy at the new riches and the deafening sound of drums that no one noticed that the real riches were going to that enterprising drum dealer, Brother William of Gates, who bought off every drum maker in the land. Indeed, he did insist on drums to be made that would work only with Brother

Gates' drum heads and drum sticks.

And Dot did say, "Oh, Abraham, what we have started is being taken over by others!" And Abraham looked out over the Bay of Ezekiel (or eBay as it came to be known), and said, "We need a name that reflects what we are." Dot replied, "Young Ambitious Hebrew Owner Operators." That's good," said Abraham, YAHOO. Because it was Dot's idea, they named it YAHOO Dot Com.

Abraham's cousin, Joshua, being the young Gregarious Energetic Educated Kid (GEEK) that he was, soon started using Dot's drums to locate things around the countryside. It soon became known as God's Own Official Guide to Locating Everything (GOOGLE).

*That's how it all began—and that's the truth!*



THIS  MONTH'S

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**Birthdays**

10/2 Penny Kindle  
 10/9 Mark Badertscher  
 10/10 Don Rock  
 10/16 Doris Conrad  
 10/27 Jenny Bracy

THIS  MONTH'S

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**Anniversaries**

10/19 Jon and Bethany Theis  
 10/21 John and Ann Nye  
 10/27 Steve and Penny Kindle

**CONGRATULATIONS AND  
 BEST WISHES FOR A  
 WONDERFUL YEAR!**

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said, ***“IF I HAD ALL THE BEER IN THE WORLD, I’D TAKE IT AND POUR IT INTO THE RIVER!”***



With even greater emphasis he said, ***“AND IF I HAD ALL THE WINE IN THE WORLD, I’D TAKE IT AND POUR IT INTO THE RIVER.”***



And then, finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, ***“AND IF I HAD ALL THE WHISKEY IN THE WORLD, I’D TAKE IT AND POUR IT INTO THE RIVER.”***



With that, the sermon was over, and he sat down. The choir director stood, very cautiously, and announced with a smile, smirking slightly, “For our closing hymn, we will sing hymn #365, “*Shall We Gather at the River.*”





Happy  
Halloween

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|----------------|---|
| Sunday (6)     | Communion served  |
| Tuesday (8)    | Ladies meet at Arby's (9 a.m.)<br>TOPS (6 p.m.)<br>Bible Study (7 p.m.)   |
| Wednesday (9)  | Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)<br>Choir practice (7 p.m.)   |
| Thursday (10)  | Consistory (7 p.m.)   |
| Sunday (13)    | Second Sunday potluck<br>Choir sings  |
| Monday (14)    | Ladies make noodles (9 a.m.)  |
| Tuesday (15)   | Ladies meet at Arby's (9 a.m.)<br>TOPS (6 p.m.)<br>Bible Study (7 p.m.)   |
| Wednesday (16) | Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)<br>Choir practice (7 p.m.)   |
| Thursday (17)  | Community dinner at Sr. Center (6 p.m.)   |
| Saturday (19)  | Decorate sanctuary for Harvest Home (9 a.m.)<br>Food pantry (9 a.m.)  |
| Sunday (20)    | Board of Christian Education meets after worship<br>Choir sings<br>CE mission offering for Food Pantry received |
| Tuesday (22)   | Ladies meet at Arby's (9 a.m.)<br>TOPS (6 p.m.)<br>Bible Study (7 p.m.)   |
| Wednesday (23) | Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)<br>Choir practice (7 p.m.)   |
| Saturday (26)  | Ladies' shopping trip to Lodi (time TBA)  |
| Tuesday (29)   | Ladies meet at Arby's (9 a.m.)<br>TOPS (6 p.m.)<br>Bible Study (7 p.m.)   |
| Wednesday (30) | Men meet at Arby's (8:30 a.m.)<br>Choir (7 p.m.)  |
| Thursday (31)  | Bluffton Trick or treat night (6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.)  |





## The Serpent's Vocabulary

**Robert Naylor**

*"Now the serpent was more crafty than any other wild animal that the LORD God had made" - Genesis 3:1-7*

All is well in the Garden of Eden. We are told that paradise is found there and the happy couple have all they need for a fulfilling life. We are told that God planted trees and plants for food; the garden even had a river running through it. We are told that everything was pleasant and perfect. And the man and the woman experienced great joy and were naked and unashamed of their nakedness. And the words "thank you" abounded to God and the grateful couple tended God's garden with care.

But then the serpent entered the scene and told the couple they had no reason to be so happy. "You don't have everything you need! There is that tree over there." And then he introduced two words into the vocabulary of humanity . . . "mine" and "more." And the couple became disenchanted with God because the Creator had required them to take care of what was created. And they pondered and concluded that if it were their property they could do anything they wanted to do with the garden. "Let's pretend that it is ours. We don't want it on loan! We want to own it." And subsequently their care for the property diminished. And thanks to the serpent they realized they wanted even more. They felt that they didn't really have all they needed. "We want more!" And suddenly they were ashamed and tried to "cover up" their sin – their greed - from God.

And the words still linger today in our souls: "mine" and "more." And our stewardship of God's property is again of less concern to us. And through all sorts of media we hear: "You need more to be happy and fulfilled!" And we listen again to the serpent and our spirit of thanksgiving is silenced and our complaints about not having enough increase.

Let us take an accounting of all that we have received from God and give thanks. And let us take better care of the property that God has loaned to us. Only then can we silence the serpent's whispered words.

### Prayer

God of all creation, we thank you for your generosity to us in loaning us such a beautiful garden. Give us joy in tending it! Amen.

# FALL TREATS



## You will need:

- Double Stuff Oreo cookies
- Candy Corn
- Whoppers
- Peanut butter cups
- Chocolate frosting
- Yellow frosting
- Red frosting (optional)
- Black sprinkles for eyes (optional)

## Steps to make turkeys:

- 1) Take a cookie and put a tiny bit of frosting inside. This will help hold the candy corn better.
- 2) Insert five candy corn, insert smaller tips in the cream center.
- 3) Place a dab of frosting on the opposite end of the cookie from where you just inserted the candy corn; secure the cookie to the "base" cookie. Place cookie against the wall while they dry to help them keep their shape better.
- 4) While cookies dry, open a peanut butter cup and cut a sliver off of one end.
- 5) Once your cups are ready, flip your cookies over, but still keep them next to the wall in case the frosting is not completely dry. Place a dab of frosting on peanut butter cup and place it on the cookies as shown.
- 6) Put a dab of frosting on a Whopper and attach it to the top of the pb cup.
- 7) Use a dab of frosting and flue on a white tip of a candy corn for a beak; put two yellow dots for eyes, use a sprinkle for eye centers, add feet with yellow icing.



- 1) Draw faces on cups with a black marker.
- 2) Add vanilla pudding tinted with green food coloring.
- 3) Crush some Oreos to sprinkle on top of the pudding.
- 4) FRANKENCUPS!

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Members of St. John's UCC:

Thank you for the special card for my 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Also, thanks to the "old" friends for the cards I received. It means so much to me for your thoughts and prayers. I had a great birthday with bouquets, parties, many cards, phone calls, visits, and especially all nine grandchildren coming from nine different states to celebrate. A handsome group! I appreciate your remembering me—thanks very much.

*Frances Scoles*

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*St. John's United Church of Christ:*

*Thank you so much for the lion.*

*It made my day. Love,*

*Lanie (Kempf)*

# FYI . . .



The annual congregational meeting of St. John's United Church of Christ will be held on Sunday, November 3, following the worship service. The purpose of the meeting is to approve the 2014 budget.

The Bluffton food pantry is in need of supplies. Needed items include tuna, mayo, ketchup, mustard, relish, shampoo, health and beauty items, peanut butter, jelly, spaghetti sauces and pasta, paper products, toilet paper, paper towels, cured meat such as hot dogs, ham. Take advantage of BYGO. Let's help stock those shelves!

The beef and noodle dinner will be held on **FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15**. This is a change from the original date as Emmanuel UCC will be holding their fish dinner on Friday, November 8, and we did not want a conflict. Plan now to bring your friends and neighbors to this wonderful supper.

*The Board of Christian Education special mission project will be our own Bluffton Food Pantry. A collection of your loose offering or other donation will be taken on the third Sunday of each month and will be used to purchase meat, butter, and other needed items for our community. This special offering will begin in October.*



The McCune's new address is: 1000 Spring Lake Drive #10, Pandora, OH 45877. The new phone number is 419-384-7575. George will be leaving Hilty home on Sunday, October 6, to further his rehab fishing at the lake and once again enjoying life. Good luck to you both on your new home!

**Walkers are needed for the Bluffton Elementary School Christian Ed. program on October 10. Please see Nancy Yeager if you can possibly help.**

**"FULL SOUND," THE INSTRUMENTAL GROUP OF FIVE YOUNG BROTHERS THAT PERFORMED FOR US LAST YEAR IN OUR SANCTUARY WILL BE WITH US AGAIN ON SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 17, BEGINNING AT 3 P.M. THIS WAS A WONDERFUL PERFORMANCE LAST YEAR, AND WE ARE EXPECTING AN EVEN BETTER PRESENTATION THIS YEAR. BE SURE TO TELL YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS AND INVITE THEM FOR AN AFTERNOON OF DELIGHTFUL ENTERTAINMENT.**

The Tuesday morning ladies group will be taking a trip to the Lodi Mall located at the juncture of Interstates 71 and 76 on Saturday, October 26. It is about a two-hour drive. We will meet at the church and carpool to the mall. Please sign up on the clipboard provided at the back of the church or call the church office.

We do not have enough orders to meet the minimum number of throws that we need (throw with the photo of the church woven into it). If you sent a check, the money will be refunded to you.