



Bible Study for Advent

For some, Christmas is a time of excitement, celebration, and quality time with loved ones. For others, it's full of loneliness, grief, and loss. No matter what this season holds for you, the promise of Christmas will bring you a lifetime of hope. As we journey through our Advent study, we will be reminded that Christmas is about more than a pretty tree with presents piled up underneath it. Christmas begins what Easter celebrates: the child in the cradle who goes on to become the King on the cross. Because of Bethlehem, we have a place on earth and a Savior in heaven. Come join us as we study "Because of Bethlehem," by Max Lucado. Revive your wonder in the promise of Christmas! Tuesday evening classes began on November 28th at 7 PM and will end on December 19th, and Thursday morning classes began on November 30th at 11 AM and will end on December 21st. There will be 4 sessions. Cost of the participation booklet is \$9. If you would like to join us, please see Wendy or email at sundayschool@noumc.org.



NOUMC STAFF

<p>Pastor: Hoyte Wilhelm hoytewilhelm@gmail.com cell: 330-428-1545</p>	<p>Christian Ed. & Youth Director: Wendy Cooper sundayschool@noumc.org</p>	<p>Organist: Javier Gonzalez Jglez_2001@yahoo.es</p>
<p>Administrative Assistant: Terri Wilhelm office@noumc.org</p>	<p>Social Media: Hanna Moore social@noumc.org</p>	<p>Music Director: Gabriela Martinez gabrielamarmar@aol.com</p>
	<p>Financial Secretary: Ron Clough finance@noumc.org</p>	

Worship Opportunities

Worship With Us In-Person and Online

Sundays at 10:30 am

DATE	GREETER(S)	LITURGIST	USHER(S)
December 3	Barb & Floyd A.	Greg L.	Judi W.
December 10	Jean S.	Floyd A.	Sarah J. Sydney S.
December 17	John & Char V.	Bev H.	Beth C.
December 24	Jim & Ellie Y.	Alice W.	Sarah J. Sydney S.
December 31	Jean S.	Michelle W.	Judi W.

Oxcart Pantry Donation List



Stocking Donation List



Boxed/Bagged Stuffing Mix
 Cranberry Sauce
 Gravy (Jar/Can/Packets)
 Boxed Cake Mixes
 Boxed Cookie Mixes
 Boxed Brownie Mixes
 Other Boxed Dessert Items
 Canned Sweet Potatoes
 Mashed Potatoes (Boxed/Packets)

Wrapped Candy
 Shampoo and Conditioner
 Toothpaste and Toothbrushes
 Deodorant and Razors
 Nail Clippers and Files
 Small Coloring Books and Crayons
 Skin Cream/Lotion and Soap and Razors
 Puzzle Books and Pens/Pencils
 Lip Balm and Cosmetics/Razors
 Jewelry
 Toy Cars/Trucks/Small Stuffed Animals
 Small Dolls

Missions News

You really came through. Since we moved the Oxcart bin closer to the sanctuary, you have found it easier to fill. We went from 21 items donated the month before to 161 items for Thanksgiving bags. To help fill the Christmas bags, we're collecting the same versatile items that we collected in

Our stocking and items to fill them are due by December 3, so the stockings can be brought over for the first of the Christmas bags given out on December 6. The items can be found in the weekly reminders or last month's Agape, but the items most needed are toiletry articles, such as toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner and body lotions and creams.

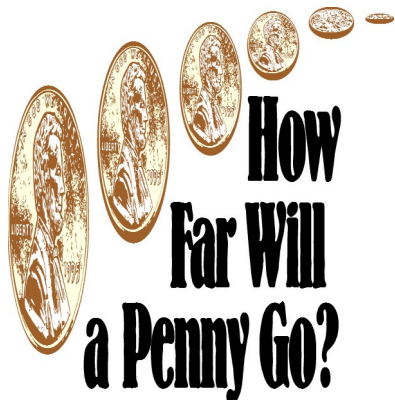
Finally, the easel is up in Fellowship Hall with the wish lists from 3 families for Christmas. A quick reminder of what to do for this project. You take a slip or slips off the board, purchase the gift, wrap it, put the part of the slip with the family number and person getting the gift, and place it under the tree in the sanctuary. These gifts are due Dec. 10. If you need an incentive, some of the gifts are kind of frivolous, but others range from winter coats and boots to ones wishing for a bus pass because of no transportation, mattress because of not having a bed, to a microwave and dishes because they have no way of cooking or having something to eat on. Please, open your hearts and wallets when you realize how well off we really are.

UWF Updates

Our year is winding down, and we celebrated with our annual "Share the Wealth" meeting. We allotted money for leaf collection, the A-To-Z dinners, the pastor's discretionary fund, for Grief books, piano tuning, Tak Sato's computer help for seniors, Lorain Men's Shelter, the Community Dinner, the Oxcart Pantry, the Community Fund, Guidestone's Cookie Fund, Flat Rock, Red Bird Mission, and Guidestone. These funds are available in part because of your support of UWF projects during

We will have our Christmas lunch on Dec. 6, take the rest of the month off, and start the new year with a business meeting on January 6. The UWF wishes one and all a Merry Christmas and a happy and healthy 2004.

December's Penny Sunday



The December Penny Sunday collection will be sent to an UMCOR International Advance program called Middle East Undesignated. Because this is an undesignated Advance project, 100% of our donation will work through United Methodist Church partners wherever the need for relief is greatest. Please be generous in your giving and your prayers, as the need is profound! Checks can be addressed to NOUMC with December Penny Sunday on the memo line.

NOUMC Financial Snapshot

NOUMC Financial Snapshot

Thanks for your continued generosity and faithfulness in supporting the financial needs of NOUMC. Through October, the church's regular giving was about \$18,800 less than was budgeted, continuing a trend we have seen for the past few years. Over the past three years, the church has been spending about \$4,000 more each month than it has collected in regular giving. This deficit has been masked somewhat because the church took advantage of government funding during the COVID-19 pandemic, received a very generous one-time special gift in 2023, and drew from its endowment to cover the remaining amounts.

In recognizing that this trend is not sustainable, the Church Council (in collaboration with the Finance Committee and the Staff Parish Relations Committee) is taking a "right-sizing" approach to the 2024 budget. That is, the 2024 budget attempts to better match our monthly expenses with our expected regular giving. In doing so, a comprehensive review of 2023 expenses was undertaken, to try to find meaningful reductions in expenses that will not significantly impact the church's core missions or programming. The following are the most significant of those reductions:

- In consultation with the District Superintendent, the church will pay only a portion of its connectional apportionments to the East Ohio Conference in 2023 and 2024.
- Church staff have been given a modest raise in compensation for 2024, but one less than the current rate of inflation, or that they deserve for the good work they do.
- Some contracted positions have been reduced or eliminated.
- The pastor's allowance for travel and out-of-pocket expenses has been substantially reduced.
- We will replace the church's outdated call-routing phone system with a simpler, more modern approach.
- The church will look for ways to significantly reduce the number of printed materials it produces and mails. That may include eliminating printed worship bulletins, and instead rely more on our projection system in the sanctuary.
- We will continue to find ways to optimize our utilities consumption.

If you are interested in seeing the full 2024 budget, a copy is available in the office.

Financial Snapshot

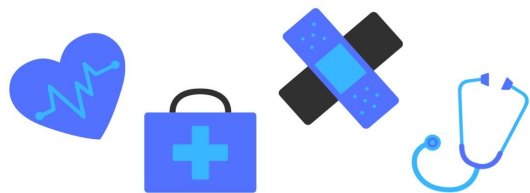
For the year to date through October 31, 2023

	January thru October 2023		
	YTD	YTD	Variance
<i><u>Regular Operations</u></i>			
Regular Giving	\$ 168,684	\$ 187,500	\$ (18,816)
Operating Expenses	204,797	216,922	(12,125)
Excess (Deficit)	\$ (36,113)	\$ (29,422)	\$ (6,691)
<i><u>Ministries funded through targeted donations (not</u></i>			
Donations	\$ 17,356		
Disbursements	\$ 25,606		
<i><u>Cash Balance</u></i>			
Unrestricted (for operations)	\$ 24,842		
Restricted (for targeted ministries)	25,826		
	\$ 50,668		



THANK
you.

Hospice Program Hosted By	Firewood Available
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**CARING FOR OUR
LOVED ONES**
(YOU ARE NOT ALONE)

Understanding Hospice,
Palliative Care and Advanced
Directives

DECEMBER 9TH, 2PM

MAUREEN SHANNON, PROVIDER RELATIONS
FOR
HOSPICE OF THE WESTERN RESERVE
PRESENTER

NORTH OLMSTED
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
4600 DOVER CENTER ROAD
NORTH OLMSTED, OH 44070

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PASTOR HOYTE WILHELM,
CAREGIVER REV. MARK STEIGER AND
HOSPICE VOLUNTEER JOEL CHERMONTE

RSVP: NOUMC@NOUMC.ORG OR 440-779-6634

Craig M. has 140 cu. ft. of split seasoned hardwood that is available for a donation to the church. He would be willing to help haul it as well. Let Craig know if you are interested!

Health Notice

Please Note: In our commitment to care for one another, we are asking that you communicate with us, and do not attend any church events if you have any reason to be concerned about exposure to COVID. If you find you are sick or have tested positive after attending a church event, please tell us so that we can carefully and confidentially make others who were attending aware so they can quarantine or take necessary precautions. Thank you for being respectful of our extended family of faith.

*Share the joy of the season
with us!*

**Fourth Sunday of Advent Worship Service
December 24 10:30 am**

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Sunday, December 24 7 pm**



**North Olmsted
United Methodist Church**

**The Rev. Hoyte Wilhelm, Pastor
4600 Dover Center Road, North Olmsted
440.779.6634 + www.noumc.org**





"...the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for see--I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord.'" (Luke 2:10-11)

Greetings in this Season of Advent and the approaching time of Christmas in which we celebrate messages of Hope, Peace, Joy, Love, and Light! Be reassured that Emmanuel, "God with us," gives us the promise of new birth through Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior!

We live with systemic problems of warring nations, famine, unusual illnesses, unemployment, unaffordable healthcare, injustices in social interactions, and uncertainties with climate change. And yet there are signs of living hope as people strive to partner together in church and society—one person, one group at a time—to better people's lives. Thankfully, growing numbers of people are offering effective alternatives to wars with weapons and words through actions of peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation.

Some of you may also be working through challenging matters in relationships with loved ones, the loss of loved ones, or caring for loved ones. Whatever may be pressing on you personally with your family, friends, or our world, I invite you to experience real hope in this Season of Advent, the approaching time of Christmas, and the New Year 2024 through your faith and the church family of NOUMC. Experience and share the good news of Jesus, the Messiah, to be born in your lives again! The joy of this hope and promise overcomes all fear and gives us the courage to move forward as a local and connectional church with The United Methodist Church!

As members of NOUMC, you are living and modeling lives of hopefulness and faith! I celebrate that fact with you! You are being faithful with your prayers, care, and loving ministry with those connected or desiring to connect with our church family. You are giving people hope with generous financial gifts that support and advance the vitality of the church's missions, staffing, and operations.

I encourage you to continue to be faithful in stewardship with your financial gifts and pledges for 2023 and 2024 by sending your contributions to the church office to the attention of Ron Clough, Financial Secretary. The church has been particularly strained financially in this past year and so you are asked to prayerfully consider increasing your financial giving to the end of 2023 and into 2024. The recent article in the December Agape provided by our Treasurer, Andy Walsh, addresses some of our financial challenges in more detail. Please contact him or me if you have further questions. Please also contact Ron to discuss any adjustments with your giving commitments.

In addition, you have an opportunity to give financially through a special Christmas offering which will support our collective efforts to close out 2023 in a positive way.

Know that North Olmsted UMC is alive and well because of you! Thank you! You are offering hope for beautiful things to be born and to grow through the love of God, Jesus Christ, and the lives of people all around you!

Faithfully serving with you,
Pastor Hoyte

Christmas Flowers

Worship Ministry Team is taking orders for Poinsettias and Christmas Cacti to be placed on the altar for our Christmas Eve services. Order forms will be available in Fellowship Hall and there is one included in this Agape issue. Please place your order and payment into the purple box, or send them to Wendy's attention at the church. You may also call the church office to place your order, or email Wendy. Poinsettias are available in Red, White, Pink, Variegated, or Burgundy. All plants are in 6 1/2" pots, and sell for \$10.00. Proceeds from the sale will support our Altar and Arts Team. Deadline to order is Sunday December 3rd. Flowers can be taken home after the service.



Poinsettia Orders 2023

All proceeds to benefit Altar and Arts Committee

*Make checks payable to NOUMC and write **Christmas flowers** in the memo.*

Please email orders to sundayschool@noumc.org or mail to the church office, to the attention of Wendy Cooper, by December 3rd.

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Size	Color	Price	Quantity	Total
6 ½ Inch	Red Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	White Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Pink Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Marbled Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Variegated Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 Inch	Christmas Cactus	\$10.00	_____	_____
	Total:		_____	_____
			Paid _____	Owe _____

In Honor ___ Memory ___ of/from: (Please check the right box and print your dedication.)

Technology Trainees Needed

Do you know how to push a button? The booth crew is looking for some backup! We would like to invite people to train with us to learn how to run the audio-visual booth. Training will consist of a brief session to familiarize you with the equipment and procedures, and plenty of opportunities to stand with us in the booth during services to learn hands-on. Contact John or Phil W. or email webmaster@noumc.org.

Intergenerational Advent Celebration

Your Christian Education team would like to invite you to bring your younger children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews, or any young children in your care to come celebrate Advent with us! Spend some fun one-on-one time with the young people in your life as you hear the story of Christmas, learn about Advent, engage in a craft, play a game, and enjoy a yummy snack together! This will be a hands-on experience, and adults should plan to stay the entire time. Our Intergenerational Advent Celebration will take place on December 3rd from 12:30-2:30. All are welcome! If you would like to participate, or if you know someone who would, please see Wendy or contact her at sundayschool@noumc.org.

January Adult Evening Bible Study

"Abide" video study by Jen Wilkin. A study of 1, 2 & 3 John. 10 sessions. John calls us to keep a habit of close communication with God, to hold fast to His word, to live like we believe it, and to find encouragement in the truth that God loves us! We will meet on Tuesday evenings at 7 PM for about 2 hours. The class will begin on January 9th, and will end on March 12th. Study booklet with video access cost is \$25. Please join us as we dig in to the apostle John's letters! Sign up sheets will be on the sign in table in Fellowship Hall, or please email Wendy at sundayschool@noumc.org.

Note from Nurture Team

Note from the Nurture Team: SHIP (Ohio Senior Health Insurance Information Program) offers free educational programming and one on one counseling for those on Medicare. They do not sell insurance so individuals will get unbiased information. You can learn more here: <https://insurance.ohio.gov/about-us/divisions/oshiip>. The North Olmsted Senior Center no longer counsels on Medicare.

Blue Christmas



Blue Christmas: Blessing the Christmas we “actually” have. *

Tuesday, December 19 th at 7:00 pm

“Come, Thou long expected Jesus, born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us, let us find our rest in Thee.” UMH #196

Advent is a time of waiting... a time of hope-filled expectation for the coming of our Savior, Jesus. A time of preparing our hearts and our homes for the joys of the Christmas season, with so many desires and longings wrapped up in every parcel, every must-make recipe, and must- do tradition.

Behind all the beautiful decorations and packages, glistening lights, and joyful music, the waiting may seem heavy. Our lives have changed this year, and for many, our world has up- ended. Yet underneath the grief, remains our longing for hope, peace, joy, love, and comfort for ourselves, our families, and our world.

This year our Blue Christmas service will be a time of “Blessing the Christmas we actually have.” It will be a safe place for persons desiring a special touch from God during the holidays. It promises to be a gentle, quiet service... one filled with peace, hope, music, candlelight, and special prayers of blessing.

There is a deep need for healing and peace in our world, in our church, and in our hearts. Into this need comes our Savior, Jesus. His name is Emmanuel, a name that means “God with us”. God comes to be present with us today in much the same way that he came to a hurting world years ago... a gentle, humble beginning bursting forth as an unexpected ray of hope.

I know that my own soul is hungry for this service this year. I believe God wants to renew our lives this Christmas, bringing hope to us in the areas of our deepest need, bringing peace to us in the midst of our darkest confusion. If you, or someone you know, are remembering a loss or going through a season of pain, I invite you to join me in-person this Christmas for a time of comfort and rest. We will also provide a link, closer to the date, for those who wish to join us online. The service will remain available for viewing afterwards on our website: www.noumc.org . Light refreshments will be provided so that we may share in community and fellowship together.

Blessings,
Rev. Alice

* A service created, with permission, from the works of Kate Bowler: *The Lives We Actually Have*: 100 Blessings for Imperfect Days (2023), and *Have a Beautiful, Terrible Day!* (releasing on 1/23/2024)

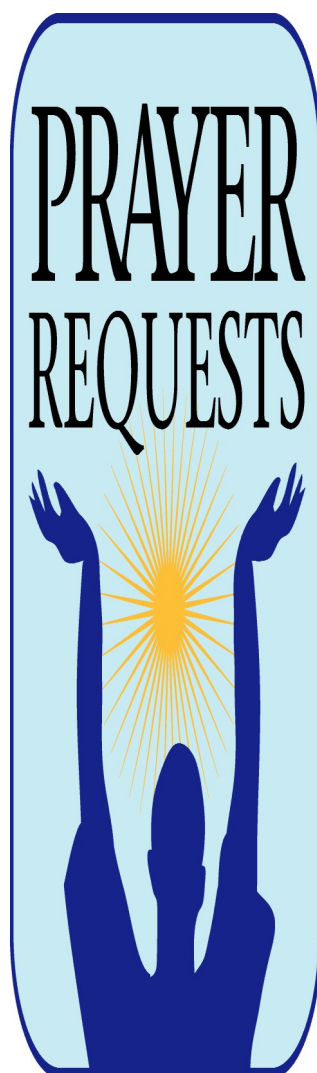
Church Family News

3	Barbara S.	18	Hanna M.
5	Kelly J.	19	Lois D.
7	Greysen T.	19	Shawn & Brigid D.
10	John S.	22	Mikenzie D.
11	Barbara S.	23	Wayne P.
13	Ray P.	24	Jean S.
15	Floyd A.	27	Christopher H.
16	Phoebe T.	29	John W.
16	Bryan D.	29	Liz L.
17	Barbara C.	29	James & Anita B.
17	Kristi J.	31	Jim & Ellie Y.

DECEMBER



BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES



Those affected by gun violence and homelessness	Judy, lifted by Brenda F.	Ron W.
Victims of Maui wildfires and natural disasters and First Responders	Selene, lifted by Carole A	Nancy D.
Those suffering from mental illness and addiction	Vicki & family, daughter of Rae & Walt S.	Lois D.
Beth N., sister-in-law of Ron & Barb C.	Joy & Rocky, lifted by Paul & Claudia T.	Anita B.
Tammy M.'s Dad's recovery	Curtis, lifted by Reba Y.	Ray S.
Marianne, lifted by Janis J.	Judy L.	Jane P.
Alice W.'s Dad's surgeries and recovery	David & Steve, lifted by Mary Ellen M.	Keith A.
Terry, Kathy & Deb, lifted by Paul and Claudia T.	Doug, friend of Joel & Deb C.	Barbara B.
Ryan and family, lifted by Ron and Barb C.	David N., JoAnne's husband	Susan L.
Carole B.'s niece and family	Bill & Marilyn R.	Joan H.
Bunny, Liz L.'s cousin	Harry W., son of Harry W.	Our Church

December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 10am-2pm Card Making
3 9am SS 10:30am Worship 12:30pm Advent Celebration 7:30pm Chorale Concert	4 6pm GS 8:30pm AA	5 7pm Advent Study 7pm Scouts	6 10am UWF 8pm AA	7 11am Advent Study 4:30pm Community Meal 7pm Choir	8	9 8:30am UMM Breakfast 2pm Hospice Program
10 9am SS 10:30am Worship 3-4:30pm GS	11 6pm Girl Scouts 8:30pm AA	12 1-3 Book Bank 7pm Advent Study 7pm Scouts	13 8pm AA	14 11am Advent Study 7pm Choir	15	16
17 18 9am SS 10:30am Worship/Penny Sunday	18 6pm Girl Scouts 8:30pm AA	19 7pm Advent Study 7pm Blue Christmas 7pm Scouts	20 8pm AA	21 11am Advent Study 7pm Choir	22	23
24 10:30am Worship 7pm Worship 31 10:30am Worship	25 Christmas	26	27 8pm AA	28	29	30

For the most up-to-date calendar, visit www.noumc.org.

Please contact the church office (office@noumc.org or 440.779.6634) to add your meeting or gathering, virtual or in-person, to the church calendar.

North Olmsted United Methodist Church
4600 Dover Center Road
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

RETURN ADDRESS REQUESTED



Our Guiding Principles

- We appreciate and invest in our youth.
- We actively serve our neighbors in the North Olmsted community and the wider world.
- We provide varied opportunities for people to grow in their faith.
- We welcome and nurture a diverse congregation who become extended family.
- We foster lasting personal relationships, which are especially important in a digital world.

Free Holiday Community Meal (In-Person Only)

Thursday, December 7, 2023

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Fellowship Hall

Menu: Roast Pork, Mashed Potatoes and Gravy,
Green Beans, Dessert and Drink

The Free Community Meal is a mission of North Olmsted United Methodist Church with assistance from our friends at St. Richard and St. Clarence Catholic Churches and others in the community. All meals are funded by donations, and the dinners are prepared and served by volunteers. Menus may change because of donated food or food pricing. Additional volunteers are always welcome! If you would like more information,

A sign-up sheet for help with set-up, serving, and clean-up will be in Fellowship Hall. For more information, contact Barb Linton at blintonofnr@aol.com.