



# AGAPE FEBRUARY

## Greek for “Love without Limits”

### East Ohio and West Ohio Conferences to Share One Bishop

A special-called session of the North Central Jurisdiction (NCJ) Jurisdictional Conference of The United Methodist Church was held on Tuesday, January 23 “for the sole purpose of approving new episcopal areas for episcopal assignments to be effective September 1, 2024.”

Delegates to this special-called NCJ Jurisdictional Conference voted to form two new episcopal areas, one to include the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference, and one to include the Northern Illinois Conference and the Wisconsin Conference. The two conferences in each new episcopal area will share one bishop.

By the action of the special session, the North Central Jurisdiction will transition from nine to seven episcopal areas. The North Central Jurisdiction Committee on the Episcopacy assigns the bishops to the episcopal areas and all assignments will be announced at the NCJ Jurisdictional Conference July 10-13 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The new episcopal areas and the bishop assignments to each of the seven episcopal areas will be effective September 1.

Executive staff leaders and members of the Committee on the Episcopacy in both the East Ohio Conference and the West Ohio Conference have been engaged in strategic conversations to explore the sharing of an episcopal leader since the NCJ Committee on the Episcopacy proposed the possibility during the 2022 Jurisdictional Conference.

“I and Bishop Palmer convened a leadership team that has been working to identify the key administrative matters that need to be addressed and to examine the best practices of other episcopal areas where shared episcopal leadership has worked well. This work will continue as we prepare the conferences for this transition,” said Bishop Tracy S. Malone, resident bishop of the East Ohio Conference.

“I am confident the people of the East and West Ohio Conferences are well suited to be served by one bishop with a single eye to living the mission of ‘making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world,’” said Bishop Gregory V. Palmer, resident bishop of the West Ohio Conference.

## Worship Opportunities

### Worship With Us In-Person and Online

*Sundays at 10:30 am*

Visit <http://www.noumc.org/worship-remote-worship-resources/> for bulletins and worship links.

DATE	GREETER(S)	LITURGIST	USHER(S)
February 4	Sarah Jackson	Barb Clough	Judi Wagner
February 11	Barb Andrews	Michelle Wolter	Sarah Jackson Sydney Scothon
February 14 Ash Wednesday	Jean Scothon	Floyd Andrews	Barb and Ron Clough
February 18	John and Char Vas	John Wolter	Judi Wagner
February 25	Jim and Ellie Yager	Chris Byrns	Sarah Jackson Sydney Scothon

## Oxcart Pantry



### Breakfast Items Needed!

For February we will be collecting breakfast items, including cereal. Please place them in the green box near the sign-in table in Fellowship Hall. Thank you!

## “Souper” Bowl of Caring

On February 11<sup>th</sup>, our Christian Education and Youth Ministry Team will help fight hunger and poverty, joining a national effort to refocus Super Bowl weekend into a weekend of sharing God’s love with our neighbors in need by participating in the “Souper” Bowl of Caring. This effort helps us to be mindful of those who are without even a bowl of soup to eat as we enjoy our Super Bowl celebrations. During worship, large soup pots will be on the table in Fellowship hall for you to leave your donation. Or, you may send checks to the church office, to the attention of Wendy Cooper. Please make checks payable to NOUMC and write “Souper Bowl of Caring” in the memo. This year’s donations will be sent to the North Olmsted Food Pantry. Please consider donating to help us make a difference in our community!

## Mission News

From Barb Andrews:

"You did so well getting items for last month that we were worried that when my trunk was opened, it would spring up on its own. Along with 65 cleaning items, mostly laundry detergent thankfully, there was a large bag of soup, a case of stuffing, and several other miscellaneous items. Although we have specific items each month, you can supply other things as well. Next month Georgia says they could use breakfast items, including cereal. Your donations are greatly appreciated."

## UWF News

"The UWF is back to work. We have a date for the craft show for those who like to plan ahead. It will be on October 12. More news when we get a little closer. We are planning on the plant sale to be on May 11, but are waiting for confirmation from Dean's. More info on that coming soon. Remember that we do get together every Wednesday, so if you'd like to join us, let us know, and we'll put you in our "This-Is-Where-We're-Lunching-This-Week" list. Or, if you have a need that we could help with, let us know." — Barb Andrews

## New Sunday School Series Begins March 3

Beginning Sunday, Mar. 3 through April 14th, the Sunday School class will view the series "Seven Words", by Susan Robb. "While many of us naturally wish to avoid the reality of the cross, it's from the cross that Jesus speaks and shows his deepest love for us. It's from the cross that Jesus' full humanity draws us closest to him."

Session 1 - "Father Forgive them"

Session 2 - "Today You will be with me in Paradise"

Session 3 - "My God, My God, Why have You Forsaken me?"

Session 4 - "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."

Session 5 - "I'm Thirsty"

Session 6 - "Into Your hands I commend my Spirit" and "It is finished."

## NOUMC Financial Snapshot

Thanks for your continued generosity and faithfulness in supporting the financial needs of NOUMC. In 2023, the church's operating expenses exceeded regular giving by about \$33,000. However, thanks to a couple of sizeable special one-time gifts, rental income, and a draw from its endowment funds, the church was able to more than offset that deficit and finish the year with a surplus of approximately \$45,000.

Nonetheless, 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. If you are interested in seeing the full 2024 budget, a copy is available in the office. A summary of the most significant reductions was listed in the December Agape.

In addition, a full set of the church's annual financial statements is also available in the office.

### Financial Snapshot

#### North Olmsted United Methodist Church

For the year ended December 31, 2023

	January thru December 2023		
	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Variance</i>
<u>Regular Operations</u>			
Regular Giving	\$ 211,709	\$ 225,000	\$ (13,291)
Operating Expenses	244,910	260,306	(15,396)
Excess (Deficit)	\$ (33,201)	\$ (35,306)	\$ 2,105
<u>Ministries funded through targeted donations</u> (not included in operations)			
Donations	\$ 20,706		
Disbursements	\$ 25,070		
<u>Cash Balance</u>			
Unrestricted (for operations)	\$ 40,592		
Restricted (for targeted ministries)	27,691		
	\$ 68,283		



THANK  
*you.*

## Lent Sunday School Special Screening: February 18th and 25th

Craig Mueller will facilitate a two-week video screening of "Heaven, How I got Here: The Story of the Thief on the Cross" by Colin Smith. This is a powerful visual illustration of one man's journey coming to accept Jesus as his savior and learning what it means to fear God. A beautiful, emotionally charged performance by Stephen Baldwin brings this timeless story to life for a new generation in a way that is both entertaining and uplifting.

40 DAYS OF

*Lengthening Silence*



A LENTEN PRACTICE OF SIMPLICITY & STILLNESS

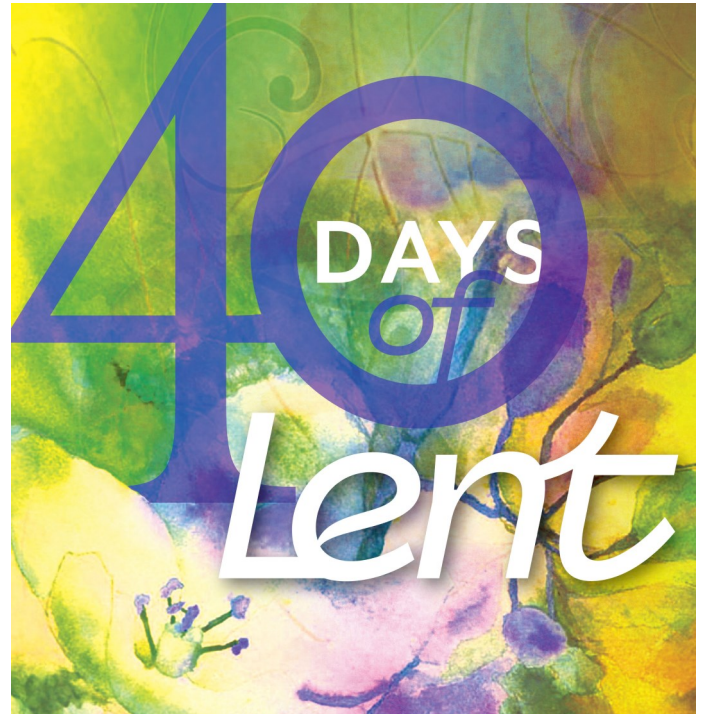
*Give up noise and embrace stillness this Lent as you lengthen your silent prayer by 1 minute each day from Ash Wednesday to Easter Sunday.*

*Register now to receive daily emails throughout Lent with helpful suggestions, inspiring scriptures, music clips & words of encouragement. Cost is pay-what-you-can.*

*This resource can be easily used by individuals, small groups or congregations.*



Belly of the Whale Spiritual Direction & Retreat Ministries  
sharon@bellyofthewhaleministries.net  
www.bellyofthewhaleministries.net

## A Heartfelt "Thank You"

To our North Olmsted UMC Family:

Thank you so much for your love, prayers, support, cards and presence for my dad over the past year. It has been a difficult year and we definitely felt comforted and supported by our loving extended church family! It was neat to see so many different churches represented at Dad's celebration of life—spanning many years! NOUMC will always be "family" to us and holds a very special place in our hearts and memories.

Thanks for sharing your stories and memories and pictures with us as Dad's health was failing. We really appreciate all your kindness—over very many years!

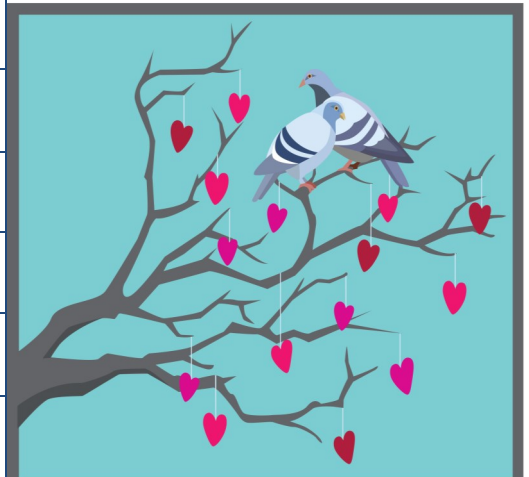
Your kindness and prayers DO make a difference and are greatly appreciated!

Love, Kim (Ressel, on behalf of the Bradley family)

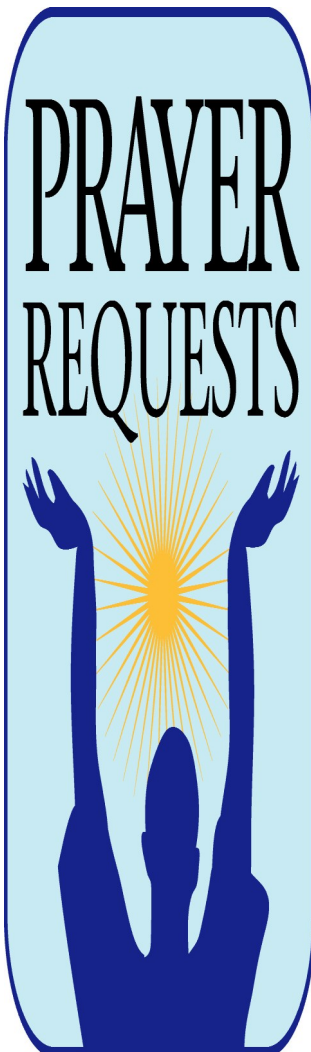
## Church Family News

3	Ron Stroup	14	Carol Weinert
8	Rachael Berry	20	Joanne Krueger
9	Don Awig	21	Terri Wilhelm
10	Emily Brown	23	Sydney Scothon
11	Colette Diddle	24	Oliver Bosau
12	Beth Cruz	25	Judy Sainsbury
12	Jim & Judy Sainsbury	25	Carolyn Bernard
13	Jean and Gary Scothon	28	Phil Wolter
13	Andrew Sabin	29	Ron & Lisa D. Stroup

# FEBRUARY



## 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.	Cindy, Reba Y.'s SIL	Jane P.
Alice W.'s Dad's 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	Jewel Y., by the Wolters	Joan H.
Bunny, Liz L.'s cousin	Harry W., son of Harry W.	Our Church
Wayne K., lifted by Liz L.	Matt & Debby, lifted by Janis J.	Judy L.
Dan G., lifted by Barb & Ron C.	Jeff S., nephew of Jan & Bill C.	Bill & Marilyn R.

# February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 11am BS 7pm Choir	2	3
4 9am SS 10:30am Worship 3-4:30pm GS	5 6pm GS 8:30pm AA	6 12-4:30 Nehemiah Mission 7pm Bible Study 7pm Scouts	7 10am UWF 7pm Joint Councils Meeting 8pm AA	8 11am Bible Study 7pm Choir	9	10 8:30am UMM Breakfast
11 9am SS 10:30am Worship 11:30 Soup Potluck	12 6pm Girl Scouts 8:30pm AA	13 12-4:30pm Nehemiah Mission 7pm Bible Study 7pm Scouts	14 8pm AA 7pm Ash Wednesday Service	15 11am Bible Study 7pm Choir Agape Deadline	16	17
18 9am SS 10:30am Worship/Penny Sunday 3-4:30pm GS	19 6pm Girl Scouts 8:30pm AA	20 1-3 Book Bank 7pm Bible Study 7pm Scouts	21 8pm AA	22 11am Bible Study 7pm Choir	23	24
25 9am SS 10:30am Worship	26 6pm GS 8:30pm AA	27 7pm Bible Study 7pm Scouts	28 8pm AA	29 11am Bible Study 4:30-5:30pm Community Meal 7pm Choir 8pm AA		

For the most up-to-date calendar, visit [www.noumc.org](http://www.noumc.org).

Please contact the church office ([office@noumc.org](mailto: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 Community Meal (In-Person Only)**

*Thursday, February 29, 2024*

*4:30 pm - 5:30 pm*

*Fellowship Hall*

Menu: Three Cheese Chicken Penne, Green Beans, Fruit Cocktail and Dessert

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](mailto:blintonofnr@aol.com).