

The Good Word



The Newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church, A Reconciling Congregation

January 2016 Issue ~ Published December 23, 2015
Open Doors. Honest Worship. Determined Service.



BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

CHILI COOK OFF

SATURDAY, JANUARY 23
6 PM IN FELLOWSHIP HALL

HOSTED BY EVANGELISM & UMW

Do you have a favorite chili recipe? Do you love chili? Then you won't want to miss BUMC's Great Chili Cook Off.

To sign up, call the church office 440-526-8938 or Ruth Herman 330-467-3237. (There will also be a sign up table at church on Sundays.) Cooks, please register before January 10!

If you're not a cook, come taste the chilis! Each year the event features a great variety of creations: spicy, mild, hot, vegan, and surprises! There's sure to be something for every taste.

It will be a fun evening get together for everyone, cooks and diners alike, with lots of yummy chili to taste. Don't miss it!

COOK & COMPETE, OR JUST COME TO EAT!



Evening Circle
Care Mail



In December, Evening Circle met to put the finishing touches on their college care package project. (Pictured above are some of the ladies who worked on the project.) Thank you to everyone who donated to the cause! We received messages through Instagram and mail with special thanks to this church family for helping the students through finals week.

Evening Circle will meet January 6 at 7 pm in the kitchen to bake cookies for UMW's USO project. Want to help? Bring enough dough to bake 2 dozen cookies and containers, if you have any, for freezing the cookies. Everyone's always welcome at Evening Circle!

Jon writes "beyond the physical gifts...your message really lifted my spirits. After a long week and a disappointing day I had prayed to God for guidance...What a great reminder about the ways God works in our lives through the people we care about."





Time Flies

Rev. Clark Stein, Senior Pastor

[Luke 9:57-62](#)

8:45 Contemporary Worship

10 Education Hour

Classes for All Ages!

11:15 Traditional Worship

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Time flies! It is very difficult for me to believe that we have once again reached the end/beginning of yet another year. It seems as though I just became accustomed to writing 2015 instead of 2014. Well, in keeping with the time honored traditions of ushering in the new, I am starting to think of New Year's resolutions. I really don't know why this idea ever got legs. It seems as though we think up ideal things to change, accept up front that our resolve is attached to a resolution, we know we will never be able to keep it, and it is really ok because most get broken anyway. We explain away our shortfalls by the tendencies of most to fail.

As I was thinking of some really terrific sounding resolutions, I was drawn once again to this passage from Luke's Gospel. It speaks of discipleship. Now, I really do know that resolutions are no big deal, but I wonder if they might give us some warning about how we treat some other areas of our lives. For instance, under the guise of being a resolution, we may resolve to try to stop some habit that we find annoying, all the while realizing that if we don't succeed it is only a resolution after all, and the sun will come up again tomorrow whether our efforts are truly feeble or not. If we allow this same type of lukewarm commitment to change and growth to spill over into other more significant areas of our lives, we might stand to lose a bit more than just a bit of face.

Most that go to the trouble of creating resolutions do so privately. If one asks, "What are your New Year's resolutions?" one is often not told, as if in the secret is a part of the chance for eventual success. But I really think that the secret is just a further safety net, for if we don't tell anyone, we cannot be held accountable to our intentions.

I guess this is where Jesus speaks to me. It is not so much that we must be willing to walk away from everything to be a disciple, but maybe it is that we need to embrace the willingness and attitude that says its ok to go to new places this year. To take on new challenges, to willingly walk away from things that have not contributed to growth in our spirits or minds or bodies or loves over many past years' resolutions. Maybe Jesus starts working with us in a willing attitude...and if that is the case...I want to be held accountable to others. Hear me. I resolve to be more willing to venture out in search of others in new arenas, to join different walks, and to willingly take on new challenges and risks, all in the name of sharing more of the good news with anyone who will hear... and in hearing the good news from anyone who will share it with me. Wishing us all a new year of opportunity, continued growth, and blossoming resolve to make a difference in the name of Christ! Happy New Year!



Our January Coffee Hour hosts
will be

United Methodist Women

Thank you, December hosts
Youth Board!

Pastor Clark

Music & Worship Scholarship



Music & Worship Board is pleased to announce that applications are open for graduates of the class of 2016. The scholarship will be awarded to select High School Seniors who have participated in music and/or worship during their time at Brecksville UMC and intend to continue as active musicians and worshipers as they pursue additional education. Students may attend a 2-year, 4-year or non-traditional post-secondary institution; they need not major in music. Past recipients have included vocalists, instrumentalists, and individuals who have supported worship through support roles (i.e. PowerPoint operation). Applications are available online at www.brecksvilleumc.com/root/bumconline/forms or may be picked up in the main office. They are due by Friday, March 4, before 5 pm.

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A Night at the Movies: The Ultimate Gift



Join us in the Youth Room on January 29 at 7pm for a viewing of the 2007 movie *The Ultimate Gift*. Drew Fuller plays the part of a young man of privilege who undertakes a series of challenges set forth by his recently deceased grandfather to attain the ultimate gift. Who does he meet? What does he learn? You will find yourself reflecting on where your true treasure lies. Bring a snack to share!



Children's Worship Sunday- January 31

This year, as the children lead our worship experience, they will share with you the unique gifts that allow them to reach out into the world as peacemakers.

Children in grades 1 to 7 have been invited to share their talents: writing skits or mini-sermons, creating video, artwork or poetry, all articulating the ways they walk with their neighbors as peacemakers.

Do not miss this once a year opportunity to experience the message offered by worship leaders.

Your presence is a gift of encouragement!

Every Kid 2 Camp



A week at one of the Methodist Church East Ohio Camps is a powerful, life-changing experience. Wouldn't it be great if every young person who wanted to attend camp could do it? This year, we're building a "campership" fund for any young person who would like to attend Camp Asbury, Aldersgate or Wanake this summer. Can you help make it happen? There are several ways you can!

- Spread the Word. Encourage your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and neighbors to check out the camp offerings posted at www.eocumc.com/camps. Offer to attend one of the 'open house' events with them. Were you a camp-kid? Let us know what you loved about it!
- Become a Sponsor. Sponsor a young person fully or make a donation to our campership fund. A week at one of our Ohio United Methodist Camps ranges between \$170 for day camp to \$550 for a week of horse camp. Other camp experiences fall in between. Look for more ways to support this fund at Music with a Mission on Friday, February 19.
- Prayer. Keep the kids, the counselors and the camps in your prayers this year.

The Power of Camp

The average American youth spends:

270 minutes watching TV
each day

4 minutes playing outside each
day

7.5 hours a day on electronics

A week at camp provides:

10,080 minutes away to
consider, to dream to believe
that they are loved and created
for a purpose!



Do you have news to share?
 Contact Melanie!
 office@brecksvilleumc.com or
 440-526-8938

**We're celebrating some
 new birthdays!**

Congratulations to Kate and Ryan Burrows, proud new parents to baby Jack Charles!

Congratulations are also in order for Penny Burns on the birth of her grandson, Thomas Burns Aldridge.

Al and Joan Filipis have a new grandson! Landon William, an early Christmas present to his parents and big brother, born on December 17.



Betsy Bellingham	3	Lois Moston	16
Penny Lienert	3	Aundrea Dumot	17
Michael Patrick	3	Eliot Slifcak	17
Michelle Shively	3	Kim Johnson	18
Emily Vincent	3	Fred Loeffler	18
Kaya Roberts	5	Jennifer Schneider	18
Nate Machesky	6	Jessica Zawada	18
Claudia Monnett	6	Kaitlyn Ellis	20
Megan Myers	6	Brian Meek	20
Margie Benedict	7	Dan Auble	21
Autumn Lasich	7	Pat Gordon	21
Cole Mihalich	9	Nate Bender	22
David Vastartis	9	Bob Nelson	22
James Vastartis	9	Bob Lundholm	24
Nathan Hulten	10	Colin Crouch	25
Gerry McMaster	11	Katie Hurder	25
Marc Vincent	11	Sue Hastings	26
Bob Carson	12	Kimmer Cave	28
Jennifer Hoffman	13	Donna Culley	28
Steven Chen	14	Lona Seifert	29
Maddy McBride	14	Rick Dean	30
Donna Sibits	14	Jill Magistro	30
Scott Ford	15	Don Salsbury	30
Donna Houston	15	Kathy Goebel	31
Marianne Nolan	15	DJ Magee	31
Joy Parker	15		



As we begin a new year, we say "thank you" to our communion stewards for 2015

Cec Podolny, Al & Barb Harper,
 Amy, Maddie & Emma Piorkowski,
 Diane Pidwell and Jack Drescher,

Chuck & Becky Gezze

We are in need of new teams for 2016. Can you help?

It's a wonderful way to be a part of worship.

To learn more,
 contact the church office!



As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly Staff Meetings this month, we lifted up the following people in prayer, thanking God for them and the way they touch the lives of others. People like Scott Campbell, who leads our Trustees committee, leads our mowing team, and constructed a frame around the church timeline on the third floor; Jane Petrie, whose beautiful live wreaths helped make the church ready for Christmas; Megan Louttit and Maddie Piorkowski for all of the ways they participate in worship including sharing song, serving as liturgists, and as communion steward; The Sendreys and Johnsons, who prepared the youth dinner in December; and Ashley Pacholewski, who made the High School Retreat possible (and fun!) by serving as a chaperone.



Where was your great-grandmother born?

Immigrants awaiting inspection in front of Ellis Island's Main Building. (Wikipedia Commons.)

Unless your ancestors were among the indigenous people of the United States, they came here from another land. They may have been looking for work, for food, for safety, or for the freedom to practice their religion. Some were displaced by war or by social upheaval. Were your ancestors refugees? What was their story?

Since 2008, Northeast Ohio has received more than 2,500 refugees. This Christmas time, instead of exchanging gifts, our church staff chose to make a donation to the International Services Center (ICS) an organization helping refugees as they resettle in greater Cleveland since 1919. In researching the issue, we learned a lot!

Refugees are people have fled their country of origin and who meet the United Nations' criteria of having a "well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion." They did not choose to leave their original countries. Many have endured unspeakable horrors, including torture, rape, and witnessing the death of loved ones. Do you know that fewer than 1% of refugees are ever resettled out of refugee camps? Most will live and die in the camps - those lucky enough to come to the United States have often spent more than 15 years in refugee camps.

When refugees arrive here, ISC and other non-profit organizations help them rebuild their lives in safety. ISC provides housing in the neighborhoods of greater Cleveland and helps refugees learn English, find employment, and embrace life in America. After five years, refugees are eligible to apply for US citizenship.

How You Can Help

In 2016, ICS is anticipating the arrival of an estimated 350 refugees (nearly twice as many as last year.) A major need is for housing. Understanding landlords are needed. Although these new arrivals have little, they make great tenants because of the strong support system dedicated to their success. *Do you know of anyone with housing to rent?*

Another important need is for good quality footwear. Once they have found employment, the refugees in the program take public transportation and most need to walk for miles outside between their transit stop and their job. They then stand all day while working, as most refugees work in manufacturing as their first job. \$60 will buy a pair of good quality steel toed work boots for one refugee.



On Sundays in January, we will be holding a "boot drive" to collect cash to help meet this need. *We have set a goal of raising enough money to buy 20 pairs of work boots.* We will have greeting cards for donors to sign which will be given to each refugee when they receive their boots. ICS adds, "We can also accept used winter boots (for youth and adults) and work boots (just adult sizes) if they have been used very lightly." If you have lightly used boots or coats to donate, please bring them to the collection basket in the first floor coat room.

English language tutors are also needed to practice speaking and word pronunciation with ESOL (English as a second language) students. The gifts of patience, an open mind, and good humor are all you need for this opportunity to learn about other cultures and meet interesting people. Call the office to learn more.

Together, we can help new arrivals establish strong roots here in Ohio, and make a real difference in the lives of refugees!

Making Survivors Welcome
Our church staff came together to donate three portable cribs with sheets and blankets, two vacuum cleaners, and much needed household cleaning items and toiletries. When told about the need for winter clothes, the UMW chose to donate the collection from the Hat and Mitten Tree. (Many refugees are experiencing winter for the first time!) And our Tuesday morning knitting group has offered to make baby blankets!

Together as a faith community, we are called to be a space of love and safe refuge for all people.



The 2015
Hat & Mitten Tree

92 hats

(Hat sets and ear muffs, too!)

+ 57 pair of gloves & mittens

+ 3 scarves =

A warmer winter for refugee families. Most are experiencing snow for the first time!

Inclusive Language in Worship... Why Bother?

At Brecksville United Methodist Church, we strive to use language that is truly inclusive with respect to God and to people. Although the generic use of masculine terms has been an accepted practice in the past, it is exclusive and can be viewed as offensive for many. For others, however, inclusive language is seen as no more than a useless exercise in “political correctness.” Why do we use inclusive language at Brecksville United Methodist Church? Does it really matter?

We believe that inclusive language is far more than a matter of preference; it is a fundamental issue of social justice. Language that is truly inclusive affirms gender, sexuality, racial and ethnic background, stages of maturity, and degrees of limiting conditions. It shows respect for all people.



Five Reasons that Inclusive Language Matters

1. As Christians, we constantly affirm that God is beyond our knowing or understanding. We certainly believe that God transcends our traditional notions of gender. How, then, can we restrict our language about God to only half of what is available to us? Scripture contains many gender neutral metaphors for God such as shepherd, rock, or Holy One. Inclusive language deepens and broadens our ability to talk about God.
2. As Christians, we believe that every single person is created in the image of God. How, then, can God be singularly male? And how are young women to see themselves as made **in God's image if our imagery for God is singularly male?** The use of **only masculine** nouns and pronouns for God and of masculine generic terms for humankind has hidden the rich feminine imagery for God and God's people in scripture. Inclusive language for God affirms the divine value of every person, regardless of their gender.
3. Sadly, we recognize that not every person has a unilaterally positive relationship with every adult figure in their life. Though it grieves our hearts, we must concede that there are **many individuals in our world for whom the identification of God only as “father” might** bring negative associations. Inclusive and varied language for God allows individuals several metaphors through which they can experience God, increasing the odds that at least some of those images and metaphors will be positive ones.
4. Scripture proclaims the world is created, redeemed, and sustained by the Word of God, and the church attests to the power of language and words, recognizing that words have the power to exploit and exclude as well as affirm and liberate. At Brecksville United Methodist Church, we choose to use our words in a way that invites, includes, and widens the fellowship.
5. Why not?! Paul frequently counsels the early church to show deference to one another when they see that a particular issue is of great importance to a brother or sister. We know that inclusive language is important to many people – especially young people – so why not show deference and respect for that desire to bring more people into the circle?

In the weeks ahead, challenge yourself to seek and experience God in a new way! If you have always experienced God as “father,” explore what it might mean for you to meet God as “mother” or simply as Creator or Provider. You may be surprised to discover new richness in your understanding of God!

NEW CLASSES FOR THE NEW YEAR

EDUCATION HOUR

Be encouraged.

Learn and Grow!

Don't miss the awesome opportunity to learn and grow and to develop friendships within your church family during the 10 o'clock education hour. Kids, check the Sunday School board in the lobby for your classrooms. Adult classes this session:

Reclaiming the "E-word": Is Evangelism Dead in the 21st Century?

Facilitated by Joy Parker & Jenny Gee

Do you cringe when you hear the word evangelism? For many of us raised in a church environment, the idea of evangelism conjures up notions of going door to door handing out pamphlets or accosting people in public places to hammer them over the head with something they don't really want to hear! In this modern age of pluralism and cultural sensitivity, is evangelism dead and gone?

This course seeks to reclaim the idea of evangelism as the important practice of learning to tell our own faith stories. It does NOT mean forcing others to "convert," nor does evangelism presuppose that you are right and everyone else is wrong. Instead, it encourages healthy dialogue and invites people to consider being part of a faith community regardless of the questions, doubts and disagreements they may harbor. (For anyone who has participated in recent offerings around unpacking scripture and dealing with the questions and challenges that arise in an honest reading, this class is a GREAT follow up!)

This course will run for 5 weeks, beginning on January 10 and concluding on February 7. The first session will examine concrete statistics about the different generations worshipping in our pews in 2016 and the different ways in which they learn and communicate. Subsequent weeks will take a look at ways in which Jesus' ministry suggests critical principles for the successful practice of modern evangelism: proximity, inclusion, hope, and boldness.

If you care about the future of BUMC, the Methodist Church, and the Church Universal, consider being a part of this class. It is a course for everyone, and we would love to overflow our classroom. Come with your questions, your objections, and your ideas; and prepare to be challenged!

Travel Through the Holy Land

Facilitated by Rev. Clark Stein

Make plans to join Pastor Clark in the Chapel for an exciting video and discussion opportunity. We will be working on stories from the Holy Land, examining the geography, what happened where, and just how we feel the impact of these events in our present day life of faith. Come experience the stories of the bible in their historical context, and join the discussion about why they still matter. Each week will stand on its own, so drop ins are always welcome!



Year end giving statements will be mailed to you before the end of January. The outside of the envelope will be marked "Important Tax Documents Enclosed." Don't miss it!

Can't wait for the mail? You can quickly print your own statement anytime from **Realm**. It's easy as 1, 2, 3!

1. Log in to www.onrealm.org/BrecksvilleMethodist.
2. Click your name in the upper right corner, and select My Profile.
3. Beneath your picture, click the Contribution Statement button.



If you have any trouble, call the church office.

440-526-8938



Three Syrian refugee students receive UMCOR school kits and hygiene kits. Photo: IOCC

12 Dozen Envelopes

It is with great joy and thanksgiving that we share the successful results of our 12 Dozen Envelopes for the Refugee Crisis campaign.

Throughout the last several months, the generous members of this church family gave \$9,109 to help our brothers and sisters around the world. The Missions Committee also donated \$1,331 to the cause, which allowed us to meet our goal of filling all 144 envelopes!

In total, we raised \$10,440, which will be donated to the UMCOR Refugee Response fund. These funds are used to respond to refugee and immigrant emergencies, like the crisis in Syria and the Middle East, as well as funding for appropriate grant requests, grassroots organizations, and community leaders that work alongside the refugee population.

Thank you to all who contributed to this important cause – you truly are the hands and feet of Christ in this world, and are helping countless individuals who so desperately need our prayers and compassion!

THE SUNDAY BLAST

A weekly e-mail Newsletter.

Sunday Song Titles, Scripture Readings, Announcements, Upcoming Events and More. To subscribe, e-mail office@brecksvilleumc.com



High School Youth Group

All ninth through twelfth graders are invited to our weekly Youth Group meeting, Sunday evenings from 7 to 9 pm in the Youth Room (406). Following the great conversations from this fall, we'll be continuing our times with Jefferson Bethke! These newest video lessons will introduce us to some practical tips for reading the Bible, and why exactly it should be a priority in our lives. Come join our conversation!

Middle School Youth Group

Sixth through eighth graders, come hang out with us after school on Wednesdays! We meet from 3 to 4:30 pm in the Youth Room (406) and always have time for plenty of snacks, Bible lessons, and hide-n-seek. Hope to see you there!

Free All Youth Dinner, Sunday, January 3. All 6th-12th graders and friends are welcome! Please RSVP by Friday, January 1. Email Courtney at youth@brecksvilleumc.com or call or text 440-537-5508.

YSP (Youth Service Project)

Are you in ninth grade or older this school year? Then you're invited to join us on our annual Youth Service Project! Summer 2016 will take us to Somerville, Tennessee (a small town outside Memphis), from June 26 to July 2. Email Courtney at youth@brecksvilleumc.com for more information or to save your spot! First payments are due in February.

Confirmation Church Visit

Eighth grade students, don't forget that our second church visit is January 10th. Look for a more detailed email in your inbox, coming soon!

Snow Tubing

Join us for an afternoon of snow tubing at Brandywine! (If it ever snows this winter. How about this weather?) Sixth through twelfth graders, friends, and families are welcome. Stay tuned for more details, coming soon.

CAN YOU HELP?

- Music with a Mission Donations – February 19th, our youth and music programs will host the annual Music with a Mission dinner, show, and auction. Do you have anything to donate to the auction? We accept single items, gift cards, themed baskets... whatever you'd like to give! If you can help, please drop off your donation in the church office by February 12. Thank you!
- All-Youth Sunday Dinner Chefs – Each month, our sixth through twelfth grade students come together to share a Sunday night dinner, prepared by one of our church families. Are you able to prepare this meal in March, April, or May? Please contact Courtney if you are interested in serving our youth ministry in this way!



United
Methodist
Women

Brecksville United Methodist Women

Next UMW Meeting is Thursday, February 5

There is no general meeting of the UMW in January, but mark your calendar for a special meeting on February 5 "Senior Scams and Identity Theft" featuring a speaker from the Ohio Attorney General's Office. You won't want to miss it! More details coming soon.

Asbury Bremeth Circle, Thursday, January 14



Having Fun at the December Asbury Meeting

Ladies, come join the circle on the second Thursday of each month! We gather in the Parlor at 9:30 for a continental breakfast, and at 10 we'll resume our study of John Ortberg's *Soul Keeping*, lead by Director of Christian Education, Jenny Gee. It's a wonderful time of fellowship and learning. How is it with your soul?

Acme Register Tapes Wanted by January 6

Acme Fresh Market register tapes are wanted by UMW for the Acme Cash Back program. Shop at Acme now and throughout the holidays. Place your register tape in the Acme labeled box in the coat room. It's an easy way to help earn money for UMW missions and help those in need!



Brookside Food Drive

Thank you for donating to our Food Tree for the Brookside Food Center! These donations were taken to the center on December 18. The UMW's next visit to the center will be January 15. If you're moved to give, bring donations to the bin in the first floor coat room!

Reconciling Ministries Drive

As a Reconciling United Methodist Church, we are eager for the day when the entire United Methodist Church chooses the path of full inclusion. In May of 2016, clergy and lay leaders of the UMC will gather in Portland, Oregon, for nearly two weeks of General Conference meetings and legislative sessions. We look forward to General Conference, as it provides the singular opportunity for the denomination to take meaningful steps forward in the direction of inclusion.



There are a number of activities occurring at and around General Conference to encourage conversation around full inclusion. One very important action that you can take right now is to complete the enclosed registration card and become a RUM (Reconciling United Methodist). The "Love Your Neighbor Coalition" (LYNC) hopes to take 2016 new names to General Conference, demonstrating the overwhelming support of United Methodist individuals for an inclusive church. Please take just a moment to complete your card. Completed cards can be dropped in the offering plate on Sunday morning or dropped off in the main office at any time. We will mail them together at the end of January. (If you are unsure whether you have previously registered as a RUM, you are invited to complete the card anyway. The RMN office is able to check names against their master list and will remove any duplicates prior to General Conference.)

Thank you for your participation in encouraging The United Methodist Church to grow in love and welcome!

- The Board of Church & Society

january

BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH www.brecksvilleumc.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>Communion Stewards</p>	<p>January Communion Stewards: Chuck & Becky Gezze</p>				 <p>A New Year Begins</p>	<p>2 9:30 Zumba 6 Music Dept. Christmas Party at the Parkers</p>
<p>3 Epiphany Sunday Communion Sunday 8:45 Worship 10 Coffee Hour 11:15 Worship 6 First Sunday Youth Dinner</p>	<p>4 5:30 Kickboxing</p>	<p>5 10 Staff Meeting 7 Evangelism</p>	<p>6 6:30 Dawnbrkrs 1:30 AGO 3 MS Youth Grp 7 Evening Circle</p>	<p>7 5 Men's Group</p>	<p>8 9:30 Bonus UMW Board Meeting</p>	<p>9 No Zumba Today</p>
<p>10 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hour 11:15 Worship 7 High School Youth Group</p>	<p>11 5:30 Kickboxing 4:15 Cantus 5 Choraliars 7 Community Chorus</p>	<p>12 12 UMW Staff Luncheon 5 Children's Choir 7 Ad Board 8 COE 8 Music Board</p>	<p>13 6:30 Dawnbrkrs 3 MS Youth Grp</p>	<p>14 9:30 Asbury Bremeth Circle 5 Men's Group</p>	<p>15 Food Delivery to Brookside</p>  <p>Deadline</p>	<p>16 9:30 Zumba 10 Caring Committee</p>
<p>17 Human Relations Day 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hour 11:15 Worship 7 High School Youth Group</p>	 <p>Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. ON BEING WISE</p> <p>Offices Closed 5:30 Kickboxing 7 SPRC Community Choruses Meet</p>	<p>19 10 Staff Meeting 10 Stitch'n'Time 5 Children's Choir 7 Missions 7 Gifts & Mem 7:30 Trustees</p>	<p>20 6:30 Dawnbrkrs 3 MS Youth Grp 7 Church & Society</p>	<p>21 5 Men's Group 6:15 Bells 7:30 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>22 5 Fridays @5 Choir</p>	<p>23 9:30 Zumba</p>  <p>GUILT COOK-OFF 6 pm in Fellowship Hall!</p>
<p>24 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hour 11:15 Worship 7 High School Youth Group</p>	<p>25 5:30 Kickboxing 4:15 Cantus 5 Choraliars 7 Community Chorus</p>	<p>26 10 Staff Meeting 5 Children's Choir 7 Finance</p>	<p>27 6:30 Dawnbrkrs 3 MS Youth Grp</p>	<p>28 5 Men's Group 6:15 Bells 7:30 Chancel Choir</p>	<p>29 9:30 UMW Board Meeting 7 Movie Night at the Church!</p>	<p>30 9:30 Zumba</p> 
<p>31 Children Lead Worship 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hour 11:15 Worship 5 Pearl Rd Dinner 7 High School Youth</p>						

When we join *The United Methodist Church*, we vow to support it with our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness. But sometimes, our good intentions get lost in the day-to-day hustle and bustle of life. As a church, how are we doing with our promises? Can you help fill in the blanks?

PRAYERS

It's a new year! Here's a prayer to help welcome it:

May today there be peace within.

May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be.

May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.

May you use those gifts that you have received, and pass on the love that has been given to you

May you be confident knowing you are a child of God.

Let this presence settle into your bones, and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise and love.

It is there for each and every one of us.

- attributed to St. Thérèse of Lisieux and St. Theresa of Avila

Do you know that Brecksville United Methodist Church has an active e-mail Prayer Chain? To be added to the e-mail list, or to submit a prayer request, please contact Elrowan33@aol.com.

PRESENCE

Date	First Service	Education Hour	Second Service	Goal of 300
Nov. 22	130	107	101	-69
Nov. 29	118	97	91	-173
Dec. 6	129	86	80	-91
Dec. 13	149	89	98	-53
Dec. 20	209		137	+46!

We've set a goal of bringing 300 people together for worship on Sunday mornings. Think we can hit that goal before Christmas? We can, if you are making meaningful worship a priority in your life!

GIFTS

If you have made a pledge or a contribution, you will receive a giving statement (either electronically or on the other side of this page with your mailed Good Word) which outlines your gifts to date this year. If you need additional information, or if you have not received your statement, please contact the church office.

Date	Offering
Nov. 22	7,346
Nov. 29	6,120
Dec. 6	13,258
Dec. 13	18,777
Dec. 20	9,654

This table outlines the offering received each Sunday since the last publication of the *Good Word*.

SERVICE

Some ways you can be of service to others this month (look for details in this issue of *The Good Word!*)

- Volunteer as an English tutor with an area refugee center.
- Donate to the Boot Drive.
- Help serve dinner at Pearl Road UMC on January 31.
- Be a part of the Chili Cook off on January 23.
- Join the Caring Committee, an outreach to those folks who can't be with us in worship.
- Serve as a Communion Steward in 2016!

Thank you! Other opportunities are listed on the church website!

The people of The United Methodist Church are putting our faith in action by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, which is [our church's mission](#). Through the power of our connection, we are making a positive difference

United Methodist News

Interfaith Welcome in Indiana for Syrian Refugees

By Dan Gangler December, 15, 2015 | INDIANAPOLIS (UMNS)

More than 200 Christians, Jews and Muslims gathered to welcome three new Syrian refugee families to Indianapolis during an interfaith rally and candlelight prayer vigil at Epworth United Methodist Church.

Among those speaking at the Dec. 11 rally were Ed and Paula Kassig, members of Epworth Church whose son, Abdul-Rahman Peter Kassig, was murdered by ISIS one year ago.

“We want everyone to know that we are not here because of the Kassig family,” said Paula Kassig. “Tonight, we asked to be allowed to speak for another family – the human family.”

The younger Kassig was captured [while working to help Syrian refugees](#). His parents are now advocating for those same refugees to be given asylum in his home state of Indiana.

“Keep your hearts open to those who could use a leg up. You will strengthen America as you welcome the newcomers,” said Paula Kassig.

Protesting ban

This was the first time that members of the Syrian American Council of Indiana have publically spoken out against Indiana Gov. Mike Pence’s ban of Syrian refugees to Indiana.

Despite the ban, [Catholic Charities relocated a family](#) to Indiana on Dec. 7. The goal of the interfaith gathering was to encourage Pence to lift the ban and stop stalling the refugee program in Indiana.

Speaking on behalf of the council, Nora Basha, the daughter of a Syrian refugee who grew up in Indiana, said, “No Syrian wants to be a refugee. They just want safety for their children and a place to call home.

“Our message to Gov. Mike Pence today is that we know that you are a good man with noble intentions and a responsibility to keep Hoosiers safe,” she continued. “We don’t take that lightly. We know how much you have given for our state and its citizens. However, we are confident if you meet with these families and hear these stories you may reconsider where you stand today.”



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Members of several families spoke during the rally. Through an Arabic translator, Syrian refugee Marwan Batman said he was overwhelmed with the amount of love and compassion he is receiving from everyone. He said he has friends, connections and relations here so he feels wonderful.

Batman, a Muslim, also said the event at a Christian church made him feel comforted and welcomed. About half of his city’s population was Muslim and about half was Christian, he explained, adding that he has several Christian friends who are dear to him.

The other families also expressed their sincere gratitude to Hoosiers for welcoming them from their war-torn country.

According to news sources, the Batman family, who arrived in Indianapolis a year ago, consists of a mother, father, and four children. After escaping the civil war in Syria, the family spent a year and a half interviewing with the United Nations in Lebanon. Another year was spent interviewing at the United States Embassy in Beirut before they were told Indianapolis would be their new home.

Heeding the call

Of the families who recently arrived, one spent two years at a refugee camp in Jordan and another spent a year in Lebanon before meeting all the requirements to come to the United States.

Preceding the vigil, the Rev. Bill Hoops, Epworth Church pastor, said, “As Christians we’re called to care for the poor, the hungry, the refugee. During this season of Advent we remember that Mary, Joseph and Jesus were refugees, they fled persecution in their native country.”

Person-to-person contact is important, Hoops noted. “Increasing dialogue, friendship, welcoming the refugees in our midst, befriending them and getting to know them, replaces fear with a sense of proactive love,” he said.

The Syrian American Council invited Pence to the rally, but he had to decline because of a prior engagement, his representative said. Indiana Attorney General Greg Zoeller was able to attend and greeted the refugee families. He did not speak at the vigil. The Council hopes to schedule a meeting between Gov. Pence and refugees living in Indianapolis in coming weeks.

Gangler is a retired United Methodist communicator living in Indianapolis. News Media Contact: Linda Bloom (646) 369-3759 or newsdesk@umcom.org