

The Good Word

The Newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church

65 Public Square, Brecksville, Ohio 44141 Phone: 440-526-8938

December Issue : Published November 23, 2011

IT'S A Wonderful LIFE

Bring your family and friends and
celebrate the Christmas season at
Brecksville United Methodist Church!



Advent Worship: It's a Wonderful Life!

Wednesday, Nov. 30, 7:30 pm

Step away from the stresses of life and join with us in welcoming the season !

Brecksville Christmas Parade Reception

Sunday, Dec. 4. Parade starts at 4 pm

Hot Chocolate and Cookies in Fellowship Hall after the parade

Sermon Series: It's a Wonderful Life

Join us on Sundays for this interactive Advent Sermon Series

Sundays, Nov. 27 - Christmas, 8:45 am and 11:15 am

Hat and Mitten Tree

Warm your heart by warming the hands of those in need.

Donations accepted through the holiday season.

Brecksville Community Chorus Holiday Concert

The sounds of Christmas will fill the air!

Sunday, December 11 at 4 pm

Mission Outreach Dinner

Serve a meal at Pearl Road United Methodist Church

Sunday, December 18, 4:30 pm

Christmas Carol Sunday

Sing with us to welcome the birth of Christ

December 18 - 8:45 am and 11:15 am

Christmas Eve Services

Family Worship at 5; Candle Light Worship at 8 and 10

Saturday, December 24

Christmas Day: One church service at 10 o'clock

Christ is born!

The Fumbly Bumbly Angel Black Light Puppet Show

Fun with puppetry from North Royalton UMC Youth

December 30 - 7 pm, Fellowship Hall



8:45 First Service
10:00 Education Hour
11:15 Second Service

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*Article deadline is the third
Friday of each month.*



The Christmas Play

Comments from Rev. Clark Stein

...When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."...

Luke 2:1-20

The children were putting on the Christmas play. To show the radiance of the newborn Savior an electric light bulb was hidden in the manger. All the stage lights were to be turned off so that only the brightness of the manger could be seen, but the boy who controlled the light got confused—all the lights went out!

It was a tense moment, broken only when one of the shepherds said in a loud stage whisper, "Hey! You switched off Jesus!"

We enter into yet another magical time of year. The wonder of the Christmas story will be ours to "get" once again. No matter where you roam, no matter the roads you wander, no matter the company you keep or don't keep, the feasts you prepare, consume and recover from, or not, no matter the degree of good health you enjoy, the blessings you count as yours, whether wallowing in despair or loneliness or anger or in love or peace or joy, the truth is once again brought home on a quiet starlit night: God lovingly reaches out to us, fully commits to journeying with us through all this life has to offer, even through death to new life. There is nowhere you can go that God doesn't go with you. Even in our perceived loneliness, we have company. You are ever destined to live in relationship. In all of our sometimes busy and crowded observances, may we not "switch off Jesus." In the glory of a simple birth, something that still happens millions of times a day, God has affirmed the wonder and magic and goodness of life. I pray that this light dawns on you and yours and remains with you, wherever life leads, always.

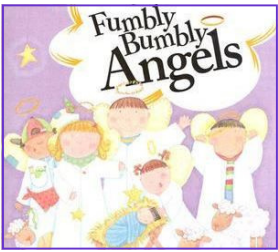
Everlasting peace,

Pastor Clark

Hat & Mitten Tree



The Hat and Mitten Tree will be set up in the Parlor again this year beginning December 1. As always, we will be collecting hats, mittens and scarves for those who need them this winter. The donations will be sent to the West Side Catholic Center which also needs to replenish their supplies of basic necessities such as shampoo, toothpaste, and socks. Please drop these items in the box beneath the tree anytime between December 2 and 19. Thank you for your generosity. Check out all the great work the West Side Catholic Center does for those in the Cleveland community by viewing their website at www.wsccenter.org/programs.html.



Family Puppet Show

December 30 at 7:00 p.m.
The Fumbly, Bumbly Angels
On the BUMC Fellowship Hall Stage!

Presented in black light by the youth of the North Royalton United Methodist Church. You will delight in this story of four charming angels who yearn to sing in the glorious heavenly choir. Be with them as they learn that their first audience will be a few ragged shepherds on the Bethlehem hillside. You will definitely enjoy this sweet perspective about the angels that visited the stable on the night of Jesus' birth. Hot chocolate and cookies will be served at the end of the performance.

Find Your Scissors and Start Clipping!

Our UMW supports the Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky by sending them **Campbell's Labels for Education** coupons. Henderson Settlement is a Methodist facility founded in 1925 whose mission is to lift up Jesus Christ by providing basic needs in Appalachia through God's love. They redeem labels for office supplies, computers, and other items. Most recently they collected 1,600,000 labels toward a new van, a much needed tool in this rural Appalachian community. All that is needed from the Campbell and other participating products is the bar code and logo. Remember, it's not just soup! Look for the "Labels for Education" Symbol on products from Campbells, Pepperidge Farm, Prego, SpaghettiOs, Swanson, BIC, Post Cereals and Pop Secret! We're also collecting **Box Tops for Education** for Frakes School in Frakes, Kentucky. Each Box Top is worth ten cents and will help this impoverished community get much needed items for their school. Bring your labels and box tops to the collection bins in the cloak room and we'll send them off to Kentucky where they will do a lot of good!

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.

BUMC Blood Drive

Fellowship Hall
Tuesday, December 13
1 pm – 6 pm

Individuals who are 17 years of age, meet height and weight requirements (110 pounds or more, depending on their height), and are in generally good health may be able to donate blood. Please bring your Red Cross Donor Card or other form of ID when you come to donate.



1-800-GIVE-LIFE
RedCrossBlood.org

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On November 13, a BUMC Potluck was held in Fellowship Hall for the Taylors. We'll miss you, Tom and Nell!



We are moving!!

We are moving on **December 9th** to Wesleyan Meadows, a retirement community for independent living. Please note our change of address. Our new phone number will be 440-695-0046. Our new email addresses are Nell's: ntay695@gmail.com and Tom's: ttay695@gmail.com

We send wishes for a Happy Thanksgiving, Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!!

Love, Nell & Tom Taylor



MILESTONES

News of the Fellowship

*Have news you would like to share?
Please call or e-mail Melanie.*

Congratulations to Fred and Olive Priest who celebrated 65 years of marriage on November 9.

Freshman Jeannie McBride appeared in The University of Akron's production of *The Great God Brown*, a play by Eugene O'Neill. Jeannie was the only non-theater major to perform in the play.

Are you among the lucky folks headed to warmer locales this winter? Have *The Good Word* sent to your winter address! Contact the office with your information.

Ken Wise is coordinating a drive for gifts for a family through Yuletide Hunger. Interested in helping? Please contact Ken at 440-526-0180. The family has four children: three boys, ages 5,6, and 9 and a girl, age 16.

Mark your calendar and save the date! On Saturday, Jan. 28 BUMC will host a Southern Cookin' Hot Homestyle Community Breakfast. Don't miss it!



As the year draws to a close, we would like to say "thank you" to our communion stewards for 2011...

Al & Barb Harper
Elaine Geringer and Janet Nelson
Janine and Emily Telischak
John & Celeste Olenik

And "welcome" to
Bob and Joan Bloch
New communion stewards for 2012

DECEMBER Birthdays

Allen McCrodden	12/01	Doug Ritterbusch	12/12
Susan Ellenberger	12/02	Raymond Carlisle	12/13
Chris Toth	12/02	Trinity Crouch	12/13
Marisol Wylie	12/02	Kiira Olszko	12/13
Ronelle Rajkovich	12/03	Shirley Harper	12/14
Edward Crist	12/04	Sydney Hazelton	12/15
Diane Ellis	12/04	David Monseau	12/15
Nicholas Mihalich	12/04	Ruth Moorhead	12/15
Timothy Simon	12/04	Dale Meyer	12/16
Kendall Lancaster	12/05	Elinor Rowan	12/17
Bruce McCrodden	12/06	Carol Wilson	12/18
Michael Memmer	12/06	Jeffrey Fesler	12/19
Kaitlynn Pasek	12/06	J. Donald Moorhead	12/19
Karen Schroedel	12/06	Nathan Petznick	12/19
Brenda Calovini	12/07	John Zupanc	12/19
Katherine Tyler	12/07	Hudson Schneider	12/20
Rachel Dubin	12/08	Megan Louttit	12/21
Steve Harper	12/08	Amanda Auble	12/23
Allison Loughner	12/08	Pam Papp	12/24
Richard Gordon	12/09	David Urdzik	12/24
Charles Helm	12/09	Kayla Kosla	12/26
Joyce Johnson	12/09	Anastasia Brachna	12/28
Daniel Soltis	12/09	David Brown	12/28
Josh Kesling	12/10	Christine Drescher	12/29
Joan Quade	12/10	Sylvia Fowler	12/29
Scott Schneider	12/10	Brandon Schroedel	12/29
David Schroedel	12/10	Mary Lou Bennett	12/30
Barbara Berry	12/11	Darell Fisher	12/30
Amy Piorkowski	12/11	Sharon Hotaling	12/30
Gregory Urso	12/11	Robert Jaite	12/30
Frank Bambic	12/12	Zachary Johnson	12/30
Mitchell Bell	12/12	Connor Hulten	12/31
Penelope Burns	12/12	John Scott	12/31
Steve Piorkowski	12/12		



As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly Staff Meetings, we have recently lifted up the following people in prayer, thanking God for them and the way they touch the lives of others: Look around BUMC and you might see **Dave Podolny** tossing starfish around, **Allison Loughner** staying as late as needed to make sure the youth events go off as planned, **Michael Jaszczak** sharing what he has learned about apportionments, **Cathy Buttolph** sharing the great works our church family has done with Project 2010 and other mission outreach, **Bev Huber** working with acolytes and taking beautiful photographs for Sunday worship, and **Brenda Calovini** sharing her talents with beautiful music. We are thankful for each of you!

Young Peoples' Gifts



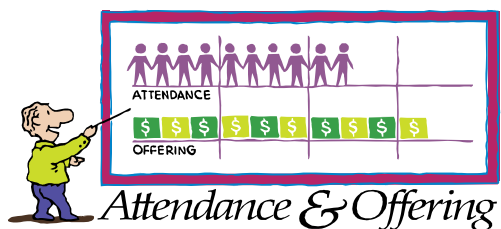
The children and youth of Brecksville United Methodist Church have decided to donate their Sunday School offering dollars to Heifer International. They are currently voting on which animals they would like to purchase first. We will keep you posted! Are you wondering what is Heifer International? Have you heard of it, but were not sure how they operated? Are they your favorite charity? You may find the information below of interest, regardless of your current connection to the organization.

The Beginning: In 1939, as relief worker Dan West ladled rations of powdered milk to refugees of the Spanish Civil War, he realized simple relief aid would never be enough. After returning to the United States, West formed Heifers for Relief, an organization dedicated to ending hunger permanently. Five years later, on June 18, 1944, the first shipment of dairy cattle left the United States bound for Puerto Rico in what would become a campaign that would change the lives of millions.

Heifer Now: Heifer International is a nonprofit, humanitarian organization dedicated to ending hunger and poverty and caring for the Earth. Heifer currently provides livestock, trees, seeds and training in environmentally sound agriculture to families in more than 50 countries, including the United States.

How Heifer Works: Heifer partners with community groups to form development plans and to train beneficiaries in animal well-being, agro-ecology, water quality, gender equity and community development. The training enables them to care for livestock, grow crops sustainably and further lift themselves out of poverty.

LASTING Solutions: Heifer's recipients agree to share one or more of their animals' offspring and the training they receive with others in need in what Heifer calls *Passing on the Gift*. This unique development tool multiplies the benefit of the original gift and allows recipients to become donors. Heifer partners are also taught to prevent overgrazing, collect manure for organic fertilizer, plant trees and manage resources for long-term success.



Can we make our numbers grow? Why not bring a friend to church or Sunday School?

Date	1st Service Attendance	Sunday School	2nd Service Attendance	Offering
October 30	172	161	134	\$7,592
November 6	159	141	85	\$12,378
November 13	120	160	109	\$9,531
November 20	161	152	100	\$11,966
Reminder! To qualify for the 2011 tax year, contributions must be received or postmarked by December 31.				



United Methodist Women

UMW Meeting, Thursday,
December 1st
11:30

Christmas Program and
Holiday Potluck Luncheon

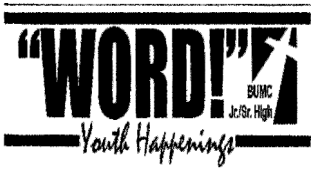
2011 North Coast District Walk to Bethlehem

Congratulations! We have walked to Bethlehem through our eating healthier, our exercise, developing our relationship with God and our mission outreach! Not to mention all of those flu shots, blood work, and blood pressures screenings! Thanks to all of you who faithfully submitted your miles.

But it's not over! We're going to journey back to Tampa, Florida. Why Tampa? It is the site of our 2012 General Conference of the United Methodist Church. We are a connectional church and have increased our connection through walking together as a district to Bethlehem and visiting Imagine no Malaria net distribution sites along the way. Now that we've walked to Bethlehem, let's remember the General Conference and the nine hundred and eighty-eight delegates from around the world who will be meeting in Tampa from April 24-May 4 to set policy and direction for the church. Our District Superintendent, Rev. Orlando Chaffee, will be one of the delegates. As we take our journey, let's uplift all of the delegates in our prayers.

Our focus in November is our spiritual life and our focus in December will be our mission outreach.

Blessings for the journey,
Rev. Linda McCowen RN
Parish Nurse,
North Coast District UMC



Mark your calendars!

Quest/Soul Quest will meet December 1st, 8th and 15th.

YSP Fundraiser: Shopping and Date Night! Let YSP baby sit while you cross some items off of your Christmas List or enjoy a date with your honey! Details coming soon. Watch your bulletin, church website and Sunday School Blast for more details.

- ◆ Saturday December 3rd 12pm-8:30 PM
◆ Sunday December 18th 12:30pm-6:30 PM

Indians Snow Days at Progressive Field! Thursday 12/22 Middle school and high school youth are invited to have a day of snow filled fun at Progressive field! \$15 will get you unlimited ice skating and a 2 hr snow tubing block. If you didn't get a chance to go last year, you won't want to miss it! Please RSVP to Cristy to reserve your spot. 216-402-7682 or youthdir@brecksvilleumc.com We'll met at the church at 10am and return between 4 and 5pm.

Parking Lot "Ministry"



With winter weather approaching, we are reminded of those cold, wintry days when ice and snow can create a safety challenge in our parking lot, particularly with our senior citizens who may have

difficulty navigating across our lot. So, beginning December 4, we are going to block off non-handicapped parking spots in the front row of our parking lot for our senior citizens who may have physical limitations that would make the walk across the parking lot hazardous. (The regular handicapped spots will remain open to those who meet the criteria.) Our Special greeters in bright char-reuse safety vests will be stationed to remove the cones blocking those spaces for you, and assist you if you need additional help.

Chippewa Residents: Our parking lot can be an even bigger challenge for you. So, we will have people standing by your building rear entrance to escort you across the lot, and back home after services.

Thank you for letting us help you!

Poinsettia Order Form

Poinsettias will be used to decorate the altar and chancel area Sunday, December 18 and Christmas Day. Order your plants in honor and in memory of loved ones or to the glory of God. Some plants will be delivered as an act of caring after Christmas.



___ Red # ___ White @ 7.50 a plant
___ Pick up after Christmas worship
___ Deliver to someone for me

To Order:

- Fill out this order form, printing clearly.
• Indicate whether you wish to pickup or have the plant delivered to a home-bound person.
• Attach cash or a check for \$7.50 per plant —payable to BUMC.
• Return to the church office or place in the offering plate no later than Friday, December 9.

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

In memory of _____

In honor of _____

To the glory of God _____

Deadline for orders is Friday, December 9. No orders can be honored after that date.

Drop in the offering plate, bring to the church office, or mail to: Brecksville United Methodist Church 65 Public Square Brecksville, OH 44141



Children's Worship Sunday



The first through fifth graders did a wonderful job leading us in a meaningful worship service on October 30. The young leaders gave us insight into the world of the ancient prophets and their powerful messages that still ring true today. Great thanks go out to the teachers and shepherds of the Rotation Sunday School children for all the time and energy they have given throughout the first few months of Sunday School this year. The children also appreciate the warm acceptance of the congregation as they are taking their first steps toward being the worship leaders of tomorrow.



Pajama and Children's Book Collection

Ten years ago, one New York woman noticed children in shelters and group homes sleeping in their clothes because they didn't own even one pair of pajamas. She filled a shopping bag with new sleepwear and books and began to hand them out to the youngsters, many of whom were abused, abandoned or neglected. Her non-profit Pajama Program marked its first decade of service this fall.

Since its inception, the organization has provided 880,000 new pajamas and new books to children across the country, operating 79 chapters in 42 states throughout the U.S. The program serves children in need living in group homes and shelters. Most have never enjoyed the simple comfort of having a parent tuck them in at bedtime with warm, clean pajamas and a story.

Please consider donating a pair of new pajamas and/or a new book by Sunday, December 4. There will be a box set up in the coat room marked "Pajama Program". Thank you for your generosity!

UMCOR School Kits – created and shipped!



The young people attending VBS this summer generously donated school supplies to fill school bags that were lovingly sewn by our UMW ladies. Our goal was to make and fill 25 kits. We surpassed our goal and were able to create 30 school kits. The kits were put together by the CMAP kids and shipped out to the UMCOR depot. They are now on their way to the south Sudan. Please keep the children receiving these kits in your prayers this week.



An Invitation to Tea

Cleveland Church Women United are sponsoring a Christmas Tea on Friday, December 9, 2011 at Church of the Covenant in Cleveland Heights at 11:30 a.m.

Bring finger sandwich type food or bite sized desserts. A program is included. Donations the church has collected for Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy will be turned in by a UMW representative.

Please call Nancy if you are interested at 440.838.4341.



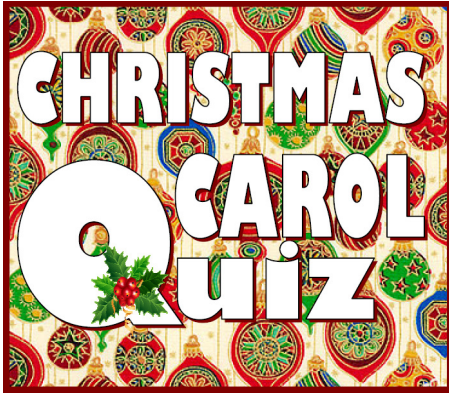
Coffee Fellowship

In December the Commission on Education will be hosting coffee each Sunday morning. Come to The Parlor between services for fellowship and to learn more about this ministry.



A Carol Quiz for the Whole Family

No, I'm not testing your knowledge of everyone you know named Carol. This is about Advent and Christmas Carols! How well do you and your family know the words and melodies of our best-loved hymns of the holidays? I bet you know every word to *Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer* (including all those bits about the flashlight and Monopoly), but do you know the words to the first verse of *It Came Upon a Midnight Clear*? I bet you can sing *Jingle Bells* with gusto, but can you sing *Silent Night* without peeking at the words?



Take the Carol Quiz!

(This activity will take 20 – 25 minutes, and it's great for families!)

- ♪ Go to the church website: www.brecksvilleumc.com.
- ♪ Select the "Carol Quiz" link, and listen to each audio clip.
- ♪ For each audio clip, can you identify the song?
- ♪ Challenge round: can you sing the first verse of each song by memory?

If you are unable to access/hear the clips, let me know, and I will provide you with a CD.

I hope you got every single answer correct, and I'm sure many of you were able to sing along with these wonderful songs of the Advent and Christmas season. No matter what your "score" on the quiz, I want to invite you to sing the Christmas season with me this year! On the website, you will find links to these same fifteen Advent and Christmas carols, in complete form, with short introductions and vocal cues. There will be a hymn for each weekday between Monday, December 5 and Friday, December 23. Take a few minutes each evening after dinner or before bedtime and sing together as a family! Beginning in December, you will find songbooks in the parlor which correspond to the audio clips on the website. Perhaps you can enhance your knowledge of these wonderful songs and hymns!

As an added bonus, I will have a small prize for any child or youth (up through 12th grade) who comes to see me and can "pass the quiz" in person. If you can name each of the fifteen tunes and sing the first verse by memory, you can choose between an iTunes or Starbucks gift card! Good luck!

Wishing you the joy of music throughout your Advent and Christmastide!

~Joy Fenton, Director of Music

Brecksville Center for the Arts
Community Chorus and Youth Chorus

Annual Christmas Concert

On Sunday, December 11, the Brecksville Community Chorus and Youth Chorus will return to our Sanctuary at 4:00pm for their annual Christmas Concert. Under the direction of Donna Box and Joy Fenton, both choruses will offer a blend of sacred and secular music representing a broad range of styles. The concert will include music for solo handbells, played by Cordetta Valthausen.

A free will offering will be collected, and a reception will follow the concert.

Back by popular demand...

Music in the Valley

In February 2012, we will reprise this romantic evening in the valley. Surprise your sweetheart with tickets for a fabulous evening of food, fellowship and music!

Saturday, February 11, 2012

7:00 to 10:00pm

\$75 per ticket

Tickets will go on sale in the New Year, but reservations may be made in advance.

(Seating is limited!)

See you at Music in the Valley!

A More Peaceful Holiday Season



During Advent we anticipate and celebrate the birth of Jesus. In modern-day culture Christmas has become a season of consumption. As Christmas approaches we face many choices regarding shopping, schedules and more. In addition to consumer dilemmas we are faced with spiritual dilemmas. On one hand we want to observe Advent and wait for the Christ child; on the other we want to shop and wrap and bake and run ourselves ragged with all the trimmings. Try some of these ideas to enjoy a Christ-centered more peaceful holiday season.

Living in the Season

Society places many expectations on us (and we place expectations on ourselves) to create “the best Christmas” by outdoing each other and what we did last year. Avoid running ragged and becoming exhausted by deciding early in the season what will be meaningful for you. Then be intentional about choices throughout the season.

Be Intentional: If you feel called to celebrate differently this year, talk with loved ones and explain why you have made the switch. Be gentle in your explanations and invite others to journey with you through the process. We need God and the people around us to assist on the journey.

Pray and Renew: Holidays can be a great time to teach, learn and write new prayers. Encourage visitors to pray and give thanks. Consider your family’s everyday prayer life, too. Rotate who prays before each meal from person to person so everyone has an opportunity to pray.

Share the Work: The holidays are times of sharing. Encourage everyone to help with preparation. Decide as a family how you want to celebrate; let go of nonessentials to make room for more quality time. Invite others to contribute a dish, creating a table filled with the gifts of friends and family.

Share Traditional Stories: Share your heritage through stories. Encourage questions and dialogue about holiday traditions past and present. Discuss the origin of traditions as you engage in them. Retell the story of the birth of Christ as you set a Nativity scene.

Remember: Take time to remember loved ones who have passed on. Recall stories to honor each one. If you have experienced a recent loss, allow time to grieve and care for yourself. The holidays are particularly difficult for those who are mourning. Cherish the joys of life amidst the bustle of the season.

Serve Someone: Volunteer! Sign up to help at the Cleveland Food Bank or Brookside Center. Make food, toy or coat donations.

Holiday Foods

Food is so important during holiday gatherings. Many Bible stories tell of God providing food for the weary. As Christians we can be conscientious about where our food comes from and how it is produced, so that our food choices sustain life rather than injustice. Here are some ways to embody the life of Christ through our eating and food preparation this season.

Cook and Bake Responsibly: Many baking items such as sugar, cocoa, vanilla, and spices are harvested under grueling conditions. The people who bear the brunt of hard work and low pay are the most vulnerable: women and children. Purchasing fair trade baking goods, as well as snacks, chocolate and beverages helps prevent child labor and oppressive working conditions and ensures workers a fair wage.

Select Organic Foods: Organic foods are made without pesticides, hormones and other potentially harmful chemicals. Buying organic helps prevent such chemicals from polluting water systems, soil and air. Organic farming reduces farm workers’ and consumers’ exposure to potentially harmful chemicals.

Keep It Local: Local foods require less energy to transport to your table and help minimize your environmental impact. Visit www.localharvest.org or www.100milediet.org for markets and farms in our area. Purchase locally sourced meats from free-range, organic producers.

Minimize Waste and Packaging: While recycling is far better than adding waste to landfills, buying items with no packaging or reusable packaging is the best option. Compost raw food scraps as a way to enhance your or a neighbor’s garden soil.

(Continues on next page)

...More Peaceful

Greenery as Life and Renewal

We celebrate the birth of Christ during Christmas. With the onset of winter, there are fewer signs of life, which can make it difficult to celebrate birth and renewal. The church has traditionally remembered Christ's birth through the introduction of signs of life during the season of Advent:

Advent Wreaths: Rather than purchasing a fresh Advent wreath, you can make one. The lower branches of a Christmas tree that were cut to fit it into a stand make excellent wreath material. Find local and organic options for greenery by visiting a local farm or farmers' market. Use beeswax candles in your wreath. They are organic and biodegradable.

"O Christmas Tree": While there may not be a Biblical basis for having a Christmas tree, bringing greens and signs of life into our homes has become a standard part of Christmas tradition. If you have an artificial tree, it is best to use it as long as you can. If you purchase a live tree, go local. Visit a tree farm for a memorable outing with family or friends. After the holidays, treecycle!

Plant Indoors: Plant winter bulbs such as amaryllis and paper whites for dramatic, fragrant blooms. These plants are exciting for kids to watch because they grow quickly. Decorate a living tree or large houseplant inside your home instead of cutting down a tree.

Edible Decorations: Attract wildlife outside with edible decorations. Coat pinecones with organic nut butter and roll them in seeds. Make garlands out of Cheerios. If a tree is close to a window in your home, keep watch for visiting animals. Make it educational and try to identify as many species as you can.



Holiday Gifts

The Magi traveled a long distance to bring gifts to Jesus. Their gifts honored the child and provided for the family. Today, gift giving can be a tricky topic. Like the Magi, we should find humble gifts that honor our loved ones while honoring Christ and remembering why we celebrate Christmas in the first place.

Skills: If you are gifted with crafts, music, dance, or other talents, give the gift of knowledge. Gifting a series of lessons empowers the people you love with new skills and abilities while passing on traditions and heritage.

Games: You can give board games or a deck of cards with a promise to play with those who receive them. Teaching a new card game to a child or adult is a lasting gift they can share with others.

Meals: Give the promise of food and meals. Promising to eat lunch with loved ones at their workplace or school once a month is a great way to spend more time together.

Homemade Gifts: Knitted items, framed photos, hand-crafted toys, works of art, and other personally made gifts show care and concern for the recipients because they require time and thought to create.

Commitment: Make a commitment to someone this season. Find ways to serve the people on your list by committing to care for them. You might shovel snow, prepare meals, plan events, or schedule a vacation.

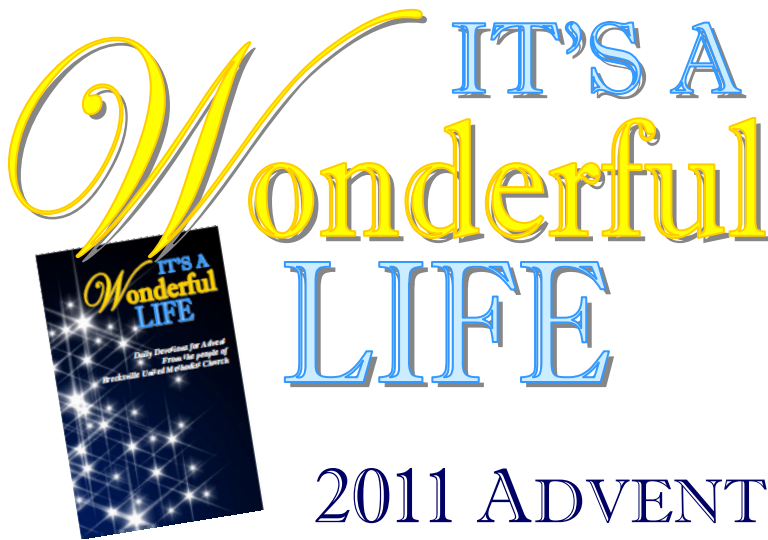
Fair Trade Items: Selecting fair trade answers God's call to liberate the oppressed and set the captives free. Coffee, tea, cocoa, chocolate, and snacks are all items that are available as Fair Trade items. They make great gift baskets or stocking stuffers.

CFLs or LEDs: It is expensive to fit a whole house with Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs (CFLs), but the electricity savings quickly offsets the initial cost. Give the gift of CFLs and each month your loved ones will thank you as they pay lower electric bills.

Reusable Gift Wrapping: Minimize the impact your gifts have on local landfills by packaging them in reusable or biodegradable materials. Use a gift bag or basket. Wrapping gifts in blankets or table linens creates practical and reusable packaging options.

Enough for Everyone

Our faith tradition calls us to care for the natural world so that all may live abundantly. God cares deeply for all of creation and seeks to preserve the diversity of life. Let's make it our goal this season to assist individuals in living a just life that honors God. Let us show deep concern for global economic justice and a commitment to live out our faith in Christ with integrity. We can do this best by evaluating our lifestyle choices and adopting any necessary changes.



IT'S A Wonderful LIFE

As a gift to the people of Brecksville United Methodist Church, we have produced an Advent Devotional booklet called "It's a Wonderful Life". Written with contributions from 30 different people, the booklet focuses on a Bible verse for each day of Advent. Pick up your copy in the Parlor, or download a copy from the church website. Large print editions are also available upon request - just call the church office to get your copy. The calendar below outlines the Bible verses for each day in the devotional, as well as the topic of each day.

2011 ADVENT CALENDAR

Daily Scripture and Reflections in Preparation for Christmas.

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
27 God Is Omnipresent <i>Psalm 139: 7-12</i>	28 God Endures Forever <i>Ecclesiastes 3:9-15</i>	29 Sing To The Lord <i>Psalm 96</i>	30 Be a Blessing and Receive a Blessing <i>John 3:16-21</i>	1 What God Has Done <i>Psalm 77:10-15</i>	2 Quiet Holiness <i>1 Peter 1:13-16</i>	3 Praise The Lord's Kindness <i>Psalm 113</i>
4 The Spirit Within Us <i>1 Corinthians 2:10b-13</i>	5 God's Glory <i>Romans 8:22-24</i>	6 Enough <i>Amos 9:13-15</i>	7 Just a Little Thing <i>Micah 5:2-5</i>	8 Finding Balance <i>Psalm 19:1-4</i>	9 Christmas Tree Moment <i>Acts 17: 24-28</i>	10 The Fragrance of Life <i>2 Corinthians 2:16-18</i>
11 Let It Be <i>Philippians 4:4-7</i>	12 The Lord Bless You and Keep You <i>Numbers 6:24-27</i>	13 A Wonderful Life <i>Thessalonians 3:9-13</i>	14 The Perfect Gift <i>1 Corinthians 1:3-9</i>	15 The Christmas List <i>Romans 13:11-14</i>	16 Over The Horizon <i>Mark 1:1-8</i>	17 That's The Way It's Always Been <i>Isaiah 11:1-9</i>
18 Amazing Grace <i>1 Thessalonians 5:16-24</i>	19 Mighty to Save <i>Zephaniah 3:14-20</i>	20 This Little Light <i>John 1:1-14</i>	21 The Gift of Tears <i>Psalm 126</i>	22 A Blue Dress <i>Luke 1:46-55</i>	23 What Will This Child Be? <i>Luke 1:67-79</i>	24 It's a Wonderful Life <i>Luke 2:1-20</i>
25 Emmanuel, God is With Us! <i>Matthew 1: 18-2:12</i>						
Contributing Writers: Sue Dietrich, Craig Czarnota, Kathy Goebel, Libby Kuntz, Monica Kotnik, Kay AuWerter, Carol Wilson, Kay Mendlik, Joy Fenton, Daniel Graham, Jenny Gee, Melanie Smith, Les Buttolph, Amy Piorkowski, Gretchen Knapp, John Brachna, Becky Gezze, Jeff Hastings, Clark Stein, Dave Podolny, Doug & Gail Huth, Cristy Shumaker, Chuck Gezze, Bev Huber, Cec Podolny, Matt & Kathy Auble, Tim Miller and Kendall Lancaster						

December 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 <p>John & Celeste Olenik</p>	<p>Sunday Worship in December</p> <p>December 4: Romans 15:4-13; Psalm 72:1-7, 18-20; Isaiah 11:1-10; It's a Wonderful Life "Bedford Falls: Hard Work"</p> <p>December 11: Luke 1:39-56; Isaiah 35:1-10; It's a Wonderful Life "Bringing it Home"</p> <p>December 18: Jeremiah 31:21-26; Luke 1:26-38; It's a Wonderful Life "Hanging By a Thin Wire"</p> <p>December 25: Merry Christmas!</p>			<p>1</p> <p>11:30 UMW Potluck 3:15 Quest 4 Wo Emmaus 5 Soul Quest 6:15 HS Ensem 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir 8 Christmas Choir</p>	<p>2</p> <p>7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>3</p> <p>12-8:30 YSP Fundraiser: Shopping and Date Night</p> 
<p>4</p> <p>8 Band 8:45 Worship 10 Ed. Hour 11:15 Worship 4 Brecksville Christmas Parade and Reception</p>	<p>5</p> <p>7 Bible Study</p>	<p>6</p> <p>11 Staff Mtg 7 Knitting Grp</p>	<p>7</p> <p>6:30 Dawnbrk 3:30 CMAP 7:30 Gifts & Memorials</p>	<p>8</p> <p>9:30 Asbury Bremeth 3:15 Quest 4 Wo Emmaus 5 Soul Quest 6:15 HS Ensem 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir 8 Christmas Choir</p>	<p>9</p> <p>7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study 7 Staff Christmas Party</p>	<p>10</p>
<p>11</p> <p>8 Worship Band 8:45 Worship 10 Ed. Hour 11:15 Worship 4 Brecksville Community Chorus Concert</p>	<p>12</p> <p>7 Bible Study</p>	<p>13</p> <p>9:30 Staff Mtg 1 Blood Drive 7 COM & SPR 8 Super Tuesday: COE, Evangelism, Missions, Music Board, Worship, Youth</p>	<p>14</p> <p>6:30 Dawnbrk 3:30 Final CMAP of the Semester</p>	<p>15</p> <p>10 History Grp 3 Poinsettas 3:15 Quest 4 Wo Emmaus 5 Soul Quest 6:15 HS Ensem 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir 8 Christmas Choir</p>	<p>16</p> <p>7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p> 	<p>17</p> <p>Wedding Recital</p>
<p>18</p> <p>8 Worship Band 8:45 Worship 10 Ed. Hour 11:15 Worship 12:30 YSP shop 1:30 Music Pty 4:30 Mission Dinner</p>	<p>19</p> <p>7 Bible Study</p>	<p>20</p> <p>9:30 Staff Mtg 7 Knitting Grp 7:30 Finance 7:30 Trustees</p>	<p>21</p> <p>6:30 Dawnbrk 10 CMAP Christmas Party</p>	<p>22</p>  <p>10 Youth Snow Day! 4 Wo Emmaus 6:15 HS Ensem 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Choir 8 Christmas Choir</p>	<p>23</p> <p>7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p>24</p>  <p>5 Family Worship 8 & 10 Candle Light Service</p>
<p>25</p>  <p>10 Worship</p>	<p>26</p> <p>Church Offices Closed</p>	<p>27</p> <p>9:30 Staff Mtg</p>	<p>28</p> <p>6:30 Dawnbrk</p>	<p>29</p> <p>4 Wo Emmaus</p>	<p>30</p> <p>7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study 7 Puppet Show</p>	<p>31</p> 