



The Good Word

The Newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church

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

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Christmas Around the World

On December 18, our kids experienced Christmas Around the World— in Fellowship Hall! How do our brothers and sisters in Poland, Russia, England, Mexico, Germany, Sweden, Italy and the Philippines celebrate this most holy day? What do they eat? What traditions originated in these countries that we use

in our own homes today? The kids learned the answers to these questions and more with crafts and activities presented by our education committee, with the help of our high school students. At each station, the kids earned a stamp in their Christmas Passport. A great time was had by all!

Photos from top: The Mexico table offered a chance to see the sights and colors of a Mexican celebration complete with a taste of Rosca de Reyes bread, traditional Mexican spiced punch and the tale of the poinsettia plant.

Once the “travelers” made the craft and tasted the food from the table they earned a stamp in their passport.

Nativity scenes (known as Presepios in Italian) are an important part of their Christmas celebration. Christmas parades in Italy have carolers going through the streets carrying lit torches in honor of the shepherds from the first Christmas Eve.

On Christmas Eve in Russia the family gathers around the table to honor the coming Christ Child. A white table cloth, symbolic of Christ’s swaddling clothes, covers the table. Hay is placed as a reminder of where Jesus was born. A white pillar candle is placed in the center of the table, symbolic of Christ as the light of the world.

The Advent calendar began in Germany.

The festival of St Lucia’s light is a huge part of the Christmas season celebration in Sweden. Boys wear pointed hats with stars and girls wear wreaths with candles in processions.

Thank you Germany, for the tradition of Christmas trees and gingerbread. Yum!





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

Our Staff

Phone: 440-526-8938

Pastor: **Clark Stein**

pastor@brecksvilleumc.com

Associate Pastor of Visitation

Libby Kuntz

associatepastor@brecksvilleumc.com

Director of Music: **Joy E. Fenton**

music@brecksvilleumc.com

Director of Christian Education

Jenny Gee

education@brecksvilleumc.com

Business Manager: **Les Buttolph**

finance@brecksvilleumc.com

Office Manager: **Melanie Smith**

office@brecksvilleumc.com

Administrative Assistant:

Cec Podolny

cecp@brecksvilleumc.com

Financial Secretary, **Pat Gordon**

Church School Registrar,

Joan Olszko

Facility Managers,

Jeff and Scott Hastings

Organist, **Chris Toth**

tothchristopher@att.net

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Greetings & Goodbyes

Comments from Rev. Clark Stein

Romans 1:7, 16:25-27

Someone once asked Perle Mesta, the great Washington hostess, the secret of her success in getting so many rich and famous people to attend her parties. She said it was all in the greetings and goodbyes. As each guest arrived she met him or her with: "At last you're here!" And as each left she expressed her regrets with: "I'm sorry you have to leave so soon!"

We enter yet another year. I believe that there is a lot to be said of greetings and goodbyes. How do we greet the coming year? Can we see it as full of possibilities? Or, is it just like any other year, nothing special, heads down we'll just trudge through it no matter what it brings? Our attitudes can help set the table for spectacular things. They can also hold us back from attaining all the good things available to us at any one time.

One only need look to the letters of Paul to recognize the importance of greetings and goodbyes. If you have some time, look at them. Paul recognized the potential in God's children. He wrote to help keep them together and on task. He answered questions, made promises for future visits, and called the community to accountability. When he reached the end, he wrote endearing, God praising goodbyes.

We greet another year together. I am ever grateful for the potential for God to meet us in new ways at Brecksville United Methodist Church. I am ever grateful for the potential for God to meet us in new people at Brecksville UMC. I am amazed at the ongoing work of the spirit in this place. I greet the New Year among you with joy. I say goodbye to the year past praising God for time well spent. May we pay close attention to our hellos and goodbyes. They matter.

Peace for the day, *Pastor Clark*



Coffee Fellowship

In January the **Mission Board** will be hosting coffee each Sunday morning. Come to The Parlor between services for fellowship and to learn more about this ministry.



BIBLE STUDY Monday Night Bible Study resumes **January 16**. Facilitated by Les Buttolph, the study group meets in The Parlor at 7 pm. Join us!

Serving in Love!

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for all the pajamas and books you donated. Together, our church raised 50 pairs of pajamas and 52 books! We're so glad that lots of less fortunate kids will get a nice Christmas present this year. Thanks again! Love, The 3rd, 4th, and 5th Grade Challenge Classes at the Brecksville Broadview Heights Schools

The Missions Committee would like to offer a word of thanks to all those who helped with this year's Adopt a Family Program. Thanks to the generosity of many, three boys and a girl will enjoy a Christmas that might have otherwise been very lean. All items requested by the family were addressed and a timely delivery made to the Brecksville Department of Human Services.

Thank you, thank you, thank you from the Brecksville United Methodist Women, Greater Cleveland Church Women United, and Domestic Abuse and Child Advocacy. Your generous out pouring of gifts was over-whelming and heart-warming. We are truly filled with the spirit!

Thank You!
THANK YOU!

**Hat and Mitten
Tree Totals**
112 Sets of Gloves and Mittens
58 Hats
20 Scarves
10 Teddy Bears
Assorted Toiletries
**For the Parma Heights
Food Pantry**

Because of the great success of this year's cherry cobbler and pie sales at Fair on the Square and other fundraisers, the UMW has been able to meet their 2011 mission fund goals AND have purchased twenty round table clothsten pink and ten beige....from L-Nique. Thank you to everyone who supported UMW fund raising projects throughout the year!

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.

Community Breakfast



Come on down for a winter warm up with your family and friends! BUMC will open the doors on January 28 from 7 – 10 am for a *Southern Cookin' Full - Hot - Homestyle Community Breakfast* hosted by the Evangelism Committee. Tell your neighbors to join BUMC in living out the mission statement of Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors. Eggs, bacon, sausage, grits and potatoes along with juices and coffee will be served. Cost is free, but donations will be accepted. Don't miss it!



MILESTONES

News of the Fellowship

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

On Monday December 12 Nell and I were doing some unpacking (can you believe?), when we thought we heard the angels singing. We opened the front door and indeed it was the angels of BUMC choir and friends including Clark and Kathy Stein, who were singing Christmas carols, their faces beaming. What a joy! They came in and we sang more carols together. We were so moved that I had to struggle to keep tears from flowing. They gave us a package to open. It was one of Les Buttolph's wonderful clocks made from the communion rail, pew supports, the pulpit which held my sermon notes, and upon which I leaned forward when I made a point. The clock chimes on every quarter hour, reminding us of Brecksville Church every time. Few ministers are so blessed to serve such a loving congregation.

Thank you all so very much,
Nell & Tom Taylor

Dear Church Family,

Sandy and I both thank the many members of our congregation who supported us with prayer, cards and hugs at the time of our mothers' deaths in October and November, and the memorial service in December. It means a lot to us to know we are part of such a caring and thoughtful community.

With love to all,
Janet Kleckner



Kevin	Schultz	01/01	Lois	Moston	01/16
Katherine	Cline	01/02	Aundrea	Dumot	01/17
Susan	Loughner	01/02	Eliot	Slifcak	01/17
Elizabeth	Bellingham	01/03	Kim	Johnson	01/18
Michael	Patrick	01/03	Fred	Loeffler	01/18
Michelle	Shively	01/03	Ellen	Martin	01/18
Emily	Vincent	01/03	Jennifer	Schneider	01/18
Beryl	Burkle	01/04	Jessica	Zawada	01/18
Donna	Sibits	01/04	Nathan	Bender	01/20
Kaya	Roberts	01/05	Kaitlyn	Ellis	01/20
Nathan	Machesky	01/06	Brian	Meek	01/20
Claudia	Monnett	01/06	Jeanne	Ross	01/20
Margie	Benedict	01/07	Daniel	Auble	01/21
Cole	Mihalich	01/09	Patricia	Gordon	01/21
David	Vastartis	01/09	Robert	Nelson	01/22
James	Vastartis	01/09	Jaclyn	Hollo	01/23
Nathaniel	Hulten	01/10	Emily	Loughner	01/24
Geraldine	McMaster	01/11	Robert	Lundholm	01/24
Marc	Vincent	01/11	Catherine	Servey	01/24
Robert	Carson	01/12	Colin	Crouch	01/25
Shelly	Meek	01/12	Katherine	Hurder	01/25
Jennifer	Hoffman	01/13	Susan	Hastings	01/26
Diana	Warth	01/13	Nicholas	Campbell	01/28
Steven	Chen	01/14	Kimberly	Cave	01/28
Madelyn	McBride	01/14	Donna	Culley	01/28
Joy	Fenton	01/15	Susan	Monseau	01/28
J. Scott	Ford	01/15	Jill	Magistro	01/30
Donna	Houston	01/15	Donald	Salsbury	01/30
Marianne	Nolan	01/15	Kathy	Goebel	01/31
Sam	Papp	01/15	DJ	Magee	01/31



Christmas Parade, **George Gee** assisting churchgoers in our parking lot ministry, or **Marisol Wylie** beautifying the church with her artistic talents. We are thankful for each of you!

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 hear **Mallory Krolikowski** sharing beautiful music, **Catherine Vastartis** and the **Evangelism Committee** welcoming everyone to our church after the Brecksville

Serving Looking for ways to "Serve in Love" ?



OTHERS

Then come to the Volunteer/Mission Fair on Sunday, January 8 from 9:30 to 1PM. We have representatives from many organizations that are excited to offer many opportunities for all ages to volunteer. If you are unable to commit to volunteering, then simply come and learn more about the organizations that serve our community.

Council on Ministries

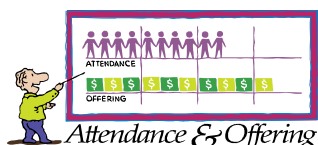
Missions Giving for 2011

Our church donates generously to mission programs through our Conference Apportionment, which includes donations from individuals towards hunger programs, UMCOR, as well as specific areas like the Haiti and Japan relief efforts. This past year, the Missions budget allocation was \$7500. Here is how that money was spent:

Brooklyn Memorial/Pearl Rd Church	
community outreach dinners	\$ 431
Russian Orphanage Missionary support	\$1 000
Nothing But Nets	\$ 250
Kairos Prison Ministry	\$ 819
Berea Children's Home	\$1 000
West Side Ecumenical Ministry	\$1 000
Hunger Network	\$ 500
Cleveland Foodbank	\$ 500
Wesleyan Senior Living	\$1 000
Cornerstone of Hope	\$ 500
UMCOR	\$ 500
Total	\$7 500



It's CHILI TIME! January 21 is the date for this year's UMM Annual Chili Cook Off! Don't miss this opportunity to enjoy some tasty chili or to share your favorite recipe! Don't miss it! Sign up in the Parlor!



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
November 27	192	n/a	95	\$7,012
December 4	176	136	107	\$14,516
December 11	185	164	93	\$11,015
December 18	247	91	160	\$14,494

CAREER CLOTHING DRIVE



The Parma Heights Food Pantry sets aside an area for clothing for those going on job interviews or starting a new job. As you are cleaning out your closets this month, why not donate to this effort? From January 8 through January 22, bring your gently used work clothes to the Fellowship Hall Stage for our BUMC Career Clothing Drive! At the conclusion of the drive, we'll deliver your donations to the Food Pantry to help those getting a fresh start in the new year!



2011 Paper Recycling

A year ago, we started weighing our paper each time we took it for recycling. Those old bulletins, office paper, and catalogs really add up! In the course of one year, we recycled 1353.5 pounds of paper, saving the equivalent of 8.5 mature trees or 3500 gallons of water or 1.5 cubic yards of landfill space or 1 barrel of oil or 2050 kilowatt-hours of electricity! Thank you for helping us be good stewards of God's resources by putting paper into the blue bins at the church!

*The earth is the LORD's,
and everything in it, the world,
and all who live in it;
Psalm 24:1*



United
Methodist
Women

**There's no
UMW Meeting
in January.**

NEW CLASSES BEGIN JAN. 16

*Sign up at church, online or
by calling the church office*

440-526-8938



Book Study

The Starfish and The Spider

by Rod Beckstrom and Ori Brafman

Facilitated by Mike Kubek and Les Buttolph

If you cut off a spider's head, it dies; but if you cut off a starfish's leg, it grows a new one, and that leg can grow into an entirely new starfish. Traditional top down organizations are like spiders, but now starfish organizations are changing the face of business and the world. What's the hidden power behind the success of Wikipedia, Craigslist, and Skype? What do eBay and General Electric have in common with the abolitionist and women's rights movements? What fundamental choice put General Motors and Toyota on vastly different paths? How do these concepts apply to our lives as Christians? How can these principles enhance our relationship with God and increase the health of our church?

This class will explore the qualities of starfish organizations, why they are successful, and what vulnerabilities could severely weaken or cripple them. The goal of the class is to empower the group to recognize the importance of every member of the church as a whole, and recognize how each one of us is responsible for its success.



Video Class, Drop Ins Welcome

"Chariots of Fire"

Facilitated by Bob Carson & Matt Auble

'He that honors me, I will honor.' 1 Samuel 2:30

Chariots of Fire is a 1981 Academy award winning British film that tells the fact-based story of two athletes in the 1924 Olympics: Eric Liddell, a devout Scottish Christian who runs for the glory of God, and Harold Abrahams, an English Jew who runs to overcome prejudice. It was nominated for seven Academy Awards and won four, including Best Picture. Join us as we watch the movie and discuss whether the ideals of Eric Liddell are still relevant today. Can we live in modern society and honor God in all that we do?



Bible Study

The Essential 100: A Bible Reading Plan

Facilitated by Jenny Gee

Have you thought about making a New Year's Resolution this year? Often when we do we immediately plan on making some health adjustments; whether through improved diet, more exercise or better rest. What about your spiritual health? Have you considered resolving to improve your meditative or prayer life?

Join me as we embark on a journey through the Bible. We will make our way through a carefully selected list of short Bible passages – 50 from the Old Testament and 50 from the New Testament. Most are about 1 or 2 chapters in length, just the right amount for a busy person to read in a few minutes. The readings cover all major types of biblical writing, including the History Books, Poetry, Wisdom, the Prophets, the Gospels, Acts, the Epistles and Revelation.

Whether you are new to reading the Bible or if you have been reading it for years, you will find this challenge a great way to get an overview of the Bible's message.

Music in the Valley

*A benefit event in support of the concert/recital series at
Brecksville United Methodist Church*

You are invited to a formal evening
aboard the Cuyahoga Valley Scenic Railroad
(A great idea for Valentine's Day!!)

Saturday, February 11, 2012

7:00 – 10:00 o'clock pm

Tickets will be available after both hours of worship on
Sunday mornings in January.

Or you may reserve your tickets by calling the main
church office at 440.526.8938.

Tickets are \$75 per person and include...

- * Heavy hors d'oeuvre dinner buffet
- * Open bar
- * Gourmet dessert selection
- * Silent auction items
- * Door prizes
- * Complimentary in-home babysitting
(available by request)



Our privately chartered train will depart at 7:00pm
from the Brecksville Station located at Station Road.

Space is limited! We truly hope you will join us!

Particular physical needs can be accommodated.

Please alert the office when you make your reservation.

January 2012

Happy New Year ♡ *Happy New Year* ♡ *Happy New Year*

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 10 Worship 	2 Happy New Year! Church Offices Closed	3 11 Staff Meeting and UMW Staff Appreciation Luncheon 7 Knitting Grp	4 6:30 Dawnbrkr	5	6 7 Emmaus 9 Men's Bible Study	7
8 8:45 Worship 9:30 Mission Fair 11:15 Worship 2 Hiking Club	9	10 11 Staff Mtg 7 Ad Board 8 Super Tues. Committee Mtgs	11 6:30 Dawnbrkr	12 9:30 Asbury Bremeth 6:15 Bells	13 7 Emmaus 9 Men's Bible Study	14 10 Taking Down the Greens
15 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hr 11:15 Worship	16 7 Bible Study	17 9:30 Staff Mtg 7 Knitting Grp 7:30 Finance 7:30 Trustees	18 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:30 CMAP 7 SPR	19 10 History Grp 6:15 Bells 6:15 HS Ensem 7:30 Choir	20 7 Emmaus 9 Men's Bible Study 	21 
22 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hr 11:15 Worship	23 7 Bible Study	24 9:30 Staff Mtg	25 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:30 CMAP	26 6:15 Bells 6:15 HS Ensem 7:30 Choir	27 7 Emmaus 9 Men's Bible Study 9:30 UWM Board Mtg	28 7 Community Breakfast
29 8:45 Worship 10 Education Hr 11:15 Worship	30 7 Bible Study	31 9:30 Staff Mtg	<p align="center"><i>Come worship with us!</i></p> <p>Jan. 1: Isaiah 60:1-6, Ephesians 3:1-12, "Surprising Delivery"</p> <p>Jan. 8: Acts 19:1-7, Mark 1:4-11, "Chosen"</p> <p>Jan. 15: 1 Samuel 3:1-10, John 1:35-51, "Come and See"</p> <p>Jan. 22: Matthew 22:34-40, Acts 17:16-34, "Deck Chairs&Clouds"</p> <p>Jan. 29: Deuteronomy 18:15-20, Mark 1:21-28, "Center of Authority"</p>			

For the most current information, click the "general calendar" link on our website at www.brecksvilleumc.com

Epiphany Reflections

By Safiyah Fosua

Many of us were introduced to Epiphany through the familiar silhouetted-image of Three Wise Men bearing gifts as they followed the Great Star by night. In some cultures, Epiphany is known as the *Day of the Kings* (*Día de los Reyes*). It is also known as Twelfth Day or Twelfth Night, reflecting an old custom of giving a gift for each of the days from December 25 to January 6 for the 12 days of Christmas. The day has special meaning for a number of reasons. Several branches of Christianity celebrate the birth of the Christ Child on January 6 or January 7.

The word *epiphany* means *appearance* or *manifestation*. Popular usage likens *epiphany* to words such as *eureka* or *aha!* Use of this word by some English speakers conjures images of having a light bulb turned on, or of being able to see something that was once hidden from view. The texts for the Sundays after the Epiphany dramatize the many ways that we people came to understand who Jesus was, through his baptism, the miracle at the wedding, or through that bodacious declaration in his hometown synagogue! But, this ever-widening circle of revelation began 'outside the circle' of Judaism, so to speak, with the Magi.

Who were the Magi?

Many versions of the Bible refer to them as the *Wise Men*. We often forget that these Magi or Wise Men were non-Jews. Older sources suggest that they were priestly descendants of one of the tribes of the Medes known for their knowledge of the stars (astronomy) and their ability to interpret dreams.

What can we learn from the Wise Men?

First, the Wise Men began their journey because of their beliefs. It was a common belief that when a world leader like a king was born that a special stellar phenomenon would appear in the sky. The Magi saw something that convinced them that they had seen the long-awaited sign. Historians tell us that the Jews, the Romans, and the Persians were all watching the skies about that time, looking for signs of the birth of an extraordinary king. A few years before, around 11 BC, Halley's Comet had been seen. There were other stellar phenomena, including a bright star, Sirius, which appeared brightly in the daytime instead of at night. The Wise Men saw the star and began their journey.

May God give us all inspiration for this year's journey.

Second, the Wise Men were willing to follow what they had seen into unknown territory.

Their journey took them outside their country and their comfort zone. The Wise Men risked the consequences of disobeying Herod, who was known to behave as a madman when provoked and returned to their country by another way.

The Christian journey is often an off-road excursion.

Third, the Wise Men were committed to the journey -- wherever the star might lead.

The Wise Men set out to find a newborn King by following a star and ended up in finding a baby born to young, relatively poor parents! Not exactly what they expected and not exactly what befit their dignity as priests.

In this coming year, may we look to heaven for guidance and comfort and may we accept God's blessings in whatever forms we find them, just as the Wise Men accepted that their long, expensive journey led them to a baby born to young, inexperienced parents who lived on the poor side of town.

Finally, the Wise Men brought gifts.

They did the thing that people in the East or in Africa or in India would do when visiting royalty. They brought gifts.

- * Gold was the kind of gift that you brought to a king.
- * Frankincense was the kind of gift that you would bring to a priest.
- * Myrrh was given to someone who was about to die.

On This Twelfth Day, or Three Kings Day, otherwise known as Epiphany, think of the gift that you will offer to God in the coming year. The gift of time? The gift of your talents? Your service in the community? Your witness and testimony? The gift of undying love and devotion?

Their greatest gift comes to us in the form of a realization. The Wise Men were the first Gentiles to recognize that Jesus belongs to everyone. Good news is for everyone, not just a select few.

*Star of wonder, Star of light
Star with royal beauty bright
Westward leading, Still proceeding
Guide us to thy perfect light. Amen.*