

# The Good Word

The Newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church

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

March Issue : Published February 25, 2011

## FAIR TRADE YOUR supermarket



While the Fair Trade movement is gaining steam nationwide, most supermarkets in our area carry only a few Fair Trade products on their shelves. Together, we can put Fair Trade products within reach right here in Brecksville and Broadview Heights. By increasing access and demand for Fair Trade products here, we are supporting producers and their families in the developing world..

**What to Do:** There are many actions that you can take to Fair Trade Your Supermarket. First, take stock of Fair Trade products in your supermarket—look for coffee, tea, chocolate, rice, sugar, honey, wine, fresh fruit, and olive oil. If you find Fair Trade options, buy them and thank the store for offering them. Then, you can encourage the store to stock more Fair Trade products by talking to the store manager as a loyal customer, providing comment cards to your local store and the national headquarters. Make sure you let the store know that Fair Trade is good for business and good for people the world over!

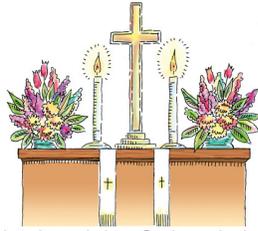
**What to Say:** When talking to your store manager you should be prepared to explain What , Why , and How , of Fair Trade. Here's what you should know!

**What is Fair Trade?** Fair Trade is a system of exchange that honors producers, communities, consumers, and the environment. Fair Trade helps ensure that farmers and artisans throughout the developing world receive a fair price for their products, have direct involvement in the marketplace, and uphold environmental and labor rights standards. The system builds real and lasting relationships between producers in developing countries and businesses and consumers around the world.

### Why should I stock Fair Trade?

- ◆ There is a growing movement for Fair Trade here in the US, and growing consumer demand. Fair Trade sales have grown from nothing to \$1 billion over the past few years. More and more consumers are asking for Fair Trade.
- ◆ In the conventional marketplace, producers in poor countries can receive less than the cost of production for their goods, driving them into debt and continuing the cycle of poverty in marginalized communities. Fair Trade ensures the health and well-being of workers, communities, and the environment and allows for producers to have a better quality of life and a better future. How does Fair Trade ensure this?
- ◆ Fair Trade guarantees producers in the developing world a fair and stable price for their product so that they can meet their living needs.
- ◆ Fair Trade promotes long-term trading relations and gives farmers the knowledge and skills for operating in the global economy
- ◆ When they're paid a living wage, farmers earn enough to invest in local community development—providing education, health care, and more to their communities.
- ◆ Fair Trade producers are encouraged to use environmentally sustainable production methods, including organic farming (no harmful chemicals) crop rotation, composting, water conservation and reforestation.

(Continued on page 7)



### Worship Schedule

8:45 First Service

10:00 Education hour

11:15 Second Service

Wednesdays at 7 pm Prayer Service

## Our Staff

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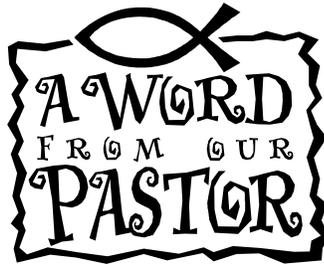
**Jeff and Scott Hastings**

Organist, **Chris Toth**

[cjtonline@hotmail.com](mailto:cjtonline@hotmail.com)

**The Good Word** is published monthly by **Brecksville United Methodist Church** 65 Public Square, Brecksville, OH 44141. Archived copies available on line: [www.brecksvilleumc.com](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com).

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



## Life as a DSD

*Comments from Rev. Karen Oehl*

A District Superintendent Designate. That's what I am now. A DSD, to folks who like that kind of thing, which the United Methodist Church does. So what does a DSD do? Since I am still Senior Pastor here at Brecksville UMC, you have a right to know where I am when I am not here, which will be on a regular basis from now until the end of June.

First, I am attending Cabinet meetings. The Cabinet is made up of all 10 District Superintendents, the Bishop's Administrative Assistant, and the Bishop. This is a busy season for the Cabinet, so they are meeting every other week, for 2 or 3 days at a time. The main work at this time of year is appointment making. Brecksville has already gone through the process. A church is open because of a pastor retiring or moving. The Cabinet hears information about that church shared by the District Superintendent. Information from our various church reports is available, plus the descriptions prepared by a Staff Parish Relations Committee about what the church is looking for in a pastor. The Cabinet considers all of this alongside the clergy in the conference, considering who is available or ready for a move, and what their skills are. After much discussion and prayer, a match is made, and new pastors are introduced to the local church SPRC. My role right now is simply to observe the process and learn—a lot!

Meanwhile, on some of the days while I am in North Canton, which is where we meet in the East Ohio Conference offices, Jim Winkler and I are spending time with other Conference staff to receive further orientation and training. For example, we have met with members of the treasurer's staff, and Paul White, who oversees much of the conference program activities, from youth to camps and more. The Bishop's Administrative Assistant, Gary George, is shepherding us through the process and answering a lot of our questions, as well.

I have been to visit the Mid-Ohio District twice now. I have had the chance to tour the parsonage, and had an introduction with the Superintendency Committee, which is a bit like our SPRC, at the District office in Mansfield. On that occasion I also got to meet the office staff. In the near future I will spend a day on a driving tour of the district. I will probably shadow the current DS for some district meetings, and will attend the spring District Conference in April.

District Superintendents have various other duties. For example, I will spend a day with a few others at the Methodist Theological School in Ohio in interviews with students. We are always looking to encourage new clergy!

I am so thankful for the wonderful staff here at Brecksville UMC, and Pastor Libby, who are on hand to care for you in so many ways. This is an exciting but challenging time for our church and the Church in the world. Pray ceaselessly for the body of Christ of which we are a part.

*Pastor Karen*

# Lent



## March 9 is Ash Wednesday



ASH  
WEDNESDAY

Begin the season of Lent with worship and prayer. There will be worship services at 7:30 am in the Chapel and 7:30 pm in the Sanctuary. This simple service will include prayer, music, ashes, and communion. The regular monthly Taizé service will still be held in the Chapel at 7:00.

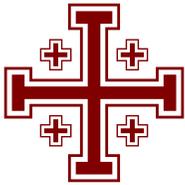
## Walk The Labyrinth



You may also come in during the course of the day Ash Wednesday to walk the Labyrinth in Fellowship Hall. It will be set up from 6:30 am until 9:30 pm. This is an ancient tool of meditation and prayer. Our floor labyrinth uses the same design as the one built into the floor of Chartres Cathedral in France. If you have never used the Labyrinth, there are introductory materials on hand to help you get the most out of the experience.

## Covenant Groups

*With a Little Help From My Friends*



It happens every year in Lent. On Ash Wednesday we make a decision to give up something for Lent, or engage in more time of prayer or study. But as the weeks go by, the world creeps back in, demanding our time and attention. It is hard to stay focused on the spiritual growth we are looking for.

This is similar to what happens when we make other commitments in life. Maybe at some time you have made a commitment to exercise, spend more time with family, or learn a new language. All of these require discipline and attention. Yet on our own we lose steam. Having friends to encourage us and make the journey with us helps us to meet our goals.

You are invited to become part of a Covenant Group this year during the season of Lent. This small group of friends will meet weekly to encourage each other in whatever goals they have chosen to grow spiritually. Along the way you'll learn a bit more about John Wesley and the early Methodist Societies and classes, which were covenant groups. You can choose to read more of the Bible, or pick a book from a reading list. The book cart in the Narthex will be stocked with Lenten study options. Your group might covenant to fast or give up something together, or participate in a service activity. The possibilities are many.

Sign ups are available now at the church and online. You can gather a group and sign up together, or pick a time and see who else is available at that time. See Rev. Oehl if you have any questions.



## HIGH SCHOOL

### 3/13 EPIC Special Event

**Laser Tag!!** 4pm-6:00pm

RSVP by March 9<sup>th</sup>. Cost is \$20 and covers 2 Laser Tag games and supper. We will need some parents to drive. Medical forms required for each participant. RSVP by Wed. March 9<sup>th</sup>.

### 3/25-26 High School Lock-In

7pm Friday to 1pm Saturday



#### "The Tornado":

Doesn't life sometimes feel like a tornado?

Join your High school friends for a lock-in that looks at how you can fight your way through the tornado of life safely! Cost

\$10. RSVP's are needed by March 23<sup>rd</sup>. We will meet in Fellowship Hall at 7pm on Friday. Bring sleeping bag, pillow, overnight gear and a snack to share! Friends are welcome, but we need a church medical form for each participant. **Parents** we will need help during and overnight at the lock-in. Let me know ASAP if you can help even for a part of the lock-in.

### 3/27 NO EPIC --- Spring Break!!!!

## MIDDLE SCHOOL

### 3/6 Movie & Pizza

4:30-6:30pm—Youth Room

Friends are welcome to this pizza party-movie day! Confirmation participants can just stay because it directly follows. Just be sure to get your homework done on Friday. Bring \$5 for pizza and if you have a favorite snack feel free to bring that to share.

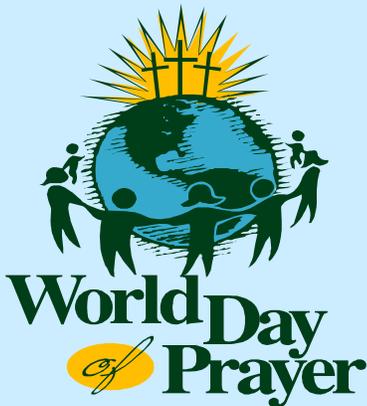
### 3/6, 13, 20: Confirmation Class

6:30-8pm



## Sock & Underwear Drive

As snowflakes continue to FALL, the needs of children's agencies continue to RISE. We can help! Look for a BLUE SACK donning snowflakes in the p\Parlor. It's waiting for donations of socks and underwear for the Berea Children's Home. ANY SIZES (even 3X) and ANY COLORS are welcome. Please consider donating a pair or two for children in need. It'll be like Christmas in February/March for them! - *The Missions Committee*



The Parma Southwest District of Church Women United is offering a program written by the women of Chile for World Day of Prayer:

Friday, March 4

### St. Matthew's Episcopal Church

9549 Highland Drive

Corner of Highland Drive and  
Valley Parkway

Brecksville, OH 44141

Continental Breakfast at 9:30

Program at 10 am

A free will offering will be accepted for CWU following the program.

Questions? Call Nancy Knowlton at  
440-838-4341.

# Uniquely Called

-Stephanie Holmes 1/16/11

On Youth Sunday, several young people spoke on the topic "Uniquely Called". Here's one of them!

Last year, there was a boy in my class who had lots of health problems. He was absent from school a lot. One day, a few kids that I've known for a long time were making fun of him. They were specifically making fun of what he was wearing. I told the kids that only cool people wore those clothes, and that maybe they weren't cool enough. I also told them that they were not nearly as mature as the boy they were making fun of.

I felt good about standing up for him. It was sort of hard to stand up for him, because the kids who were teasing him were the kind of kids who make fun of everyone and everything. Maybe if I stood up for him, they would make fun of me to. But I felt it was the right thing to do. God called me in that little way to do the right thing, and God gave me the courage to stand up for him.

Ever since I was a kid, I always liked to sing. When I was three, I really liked to watch the musical *Cats* on DVD. My dad got all the songs on a tape, and I memorized every song. I would walk around the house just singing all the music from *Cats*! I used to go over to my grandma's house a lot, and my grandma had big sound system. She would put on the music from *Cats*, and I would sing along all day. Even as I've gotten older, I have always dreamed of being a singer and admired people who are singers. In every church or school production, I would have a solo or a duet. I just really love to sing!

A few years ago, I developed bad case of performance anxiety. I would get up onstage, and I would feel like I was about to fall down. When I get in front of people, I get a feeling of insecurity, as though I'm standing on a little tiny platform and it might not be enough to hold me up. I had always felt God was calling me to use my singing talent to show his love, and I thought, "Well I can't do it if I have this performance anxiety getting in my way."

Over the past few years, I have continued to sing anyway. When I get onstage, I still get nervous for a couple of minutes, but I almost always start to feel better. Obviously, God is giving me the courage to get up in front of people even when I'm terrified of people seeing me get nervous. God is giving me the courage to overcome my fear, a little at a time, so I can continue to use singing to show his love.

A long time ago in Worship Arts we had to write down prayers we wanted to tell God. I wrote down that I wanted to find a cure for lupus, because my mom has lupus. I go to Lupus Walks and fundraisers with her. Maybe God is calling me to help my mom and other people who have lupus.

I feel called to care for younger children. I have already responded to that call by babysitting in the crib and toddler room and helping out at Vacation Bible School. God gives me the courage to answer the call to care for young children. I don't know where it will take me, but I know it will take me somewhere that God is leading me.

So maybe God is trying to tell all of us to spread his love in ways that we never expected. God can call you to do anything, no matter how big or small. And, God will give you the courage to follow that call.



**United Methodist Women**  
FAITH · HOPE · LOVE IN ACTION

The theme for UMW this year is *Faith, Hope, Love in Action*. Please mark your calendar for the following dates:

- ◆ **Thursday, March 3:** Our UMW meeting will feature Matt Williams from Cornerstone of Hope. Come join us for a continental breakfast and fellowship starting at 9:30 in the parlor. The program starts at 10:00.
- ◆ **Sunday, March 6:** Soup Sunday. Order forms available in this issue, on the church website, and at church.
- ◆ **Tuesday, April 12:** Plan to dine in or take out from Creekside Restaurant. UMW will receive 20% for our mission fund when you present our fundraising flyer. Get your copy in the next Good Word or online.

## UMW Eyeglass Project



The Eye- glasses container from the downstairs hall has been moved to the centralized collection location in the downstairs cloakroom. BUMC has been very generous in donating glasses to this project. Your donation goes to EyeCare International which provides vision care to the underserved population of El

Salvador. It was founded by Dr. William Brinker in 1995 to bring ophthalmology, optometry, and optical services to areas of El Salvador outside of metropolitan centers. Typically, 5,000-7,000 patients travel to the annual two-week clinic to have their vision checked. They may receive eyeglasses or undergo surgery for cataracts or pterygium removal. Approximately 20 artificial eyes are fitted each year. Each patient is asked to donate one dollar (if they can afford it). However, there are no fees for eyeglasses, surgery, or medications.

Each year a group of 40-50 volunteers from Northeast Ohio, other states and Canada pay for their room and board and airfare to spend two weeks caring for Salvadorans who might have no other opportunity to receive vision care. Volunteers include not only eye care professionals, but others with varied backgrounds who want to help the underserved.

**One pair of glasses may not change the whole world but it will change that person's world forever.** Thank you so much for your support. Please continue to donate to this worthy cause.

## Interfaith Passover Seder April 5



Anshe Chesed Fairmount Temple holds a wonderful introduction to a Passover Seder each year and invites participants from faith communities all over the metropolitan area. Many of our confirmation students and mentors have taken advantage of this opportunity each year. This year's program is on Tuesday, April 5, from 7:00-8:30 pm. Craig

Czarnota has reserved 20 places for people from Brecksville UMC. The evening includes music, telling the Passover story, explanations of customs, and a small sampling of food. (This does not replace dinner!) When the program is over, you can tour the building and Judaica collection. Please contact Craig Czarnota as soon as possible if you are interested in attending.



The children and youth of Brecksville United Methodist Church were challenged this year to raise enough money to fund the digging of a well in Camphor Mission Liberia. Through Vacation Bible School and Sunday morning offerings we made progress toward the goal of \$1800.

Middle School and High School youth asked for pledges to their Rock-a-thon on December 3, 2010. Because of your generous support and the youth's rock-ability the wish for a well has become a reality!!! Thirty one youth collected almost \$2,000 in that one single evening!

The pledges from the Rock-a-thon and the VBS and Sunday morning children's offering dollars were pooled. We were able to send Janet Kleckner off to Liberia with \$3,200. \$1800 will go to the installation of a fresh water well, with the remaining \$1400 earmarked for improving the school and library inside the Camphor Mission.

Janet writes from Africa, "The villagers are so happy to have a source of cleaner water, and send their love and thanks to the youth in Brecksville and our entire congregation."



Limber up those legs! April 30 is the 2011 "Race at the Rock" to benefit the children and adults of Flat Rock Homes Care Center and Community Services in Flat Rock, Ohio. Walkers and runners are welcome! Will BUMC take home the Bishop's Cup again this year? Want to participate? Contact Chris Oehl, Jeff Fessler, or Mark Spencer. Applications will be available in the Church Office.



# MILESTONES

News of the Fellowship

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

Our own Abigail Smith will represent Brecksville-Broadview Heights High School at this year's Hugh O'Brien Youth Foundation Leadership Seminar, sponsored by the Brecksville Kiwanis Club. Congratulations, Abby!

Birthday wishes to Miriam Buttolph, who celebrated her 90th birthday on February 25.

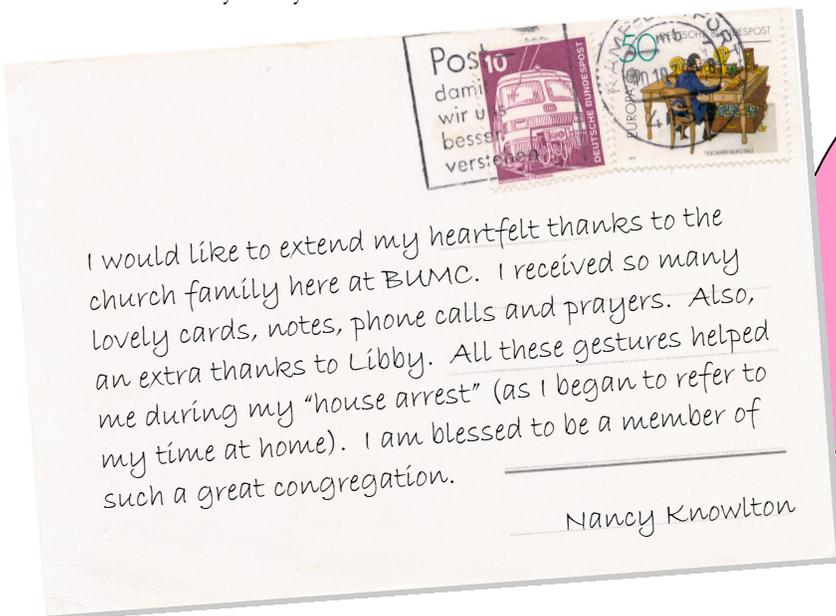
Ben and Alene Yeater welcomed a daughter, Ashlyn Elyse, into the world before the sun rose on February 3, bringing great warmth to a cold winter day!

On Sunday, February 6, 2011, Emma Sak from Brownie Troop 573 was recognized with the Family of God Award by the Girl Scouts.

Congratulations to Courtney Drescher, who will be participating in an internship with Group Work Camps this summer. She joins Alex Vastartis and Jenny Scheufler who will be working with Group for their second summer. It's wonderful to see our youth in outreach ministry this year!

# MARCH Birthdays

Brianna	Diver	03/01	Daniel	Dubin	03/15
John	Falko	03/01	Samuel	Eberhardt	03/16
Edith	Coman	03/02	Jennifer	Scheufler	03/16
Mary	Kotnik	03/02	Joann	Fox	03/17
Eileen	Yates	03/02	Patricia	Grossmyer	03/17
Lillian	Johnson	03/03	Carly	Johnson	03/17
Susan	Dietrich	03/04	Robert	Hudacek	03/18
Emily	Schultz	03/04	David	Sibits	03/18
Phyllis	Phillips	03/05	Jack	Monnin	03/19
Tiffany	Warth	03/05	Seth	Johnson	03/20
Kurt	Campbell	03/06	Kristen	Kubek	03/20
Anne	Christensen	03/06	David	Podolny	03/24
Caitlin	Drescher	03/06	Philip	Storey	03/24
Donald	Burkle	03/07	Elizabeth	Fredrick	03/25
Megan	White	03/07	Stacie	Memmer	03/25
Ruth Ann	Bilek	03/08	Susan Parry	Whelchel	03/25
Matthew	Auble	03/09	Mallory	Krolikowski	03/26
Clifford	Thielman	03/09	Robin	Wilson	03/26
George	Gee	03/10	Joseph	Holmes	03/27
Michael	Kubek	03/10	Carol	Kubicek	03/27
Robert	Bloch	03/11	Judith	Spraggins	03/28
Janet	James	03/12	Jean	Johns	03/29
Tyler	Hulten	03/13	Kimberly	Rybak	03/30
Sydney	Hudacek	03/14	Hannah	Shively	03/30
Lisa	Sibits	03/14	Madeline	Piorkowski	03/31
Lindsay	Dorman	03/15	Doris	Wadsworth	03/31



Thank you for your blood drive on February 8, 2011. You made it possible for the American Red Cross to make available 22 pints of blood for needed patient care. You inspired 27 people to donate blood in response to your drive goal of 29... Precious lives have been saved or sustained as a direct result... On behalf of the patients whose lives you have touched, as well as their loved ones, we offer heartfelt gratitude.

Sincerely, Gretchen Kresge  
American Red Cross

# FAIR TRADE YOUR supermarket

(Continued from page 1)



Walk to  
**Emmaus**  
THE UPPER ROOM

## Why do you think that people will buy Fair Trade?

- ◆ As people are becoming more aware of Fair Trade and its benefits for producers in the developing world, many consumers are now seeking out Fair Trade products.
- ◆ Fair Trade is a win-win for producers and consumers. It gives consumers an opportunity to purchase quality products and stay true to their values.

**Is the quality good?** Fair Trade products are often higher quality than other products because the Fair Trade system provides incentives for farmers to improve the quality of their products. For example, most Fair Trade coffee is also single origin, which enhances the quality of the coffee. Fair Trade coffees consistently win awards for taste and quality.

**Isn't Fair Trade more expensive?** Most Fair Trade products like coffee, tea, and chocolate, are priced in the same range as other high-quality specialty food items, such as organic products. Also, because Fair Trade relationships are more direct than conventional trade, there are fewer points along the supply chain where a middleman will raise the price before passing it on and taking a large cut for themselves.

## How can I get it through my distributors?

- ◆ Many supermarket distributors offer Fair Trade products as part of the catalog of items supermarkets can choose to carry.
- ◆ UNFI (United Natural Foods) is the largest distributor of Fair Trade food products. If you already have a relationship with UNFI it will be easy to stock Fair Trade items in your store. Visit [www.unfi.com](http://www.unfi.com) for more information.
- ◆ TransFair USA is a third-party Fair Trade certifier in the United States. Its website, [www.TransFairUSA.org](http://www.TransFairUSA.org) can provide you with information about distributors in your area.
- ◆ In addition, many stores, especially smaller, local grocery store chains, have policies that allow them to order products directly from the manufacturer. The manager of your local store can check with senior management about this possibility and then they can approach the brands you requested directly.

◆ Jenny Gee, Director of Christian Education

***On the next two pages of the Good Word, you will find a postcard that you can print out and share with your grocer.***

*This article is part of a series appearing in the Good Word each month highlighting social justice issues and action that you can take to be a blessing to our brothers and sisters in Christ. This is not to be looked at as something to "make you feel guilty" but to give you the opportunity to let your voice be heard and to right some of the wrongs in our world.*

The Walk to Emmaus is an experience of Christian spiritual renewal. The Gospel of Luke chapter 24:13-35 relates the story of two disciples of Jesus who were going along the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus. As these two friends were walking together, they were joined by an unknown person who explained the scriptures as they walked. Toward the end of the days travel, they urged the stranger to eat with them. As the stranger took bread, blessed, broke and shared it with them, their eyes were opened and they recognized the risen Christ.

During a Walk to Emmaus, you will enjoy three days singing, learning, laughing, worshipping, sharing communion, reflecting, praying and participating in small groups. Discussions center around fifteen talks given by laity and clergy. These talks present the theme of God's grace and how that grace comes alive in the Christian community. You will experience God's grace through the prayers and acts of anonymous service offered by the Emmaus community.

The upcoming Men's Walk will be held April 7-10, 2011 and the Women's Walk will be held April 28-May 1, 2011.

For more information you may view a short video presentation about the Walk to Emmaus at [www.UpperRoom.org/Emmaus](http://www.UpperRoom.org/Emmaus) or contact Les and Cathy Buttolph, Chuck and Becky Gezze, or Craig Czarnota for more information.

February 25, 2011



YOUR SOURCE FOR FAIR TRADE SUPPLIERS SINCE 1994  
[www.FairTradeFederation.org](http://www.FairTradeFederation.org)



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[www.FairTradeFederation.org](http://www.FairTradeFederation.org)

Dear Store Manager:

I often shop at your store and would like to see more Fair Trade offered here.

Products sourced according to Fair Trade principles are of exceptional quality and available in a wide variety of categories, including coffee, clothing, accessories, food, home and garden, gifts, toys, and more.

Fair Trade creates sustainable, positive change for communities around the world by offering transparent relationships, paying promptly and fairly, supporting safe and empowering working conditions, respecting the environment, and more.

I support members of the Fair Trade Federation, businesses who have fully committed to these principles. More than a marketing gimmick, FTF members strive to only source their products under these Principles, empowering artisans and farmers to manage their own lives with dignity.

I encourage you to **visit [www.FairTradeFederation.org/members](http://www.FairTradeFederation.org/members)** and look for suppliers to include in your shop. I will gladly purchase their products.

Thank you,

---

A faithful customer

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Thank you,

---

A faithful customer

MMMMMMMMMMMM Good! That's what UMW homemade soup is!

Order yours today! (Return this form to the church office.)

UMW



March 6, 2011

Soup	Pint \$4.00	Quart \$8.00
Chicken Noodle		
Tomato Basil (vegetarian)		
Potato Soup		
Chili		

The soup will be sold in the Parlor and Fellowship Hall between services and after the 11:00 am service.

Preorders are encouraged.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Amount Due: \_\_\_\_\_

Proceeds benefit the many missions of the United Methodist Women here at Brecksville United Methodist Church.



## Saturday, March 5, 7:30 pm

**The BUMC Fine Arts Concert Series Presents, The Merling Trio:** Come enjoy an evening of music composed by Haydn, Piazzolla, Ravel, and Dumky.

The Cleveland *Plain Dealer* reviewer said, "The players shaped a grand interpretation, fluent in rhythm and rich in romantic feeling." The *Grand Rapids Press* has said, "The trio...delivered a standard of playing that is on par with some of the best known violin-cello-piano teams, captivating the audience through the immediacy and extraordinary sensitivity of its playing." The London *Musical Opinion* declared that the Merling Trio "made a powerful impression, with unabashed romanticism and finesse."

For more information about the group and to hear some of the trio's music visit the website [www.merlingtrio.com](http://www.merlingtrio.com)

*Concert is free and open to the public.*



Brecksville United Methodist Church

# Our Language About God

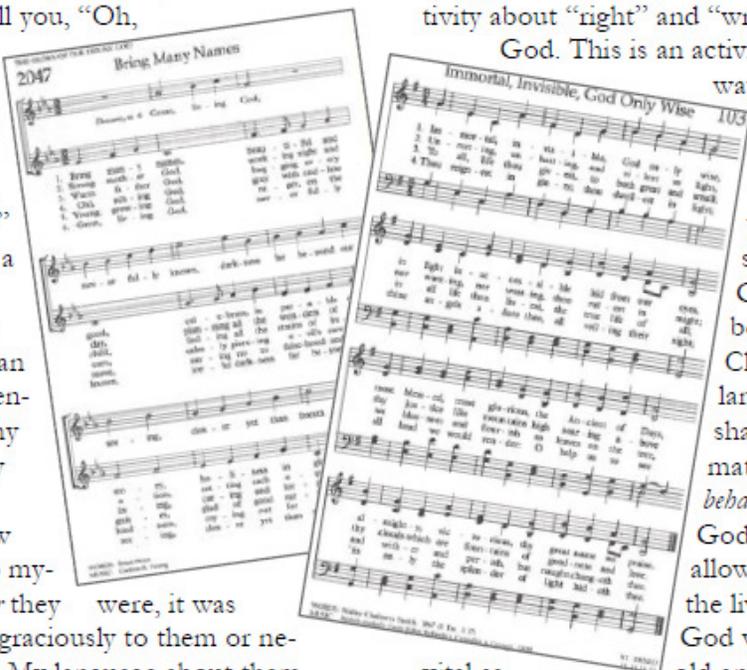
A Column of Ongoing Response to our Worship Surveys

Language matters. Have you ever prepared to meet a new person by asking a common acquaintance, “What is she (or he) like?” They might tell you, “Oh, she’s really nice,” or, “He’s hilarious; you’ll love him.” Sometimes, the response is less encouraging. “She’s a real taskmaster.” “Actually, he’s a little high on himself.” The language we use paints a picture, flattering or otherwise, that can alter how we interact with each other. I can remember as a child or a teenager being frustrated with my parents over a curfew or my allowance or having to do chores. After spending a few hours repeating endlessly to myself just how *mean* and *unfair* they were, it was almost impossible to speak graciously to them or negotiate the issue reasonably. My language about them, whether verbalized or not, ultimately shaped my behavior. I don’t think any of us have to think very hard to come up with copious examples of this principle, whether we are children, youth or adults. If we tell ourselves we’re unattractive, we feel increasingly unattractive. If we tell ourselves we have the discipline to focus on an upcoming exam or project at work, we are more likely to succeed. Language matters!

We could take this line of thinking in a few directions. Obviously, we should all work to be edifying in both our speech and our thoughts about others (and ourselves). We should also remember just how powerful it can be to use *positive* language to bring about change in our own habits and the habits of those around us. But what of our language about God? Does our language about God strive to capture all that God is and the many ways in which God loves and challenges us? Or does our language about God wedge God into the narrowness of our own thinking? Might the language we use cause us to expect only certain aspects of God’s character, instead of opening our hearts to the often surprising reality of God’s presence?

**Activity:** the language of God in hymnody and song. Over the next couple of weeks, take some time to compare and contrast two pieces of our Methodist hymnody. Examine UMH (hymnal) 103. Take time to consider each phrase and what it says about the nature of God. Close your eyes and visualize the image it paints for you. Then spend some time with FWS (Faith We Sing) 2047. Does

it conjure any different images of God? Are any of them foreign or surprising to you? *Please note:* this is not an activity about “right” and “wrong” ways of thinking about God. This is an activity to encourage different ways of thinking about God.



vital as that allows God to reach into the hearts of women and minorities, as a God who is as much female and Hispanic as male and Caucasian? Or do we place strict limitations on the nature and image of God?

As a congregation, we must continue to strive toward broader and more imaginative language about God. Our conscious effort to speak of the mothering heart of God *as well as* the fathering nature of God may open new doors into our spirits. Sharing words about the youth and vitality of God may invite the children and youth among us to experience God in a new and exciting way. Admitting aloud the mystery and enigmatic nature of God may release God from our narrow imaging and give us new freedom to experience God in a great and challenging way. In our church, as in thousands of churches elsewhere, this effort is often named as seeking to use gender-neutral language about God. But it’s much more than just being gender-neutral. It’s also being age-neutral, ethnicity-neutral and probably a few other neutrals as well.

Be courageous, people of God. Instead of feeling irked when a boatload of “He’s” get replaced in the music, or when a reading or song about “mothering God” strikes you as weird or too touchy-feely, allow your heart to be opened and moved by a new experience of God’s presence. We would all certainly concede that the reality of God is greater than our language could ever capture. One might suggest, then, that we simply make an effort to move in the right direction. Language matters, friends, so let’s use as much of it as we can!

~Joy Fenton, Director of Music

# MARCH 2011

Look for Calendar Updates on the Church Website!  
www.brecksvilleumc.com

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p><i>UMW Soup Sunday</i> ~ <i>Communion</i> ~ <i>Children's Worship Sunday</i></p>	 <p>New Church Directories will arrive in your mailbox this month!</p>	<p><i>1</i> 11 Staff Mtg</p>	<p><i>2</i> 6:30 Dawnbrks 3:15 Quest 4 CMAP 7 Prayer Svc</p>	<p><i>3</i> 9:30 UMW 3:30 Band 4:30 Children's Worship Rehearsal 5 Soul Quest 6:15 Handbells 6:15 HS Choir 7:30 Ch Choir</p>	<p><i>4</i> 7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p><i>5</i> 9 Chorister's Guild Festival 7:30 Merling Trio Concert</p> 
<p><i>6</i> 8:45 Worship 10 Ed. Hour 11:15 Worship 4:30 MS Movie 6:30 Confirmation Class</p>	<p><i>7</i> 7 Bible Study: Jesus in the Gospels</p>	<p><i>8 Super Tues</i> 9:30 Staff Mtg. 7 COM 7 Knitting 8 COE, Evangelism, Missions, Music Board, Worship</p>	<p><i>9</i>  ASH WEDNESDAY 6:30 Dawnbrks 7:30 Worship 3:15 Quest 4 CMAP 7 Taizé Service 7:30 Worship</p>	<p><i>10</i> 9:30 Asbury Bremeth Circle 3:30 Band 5 Soul Quest 6:15 Handbells 6:15 HS Choir 7:30 Ch Choir</p>	<p><i>11</i> 7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p><i>12</i> 8 Women's Emmaus Team Meetings</p> 
 <p><i>14</i> 7 Bible Study: Jesus in the Gospels</p>	<p><i>15</i> 9:30 Staff Mtg 7:30 Finance 7:30 Trustees</p>	<p><i>16</i> 6:30 Dawnbrks 3:15 Quest 4 CMAP 7 Prayer Svc 7 SPR</p>	<p><i>17</i> 3:30 Band 5 Soul Quest 6:15 Handbells 6:15 HS Choir 7:30 Ch Choir</p>	<p><i>18</i> 7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study</p>	<p><i>19</i> 8 Women's Emmaus Team Meetings</p>	
 <p><i>21</i> 7 Bible Study: Jesus in the Gospels</p>	<p><i>22</i> 9:30 Staff Mtg. 7 Knitting</p>	<p><i>23</i> 6:30 Dawnbrks 3:15 Quest 4 CMAP 7 Prayer Svc</p>	<p><i>24</i> 3:30 Band 5 Soul Quest 6:15 Handbells 6:15 HS Choir 7:30 Ch Choir</p>	<p><i>25</i>  7 Emmaus Reunion 9 Men's Bible Study 7 HS Lock In! </p>	<p><i>26</i>  7:30 Cleveland Food Bank 8 Women's Emmaus Team Meetings 6 Recital</p>	
 <p><i>28</i> 7 Bible Study: Jesus in the Gospels</p>	<p><i>29</i> 9:30 Staff Mtg.</p> 	<p><i>30</i> 6:30 Dawnbrks 7 Prayer Svc</p> 	<p><i>31</i> 6:15 Handbells 7:30 Ch Choir</p> 	<p><i>Upcoming Dates to Note:</i></p> <p>Sunday, April 17: CMAP Music and Passion Drama</p> <p>Sunday, May 1: Community Chorus Spring Concert</p> <p><i>More details coming soon!</i></p>		