

The Newsletter of Brecksville United Methodist Church

# The Good Word



**JANUARY ISSUE**

**DECEMBER 21, 2012**

**65 Public Square  
Brecksville, Ohio 44141**

**440-526-8938**

**Open Doors. Honest Worship. Determined Service.**



## FAITHinACTION

### BUMC MISSION MOMENT

#### *Santa Comes to the Native American Community*

Santa stopped in to visit the Native American Christmas party on December 16. As with most Christmas parties, the festivities started with a dinner. Food was provided by the American Indian Education Center (AIEC), private donations, and “pot-luck” dishes provided by the community itself. Diners were treated a wonderful buffet of fried chicken, beef, turkey, ham, salads, green beans, stuffing, fried bread, and of course, great desserts, all served by BUMC volunteers. The 432 attendees, including 240 children, definitely enjoyed the plentiful banquet.

Of course, Santa was the major attraction to the kids. The goal of the AIEC was to provide each child with one new toy, often the only new toy a child would receive for Christmas. This year was unusual because each child received **three** toys. Normally, the Marine Corps’ Toys for Tots provides toys for kids under 5 years old and community support provides the balance. This year, Brecksville UMC provided a Christmas Miracle. Footballs, soccer balls, jewelry kits and dolls were among the plentiful gifts that you so generously donated.

The Christmas Miracle, however, went beyond just the toys. We also provided 15 volunteers, adult and youth, who helped set up, serve food on the buffet line, and help Santa distribute age specific gifts to the kids. George and Jenny Gee, Kyle and InHye Allen, Jim and Judy McBride, and Les and Cathy Buttolph worked with our Youth – Bridget and Erin Gee, Maddy McBride, Dan Auble, Kristen Kubek, Josh Dietrich, and Jimmy Zawada. AIEC Director, Bob Roche, was very appreciative of the volunteer force from BUMC, which was a major factor in helping complete the work it took to make the party a huge success.

To finish the Christmas Miracle, the Mitten Tree gifts this year were also donated to the Native American community. Your generous donations (outlined inside this issue of *The Good Word*) will certainly be appreciated by many needy kids this winter, and will help keep many little hands warm.

Thank you, Brecksville church, for the wonderful support you provided. The pictures you see on this page are just a sampling of this Christmas celebration that the Native American community enjoyed. We helped to fill one more “Hole in our Christmas Gospel.”

*- Les Buttolph*



8:45 Contemporary Worship  
10 Education Hour  
11:15 Traditional Worship

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## Standing on the Brink of a New Year

*Comments from Rev. Clark Stein*

*"New wine is not put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved." – Matthew 9:17*

The wizard had fallen out of favor with the court, and the king sentenced him to death. On the day of the planned execution, the wizard told the king that if he would allow him to live for one year, the king would become famous around the world-because the wizard would make the king's horse talk. If the wizard failed, the king could kill him and the wizard wouldn't object. The king agreed, and the wizard was spared for one year and dispatched to the dungeon. A duke, who was friendly to the wizard, snuck down to the dungeon and said, "You are indeed a fool! I know and you know that you do not have the power to make animals speak. Now you will surely die." The wizard answered: "I have a year. Many things can happen in a year. The king might die. Or I might die. And who knows? In a year perhaps the horse might talk."

We enter the year 2013 riding a wave of good fortune and some change happening in the life of Brecksville United Methodist Church. Much has happened to and in and through us in the past year. As I write this we have enjoyed two weeks in a row of over 300 people in worship. This was a goal we set recently, and it is joyful to see that many new folks in our worship experience. New people have made their way into our fellowship, and they have been welcomed here. New Bible study opportunities are upon us, new relationships have been forged in the larger community, and I'm quite certain that as we stand together on the brink of a new year, we cannot begin to imagine the new wine that will be poured out in our midst.

My prayer is that we can continue to walk together in wonder and amazement at the twists and turns of our journeys. New wine put into new wineskins expands the container and places stress upon it. However, God sees to it that the wine is put to the best of uses and is not wasted.

Many things might just happen this year. Imagine the possibilities as we work and worship together. Who knows, perhaps the horse might even talk!

Keeping the faith,

*Pastor Clark*



Our UMW supports the Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky by collecting Box Tops for Education. This Methodist facility's mission is to lift up Jesus Christ by providing basic needs in Appalachia through God's love. You can help! Clip the Box Tops Symbol from participating products and bring them to the collection bin in the coat room. More info: [www.BTFE.com](http://www.BTFE.com)



## Fellowship Hour Hosts

**January:** Youth Board  
**February:** Music Board



# EMPTY BOWLS FIGHT HUNGER



The Kiwanis Club of Brecksville and the Lions Club of Broadview Heights are hosting the Empty Bowls Dinner at the Gathering Room in the Brecksville Human Resources Center on February 7 from 5—7:30 pm. Tickets are \$10 each, with proceeds benefiting the Brecksville Food Bank and Lend-a-Hand in Broadview Heights. Tickets are available from any Kiwanis member.

Empty Bowls is an international grassroots effort to fight hunger. The basic premise is simple: potters and other craftspeople, educators and others work with the community to create handcrafted bowls. Guests are invited to a simple meal of soup and bread. In exchange for a cash donation, guests are asked to keep a bowl as a reminder of all the empty bowls in the world. The money raised is donated to organizations working to end hunger and food insecurity. The Brecksville Center for the Arts and the Brecksville Broadview Heights High School Art Department have committed to making ceramic bowls and The North Coast Woodturners will make wooden bowls for the event. For additional information, please contact Bill Rittman 440-526-5618 or [abruttman@sbcglobal.net](mailto:abruttman@sbcglobal.net).



**Human Relations Day is January 20:** Honor the Christ-child and make a difference in someone's life! Just as the Magi honored the Christ child with gifts, we honor the Savior by sharing with others. One way is by giving a special contribution to Human Relations Day offering. Your gift will make a huge difference in the lives of persons like Monty Payne.

## Human Relations Day: Church Helps Addicts Heal

Monte Payne pulls from personal pain and experience when he counsels men and women battling addiction. "A lot of the counseling that we do here like helping with jobs, helping with finances, helping with parenting, would seem real simplistic to the average American but they didn't lose ten or fifteen years of their life in drug addiction," says Payne. It took more than one try for Payne to stay clean but he finally found peace and sobriety with help from Theresa Hoover United Methodist Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. Payne is now a homeowner, an active parent to his teenage son, and a mentor to others trying to turn their lives around. - Reprinted with permission from the United Methodist Website, GBOD.ORG

## FAITHinACTION

### Introducing "Mission Moment"

We're starting a new feature in each issue of *The Good Word* in 2013, the Faith in Action Mission Moment. Each month, we'll highlight one way that our church is working as the hands and feet of Christ in the world. The cover story this month is the first in the series. Would you like to write for future issues? Here are some tips to get you started.

- Tell the congregation what the ministry is.
- Describe how the ministry affects lives and fits within the overall mission of the church. Tell a brief, inspirational story.
- Give information on how people can become involved through their prayers and their participation.
- Thank the congregation for their support to make the ministry a reality.

Remember: the deadline for each issue of *The Good Word* is the third Friday of the month!

## Warm Hands & Hearts

Donations to this year's Hat and Mitten tree were delivered to the Native American Education Center on December 19. We wrote a little song about it, to the tune of "Twelve Days of Christmas."

♪ For our friends in Parma, from Brecksville UMC ♪

- 1 pocket book
- 2 ear muffs
- 3 tubes of toothpaste
- 4 pair of slippers
- 6 infant blankets
- 8 bars of soap
- 13 warm pajamas
- 17 pair of socks
- 32 scarves
- 34 winter warm sets
- 65 gloves and mittens
- and

**Ninety-one** winter hats!



# MISSIONS GIVING 2012

Our Commissions on Missions made  
the following gifts in 2012

## Guidestone

(formerly Berea Children's Home)  
\$1,000

## Cleveland Foodbank

\$1,000

## Cornerstone of Hope

\$500

## Kairos Prison Ministry

\$500

## City Mission

\$500

## American Indian Education Center

\$500

## Global Board of Ministries

(Missionary Support -  
General Advance #0079Z)  
\$1,000

## The Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland

\$500

## Camphor Mission

\$1,000

## West Side Ecumenical Ministry

\$500

**Total Given - \$7,000**



**As You Pray This Month Consider**

New beginnings.  
Those in need.



## Happy Birthday To...

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



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. Don Yates, serving faithfully as our balcony usher; Ruth Herman with her work with the UMW; and the volunteers who helped serve the

Christmas Party at the Native American Center are all great examples of the ways that we can each make a difference within the walls of the church and out in our community.

# A Biblical Foundation for Welcoming

Our "30 New Member Challenge" encourages each of us to become active in welcoming others to church. How can we do this on a more personal, Bible-based level? Romans 12 is a treasure trove of inspiration as Paul gives us the steps for building relationships:

- ♦ **Be genuine.** "Let love be without hypocrisy." Don't just pretend to love others.
- ♦ **Be contagious with enthusiasm.** We are to be "fervent in spirit."
- ♦ **Be positive, patient and prayerful.** This connects us with others. We may never see our friends believe as we do, but we can still be a positive influence in their lives.
- ♦ **Open your heart and home to others.** Hospitable people make the world a smaller place. What if missionaries received free lodging wherever they traveled? What if a hospitality service allowed the church to open its doors to people from all over the world? Read about [Couchsurfing.org](http://Couchsurfing.org) is the largest free hospitality-exchange network in the world.
- ♦ **Never speak evil or negatively of others.** "Bless and curse not."
- ♦ **Empathize.** This will help you avoid seeming to be indifferent.
- ♦ **Let God handle justice.** When we seek revenge, we put ourselves in God's place, as if we could judge their hearts.

*Adapted and used by permission from [www.umc.org](http://www.umc.org).*

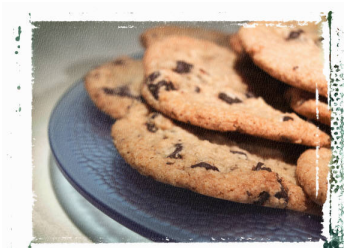


United  
Methodist  
Women

## News and Notes

**There is no United Methodist Women Meeting in January.** We'll see you at our next meeting in February!

**Many, many thanks** to the church family for all donations for the Domestic Violence and Child Advocacy Program.



### Cookies Wanted!

Attention all church members – don't forget to donate cookies for the USO (sponsored by Parma Southwest District of Church Women United). Please leave your donations in the kitchen clearly marked USO. Donation deadline is January 20, 2013.

**Greater Cleveland Church Women United's Interfaith Fellowship Day** will be held 10:00 am on February 4, 2013 at Landerhaven in Mayfield Heights. Cost is \$30. Please contact Nancy Knowlton 440.838.4341 for additional information.

## Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange



Have you visited our Jigsaw Puzzle Exchange? The colder months are prime jigsaw puzzle time, so we've set up a "bring one/take one" shelf in the Chapel. Bring a jigsaw puzzle you no longer want and take one left there by another puzzler. Happy puzzling!



In November, we launched the 30 New Member Challenge. The goal of the Challenge is for the church to modestly increase membership at BUMC by at least 30 members in 2013. As we enter into the Christmas holiday season, please consider making a concerted effort to invite others to experience what a wonderful blessing this church is to so many of us.

**Learn more about MEMBERSHIP! 30**

*YES! I want to learn more about becoming a member of Brecksville United Methodist Church! Tell me about:*

\_\_\_ New Member Classes

\_\_\_ Transferring my Membership

*Not ready for membership, but wanting to learn more about the Brecksville UMC family? Check here! \_\_\_*

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Drop this form in the collection plate on Sunday, or mail it to Brecksville UMC, 65 Public Square, Brecksville OH 44141. Or e-mail us!**

[office@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:office@brecksvilleumc.com)





## Human Trafficking Awareness Day is January 11, 2013:

"Human trafficking is a crime," said Susie Johnson of United Methodist Women. In response, United Methodist Women are taking a stand "to prevent, protect and prosecute those impacted by this trade in human beings that occurs everywhere in the world."

Through education, partnership and action, United Methodist Women work with faith representatives, elected officials and community groups to build awareness and ignite hope for those who are trafficked.

Human trafficking is the second-largest criminal industry in the world. Traffickers take advantage of vulnerable persons with false promises or physical abduction, forcing them into contract slavery, forced labor and sexual trafficking.

According to the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Report 2010, 12.3 million adults and children are currently in forced labor, bonded labor and forced prostitution. Worldwide, 1.8 per 1,000 persons is a victim of human trafficking, increasing to three persons per 1,000 in Asia and the Pacific.

On Human Trafficking Awareness Day, United Methodists draw attention to efforts to eradicate modern-day slavery – in their own communities and around the world.

--Adapted from the United Methodist Women website



# LIVING THE QUESTIONS

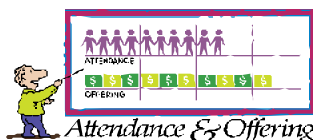
*Our all-church Lenten Study is starting early!*

- ♦ *What were the defining aspects of Jesus' ministry on earth?*
- ♦ *As Christians, can we rely on God to come back and perform a "divine clean-up" of the world?*
- ♦ *Did Jesus come into the world just to die? (We call that substitutionary atonement.)*
- ♦ *Does a faithful reading of Scripture reveal that God is violent?*

Prepare to stretch your thinking as we explore these questions and others in a challenging all-church study. **First Light: Jesus and the Kingdom of God** will kick off on **Sunday, January 6** (note the corrected date, as we had originally indicated January 13). This study will continue through Lent, concluding on Palm Sunday (March 24).

In each of the 12 sessions, we will gather in the Sanctuary to watch a 20-25 minute DVD presentation before breaking out into small groups for discussion. In each video, we will learn more about the historical Jesus and his vision for the Kingdom of God as two of the world's leading Jesus scholars take us on location throughout the Galilee and Jerusalem. Small group discussion will be led by Pastor Clark, Joy Parker and others. The participant reader is available as soon as you RSVP for the class, and there are 2-3 pages of reading material in preparation for each session. Web-based study materials are also available if you want to go more in-depth!

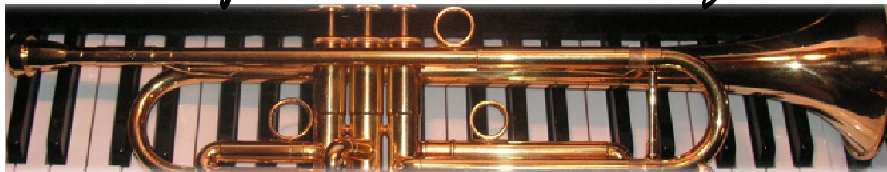
Sign up soon so that small groups can be formed. We are excited to learn together! (Call or [E-mail](#) the church office: 440-526-8938.)



**We've set a new goal of bringing 300 people together for worship on Sunday mornings.**  
Bring a friend to church or Sunday School!

Date	1st Service Attendance	Sunday School	2nd Service Attendance	Worship Attendance Goal 300	Offering
Nov. 25	143	114	101	-56	\$8,200
Dec. 2	173	115	138	★+11★	\$11,339
Dec. 9	157	147	154	★+11★	\$15,414
Dec. 16	156	139	95	- 49	\$7,956
Dec. 23	228	N/A	147	★+75★	\$10,708
Dec. 24	5 pm 301	8 pm 300	10 pm 189	2011: 791 2012: 790	\$9,733

*Warm up a cold winter night*



*With some cool Jazz*

## AN EVENING OF JAZZ

WITH

JOSH RZEPKA, TRUMPET

&

JACKIE WARREN, PIANO

*Saturday, January 26, 2013*

7:30PM IN THE SANCTUARY

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

*Brought to you by the BUMC Music Department  
2012.13 Concert Series*

### *About the artists...*

Twenty-eight year old rising trumpeter and composer Josh Rzepka has been described as “a musician who doesn't believe in limits” by the **Tribune Chronicle**, and as being “gifted” by the **Cleveland Plain Dealer**. He has been heralded not only for his jazz playing and composing, but for his classical trumpet playing as well. Josh is a native of Akron, Ohio, and current resident of Cleveland Heights, Ohio. Learn more at [www.joshrzepka.com](http://www.joshrzepka.com).

A native of Colorado, pianist Jackie Warren originally came to Ohio to study classical piano at Oberlin Conservatory. She performs regularly as a soloist, has her own jazz trio, and also arranges and plays salsa and Latin jazz with percussionist Sammy Deleon y su orquesta. Ms. Warren can be heard regularly at such local venues as The Velvet Tango Room, Nighttown, and Belinda's Nightclub, and on numerous recordings, including “Into the Night” (Josh Rzepka). Learn more at [www.jackiewarren.net](http://www.jackiewarren.net).



## Organ Update

*(The End is in Sight!)*

Have you been in worship during Advent? If so, you are already enjoying the results of our Organ Restoration Project! On Sunday, December 23, as part of Christmas Music Sunday, we heard our new chimes for the first time! And our zimbelstern made its debut on Christmas Eve! Rick Nelson, our organ builder, continues to work tirelessly on the less visible aspects of the project and has worked some very long hours so that we could enjoy the organ, and these beautiful new sounds, as soon as possible.

Some of the electrical equipment for our organ has had to travel across continents, so there is still some internal electrical work to be completed. There will also be a new coat of paint, and we are working out the details around installing the donor plaque. We would like to have these final items wrapped up before our official service of rededication, so continue to watch the Good Word for that revised date. We recognize that many of you who love the organ are in warmer locations for the winter months, so we will wait until Spring to hold this special service of commitment for the organ!

Don't ever hesitate to ask Joy or Chris for an update, or let us know if you would like to stop back behind the screen and take a look at the work in progress! Thank you again for your continued support.



# Faith & Family



at 5pm

## Movie Night

# TO SAVE A LIFE

RSVP: Kyle  
(440) 526.8938  
@ kyclerallen@gmail.com  
f brecksvillyouth

**SOME PEOPLE  
ARE JUST DYING TO BE HEARD**  
High school youth and their parents are invited to a fun and engaging night of food, film, and discussion as we watch and talk about this meaningful Christian movie that covers critical and timely teen topics, struggles, and joys.



# JANUARY 2013

BRECKSVILLE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH [www.brecksvilleumc.com](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		<b>1</b>  <i>Happy New Year!</i> Church Offices Closed	<b>2</b> 6:30 Dwnbrkr 11 Staff Mtg	<b>3</b> 4 Wo. Emmaus 5 Men's Grp	<b>4</b> 7 Emmaus Re 9 Men's Bible Study	<b>5</b>
<b>6</b> <i>Epiphany</i> <i>Sunday,</i> <i>Communion</i> <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education <b>11:15 Worship</b> 2 Hiking Club	<b>7</b> 7 Monday Night Bible Study	<b>8</b> 11 Staff Mtg 5:15 Children's Choir 7 Ad Board 8 Committee Meetings	<b>9</b> 6:30 Dwnbrkr 4 Youth Quartet <b>5:30 Youth            Worship</b>	<b>10</b> 9:30 Asbury Brem 4 Wo. Emmaus 5 Men's Grp 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	<b>11</b> 7 Emmaus Re 9 Men's Bible Study <i>Human            Trafficking            Awareness Day</i>	<b>12</b>
<b>13</b> <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education <b>11:15 Worship</b>	<b>14</b> 7 Monday Night Bible Study	<b>15</b> 9:30 Staff Mtg 10 Stitch'n'Time 5:15 Children's Choir 7 Knitting Grp 7:30 Finance 7:30 Trustees	<b>16</b> 6:30 Dwnbrkr 4 Youth Quartet <b>5:30 Youth            Worship</b> 7 SPR	<b>17</b> 9:30 History Detectives 4 Wo. Emmaus 5 Men's Grp 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	<b>18</b> 7 Emmaus Re 9 Men's Bible Study 	<b>19</b>
<b>20</b> <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education <b>11:15 Worship</b> 12 Pizza with the Pastor 5 Family Movie <i>Human            Relations Day</i>	 <i>Martin Luther            King Day</i> Church Offices Closed	<b>22</b> 9:30 Staff Mtg 5:15 Children's Choir	<b>23</b> 6:30 Dwnbrkr 4 Youth Quartet <b>5:30 Youth            Worship</b>	<b>24</b> 4 Wo. Emmaus 5 Men's Grp 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	<b>25</b> 7 Emmaus Re 9 Men's Bible Study 9:30 UMW Board Meeting  <i>GW Mails!</i> 	<b>26</b> Concert Series: An Evening of Jazz 7:30
<b>27</b> <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education <b>11:15 Worship</b>  <i>Faith &amp; Ameri-            can Politics            Luncheon</i>	<b>28</b> 7 Monday Night Bible Study	<b>29</b> 9:30 Staff Mtg 11 UMW Staff Luncheon 5:15 Children's Choir	<b>30</b> 6:30 Dwnbrkr 4 Youth Quartet <b>5:30 Youth            Worship</b>	<b>31</b> 4 Wo. Emmaus 5 Men's Grp 6:15 Bells 7:30 Choir	<div> <div> <b>\$1 Week Campaign</b> </div> <div>           As of            Dec. 24,            we have collected  <b>\$7,474</b>            for our Liberia            School building fund.            Our goal            is \$24,000.         </div> </div>	

# United Methodist News

*“News in the Pews” from the United Methodist News Service*

## **Thousands of Sandy survivors know church cares**

NEW YORK — A thousand Early Response Team members working in severely damaged homes on Long Island alone. Four thousand cleaning buckets handed directly to storm survivors in New Jersey’s hardest-hit coastal towns — and thousands more given across the rest of the state. Three thousand hot meals served from a single church in the devastated city of Crisfield, Md. One month after the hurricane-turned-Superstorm Sandy hit, it’s possible to summarize the church’s response in numbers, though these statistics are ever-changing as relief efforts continue in earnest.

## **Dreaming of a Malaria-free Christmas**

SPRINGFIELD, Ill. (UMNS) — What would you do to see your bishop in bright red flannel pajamas at annual conference? Bishop Jonathan D. Keaton is challenging Illinois Great Rivers Annual (regional) Conference congregations to raise the remaining \$141,000 needed to meet the \$2.3 million goal for Imagine No Malaria by Dec. 31. If they succeed, Keaton will wear red pajamas for a session of the 2013 annual conference.

## **Hoosiers go for holiday records**

INDIANAPOLIS — United Methodists in Indiana are pushing some records in their efforts to make sure everyone shares in Christmas. La Porte residents are eagerly waiting to get the official nod from Guinness World Records that the Rev. Billy Nickrand of Door Village United Methodist Church broke the bell-ringing record to raise money for the Salvation Army. Nickrand rang for 60 hours and 5 minutes in front of a grocery and raised more than \$6,300. The Rev. Randy Davis, of the Dunkirk Mount Tabor and Redkey United Methodist churches, collected more than 10,000 McDonald Gift Cards, valued at \$5 each, to give to veterans in Veteran Administration medical centers across Indiana.

## **United Methodists to get discounts at Staples**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — The General Council on Finance and Administration, the denomination’s finance agency, has entered into an agreement with Staples to provide preferred pricing and discounts on purchases. All sales to United Methodist organizations will result in a 1 percent annual rebate to the United Methodist Committee on Relief. To get started, go to [StaplesAdvantage.com/UnitedMethodists/](http://StaplesAdvantage.com/UnitedMethodists/).

## **Ministry with people with disabilities class**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Many churches want to do a better job of ministry with children and adults with disabilities, but often simply don’t know how. United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio, now offers classes that can help laity and clergy serve an underserved population. For more information, go to the seminary’s website at [United.edu](http://United.edu).

## **Border separates families at Christmas**

TIJUANA, Mexico — United Methodist missionaries are part of an effort to unite families divided by deportations and immigration policies. For nearly 20 years, families have gathered at Christmas at Friendship Park in San Diego for a reenactment of the Nativity called Las Posadas. A fence keeps families separated, but they are able to make contact through the barrier. “This gives me hope at least. I’m so close to my kids, and that’s all I want is just to see my kids one more time,” says one participant.

## **Newtown: The church responds**

NEWTOWN, Conn. — The Rev. Mel Kawakami, senior pastor of Newtown United Methodist Church, has the difficult duty of shepherding his flock through the anguish of the second deadliest school shooting rampage in U.S. history. Two 7-year-olds from the congregation were among the 20 children and six adults who were killed Dec. 14 in the shooting rampage at Sandy Hook Elementary School.

- ♦ The Rev. Art McClanahan interviewed his longtime friend, Kawakami, and wrote about the church’s first Sunday worship service after the service.
- ♦ Linda Bloom wrote about how the response to grief has transcended faith boundaries.
- ♦ The Rev. Joanne S. Utley wrote about how Newtown United Methodist Church has a passionate history of reaching out around the world but now finds the world’s attention and caring riveted on its own tight-knit community.

Read these and other United Methodist News Service stories and find United Methodist resources to cope with grief and respond to violence at **UMC.org/SchoolViolence**.



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