



# The Good Word

*Open Doors.*



*Honest Worship. Determined Service.*

PUBLISHED DECEMBER 19, 2014  
65 Public Square, Brecksville, OH  
440-526-8938  
[www.brecksvilleumc.com](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com)

## Brecksville United Methodist Women

On Feb. 1, thousands will travel to the Phoenix area to take part in Super Bowl festivities. Among the travelers will be those arriving in Arizona by force, fraud or coercion — they will not be there of their own free will but as victims of human trafficking.

Some of those who are trafficked will be serving food in restaurants or at catered parties related to the Super Bowl. Others will clean hotel rooms, wash dishes, tidy nail salons, deliver dry cleaning or wash windows. Some will be trafficked as sex workers for “escort” services or in men-only clubs.

To express their belief that we can help survivors of human trafficking live as whole persons, our UMW is “huddling” with others to form a virtual circle around Arizona stadium.

Let us join them in committing ourselves to acts of prevention and protection, so that those who are victimized can move from trauma to thriving. Let’s huddle to pass laws that prosecute the traffickers, not the victimized. Let’s huddle together to bear witness to the strength of survivors and to partner in their journey to wholeness!



*“Our UMW is joining UMW’s from all across America to HUDDLE against human trafficking, especially at this year’s Super Bowl. Groups will be HUDDLING around the perimeter of the stadium by sending out HUDDLING pictures like these for the cause.” —Nancy Knowlton*



Worship Schedule

**8:45 Contemporary Worship**

10 Education Hour

**11:15 Traditional Worship**

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## As We Begin a New Year

**Luke 2:9-12**

We are the music makers,  
And we are the dreamers of dreams,  
Wandering by lone sea breakers,  
And sitting by desolate streams;  
World-losers and world-forsakers,  
On whom the pale moon gleams:  
Yet we are the mover and shakers  
Of the world forever, it seems.

*-Arthur William Edgar O'Shaughnessy "Ode"*

Photo by Ben Huber

The noise of the holiday season begins to fade quite quickly as we move rapidly into another new year. I often ponder over what happens to the wonder we feel, the community we seek out and treasure around Christmas? We seem to fall back into old familiar patterns, and out of holiday spirit. We allow ourselves but a glimmer of opportunity for real change, and go back to that in which we are so comfortable. I can't help but wonder if we are missing an important element of the story.

The arrival of the Magi is an interesting tidbit to me. They come from afar, prompted to journey and seek out the promise of something new. They encounter the resident power structure, and move on ahead to see for themselves this potential for change...And once they encounter this possibility, they return home by another way. Things couldn't remain as they were. They couldn't return the same way they had come.

As we enter another year together, I hope you and I still hold out the hope that we are the music makers, and the dreamers of dreams. Perhaps we will set out for home by another way?

Peace,

*Pastor Clark*



**Pop Tops for**

**Ronald McDonald House:**

Why throw them away? Turn your pop tops into cash for Ronald McDonald House. There's a collection bin in the cloak room.

Thank you!



Special Thanks to the Commission on Education for hosting Coffee Hour in December!

Our January hosts will be  
**The United Methodist Women**



# YOUTH NEWS!



## Middle School Youth News

**Middle School Youth News** – We will continue meeting on Wednesdays after school, but effective January 7, our time together will end at 4:30pm (instead of 5pm). Hopefully, this will give students more time for homework and rest in the evenings!

**Confirmation News** – Hey Confirmation families! Please don't forget to turn in your registration forms to Courtney ASAP. All forms and payments are due by January 11. Students received forms and information in Sunday School class – please email [youth@brecksvilleumc.com](mailto:youth@brecksvilleumc.com) if you are missing these. We'll be traveling to Camp Aldersgate in Carrollton, Ohio, on February 20-22 for a conference-wide Confirmation retreat weekend. This is a mandatory retreat for all Confirmation students! Please contact Courtney with any questions or if you are a parent interested in chaperoning this trip.

## High School Youth News

**High School Youth Group**– Haven't made it to a youth group meeting yet this school year? No worries! Come join us starting with the New Year. We'll continue our walk through the Bible, spending one week reading the story and responding to the Biblical text, and the next week applying it to our lives in the 21 century. Great discussions are always abundant in this open group!

**Finals Study Hours** – Sometimes, we just need a change of scenery to refocus our minds. The youth room will be open on MLK Day (Jan. 19) from 12-4pm for *quiet* study hours. All high school students and friends are welcome to this silent study party! Plenty of brain food will be present.

**Winter Retreat** – Our high school students will be traveling north from January 23-25 for an awesome weekend of snow tubing, indoor rock climbing, archery tag, food, worship, and free time! We'll be joining other churches from throughout the Midwest, in what is sure to be a great time of fellowship and bonding. Prayers for safe travels and unending growth in Jesus are much appreciated!



## Make the Most of Winter!

- ☐ Go sledding/snow-boarding
- ☐ Build a snow man
- ☐ Hand write a letter—and mail it
- ☐ See a play or musical
- ☐ **Go to YOUTH GROUP!**
- ☐ Have a board game night.
- ☐ Share a hot cocoa with a friend
- ☐ Volunteer
- ☐ **Enjoy Worship on Sunday**
- ☐ Play football in the snow
- ☐ Sit by a fire
- ☐ Spend time with family
- ☐ Feed the birds
- ☐ Catch snowflakes on your tongue
- ☐ Start a snow ball fight
- ☐ **Meet friends at Sunday School**
- ☐ Go ice skating

## MARK YOUR CALENDARS

- **February 6-7:** Annual Rock-A-Thon! Middle school students will be rocking from 6-9pm, and high school students from 8pm-10am. More information to come!
- **March 1:** Deadline for YSP participants to register!!
- **March 6:** Music with a Mission, 6-9pm
- **July 19 - 25:** Youth Service Project trip to Pocahontas, Virginia



## February 1

**Children's Sunday** is a day set aside to celebrate children as active participants in the life of our church. Children serve as worship leaders throughout the service.

*Children in grades 1 through 5 and their families should plan to be present for our Kid Led Worship Sunday on February 1.*

We will be practicing and preparing in January and you will be ready to share your faith as you lead through reading scripture and prayers, sharing thoughts, creating artwork and singing.

This is a very special day for everyone in the church. Don't miss it!!

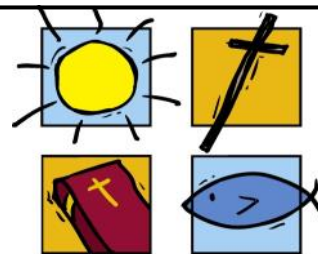


You can help unlock a world of opportunity for the students at Henderson Settlement in Frakes, Kentucky. All you need is a pair of scissors. Our UMW collects Campbell's Labels for Education and Box Tops for Education. Clip the symbols from products and bring them to the collection bin in the coat room. Learn more at

[www.labelsforeducation.com](http://www.labelsforeducation.com) or [www.bboxtopsforeducation.info](http://www.bboxtopsforeducation.info).

# EDUCATION HOUR

ALL AGES  
Sunday at 10



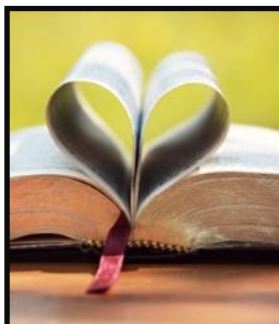
*New Classes Begin Sunday, January 4 at 10:15 (after extended Coffee Hour.)*

## Help, I'm Afraid of My Bible!



Are you intimidated by big "Bible words" and long genealogies? Unsure where to begin when reading your Bible? Do you feel like you should be "better informed" before you take on challenging Scriptural texts? If you answered yes to any of these – or if other fears keep your Bible closed and on the shelf – then this class is for you! Joy Parker and Youth Director Courtney Drescher are teaming up to co-lead a class that will be open to both adults and high school youth. The 5-week class will touch on both the Hebrew Bible ("Old" Testament) and the Christian ("New") Testament and will include basic, approachable information about origin, authorship and genre. In addition, there will be *optional* assigned readings each week for those who want to better familiarize themselves with different types of biblical writing.

## Lectionary Learnings



Whether you attend first service or second service, don't miss the awesome opportunity during the education hour (10 o'clock) each Sunday to delve a little deeper into the meaning of the week's scripture reading. Explore commentary and today's news stories as they tie into the message and the meaning of both the Old and New Testament scripture pieces. Drop in any Sunday and try it!

## Balancing Life's Demands – A New Kind of Sunday School



Calling all parents! Do you feel overwhelmed with your to-do list? Did you ever wish time could slow down a little so you could catch your breath and start 'living your life'? Have you used the words 'busy', 'tired', or 'stretched to the limit' to describe yourself this month? You know you aren't alone. Join other parents to network, socialize and explore the idea of finding peace within your schedule. Together we will watch a video series by Chip Ingram called "Balancing Life's Demands" and have time to talk with each other about what is on our hearts. Don't worry... no homework or at-home reading assignments. Come as you are on Sunday morning to room 402. Questions? Call Jenny 440.526.8938.



## Electronic Giving at Brecksville UMC

Finance Committee is very pleased to offer electronic giving as another giving option for supporting the life and body of Christ at BUMC. Electronic giving isn't intended to replace traditional ways of giving, but gives us all another option to contribute to God's work in the form that works best for each of us.

Online gifts can be made by electronic check or with debit or credit cards. You can set up a recurring gift, make one-time gifts, and contribute to special offerings.

If you are a part of our church family, we encourage you to create a profile on Realm, our church's new online community. (If you have not yet received an invitation, please call our church office for an email link.) In Realm, you can review your family profile, see your giving history (especially helpful at tax time), and easily set up future gifts. The site is password protected. Create your password, log-on, and see what it has to offer!

You can make electronic gifts from your checking account or credit card. If you make credit card gifts, consider increasing the gift by 3.5% - the fee the church will be charged for your credit card gift.

You can also access online giving using the QR Code found at right and on electronic giving cards in our church pews. You can easily select your payment source and make your gift right from your smartphone.



Another way to make a gift is through the "giving" link at the top of our church website home page: [www.brecksvilleumc.com](http://www.brecksvilleumc.com).

The payment process vendor we are using is PCI Level 1 Compliant for your data security. They provide similar services to over 15,000 churches.

When you make an electronic gift, you are invited to place a yellow "I Gave Electronically" card into the collection plate on Sunday (find one in the pew pocket.) This tangible act of giving helps remind you that you are part of something much bigger than yourself each time you give to the ministry of our Church!

We are so grateful for your gracious financial support of our Church's program and ministry. Without your gifts, our church's ministry could not happen.



**2015 Offering Envelopes** should arrive any day now. Those who requested envelopes can pick them up outside of the church office on Sunday. Don't see your name? Sign the clipboard and we'll have a set ready for you next Sunday!

Finance Committee is offering a special opportunity for BUMC members, friends and family to participate in *Financial Peace University*, by Dave Ramsey.

If you are fed-up being controlled by your money, and want to learn to take control of it, this course is for **you**. If you desperately need to know how to get out of debt, this course is for **you**. If you wonder 'will I have enough money?' this course is for **you**. the average family who participates pays off \$5,300 in debt and saves \$2,700 in the first 90 days!

During each 90 minute session, we will review a video lesson on how to take control of our finances, followed by small group discussions. Dave Ramsey does the teaching, and you start taking the baby steps to take back control.

The sessions are biblically based, teaching us what God says about money and how we should treat it. Jesus talks about money almost more than any other subject in the Bible, because he knew it is such a struggle for us.

- The 9 week course starts **January 25 through March 29** (skipping Super Bowl Sunday, Feb 1<sup>st</sup>).
- Classes are at 6:30 pm in the parlor. Childcare will be provided if needed.
- Curious? A **special video preview** will be offered Sunday morning, **January 11** at 10:00 am in the Chapel.
- Cost is \$99 for a membership kit. (A couple can share.) Call the church office to sign up.

This course is for young adults through senior citizens. Couples are encouraged to attend as together.

Be prepared to be challenged to do things differently. Be prepared to learn God's lessons on how to manage money. - *Finance Committee, Alan Scheufler, Chair*





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

On November 30, we celebrated the Baptism of Jackson Philip Stein, grandson of Pastor Clark and Kathy Stein.

Stephen Patrick and Christian Thomas Podolny, grandsons of Cec and Dave Podolny, arrived earlier than expected. The boys are growing, gaining strength, and doing well. Keep them in your prayers, along with parents Derek and Meghan and big brother, Daniell!

George Gee, Jenny and the girls would like to thank everyone for all the kind words of comfort and encouragement and beautiful cards offered after the death of George's dad. The incredible support from this church family certainly helped during this sad time.

"To the Congregation of BUMC, Thank you to all those who sent cards, prayers, phoned, and came to Don's memorial, and for all of the sentiments given at the memorial. For 53 years, this United Methodist church was our second home. Don made many good friends there as he worked, ushered, and went to meetings."—  
Eileen Yates

"Your generous support of WSEM Food Center at Brookside is deeply appreciated. With your help, we distributed food to 898 families. We also had our Thanksgiving Distribution which was a huge success thanks to the many organizations and churches that made it all possible. Brecksville UMC contributed 45 bags of food and paper products totaling \$675! Thanks for your help!" - Lourdes Santiago, WSEM Food Center at Brookside.



# birthdays

Joni Robinson	1	Lois Moston	16
Kevin Schultz	1	Aundrea Dumot	17
Katie Cline	2	Eliot Slifcak	17
Susie Loughner	2	Kim Johnson	18
Betsy Bellingham	3	Fred Loeffler	18
Penny Lienert	3	Ellen Martin	18
Michael Patrick	3	Jennifer Schneider	18
Michelle Shively	3	Jessica Zawada	18
Emily Vincent	3	Nate Bender	20
Donna Sibits	4	Kaitlyn Ellis	20
Kaya Roberts	5	Brian Meek	20
Nate Machesky	6	Dan Auble	21
Claudia Monnett	6	Pat Gordon	21
Margie Benedict	7	Bob Nelson	22
Cole Mihalich	9	Emily Loughner	24
David Vastartis	9	Bob Lundholm	24
James Vastartis	9	Colin Crouch	25
Nathan Hulten	10	Katie Hurder	25
Gerry McMaster	11	Sue Hastings	26
Marc Vincent	11	Kimmer Cave	28
Bob Carson	12	Donna Culley	28
Jennifer Hoffman	13	Lona Seifert	29
Diana Warth	13	Rick Dean	30
Steven Chen	14	Jill Magistro	30
Maddy McBride	14	Don Salsbury	30
Scott Ford	15	Kathy Goebel	31
Donna Houston	15	DJ Magee	31
Marianne Nolan	15		
Sam Papp	15		
Joy Parker	15		



As people of faith, we find God's presence in those who have been blessings to us. At our weekly Staff Meetings, we recently lifted up the following people in prayer, thanking God for them and the way they touch the lives of others. People like Susie Loughner who stepped in to organize a reception for the Community Thanksgiving Service; Lynn and Mark Hobzek, Marisol Wylie, and the entire team of folks who helped decorate the church for the Christmas season; for Kathy Stein who jumped in and helped organize a lovely reception after the Christmas Concert; and Carole Emery, Jenny Gee's mother, who has been so instrumental in getting the Bourne Reading Room up and running. Thank you all!



# News from the Brecksville United Methodist Women

*There is no general meeting of the United Methodist Women in January. Check back next month to learn about February's program!*

## Cookies Wanted!

The Parma Southwest District Of Church Women United will be collecting cookies (BAKE, BUY or BORROW) for the USO at the end of January. Please donate cookies to the church kitchen by Monday, January 26. A USO representative will pick them up from our church on Tuesday, January 27.

## Acme Register Tapes Wanted

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

## Come Join The Circle!



Have you been to an Evening Circle meeting? In December, we created earrings for Ears to You, an organization providing comfort and hope to those undergoing treatment for cancer. Our next meeting will be **Wed. January 7 at 7 pm.** Watch the Sunday Bulletin and the weekly Blast for more information. We meet the **first Wednesday of every month at 7 p.m.** We will sometimes do a Bible study, sometimes have a speaker and sometimes do community outreach. Our ages range from 16 to 70-something and everywhere in between. Everyone is welcome!



## Caregiving Support Group Forming



Are you caring for an aging parent (or parents) and looking for some support or a place to share ideas, resources, or frustrations? Try our new Caregiving Support Group! With enough interest, we hope to meet, perhaps once month, here in Brecksville. Interested? Please contact Pastor Barbara before Jan. 26. If enough people are interested in forming the group, we look to have an initial meeting in February. - *Rev. Barbara Bartholomew, Associate Pastor of Visitation*, 440-799-3126 or e-mail

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

## Open Table Worship Service Here, January 18



Brecksville United Methodist Church welcomes Reconciling Ministries Network for an Open Table Worship and Communion Service lovingly created to honor full inclusion of all God's children in our church.

*All are welcome! Please join us for incredible worship!  
Sunday, January 18, 2015, at 6:00 pm in the Sanctuary*

East Ohio RMN Leadership Meeting—Before Open Table at 5 pm



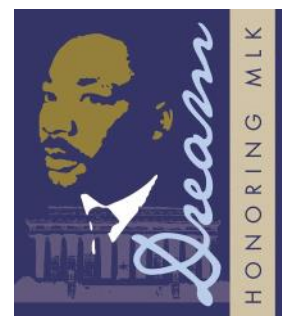
## The Chili Cook Off Returns! January 24

Evangelism and UMW are looking for some "Chili Connoisseurs" who would like to contribute their homemade chili to the Chili Cook Off on Saturday, January 24, 2015.

We are looking for any chili recipe. What's your specialty? If it's spicy, mild, hot, vegan, or something else, bring it to the chili cook off!

Please call the church office at 526-8938 or Ruth Herman at 330-467-3237 to sign up! (We will also have a sign up table at church starting Sunday, December 14.) Register before January 11!

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



The observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day enriches and strengthens our social witness today. Our church offices will be closed in observance of the holiday, Monday, January 19, 2015



## The Bourne Reading Room

Are you looking for a quiet spot to enjoy a good book? Or maybe you're in need of a spot to meet with 3 friends for a Bible Study or Small Group?

Try the Bourne Reading Room! Located on the third floor, in a corner of the large meeting room (301), it offers a quiet, private spot. This space was previously used as our Youth Director's office, but Courtney has moved her office to the Youth Room on the fourth floor.

The Reading Room is open whenever the church is open—but won't be available when there is a meeting in Room 301. (Check the church calendar or call the office for that schedule.)

To reserve the room for your small group meeting, call Melanie in the church office: 440-526-8938.

We're also looking for volunteer librarians. If you'd like to help, contact Melanie!

Special thanks to Gifts and Memorials, who funded the update of the room; Jeff Fesler, who painted the library; Jeff & Scott Hastings, who tore out the old carpet and hung art and curtains; Jenny Gee's mother, Carole Emery, who organized the books; and Melanie's mother-in-law, Jean Smith, who helped with the furniture!

# SHAKING THINGS UP!

(In the Music Department)

In the New Year, our music rehearsals will be shifting to Wednesday evenings! Times will remain the same; we'll just gather on a different night. If you have had trouble with the Thursday evening rehearsal schedule, this is a great opportunity for you to get involved in the music program on an alternate night!



**Handbell Choir** – this ensemble rehearses from 6:15 to 7:15pm behind the screen in the Sanctuary. New ringers are always welcome; we offer guidance to get you started, but a basic ability to read music is helpful. The group plays in worship about once per month, and participants are permitted one rehearsal absence per performance. We will resume in the new year on Wednesday, January 7.



**Chancel Choir** – this is our main choir for worship leadership at the 11:15 service, and they meet (now on Wednesdays) from 7:30 to 9:00pm in the Choir Room (304). Singers of all levels experience are welcome; you need not be able to read music. The ensemble sings at our traditional worship service (11:15) about 3 Sundays per month. This ensemble will also resume on January 7.



**Men's Ensemble** – this group of dedicated guys gathers from 8:15 to 9:00pm every other Wednesday, beginning with January 7 and 21 (and so on). We work on about two pieces of music at a time and always welcome new singers! The group shares in worship at both services about once per month.



**Praise Team** will continue to rehearse on Sunday mornings at 8:00am. Interested singers and instrumentalists are always welcome to contact Joy to get involved!

As always, we would love to see *you* in the Music Department. Happy New Year!

- Joy Parker, Director of Music



## Welcome Leslie Miller!

A familiar face will soon be joining our church staff! On January 5, Leslie Miller, begins a new kind of service to our church as Assistant Office Manager. Leslie's warm and positive personality and knowledge of our church family will help fill the huge void left by Cec Podolny's retirement. Please join the Staff Parish Relations Committee in extending a warm welcome to Leslie, and stop by to say hello in the new year!





# Brecksville United Methodist Church

## Concert Series

*Join us for these great events in 2015!*

### Josh Rzepka Jazz Quartet

**Saturday, February 14 at 7:30 pm**



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, a native of Akron, Ohio, will be performing with his quartet (drum set, keyboard, and bass). Don't miss this perennial favorite! Learn more at [www.joshrzepka.com](http://www.joshrzepka.com).

### Music with a Mission: “On the Road”

**Friday, March 6 at 6:00 pm (Dinner)/7:00 pm (Show)**



This summer, BUMC's Youth Service Project team will be traveling to the Appalachian town of Pocahontas, Virginia for a week serving people in need through home repair, basic construction, and painting. **Music with a Mission** is a great evening of food, music and fun benefiting the trip. Come enjoy dinner, prepared by our youth, a silent auction, and a show featuring songs in the theme “On the Road.” Watch your bulletin and the February issue of the Good Word for more details.

### The Gray Havens

**Friday, March 20 at 7:30 pm**



What sets narrative-pop-folk husband & wife duo **The Gray Havens** apart from other artists is that they seem to draw little distinction between fantasy stories, lyric poetry, theology and song. That, and the level of obvious delight Dave & Licia Radford take in creating, recording, and performing their richly textured compositions paired with unexpected, imaginative lyrics. Come and enjoy an evening of great music by this light-hearted and folksy singer-songwriter duo. Learn more at

[www.grayhavensmusic.com](http://www.grayhavensmusic.com).

### Community Chorus Spring Concert

**Sunday, April 19 at 4:00 pm**



Join us on Sunday, April 19, in the Sanctuary for the Brecksville Community Chorus and Youth Chorus Spring Concert. Under the direction of Mr. Chuck Valley (adults) and Joy Parker (youth), the choruses will present a program including a variety of unique and uplifting music. The adult chorus will feature a complete performance of *Frostiana* by Randall Thompson, a setting of Robert Frost poems paired with beautiful original music.

## Fitness Resolutions

If you're looking for a new way to get moving, come to fitness classes at the church!

### Monday Night Kickboxing

Body Sculpting and Kickboxing classes emphasize various exercises to strengthen the shoulders, arms, hips, legs, abs, and back. The workout consists of upper and lower body aerobic and strengthening techniques and ends with an abdominal workout, stretching and cool-down session. Kristin Bisco teaches **Body Sculpting (5:30-6:00 pm)** and **Cardio Kickboxing (6:00-7:00 pm)** on **Mondays in Fellowship Hall**. Please bring 3 or 5 pound weights for Body Sculpting and a mat/towel and water bottle for Kickboxing. Boxing gloves are optional.

### Zumba Fitness Tuesdays and Saturdays

Zumba fitness, moving the world to a new beat! Are you ready to party yourself into shape? That's exactly what the Zumba program is all about. It's an exhilarating, effective, easy-to-follow, Latin-inspired, calorie-burning dance fitness-party that's moving millions of people towards good health and happiness. Join instructor Ann Marie Martinis in Fellowship Hall Classes on Tuesdays at 7:30pm and Saturdays at 9:30am.



# JANUARY 2015

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

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Church Offices Closed	2 Church Offices Closed	3 8:30 Women's Small Group 9:30 Zumba
4 Epiphany Sunday Communion Sunday <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education Hour <b>11:15 Worship</b> 7 HS Youth Group	5 5:30 Kickboxing 7 Community Chorus	6 10 Staff Mtg 7 Evangelism 7:30 Zumba 7:30 Church & Society	7 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:15 MS Youth Gp 4:30 Children's Choir 6:15 Bells 7 Evening Circle 7:30 Chancel Choir	8 9:30 Asbury Bremeth 5 Men's Group 	9 7 Emmaus Reunion	10 8:30 Women's Small Group 8:30 Emmaus Team No Zumba 10 Caring Committee
11 Human Trafficking Awareness Day <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education Hour <b>11:15 Worship</b> 12:15 Music & Worship Board 7 HS Youth Group	12 4:30 Youth Chorus 5:30 Kickboxing 6:30 Relay for Life Team Cpt Meeting 7 Community Chorus	13 10 Staff Mtg 7 Ad Board No Zumba 8 Youth Board	14 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:15 MS Youth Group 4:30 Children's Choir 6:15 Bells 7:30 Chancel Choir	15 5 Men's Group	16 7 Emmaus Reunion  UMW Food Delivery to Brookside	17 8:30 Women's Small Group 9:30 Zumba
18 Human Relations Day <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education Hour <b>11:15 Worship</b> 5 East Ohio RMN Meeting <b>6 Open Table Worship Service</b> Fellowship and refreshments in the Parlor following the service. 	19  Church Offices Closed 12-4 Youth Study Hours 7 SPRC 7 Community Chorus	20 10 Staff Mtg 10 Stitch'n'Time 11 UMW Staff Luncheon 7 Gifts & Memorials 7:30 Trustees 7:30 Zumba	21 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:15 MS Youth Group 4:30 Children's Choir 6:15 Bells 7:30 Chancel Choir	22 5 Men's Group 	23 7 Emmaus Reunion Youth Winter Retreat Weekend	24 8:30 Women's Small Group 8:30 Emmaus Team 9:30 Zumba 5 Chili Cook Off 
25 Ecumenical Sunday <b>8:45 Worship</b> 10 Education Hour <b>11:15 Worship</b> Youth Winter Retreat Weekend	26 4:30 Youth Chorus 5:30 Kickboxing 7 Community Chorus	27 10 Staff Mtg 7 Finance 7:30 Zumba	28 6:30 Dawnbrkr 3:15 MS Youth Group 4:30 Children's Choir 6:15 Bells 7:30 Chancel Choir	29 5 Men's Group	30 7 Emmaus Reunion 9:30 UMW Board Meeting	31 8 Cleveland Food Bank Volunteers 8:30 Women's Small Group 9:30 Zumba



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

# PRAYERS

*Consider adding the following to your prayer list...*

- For peace in the world in the new year.
- For those who are in need of shelter in these cold winter months.
- For fresh starts. Pray for a forgiving heart.
- For the ministry of this church. That we may reach out into our community that more people may know Jesus.

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

*May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.*

- 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17

# PRESENCE

Date	First Service	Sunday School	Second Service	Goal of 300
Nov. 30	174		110	-16
Dec. 7	146		57	-97
Dec. 14	151	77	100	-51

We've set a goal of bringing 300 people together for worship on Sunday mornings. We fell short of this goal again this month. What's keeping you from church on Sunday? What are some other ways you can be present in the life of the church this month?

# GIFTS

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

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

Date	Offering
Nov. 30	\$8,485
Dec. 7	\$8,732
Dec. 14	\$11,008

# SERVICE

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

- Donate food to the January Brookside Food Drive before Friday, January 16. Thank the UMW for delivering it to Brookside for us!
- Lend a hand with the Evangelism/UMW Chili Cook Off. It's going to be a great evening of fun and fellowship.
- Volunteer with the Cleveland Food Bank January 31.
- Tell a friend about the Caregiving Support Group, forming soon. See details in this issue.

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

*The people of The United Methodist Church are putting our faith in action by making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world, which is our church's mission. Through the power of our connection, we are making a positive difference in more than 125 countries.*

# United Methodist News

## *Sad at Christmas? Advice for Coping with Holiday Blues*

By Joe Iovino

In December, we watch “magical” Christmas movies, shop from stores promising a special season, and hear songs proclaiming this as “the most wonderful time of the year.” We feel pressure to be jolly, but [sometimes we're not](#).

If you or someone you love is struggling with the Christmas blues, you are not alone. Many people find the season difficult. To help you through what may be a challenging [Christmas season](#), we sought sound advice from United Methodist pastors, counselors, and others.

**Accept feelings:** Though you may feel like you are *supposed* to be merry, don't force it. “You just can't be where you're not,” says retired United Methodist state correctional chaplain, The Rev. Ben Wright. “So if you feel down,” he continues, “feel down.” As he tells the members of the grief support group he facilitates in [his United Methodist congregation](#), “When we acknowledge that we are down, it helps us.”

We ought to give others space to feel whatever they are feeling as well. [United Methodist counselor Cindy Elrod](#) cautions, “be in touch with your own anxiety that may surface when you are in the presence of someone who appears to be in distress, so that you are not trying to ‘fix’ them in order to ease your own distress.”

**Manage expectations:** There can be a lot of pressure to make Christmas perfect. Megan Forshey, program manager of [Gilda's Club Nashville](#), reminds us to, “try to let go of how things have always been or are supposed to be and allow this holiday to reflect your current reality.” If you are feeling blue, the goal of perfection can lead to stress or disappointment. Keep expectations realistic, and receive the season as it comes to you.

When supporting a friend through a difficult period, help keep the pressure low. Don't push the “holiday spirit” upon your loved one. Give space and permission for them to cancel a day of shopping, or to initiate a deep conversation on a day you had planned for celebration.

**Care for the body:** Physical factors such as fatigue and low blood sugar, can contribute to a sense of sadness. When feeling down, extra attention to your health is helpful. “Take care of yourself,” Forshey urges. “Adequate sleep, exercise, and good nutrition relieve stress, deter depression and improve self-

esteem.” That doesn't mean you have to avoid *every* Christmas cookie, but take care of your body.

Healthy habits are sometimes set aside during the holidays. When supporting one who is struggling, you can help by offering to go for a walk together or by making healthy eating choices. The disciplines of diet and exercise always seems a [little easier with a partner](#). Be that partner.

**Watch your language:** Be mindful of times you talk to yourself in ways you would never speak to another. Thoughts like, “I should be over this by now,” or “I'm ruining Christmas for everyone,” add guilt, which exacerbates the sadness. Instead, look for things to celebrate. When you get yourself to go to that party, pat yourself on the back. When you turn down that third cup of eggnog, tell yourself how proud you are of your accomplishment. Be your own cheerleader.

Cindy Elrod reminds us also to be cognizant of what we say to others. “Avoid these phrases: ‘It's Christmas! Catch the spirit!’, ‘You're just sad because you WANT to be sad!’, ‘I know just how you feel,’ or ‘If you really believed in the reason for the season, you wouldn't be sad.’” None of these is helpful. “Giving advice,” Elrod continues, “often results in the other person feeling minimized, dismissed, judged, or unheard.” Focus your attention on listening rather than talking during this time.

**Worship:** While typical Christmas worship services and programs may not be appealing to you, many churches offer special [Blue Christmas](#) or [Longest Night](#) worship gatherings. Churches design these services to offer those in attendance the hope of Christmas even while feeling a sense of sadness.

Joyce Kieffer has been planning “Blue Christmas: A Service of Hope” for Community United Methodist Church of New Cumberland, PA for ten years. The service, followed by a time of prayer and fellowship, has been valuable to those participating. “The Blue Christmas service gives people a place to validate their sadness, and to find kindred spirits,” she says, in others who are also sad. This year, she continued, “people stayed and stayed. Talking to each other. They didn't want to leave, but needed time to linger and relax.”

To find a United Methodist church near you offering special worship gatherings, use [Find-A-Church](#) to check websites and other contact information for congregations in your area. Then, invite someone to join you for worship. Both of you will find comfort, healing, and peace during what is often a hectic season.

It is unrealistic to expect you or your loved ones to feel better simply because it is the season to be jolly. Be intentional in addressing the sadness. Although it may not feel like the most wonderful time of the year, the event we are celebrating – “The Word became flesh and made his home among us” (John 1:14 CEB) – reminds us that Jesus is near, even when we are feeling down.

*\*Joe Iovino works for UMC.org at United Methodist Communications. He may be reached at [jiovino@umcom.org](mailto:jiovino@umcom.org) or 615.312.3733.*



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