



THE JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

# MESSENGER

## MISSION

We, as individuals and as a congregation empowered by the Holy Spirit, strive to serve God by walking with Christ to reach the individual, touch the community, and serve the world.

John Wesley  
United Methodist Church  
1927 West Kemper Road  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45240-1421  
Phone: (513) 825-0733  
Fax: (513) 825-8090  
Website: [www.johnwesleychurch.com](http://www.johnwesleychurch.com)  
E-mail address: [info@jwumc.com](mailto:info@jwumc.com)

## SUNDAY MORNINGS

**Worship Services:** 10:00 AM

**Sunday School:** Children—during service  
Adults—various times

## STAFF

**Pastor** Kalamba Kilumba  
[kkilumba@jwumc.com](mailto:kkilumba@jwumc.com)

**Certified Lay Minister** Dave Conaway  
[dave@jwumc.com](mailto:dave@jwumc.com)

**Office Mgr.** Christie Riggsby  
[christie@jwumc.com](mailto:christie@jwumc.com)

**Office Associate** Pim Kremer  
[pim@jwumc.com](mailto:pim@jwumc.com)

**Media Coordinator** Barb Wetzel

**Music Director**  
Joanna Duhaime  
[jiduhaime@gmail.com](mailto:jiduhaime@gmail.com)

**Organist** Sam Melson

**Accompanist** Tisha Patton

**E.L.C. Admin.** Melissa Fille  
[JWELC@jwumc.com](mailto:JWELC@jwumc.com)

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[messenger@jwumc.com](mailto:messenger@jwumc.com).

December, 2024



Dear Friends,

As we enter the sacred season of Advent, our hearts are filled with anticipation and hope. This is a time of preparation, reflection, and joyful expectation as we await the celebration of the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Advent invites us to pause amidst the busyness of our lives and to focus on the profound mystery of God's love made manifest in the world. It is a season of light in the darkness, a time to rekindle our faith and to open our hearts to the transformative power of God's grace.

During these weeks of Advent, let us take time to reflect on the themes of hope, peace, joy, and love. Let us light the Advent candles, each flame a reminder of the light of Christ that shines in our lives and in our world. As we prepare our homes and our hearts for Christmas, may we also reach out to those in need, sharing the love and compassion that Christ has shown us.

*"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shone." (Isaiah 9:2)*

Christmas is a celebration of the Incarnation, the moment when God became one of us, sharing in our humanity and bringing us the gift of salvation. It is a time to rejoice in the good news of great joy that is for all people. As we gather with family and friends, let us remember the true meaning of Christmas and give thanks for the immeasurable gift of God's love.

May this Advent and Christmas season be a time of renewal and blessing for each of you. May the peace of Christ fill your hearts and homes, and may you experience the joy and wonder of this holy season.

With prayers and blessings,

Pastor  
Kalamba  
Kilumba



## KEEP SEEKING HIM



## Christmas Eve Schedule

4:00 PM – Family Service. The John Wesley Bells and the Praise Band will be heading our music program during this service.

11:00 PM – Candlelight Service. The Chancel Choir will be heading our music program. We will have candle lighting at this service.

Join us for the celebration of Christ's birth.



### Call to Prayer – “Pray without Ceasing”

Dear Parishioners, We invite you to join us in prayer every Tuesday at 8 AM. Let us come together as a community to seek God's guidance, strength, and peace. Your presence and prayers are powerful.

Together, we can make a difference.

(1 Thessalonians 5:17)

In Christ's Love, Pastor





# Candy Cane Christmas!

December 7 - 2:00-4:00 PM

Join us for cookies,  
hot chocolate, crafts,  
music, popcorn, stories,  
and a visit with Santa!

John Wesley United Methodist Church  
1927 West Kemper Road



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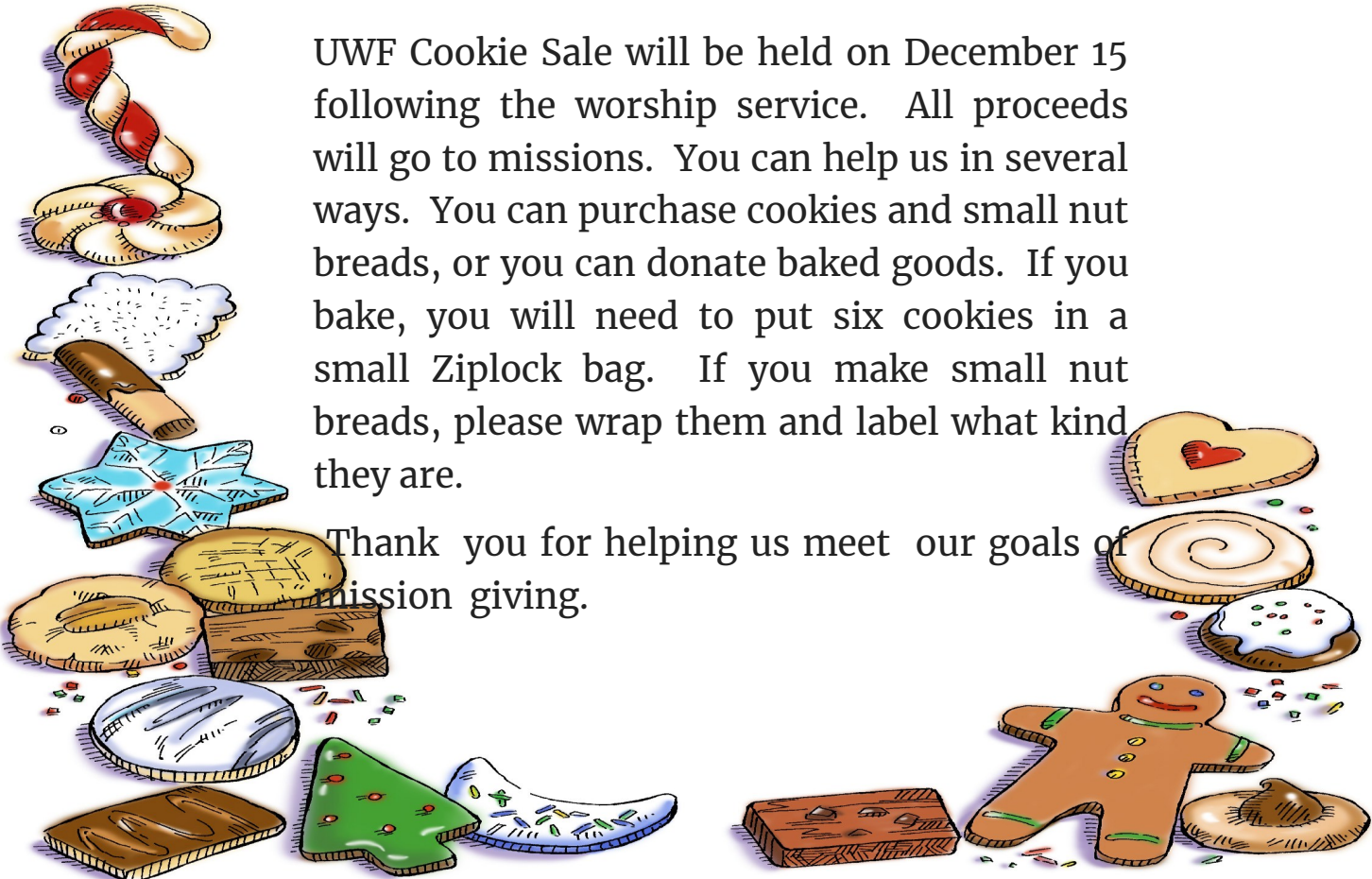


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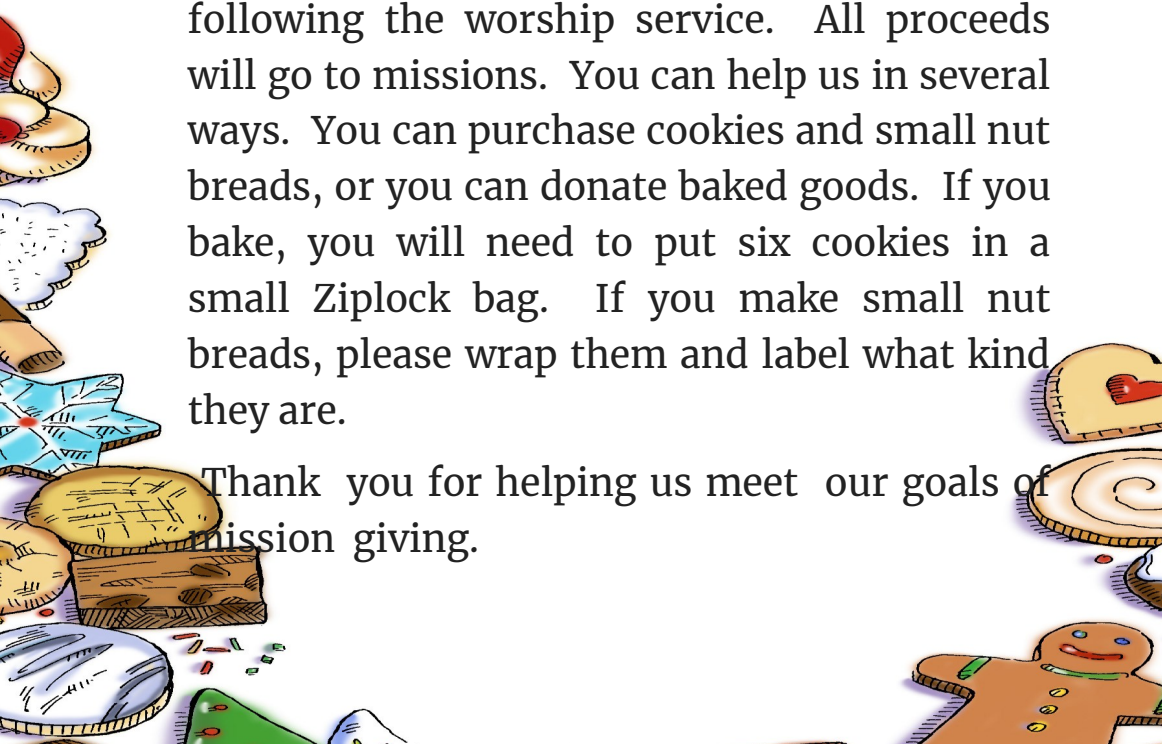
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UWF Cookie Sale will be held on December 15 following the worship service. All proceeds will go to missions. You can help us in several ways. You can purchase cookies and small nut breads, or you can donate baked goods. If you bake, you will need to put six cookies in a small Ziplock bag. If you make small nut breads, please wrap them and label what kind they are.

Thank you for helping us meet our goals of mission giving.



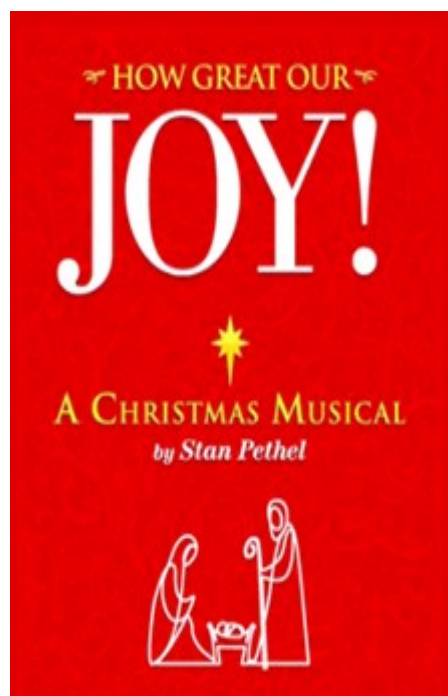
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### **You Are Invited!**



Join us for a heartwarming celebration of the season with our church cantata, "How Great Our Joy!"

This special presentation will feature our talented chancel choir, the captivating narration of Eric Christianson, and delightful performances by some of our JW children.

Date: December 15th

Time: During our morning service

Come and share in the joy and spirit of the season with us. We look forward to seeing you there!



## DO YOU LIKE TO COOK?

Our Coalition partner, Augsburg Lutheran Church, provides a free meal to anyone on the third Sunday evening of each month. Besides providing food, and a small food pantry, they get to know the regular attendees – truly a wonderful ministry. A small group does all the preparation and serving.

If you like to cook, and would be willing to offer some time, your help would be welcome. For their Thanksgiving meal on November 17, they are planning for 150 people. If you would like to help, there are two possibilities. 1. You could prepare a turkey or a dish of stuffing ahead of time. 2. You could help with the last minute prep and serving the day of the dinner. The December 15 dinner will be ham and potato dishes.

For more information, contact Cheryl Harper at 513-829-0936 or cell 513-608-2869. For more complete information, contact Joyce Gronostaj at 513-604-1572.



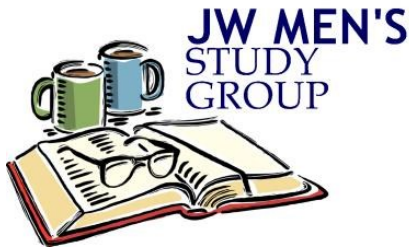
*Thank  
You!*

Our family would like to thank you for all of your prayers, visits, cards, emails, texts and hugs. 2024 has been a challenge for the Wetzels. God and our church family has gotten us through all the rough times. Each and everyone of you mean so much to us. We are so blessed! Thank you again and maybe say a little prayer that 2025 is a better year (and the rest of 2024 too)

Love,  
The Wetzel Family







## **"CALLED, Hearing and Responding to God's Voice" by Susan Robb**

First Saturday of each month in Room 8.

8 AM - Video followed by discussion.

9 AM - Breakfast at Frisch's on Hamilton Ave.

There is no book, no reading, no prep, and no homework. All you need to do is show up each month as you are able.



### **Room Use and Calendar Scheduling**

In order to have a meeting or an event on the calendar, you must contact Christie at [christie@jwumc.com](mailto:christie@jwumc.com) or call me at 513-825-0733. If you haven't confirmed your meeting through me, then it's not on the calendar and another group might end up getting that spot or date. If you are setting up a special event on a Sunday during worship (selling cookies, setting up a registration table, providing cake or treats) you also need to contact me to get that on the calendar.

Regularly reoccurring monthly meetings don't need to be cleared through me once we talk at the beginning of the year and you are assigned a meeting date and time. Please let me know if you have to change your meeting time or date, whether it's a one time change or a permanent change.

If you use a room, please leave it exactly how you found it. Other groups use that room too and expect a certain amount of chairs, tables, and equipment to be in certain rooms. If you have to move anything out of a room, please make sure you put it back in the same room when you are done.

Keep in mind that all of our classrooms and meeting spaces are used by a variety of people throughout the week. No one group "owns" a certain room or meeting space so we all need to be kind and gracious as we go about the business of being the hands and feet of Jesus.

If you have any questions about meetings, scheduling, or room use, please always direct them to me, [christie@jwumc.com](mailto:christie@jwumc.com) or call me at 513-825-0733.

Be a rainbow in someone's cloud,





A new concept and direction for adult and family ministries at John Wesley is in the works. But we cannot let the cat out of the bag quite yet. A planning development team will be assembled soon. If you enjoy or want to get out more often doing exciting stuff, this may be your bag. See Mark Upton if this interests you.

One Christmas tradition that has been at John Wesley since I can remember is the Mitten Tree. We will have the tree up in the narthex again this year following Hanging of the Greens. Please bring mittens, hats, and socks to hang on the tree. We will have clothespins in a basket under the tree. We will also have a basket for extra items that may not fit on the tree. We are collecting children and adult sizes.



We have always had a good response in previous years, and I am sure that will happen again.





## SHORT STORIES FROM JW'S HOUSE

Hi, this is Bobby Woodward with a social justice message. At this time, I'll share more about God calling me to lead a LGBT diversity network in the workplace in 1999. As I shared previously, all members of this group participated anonymously except for the Diversity Committee Representative (me). Some folks like to frame the issue as people making a decision to adopt 'a gay lifestyle'. I came to understand that the decision has more to do with the struggle around keeping their gayness a secret to avoid persecution, versus coming out of the closet to embrace the world in their authentic identity as God created them to be.

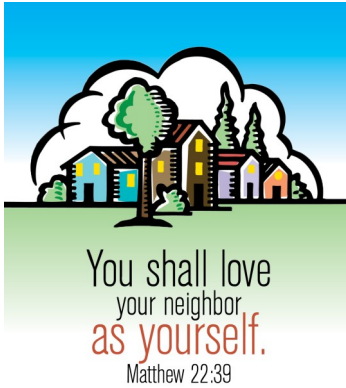
One day, we had our network meeting offsite at a bar. It was at this bar that I facilitated a discussion about God, religion, and being a part of a church community. As it turns out, every one of them was raised in a church community as a child. As adults, none of them felt welcomed in churches. At that moment, I realized that I could not invite my friends to my local United Methodist Church. My church had taken a stand in writing and sent to the Bishop a declaration that they welcome LGBT people and would walk alongside them as they repent of their 'wicked ways' in seeking the path to righteousness through Jesus Christ. As it turns out, this declaration is not all that inviting or welcoming when applied to real people. I was too embarrassed and troubled by the declaration to invite them to my church.

From my Delaware office, I received a phone call from Philadelphia asking if I would consider leading their LGBT group temporarily as their leader had transferred to another part of the country. After getting approvals from my site, I rode Amtrak into Center City Philadelphia once a month to lead the meetings. It was only a few months before they found a permanent leader. During this time the Philly group invited the Delaware group to participate with them in the annual Philadelphia Gay Pride Parade. We began this outing at a restaurant near the parade route for breakfast. At breakfast, there was a similar discussion with both groups about God, religion, and church. The results were similar with most individuals raised as Christians but not feeling welcome in churches. After breakfast, we went a couple of blocks to the parade route where everyone was encouraged to join the parade. We walked in the parade for a few blocks before heading back to our car. It was a lot of fun for Susan and I; an experience we will never forget!

Some members left our church because they didn't believe the local church declaration was condemning enough. Susan and I left that church because we felt like hypocrites after getting to know our new friends and realizing they would not really be welcomed. God had opened our eyes! We transferred our membership to another UM Church near University of Delaware that was much more accepting and welcoming of all individuals. After these diversity network experiences, I was deeply touched by an infant baptism one Sunday in our new church home. The two moms and their children came forward with their new infant to be baptized. One of the moms was in charge of children's ministry at this church. The pastors, moms, brothers and sisters all placed hands on the infant. The congregation also extended hands from where they were standing as we joined in the congregational pledge (Page 44, United Methodist Hymnal):

**“With God’s help we will so order our lives after the example of Christ,  
that this child, surrounded by steadfast love, may be established in the faith,  
and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to life eternal.”**





When Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment he replied, "Love the Lord your God with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Matthew 22:36-39. Our JWUMC vision calls us to "reach, touch, and serve" our neighbors and we do it throughout the year in many ways. At Christmas, there are some special ways we "love our neighbors."

**1. Christmas Offering.** We will be restocking the Pastor's Emergency Fund. These are some of the urgent needs that "neighbors" request: assistance with rent payments, utility bills (electricity and water), food (especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas), gas, and education fees (such as for books). Our

neighbors might be members of our congregation or folks who live nearby. You can put cash or a check in one of the special offering envelopes or send it to the church office. For a check, please write "Christmas Offering" on the subject line.

**2. Angel Wishes.** Now in its 14th year, the Angel Wishes program will be assisting 35 families, including 142 people. These are clients of Tri-County S.O.U.L. Ministries who have applied for and been accepted into our Caring Center. These families have a strong Christian faith and are working to become more self-sufficient. We are asking you to make a cash donation to "Angel Wishes" so we can help these families with something significant. These are not your typical Christmas gifts; the wishes granted are very practical and necessary. Here are a few "Angel Wishes" that have been granted in the past: Duke or water bill, car repairs, doctor or dental work, rent, car loan payment, tires or gift cards for groceries.

**For instructions, find the "Wooden Angel" in Dunlap Hall and take a reminder note and Angel Wishes envelope. Any amount is welcome and helpful.** Checks can be made payable to John Wesley with "Angel Wishes" in the memo line. If you choose to contribute, please get your donation to the church by Sunday, 12/15. You can mail it or put it in the offering plate.

### **VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR S.O.U.L.**

S.O.U.L. could use a volunteer who has a truck and would be willing to pick up supplies at the Freestore Foodbank warehouse. It's near the river, about ½ hour from JWUMC. Ideally, it would be helpful to have 2 people who could go once a month, help load the truck and deliver it to S.O.U.L. at the Nazarene Church in Springdale. For more information, call Pat Westerman at 513-824-1399.





**For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.**

Matthew 18:20

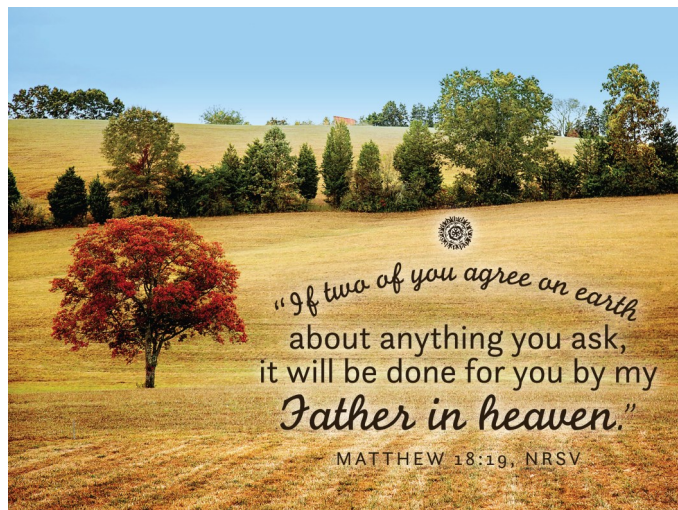
When Stephen Ministers meet with a care receiver, they don't come alone. Stephen Ministers carry with them the promise Jesus made in Matthew 18:20.

When a Stephen Minister listens, Jesus is there to listen. When a Stephen Minister offers words of understanding and compassion, Jesus is there to comfort and bless. Stephen Ministers learn early in their training; they are the care giver - Christ is the cure giver Who brings wholeness. It's through the presence and power of the risen Savior that burdens are lifted and wholeness is possible.

Won't you let one of our John Wesley Stephen Ministers walk with you during a difficult time in your life? Remember, they won't come alone.

For more information, please contact Pastor Kalamba or one of our Stephen Leaders: Gary Ward ([gward@cinci.rr.com](mailto:gward@cinci.rr.com)) or Susan DeNyse ([sdenyse@me.com](mailto:sdenyse@me.com))

Matthew 18:19 - **Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.**





# Prayer Chain

Please ALWAYS send prayer requests to: [prayerchain@jwumc.com](mailto:prayerchain@jwumc.com)

Whether it's day, night or weekends, always send your prayer requests to the address above. From that email address, your prayer request will be sent along to the main prayer chain distribution list by me (Christie) or by Tavane.

Anyone can send a request to the prayer chain. Also, feel free to call the office and we can write down your prayer request and send it out for you.

**THIS PART IS VERY IMPORTANT-** Please remember, when replying to prayer chain emails, you need to put the person's email address in the TO section of your reply. Otherwise, your response will only come back to the church office.

Thank you to everyone on the prayer chain for their faith and devotion in praying. You all are a powerful bunch! The Lord gives strength to his people; the Lord blesses his people with peace." ~ Psalm 29:11

If you have any questions about this information, or about the Prayer Chain in general, please contact me at [christie@jwumc.com](mailto:christie@jwumc.com).

Share  
THE *joy*  
OF Christmas





# Pickleball

The 9:00 Sunday school class has converted half of Wesley Hall into two pickleball courts. We have three times reserved weekly for those of you in our congregation who would like to join us. We're set up for Tuesdays and Thursdays from 4:00-6:00 and Saturdays from 10:00 to noon. You need to enter by the back Wesley Hall door, and ring the door bell if you do not have a key. Contact Marilyn Shultz if you have questions.



## Christmas Greetings from S O U L PANTRY

The shoppers and the volunteers at the Pantry very much appreciate all the donations you have brought in through the year. It is always so good to see a well stocked pantry from which our clients can choose what they need.

For the month of **December**, we are going to continue to **collect hearty soups and canned pastas**. However, you may contribute anything that you would like.

We can use anything and everything!

Thank you again for your generosity! You all are the BEST!

PS. Remember our **ANGEL WISHES** for our clients.



## SHARING OUR BLESSINGS IN DECEMBER

For over 30 years, Found House IHN has provided a number of services to families who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, mostly using temporary housing in churches. For folks in temporary housing, they operate a day center to provide child care and further assistance to the families. While they still use overnight stays in churches, they opened an exciting new program last year. With the support of many community organizations, churches, grants, etc. they opened Melrose Place, an apartment building which provides housing for 26 families, pets included.

In addition to basic housing needs, they also have a number of specific programs targeted to special needs. One example is the Child Enrichment program to combat the negative effects of homelessness on children. To learn more about all their wonderful programs, check out their website: <https://www.foundhouse.org>

To quote their website, "All Found House programs take a holistic, community based approach, by connecting families to tools and resources, to move families out of homelessness rapidly while helping them retain their housing and achieve success in the long-term."

### Three Ways to Help

1. On Communion Sunday, place your donation (cash or check) in one of the baskets on a front pew.
2. Any Sunday in December, place your donations in the offering plate. Put "Found House" on the memo line of a check or cash in an envelope marked the same way.
3. You can also send a check to the church marked the same way.

As we appreciate our homes, especially during the holiday season, we can feel good about helping provide this basic need for others.





# Devotions Along the Way

by Gary Ward



**“Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Matthew 1:23 NKJV**

**For in Christ lives all the fullness of God in a human body.** Colossians 2:9 NLT

Think about it. God the Father came to live *with* us in the form *of* us. Let’s consider how the human eyes, hands, heart, and feet of Jesus, connect us to God’s love and grace.

Jesus’ eyes looked upon a woman caught in the sin of adultery (John 8). Moses’ Law was clear: She must be stoned to death. But Jesus’ eyes saw more than her sin. He saw a precious soul in need of grace. Instead of stones, Jesus offered forgiveness – and a new beginning. His eyes see our sin, and He offers the same to us through relationship with Him.

Jesus’ hands were unique, as they alone bore the fingerprints of God. Whatever Jesus touched was changed forever: Blind eyes regained sight (Mark 8, Matthew 20); Diseases were healed (Matthew 8); Limbs and lives were restored (Luke 22); The dead returned to life (Luke 7); Little, miraculously became much (Matthew 14). As in biblical times, Jesus can still touch our sick bodies, broken finances, and troubled lives through relationship with Him.

Jesus’ “heart” was on full display during His divine appointment with the woman at the well (John 4). She was a sinner, an outcast, and a Samaritan woman. Any of those descriptors would have kept a self-righteous, first century Rabbi at a respectable distance. Their encounter allowed Jesus’ heart to show compassion and caring to one who desperately needed both. She was forever changed. In what ways are you an outcast? Jesus’ heart is waiting to shower you with compassion and caring through relationship with Him.

Aside from a short donkey ride into Jerusalem, Jesus walked everywhere he went. It’s estimated His feet traveled more than 3,000 miles during His adult ministry. The important point is Jesus’ feet walked as far as needed to share the truth of God’s love for *everyone*. Not just the righteous. Not only the “church goers.” Not just those acceptable to society. Jesus intentionally sought out sinners, tax collectors, drunkards, the marginalized, and the hopeless. How far did His feet walk to find you and me? All the way to the cross...

What began in Bethlehem was completed on Calvary. Jesus’ finished work made a way for us to have a reconciled relationship with God the Father. Today, His eyes still see us. His hands still touch us. His heart still cares for us. His feet still finds us. Thanks be to God.





## Birthdays

- 2 Becky Bashor
- 3 Isabella Borden
- 4 David Medkeff
- 5 Mike Griffin
- 7 Judy Miller
- 14 Kathy Chen, Margaret Fille
- 15 Tracy Ruberg, Joe Liles
- 16 Ron Schaller
- 17 Judy Day
- 18 Eric Canter
- 24 Carol Walters
- 25 Darlene Reed
- 27 Scott Kosarko
- 29 Scott Miller, Sharon Davis
- 31 Jean Crosby



## Anniversaries

- 3 Hugh & Grace Thompson
- 4 Jerry & Pat Bennett
- 12 Denny & Linda Osterhaus
- 23 Harry & Barbara Beutel, Steve & Stefanie Williams
- 29 Andy & Nancy Shreve

