



THE CALLER

The United Methodist Church of Berea ♦ 170 Seminary Street ♦ Berea, Ohio 44017
(440) 234-3525 Phone (440) 234-3078 Fax www.umcb.org

Volume 16, No 12

combined December 2015 & January 2016



Christmas, 2015

“And this shall be the sign unto you, ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.” Such was the angel’s message to those Bethlehem shepherds out on the hillside watching their sheep.

The angel said, “This shall be a sign.” But what kind of sign is a baby in a manger? It seems more like a way to ask directions. “Say,” the shepherds could have said to anyone walking by, “Have you heard any babies crying in a stable?” “Where’s the nearest manger?”

But the angel didn’t say, “Here’s what to look for.” He said, “This shall be a sign unto you.” So what sign were the angels to find in the stable? More to the point, what sign are we to find?

The baby in the manger is the sign of the power of God. Now that seems a bit absurd, because nothing is more powerless, more vulnerable, than a baby.

But the power of God is there—really it is! We find it earlier in the story when the angel Gabriel comes to Mary to tell her that she is to give birth to Jesus. Her answer? “How can that be? I’m not married!” And the angel replies, “With God, nothing is impossible.”

In fact, Jesus’ whole life is a sign of God’s power:

A baby born of a virgin? Impossible.

A little family of peasants, Mary, Joseph and Jesus, outwitting a murderous king? Impossible!

Jesus as a lad of 12 managing to confound the greatest thinkers of his day in the Temple? Impossible!

In his daily ministries, the blind gained their sight, the deaf, their hearing, the lame their ability to walk, and the dead were brought back to life. And then, when this world had had enough of him and killed him, Jesus rose from the dead. Impossible!

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Do you begin to get the picture? Do you begin to understand the sign? Nothing is more powerful than the power of God in his world. And in Jesus we see that that power is the power of infinite love. No wonder the angels could say to the shepherds, “Be not Afraid!”

And that is what they are still saying—even in a world where the headlines are too often filled with hate and pain. The Baby of Bethlehem is the sign and the reality of God, his purposes, and his infinite power and love.

Rev. Skip Myers



November 29: **Advent I**
Scripture: Matthew 1:1-17
Sermon: “All Part of Life’s Rich Pattern”

December 6: **Advent II**
Scripture: Matthew 2:16-18
Sermon: “Herod”

December 13: **Advent III**
Scripture: Matthew 2:13-15
Sermon: “Hope”

December 20: **Advent IV**
Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25
Sermon: “Birth”

December 24: **Christmas Eve**
4:00 Candlelight Carol Service, Chancel Choir
7:00 Family Service
9:00 Candlelight Carol Service, NEWSingers
11:00 Chapel – Candlelight Communion
Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12
Sermon: “The Old, Old Story”

December 27, 10:00 a.m. **Student Sunday**
A SINGLE SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS

January 3: **Epiphany Sunday**
Scripture: Matthew 2:1-12
Sermon: “Another Way”



COSROW Corner – December 2015

The excitement of Christmas varies as we grow older. Christians have changed over the years and especially since modern scholarship has informed us of realities we never had known. It was St. Francis of Assisi (1181-1226) who after visiting the Holy Land, decided that his parishioners would be more informed with a symbolic manger scene. He began a tradition that we follow each December. Although we now know that Jesus was born in Galilee, not Bethlehem, and that many other traditions are not factual, the crèche reminds us of a real truth: Jesus began as a baby just as we do. He brought the message of unconditional love. How apropos that the Pope chose that name. That is a message of love about which we are reminded every year.

Submitted by Jo Swanson

Church Family Prayer Concerns

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------|
| Bruce Akins | Carol Isgro |
| Florence Baker | Marilyn Jelinek |
| Ann Benson | Janice Kavandar |
| Esther Berger | Clint Lunt |
| Mary Bittinger | Margaret McCreedy |
| Fran Bobo | Bernice McHenry |
| Lenora Cool | Clarence Nealy |
| Bob & Donna Dial | Tom Oakley |
| Cleda Fletcher | Roger Reeves |
| Marlene Felts | Jeanette Sheneman |
| Laurie Garvin | Sarah Ulmer |
| Helen Graham | Kathleen Wargelin |
| Karen Grant | Dorothy Wheaton |
| Betty Green | Eva Williamson |

Our Sympathy to:

- Tom Szudy on the death of his mother, Blanche Szudy on October 25.
- The family and friends of Nancy Edmondson, who passed away on November 1.

WORDS OF THANK YOU AND CONGRATULATIONS!

- The deluge of cards I received for my 90th birthday was a joy and a treat. They came from all over (even Texas - thank you Linda Langley). It was like a two week party. Some came early, some late, some funny, some serious, some with notes, all signed with love. Which is what I feel for all of you.
Janice Arnold
- James William Warnsman, born November 5, 2015 in Bethesda, Maryland to Karl and Paula Warnsman. Paternal grandparents are Boyd and Judy Warnsman.
- The Craft Committee for the United Methodist Women would like to thank many people for helping make our Craft Show a fun and successful event. This includes all who attended and supported the event. The profit we made will go to several outreach mission projects. This is the kind of event that takes much time and many hands. We thank the set up committee, the publicity group, the women who made and sold the lovely items at the WMW booth, all of the large kitchen crew headed by Dee Bosl and Laura Sperry for the delicious meal including the many pies that were made by members of the church. We especially appreciate all the extra time given by our church staff Irene, Joanne, and Jim above and beyond their regular duties. The silent auction baskets were beautifully put together and wrapped thanks to Cass Beckman and her helpers. Our UWM Treasurer and also pie coordinator, Marilyn Smith, for all her time and efforts. The staff person to UMW - Vivien Swaddling did many things to make the days go smoothly including the snacks and drinks for vendors and the Tasty Treat Cafe on Sat. All of the vendors and shoppers were greeted and made welcome at the door each day by the committee headed by Dorene Larkey and Molly Arthur. We also thank the Arise leaders for their willingness to move the stage in order for the tables to be set up. It took lots of people working together for it to all come together in order for us to fulfill our mission to reach out to our community and the missions we support. Thank you all and any names we may have missed.



UMW Reading Program: Everyone who has completed the UMW reading program for 2015 by reading at least one book in each of the five categories and some articles in the "Response" magazine should turn in your reading record to Betsy Meikle by December 31. Please just place your list of books in the UMW mailbox beside the offices.

Thanks, Betsy Meikle

Sunday Opportunities

HOMEBUILDERS SUNDAY SCHOOL

ALL ARE WELCOME 10:00AM IN THE PARLOR



- December 6 and 13th - Join us as Dr. Alan Kolp inspires us to return to Bethlehem.
- January 3rd - Our Church Organization led by Roger Reeves
- January 10th - Problems and Solution Facing our Church led by Roger Reeves
- January 17th and 24th Book Review led by Jo Swanson
- January 31st - Topic to be announced



UMW Sunday

UMW / Missions Sunday is January 10, 2016. We are pleased that our own Diane DeCaprio will be speaking on "Grace and Service."

- * Following the 11:15 worship, there will be an all church Potluck Luncheon. UMW will provide ham for this dinner and looks forward to potluck dishes from the congregation.

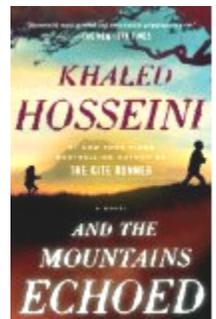
At the potluck, Kim Pride from Habitat for Humanity will give us an overview and update of the apostles build homes in the Stockyard area of Cleveland.

Additionally, Missions Committee has organized our bi-annual Missions Fair highlighting our church's missions activities. Please be sure to visit the various displays to learn more about our UMCB mission efforts. Your ideas for future projects are always welcome, as well.



Khaled Hosseini was born in Afghanistan but left the country in 1976 at the age of 11, eventually moving to the United States where he worked as a doctor.

Khaled Hosseini who is the author of Kite Runner and Thousand Splendid Suns has has written a new novel about how we love, how we take care of one another, and how the choices we make resonate through generations. In this tale revolving around not just parents and children but brothers and sisters, cousins and caretakers, Hosseini explores the many ways in which families nurture, wound, betray, honor, and sacrifice for one another; and how often we are surprised by the actions of those closest to us, at the times that matter most. Following its characters and the ramifications of their lives and choices and loves around the globe—from Kabul to Paris to San Francisco to the Greek island of Tinos—the story expands gradually outward, becoming more emotionally complex and powerful with each turning page.



This book will be available in room 12 on Sunday December 6th. This will be an on-going study on Sundays at 10:00 AM through January.

Submitted by Deaconess Karen Caldwell

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Week Day & Saturday Opportunities

Read and Grow Discussion Group

- Monday, December 14 from 6:45 to 8:00 PM in the parlor.

Book Title is: *"The Storied Life of A.J. Fikry"* by Gabrielle Zevin

The book is funny, tender and moving and reminds us all exactly why we read and why we love.



- January 11 from 6:45 to 8:00 PM in the parlor.

Book Title is: *"The Crossover"* by Kwame Alexander

Twelve year old Josh Bell and his twin brother Jordan are awesome on the basketball court. But Josh has more than basketball in his blood and tells his family's story in verse.

For more information, call Janet Mallarnee, [440-235-7331](tel:440-235-7331) or Jan Harlamert [440-243-7126](tel:440-243-7126)

Demystifying and Dignifying Dementia

Tuesday, December 8 at 6:30pm

Janice Lovelace, Hospice RN will be our speaker.

Others outside of our congregation are welcome if you wish to invite someone. Topic will be how to keep the communication open between individuals with dementia and their family.

Sponsored by Adult Council



Dinner for Eight is an informal dining group involving 8 couples who enjoy fellowship and conversation around a good meal. Each member commits to preparing and hosting one meal per year while other members contribute the side dishes, beverage, and dessert. Dinner can be offered from one's home, from the church, or from an area restaurant.

If you think you would be interested in joining this dining group, a new session is starting in January 2016. Please contact Molly Force, Dinner for Eight Coordinator, at: [440-888-8417](tel:440-888-8417) to be placed on the list for the upcoming calendar year. Or e-mail Molly at: mforce@berea.k12.oh.us.

UMCB Youth Group

For more information about youth activities go to: umcbyouth.weebly or text/call Sarah 417-343-3775 or text @umcbyouth to 81010 for updates!



- December 6 - #NOfilter Sunday FUN Day! 11:30 AM -1:00 PM Youth Room
- December 11-13 Take RISKS Senior High Retreat –leaving church at 7:00 PM \$60. Permission slips due Nov. 22.
- December 21 – White Elephant Christmas Party! Youth Room at 7 p.m. – please bring a snack to share and a gift equal to \$5.
- December 29 – Tobogganing @ Strongsville Chalet - leaving church at 1:00 PM \$12. Permission slips due Dec. 13.

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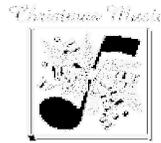
FRIDAY NOON CONCERTS

NEXT CONCERT – FRIDAY, DECEMBER 4TH *Sounds of Christmas*

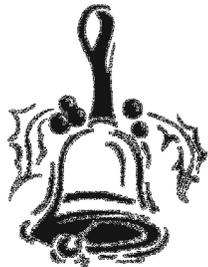


The next First Friday Noon concert will be December 4th. Organist, Barbara MacGregor, will play music of this beautiful season on the Janke pipe organ along with seasonal “bells and whistles”.

A reception with homemade Christmas cookies and Hot Cider Wassail follows the program. Plan to attend and bring guest as we welcome the blessed Christmas season with music.



Our Giving Tree is ready! We have stars for several children who are listed with Berea Community Outreach this year. If you decide to sponsor a child, please bring the gift back (unwrapped) in a bag with the star taped on the outside by December 13. They have requested that you place wrapping paper and ribbons in the bag with the gift, so parents may wrap it themselves. There is a box in the Narthex for the gifts. If you decide to bring a gift card, please place it in an envelope with the star taped on it, and put it in Joanne Mansfield's mail slot on her door.



Bell-Choir Concert and Carol Sing

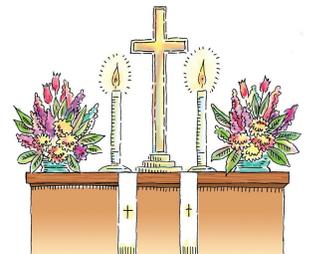
December 13 at 4:00 PM in the Sanctuary

The concert will feature ancient and modern Christmas tunes rung by the Bell Choir, a Christmas Carol singalong, and more music by solo artists.



The 2016 Altar Flower Sign Up Calendar is posted in the hallway by the drinking fountain.

Reserve your special Sunday to dedicate the flowers on the altar in memory, celebration, honor of a loved one.



Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow
Praise to God for His Faithful Followers

Thank you to all those who supported Catch-Up Sunday through their prayers and gifts. Over \$6,800 was collected to help us catch-up on our financial obligations. Please continue to pray for our church and church families as we work to further God's kingdom in Berea and world-wide.

Submitted by Finance Committee

University Circle United Methodist Church &
The United Methodist Church of Berea

Neighborhood Luncheon



Future dates for UMCB

- Sunday, December 27, 2015
- Sunday, February 28, 2016
- Sunday, April 24, 2016
- Sunday, June 26, 2016
- Sunday, August 28, 2016

Luncheon volunteers are needed to help prepare the food to be served, serving food to our guest on the serve line and helping in cleaning up the kitchen after the meal is served. We have been blessed to have very helpful, cheerful and wonderful volunteers who have helped with all aspects of this process giving lots of smiles to our guest as they come to be served. If you would like to be part of this team please sign up under the volunteer space on the sheet with the items to be donated. The sign up sheet will be posted at the beginning of the month we are scheduled. Thank you so very much!

Claire Powell / Missions Committee

Hungry to Help Project

Twelve youth and adults joined with many other volunteers at Baldwin-Wallace University on Sunday afternoon November 15th for the PACKAWAY HUNGER mission project. Our goal was to prepare instant food packets for Guatemala. Mission Guatemala is a nonprofit working in the highland of Guatemala. They strive to help meet the basic needs and improve the quality of life of under-served and impoverished Guatemalan children and families. The Mission Committee of UMCB provided the funds for our portion of the project. During our shift over 24, 500 meal packets were prepared for shipment. Our cheer was: "B-E-A-T HUNGER! We all had a good experience working with the college, the community and other churches. Being on a production line for a great cause "WORLD HUNGER was an exciting new experience for us!

Submitted by Vivien Swaddling
Mission Committee Staff Liaison



2016 Mission Fair

In partnership with UMW and for the benefit of Missions. Sunday, January 10, 2016 from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM

- See how our church supports our local community and the world.
- Show how UMCB support one another and our mission to live, learn and love God.
- Educate the congregation and others about our Missions within our church and outside our church.
- Be amazed at how much You do in your offerings to help others.

church e-mail directory



As many of you know we have not had a pictorial directory since 2011. If you wish to have a current listing of members addresses and contact information, please call the

church office. It can be emailed to you or a hard copy can be printed and held for you to pickup. So many of us have dropped our telephone land lines and gone to cell phones. The office tries to keep the membership directory updated as things change.

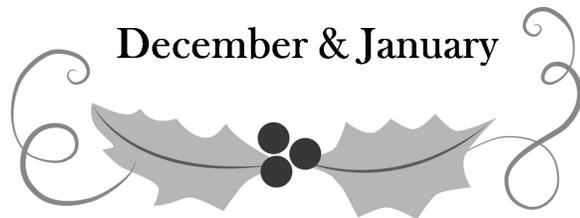
Send your request to:
ipetras@umcb.org

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NOTE: If you wish to discontinue receiving this newsletter, please contact the church office to remove your name from the mailing list.



The HCI Church Vote on November 15 passed the 5 Prescriptions proposed at our HCI weekend in September 2015. Starting in January we will begin the process.



Food Pantry Needs SCAN Collection is December 6th.

SCAN Sunday is December 6. The requests from SCAN have been updated. There is an addition to the SCAN wish list for December. They need instant mashed potatoes, either in pouches or boxes and instant gravy mixes, e.g. McCormick's "just add water" envelopes. They would prefer pouches or cans – **NO GLASS JARS.**

Right now items most needed are: 1) Canned vegetables such as corn, mixed vegetables, carrots, beets, spinach, lima beans, stewed tomatoes, hominy, etc. (NOT GREEN BEANS OR PEAS) 2) Canned fruit such as pears, apricots, pineapple, mixed tropical fruit, fruit cocktail (NOT PEACHES OR MANDARIN ORANGES or APPLESAUCE). There has been no variety in the kinds of canned fruits and vegetables available from the Cleveland food bank and SCAN would like to be able to offer choices to make more interesting meals possible. 3) Paper products are always a critical need – toilet paper, paper towels, Kleenex or Puffs tissues, napkins. All donations of non-perishable are much appreciated.



December 13 is loose coin Sunday. The offering collected will go directly to:

Cradle of Caring
for Needy Families in
Guidestone Programs