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Divine Interruptions

Advent & Christmas Worship Series



NOVEMBER 27, 2022 - JANUARY 8, 2023

The word “advent” is from the Latin *adventus*, meaning “coming” or “arrival.” Throughout the season of Advent, we renew our anticipation not only to celebrate Jesus’ birth at Christmas but, from the larger perspective, to welcome the ultimate fullness of God’s beloved community “on earth as it is in heaven.”

The traditional readings from our scriptures during Advent include a variety of “annunciation” or “announcement” stories: stories that anticipate this arrival or fulfillment of God’s promises. The most familiar of these annunciation stories is from God’s messenger, Gabriel, to Mary, the mother of Jesus (Luke 1.26-38). But all throughout our scriptures, God’s messengers come among God’s people to announce and describe God’s dream and intentions for our lives and for the life of creation. Often, these announcements are a substantial “divine interruption”: disrupting our normal routines and expectations and inviting us into something new.

This year, during our Advent and Christmas seasons (from the First Sunday of Advent on November 27 through Epiphany of the Lord Sunday on January 8), we will explore a few of the many annunciation stories from our scriptures, including those of Hagar, Sarah and Abraham, Hannah, Mary and Joseph, the shepherds, the early church, and the magi. Through these stories, we will consider the many ways God comes into our lives still, as both gracious disruption and generous invitation.

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**ADVENT
& CHRISTMAS
WORSHIP LECTIONARY**

November 27
First Sunday of Advent
God's Annunciation to Hagar
Genesis 16.7-13

December 4
Second Sunday of Advent
God's Annunciation to Sarah & Abraham
Genesis 18.1-15

December 11
Third Sunday of Advent
God's Annunciation to Hannah
1 Samuel 1.19-28; 2.1-10

December 18
Fourth Sunday of Advent
God's Annunciation to Mary & Joseph
Luke 1.26-38
Matthew 1.18-25

December 24 - Christmas Eve
God Accompanies Us in the Darkness
Isaiah 9.2-7
Luke 2.1-14(20)

December 25 - Christmas Day
God Accompanies All Creation
Colossians 1.15-20
John 1.1-14

January 1, 2023 - First Sunday after Christmas Day
God Accompanies Us as a Compassionate Parent
Hosea 11.1-4, 7-9
Matthew 2.13-18

January 8, 2023 - Epiphany of the Lord Sunday
God Accompanies All People
Isaiah 60.1-6, 11
Matthew 2.1-12



COME AS YOU ARE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18
WORSHIP SERVICES AT 9 AND 11 AM

You are a part of God's story! Let's celebrate the coming birth of Jesus with a retelling of the story that includes all of us! Young and Wise are encouraged to pick up a costume or prop on their way into worship to help us retell the Nativity story. No rehearsals, no lines, just a beautiful picture of God's family celebrating that very first Christmas scene and story.

Questions? Want to help with prep?

Contact **Pastor Carrie** at

cantczak@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x105.

THE LONGEST NIGHT

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 21, 7 PM, SANCTUARY

The holiday season can be especially difficult for some of us, a painful reminder of what has been lost or of what has never been. All are welcome to join us on Wednesday, December 21 at 7 PM in the Sanctuary for a time filled with scripture, prayer, candlelight, and Holy Communion. Together, we will remember and give thanks for God's abiding presence even in the longest or loneliest of nights. Invite others, and join us.



CONNECTING, INVITING, & WELCOMING



CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP SERVICES

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 24

4 PM TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE WITH CHOIRS
IN THE SANCTUARY & ONLINE AT [FACEBOOK.COM/UMCBAREA](https://www.facebook.com/umcberea)
7 PM MODERN WORSHIP WITH PRAISE BAND, IN THE SANCTUARY
11 PM TRADITIONAL WORSHIP, IN THE SANCTUARY

We will gather together for three worship services on Saturday, December 24. Each service will include beautiful music, a message of hope, and the traditional passing of candlelight while we sing "Silent Night."

Invite your friends, family members, and neighbors, and join us as we celebrate the gift of God's presence with us in Jesus Christ.



(Artwork by
Tessa Canterbury)

CHRISTMAS DAY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 25

9 AM IN THE SANCTUARY

10:45 AM AT THE RENAISSANCE
(26376 JOHN ROAD, OLMSTED FALLS)

Christmas Day this year falls on a Sunday, and we are going to expand our worship opportunities. On Sunday, December 25, there will be one worship service in our building, at 9 AM in the Sanctuary. Join us as we sing carols, read scripture, and celebrate the ongoing gift of Incarnation, Emmanuel, God-with-us. Our second worship service on Christmas Day will be at the Renaissance (26376 John Road, Olmsted Falls) at 10:45 AM.

If you would like to help lead our Christmas Day worship service at the Renaissance, providing music, reading scripture, or otherwise worshipping alongside our friends there, please contact Pastor Nathan at nhowe@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x101 for more information.

BLESSING OF HOMES

POST-EPIPHANY (JANUARY 6, 2023)

In some parts of the world, there is a Christian custom of inviting God's blessing on dwelling places, including both homes and workplaces, and upon all who live, work, or visit there. Along with prayers for God's blessing, the front or main entrance is marked with chalk as a sign and reminder that we have invited God's presence into our homes.

This tradition is rooted in the visit of the magi to the place where the Christ-child resided (Matthew 2.1-12), and so it is most appropriately practiced near or during the season after the Epiphany, on January 6.



If you would like to share in this brief and simple ritual of worship for your home, please contact **Pastor Nathan** (nhowe@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x101) with a day and time that would be convenient for you, beginning January 6, 2023.



SHARING OUR JOYS & CONCERNS

MEMBERS

- | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Betty Atherton | Christine McMillin |
| Cass Beckman | Betty Miller |
| Barbara Beihl | (Renaissance) |
| Heidi Blue | Rev. Cal Myers |
| Carol Bodle | Donald Powers |
| Hugh Burtner | (Renaissance) |
| Wilda Donegan | Lou Russell (Westlake |
| Molly Force | Villages) |
| Carol & Bruce Forster | Russ Sanderson |
| Debby Haas | Mary Lynn Swartz |
| Jan Heter (Arden | Carol Thompson |
| Courts) | Kathleen Wargelin |
| Elenore Long | Sharon Williams |

MEMBERS AT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

- Shirley Bedford (Independence Village)
- Ann Benson (Western Reserve-Medina)
- June Demmerle (Generations)
- Janice Kavander
- Helen Madis (Renaissance)
- Mary Lou McKissock (Kemper House, Strongsville)
- Pat Sarka (Wesleyan Village, Elyria)
- Barbara Scoon (Vista Springs, Parma)
- Von & Marilyn Smith (Southwest Commons)
- Ruth Vrana (Generations, Strongsville)

WE REACH OUT IN CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO THE FAMILY & FRIENDS OF...

- ...Jim Gorsline, who went on to rest in God's eternal peace on Sunday, October 23.
- ...Daniel Dietz, son of Joan Dietz, who went on to rest in God's eternal peace on Saturday, October 29.
- ...Jack Irey, who went on to rest in God's eternal peace on Friday, November 3.
- ...Linda Chapman, Patty Worthem's sister, who peacefully went on to rest in God's eternal peace on Wednesday, November 9 after many years of illness.

MILITARY

- J.D. Ferut (grandson of Gerry & Jo Boggs)
- Ryan Hopkins
- Bill Lambert (son-in-law of Corky Cline)
- Josh Lambert (grandson of Corky Cline)
- Ben Lebrun
- Zachary New (grandson of Bob & Jackie King)

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Wanda Baulin (sister of Wilda Donegan)
- Dave & Jane Breakey (friends of the Brenneisons)
- Marc Bittinger **
- Cheryl Cheff (mother of Corey Reams)
- Dan Dietz (son of Joan Dietz)
- AmyMarie Dziak (daughter of Marlynda Dziak)
- Spencer Gehring
- Sylvie Isgro-Schicker
- Isaac Kowicki & Oliver Lawrence (great nephews of Cindy Osborn)
- Lillian and Lucas (family friends of the Howes)
- Paul & Kathryn and children (family of Christine and Andy McMillin)
- Joann Mraz (friend of Nancy Schillace)
- Jeanne Sowder (sister of Buck & Karen Caldwell)
- Laura Swartz Steele
- Chet Talarczyk (husband of Judy Talarczyk, Renaissance)

PASTORAL CARE & PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact **Pastor Nathan** at **440-234-3525 x101** or nhowe@umcb.org if you would like to schedule an individual time to talk or if you have a specific prayer request.

You can also submit prayer requests at umcb.org/worshipresources or by emailing the church office at info@umcb.org.

To receive Prayer Concerns by email, visit our website at umcb.org/contact and subscribe in the lower right column.

CONNECTING, INVITING, & WELCOMING



CONNECTING . . .



TEACHING & LEARNING TOGETHER

Ecumenical Youth Group + Kids Christmas Party!

Where: Above-the-Barre
1087 Berea Industrial Pkwy, Berea

When: Sunday, December 4th

Open Gym, 4-5:30

What to Bring: Socks, Water, Snack to Share, White Elephant Gift

Parents of children under 12, please stay and play!

RSVP: Pastor Carrie by Dec. 1st.

Parents need to sign a waiver! Will be sent after you RSVP!



White Elephant Gift Exchange:
NO purchased items - all gifts must be recycled, repurposed, or homemade!



UPCOMING BOOK DISCUSSION *WHOLEHEARTED FAITH* BY RACHEL HELD EVANS WITH JEFF CHU

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 25, 6:30 PM, PARLOR

At the time of her death in 2019, at the age of 37, Rachel Held Evans was recognized widely for her theologically astute, profoundly honest, and beautifully personal books which have guided, edified, and helped to shape countless Christians as they seek to live a just and loving faith. *Wholehearted Faith* is the book she was working on at the time of her death; in it, the author wrestles with God's grace and love, looks unsparingly at what the church is and does, and explores universal human questions about becoming and belonging.

All are welcome to join us. Copies of the books are available through most library systems, but please contact **Pastor Nathan** at nhowe@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x101 if you need help accessing a copy and if you plan to participate.

THURSDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

THURSDAYS BEGINNING JANUARY 12
6:30 PM, VIA ZOOM

We have finished our current book and are looking forward to a start fresh on January 12. Our Bible Study is open to anyone and everyone. We will be studying **Women Rise Up** by Katey Zeh. Books will be available in Rm 12.

For more information and Zoom details, please contact **Mary Lynn Swartz** at marylynn482@gmail.com or 440-409-5931.

GRIEFSHARE

We are finishing up two successful groups of GriefShare, Wednesday's on zoom and then in house on Fridays! Thank you all for being there!

We will restart the Wednesday group on January 11, 2023, again on zoom. We will postpone the Friday one until the weather is decent - probably mid March.

Questions? Please contact **Mary Lynn Swartz** at marylynn482@gmail.com or 440-409-5931.



Mandalas, Candles, & Prayer

SUNDAYS BEGINNING NOVEMBER 27
10 AM, PARLOR

Join us Sundays at 10 am beginning November 27 to bring color and light to the Advent Season! We'll be working contemplatively, sharing scripture, and heartfelt reflections.

Pick up a book now from room 12, for \$10. We have plenty of colored pencils, but feel free to bring your own colors of choice!

ADVENT YOGA WITH JEN MARSHALL

WEDNESDAYS -
NOVEMBER 30, DECEMBER 16,
DECEMBER 14, AND DECEMBER 21
7 PM, PARLOR

Join us November 30, December 6, December 14, & December 21 at 7 PM for Advent Yoga with Jen Marshall.

Stretch your spirit and your body as we contemplate what it means to serve a God who took on flesh. No prior yoga experience necessary!

Bring a yoga/exercise mat if you have access to one; if not, a beach towel will also work.

FAITH AND PROTEST:

THE ROLE OF GOSPEL MUSIC IN MOVEMENTS FOR SOCIAL CHANGE

SUNDAY, JANUARY 15, 10 AM, FELLOWSHIP HALL

Cleveland-based singer/musician Erin Nicole Neal will discuss the history of gospel music from an African American experience and how it had evolved from the age of slavery to the civil rights movement to more modern times. Gospel music influenced culture, and, in particular, its impact on the civil rights movement of the 50s and 60s as activists incorporated freedom songs and protest songs amid the struggle for Civil Rights. The music carried them through marches, jail, demonstrations, and police brutality, as they carried on unabashedly singing, "We Shall Overcome" and "Up Above My Head, I Hear Freedom In The Air" and many more. Erin will demonstrate gospel songs utilized in Civil Rights, as well as Gospel songs throughout its evolving history and discuss why Gospel music was influential in culture and utilized in the Civil Rights struggle.

READ & GROW BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 6:30-8 PM, PARLOR & ON ZOOM

Dates on which we will discuss the upcoming books are changing! The discussion has moved to **Becoming** by Michelle Obama will be on December 12. We will still discuss **Blind Man's Bluff** as planned. Then, on February 13, the discussion has changed to **The Orphan House** by Ann Bennett. Our meetings will be scheduled as partly zoom and partly in-person.

For more information, please contact **Betsy Meikle** at meiklebetsyj@gmail.com or 440-243-5767.





METANOIA PROJECT

Volunteers and food donations are needed to deliver a hot meal to the Metanoia Project hospitality center on Sunday, December 11, and Sunday, January 22. On December 11 the location is Bethany Presbyterian Church on Clinton near W. 65th. In January we go to Franklin Circle Church on Fulton. Jeff Zeager is cooking the main course. There is a sign up sheet on the board outside Room 13 for other donations, including bagged snacks, fruit, vegetable side dish, starch (potato, rice or bread), beverages and dessert. Please make enough to serve 20 people. You may drop off items Sunday in the parlor kitchenette or the main kitchen.

A small serving team will assemble in the main kitchen by 6 PM to load the food and take it to the location. To volunteer, use the sign-up, or email **Laura Rushton** at jlaurush@gmail.com.

Thanks to all who responded to the call for volunteers and donations when we delivered the meal on November 20. Our friends at Metanoia are thankful for your kindness. The warm clothing and footwear we collected will be much needed as the weather gets colder.

DINNER CHURCH



FOOD, FAITH, AND FRIENDSHIP

WEDNESDAYS, DECEMBER 7 & JANUARY 4
6 PM, WESLEY HALL

We welcome you and our neighbors to join us for our first two Dinner Church events! Dinner Church is our newest ministry which combines a worship experience with a fellowship dinner. Community members who may not be able to join us on Sundays for worship, those who especially need community and/or a meal, and those who are just new to church are our expected guests. Please invite your friends and neighbors to meet us around the dinner table!

Church friends, please sign up to bring a dish, help set up or clean up, or help with hospitality for these dates.

Sign up sheets are on the outreach board, or you can contact **Nancy Buehler** at 440-292-6194 or nbuehler75@gmail.com.



THE GIVING TREE

BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11

PLEASE TURN IN

UNWRAPPED GIFTS (BOX IN NARTHEX)
AND GIFT CARDS (MARYANN'S MAILBOX)

All gifts for the Giving Tree are due on Dec. 11. Please remember not to wrap gifts, but place them in a bag with the star attached to the outside. You may include wrapping paper if you wish.

All gift cards should be in an envelope with the star on the outside and placed in Maryann's mailbox in her office door.

Thank you so much for participating in this ministry!



SUPPORT OUR LOCAL FOOD PANTRIES

DONATIONS CAN BE LEFT IN THE CUPBOARD
BETWEEN THE NARTHEX AND THE LIBRARY

Our collections of food continue. Please place donations of non-perishable food in the cupboard between the narthex and the library anytime you are in the building. (If you need help finding the right location, talk to one of the pastors or other staff.)

If you are not planning already to make a trip to the grocery store, please feel free to participate with a monetary donation instead, either by mailing a check to the church office or online at www.umcb.org/donate. Please note "food pantry" on the description line.

Thank you for supporting this effort.



SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18
4 - 6 PM, WESLEY HALL

It's the story of Christmas, brought to life, by YOU! Join us for a delightful afternoon of creating our own Christmas pageants! Santa is sure to stop by and share the story-telling with us! Let's celebrate God's greatest gift together! A holiday dinner will cap off this celebration!

Extra volunteers needed for this popular community event! To sign-up to help out, please sign up on the Outreach Board (by Room 13) or contact **Pastor Carrie** at cantczak@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x105.

E-BIT (ENVIRONMENTAL TIDBIT)

GIFT-WRAPPING IDEAS



ALTERNATIVES AND HOW TO RECYCLE PAPER WRAPPING PAPER

When you wrap your Christmas gifts, "think outside the box" (literally!) and use an alternative to the usual wrapping paper or gift bags. If you have extra fabric and are handy with a sewing machine, make your own wrapping "paper" or gift bag. You can also use a reusable shopping bag or a microfiber cloth (think red or green or one with a fun pattern) with a ribbon to wrap around a bowl of chocolates as your "gift bag." (I received one for my birthday!) You can also make a gift box out of old cards or use other types of paper like old maps or newspaper for a box or wrapping paper.

If you decide to use traditional wrapping paper, it's ok (and there are some fun paper out there!), remember that you can recycle used wrapping paper *unless* it is foil, metallic or is heavily laminated or has metallic flakes or glitter. Please remove sticky labels or lots of tape on the paper that you want to recycle. (Source: <https://www.treehugger.com/is-wrapping-paper-recyclable-5075370>).

Tissue paper is not recyclable but keep on reusing those paper gift bags that you receive and you might be able to reuse that tissue paper too. Have a bright, blessed and "green" Christmas!

*Submitted by Wendy Jelinek
Church & Society/Creation Justice Team*



EQUAL EXCHANGE ITEMS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4
10-11 AM, BY THE PARLOR

Sunday, December 4, 10-11 am, by the Parlor
Equal Exchange coffee, tea, and chocolates make great socking stuffers or gift basket fillers. Visit the Equal Exchange table on Sunday, December 4 and stock up for all your holiday gifting. Thank you for your continued support of farmers around the world who are paid a fair wage for their hard work in producing these items in a sustainable manner.

Learn more at equalexchange.coop.

LOOSE CHANGE OFFERING - GUATEMALA

This month's loose change will benefit our mission partners, The Association for Mam Christian Women in Guatemala. Your support recently helped fund an addition to the community building where women are learning business skills and trades that will support their families. Your support truly makes a difference! Help us continue to support these industrious women as they pursue health and well-being for themselves and their families.

You can support this mission by either mailing in an offering, or donating electronically at www.umcb.org/donate using the "other" box and marking it "loose change offering".



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

We are continually amazed and blessed by the generosity shown by this community of faith. Your continued donations for outreach ministries such as the local food pantries, UMCOR, Nehemiah, and Berea Community Outreach is overwhelming.

Recently we have noticed an increase in unsolicited donations being left throughout our building. While they are also appreciated, we do not always have the need or resources to make the best use of these donations. We ask that only the items requested in our communications be donated to the church and left in the specified donation areas. For example, non-perishable food donations should be left in the cupboard between the narthex (the hallway outside the Sanctuary) and the library and items for Love Your Neighbor campaigns are collected by the Outreach Board (next to Room 12).

If you have items to donate that have not be requested, please consider one of these local missions:

Common Threads

www.commonthreadsthift.com/donate/
22049 Lorain Road, Fairview Park, 440-641-1311
5793 Smith Road, Brook Park, 216-862-0749

Second Mile Outreach

www.secondmileoutreach.org/donate.html
1480 W Bagley Rd, Berea, 440-239-0549

If you have items to donate that are not requested, please talk to a church staff member prior to bringing your donation to the church.

Thank you for your understanding and continued generosity.



REMEMBER OR HONOR A LOVED ONE BY HELPING OTHERS

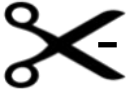
The Magi came bearing gifts, and began the tradition of gift-giving to celebrate the birth of Christ. We join them, offering our gifts to support our community.

We invite you to make a financial gift to support three of our mission partners - Berea Community Outreach, Second Mile Outreach, and the Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland. While we will have some poinsettias for our Christmas services, we will also have a tree decorated with ornaments, in honor or memory of your loved ones or families. Make any size donation and an ornament will be put on our tree with the name your request.

Forms & donations may be mailed to the church, marking "Magi" in the other box. You can also make your donation and complete the form online at www.umcb.org/donate.

Forms and donations must be turned into the office or submitted online by **December 12**.

A full list of those remembered or honored will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin and the January Caller.



MAGI GIFT FORM

Your Name: _____

(as you wanted printed on the listing)

Your Phone: _____

(in case we have questions)

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

DONATIONS MUST BE RECEIVED IN THE CHURCH OFFICE BY DECEMBER 12, 2022.