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STAY AWHILE

Advent Lessons

in Divine Hospitality

Church,

In this time of Advent, we welcome the Christ child into our hearts and into our lives. Hospitality is one of the central tenants of our faith and of this season. Let us engage in more prayer, Scripture reading, acts of kindness, and acts of justice that all ensure a welcoming spirit for the arrival of Christ. As we enter Advent, let us think about how we will welcome all those within our doors, within the various ministries of the church, and in our interactions outside of a religious context. Our hospitality shows people the Christ who welcomes all of us. Let us embrace a profound welcoming spirit into our church home, so people will find their home in Christ, and their home here at The UMCB.

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Steve

STAY AWHILE

Advent Lessons

in Divine Hospitality

ONLINE PRAYER SERVICES DURING ADVENT

NIGHTLY* BEGINNING SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3
8 PM, [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/UMCBEREA](https://www.facebook.com/UMCBEREA)

During this season of Advent, I will be offering a nightly* prayer service at 8PM on Facebook. During this time, we will engage in prayer, read Scripture, sing, practice spiritual disciplines, and engage in reflection (among other practices that deepen our faith). The purpose is to help each of us engage and connect with God. The hope is also that we might enter a time of rest and reflection, helping us to sleep well and begin the next day refreshed, knowing that God loves us and is with us. Furthermore, this prayer time is a great opportunity to engage our online community, our wider church community, new people seeking to find Jesus and/or a new church family.

Grace & Peace,
Pastor Steve

**This study will end on Saturday, December 23 - the night before Christmas Eve. It will also not take place on Fridays (my pastoral Sabbath)*

THE LONGEST NIGHT

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21, 7 PM, CHAPEL

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 for a time filled with scripture, prayer, candlelight, & 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.



WORSHIP WITH US

Christmas Eve

We welcome and invite everyone to come join us and celebrate the birth of Christ. While we graciously welcome others, let us also be hospitable by welcoming and inviting Christ into our hearts, into our homes, and into our lives.

Christmas Eve occurs on a Sunday this year, so our Christmas Eve services will look a bit different.

10 AM, Sanctuary & www.facebook.com/umcberea

Celebrate our yearly Come As You Are Christmas Pageant.

This will be in leu of the normal 9 AM and 11 AM services.

4 PM, Sanctuary & www.facebook.com/umcberea

A traditional Christmas Eve service with the choir.

7 PM, Wesley Hall

A contemporary Christmas Eve service.

11 PM, Chapel

A traditional Christmas Eve service

Each of the evening services will include beautiful music, a message of hope, and the traditional passing of candlelight while we sing "Silent Night".

HYMN SING

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31, 10 AM, SANCTUARY

The Sunday after Christmas, December 31, we will be having a hymn sing at 10 AM, instead of our usual two services. The pastoral staff will be taking the week off after Christmas to recuperate, travel, and visit with family during one of the few times that kids are home from school. This will provide the opportunity for the church to gather in a unique and enjoyable way without the need for pastoral staff. You will all get to lift up your voices and sing your favorite hymns together!



HOLIDAY HIKE

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10

4 PM, MEET AT COE LAKE

We had a great hike in November at the Lake to Lake trail!

Join us for our holiday hike on Sunday, December 10 at 4 PM, beginning at Coe Lake. The city lights will go on as it gets dark and we can enjoy the decorations, nature, and fellowship.

CONNECTING, INVITING, & WELCOMING

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOTS

As the leadership of UMCB, we desire to be intentionally transparent with the church finances. Over the coming months, we will be providing some “snapshots” of these finances in our communications. Together, these “snapshots” will help inform our discussions of the fuller picture in the new year.

Stay tuned as there is more to come.

We are grateful for your constant generosity!



BLESSING OF HOMES

POST-EPIPHANY

(BEGINNING JANUARY 7, 2024)

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 7.

If you would like to share in this brief and simple ritual of worship for your home, please contact **Pastor Steve** at sknisely@umcb.org or **440-234-3525 x101** with a day and time that would be convenient for you, beginning January 7, 2024.

2024 COMMITMENT FORMS

This is just a friendly reminder to turn in your commitment forms. These forms are important because they help us to actively and intentionally think about how we will be formed into the image of Christ, how each of us can bring the gifts that God has given us to build up the community of believers (the church), and how each of us can impact our wider community and society in the name of Jesus Christ.

The 2024 Commitment Forms may be completed online at www.umcb.org/donate. Forms are also available on tables at the back of each worship space and may be turned into the Finance Secretary, Maryann Herron’s mailbox in the office hallway.



SHARING OUR JOYS & CONCERNS

CONNECTING, INVITING, & WELCOMING

MEMBERS

- Bruce Akins, Molly Arthur, Cass Beckman, Barbara Beihl, Heidi Blue, Carol Bodle, Jean Brenneison, Lee Brenneison, Hugh Burtner, Wilda Donegan, Neven Eilbeck, Molly Force, Carol & Bruce Forster, Jan Heter, Larry Jelinek, Dorene Larkey, Nancy Leeseberg, Elenore Long, John Marting, Christine McMillin, Betty Miller, Lou Russell, Russ Sanderson, Barbara Scoon, Linda Short, Pat Slater, Joan Smith, MaryLynn Swartz, Kathleen Wargelin, Sam Weaver, Patty Worthem

WE REACH OUT IN

CHRISTIAN SYMPATHY AND LOVE TO ...

- ... Wendy Jelinek's friend Pat, her family, & all who mourn the loss her son, William.
... the family & friends of Mary Lou McKissock who went on to rest in God's eternal peace on Tuesday, November 7.

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)

MEMBERS AT HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

- Shirley Bedford (Independence Village), Ann Benson (Western Reserve-Medina), Janice Kavander, Roy Miller (Western Reserve-Medina), Pat Sarka (Wesleyan Village, Elyria), Von & Marilyn Smith (Renaissance), Ruth Vrana (Generations, Strongsville), Mary Jane & Sam Weaver (Generations)

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

- Wanda Baulin (sister of Wilda Donegan), Marc Bittinger **, Vicki (friend of Jean Brenneison), Terre Christian (Pastor Carrie's mother), Pattie Dronen (mother of Sarah Knisely), AmyMarie Dziak (daughter of Marlynda Dziak), Spencer Gehring, Sylvie Isgro-Schicker, David Knisely (father of Pastor Stephen Knisely), Isaac Kowicki & Oliver Lawrence (great nephews of Cindy Osborn), Anne M. (friend of MaryLynn Swartz), Sean (brother of Bobby Meadows), Julie & Aaron Mansfield (family of Joanne Mansfield), Paul & Kathryn and children (family of Christine and Andy McMillin), Sean McNichols (friend of the Knisely family), Joann Mraz (friend of Nancy Schillace), Dick Schuerger (friend of Debby Hass), Chet Talarczyk (husband of Judy Talarczyk, Renaissance), Alan Wohlfield (family of Pam Antczak)

PASTORAL CARE & PRAYER REQUESTS

Please contact Pastor Steve sknisely@umcb.org, 440-234-3525 x101) or Pastor Carrie (cantczak@umcb.org, 440-234-3525 x105) if you would like to schedule a 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, scan the QR code to the right or visit umcb.org/communications.





GOD'S ♥

We are filled with gratitude for the many prayers from the members and friends of The United Methodist Church of Berea for both Rev. Dr. Calvin R. Myers, Jr. and his family over the course of illness as well as after his passing.

Marlyn Myers & The Myers Family

Please accept our deepest thanks as we honored the life of our father and grandfather, Allan Swanson on October 22 of this year. We are grateful to the Staff, Congregation, and the Memorial Committee at The United Methodist Church of Berea. Your kindness & ongoing support are appreciated.

The Swanson Family



GROW

TEACHING & LEARNING TOGETHER

MISSION PROJECT AT 4 PM WITH EAST OHIO YOUTH BENEFITING THE UM MIDWEST DISTRIBUTION CENTER

ALL YOUTH ARE INVITED!

HEROES OF JUSTICE LOCK-IN!

Fun, Faith, and Saving the World... as we learn about Saints who worked for a more just world. You too, can be a justice hero! Come dressed as a super hero!

**@UMC BEREA
JAN. 14 4 PM - JAN 15 10 AM**

MIDWEST DISTRIBUTION CENTER

SAVE-THE-DATE: YOUTH MISSION AND LOCK-IN

JANUARY 14-15

We are excited to be hosting the East Ohio Conference's Youth Mission Event in conjunction with our Heroes of Justice Lock-In!

RSVP's accepted now!

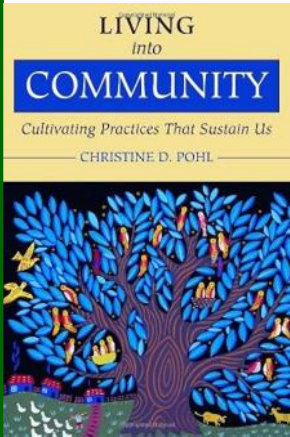
Let Pastor Carrie (cantczak@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x105) know you're able to be a hero!



RECOMMENDED READING

Stay Awhile: Advent Lessons in Divine Hospitality by Kara Eidson

We will be utilizing this book (sometimes closely/other times loosely) as our hospitality focus for advent services, preaching, themes, insights, and for the nightly Advent prayer service on Facebook. *Pick up a copy to follow along with the lessons, have daily readings, and more. Available for \$17 in Room 12, or order online at Amazon.*



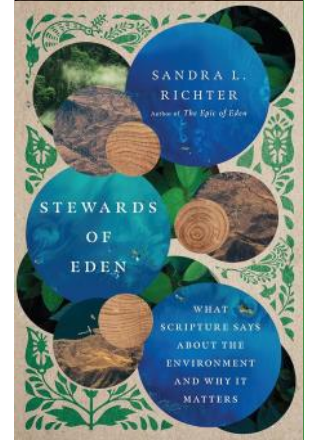
Living into Community by Christine Pohl

This is a whole church effort to intentionally live together as a church family. Dr. Christine Pohl emphasizes four practices that will aid us in this endeavor. They are: 1) truth telling, 2) keeping promises, 3) gratitude, and 4) hospitality.

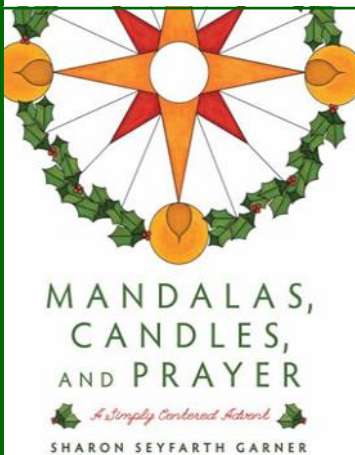
Let's come together to be a community that reflects Christ and lives out these important values.

Stewards of Eden by Sandra Richter

The Creation Care team will be reading this with Pastor Steve.



TEACHING & LEARNING TOGETHER



MANDALAS, CANDLES, AND PRAYER

SUNDAYS, 10 AM, WESLEY PARLOR

Color, pray, and reflect as we journey once again through the peaceful spiritual discipline of Mandala work. Join Rev. Linda McCown and friends for reflective group work. Or, pick up a book for your own personal devotion during the season.

Copies available for \$12 in Room 12, or order online at Amazon.

If you have any questions about these or any of the Formation opportunities, please contact **Pastor Carrie** at cantczak@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x105.



READ AND GROW BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP

MONDAY, DECEMBER 11, 6:30-8 PM, ROOM 13 OR VIA ZOOM (MEETING ID: 815-5894-6774, PASSCODE: 942297)

The book for December is **The Music of Bees** by Eileen Garvin.

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



SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 6:30 PM, VIA ZOOM

- OR -

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15, 1:30 PM, ROOM 13

We will have two sessions of Surviving the Holidays. Grief can strike us at any time, but especially the Holidays. If you have lost a loved one, getting through them can be especially difficult. In these sessions, we will learn a few techniques to help you through this time.

Come join us and let us help you through the Holidays.

THURSDAY BIBLE STUDY

THURSDAYS, 6:30 PM, VIA ZOOM

We have almost finished our study of Revelations and it has been good - sometimes challenging, sometimes hard, and even enjoyable at times. We love the different opinions that are being expressed.

Come join us on **January 14, 2024**, when we start a new, yet to be determined study!

GRIEF SHARE

Our two GriefShare sessions have finished. We thank Pastor Carrie for allowing us to get the new reformatted series. We all enjoyed it as it was wonderful.

We all learned things about ourselves and our grief. We had smiles, laughter, tears, & remembrances.

New sessions will start in the second week of January.

For more information about GriefShare or Thursday Bible Study, please contact Mary Lynn Swartz at marylynn482@gmail.com or 440-409-5931.



TEACHING & LEARNING TOGETHER

Student Mission Nov/Dec Cookie & Brownie Mix for Second Mile

Drop off on
Second Floor
Landing



Thank
you!



SUNDAY SCHOOL MISSION: COOKIE & BROWNIE MIXES FOR SECOND MILE FOOD PANTRY

Encourage your students to consider families who may not have “extra” for treats this holiday season. Bake some goodies together, enjoy the quality time, and then buy an “extra” set of supplies for a family in need of a treat and quality time as well.

CHILDREN’S SUNDAY SCHOOL

This month, children will be learning about Joy and all of the stories leading up to Christmas.

There will be no Sunday School on **Sunday, December 24** or **Sunday, December 31**. Be sure to take home these extra lessons with you on **Sunday, December 17**.

If you have any questions about these or any of the Formation opportunities, please contact **Pastor Carrie** at cantczak@umcb.org or **440-234-3525 x105**.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

OUR GIVING TREE NEEDS MORE GIVERS!

TAKE TAGS FROM THE GIVING TREE IN THE NARTHEX
RETURN *UNWRAPPED* GIFTS WITH TAGS ATTACHED
BY *SUNDAY, DECEMBER 10*



We are pleased to again share that we are sponsoring 25 children from the Berea Community Outreach with our Giving Tree. Please consider picking a star or two so we can bless the children of our community this Christmas.

Gifts should be returned, unwrapped, and with the tag attached by **December 10**.

Parents and Caregivers will have the joy of wrapping the gifts themselves so wrapping paper is also graciously appreciated.



GRINDSTONE APPRECIATION - COCOA BAR & TREATS

LEAVE DONATED ITEMS IN THE PARLOR KITCHENETTE BY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13

Let's show some holiday love to our partner school, Grindstone! We will be providing a Cocoa Bar and treats for the Grindstone staff on December 14. If you'd like to donate holiday cups, napkins, or treats, please have them to Parlor Kitchenette by **December 13**.

If you'd like to help with set-up, please contact **Pastor Carrie** at cantczak@umcb.org or 440-234-3525 x105.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

STOCK UP ON EQUAL EXCHANGE STOCKING STUFFERS

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 3
10-11 AM, BY THE PARLOR

Equal Exchange chocolates make great stocking stuffers. Don't do stockings? That's okay. Equal Exchange also has hot cocoa, coffee, and teas to warm your Advent and make Christmas extra cozy! Your purchase helps provide a fair wage for those who work hard to grow these food items in a way that does not harm God's creation.

Learn more at equalexchange.coop.



LOOSE CHANGE SUPPORTS BERA Community OUTREACH

Berea Community Outreach's mission is to support residents and connect the community by lending a hand to make a difference. We are grateful to partner with BCO for community raking day and more. Thank you for supporting this local partner who seeks to strengthen our community.

You can support this mission by dropping your change in the offering plate, mailing an offering to the church, or donating electronically at umcb.org/donate using the "other" box and designating it as "loose change offering".





STAR TRIP

Long Long Ago

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT, COMPASSION, & JUSTICE

AUDITIONS - FRIDAY, DECEMBER 1, 7 PM, SANCTUARY

REHEARSALS - FRIDAYS, DECEMBER 8 & 15, 7 PM, SANCTUARY

MESSY CHURCH - DECEMBER 17, 4-6 PM, WESLEY HALL

Messy Church will do its first drama production of "Star-Trip" - a retelling of the Nativity Story in the style of Star Wars.

Older kids and adults are welcome to participate!



COME AS YOU ARE CHRISTMAS PAGEANT

CHRISTMAS EVE, DECEMBER 24, 10 AM, SANCTUARY

At the 10 AM morning worship on Christmas Eve, December 24, we will have our Come As You Are Christmas Pageant with fun easy costumes, no rehearsal, and lots of joy!

All ages are welcome to participate!

A SIMPLER CHRISTMAS

We are all celebrating a simpler, yet not less joyous Christmas this year. With so many needs in our community and in the world, we have prayerfully chosen not to invest in as many poinsettias this year. *The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever.* (Isaiah 40:8) Instead, we invest our hearts in the Good News, that God is with Us. Join us in supporting mission this Advent season.

Star Light, Star Bright - Giving for Local Missions

This year's giving toward to the Star Tree will bless the Nehemiah Mission of Cleveland and Berea Community Outreach. Giving a gift of any amount in honor or in memory of a loved one is the perfect way to bless their name this Christmas season. Your loved one's name will be printed on a star and put on our Star Tree in the Gathering Place. A full list of those remembered or honored will be included in the Christmas Eve bulletin and the January Caller.

Forms & donations may be mailed to the church. Please designate "Star" on the memo line of your check. You can also make your donation online by designating "Star" in the other box and complete the form at www.umcb.org/donate.

Forms and donations must be turned into the office or submitted online by **December 15**.



STAR LIGHT, STAR BRIGHT DONATION 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 15, 2023.