

# Agape

Greek for “Love without Limits”

North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Vol. 54 Issue 9

October 2020

## The Challenge to Love One Another

We live in very unusual times with the convergence of difficult matters. COVID, social and racial injustice, climate imbalance, and the polarization of people’s political views are just a few major problems that make it challenging to love one another. Many people are experiencing fatigue and frayed emotions with the weightiness of concerns that affect loving others, even with those they count as their closest friends and family members. And so, it is not surprising that people also find it difficult to love the stranger, acquaintance, or neighbor who makes one’s life difficult. I am often alarmed at how people behave in ways that are the opposite of trying to love others.

Terri and I are fortunate to have been very warmly received and welcomed in our new neighborhood in Huron. While we are still getting to know one another, people seem to have quietly laid aside political differences while respecting the diverse display of signage on people’s lawns advocating for one or the other Presidential candidate.

We entertained one of our neighbors for dinner a few days ago who had kindly included us at his outdoor table on Labor Day with members of his family. While we engaged in conversation, we unintentionally discovered that we differed greatly in our political views and filters of life experience with our country and world. However, the good news is that we were able to have a free-flowing and respectful discourse that was civil and loving with each other. We learned from one another and found common ground with what is most lasting in life: working to love and care for family, friends, neighbors, and people with whom we may agree or disagree.

Near the end of Jesus’ mortal life, he shared with his disciples: *“This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you”* (John 15:12). Jesus did not say: “This is an option for you to consider: if it is convenient for you and it works, particularly with people who agree with you and make your life easy, love them, otherwise, it’s OK not to do so.” Loving others can be very challenging and difficult, but through God and Jesus’ unwavering love for us—“warts and all”—we are called, yes, we are commanded, to love others. It’s amazing what can happen when we persevere in grace and faith to love others, even with those that may differ so strongly with us!

In a time in which people can get caught up in mud-slinging and hateful rhetoric, let each one of us be a model of loving one another, taking the high road and not succumbing to harmful words and actions. Love one person at a time and see how God works wonders and miracles beyond imagination!

Through the love of Christ,

Pastor Hoyte

## Small Group Gathering Procedures from the Reopening Team

*Planning a small group gathering? Please contact the church office and follow all of the procedures developed by the Reopening Team. They can be found online at [www.noumc.org](http://www.noumc.org) or in the [September Agape Newsletter](#).*

***You are encouraged to continue Zoom meetings and outdoor meetings at the church or at public parks as a good and safer option than meeting indoors. For outdoor meetings, masks and social distancing continue to be required.***



## COVID-19 Reminders

### Worship with Us Online!

*Live-stream worship on Sundays at 10:30 am*

Join us online as we live-stream worship on Sundays at 10:30 am! Visit our [YouTube channel](#) to worship with us. The videos will also be available to view later. For more information and assistance, visit [www.noumc.org](http://www.noumc.org) or our [Facebook page](#).

Visit <http://www.noumc.org/worship-remote-worship-resources/> for bulletins and weekly announcements.

#### Office Hours

To protect the health and well-being of you and the staff, we will be working from home whenever possible. Please conduct business with the staff by phone or email, when possible. If you leave a voicemail at the church or send an email, a member of the staff will respond. If you need to conduct business in person, please call ahead to be sure someone is in the office to assist you, or contact a staff member and leave a voicemail to make an appointment.

#### Pastoral Care

Please reach out to Pastor Hoyte by using his cell phone or email address (330-428-1545 or [hoytewilhelm@gmail.com](mailto:hoytewilhelm@gmail.com)) if you have any questions or want to schedule an individual time to talk as he will be working remotely much of the time from the church office consistent with the rest of our support staff.

Pastor Hoyte continues to keep you in his thoughts and prayers. God *IS* with us!

### Stay Connected—We Are Not Alone

If you would like to subscribe to receive weekly e-newsletters, up-to-date email announcements from Pastor Hoyte, and prayer concerns from the congregation, email [office@noumc.org](mailto:office@noumc.org).

### Financial Contributions to North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Please continue to be faithful with your financial gifts by sending your stewardship contributions to the church office to the attention of the Financial Secretary.

### November Agape Deadline

*October 15*

Email articles to [office@noumc.org](mailto:office@noumc.org) or mail them to the church, attention Megan Howe by October 15.

**Church Staff:** 440-779-6634

**Pastor:** Hoyte Wilhelm  
[hoytewilhelm@gmail.com](mailto:hoytewilhelm@gmail.com)  
ext. 16  
cell: 330-428-1545

**Christian Ed.:** Wendy Cooper  
[sundayschool@noumc.org](mailto:sundayschool@noumc.org)  
ext. 13

**Youth Director:** Katie Chapman  
[youth@noumc.org](mailto:youth@noumc.org)  
ext. 14

**Admin. Assistant:** Megan Howe  
[office@noumc.org](mailto:office@noumc.org)  
ext. 10

**Music Director:** Gabriela Martinez  
[gabrielamarmar@aol.com](mailto:gabrielamarmar@aol.com)

**Organist:** Marlene Dirksen  
[marlened959@gmail.com](mailto:marlened959@gmail.com)

**Social Media:** Hanna Moore  
[social@noumc.org](mailto:social@noumc.org)

## Special Church Conference regarding NOUMC Governance

The Administrative Board in January approved a proposal for some significant improvements to NOUMC's governance structure. This new structure will enable the church to plan more effectively, think and act more strategically, and operate more efficiently. This is an important element of *Our Faithful Journey*, the church's long-term vision.

"Governance" is a broad term that includes many elements related to how the church makes decisions about our ministry and our administration. It includes, among other things, the number and composition of our committees and ministry teams, the processes under which they operate, how we develop our annual plans, and how the congregation stays informed about all matters that are important to the life of the church.

The current NOUMC governance model has been in place for many years. It works well for tactical decision-making and coordinating activities throughout the church. However, it has some significant shortcomings that could be impediments to the church achieving the strategic goals and brighter future articulated in *Our Faithful Journey*. The current proposal outlines these challenges in more detail. It also proposes a new structure to address these challenges without sacrificing the best elements of our current structure.

It is important that the whole church understand and approve the new structure. A special Church Conference had previously been scheduled in April but was postponed due to the COVID-19 outbreak. The Special Church Conference will now be held via Zoom teleconference. During this conference, the plan will be presented and the church membership will be given the opportunity to discuss it and ask questions prior to voting on its adoption.

Please join us at **Sunday, October 18, at 11:45 am** (following Sunday worship from 10:30 am - 11:30 am) for the special Church Conference in which the plan will be presented and the church membership will be asked to vote on its adoption. A Zoom link will be provided.

You may also participate in the special Church Conference by phone if you do not have the ability to join the teleconference. If you would like to do so, please contact Pastor Hoyte and printed copies of the conference materials and telephone instructions will be provided to you. If you are unable to participate by either teleconference or phone, please let Pastor Hoyte know and other arrangements will be made.

For those not aware, a Church Conference is a basic unit of The United Methodist Church including all members of a local UMC church. It may meet as needed to evaluate, discuss, and vote on ministry matters of a local church. Because the governance structure affects all areas of NOUMC, the Administrative Board believes it is important that the whole church have an opportunity to review the plan, ask questions, and vote on its adoption. As such, it has been recommended that the new governance proposal be presented and voted upon at a special meeting of an NOUMC Church Conference.

We will be sending more information by email prior to the conference to help you prepare for the discussion. Please watch for it, take time to read it, and plan to join us for this important discussion.

If you have any questions, please contact Andrew Walsh (*Our Faithful Journey* leader), Pastor Hoyte, or any member of the Administrative Board.

### Our Guiding Principles

- We appreciate and invest in our youth.
- We actively serve our neighbors in the North Olmsted community and the wider world.
- We provide varied opportunities for people to grow in their faith.
- We welcome and nurture a diverse congregation who become extended family.
- We foster lasting personal relationships, which are especially important in a digital world.

*Our Faithful  
Journey*



## Christian Education

### Sunday School Mission Project: A Few Facts about Africa University

Africa University is a private, Pan-African, and United Methodist-related institution. It has more than 1,200 students from 36 African countries. Established in 1992, it is northwest of Mutare, Zimbabwe's fourth largest city. It grants bachelor's, master's, and PhD degrees in various programs. There are three schools at Africa University: the College of Health, Agriculture, and Natural Sciences; the College of Business, Peace, Leadership, and Governance; and the College of Social Sciences, Theology, Humanities, and Education. There is also the Africa University Information Technology Training Center. Africa University is committed to a diverse student population. Being both a pan-African and a Zimbabwean university, every year it strives to enroll up to 50% Zimbabwean students and the rest from Africa. About 52% of the student body are women. Although the university is United Methodist-related, students are members of various Christian denominations and other religions including traditional African. The University's goal is "Investing in Africa's Future".

***This year, we hope you will support the Sunday School Mission Project by helping us raise money to build a new dorm for female students of Africa University! A new dorm will enable women from all over Africa to be housed in a safe place while completing their education.***

#### Support Africa University

*Penny Sunday is October 18*

October's Penny Sunday offering will go to support the Sunday School Mission Project, helping to fund the building of a new women's dorm at Africa University.

*Make checks payable to NOUMC and write October Penny Sunday in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Ed Brewster, Financial Secretary.*



#### Sunday School News

*Lessons Posted on [Friends of NOUMC Facebook Page](#) beginning in October*

As our Sanctuary re-opening plan gets pushed back farther into the year due to the pandemic, unfortunately, so also does our return to in-person Sunday School classes. With great respect and care for the health and safety of our teachers, kids, and their families, classes will probably not resume until January at the earliest. In the meantime, in hopes that the kids will stay connected to the church, I will be posting on our Friends of NOUMC Facebook page a weekly video and activity sheets that our elementary and middle school classes can click on at any time during the week. I will also post a weekly devotional for our High School/Young Adults. I am very aware of the upheaval in our kids' lives as they struggle with online learning and all the challenges that COVID has brought into their world. We don't want to add to that stress, but instead want to provide much needed access to the sanctuary of God's Word in the midst of their chaos. The videos are short, and the activity sheets are fun; the devotions will be meaningful and relevant to our youth. Videos and devotions will begin on October 1. And, we will still be in need of teachers once we do return to in-person classes, so if you are interested in doing so, please let me know! Email me at [sundayschool@noumc.org](mailto:sundayschool@noumc.org).

*—submitted by Wendy Cooper*

#### It isn't too late to join the Adult Sunday School Class: *The Color of Compromise*

*Sundays, 9:30 am - 10:15 am on Zoom*

Join us as we study via Zoom the DVD series, *The Color of Compromise*. In this series, Jemar Tisby discusses racism in the American Church. Email Craig Mueller if you are interested in joining us, and Craig will be sure to email you the course guide information and the Zoom link for each week.

## World Communion Sunday

### Raising Up New Leaders to Transform the World

*Sunday, October 4 is World Communion Sunday*

Nelson Mandela said, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world."

On World Communion Sunday, October 4, we will receive a special offering to support scholars in their education. Because of our giving on World Communion Sunday, the most powerful tool to change the world is in more hands.

In The United Methodist Church, World Communion Sunday is one of six special offering Sundays. On the first Sunday in October, our designated gifts benefit students around the world by providing scholarships, mentoring, and training.

As we share in Holy Communion along with Christians around the world, we recognize our unity and shared commitment to building God's kingdom on earth. Together, we help raise up new leaders around the world, equipping them to be agents of change. Please give generously on October 4.

*Make checks payable to NOUMC and write World Communion Sunday in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Ed Brewster, Financial Secretary.*

### We will celebrate Holy Communion on World Communion Sunday, October 4.

You are invited to set up bread and grape juice (or other juice or drink available in your homes) so that it may be blessed and received through the sacrament of cup and table. The Holy Spirit knows no boundaries in being reminded of what God offered for us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ!

### World Communion Sunday Watch Party

*October 4, 10:30 am, church parking lot*

Adult Council welcomes you for fellowship and worship together. Let's commune and watch the service via our telephones. We may even hook up a microphone to a phone so we can hear the words together. Don't forget your bread and "wine". For more information, email Claudia Taller.

## Thank you

Thank you for the cards, prayers, and memorial contributions to the technology fund as we mourn the loss of our mother, Twila Vas. She was a member of NOUMC for only a few years and your kindness to her meant so much. She loved the notes when she missed church for a week or two. And Sarah's balloons always made her smile!

Charlene and John Vas

I would like to thank everybody for the cards and for their thoughts and prayers following the passing of my son.

Wayne Pullman

Dear Church Friends,

Amanda and her family were so grateful for all your thoughts and prayers as she fought throat cancer. Amanda's words were, "It's God's plan—it's my cross to bear," as she bravely kept a smile on her face. She was amazing. During the summer months, she prepared "Advice from Mommy" for their two little daughters to help guide them in their lives and to know their mommy loved them.

Thank you all for your words of sympathy.

Jane Philpott

## Improving NOUMC Sanctuary Technology Update & Thank You

Friends in Christ:

In June the church sent a request for contributions to improve our sanctuary audio, video, and live-streaming capabilities. Many of you had commented on the need to continue our live-stream of services even after we return to in-person worship, which requires an investment above and beyond what is available in our operating budget. This need was clearly validated in the reopening survey conducted in July. Our goal was to raise between \$12,000 to \$15,000 to modernize our AV capabilities, which will help propel our ministries to the congregation and our community for years to come.

We are excited to let you know that as of August 15, \$17,000 has been raised for this important project. Thank you! The people of NOUMC are indeed generous and faithful to our mission!

Our technology team has been working hard since May on this project. To date, they have:

- developed a set of requirements in consultation with our Worship Committee and Trustees;
- translated those requirements into a technical design;
- prepared materials to assist in the selection of a vendor/consultant;
- identified four potential vendors from whom to solicit bids; and
- updated both the Administrative Board and Finance Committees on the status of the project.

The team is now in the process of consulting with the potential vendors and determining what modifications to the plan may be necessary. After that, they will select a vendor and finalize the design and installation schedule (completion date not yet determined). They will also be working to identify individuals within the church who might be interested in learning to operate the new system. Please contact Pastor Hoyte or any member of the tech team if you have such an interest.

Based on a few questions the team has received, we should let you know that three important goals of the project include:

- developing a system that will allow, as much as possible, for those watching services from home to have the same experience as those present in the sanctuary;
- install the new equipment so that it blends in with the sanctuary aesthetic, in a way that enhances our worship experience; and
- be funded completely separate from the NOUMC operating budget.

We will strive to keep the congregation updated on this project as it progresses. Please feel free to reach out to me or anyone involved with the project if you have questions.

Faithfully in Christ, Pastor Hoyte

## Adult Council Opportunity for Fellowship

### Halloween Pet Parade

*Saturday, October 24, 1 pm, church parking lot*

Bring your pets, with or without costumes, or just cheer them on. Invite neighbors and friends to this community-focused event that we hope will include dog training and services and organizations. Email Claudia Taller for more information.



## A Message from the Stephen Ministries Team

### Why Worry?

Your Stephen Ministers, like you, are worried about our health and finances and our loved ones and about bigger world problems like climate change, racial inequities, and human rights. The world seems to be spiraling towards . . . who knows? Most of what we worry about is beyond our control. So why worry?

During last month's Stephen Ministry meeting, Michelle Wolter led us through some mindfulness exercises to lessen our stress and provide tools for our ministry. Stephen Ministers are trained to listen as their care receivers explore and talk about their feelings. The act of talking it out while checking in brings us into the present moment.

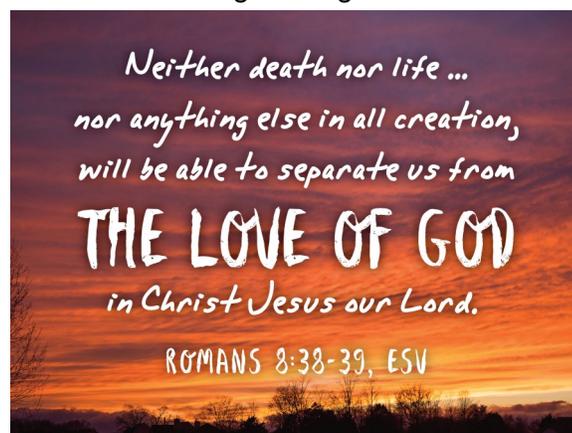
Another way to practice mindfulness is to stop and observe your thoughts. Begin by closing your eyes and paying attention to your breath. The mind quiets, but thoughts arise—observe your thoughts without judgment and let them float by as you bring yourself back to the present moment. In this way, you create space between yourself and your reactions and are able to see how your mind causes you to worry.

Pastor Hoyte recently pointed out during one of his videos that Matthew 6:25-34 urges us not to worry. God doesn't want that for us. The verses conclude with, "*Do not be anxious about tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble.*" Living one day at a time, dealing just with today, as 12-step programs advise, puts us more in the moment of living well and letting go.

Even though I embrace meditation, when I'm awake in the middle of the night, I remember the words of Paul in Romans 8:39: "*Neither height nor depth, nor any other created thing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" When we worry, we are not letting go and letting God (another 12-step principal); we are turning away from God and are in sin. How do I find my way to God? I begin with the words, "Dear Lord, be with me . . ." When I wake up in the morning, I don't remember ending the prayer. And the worry is gone.

Your Stephen Ministers can pray with you, meditate with you, sing with you, and talk with you. Even during the pandemic, there are ways to connect and find peace. Reaching out is always a good thing. No worries.

Claudia Taller, Stephen Minister



## United Methodist Women



We continue to meet every couple of weeks on Wednesday mornings. If you would like to meet us, contact one of the UMW members for the meeting day and location.

We have decided to hold another FUNDrive in the Spring, but we have not yet coordinated a date. We appreciate you storing your donations to support the sale as you do any cleaning or down-sizing. More specifics about acceptable donations will be communicated once we have that information to give you. In the meantime, we know that clothes, accessories, and bedding are needed, and hopefully small appliances, knick-knacks, and books will also be collected.

## Church Family News

# OCTOBER

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

4	Claire T.
5	Josh O.
9	Nancy D.
11	Michael G.
14	Dave H.
16	Mary Ellen M.
17	John-John W.
18	Elizabeth G.
19	Hoyte W.
24	Ryan B.
26	Rita W.
28	Don R.
28	Ellie Y.
29	Alyssa D.
31	Anthony B.
18	Jennifer & Michael G.
22	Joanne & Douglas B.
31	Rachael & Tom B.



### Community Meal

#### Free Community Meal (Carry-Out Only)

*Thursday, October 29, 4:30 pm - 6 pm*

The menu for October is sloppy joes, macaroni and cheese, a pickle, and dessert. The meal will be provided and served by St. Richard's this month.

## Prayer Concerns

First Responders  
Victims of natural disasters  
Those suffering from mental illness  
Those affected by gun violence  
Those who are homeless  
Stephen Ministers  
Care Receivers  
Our condolences to Wayne P. following the passing of his son, Scott  
Our condolences to Charlene V. following the passing of her aunt, Marion  
Our condolences to Jane P. following the passing of her granddaughter-in-law, Amanda  
Bob, Carole B.'s son  
David, brother-in-law of Susan S.  
Josh O.  
Donald R.  
Sheryl, lifted by Sally S.  
Danielle, lifted by Alice W.  
Scott, brother-in-law of Barb L.  
Frank M.  
Keith A.  
Danielle, lifted by Gwen H.  
Gwen H.  
Mary Lou L.  
Barbara B.  
Dave L.  
Sterling B.  
Bev, lifted by Josh O.  
Viola C.  
Carl, friend of Rita R.  
Darlene, friend of Barb A.  
Susan W.

Donna, sister of Carol N.  
Adrienne, lifted by Tom M.  
Bill and Vince, brothers of Reba Y.  
Russ, friend of David L.  
Andy, Faye W.'s son  
Dusty, nephew of Reba Y.  
Israel, Sarah's student  
Dawn, friend of Susan W.  
De Niro and family  
Connie C.  
Jim, friend of Bill and Marilyn R.  
Donna friend of Judy K.  
Kevin, friend of Barb and Ron C.  
Zack, son of Jennifer G.  
Brian R.  
Steve, son of Mary Ellen M.  
Carol, lifted by Ray and Jane B.  
Selene, lifted by Carole A.  
Christopher Y., USAF  
Matthew F., USAF  
Lt. Col. Bill G., USMC  
Cpl. Trevor C., USMC

## October 2020

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
<b>4</b> <i>World Communion Sunday</i> 9:30 am Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30 am Worship with Holy Communion (livestreamed) Worship Watch Party (parking lot)	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b> 10:30 am Anti-Racism Group (parking lot) 7 pm Facing Covid Together (Zoom)	<b>7</b> 10:30 am UMW 7:30 pm Tech Team (Zoom)	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:30 am Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30 am Worship (livestreamed)	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> 10:30 am Anti-Racism Group (parking lot)	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <i>November Agape Deadline</i> 11:30 am Lunch with Friends (at home)	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> <i>Penny Sunday</i> 9:30 am Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30 am Worship (livestreamed) 11:45 am Church Conference (Zoom)	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> 10:30 am Anti-Racism Group (parking lot) 6:30 pm Stephen Ministries (Zoom) 7 pm Facing Covid Together (Zoom)	<b>21</b> 6:30 pm Tech Team (Zoom)	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 1 pm Halloween Pet Parade (parking lot)
<b>25</b> 9:30 am Adult Sunday School (Zoom) 10:30 am Worship (livestreamed)	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 10:30 am Anti-Racism Group (parking lot)	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b> 4:30 pm - 6 pm Community Meal (Carry-Out Only)	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>

*Please contact the church office to add your meeting or gathering, virtual or in-person, to the church calendar.*

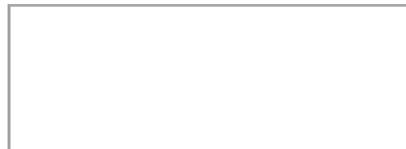
### North Olmsted United Methodist Church

4600 Dover Center Rd. North Olmsted, OH 44070 + Phone 440-779-6634 + [office@noumc.org](mailto:office@noumc.org)



North Olmsted United Methodist Church  
4600 Dover Center Road  
North Olmsted, Ohio 44070

Agape Newsletter



## October Free Community Meal Carry-Out Only



*Thursday, October 29,  
4:30 pm - 6 pm*

**Carry-Out Menu:**  
sloppy joes, macaroni and cheese,  
a pickle, and dessert

The Free Community Meal is a mission of North Olmsted United Methodist Church with assistance from our friends at St. Richard and St. Clarence Catholic Churches and others in the community. All meals are funded by donations, and the dinners are prepared and served by volunteers. Menus may change because of donated food or food pricing. Additional volunteers are always welcome! If you would like more information, please contact us at 440-779-6634. *We are an accessible facility.*