

# Agape

Greek for “Love without Limits”

North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Vol. 55 Issue 1

January 2021

## Prayers for the New Year 2021

*“Pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.”*

(I Thessalonians 5:17-18)

I am thankful in reflection of this past year and anticipation of the new year for the gift of prayer in our lives. There have been many moments in 2020 in time alone with God in which prayer sustained and empowered me to move forward in hope and courage. Our prayer life in worship, through phone calls, and in fellowship and committee meetings via Zoom have provided an undergirding of love and support within our church family. Prayers shared through email and text messages, hand-written notes, and greeting cards will continue to be very special ways in which God is made known through us. Even meetings outside the church with safe-distancing practices and wearing masks have been uniquely meaningful ways of extending blessings and prayers with one another.

The Apostle Paul encouraged the faith community of Thessalonica to *pray without ceasing in all circumstances through the will of God and Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior*. This will become a guiding scripture for me in the new year, 2021—in the best of times and the most challenging of times! May it be so for you, too!

Christian prayers of the ancients and contemporary authors have been foundational in strengthening and transforming people’s lives. What are your favorite prayers that are centuries old or newer over the last few years and decades? Commit and recommit to quiet centering and recitation of your favorite prayers while being open to the possibility of receiving new prayers, too!

I want to offer two prayers as gifts in the approaching time of the new year as sources of comfort and renewed confidence. The first prayer is from *The United Methodist Book of Worship (No. 295)*.

“Creative God, you make all things new in heaven and on earth. We come to you in a new year with new desires and old fears, new decisions and old controversies, new dreams and old weaknesses. Because you are a God of hope, we know that you create all the possibilities of the future. Because you are a God of love, we know that you accept all the mistakes of the past. Because you are the God of our faith, we enter your gates with thanksgiving and praise, we come into your presence with gladness and a joyful noise, and we serve and bless you. Amen.” (Maren C. Tirabassi, U.S.A., 20<sup>th</sup> CENT., ALT.)

The second prayer is from *The United Methodist Hymnal (No. 607)* entitled, *A Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition*.

“I am no longer my own, but thine. Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt. Put me to doing, put me to suffering. Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee or brought low for thee. Let me be full, let me be empty. Let me have all things, let me have nothing. I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal. And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it. And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.”

Praying with you in service and faithfulness,

Pastor Hoyte



## 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, Ed Brewster.

### February Agape Deadline

*January 15*

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

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

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

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

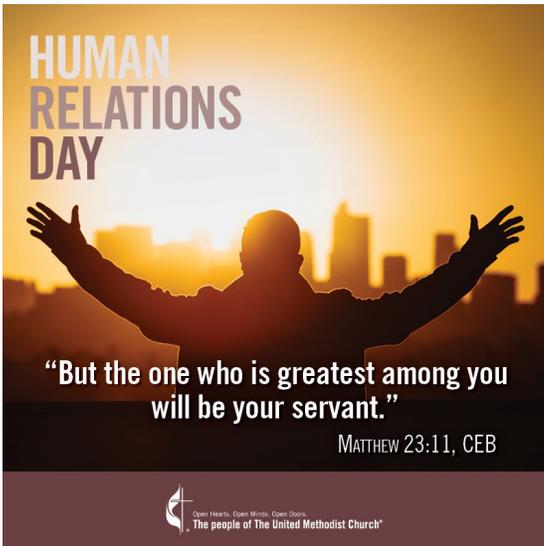
**Music Director:** Gabriela Martinez  
[gabrielamarmar@aol.com](mailto:gabrielamarmar@aol.com)

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

## Opportunities to Give

### Human Relations Day

*Sunday, January 17*



We are all family. When we walk past our neighbor who is hiding in plain sight, we limit the gifts and graces that our sisters and brothers in Christ bring to the table. We limit the experiences, the voices and the beloved community that take place through mutual sharing of gifts. With a special offering celebrating Human Relations Day, we join with United Methodists around the world, remembering that the size of the table of divine love is unlimited.

One of the wonderful aspects of The United Methodist Church is that we can do so much more together than we ever could do on our own. On Human Relations Day, the Sunday before the birthday celebration of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., we join other UMC congregations in a special offering to support neighborhood ministries through Community Developers, community advocacy through United Methodist Voluntary Services, and work with at-risk youth through the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

*Make checks payable to NOUMC and write Human Relations Day in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Financial Secretary.*

### Support UMCOR

*Penny Sunday is January 17*

January Penny Sunday donations will go to benefit the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). UMCOR provides humanitarian relief and disaster response to more than 80 countries, including the United States. Through them, we are able to bring hope, healing, and renewal to those whose lives have been disrupted by war, conflict, or natural disaster. After recovery has begun and basic needs are met, UMCOR provides ongoing assistance and support.

Please give generously to support UMCOR's mission to aid those in critical need. *Make checks payable to NOUMC and write **January Penny Sunday** in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Financial Secretary.*

### Christmas Outreach

Wow!! You have made some of your North Olmsted neighbors happy this Christmas. Every gift was purchased for the ten people we adopted, and we were able to give them some gift cards with the extra money you gave on Penny Sunday. We even found several rolls of wrapping paper that we added to their gifts so they could wrap the gifts purchased on Amazon. Thank you, all, for your generosity.

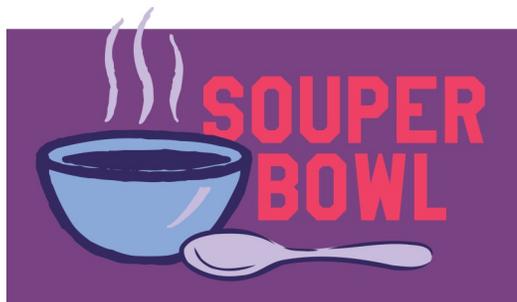
There were also close to 100 items in the hat and mittens box, which was filled to overflowing. These were given to Laura's Home and Oxcart Pantry. We also left some wrist warmers made by some of our members at Laura's Home to be distributed to the homeless that are helped by The City Mission. And that doesn't include the donations you gave to purchase laundry detergent and cleaning supplies for Oxcart Pantry. Thank you!



## Christian Education

### Souper Bowl of Caring

*Sunday, February 7*



Our youth will help to fight hunger and poverty in February, joining a national effort to refocus Super Bowl weekend into a weekend of sharing God's love with our neighbors in need. Souper Bowl of Caring helps us to be mindful of those who go without even a bowl of soup to eat as we enjoy our Super Bowl celebrations. Because of the pandemic, people are in need more than ever. All donations will go to benefit the Oxcart Pantry. *Please make checks payable to NOUMC and write Souper Bowl of Caring in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Wendy Cooper.* Please consider donating by February 7 to help our youth make a difference in our community!

### Online Sunday School

Sunday School students, please join us each week on our [Friends of NOUMC Facebook page](#) as we continue to study God's Word! A video Bible lesson will be posted, and links to activity sheets will be offered in the comments. High School and Young Adults are welcome to click on a weekly devotion with thoughts and questions to ponder. Video lessons and devotions will be posted by Saturday evening each week.

### Sunday School Mission Project: Africa University

*Africa University Facts*

*Vision:* Africa University aspires to become a world class university for leadership development in Africa.

*Mission:* The mission of Africa University is to provide quality education within a Pan-African context through which persons can acquire general and professional knowledge and skills, grow in spiritual maturity, develop sound moral values, ethics, and leadership qualities.

*Values:* Academic Excellence, God Fearing, Integrity, Professionalism, Diversity, and Ubuntu (*{oo'boon(t)oo}*), a South African word that means a quality that includes the essential human virtues, compassion and humanity.

***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. Make checks payable to NOUMC, write Africa University in the memo, and send them to the office, attention Wendy Cooper.***

## Staying Connected

Have you been "Staying Connected?" Recently, when we have them to share, we have been including updates from the congregation along with the emailed Agape. It appears on your email as a button: Click for updates from your Church Family. These have also been mailed by USPS to those not connected online.

Now we would like to hear from you! Please provide an update via email, text, or snail mail. It can be emailed or mailed to Megan in the office ([office@noumc.org](mailto:office@noumc.org)) or to Tammy Moore. Include anything you want your friends to know about you or your extended family. Your friends want you to "Stay Connected"!

## Youth News

Hello and Happy Holidays to all of you! I am pleased to introduce myself as the new youth leader. As many of you know, I have been a Sunday School teacher, a leader for Work Mission, VBS Coordinator, and I have held various other youth-related volunteer positions within our church. I hope that I can bring some ideas and energy to help grow an active and robust youth group as per our mission statement, similar to what my children experienced growing up in our church community. My inspiration has been a new generation within my own family who are actively seeking spiritual opportunities for their young children. Thanks for the chance to share our faith with them!

Merry Christmas, Chris Byrns



## Opportunities to Grow

### The Color of Compromise Study

*Begins Tuesday, January 12, Noon, on Zoom*

The Adult Sunday School class just finished a study of *The Color of Compromise: The Truth about the American Church's Complicity in Racism*, by Jemar Tisby. We were awakened to the complicity of Christianity in racial injustice throughout the history of the United States. Tisby's timely video presentation reveals these chilling connections and explores ways Christians have reinforced theories of racial superiority and inferiority. He outlines the kind of bold action needed to forge a future of equality and justice.



At the end of the class, we felt the need to share the series with more of the congregation. We agreed that NOUMC should make anti-racism a top priority, starting with learning more about it.

The Anti-Racism Discussion Group invites you to experience the video with them on Tuesdays at Noon beginning on January 12. We feel NOUMC should join the fight for racial justice. If you're interested in taking part in this new study, contact Janis Jarvis or Beverly Hixon so you can receive the Zoom invitation that will be arranged by Pastor Hoyte.

## United Methodist Women

In spite of a lack of fundraising opportunities in 2020, we were happy to meet our budget and still have \$1500 to give away. Money was allocated to Marlene for organ repair and to Stephen Ministries for grief booklets. We also gave money to be used for monthly meals at Laura's Home, the Oxcart Pantry, North Olmsted Community Fund, the monthly Free Community Meal, the OhioGuidestone cookie fund, and the Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Since the funds were much lower than usual, we decided to keep most of the money for the church family. Once again, thanks to all of your support during this difficult year.

We have set some tentative dates for activities, depending on the pandemic and other factors. Dean's Plant Sale is set for May 8, a FUNDrive collection is set for May 21-23, and the Craft Show for October 16. As the dates are finalized, we'll get back to you, and we will check into further fundraisers after we return to some sort of normalcy.

Meanwhile, stay positive on NOUMC's future and negative on your test results.

# ARE YOU EXPERIENCING PANDEMIC FATIGUE?



Are you feeling exhausted from all the disruptions to life brought on by the pandemic? Are you or someone you know struggling with challenges like . . .

- ISOLATION AND LONELINESS
- ANXIETY OVER HEALTH
- GRIEF DUE TO MANY DIFFERENT KINDS OF LOSSES
- TENSION FROM JUGGLING WORK, CHILDCARE, AND SCHOOLING
- FINANCIAL STRAIN OR JOB LOSS
- UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE
- OTHER UNEXPECTED LIFE CHALLENGES?



**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

If so, you don't have to face it alone. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support.

A Stephen Minister will meet with you privately—by phone, by video chat, or, if safely possible, in person—to offer care and support. It's free and completely confidential. For more information, call our church office.

*"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."*  
Matthew 11:28

## Church Family News

# JANUARY

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

2	Elizabeth S.
4	Brenda F.
4	Benjamin T.
7	James B.
7	Tom M.
9	Kim D.
10	Morgan C.
13	Leighton M.
15	Barbara L.
16	John D.
16	Clara B.
19	Christine M.
20	Joel C.
21	Mary Lou L.
23	Jack L.
28	Janis J.
31	Emily C.
31	Darlene O.

25	Carol and Bob N.
26	Judy and John S.
30	Gwen and Dave H.



## 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 the  
 family of John W.  
 following his passing  
 Barbara B.  
 Viola C.  
 Susan W.  
 Carolyn and Alex B.  
 Mary, Sue S.'s mother  
 Jeff, Judy K.'s friend  
 Kifah, David L.'s friend  
 Jeff and Sharon, lifted by  
 Janis J.  
 Bob, Carole B.'s son  
 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.  
 Sterling B.  
 Bev, lifted by Josh O.  
 Darlene, friend of  
 Barb A.  
 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 Marilyn  
 and Bill 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 Jane and  
 Ray B.  
 Selene, lifted by  
 Carole A.  
 Christopher Y., USAF  
 Matthew F., USAF  
 Lt. Col. Bill G., USMC



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

Agape Newsletter



### 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*



## Free Community Meal Carry-Out Only



*Thursday, January 28*

*4:30 pm - 6 pm*

Carry-Out Menu:

baked lasagna, salad, a roll, and dessert

*St. Clarence is preparing and serving the meal*

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.*