

Agape

Greek for “Love without Limits”

North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Vol. 56 Issue 12

December 2022

Advent Wreath

Sundays of Advent and Christmas Eve

As we count down the Sundays leading up to Christmas, in worship we will light an additional candle each week on the Advent wreath. This is a great opportunity especially for families with children to participate in a tangible ritual, but of course individuals, friends, or any other groupings are welcome! For more information or to sign up to participate during any of our four Sunday morning worship services from November 27 through December 18 or on Christmas Eve, please contact Pastor Hoyte at noumc@noumc.org or ext. 16.

Christmas Eve Worship Leadership

December 24, 7 pm

Help us lead worship and offer hospitality on Christmas Eve by serving as liturgist, usher, or greeter! If you are interested in serving, please email noumc@noumc.org.

Worship With Us In-Person and Online

Sundays at 10:30 am (with the possible exception of Christmas Day—see below)

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



Blue Christmas

Friday, December 9, 7 pm, Sanctuary & Online

See page 2 for more information

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24, 7 pm, Sanctuary & Online

Candlelight Service with Choirs & Special Music

Christmas Day Worship Plans Pending

Sunday, December 25

Please note that Pastor Hoyte, the staff, and church leaders are continuing to discern what will take place for worship on Christmas Day with NOUMC members, families, friends, and online worshippers. Careful considerations are being discussed as it relates to: presence of music and worship leaders, participation of greeters and ushers, availability of technology staff for live and/or recorded components of a service, and realities with the number of worshippers in respect for travel and family commitments on Christmas Day. *A firm decision about Christmas Day worship will be made by no later than Sunday, November 27.*

Worship Opportunities

Blue Christmas: A Service of Comfort & Hope

Friday, December 9, 7 pm

“This year, this year, let the day arrive when Christmas comes for everyone, everyone alive.”

-- TFWS 2095



Advent is a time of waiting...a time of hope-filled expectation for the coming of our Savior, Jesus. Yet sometimes waiting feels heavy, especially with the changing world around us, and even our own personal changes. This year we will pray specifically for all who are vulnerable in our world...those for whom Christmas is not a “Silent Night”.

There is a deep need for healing and peace in our world, in our church, and in our hearts. Into this need comes our Savior, Jesus. His name is Emmanuel, a name that means “God with us”. God comes to be present with us today in much the same way that he came to a hurting world years ago...a gentle, humble beginning bursting forth as an unexpected ray of hope.

This service offers a safe place for persons desiring a special touch from God during the holidays. It promises to be a gentle, quiet service...filled with peace, hope, prayer, music, and candlelight.

I know that my own soul is hungry for this service this year. I believe God wants to renew our lives this Christmas, bringing hope to us in the areas of our deepest need, bringing peace to us in the midst of our darkest confusion. If you, or someone you know, are remembering a loss or going through a season of pain, I invite you to join me in-person this Christmas for a time of comfort and rest. We will also provide a link, closer to the date, for those who wish to join us online. The service will remain available for viewing afterwards on our website: www.noumc.org.

O Come, O Come, Emmanuel... May we journey together.

Blessings,

Rev. Alice

*Sponsored by your Stephen Ministers. Light refreshments will also be provided so that we may be in community and fellowship during this holy season.



Date	Greeter(s)	Liturgist	Usher(s)
December 4	Barb Andrews	Greg Lavelle	Sarah Jackson and Sydney Scothon
December 11	Jean Scothon	John Vas	Beth Cruz
December 18	Charlene and John Vas	Bev Hixon	Barb & Ron Clough

Opportunities to Give

Adopt a Family

THIS CHRISTMAS

Wrapped Gifts Due by Sunday, December 11

Visit the easel in Fellowship Hall to choose a gift from the wishes of families in our area. Please take a tag or tags from the board, purchase, wrap, and bring in the gift(s) with the tag attached so they can be delivered. Place the gifts around the tree in the Sanctuary by December 11.

Oxcart Pantry Collection

Collecting cleaning supplies, especially laundry detergent, through the end of the year

We donated an initial batch of 96 Thanksgiving goodies to Oxcart Pantry with even more collected throughout November. Next up is our usual end-of-the-year collection of cleaning products with a special emphasis on laundry detergent, which is something that many clients ask for at the Pantry. We will be collecting these items until the first of the year since the Pantry is closed over the holidays. Please place donations in the Oxcart Pantry bin in Fellowship Hall. Thank you for your generosity!

Stocking Stuffers for Oxcart Pantry

Donations due by December 4

We are collecting stocking stuffers for Oxcart Pantry clients. For those who are new to this project or those who could use a reminder, we collect stockings, toiletry articles, and small gifts for adults and children; see the list of needed items below.



Oxcart Pantry Christmas Stocking Shopping List

Donations due by December 4

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| ◇ Christmas stockings | ◇ Shampoo | ◇ Conditioner | ◇ Hair items |
| ◇ Wrapped candy | ◇ Deodorant | ◇ Toothpaste | ◇ Small coloring books |
| ◇ Toothbrushes | ◇ Soap | ◇ Skin cream/lotion | ◇ Puzzle books |
| ◇ Lip balm | ◇ Combs | ◇ Razors | ◇ Crayons |
| ◇ Nail clippers/nail files | ◇ Small tools | ◇ Pens and pencils | ◇ Jewelry |
| ◇ Toy cars & trucks | ◇ Small stuffed animals | ◇ Small dolls | ◇ Cosmetics |

Opportunities to Give and to Serve

Support UMCOR

Penny Sunday is December 18

From the eyes of someone that's been on many mission trips, I've seen how UMCOR can be a positive influence on individuals and communities. For those whom haven't been on a trip, they may not be aware of how powerful the work done by volunteers funded by UMCOR is. Nature is powerful and new disasters happen all the time, tearing apart lives and communities. This month's Penny Sunday collection goes towards UMCOR. UMCOR stands for United Methodist Committee On Relief. UMCOR helps rebuild, and in the process restores people's faith. They help after hurricanes, flooding, tornados, earthquakes, and other disasters. They provide relief and help to restore communities and help start the process of healing. When disaster strikes, some people lose everything. It can take years for them to rebuild the life they once knew. Their website states their goal is to assist the most vulnerable people affected by crisis or chronic need without regard to their race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation. And that they believe all people have God-given worth and dignity. Donating to UMCOR is a great way to support the hands and feet of Jesus in action.

*Make checks payable to NOUMC and write **UMCOR** or **December Penny Sunday** in the memo. Send checks to the church office, attention Financial Secretary. For those worshipping in-person, a special offering basket will be made available.*



—submitted by Kris Hipple

Used Eyeglasses Collection



After a long break, we have found a place to donate used prescription eye glasses again! The Elyria Lions Club is willing to pick up our donations and deliver them to a volunteer student group at OSU who recycles them. Their annual delivery will be coming up in early January, so please search your desk drawers and nightstands for any eye-glasses you're ready to discard. You'll find a collection basket in Fellowship Hall.

Cleveland Kids' Book Bank Mission Trip

Tuesday, December 20, 1 pm - 3 pm, Carpool from NOUMC at 12:15 pm

Join us as we support Kids' Book Bank in their work to ensure all kids growing up in Greater Cleveland have books of their own to read and cherish. We will help to sort book donations; no lifting required. We will carpool from the church building at 12:15 pm. Contact Sarah Jackson for more information or to reserve a spot.

We are also collecting **new or gently used children's books**. Books should be in good condition and with a copyright no earlier than 2000. We cannot accept textbooks, dictionaries, encyclopedias, or similar books.



The Seasons of Advent and Christmas

Christmas Flower Sale

Orders due December 4

The Christian Education and Youth Ministry Team is still taking orders for Poinsettias and Christmas Cacti to be placed on the altar for our Christmas Eve services. Poinsettias are available in Red, White, Pink, Variegated, or Burgundy. Flowers are \$10 each. Proceeds from the sale will support Laura's Home Women's Crisis Center.

Order forms are available in Fellowship Hall and on page 7. *Make checks payable to NOUMC and write Christmas flowers in the memo.* Please place your order and payment into the purple box in Fellowship Hall, or send them to the church office, attention Wendy Cooper. You may also call the church office, extension 13 or email Wendy to place your order.



Adult Sunday School Advent Study

Sundays of Advent, 9 am, Classroom 4

Claudia Taller is continuing to lead us in our Advent series, and it isn't too late to join us! For centuries, Christians have turned to the story and message of John the Baptist in the weeks leading up to Christmas. We are exploring the Advent themes of John's life and ministry, and how John calls all followers of Jesus to prepare our hearts for his coming.

Please note that we won't meet on November 27. On December 4, we will meet in the Prayer Room.



A Christmas Cabaret: Dinner and Show

Saturday Matinee, December 10, 2 pm

Join us for **A Christmas Cabaret** musical show at LCCC's Cirigliano Studio Theatre. Call 440.366.4040 or visit www.stockerartscenter.com for tickets. Afterward we can share a meal at one of the local restaurant choices. Sign up so we know who is going and so we can carpool from the church.

Questions? Call Sarah Jackson.

Order Your

Poinsettias



The Salvation Army's

Red Kettle Campaign

Would you like to ring a bell to help people in need? Cuyahoga County and the surrounding area has various locations available for you. Two-hour shifts are available through December 24 by contacting Demetrius Stanford, Major at 216.206.7672 or by registering online at www.savolunteer.org.

United Women in Faith

Christmas Lunch Out

Wednesday, December 7, time and location TBD

We would love to have you join us for our Christmas luncheon, location to be decided. To RSVP, contact Barb Andrews. It would help if you could let us know if you're joining us so we can make reservations, but we're always happy to squeeze in extras.

Our next regular meeting is January 4 at 10 am in Room 7. A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and a big thank you for your support throughout the year.

2022 Wrap-Up

We finished the year with our give-away meeting. Gifts to the church included those to the Altar and Arts Team, Stephen Ministries, sanctuary piano tuning, Pastor Hoyte's discretionary fund, the community meal, and Laura's Home dinner. We also gave money to OhioGuidestone's Cookie Jar Fund, Oxcart Pantry, and the Community Fund. It's always a fun meeting.

Racial Justice Group

Conversations with Our Congregation

In a recent conversation, I mentioned my frustration about the number of people of color in prisons, a much higher number than white people. My friend looked confused, so I explained that outrageous numbers are there for very minor offenses for a very long time. Furthermore, thanks to the 13th amendment, they are required to work as slaves for extremely low pay (in Ohio ~25 cents per hour!). While white people have to work, too, they get most of the indoor jobs.

A few days later, a different friend said she was upset by this use of prisoners. Unless they have someone to fund them, they are responsible for their room, board, clothing, toothpaste, shampoo, candy bars, and cigarettes at EXORBITANT prices. They have to pay exorbitant phone bills to call their lawyers or family. When the incarcerated finally are released, among the mountains they must climb, they have to pay back the prison, even when they've been exonerated. Another friend reminded me that they are criminals, but then admitted that this system only helps the prison owners and the companies to whom they 'rent' the prisoners. When have the guilty paid their dues?

This is only one snapshot of systemic racism. Several people have told me it can't be changed in our lifetime. **Why?** Pastor Hoyte preached last Sunday (11/13) about "difficulties taking time to overcome, and impossibilities taking longer". We need to figure it out and DO SOMETHING.

Janis Jarvis

Racial Justice Group

Seeking Kindness



Lunch with Friends

Next meeting will be January 19, 11:30 am

The Lunch with Friends group will not meet in December so we can spend more personal and quality time with families. Have a wonderful holiday!



Poinsettia Orders 2022

*Make checks payable to NOUMC
and write **Christmas flowers** in the memo.*

Please email orders to Wendy
or mail orders to the church office,
attention Wendy Cooper, by December 4.

All proceeds to benefit
Laura's Home Women's Crisis Center.

Name: _____

Phone Number: _____

Size	Color	Price	Quantity	Total
6 ½ Inch	Red Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	White Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Pink Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Marbled Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 ½ Inch	Variegated Poinsettia	\$10.00	_____	_____
6 Inch	Christmas Cactus	\$10.00	_____	_____
		Total:	_____	_____
			Paid _____	/Owe _____

Please print your dedication. Thank you!

In Honor of/from: _____

In Memory of/from: _____

Church Family News

2	Sally S.	17	Barbara C.
3	Barbara S.	18	Hanna M.
5	Kelly J.	19	Lois D.
10	John S.	22	Mikenzie D.
11	Barbara S.	23	Wayne P.
13	Ray P.	24	Jean S.
15	Floyd A.	27	Christopher H.
16	Phoebe T.	29	Liz L.
17	Kristi J.	29	John W.



Pastoral Care Please reach out to Pastor Hoyte by using his cell phone or email (noumc@noumc.org) if you want to schedule a time to talk.	18	Megan and Nathan H.
	19	Brigid and Shawn D.
	29	Anita and James B.
	31	Ellie and Jim Y.

Prayer Concerns

First Responders	Louise A.	Lois D.
Victims of natural disasters	Barb & Ray S.	Keith A.
Those suffering from mental illness	Ray P.	Barbara B.
Those affected by gun violence	Justin, lifted by Vann P.	Donna, sister of Carol N.
Those who are homeless	Judy F.	Steve, son of Mary Ellen M.
Those experiencing addiction	Arthur, Louise A.'s brother	Selene, lifted by Carole A.
Our condolences to the loved ones of Donald R. following his passing	Josh O. & Guylene H.	Christopher Y., USAF
Our condolences to the loved ones of Viola C. following her passing	Judy, lifted by Brenda F.	Matthew F., USAF
Terry, lifted by Claudia & Paul T.	Bill, Sarah J.'s brother	Lt. Col. Bill G., USMC
	Nancy D.	
	Sally S.	
	Kathy, lifted by Claudia & Paul T.	
	Deb, lifted by Claudia & Paul T.	
	Ron W.	

January Agape Deadline

December 15

Please email articles to noumc@noumc.org, mail them to the church, or put them in the Administrative Assistant's mailbox outside the church office by December 15.

December 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Office Hours:</i> <i>Monday, Wednesday, & Thursday</i> <i>10 am - 2 pm</i></p> <p><i>On Tuesday, Megan works from home and will check her email and voicemail during office hours, 10 am - 2 pm</i></p>				<p>1 4:30 pm - 5:30 pm Holiday Free Community Meal (Carry-Out Only)</p> <p>7 pm Choir (Choir Room) 7 pm SPRC (FH)</p>	2	3 10 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved
4 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	5 5 pm Bells (Choir Room) 6 pm - 8 pm Girl Scouts (Classroom 7) 8:30 pm AA (FH)	6 11 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved 7 pm Scouts (FH)	7 UWF Christmas Luncheon (Time and Location TBD) 8 pm AA (FH)	8 7 pm Choir (Choir Room)	9 7 pm Blue Christmas Worship (Sanctuary)	10 8:30 am UMM Breakfast (Canary's) 10 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved 2 pm A Christmas Cabaret (Stocker Arts)
11 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	12 5 pm Bells (Choir Room) 6 pm - 8 pm Girl Scouts (Classroom 7) 8:30 pm AA (FH)	13 11 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved 7 pm Scouts (FH)	14 8 pm AA (FH)	15 <i>January Agape Deadline</i> 7 pm Choir (Choir Room)	16	17 10 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved
18 Penny Sunday 9 am Sunday School 10:30 am Worship	19 5 pm Bells (Choir Room) 6 pm - 8 pm Girl Scouts (Classroom 7) 8:30 pm AA (FH)	20 11 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved 1 pm - 3 pm Kids' Book Bank Mission Trip 7 pm Scouts (FH)	21 8 pm AA (FH)	22 7 pm Choir (Choir Room)	23	24 <i>Christmas Eve</i> 10 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved 7 pm Christmas Eve Worship
25 Christmas Day Worship Plans TBA (please read bulletin announcements, e-newsletters, the website, or call the church office for worship information)	26 <i>Church Office Closed</i> 8:30 pm AA (FH)	27 <i>Church Office Closed</i> 11 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved	28 8 pm AA (FH)	29	30	31 <i>New Year's Eve</i> 10 am - 2 pm Sanctuary Reserved

For the most up-to-date calendar, visit www.noumc.org.

Please contact the church office (noumc@noumc.org or 440.779.6634) to add your meeting or gathering, virtual or in-person, to the church calendar.

Agape Newsletter

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



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.

Holiday Free Community Meal Carry-Out Only

Thursday, December 1

4:30 pm - 5:30 pm

Carry-Out Menu:

pork roast, mashed potatoes and gravy,
green beans, 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.*