

Agape

Greek for "Love without Limits"



North Olmsted United Methodist Church

Vol. 53 Issue 1

February 2019

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Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday, February 3

You are invited to bring donations of money and food to donate to Oxcart Food Pantry.

Our youth will be stationed at the Sanctuary doors after worship to collect your donations.



Thank you for making a difference in our community!

Youth Work Mission News

July 7-13, 2019

Cass Community Center in Detroit, Michigan

Open to all youth who will have completed 6th grade.
Adults welcome, too.

We are partnering with Westlake UMC
(the Suburban Campus and the Simpson Metro West Campus)

Join us at our next meeting:
Sunday, February 10, at 5:30 pm
at North Olmsted UMC

Meetings will generally be held
on the second Sunday of the month,
alternating between Westlake UMC and North Olmsted UMC,
and will start with dinner.

Contact John Wolter
or Katie Chapman at 440-779-6634, ext. 14



Announcements

Just Mercy: Conversations to Spark a Redemptive Movement



During the month of February, we will join other congregations in the North Coast District as we focus on “Just Mercy,” a worship series very loosely based on the book *Just Mercy: The Story of Justice and Redemption* by Bryan Stevenson. No, Rev. Mark will not be preaching a prescribed sermon. Every pastor is still writing and preaching their own sermons as they are led by the Holy Spirit. However, many of our bulletin resources and our general theme will be gleaned from this program. Rev. Mark recommends the book *Just Mercy*, if you have not read it; and he looks forward to developing and sharing some provocative meditations considering justice and mercy in American society.

Reverend Mark Announces His Retirement

In church on January 13 it was announced that I will be retiring from active ministry effective July 1, 2019. I feel very blessed to have served in parish ministry for the past fifteen years and to have been the pastor of North Olmsted UMC for the past eight. This is a wonderful church with wonderfully loving people. As I make this announcement, please know that I will always be an ordained minister, serving God and the church as I am called. This simply starts a new chapter in my life. I hope to do more teaching and writing. I also hope to be more involved in music – both as a church musician and a piano technician. Also know that I will continue to be your pastor for the next five months. During that time, together we will continue progress on *Our Faithful Journey*. Finally, once my replacement is named, I will work with that person to affect a smooth transition of leadership. I will say more about these plans in future columns.

Grace and Peace Always,
Rev. Mark

Opportunities to Serve at North Olmsted UMC

February Free Community Meal

Thursday, February 28, from 4:30 to 6 pm

Barb Linton will cook the meal. The menu is: baked ziti, salad, applesauce, bread, and dessert. We are in need of helpers to prepare, serve, and clean up. We are especially in need of helpers for set-up from 2:30 to 4 pm as there is a lot to do. Please sign up in Fellowship Hall.

Also, we need cooks for future meals. Start 2019 off right by signing up for this whole-church ministry. Thanks!



Community Meal

Stephen Ministers Meeting

Tuesday, February 26, from 6:30 to 8:30 pm

Classroom

A message from one of our new Stephen Ministers:

Becoming a Stephen Minister was a humble and happy process for me. This church's Stephen Ministry needs more Stephen Ministers, especially men. Stephen Ministers are assigned care receivers that are of the same gender. Are you a good listener, and do you like people? Try us out. God needs you, we need you, and most of all, your future care receivers need you. God bless you and yours this new year and for all time. Thank you.

Wayne, Class of 2018

Commission on a Way Forward...

Rev. Mark Steiger

As February approaches, my thoughts and my prayers turn to our upcoming special session of the General Conference in St. Louis, Missouri, February 23-26, 2019. The General Conference is the highest legislative body of The United Methodist Church. It is the only body that can “officially” speak for United Methodism. One of its chief responsibilities is to review and revise The United Methodist Book of Discipline as needed. Delegates to General Conference are elected by each of the Annual Conferences within the denomination. (Twelve of the 1000 total delegates are from East Ohio.)

The General Conference usually meets once a quadrennium (every four years), for approximately two weeks. In the last several meetings, it became apparent that our denomination is deeply divided on the issue of human sexuality, especially when it comes to matters of same-sex marriage and the ordination of LGBTQ individuals. As a result, the 2016 General Conference, at the suggestion of our bishops, referred the matter to a special commission, called the *Commission on a Way Forward*. This commission was made up of a wide range of individuals covering all aspects of the issues. Last spring, the commission released its report, including three possible plans:

1) *The Traditional Plan calls for basically no change other than to stiffen penalties for those violating the Discipline. The United Methodist Church would still forbid same-sex marriage and the ordination of practicing homosexuals. I believe this plan offers no solution to the divide that has existed in the past several conferences.*

2) *The Connectional Plan calls for three separate branches of the denomination, one that is quite conservative/traditional, one that is progressive, and a third that seeks to be moderate. I believe this might actually be worse than the Traditional Plan. Not only would it split the denomination, it would also cause a major division in a lot of churches as they argue over to which branch they should belong.*

3) *The One Church Plan calls for the elimination of all homophobic language from the Book of Discipline. It would allow for same-sex marriage at the discretion of the presiding clergy and the church in which the marriage might be performed. It leaves the question of ordination up to the individual conference. Basically, the One Church Plan leaves the issue of LGBTQ rights up to the individual consciences of the people involved. The One Church Plan was supported by the majority of the members of the Commission on a Way Forward and has been endorsed by the Council of Bishops. I believe it is the best plan for our denomination as a whole – for both progressive and conservative churches and members.*



The Council of Bishops has now called a special session of the General Conference for this February. The sole purpose of this session will be to receive and act upon the report from the Commission on a Way Forward. This will not be an easy conference. There are traditionalists who do not accept that sexual orientation is not a matter of choice; and there are progressives who feel that none of these plans goes far enough toward full-inclusion. There will be amendments proposed on the floor of the conference seeking to change plans in various ways.

And so I pray. I pray for the church. I pray for our denomination. And I pray for our General Conference and its delegates. Most of all, I pray that God's will be done. Please join me in prayer. Pray during the days leading up to General Conference and pray every day – February 23-26, 2019. Finally, pray that, in all things, God may be glorified. Amen.

See you in church,
Rev. Mark

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

by Wendy Cooper

Souper Bowl of Caring

Sunday, February 3

On February 3, our Youth, with your help, will help fight hunger and poverty. We will join a national effort to refocus Super Bowl weekend into a weekend of sharing God's love with our neighbors in need by participating in the Souper Bowl of Caring. This effort helps us to be mindful of those who are without even a bowl of soup to eat as we enjoy our Super Bowl celebrations. Our Youth will be stationed at the Sanctuary exits after worship to collect your donations, which will be given to the North Olmsted Food Pantry. Thank you for making a difference in our community!

Pre-Ordered Sub Sandwiches

If you ordered subs, you can pick them up Sunday, February 3!

Thank You!

The youth would like to thank all who have supported their Sunday School 4 Paws for Ability Mission Project since September:

Thank you to all who purchased monkey bread. The youth made a profit of \$192!

Thank you to the UMW who generously donated \$200!

Thank you to those who just wanted to generously donate \$18.50!

Thank you to all who purchased Christmas flowers: the youth made a profit of \$134.25!

Our grand total so far is **\$544.75**. Thank you for helping our youth learn what it means to "bear another's burden" and for getting them closer to their goal of raising \$6000 to help a child in need receive a service dog!

4 Paws Facts:

At 4 Paws for Ability it costs at least \$40,000 to train and place a service dog with a disabled child. Costs include medical care, food, and training equipment.

Through our partial payment for service model, our families can pay or engage in fundraising activities to cover the fee. Fundraising is completed in the families' communities to help raise the fee. Very few families pay out of pocket for their service dog.

The fee for a service dog is \$17,000.

It costs about \$1,500 - \$2,000 to maintain a service dog each year, or about \$100 a month, for proper veterinary care, food, equipment, etc.



United Methodist Men

UMM Chicken Dinner & *Jake's Dilemma*, presented by The Dover Players

Saturday, February 23

Dinner served from 5 to 7 pm; Show begins at 8 pm

Adults - \$13.00 (Dinner only - \$10.00)

Seniors - \$12.00 (Dinner Only - \$9.00)

Children ages 6 to 12 - \$8.00 (Dinner only - \$5.00)

Children 5 & under - Free

Tickets on sale following worship or call the church office



Youth News

by Katie Chapman

Breakfast with Santa Recap

Breakfast with Santa was a HUGE success! We served over 90 people this year. That's more than double from last year. I was overwhelmed by the gratitude and excitement of the families we served.

Thank you to all of the volunteers who graciously gave their time to help set up, serve breakfast, cook, run the games, supervise the crafts, make center pieces, paint faces, make balloon reindeer, take photos, and clean up. I know December is a very busy month, but without you, this event would not have been as successful as it was. I am eternally grateful. Last but certainly not least, to UMW and UMM.....**THANK YOU!** Your extremely generous donations are what made it possible for us to offer a free breakfast to the community. I wish I could show you each and every child's face when they saw Santa walk in. You are truly a blessing to this church and this community. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Upcoming Events:

February 8-10
Confirmation Retreat at Camp Asbury

Sunday, February 10 at 5:30 pm
Next Youth Work Mission Meeting at NOUMC
Dinner will be provided

Sunday, March 3
Following worship
Work Mission Soup and Chili Cook-off Fundraiser



Youth Council Report, 2018

by Jean Scothon

Youth Council was formed last spring to fulfill a directive of the Strategic Plan to build our youth program. Our goals are to assist our Youth Leader, Katie Chapman, and to help direct our NOUMC Youth Program.

Five of us (Rev. Mark, Wendy Cooper, Tammy Moore, Katie Chapman, and myself) have been attending the Small Church Cohort sponsored by our East Ohio Annual Conference. The purpose of the cohort is to help small churches build sustainable children and youth programs.

One of the first guidelines given to us was to create a mission statement. We will share that with you in the next Agape, as it is a work in progress. A second guideline was to build a master volunteer list. This is a list of the members (and attendees) of our congregation that are willing to help us once or twice a year by volunteering their services. That may mean working in the kitchen, setting-up for an event, chaperoning, sharing a talent, cleaning-up, or any other needed help. We have started creating the master list and will be calling you, if we haven't called you already!

The Youth Room has been painted, furnished, and made very attractive. In September we had a ribbon cutting ceremony to introduce the "new" room. Our youth were impressed to have an attractive space for themselves.

Katie has reported in the Agape the many activities that we had for youth and children in 2018. The Youth Council has assisted and supported these activities. Many more meaningful events, activities, and services are being planned for 2019. (Watch the Agape for details.)

As we have learned in our cohort sessions, we must be patient. A successful youth program takes several years to establish. Thank you for your patience and help.

Outreach Committee

**OXCART
PANTRY**



Oxcart Pantry Collection

We certainly deserve a pat on our collective backs. In December, we donated two carloads of gifts for our four adopt-a-families, 100 stockings stuffed with gifts, and 70 cleaning supplies (mostly laundry detergent) to the Oxcart Pantry. I know we don't do it for the back-patting, but it's amazing how much enjoyment we get from giving to others. We are appreciated. In January, we started the new year by donating 93 containers of fruit. We are now collecting spaghetti sauce until February 10. In March, we will collect canned meat and fish until March 10. Thanks for all you do.

Item	Due
Spaghetti Sauce	Feb. 10
Canned Meat & Fish	Mar. 10

Military Coupon Collection

We continue to collect coupons for military families to use at the PX. These coupons help families to stretch their budgets and are greatly appreciated. *Please clip the coupons before bringing them. It is not necessary to sort them.* Place them in the envelope under the Outreach bulletin board by the nursery. Thanks for your ongoing support.

United Methodist Women

by Barb Andrews

At our give-away meeting in November, we were happy to allot \$5000 to various charities and many requests from people or groups in the church. Charities included OhioGuidestone, Lenore Jarvis' medical trip, the Oxcart Pantry, the Community Fund, the Salvation Army, City Mission, Cleveland Back Packs, Flat Rock Homes, Red Bird, coats for some seniors, Pedaling Parsons, WSCH, Cambodian Missionary Tuition Assistance, Mobile Outreach, Wesleyan Home, and Laura's Home. Other charities closer to home included the Community Dinner and Laura's Home dinners. In the church, money was allotted for the outdoor spring clean-up, a new vacuum, a coffee maker, music program funds, Breakfast with Santa, the discretionary fund, organ repair, the 4 Paws Sunday School project, the building fund, and the nurture committee. We think everyone who asked for money was happy with that day.



United
Methodist
Women
FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

We are back to meeting every Wednesday at 10 am and would love to have you join us. We did set up dates for our activities when we will definitely be asking for your help so we can have another big giveaway day this year. If you like to plan ahead (to get out of town on rummage sale weeks), here they are. The plant sale will be tentatively May 11 (subject to Dean's schedule), the craft show will be October 12, and the two rummage sales will be April 6 and November 9. We can't do these events without your help, and we do love giving back to the church to thank you for all your hard work.

Opportunities for Fellowship

Adult Council: Dinner and a Movie

Friday, February 8

Join us for dinner at Don Tequila at 5:30 pm, followed by a movie at LCCC Stocker Arts Center at 7:30 pm. The cost for the movie is \$7. Tickets are general admission; purchase tickets by phone at 440-366-4040 or buy tickets online at https://www.lorainccc.edu/stocker/lccc_events/you-can-count-on-me/. See the sign-up sheet in Fellowship Hall for additional information or call Charlene.

Lunch with Friends

Thursday, February 21, at 11:30 am

Our group meets on the third Thursday of each month at 11:30 am. Watch the bulletin for the location. Please join us for a couple of hours of food and fellowship. It really helps if we know how many are coming so we can have enough chairs. To reserve your seat, call and leave a message with Carole Bettinger. (If you forget to call, come anyway!)

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 8:30 am UMM at Canary's Family Restaurant 10 am - 1 pm Sanctuary Reserved for Organist
3 <i>Souper Bowl of Caring</i> 9 am Sunday School 10 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 12 pm Youth Council 12 pm Nurture Committee	4 6:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Bell Choir 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	5 11 am AA 4:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Gospel of Mark Study 7 pm The Dover Players 7 pm Girl Scouts of North Olmsted	6 10 am UMW 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	7 7 pm Choir 7 pm The Dover Players	8 Adult Council Dinner & Movie 5:30 pm Confirmation Retreat through Sunday	9 10 am - 1 pm Sanctuary Reserved for Organist
10 9 am Sunday School 10 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 5:30 pm Youth Work Mission Meeting 6 pm Teen Scouts Committee	11 6:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Bell Choir 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	12 11 am AA 4:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm Gospel of Mark Study 7 pm The Dover Players	13 10 am UMW 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	14 7 pm Choir 7 pm The Dover Players	15 <i>March Agape Deadline</i>	16 10 am - 1 pm Sanctuary Reserved for Organist
17 <i>Penny Sunday</i> 9 am Sunday School 10 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship	18 <i>Presidents Day/ Office Closed</i> 6:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Bell Choir 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	19 11 am AA 4:30 pm Confirmation 7 pm The Dover Players	20 10 am UMW 7 pm The Dover Players 8:30 pm AA	21 11:30 am Lunch with Friends 6 pm Worship Committee 7 pm Choir 7 pm The Dover Players	22 8 pm The Dover Players	23 10 am - 1 pm Sanctuary Reserved for Organist 5 - 7 pm UMM Chicken Dinner 8 pm The Dover Players
24 9 am Sunday School 10 am Fellowship 10:30 am Worship 11:30 am Fellowship 3 pm The Dover Players 6 pm Teen Scouts Committee	25 6:30 pm Scouts 7 pm Bell Choir 8:30 pm AA	26 11 am AA 4:30 pm Confirmation 6:30 pm Stephen Ministry	27 10 am UMW 8:30 pm AA	28 4:30 - 6 pm Community Meal 7 pm Choir		

Office Hours:

Mondays - Wednesdays 10 am to 2 pm, Thursdays 1 to 5 pm

Christian Education Office Hours:

Mondays 1 to 3 pm, Thursdays 12 to 3 pm

Youth Director Office Hours:

Mondays & Thursdays 11 am to 2:30 pm

**NORTH OLMSTED
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Agape Newsletter

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February Free Community Meal



Thursday, February 28

Serving 4:30 to 6 pm

baked ziti, salad, applesauce, bread,
dessert, and beverages

Held at North Olmsted United Methodist Church
4600 Dover Center Road, North Olmsted, Ohio 44070
440-779-6634 + www.noumc.org

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.