

*“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned.”*

- Isaiah 9:2

Dear Union Avenue UMC Family,

Greetings in Christ! As the new year dawns, I am thinking of all the ways we try to reinvent ourselves at this time of year. We want to eat healthier after a holiday season filled with treats. We want to exercise more. We set goals that usually we fail to reach. A 2023 poll from Forbes Health found that most people give up on their New Year’s Resolutions less than four months into the new year.

Around ten years ago, my spiritual director suggested that instead of a New Year’s resolution, I pray that God would give me a guiding word for the coming year. This word would be a kind of theme for the year – a word that I would pray about, that I would continue reflecting on throughout the year. My word for 2025 was peace; in 2024 it was presence. For 2026 it seems I am being led to the word joy.

Last year on Epiphany Sunday we passed out “star words” – guiding words for the new year. This year I have decided not to hand out guiding words – instead, I invite you to pray that God gives you a guiding word for 2026 to help you grow in your spiritual life. Spend some time in quiet asking God for a word to guide you. Listen for what emerges.

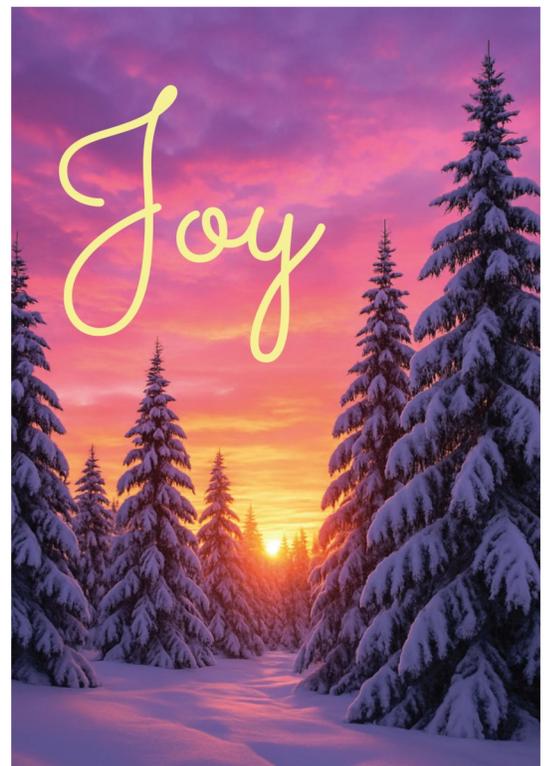
As we continue in the winter season of cold and dark days, I see my guiding word as a kind of light – like the star that led the magi to Jesus. The word is a star that keeps me close to the true light that was born into the world at Christmas and has existed forever – the light that will never go out.

In 2026, may you have grace for yourself and others, and may you live in and be aware of the light all around you.

In Christ’s Love,

Pastor Becky

Pastor Becky



PASTOR BECKY’S OFFICE DROP-IN HOURS

See Sunday bulletin for current hours or call office to schedule.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------|
| 1. Pastor’s Letter | 5. Apple Dumpling Wrap Up |
| 2. Missions | 6. Altar & Arts |
| 3. Mental Health Awareness,
Passings, Preschool | 7. Calendar, Birthdays |
| 4. Meetings/Events | |

NEXT ISSUE DEADLINE:
Thursday, January 15



GIVING TREE THANK YOU

Once again, the generosity of our Union Avenue United Methodist Church family was overwhelming!

The gift storage room was *filled* with gifts of all shapes and sizes...all items that children hoped they might receive for Christmas. Fifteen families with 26 kids were blessed by your giving spirit. These families are from our Union Avenue Preschool, our community and the A-FIRST permanent housing.



Boy Scout Troop #101 and Cub Scout Pack #52 once again helped provide some of the gifts for their December philanthropy. Each family received a \$40 gift card to either Giant Eagle or Aldi to help alleviate some of the cost of purchasing their holiday meal.

THANK YOU for sharing the spirit of Christmas and for bringing JOY to those in need.



HUMAN RELATIONS SUNDAY - JANUARY 18

Human Relations Day is our day to **celebrate everyone's potential** to do great things.

It's our day to **empower those living on the margins of society.**

It's our day to **invest in at-risk youth.**

It's our day to **make a difference together.**

Human Relations Sunday was first introduced in 1972 on the Sunday before the observance of Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King's birthday.

King cast a vision "to place at the forefront of our lives the Christian virtues of love, mercy, and forgiveness...a world in which everybody will respect the dignity and worth of all human personality." He noted: "That will be the day when God's kingdom will be here."

Human Relations Day serves as a call for United Methodists to live into King's vision by supporting ministries that focus on small-business development, transitional housing, homelessness, community advocacy, literacy, incarcerated youth, racial equality, and raising awareness around poverty, human trafficking, immigration, and environmental justice.

One of our greatest callings is to help bring God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven. By supporting the Human Relations Sunday offering on January 18, we are able to participate in this beautiful vision.

Please mark donations and checks with Human Relations, or select the appropriate online giving tab.



ALLIANCE COMMUNITY PANTRY

Community food needs are ongoing. Please consider picking up an extra item or two while grocery shopping to add to the food pantry tubs at either the north parking lot entrance or the Hartshorn Street entrance. Thank you!



DINE OUT – CHIVES

5:30 PM, Tuesday, January 20 | Our Mental Health Awareness Team invites you to join UA family and friends for our 3rd Tuesday dinner out. All are welcome! This month we'll dine just down the street at Chives, 2355 S. Union Ave., Alliance. A sign-up sheet is outside the sanctuary.

MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Have a mental health need? Free booklets to help you respond are available on the display racks outside the church office. The booklets are free, and a few of the topics available are anxiety, worry, depression, and addiction.





Our hearts and prayers go out to the family of:
John Armitage - November 26

UNION AVENUE PRESCHOOL

On the last week before their Christmas break, our Union Avenue preschoolers celebrated Jesus' birthday. Pastor Becky read the story of Christmas to the children and they sang Christmas songs. At snack time they sang Happy Birthday to Jesus and enjoyed cupcakes.

We hope all our students and their families, and our Preschool staff have been enjoying their Christmas break!





ALL CHURCH BOWLING

5:00-7:00 PM, Saturday, January 10 | Union Avenue Social Ministries is having a bowling get together at the Christopher Columbus Society lanes, 505 S. Liberty Ave. You won't want to miss the delicious pizza!

UNBOOK CLUB

7:00 PM, Monday, January 12 | If you would like to share, let us know about your favorite read of 2025. We are all looking forward to hearing each other's book recommendations.

YOGA CHURCH

6:30-7:30 PM, Friday, January 16 | This worship gathering incorporates gentle movement with modifications for all levels, prayer, meditation, and a brief scripture reflection. Every service ends with extended rest. Connect to Christ as you connect with the breath and body God has gifted you! Bring a mat or borrow ours.

BOOK CLUB

Zoom link: kbericchia@gmail.com

7:00 PM, Monday, February 9 | We have chosen our next Book Club pick, which is *The Frozen River*, by Ariel Lawhon. We hope you will find this historical mystery based on the life and diary of an 18th century midwife well worth your reading time.

WEEKLY EVENTS

THE GATHERING - 11:00 AM, Sundays - RESUMES JAN. 11 | Everyone is welcome to The Gathering class which meets after worship down the hall from the Sanctuary. We rotate leaders, with occasional guest speakers, and typically study a 6-week series with a video, brief lesson, and discussion. A freewill "light" offering is collected, and donated, by group consensus, to community areas of need.

BIBLE STUDY

10:00-11:00 AM, Wednesdays | We study the scripture that Pastor Becky will preach on the coming Sunday. Each session stands alone so feel free to drop in whenever you are available.

THE HOUR DISCUSSION GROUP

Zoom link: mkpatter@aol.com

10:00 AM, Thursdays (Zoom) | Discuss social justice issues, current events, church and society, and more.

COPELAND OAKS

MINISTRY TO CRANDALL MEDICAL CENTER

10:00 AM, Tuesday, January 13 | Crandall residents are invited to our next service. Other Copeland Oaks residents are invited to come visit with residents, help them to/from the dining hall and sing hymns.

UNION AVENUE RESIDENTS GATHERING

10:00-11:00 AM, Tuesday, October 28, Williamsburg Lounge | Copeland Oaks residents are invited to join Pastor Becky and friends for devotions, singing and conversation.



(Like this article?
We still have a few dumplings left.
Contact the office to purchase.)

Apple Dumplings,
a United Methodist Men project:
2025 Season Wrap Up

Apple Dumpling makers complete another successful year, our 23rd!

For the 23rd year, our loyal apple dumpling crew completed another successful year in mid-November.

Working every Monday and Tuesday morning since September 29, our hard workers turned out 5,130 dumplings (855 bags) which are sold in bags of six for \$12, until they are gone, with all money supporting missions projects and local nonprofit organizations.

It's a project that started in 2002 during the annual East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church when all delegates were given one dollar from the conference treasury, along with the challenge to use it to raise money for missions.

About 25 people from Union Avenue UMC pooled their money, bought apples and flour and made a limited number of dumplings. They quickly sold, and from there the project took off. First under the direction of the United Methodist Women, the project is overseen by the United Methodist Men since 2008.

Led by Margaret and Keith Brown, the hard working Apple Dumpling Gang members this year were Dick Bashore, Ted and Betty Clark, Barb Gaughan, Susan Headley, Jeanne LeMieux, Clyde Lepley, Carla McIntosh, Walt and Donna Mozzochi, Art Murdoch, Sally Petrucci, Carol Powell, Donna Rickels, Mary Jane and Rick Sampson, Lynda Slack, and Karen Wilson.

Members who have been selling dumplings weekdays from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM are Linda Brady, Betty Clark, Jennifer Crist, Bill and Penny Downs, Sue Goris, Paula Hochradel, Kathy Kramer, Jim Lackey, Ron and Diana Priest, and Carole Wilson.

Others helping out were Kerry Cochran who helped pick up the apples at Arrowhead Orchard, Len Slack who handled the finances, Mike Patterson who helped with organizing the project and publicity, and of course custodian Dale Brown, and church administrative assistant Chris Lamb.

Among the local nonprofits to benefit from the dumpling project are Alliance Area Habitat for Humanity, the Alliance Community Pantry, the Salvation Army, the Alliance Area Domestic Violence Shelter, Clothed in Righteousness, the YMCA, Raiders Cove, and the University of Mount Union Social Responsibility spring break class trips.

Proceeds also sponsor the Union Avenue Preschool open house dinner, and pay for the church's monthly community spaghetti dinners served at Christ United Methodist Church.

- Mike Patterson





ALTAR & ARTS SANCTUARY DECOR

The Altar and Arts Committee is very excited about changes to some of our church Advent decor!

Pulpit Banner (photo right)

Our special thanks go to **Amy Miller**. When asked "Would you be able to create an Advent pulpit banner?" Amy said sure...little did we know that we would receive a one-of-a-kind handmade pieced and quilted piece of art. The new banner features the beautiful white star on a field of blues and purples that is wonderful addition to the sanctuary. Thank you Amy!

Nativity Set (photo below)

In early spring we received a call from our dear friend and former Union Avenue pastor **Rev. Dr. Ken and Grace Chalker**, asking if we might be interested in a wooden nativity set. This couple, along with their two children served Union Avenue UMC from 1982 to 1986.

Ken created the nativity set for his next appointment at First UMC in Cleveland. When that church merged, the set traveled to University Circle UMC. Hearing that they might not be using the set any longer, Dr. Chalker took it back and called us.

Of course we were interested! But we had **no idea** how beautiful and amazing this nativity would be until Grace and Ken brought it here.

The set is all hand-crafted by Dr. Chalker out of oak, walnut, and poplar. It consists of a simple stable with the star, Mary, Joseph, two large shepherds and a small shepherd boy, with a sheep, lamb, and donkey. There are three wise men, a camel, and a magnificent angel, all holding candles to welcome the baby Jesus (who did not appear until Christmas).



This set took seven years to complete, and began with the wise men, a gift to Grace from Ken. As the other pieces took shape, he told us they seemed to come to life.

We are beyond grateful to Ken and Grace for this extraordinary gift and look forward to featuring it for many years to come. If you see or talk with our former pastor and his wife, please thank them for their generosity!

- Lynda Slack

JANUARY

SUNDAYS: 9:45 AM (also Facebook Live); 11:00 AM - 91.1 FM

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
SUNDAYS: Social Hour: 9:00-9:45 AM Kids Faith Formation - 9:00-9:30 AM (no class 1/4) Adult Gathering Class - 11:00 AM (no class 1/4) All events at UA unless noted; Z = Zoom				1 NEW YEAR'S DAY: OFFICE CLOSED	2	3
4 9:45A Worship Communion 11A 91.1 FM	5	6 5P Spaghetti (at Christ UMC)	7 10A Bible Study	8 10A The Hour (Z)	9 6:15P Bell Choir 7:30P Choir	10 5P All Church Bowling
11 9:45A Worship 11A 91.1 FM	12 7PM Unbook Club	13 10A Crandall Service	14 10A Bible Study	15 10A The Hour (Z)	16 6:15P Bell Choir 7:30P Choir	17 6:30P Yoga Church
18 9:45A Worship 11A 91.1 FM	19 MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY: OFFICE CLOSED	20 5:30P Dine Out (Chives)	21 10A Bible Study	22 10A The Hour (Z)	23 6:15P Bell Choir 7:30P Choir	24
25 9:45A Worship 11A 91.1 FM	26	27 10A UA at Copeland Oaks	28 10A Bible Study	29 10A The Hour (Z)	30 6:15P Bell Choir 7:30P Choir	31

JANUARY:

3 – John Rasile
4 – Dawn Denny
7 – Jed Mewborn
7 – Carol Powell
10 – Jenni-Jo Kinser

10 – Steve Kramer
10 – Jean Smith
11 – Larry Snodgrass
15 – Tom Rickels
15 – Abbey West

17 – Sue Sheets
21 – Diana Priest
22 – Mary Jane Sampson
Contact office to have your birthday listed here.





UNION AVENUE UMC
1843 S. UNION AVE.
ALLIANCE OH 44601

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

*A United Methodist Church
practicing Safe Sanctuary through
the child protection policy*

Church: J. Kim Lewis
Director of Music
Rev. Rebecca Weamer
Elder and Lead Pastor

Dale Brown
Custodian
Preschool:
Pam Harlan
Preschool Director

Christine K. Cochran
Financial Secretary
Kirk Miller
Preschool Treasurer

Tyler Kinser
Treasurer
Cindy Saari
Preschool Custodian

Christine R. Lamb
Administrative Assistant,
Membership Secretary



UNION AVENUE
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

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Instagram:
[instagram.com/unionavenue
umc](https://instagram.com/unionavenueumc)

Church office hours: Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM-2:30 PM

SUNDAY: Sanctuary 9:45 AM | WRMU 91.1 FM 11 AM | [Facebook.com/uaumc](https://facebook.com/uaumc) (live)