

MENTOR

UNITED

WEEKLY UPDATE

METHODIST

CHURCH

DECEMBER 15, 2024

8600 MENTOR AVE

MENTOR OH 44060

MENTORUMC.ORG

440.255.3496

Worship with us in-person or online:
Mentorumc.org, [Facebook](#), and [Youtube](#)

Worship Schedule

9 AM Modern

11 AM Traditional



Pastor's Letter

God With Us – Joy Through Identity

"...because there was no place for them in the inn." – Luke 2:7b

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it." – John 1:5



Welcome to our third week of Advent! I hope you have been enjoying the reflections in our Advent Devotional written by members of the church. Each reflection, photograph, poem, and artwork submitted has enhanced my experience of our theme "God with us".

This week, we are invited to consider joy through identity. The twelfth reflection in our Advent Devotional is written by Nancy Richards. On the adjacent page is this picture she took of a quiet place at dusk. She wrote, "This is where I take time to listen to God. Peace and Serenity is given to me by His grace."

I was in touch with Nancy because I wanted to know more about this place and what it means to her. I asked her if she would say that it is also a place where her identity as a beloved child of God is restored and with that, joy. She replied a resounding "Yes, very much!"

There are so many things that shape our sense of identity in both good and no so good ways. When we meet someone new, whether we are aware of it or not, our brains are analyzing tons of information to create in our minds a sense of who this person is. Their name, the color of their skin, the way they talk, their height and weight, their facial expressions, what they are wearing, their age and so on. Not to mention the questions we typically ask also to create an identity that we associate with the person. "Where do you work?" "What do you do?" "Where did you grow up?" "What school did you go to?" "Are you a Browns fan?"

I wonder what identities were assigned to Joseph and pregnant Mary when they came to Bethlehem for the mandatory census: Teenagers. Unmarried. From backwater Nazareth. Poor. Out-of-towners. Lost. Vagabonds. I wonder if the identities that were assumed upon them played a part in there not being a room for them. It must have been a pretty dark and scary night.

Yet, today, we celebrate the story and we call this couple holy and blessed. Their child we call the Son-of-the-Most-High, King of Kings, Prince of Peace, Messiah, Savior, Light-of-the World and more! It is an example of what we hear John the Evangelist proclaim in the beginning of his gospel – "The light shines in the darkness and the darkness did not overcome it."

May we each receive anew this day the light of Christ that restores our true identity as children of God. May we find joy in this gift of blessed identity and the witness of God's light shining in the darkness.

In the light of Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Pastor Steve". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Pastor Steve



December 15th
Christmas Cantata
 in Traditional Worship, 11 AM

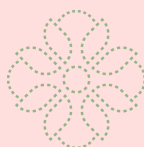
December 18th
Blue Christmas Service,
 7 PM in the Chapel

December 20th
Prelude to Christmas,
 7:30 PM in the Sanctuary

December 29th, 30th
Youth Holiday Lock-In,
 7 PM-8 AM



Advent Season

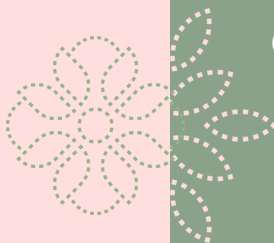


December 24th
Christmas Eve Services

Communion, 3 PM
Family, 5 PM
Modern, 7 PM
Traditional, 9 PM



all services are candlelight



Care CONGREGATIONAL

In our prayers today & in your personal prayer time, please remember the following:

Members admitted to Rehab, Assisted Living or Nursing Home Facility:

The Enclave - Delores Tackett, Johanna Kessler, Dee Smith,
 Mary Lou Haines, John Shetler, Carol Anderson, Doug Kepp

Governors Point - Doris Sturm

Parker Place - Bill Owen, Bob & Sandy Linsell,

Deloris Parsons, Mary Ann Haycox

Tapestry - Gloria McFeely

Symphony of Mentor - Lorraine Ahlstrom

Breckenridge/Fairmount - Patricia Laubscher

Village of St. Edward: Dale Porter

Holly Hill - Floyd Richards

Brookdale - Bill Wolfgang

Mentor Ridge - Russ Lancaster

Concord Ridge - Jack Brown

Members who are in need of prayer:

Karen Mancini, Marilyn Oliver, Luke Sanvido, David Fell, Carol Anderson, Pam Crawley, Bob Linsell, Dick & Nancy Smith, Andy Champa, Georgeanna Allen, Suzanne Dubeansky, Ida Reynolds

Need to Know

Youversion

<https://bible.com/events/49361374>

Learn more about Sunday's scriptures & worship by visiting this link.

Communion & Fellowship

Join us for Communion at 10:30 AM in the Chapel on Sundays in December.

Carols in the Gallery

You can listen to Christmas songs being performed in the Gallery during Fellowship Hour, starting at 10:15 AM on Sunday mornings. This Sunday, Carol Haines will be playing carols on the piano!



Advent Devotional

You can pick up a Devotional at the church or read the digital version [found here](#) or on our website. If the browser version doesn't work for you, try the PDF version. [More info here](#). To celebrate the art shared in this devotional and our Stewardship craft, we will have an art display in the Gallery through December.

Christmas Cantata

Each year we prepare for Christmas with an incredible performance by members & friends of Mentor UMC. Join us in Traditional Worship at 11 AM on Sunday, December 15th in-person or online.

Blue Christmas

Blue Christmas is a service for those dealing with grief and loss this Advent season. Join us for a meaningful service in the Chapel at 7 PM on Wednesday, December 18th.

Prelude to Christmas

Join us on Friday, December 20th at 7:30 PM in the Sanctuary for this special service presented by the Charter Members Men's Choir & guests from Painesville & Chardon UMC Choirs.

Shepherding Summit

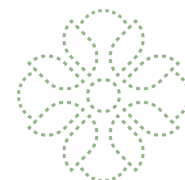
Join us on January 15th here at MUMC for the next Shepherding Summit. This is a great opportunity for leaders & friends of the church who wish to know more about leading all onto a path of Christ-centered discipleship through faith, processes, ministries, and more. More info coming soon!

Disciple Bible Study

Beginning in the new year, we will start Discipleship Bible studies. Pastor Steve will lead a Disciple 1 class on Thursdays, 4-6 PM starting January 16th. Syndie Toth will lead Disciple 1 on Mondays from 10-12 PM and Lucas & Wendy Rhoads will lead Disciple 2 on Thursdays from 7-9 PM. This will go all 2025, with a break in the summer. Pastor Tammy will facilitate the fast track version, which is 24 weeks. The prayer is to have 100 plus people involved to learn more about the Bible. [Register here](#).

Healthy Congregations Workshop

The Healthy Congregations workshop is on Saturday, February 8th from 9-4 PM. This workshop is designed to equip leaders to respond to the presence or potential threat of anxiety in a congregational system in ways that prevent destructive conflict and help the church stay focused on its unique mission and purpose. The cost is \$15 and can be paid by cash or through our online giving. [Click here to access the registration form](#)



Giving Trees

The trees are up and the names are ready. As in the past we have the signup genius available as well as GREEN TREE tags on the tree, We encourage you to look at the [signup genius](#) if you plan on taking more than one name. This way you can bless a family for Christmas. Families range from 2-8 children this year. The tags on the trees are mostly single child families and work well for people that are not able to access the signup genius.

YELLOW ANGELS tags are for members of the church that could use some extra prayers.

RED HEARTS represent charities that we are supporting this year. They include: Ohio Guidestone, Project Hope, Royal Family Kids Camp and Ronald McDonald House.

BLUE BELLS represent acts of kindness.

Please return your wrapped and well labeled gifts for the children to church ON or BEFORE Sunday December 15th at noon. We have a secure place to store all gifts. Please contact Betsy Iskra at 440-283-6524 or Iskra5@aol.com with any questions.

[View online signup here.](#)

What's ?

Your Mission Opportunities

Pastors Discretionary Need

As winter heightens and the holidays draw near, the Pastor's Discretionary fund is in need of financial support. The purpose of this fund is to help needy individuals in a confidential and timely manner at the discretion of either the Lead or Associate Pastor of the church. This fund has helped many families in need of emergency rent, utilities, medical needs prescriptions, etc. Often these families are living in a car, have fallen on hard times, are disabled, or working in low paying jobs and don't qualify for other assistance. Mentor UMC's Pastor's Discretionary fund has been a life saving vehicle. Because of the great need in our community, this fund is dangerously low, and contributions would be welcomed. Checks can be made out to Mentor UMC and designated to Pastor's Discretionary Fund. Thank you for your generosity!

Blood Drive

The next Blood Drive at MUMC is Tuesday, January 14th. Signup [online here](#) or at our site.

Hope Chest

Hope Chest is in the process of moving locations. During this process, we ask that donations be paused. Thank you for your continued support and prayers.

Advent Candle Lighting

All are invited to sign up to light candles this Advent season during service. [Visit this signup](#) to learn more.

Christmas Eve Ushers

[Sign up online](#) or in the Info Hub to be an Usher for one of the Christmas Eve services. For questions, contact Chris Meldrum.

Love Begins at Home: Stewardship 2025 Pledge Cards

Thank you to all who have turned in a 2025 Stewardship Pledge Card. Anyone who has not yet turned in a pledge card, please do so. There are cards in the church office or you can use the online pledge card [here](#). Pledges are confidential and can be changed at any time. May God use our pledges to deepen our discipleship and walk of faith.

WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?

Sunday Morning Kids

9:00 & 11:00 AM at MUMC for all services.

- ALL ages are encouraged to check in at the Early Childhood Center (or Gallery, if available).
- Grades K-5 begin in worship with their families and then be dismissed to the Education Wing.

Sunday Morning Signup

MUMC's mission is to lead all onto a path of Christ-centered discipleship. Here is a great place to do just that! [Click here for leader signup](#). There are spots for various ages/levels, so check out what section works for you:

"Worship one, serve one!"

2024-2025 Preschool Reg

There are still a few openings for 2024-2025 Preschool. If you have questions or wish to register, please contact State Manager, Brittany Jones at bjones.preschool@mentorunc.org.

Pre-Reg for 2025-2026

Pre-register for the 2025-2026 school year at MUMC: [link here](#). Get in touch with Brittany Jones to learn more: bjones.preschool@mentorunc.org

MOMCo

MOMCo meets Fridays, December 13th & 20th. Moms join us in the Gallery from 9 AM - 12 PM.

Child & Caregiver Class

Age 2 ½ to 3 ½

9:15-10:45 AM in the Early Childhood Area

- WINTER: January 15, 22, 29, February 5, 12, 19, 26, March 5
- SPRING: March 26, April 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, May 7, 14

Cost is \$60 per 8 week session (prepaid, non-refundable). [Apply here!](#)

Middle School

Grades 6-8 are welcome Sundays from 9:15-10 AM in the Youth Room.

Tea Time

Youth are invited to meet at MUMC in the Library between Sunday services (around 10 AM). We'll enjoy drinks and snacks, talk, do devotions, and more. No need to RSVP, just pop in!

Youth Lock-In

We will have a Holiday Lock-in on December 29th-30th. We will meet in the Youth Room from 7pm to 8am. This will be a time for us to gather together, celebrate the holidays, and have some Holy Shenanigans. [RSVP here](#). To volunteer to help with this event, [sign up online](#).

Young Adult Small Group

Young Adults are encouraged to join a small group that will be meeting in-person and online December 17 and 30th at 6 PM. We will be discussing the Honest Advent devotional and enjoying the Advent season together. [Sign up online](#) or get in touch with Mackalyn.

