

# STEEPLETALK

News from Mentor United Methodist Church

Fall

2020

## Through the Years

Charles Wesley, like his brother John, was one of the major forces in the early Methodist movement. Unlike John, who had little interest in music, Charles was a writer of many, many hymns. Our United Methodist Hymnal contains dozens of hymns which are, at least in part, composed by Charles.

Charles wrote hymns for Advent and Christmas. This was in contrast to many of his contemporaries who were not so enthusiastic celebrants of these seasons. This was due to the Puritan legacy of many in the eighteenth century who didn't believe in celebrating Christmas.

One of Rev. Charles' most famous hymns celebrates Advent. It is "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus", written in 1744. I'm sure many of you are very familiar with this hymn. It is number 196 in our hymnal. It is also found in the hymnals of Lutheran, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches. While Rev. Charles' lyrics (words) remain today, his original music does not. The music we use now is from a Welsh tune "Hyfrydol" written by Rowland Pritchard.

The most famous Charles Wesley hymn we sing at Christmas is "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing". It is number 240 in our hymnal. Once again, it is the lyrics which Wesley wrote that we sing today. Wesley wrote this in 1734. There were some alterations to his lyrics by Rev. George Whitefield, another early Methodist preacher. The melody we sing to this hymn was written over one hundred years later by the famous composer Felix Mendelssohn. This music comes from the cantata Festgesang which Mendelssohn wrote in 1840 to commemorate the four hundredth anniversary of the invention of Johann Gutenberg's movable type.

Charles Wesley's contribution to the world of sacred music is immeasurable. He was, by the way, inducted into the Gospel Hall of Fame in 1995. His lyrics celebrating Christ live on after two hundred years.

However you celebrate Christmas during this crazy pandemic year, may you find joy and peace in your lives as we celebrated the birth of our Savior. Merry Christmas to all!

Do you have any MUMC history you would like to share with the congregation? Please send it to: Don Humphrey, 7330 Holly Park Dr., Concord, Ohio 44060-6704 or e-mail to: [dhumphrey@ameritech.net](mailto:dhumphrey@ameritech.net)

## Pray for our Mail Carriers

Due to the pandemic, mail carriers will not be able to hold their food drive. MUMC received a donation to put toward our food distribution from our local mail carriers. The only request was that we pray:

*I only ask they you say a prayer for each of us carriers in these scary times and if each of your members could just take a moment out of your day when you see your mail person and give a kind word to all of my fellow brother and sister carriers on the streets every day.*

## STAFF

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## Children and Family Ministries

Register for events through the app or at [www.mentorumc.org/children](http://www.mentorumc.org/children)

Our Family Style Sunday School is humming along. I thoroughly enjoy seeing the children as they enter Zoom. I am so grateful to the leaders who are sharing their love for Jesus with our children. There are three breakouts available: preschool, kindergarten, and first grade; second, third, and fourth grade; and fifth and sixth grade. If you haven't joined us yet, that is okay! We meet at 10:10 each Sunday morning. Let me know if you need the login information.

I was so happy that our third graders were able to receive their Bibles in August! It was such a joy to share in this moment with our families. I also was overwhelmed with the awesome response to Treat Street in October. What a fantastic event it was. I truly appreciate everyone who made it such a success and were safe while participating. I am also excited that our [Youth 56](#) has been able to meet during these months as well.

As we move into Advent, I am trying to continue with as many of our "normal" activities as possible. I am looking for families to sign up to light the [Advent Candles](#) during worship. At home Advent wreath kits are ready for families to pick up, so each family can light candles at home. We are having our annual Christmas play. It will be livestreamed on December 11 at 7:30 PM. [Tickets](#) are \$5.00 per device. I am planning the Family Christmas Eve service and would love to include our sixth graders as we have been doing each year.

Even in the midst of our current situation, time marches on. I want to do all that I can to make Advent and Christmas as special as possible. I know that things are challenging for us all. I know my attitude has to be rooted in Jesus and not in the circumstances. I pray that we all can lean into Him during these crazy times.

Please know that even though we are not physically together, I am here to assist you any way that I can. You can call me, text me, email me, etc. I want to come alongside of you as we navigate these times. God has us in His loving arms. He only wants us to lean into Him. Praying you and your family are well and doing all that you can to help us all deal with each day as it comes.

By HIS Grace and through HIS love,  
Tammy Palermo  
Director of Children and Family Ministries  
[tpalermo@mentorumc.org](mailto:tpalermo@mentorumc.org)

### **Advent Wreath Kits - Not Just for the Kids!**

To celebrate advent together, we have a small advent wreath for your household! Just glue the candle cups with a glue gun to the wreath!

Kits can be picked up from the church office during the week, 8 AM to 4 PM.

### **Thank You's**

Thank to all who sent cards, gave gifts, and/or participated in the parade for my birthday. You helped make it one of the best birthdays ever.

*Georgeanna Allen*

To Our Friends at Mentor UMC,

We want to extend our deepest appreciation for the overwhelming number of cards, words of sympathy and prayers we received after the tragic death of our beloved Melissa. Only through our faith, love of family, friends and the peace that passes all understanding which God provides can we get through this great sadness in our lives.

*Love and God Bless,*

*Ellen & Dale & the Maynard Clan*

Thank you to those from the church who remembered our 60th anniversary. The cards were very appreciated. Thank you for your thoughtfulness.

*Richard and Nancy Smith*

## **Pastor's Report for Charge Conference, November 2020**

When 2020 began, we could not have predicted the challenges we would face in the ensuing months. Neither could we have anticipated how creative and courageous we would be as we faced the challenges. It has not been an easy year. Yet Mentor UMC has found ways to proclaim the love and promises of Jesus, offering encouragement to one another and our community. I praise God for your faithful witness.

Throughout this year, I have marveled at our dedicated staff. Each one has dealt with personal realities, and yet remained committed to the collective work we are called to do. I thank each of them for listening and caring for individuals, focusing on what we can do instead of being paralyzed by what we cannot, and consistently engaging in conversation about how we keep moving our mission forward. They have been a source of encouragement to me. As I know they have been to our congregation.

Throughout the year we have learned the value of the Body of Christ. So many people have pitched in to make calls to check on people or go shopping for those at risk. We have all benefitted from the collective wisdom of persons working behind the scenes to record music and deal with technology and make decisions about disinfectant and assure safe building use and develop strategies to reach people for Christ. YSP and Middle School Mission week and Theatre Arts Camp ... they all happened! We also found ways to feed people – never missing a More than a Meal Saturday. Even now plans are underway for another Food Distribution, our 30th Thanksgiving Dinner, and Christmas Giving Tree outreach. Each person is important to the work of the church; perhaps this year more than any other.

The most important things we have accomplished this year, however, are what have sustained us in the faith. Worship may be different - an online blended service, an in person non-singing gathering, a drive thru communion experience - but God is worthy of our efforts because God is who we worship! Discipleship may occur in different ways (we have taken on Zoom and Google Hangout and emerged victorious) but we continue to find ways to lead all onto a path of Christ-centered discipleship. VBS, confirmation, youth group, Journey Groups, Bible Study, and vital conversations about social justice have found ways to continue. Our faith continues to deepen.

Thank you, Mentor UMC, for your faithful witness. There is still work to do. Although the path may not be easy, may we continue to be patient and loving to each other. And, together keep looking to Jesus. May those who come behind us find us faithful.

Our Lay Leaders also offer their reflections for our Charge Conference Report:

This year has been one like no other in the life of our church. MUMC has faced the challenges of COVID-19 with persistence and creativity. Although in-person worship is the ideal format, unique and creative streaming worship opportunities for our parish have helped keep people engaged. Our church has been flexible and cautious when needing to adjust to the changing situation that a pandemic can bring. In person worship experiences continue to be a challenge as guidelines and precautions are taken. Striving to follow safe precautions while not having them interfere with a worship-full experience, will be an on-going challenge.

We look forward to adding more and more face to face events as we move forward. But until then, connecting with one another is vitally important. One of the greatest concerns during these times is the mental health of our people. Building up the ministry of connections at this time, in which people are definitely feeling disjointed from their church family, is an important responsibility we have to one another. Whether it be a phone call, a text or note to our church family members, we can all be a part of helping each other. Through constant prayer and the support of one another, MUMC can and will come through this pandemic in one piece. It may take some rebuilding and some reconnecting, but overall how the church has handled things will help us into the future.

In the area of missions, MUMC has continued to serve the community through meals and food distribution, and also continued to support international missions. We have learned to appreciate normal things like the YSP plant sale, and contributing to the food ministry of our church. How nice it is to do normal things like contribute towards the Thanksgiving meal, and food pantry, and know there will be Giving Tree tags! We also highly value the importance of communications in keeping the congregation informed and connected. Our church APP, weekly updates, and online worships have helped us stay in touch.

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## Pastor's Report for Charge Conference, November 2020, con't

Our children and family ministries have continued to offer options for remote learning through bible school, Sunday school, and parent support and study programs. Adult bible studies (Journey Groups) have continued to meet remotely and offer the important connection to one another needed during this isolating time. Zoom meetings have helped groups and committees stay connected. And, we have found ways to celebrate the confirmation class, and high school graduates. Even drive-thru opportunities for communion and Trunk-or-Treat have occurred.

In addition to all the challenges of the pandemic, the sudden departure of Quincy was disappointing based upon the timing. It would have been good to know a few months earlier during the normal placement/rotation period that the church goes through. However, we celebrate his time among us, and pray for his family.

We are grateful for the faithful witness of our congregation.

Andrea Gingrich  
Mitch Kallay  
Dana Ludwig  
Pam Schwaller  
Sondra Snode

### Giving Tree Choose "Tags" on SignUpGenius

Each year we put the names of 250-300 children on the tree in the Gallery. This year, those trees will not be put up. This congregation has been so amazingly generous with this project over the many years that I have had the privilege to oversee it. Now more than ever, these children need some joy at Christmas time, so we are working to make this more Covid friendly.

We have the SignUpGenius link ready to use! Click here <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0c48acae2daafe3-giving> to choose your "tags". **Gifts are due by December 6.** Families are indicated by the number and then each child is a letter. If you would like to take siblings, you can easily identify them.

When using SignUpGenius, be sure to select the slots you would like, then go to the bottom of the page and click, "Submit and Sign Up" to complete the process.

Please feel free to contact me at 440-283-6524 or [lskra5@aol.com](mailto:lskra5@aol.com).  
Betsy Iskra, Missions Commission

### Africa University

Dear Friends,

We want to thank you for the gifts that we have received for the Teach-Reach-Bless Campaign from your church. We very much appreciate this support.

The need for additional on-campus housing for female students at Africa University is critical.

Currently more than 250 of our female students must find housing off campus. Female students living off campus are very vulnerable to male predators. The Teach-Reach-Bless campaign will enable us to provide housing for 90 female students. We appreciate the fact that you have joined in our effort to improve the education and wellness of women today for a better Africa tomorrow.

*Bill McFadden and Maggie Jackson*

*Co-Chairs of the Teach-Reach-Bless Campaign*

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**This Christmas, join us as we celebrate how Jesus has made His home among us. We will fill our homes with reminders of His Presence and share His love, joy, hope and peace in all the ways we can!**

## *Home for Christmas*

**Christmas Eve Services ~ Livestream Only  
3 PM Communion • 5 PM Children's Service  
7 PM Modern • 9 PM Traditional**

**Facebook, YouTube and our website, [www.mentorunc.org](http://www.mentorunc.org)**

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Livestream worship Sundays Modern at 9 AM and Traditional at 11 AM  
Facebook, YouTube and our website, [www.mentorunc.org](http://www.mentorunc.org)