



# The Circuit Rider

The newsletter of First United Methodist Church, Lancaster, Ohio

## December 2023— January 2024

Loving God and Loving People Making Disciples of Christ for the Transformation of the World.

### CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP

*Join us!*  
DECEMBER 23  
7:30 PM  
  
DECEMBER 24  
5:30 PM  
8:00 PM

*Christ  
is the  
Light  
of the  
World*

  
LANCASTER FIRST  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
163 E. Wheeling Street, Lancaster  
[love-first.org](http://love-first.org)

### Christmas/New Year's Worship Schedule at First UMC

We will again celebrate the gift of the Christ child this year through our times of candlelight worship, as has been our longtime tradition. We will keep the same schedule as last year. We will offer a time of worship on Christmas Eve-Eve, on December 23<sup>rd</sup>, at 7:30 p.m. On Dec. 24<sup>th</sup>, Christmas Eve, we will offer worship times of 5:30 and 8:00 p.m.

These options allow you to choose the day and time that work best for you and your family as we come together to celebrate the reason for the season! These options also provide flexibility for all of those that you can invite to be a part of our celebration. Please share the information about our services wherever you can. People need to experience the joy of Christ during this holiday season!

All three candlelight services on both nights are similar to one another. On Christmas Eve at the 5:30 worship, we are planning an especially family-oriented worship experience, with the praise band leading music and Pastor Amy sharing the message. Pastor Nikki will provide the message, and pipe organ and the Chancel Choir will lead music at 8:00 on Christmas Eve and on Eve-Eve at 7:30. All of the services sing wonderful Christmas carols, and all feature the candlelight singing of "Silent Night" that makes this time of worship so special. Choose a day and time, bring your family and friends, and experience the light of the Christ child as we worship together!

Because Christmas Eve is on Sunday this year, we'll change our Sunday morning schedule. We'll have only one service at 10:00 a.m., and we will worship with the reading of Scriptures and the singing of Christmas Carols.

Similarly, on Sunday, Dec. 31<sup>st</sup>, we will have one service at 10:00 a.m., which will include an updated version of the Wesley Covenant liturgy and a time of baptism renewal in connection with celebration of an infant baptism.

Let's worship together as we celebrate the holidays!

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people.*

*John 1:1-4*

As I write, November is nearing its end. Mother Nature is reaching to the foot of her bed to pull a soft grey comforter over the dome of the earth, and the daylight hours grow shorter. With little sunlight to buoy our spirits, we go from home to work and back again, experiencing only glimmers of natural radiance. Our spirits cling to every spark of light and warmth.

It may sound strange, but this cycle from sunlight to darkness is one of my favorite times of the year. In times when natural sunlight is plentiful and it is easy to see, we take the light for granted. Our lives fly by in a blurry picture. All our senses are overwhelmed with spring rains bringing wet dirt, pale green tendrils shooting from winter-dark limbs, all the world awakening as it is kissed by the sun. Summer is life and light—birds singing, insects buzzing, everything growing and learning how to be in the world. And then the parade of autumn golds, fiery oranges, and deep reds of changing leaves enter as September's clear-blue skies give way to crisp October mornings and smells of bonfires still smoldering. We don our flannel and warm our hands with hot coffee mugs and steaming teacups. There is steady slowing of time while the Ohio landscape loses its color and goes quiet in late November. As December stomps its boots to our doorstep, the whole world pauses with a great heave of breath—the longest nights of the year approach.

I find this pause in the December darkness thrilling because even though the nights hang heavy, I know that the light is coming. And that light is the light of Christ Jesus. Just as the light from the flame of a single candle can illuminate an entire dark room, the light of Christ Jesus banishes all the darkness in the world.

So, even as the darkest months of the year approach, I am giddy in hopeful expectation that the true light that enlightens everyone is coming into the world. And the best part? We *get* to be witnesses to that light. Standing in the presence of the light of Christ, our own flames ignite. When we step through the door to the new year, we are sent to testify to the light in all we think, say and do. It's so exciting!

So, let's experience Christmas with all our senses this year. If you have not opted to join a small group for our Advent study, I invite you to read along with us Matt Rawle's *Experiencing Christmas: Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent*. Join us weekly in worship! Come, sing and serve with us. May you be filled with the joy of gathering in community to worship the Triune God. We are witnesses to the light of Christ. Take your candle, go light the world!

Pastor Nikki



The **Nativity Festival** will be on **December 3rd at Crossroads**. Please consider displaying your own nativity collections on this evening. The festival runs from 6-8:30. Reservation forms are available in the parlor and at Crossroads to reserve a table for your display. **We need cookie donations to serve at the Nativity Festival.** Please consider making some cookies to share that evening. They can be dropped off at the church on Dec. 3 or at Crossroads that afternoon. Thank you!

### **All members of the 2024 Church Council and Staff of FUMC:**

You are invited to our first annual Leadership Retreat on January 13, 2024 at Crossroads from 10:30 am until 3:30 pm. This will be a day of on-boarding new leaders, looking back at 2023, planning for 2024, Safe Sanctuary training, setting the work of your committees, and worship with communion. Lunch will be provided. Please RSVP to Sarah Holley in the church office by December 20.

## Serve As a Christmas Usher

Please consider being a part of one of our usher teams at one or more of our Christmas Eve and Christmas Eve-Eve services this year. December 23rd is at 7:30pm, and December 24th offers 5:30 and 8:00pm. The service of our usher teams helps to provide a comfortable and welcoming environment as we share the light of Christ with all who come to worship during this wonderful season.

The job involves arriving 45 minutes early for the service, greeting worshipers with a smile, handing out bulletins, collecting offering, distributing candles, and staying for a few minutes after the service to help straighten up for the next group. That's all there is to it. It's simple and easy, but it's so important!

Benefits include no traffic hassles because of your early arrival, easy parking, and helping your church family during important and meaningful times of worship.

Contact Clarence McCoy as soon as you can at [clarencemccoy@love-first.org](mailto:clarencemccoy@love-first.org) or 740-653-3330 (ext. 1004), and let him know which worship time or times you would like to serve in this way.

## Candlelight Tour Information

"Joyous Light" is the theme of this year's Candlelight Tour, which will happen on Saturday, Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.

Organist Parry Norris will provide celebrative music for all as they arrive. Our Chancel Choir will offer music of the season as we share our worship space with the community for this event.

Tickets are available at [www.fairfieldheritage.com](http://www.fairfieldheritage.com) or by calling 740-654-9923.

## Candlelight Tour Ushers

Please consider providing hospitality for our guests during the Candlelight Tour by being part of our usher team for the evening on Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>. Provide a smile and a welcoming presence, distribute our bulletins, help people find seats or facilities, and just represent First UMC with our usual high level of friendliness. You will arrive before 5:30 p.m. and be finished around 6:50 p.m. Contact Clarence McCoy to be a part of this valuable service.

## Blue Christmas

a service of hope for the hurting

This time of year can be a mix of emotions that make it a challenge. We invite you for a service of reflection, comfort, and hope for hurting hearts.

December 17 at 4:00 p.m.  
in our Main Sanctuary  
163 E. Wheeling Street



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## Advent 2023

We have started our Advent observance on Nov. 26 (a week early) to accommodate our churchwide study. Communion in December will be a week later than usual, being served on Dec. 10, to fit our worship theme for that day.



## Caring Ministries

Judy Hug: [judyhug@love-first.org](mailto:judyhug@love-first.org) or 740-653-3330 ext. 1003

### 'Sweet Treats +' for December

What goes best with our 'spoonful of sugar' treats as we approach Christmas? Yes – singing! Come join us on Saturday, December 9, 12:30 – 3pm to help deliver our monthly Sweet Treats and for Caroling! We will meet at Crossroads in the 4-Square Room and car pool to various nursing facilities and homes. Bring some holiday cookies, candies, or fresh fruit for the treat bags. Wear your Christmas colors, reindeer antlers, or Santa hats as we visit members of our church who are no longer able to attend church in person. The 'Good' list is lengthy, so many elves are needed! Come join the fun!



### Coming in 2024!

Did you ever wonder how United Methodists are connected in our conference, nation, and globally? Perhaps you want to serve but are unsure of where you fit in the ministries of this church? Maybe you are interested in exploring membership at First UMC? Time with Pastor Nikki will be offered each quarter throughout 2024 in an informal yet informative setting. Watch the bulletin, newsletter and social media for dates, times and locations!

### WANTED: Blood Donors!

The November 13 blood drive was a success! 39 units of blood were collected representing 111% of our goal of 35 units! Thank you to all donors, and especially to those who reached milestone donations:

3 gallons	Alma Booker	7 gallons	Norman Hoyt
4 gallons	Clarence McCoy	8 gallons	Karen Hardie
	Jill Warner		Lynn Householder-Glenn
6 gallons	Ann Cherry	9 gallons	Scott Bope

The next Red Cross Bloodmobile will be held at Crossroads on Monday, January 15 (note this is a holiday), 1:30 – 6:30pm. If you are unable to donate, but interested in volunteering to help at the bloodmobiles, please contact Judy Hug.







We express our sincere sympathy to the families of those who have lost loved ones:

**Edna Hoch**  
**Melissa Stoneburner**  
**Lowell Karcher**



## Birth

**Elijah Wilkes Menczywor**

November 4, 2023

Parents: Josh and Emily Menczywor

Grandparents: Jeff and Ann Baird



## Birth

**Sadie Grace Smith**

November 9, 2023

Parents: Kyle & Jessica Smith

Grandparents: Dave & Karen Smith

Great Grandparent: Patsy Martin



## **Holy Baptism (10:30)**

**October 8, 2023**

**Jack Thomas Fuller**

Son of Mark & Samantha Fuller



## **Interested in Baptism?**

If you are, please contact the church at (740) 653-3330.



## Come Celebrate a Century! Sunday, December 10

Two great events took place on December 24, 1923: the first National Christmas Tree lighting took place at the White House and Robert Morehead, a member of First Church for 74 years, was born! Please help in celebrating this monumental birthday

by showering Robert with birthday cards to be collected December 1 – 10 and wishing him a Happy Birthday between services in the parlor while enjoying a piece of cake!

## Thank You's

**Thank you for always thinking of Maywood Mission.** Your faithful giving to our work for Christ in this community is a real blessing. Your Coins for Christ donation truly makes a difference to the hurting and hopeless and helps us to shine the light of Christ into dark situations. You can see what is happening at the Mission by connecting with us through our Facebook or Instagram pages and signing up for our email newsletter. Search "Maywood mission Lancaster" on social media to like and follow our page, and sign up for our email newsletter

**Thank you** for your \$480 gift to Good Works, Inc. This is such an important ministry, and we thank you for your generous support!

*All the best, Mary Lou Greenwood Boice*

A huge **THANK YOU** to everyone who purchased a gift or donated funds toward a present for little ones whose families needed a little extra help this holiday season. First Church has the most generous people!

**Dear First United Methodist Church:** On behalf of the Board of Directors of The Lighthouse, I wish to extend our gratitude to you for your donation of helping our clients get birth certificates. Your thoughtfulness and kindness is appreciated. Having the support of individuals like you ensures we will continue our work offering a safe, supportive environment for survivors and their children when they are involved in the unthinkable. Often our clients must leave in a hurry and leave their important documents behind. Most times, a birth certificate is needed to apply for community resources. What you donated will help our clients get their lives back. There are no words to adequately express my most humble appreciation of your support of The Lighthouse.

*Sincerely, Jessica Estridge, Operations Manager*

**Dear Pastors & Staff:** We deeply appreciate your expression of sympathy and love during this difficult time. Your support means so much and will always be remembered.

*Shaunna Ford & Family of Brenda Wildermuth*

**Dear FUMC:** A "Thank You" to all who signed and sent a card and good wishes for my 95th Birthday. Also to Judy Hug who visited me in my home, bringing me a yellow potted mum, food, and church literature. Your thoughtfulness was so appreciated.

*Maxine Yost*

**Thank you for praying for my son, Ryan Daniels,** who is in the Air Force Reserves from the Zanesville Post deployed in Saudia Arabia. He used to work at the Lancaster J.C. Penneys Store and a local bank, so people know him and not by name.

*Thank you, Virginia Daniels*

**Dear FUMC:** Thank you for the cookies delivered yesterday. Sorry we were not home. Very thoughtful, Earnie loves cookies!!

*Thanks again, Doris Morris*

**MERRY CHRISTMAS**



## *The Joy of Giving* Christmas Mission Offering

As we prepare for our Christmas celebrations remember the joy you can have from giving where it is needed.

Our Global Missions Team has announced the following projects that we will be supporting through the Christmas Season.

- Our Lithuania Partner Church
- Jane Wise, West OH Conference Missionary in the Democratic Republic of Congo
- Good Works Outreach, Athens, Ohio
- West Ohio Conference Apportionments

A special Christmas Mission envelope is provided for your convenience. Checks may be made payable to "First UMC" with "Christmas Offering" on the memo. Thank you for your generous support of our Christmas mission project.

The following are ways that you can give your monetary gifts to our church:

- On-line giving on our website, [www.love-first.org](http://www.love-first.org)
- E-Offering (ACH) is a safe way to have your giving directly deducted from your checking or savings account—contact the Business Office for an authorization form.
- Direct bill payment through your own bank
- Mail in gifts to 163 E. Wheeling St., Lancaster, OH 43130

We are here to help! If you have any questions on any of the ways to give to our church please call Sarah or Jill in the Business Office at 740-653-3330. Thank you for your generous gifts to our church.



Online Giving is available!  
Please visit our website,  
[love-first.org](http://love-first.org), and we also have  
our Giving QR code!



**End of Year Giving:** Many of us consider giving more during the Christmas season, First Church is grateful for your investment in the mission & ministries here at our church and in our community! If you are planning a stock gift or direct gift from an annuity, please be sure to contact Jill Warner in the Business Office for assistance.

**The deadline to make contributions for the year 2023 to First UMC is Friday, December 29, at 1pm.** If you plan to drop off a gift on this day please call the church at 740-653-3330 ext. 1007 so it can be received. Also note that gifts given online take several days to process. In order to receive credit for your online gift in 2023, please make it no later than December 27, 2023.

Merry Christmas and Thank you for your generous gifts to our church!



**Nursery Helpers Needed for Christmas Eve-Eve 7:30 p.m., and Christmas Eve Services, at 5:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m. Can you help? Please contact Judy Kraft at 740-653-3330. Thank you!**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 7:30 p.m. Christmas Eve-Eve Yes, I/we can help! Name & Phone #:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 5:30 p.m. Christmas Eve Yes, I/We can help! Name & Phone #:  
\_\_\_\_\_ 8:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Yes, I/We can help! Name & Phone #:

**Family Advent Booklets:** Cindy Lou Who, Ebenezer, Buddy the Elf, Rudolf, Frosty, George Bailey and Tiny Tim. These classic characters are each part of his/her own beloved holiday story and watching those stories together with family is a treasured tradition. Make that time even more special this Christmas season by uncovering the universal Christian themes that can be found in our favorite Christmas programs. Family-friendly discussion questions help get the conversation started and help make the holiday specials even more special.


**The church will be closed in observance of the Christmas holiday on Monday, 12/25 and Tuesday, 12/26.**

Please join us!




**December 9, 2023**  
8:30am at Crossroads Ministry Center  
2095 West Fair Ave.

**Second Saturday is December 9** Please also join us on Saturday, January 13, 2024, at 8:30 a.m. for a Second Saturday planning meeting. We will meet in the Conference Room to plan the future, focus, and Community Outreach projects for 2024. Please contact Judy Kraft at 740-653-3330 or [judykraft@love-first.org](mailto:judykraft@love-first.org) for more information. In planning ahead, Second Saturday **will not** be meeting in February. Plan on joining us on March 9<sup>th</sup> for our projects!



**Angel Tree** Just a friendly reminder to have your gifts returned to the Parlor no later than December 3! If you like wrapping presents, join the 2<sup>nd</sup> Saturday team on December 9 at Crossroads to help wrap and distribute Angel Tree gifts! Festivities begin at 8:30 a.m. Contact Shannon McKisson, Whitney Coy, or Judy Kraft at [judykraft@love-first.org](mailto:judykraft@love-first.org) for more information!



**We are collecting NEW, Twin/Full Sized Blankets & Comforters.**

**Let's Blanket the Shelter with Love!!** We are collecting **NEW** blankets for the Lutheran Social Services Shelter on East Main Street where many of our First Community Kitchen guests stay. **The shelter needs NEW, Twin/Full Sized Blankets and Comforters.** You can bring your donations to our Drive-Thru Dinner on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> from 4:00 to 5:30 p.m. or drop them off at the church Monday – Thursday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. **We will accept blankets through December 20<sup>th</sup>.** Thank you for helping others stay warm this Winter!

**Sick Child Policy** If your child exhibits: RUNNY NOSE, COUGH, FEVER, DIARRHEA, SCRATCHY THROAT or ANYTHING ELSE THAT MAY BE CONTAGIOUS; please do not bring them to class. Thank you for your help with keeping everyone healthy during this cold and flu season!

### **Children's Ministry Weather Emergency Plan**

This Winter Weather Emergency Plan is what to expect when Fairfield County is under a **Winter Driving Emergency**. Please consider your neighborhood's road conditions when deciding whether to be on the road or not. We want our families safe!

- LEVEL 1:** NORMAL Sunday Morning Programming. No children's programming modification.  
**LEVEL 2:** Family Worship. NO CHILDREN'S PROGRAMMING.  
**LEVEL 3:** CHURCH SERVICES CANCELLED. Worship at home with your family.



## Hooked on Books

Contact  
Linda  
Godenschwager  
or Denise  
Bennett

Dec. 5, 2023  
10:00 a.m.  
Crossroads Ministry Center

Sign up in the Parlor

## Hooked on Books

Contact  
Linda  
Godenschwager  
or Denise  
Bennett

Jan. 2, 2024  
10:00 a.m.  
Crossroads Ministry Center

Sign up in the Parlor

## The book selection for December 5 is *Women Talking* by Miriam Toews .

Anyone wishing to bring snacks to share is appreciated, and please bring your own drinks. January's book selection will be chosen at the December meeting. Also, remember our service project is donations for the Blessing Box. Please place your donations in the box anytime during December or January.



## GriefShare: A support group to help you move through the grief process

No matter what the circumstances, grief is a painful, confusing process. A GriefShare support group is a safe, welcoming place where people understand the difficult emotions of grief. Through this 13-week group, you'll discover what to expect in the days ahead and what's "normal" in grief. Since there are no neat, orderly stages of grief, you'll learn helpful ways of coping with grief, in all its unpredictability—and gain solid support each step of the way.

At each weekly meeting, you will view a video featuring respected counselors, pastors, and healthcare professionals on grief-related topics, plus you'll hear relatable personal stories of grief. After that is a small-group discussion to allow people time to talk, share support, and personally apply what they learned on the video. Everyone will receive a book to take home filled with valuable exercises for navigating their personal grieving process.

Brenda and Rev. Ricci Arthur are planning a GriefShare support group to begin in January. The day and time will be determined by those interested. If you want to find out more, contact the church office at 740-653-3330 or Rev. Ricci Arthur at [pastorric@aol.com](mailto:pastorric@aol.com)

## December 6th

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

### Roast Beef

Mashed Potatoes w/Gravy  
Hot Vegetable  
Salad, Roll, and Dessert

**\$7**  
Suggested Donation

**Meals served at Crossroads Ministry Center**  
Just follow the line, stay in your car, and let us serve you!

For reservations call 740-653-3330 **no later than**  
**1:00 p.m. on Monday, December 4th.**

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## December 20th

4:00 - 5:30 p.m.

### Ham Loaf with Sauce

Buffet Potatoes  
& Hot Vegetable  
Salad, Roll, and Dessert

**\$7**  
Suggested Donation

**Meals served at Crossroads Ministry Center**  
Just follow the line, stay in your car, and let us serve you!

For reservations call 740-653-3330 **no later than**  
**1:00 p.m. on Monday, December 18th.**

LANCASTER FIRST  
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Drive-Thru Dinners are on winter break during the months of January and February. Join us again on March 6, 2024 for a delicious Drive-Thru Dinner!

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## Welcome to the Trustees' Corner

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all of you. Even though the holiday season is upon us, the renovations continue to march on. For those that have been able to attend church in



person, you have seen the new sidewalks on the High Street side of the church. The new foundation and stairwell on the west side of the building have been poured. The stairwell to the basement used to be north and south and now is east and west. Regardless of the direction, it looks just as nice as the new sidewalks on the east side of the building. Here are pictures of them. They are beautiful and smooth. The electricians have finished the underground electrical and will have filled the trenches with new cement by the time you read this. To date, we have received a little over \$1.173 million cash. Reminder that the overall job cost ended up coming in at a little over \$2.1 million, leaving almost \$927k in cost above what we have received to date through the Capital Campaign. We are grateful for all the gifts given thus far to the Capital Campaign, any additional giving in your heart would be greatly appreciated to help make up for the difference between the project cost and the cash received to date. Be sure to stay tuned each month and read our article.



See you around the corner.

The Trustees



**Messy Church Christmas Party**

- Sunday, December 10
- 3:30-5:30 pm
- Free
- Cookie Decorating, Craft, Pizza, Movie!

Bring a gift of gloves for baby Jesus! (They will be given to our 1st Comm. Kitchen guests)



 **CROSSROADS**  
2095 W. Fair Ave.



**Messy Church JANUARY**  
Let's have fun in winter

Games, Snack, Crafts, The Big Messy Dinner



**January 14**  
**3:30-5:30 pm**

**MORE INFO** Crossroads Ministry Center  
2095 W. Fair Ave. Lancaster, OH  
[www.love-first.org](http://www.love-first.org)

 **LANCASTER FIRST**  
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**REAL people looking for a way to have  
REAL conversations and live a  
REAL faith in Jesus Christ in the REAL world**

**We would love to have you join us!**

**Tuesdays, 6:30-7:30 p.m. at Crossroads Ministry Center**

We'd love to have you join us for a time of fellowship and worshipful, interactive, and relevant Bible study (with small group discussions and sharing) to help us live out our faith in our world today. Children are welcome to stay with their parents or play in the nursery. **We invite you to join us any or every week—and bring a friend!**

Crossroads Community will take part in the church-wide Advent study, Experiencing Christmas under the leadership of Jeff Cherry.

December 5: Do You Hear What I Hear?

December 12: Do You Taste What I Taste?

December 19: Do You Feel What I Feel?

December 26th: No Crossroads Community Gathering

### **January:**

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

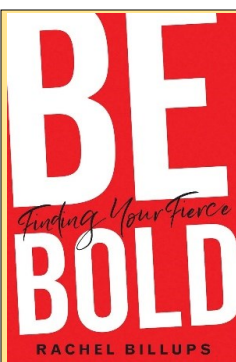
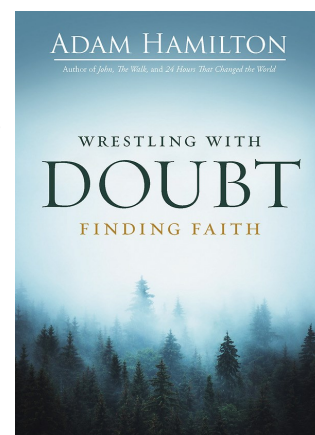
Join us at Crossroads Community as we delve into *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith* by Adam Hamilton as we consider questions like:

"Does God exist? How can I know?"

"Is the Bible true?"

"Why do prayers go unanswered?"

"Is Heaven Real?"



### **Save the Date: Find Your Fierce One Day Women's Retreat on Saturday, February 10<sup>th</sup>!**

Join with women of all ages from Lancaster First UMC, New Albany UMC, and others for a day to "Find Your Fierce" with speaker, Rachel Billups. The day will be at Crossroads (2095 W. Fair Ave) from 9 am-4 pm and cost is \$25 which includes lunch, snacks, materials, etc. Make plans with your besties, your mom, your daughter, etc. to join us for a time to worship, laugh together, and learn from one another as we all seek to Find our Fierce! More details will be available through the bulletin. You don't want to miss this!

### **About the Speaker:**

Rachel Billups is a visionary, leader, speaker and author. Currently she serves as Senior Pastor at New Albany United Methodist Church, New Albany/Columbus, Ohio. Rachel draws on her love of people and passion to explore new venues for ministry and mission.

Rachel is an ordained Elder within the United Methodist Church and holds a Bachelor's Degree in Bible/Religion and History from Anderson University and a Master of Divinity Degree from Duke Divinity School.

Most days you can find Rachel reaching out – praying online, hosting Open Table gatherings in her home or enjoying moments with husband Jon and their four loves: Adeline, Christopher, David and Sarah. She also might be cheering for those Duke Blue Devils and The OSU Buckeyes.

Rachel is a popular speaker for national gatherings and has recently authored *An Unlikely Advent: Extraordinary People of the Christmas story* as well as *BE BOLD: Finding Your Fierce*—all by Abingdon Press.

You can find her on social media at: @rbillups.





## YOUTH NEWS

### December

#### Classes at Church:

**3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>** : 9:00am Combined class Jr & Sr. High, room 26 upstairs.  
10:30am Jr. High, room 26 upstairs.

**3<sup>rd</sup>** : 10:30am High School, Chapel room upstairs.

**24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>** : **No Classes, Holiday Weekends!**

#### Confirmation Class:

**10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>** : 10:30am 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, Chapel room upstairs.

#### Give Back Days:

**3<sup>rd</sup>** : Acolyte, one youth for each service. 9am & 10:30am

**6<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>** : Drive Thru Dinners 3:30-5:30pm at Crossroads.

**10<sup>th</sup>** : Messy Church 3:30-5:30pm at Crossroads.

#### S.H.I.E.L.D. Youth Group Nights, at Crossroads

**3<sup>rd</sup>** : 4:30 youth family meeting, youth room open till 7pm. First night of our Advent Study!

**10<sup>th</sup>** : 5:00-7pm Second night of Advent Study!

**17<sup>th</sup>** : 5-7pm Final night of Advent Study!

**24<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup>** : **No Youth Group, Holiday Weekends!**

#### Driver's License:

No one in Nov. said they got their driver's license.

Let me know if you get yours, I still have visor clips for you. Drive Safe!



**Contact Janie Burdsal**  
**740-653-3330, ext. 1101**  
**janieburdsal@love-first.org**

**Youth Family Meeting Night** During this night we will start in the 4 Square room, discuss our ideas for the youth ministry and your ideas for your youth and all the programs under youth ministry. This is for anyone at our church who has youth from 6<sup>th</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> grade, even if you have a 5<sup>th</sup> grader and are interested in what comes next. Also, for those that do not attend our church but has a youth in our S.H.I.E.L.D. youth group program. We will open up the youth room at 5pm for the youth to play games and hang out, you are welcome to come see what the room is like and what there is to do or continue talking with Pastor Amy and me in the 4 Square room. At 6pm I will be starting the youth Advent study in the youth room; at the same time the Nativity Festival will be starting at 6pm that night as well and we encourage you to check it out. The youth Advent study will be done at 7pm like we usually are for youth night. We hope to see you there! Please feel free to reach out to me anytime with questions.



### January

#### Classes at Church:

**7<sup>th</sup>, 21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>** : 9:00am Combined class Jr & Sr. High, room 26 upstairs.  
10:30am Jr. High, room 26 upstairs.

**7<sup>th</sup>** : 10:30am High School, Chapel room upstairs.

#### Confirmation Class:

**21<sup>st</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup>** : 10:30am 8<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade, Chapel room upstairs.

#### Give Back Days:

**7<sup>th</sup>** : Acolyte, one youth for each service. 9am & 10:30am

**NO Drive Thru Dinners** on break till March

**14<sup>th</sup>** : Messy Church 3:30-5:30pm at Crossroads.

#### S.H.I.E.L.D. Youth Group Nights, at Crossroads

**7<sup>th</sup>** : 5-7pm

**14<sup>th</sup>** : **NO Youth Night**

**21<sup>st</sup>** : 5-7pm

**28<sup>th</sup>** : 5-7pm High School only night





# #STILLINMISSION

Join us on Thursday, Dec. 7,  
12 p.m. ET for conversations  
with missionaries:

**William Lovelace, Norway**  
**Ngoy Kalangwa, Tanzania**  
**Mari Ellyza Valencia, Barbados**



Please register at:  
<https://umcmmission.org/sim-2/>

Sending  
Missionaries



Providing Humanitarian  
Relief and Recovery

GOD'S MISSION OUR WORK AND WITNESS

Supporting Evangelism  
and Church Revitalization



Promoting  
Global Health



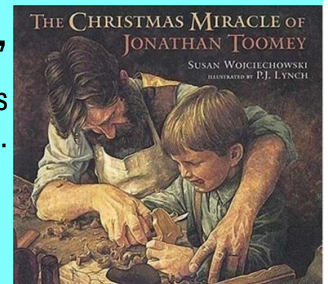
[umcmmission.org](http://umcmmission.org)



## Stop by the Church Library!

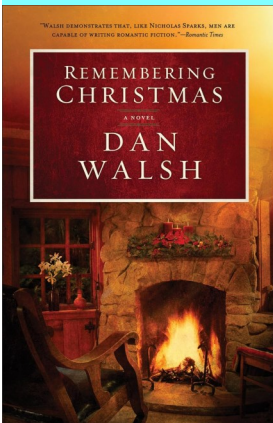
We have a lot of holiday books, DVDs and CDs to get you in the holiday spirit! Here is just a sample:

**“The Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey”**  
by Susan Wojciechowski. -A lonely woodcarver discovers  
joy through the request of a widow for a new creche.



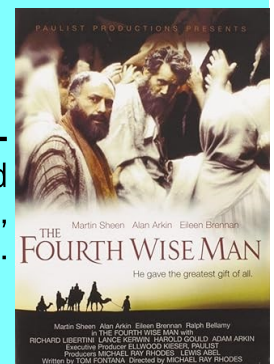
**“Remembering Christmas” A novel by Dan Walsh**

Can one Christmas change a life forever? With skillful storytelling,  
Dan Walsh creates a Christmas story that will have you  
remembering every good and perfect gift of Christmas.



**“The Fourth Wise Man” DVD-**

Martin Sheen stars in this story, based  
on Henry Van Dykes' classic,  
“The Story of the Other Wise Man”.



**“Emmet Otter’s Jug Band Christmas”**

DVD- Based on a book by  
Russell and Lillian Hoban, and marking the  
first time radio-controlled puppets were used,  
this Christmas story is a Jim Henson holiday classic.



**“Yuletide Joy”-Sandi Patty CD-**

13 Christmas tracks as only Sandy  
can sing them.





## Creative Ministries News

Thank you to everyone who helped with the Halloween Carnival. 401 people visited and were very pleased with the event. Your participation through staffing and donations made this a success!

A big thank you to those who helped set up the **walk-through nativity display**. This is a major project, and those who come and build it each year are invaluable! Thank you to those who have signed up to staff the display on Sunday, Wednesday and Friday evenings. Come check it out!



Thank you to those who participate in the **Nativity Festival on December 3rd**. Whether you are providing nativities, cookies or special music, we appreciate you!

Our Blacklight Christmas Show is on December 10th at 2 & 6 p.m. We hope to see you!





## UPCOMING DATES:

Tuesdays: Crossroads Community, 6:30pm  
Wednesdays: Pastor's Bible Study, 4pm  
Dec. 6 & 20: Drive-Thru Dinner, 4 - 5:30pm  
Dec. 2, Jan. 6: Men's Breakfast at Crossroads Ministry Center  
Dec. 3: Nativity Festival, 6-8:30pm  
Dec. 5, Jan. 2: Hooked on Books-Crossroads  
Dec. 9, Jan. 13: Second Saturday  
Dec. 9: Candlelight Tour  
Dec. 10: Virtuous Reality Christmas Show, 2pm & 6pm  
Dec. 10, Jan. 14: Messy Church  
Dec. 17: Blue Christmas Service  
Dec. 23 & 24: Christmas Candlelight Services  
Dec. 29: End of Year Giving Deadline (Dec. 27 is deadline for Online Gifts)  
Jan. 13: 2024 Church Council & Staff Leadership Retreat  
Jan. 15: Red Cross Blood Drive

It's easier than ever before to find out, and see, all the **great things happening at Lancaster First**. In addition to our Facebook page, we have a Twitter account as well as an Instagram account. Not only will you be kept up-to-date with our ministries, but we'll include devotions, thoughts for the day, pictures, music, and a few surprises along the way. Follow us at: Facebook: Lancaster First United Methodist Church; Twitter: LoveFirstUMC; Instagram: Lancasterfirstumchurch



Articles for the February issue of the **CIRCUIT RIDER** are due by January 15 to Lisa Schenck at [lisaschenck@love-first.org](mailto:lisaschenck@love-first.org)

## The Circuit Rider

is the monthly newsletter of  
First United Methodist Church  
163 E. Wheeling St.  
Lancaster, OH 43130

### Sunday:

9:00 a.m. – Worship Celebration  
10:30 a.m. – Praise Worship

### Tuesday:

6:30 p.m. Crossroads Community  
Crossroads Family Ministry Center  
2095 W. Fair Ave.

We welcome you to worship with us and to experience the joy of having fellowship with other people who believe in the love of God and the teachings of Christ.

Lead Pastor – Rev. Nikki Baker  
Associate Pastor – Rev. Amy Wood  
Telephone – 740-653-3330  
Email – [receptionist@love-first.org](mailto:receptionist@love-first.org)  
Website – [www.love-first.org](http://www.love-first.org)

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