



December Messenger

ASBURY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Inside the December Issue:	
Advent & Christmas Worship	2-3
Lay Leader Finance	4-5
Mission and Outreach	6-7
Christian Education	8-9
Birthdays & Prayer Requests	10
December Calendar	11
Connection Opportunities Member Notes	12

As we step into December, the church begins the new Christian year with Advent. Writer Enuma Okoro in *Silence and Other Surprising Invitations of Advent* says, “Advent is a season to ponder, to listen, to understand that prayer is as much about cultivating stillness and attentiveness as it is about offering our words to God. This listening for God is a difficult business. It requires a willingness to be patient and to be still. It requires disciplining ourselves to consistent times of sitting quietly before God and waiting for God to meet us in that space. When we are still we can better attune ourselves to the thoughts and feelings that well up within.

As we anticipate God made flesh in Christ Jesus, we dare to relinquish control, to harness our empty life-numbing habits, and to forfeit logic and reason because God often acts outside of such boundaries. Advent is a season in which we are reminded that God invites us to listen, dwell, wait, and trust in communion with one another. No one is left to discern God’s life-altering activity alone, to hold God’s promises alone, or to bear the burden of divine blessings without faithful companions, whether human or angelic.”

The stories which light the way to Christmas morn remind us of the silence, and the pondering, and the wondering that captured these characters – from Zechariah and Elizabeth to Mary to Joseph. Might we be caught in stillness, dwelling with reverent expectation with God and one another, as we step into the new year – to prepare our bodies, our minds, our hearts, and spirits to receive the Christ child and take him into the world to see and worship; the Christ with whom we dream big and imagine wildly.

CHURCH STAFF

MINISTER:

Rev. Katie Osier

OFFICE ADMIN (INTERIM):

Sheila Hemans

INTERTWINE YOUTH MINISTRY:

Rev. Kara Jones

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC:

Rev. Carol Ann Bradley

WORSHIP & LAY LEADER:

Peter Baylis

CHILDREN’S CHOIR DIRECTOR:

Natalie Ritchie

CUSTODIAN:

Tom Szymkowiak

GIVING HANDS COMMITMENT CARDS FOR 2024

Thank you to those who have boldly committed to the mission and ministry of Asbury UMC. We continue to listen as we ask God, “What’s in store for ‘24?” There are some big dreams that are being lifted from the congregation – and it is exciting! You can still send in your pledge card into the church office. You can also use this link to submit your card directly:

<https://forms.gle/4xYLkZYyZvFe9jACA>.

Thank you for your continued generosity as we wonder together!



The Advent & Christmas Season Asbury UMC

DECEMBER 3, 2023 @ 10:45 AM

Zechariah & Elizabeth

Jubilation Singers, Adult Choir and Handbell Choir

DECEMBER 10, 2023 @ 10:45 AM

Christmas Pageant

Asbury Youth Choir and Adult Choir

DECEMBER 17, 2023 @ 10:45 AM

Mary's Magnificat

Adult Choir

DECEMBER 24, 2023

10:45 am - Family Service, Prelude begins at 10:30 am

Joseph

Advent Worship and Carols with Candlelight

Sunday School Singers, Jubilation Singers, Asbury Youth Choir,
Handbell Choir, and Brass Quartet

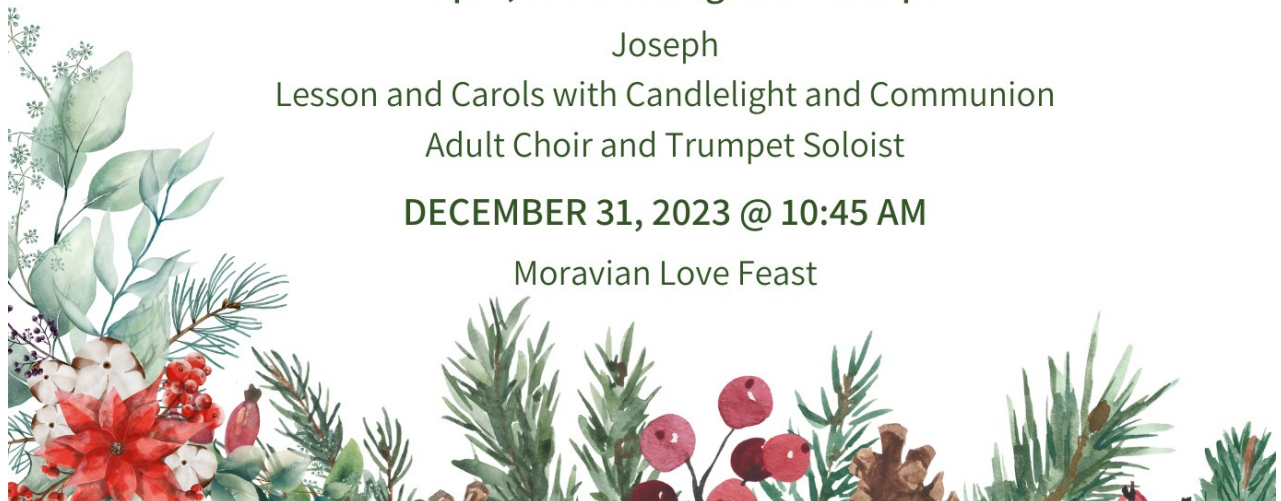
8:00 pm, Prelude begins at 7:45 pm

Joseph

Lesson and Carols with Candlelight and Communion
Adult Choir and Trumpet Soloist

DECEMBER 31, 2023 @ 10:45 AM

Moravian Love Feast



LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE: THURSDAY, DECEMBER 21 @ 7 PM WILLIAM STREET UMC OR ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Not everyone is up and cheery for the Christmas holidays. Dealing with the death of a loved one, facing life after divorce or separation, coping with the loss of a job, living with cancer or some other dis-ease that puts a question mark over the future, and a number of other human situations make parties and joviality painful for many people in our congregations and communities.

Our sister churches, William Street UMC and Zion UCC, are holding Longest Night services, both at 7 pm. The services are open to all persons who are seeking a sacred space for people who are living through dark times. Come as you are and meet the season with the hope for healing.

PEACE LIGHT FROM BETHLEHEM COMING TO ASBURY UMC CHRISTMAS EVE



For years now, a child in Austria travels to the grotto in Bethlehem where Jesus' birth has been named to be and lights their lantern with the light from the lantern at the grotto. This light then travels the world as a symbol of the proclamation made at Jesus' birth: Glory to God, and Peace to all People. Especially with the conflict happening in the far east, the prayer for peace groans on as the light is passed from place to place around the world.

This year, the peace light will reach Delaware, Ohio, and will be the light which will light the Christ Candle on Christmas Eve. You are welcome to bring a candle with you to either service so you can take the light from the Christ candle home with you. For more information about the Peace Light, go to www.peacelightnorthamerica.org.

MORAVIAN LOVE FEAST: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 31

A Time of Worship and Fellowship with Family and Friends



The Sunday after Christmas we will have the opportunity to worship together and participate in our traditional Moravian Love Feast. This is an informal service of singing your favorite carols, worshiping alongside with family and friends, and a Christmas story for all to hear and enjoy.

The service begins in the sanctuary at 10:45 am and then we will process to the Great Room singing "Go Tell it on the Mountain". After the blessing we will enjoy table fellowship with friends, family and extended family over coffee cakes, rolls and baked goods. Coffee, hot tea and cider will be provided.

The dress for this service is informal. Those who are able to bring coffee cakes, rolls or baked goods to share (*homemade or store brought*) will find tables set up in the Great Room when you arrive.

What could be a more fitting way to start the new year than by gathering as one to celebrate the birth of Christ, Emmanuel, God with us?

REALLY, WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO YOU? LAY LEADER REFLECTION—PETER BAYLIS

It was Wednesday, November 1, 2023, when I saw the first one of the year. I was driving home from church after choir practice and there it was, a light shining out or better yet standing out in the darkness, a beacon for all to see. A house all decked out with its Christmas greenery. For the holiday lights were strung and lit on the front porch, the windows were lit with candles, and a Christmas tree was displayed prominently in the front bay window. And as the early start of November passed, slowly more and more Christmas and holiday decorations started to appear as we approached Thanksgiving and the Advent season. Seeing decorations so early, sometimes I feel like the Grinch for, “Every Who down in Who-ville, liked Christmas a lot...but the Grinch, who lived just north of Who-ville, did not. The Grinch hated Christmas! The whole Christmas season!” Now while I don’t agree with the Grinch’s sentiment on Christmas and the Christmas season, I do, however feel at times we tend to push the Christmas season ahead of its time as well as what I usually see immediately after Christmas. Many times, the day after Christmas, I see houses that were previously decorated with merriments of good cheer become bare, plain, and ordinary once again. I usually see the discarded Christmas tree out by the trash along with many boxes that held presents on Christmas morning. Why even a house around the corner from where I live begins this “de-decoration” on Christmas day so that by Christmas evening all is packed away and stored for another year. So, I wonder, what does Christmas mean to myself, what does Christmas mean to you and to others?

To pursue this answer, I started to ask individuals a simple question, “What does Christmas mean to you?” Now when I asked the youngest of the youngest one’s downstairs during Sunday School, I expected how they would respond and they did not disappoint. Christmas means Santa. While asking some of the older one’s downstairs I was given the answer Santa and presents. Moving up in ages, the focus was on presents, and something to do with a baby, but when asked the baby’s name, I was met with blank faces. Continuing up the age ladder, responses revolved on presents, food, family, and a baby being born, sometimes with a name and sometimes without. The Sunday School youth tended to reply with presents and Jesus being born. However, when asked what it means that Jesus was born, well once again I was met with blank faces for the most part. Moving to adults of all ages, the first response usually focused on family followed by celebrating the birth of Christ. Still not quite satisfied with these answers, I pushed for further clarification and a deeper understanding of the meaning of the birth of Christ. It was at this point answers did start to become deeper and more reflective: Emmanuel, God with Us, Savior, and God’s son.

Now while all the responses made age-appropriate sense, I was still not satisfied with the answers I received. It was at this point I felt like a judge on Jeopardy, being very meticulous since I was looking for one specific word and I just wasn’t hearing it which made me question whether maybe I was amiss in my own response. However, with more pondering and reflection on my part, I knew the word that I wanted to hear was right and appropriate. So, my answer to the question of the meaning of Christmas in one word would be...salvation. Now while many great theologians, students of theology, friends gathered around a table and others have discussed and debated the deeper and a more complex meaning of salvation it basically comes to this: Salvation is the saving of humankind, all of us, from our own sin and its consequences, which includes our death and separation from God, and we are restored to wholeness by Christ’s death and resurrection. Salvation is God’s grace to us. Stay with me now for I’m not confusing Christmas and Easter,

however, the two are interconnectedly tied together so that they cannot be separated. For by the birth of Jesus, salvation is created, and its fulfillment is in the death and resurrection of Jesus. And all the words in the world can try to explain this in greater detail, however, our words will always fall short. Listen again, for in the birth of Jesus, salvation is created, and its fulfillment is in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

In the music offering this month I present the piece **Salvation is Created** by Pavel Chesnokov composed in 1912. This piece was one of the last sacred works he composed before the Soviet government began to suppress Christianity. Chesnokov never heard his piece performed. In the piece, Salvation is Created, there are two phrases that compose the piece, salvation is created and alleluia, which means, God be praised.

And as the Grinch looked down to Who-ville, he said, "Every Who down in Who-ville, the tall and the small, was singing! Without any presents at all! And the Grinch, with his grinch-feet ice-cold in the snow, stood puzzling and puzzling: How could it be so? It came without ribbons! It came with tags! It came without packages, boxes, or bags! And he puzzled for three hours, till his puzzler was sore. Then the Grinch thought of something he hadn't before! Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!" Here I can finally agree with the Grinch, however, Christmas means a lot, a lot much more!

And during this Advent and Christmas season, may we to puzzle, and ponder in amazement and in awe the love that God has for each of us in that the birth of the babe lying in the manger, is the birth and gift of our salvation given freely and unearned. This is the Christmas present! And may this Christmas gift live, and flourish, guide and grow within each us always.

Salvation is Created – by Pavel Chesnokov
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ggp_jj6tLtg



2023	Deposits	Expenses	Surplus/(Deficit)
Prepaid & Jan - Sep	\$369,598.30	\$384,166.65	(\$14,568.35)
October	\$34,317.50	\$31,356.13	\$2,961.37
YTD Cumulative	\$403,915.80	\$415,522.78	(\$11,606.98)

As you know from last month's Messenger, the Finance Committee has designated this year's Christmas Special Offering to the church operating budget to erase our current deficit and to help stabilize our financial position. The Administrative Council has selected Turning Point to be the organization to receive the gift of a tithe (10%) from the Christmas Special Offering. Turning Point provides free and confidential services to domestic violence victims and their families in Crawford, Delaware, Marion, Morrow, Union, and Wyandot counties. We ask that you prayerfully consider giving generously to the Christmas Special Offering this year.

Thanks for all that you do and God Bless!

The Finance Committee & Administrative Council

MISSION AND OUTREACH



PIN HOLIDAY CLEANING HOUSE: ADOPT A CHILD

Thank you for caring for 54 children in our community!

Gifts will need to be returned to the church wrapped with the tag taped to the gift NO LATER THAN WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023.

Thank you for your generosity in providing for children this Christmas!

SANDWICH SUNDAY: DECEMBER 17, 2023

Asbury provides 50 delicious hearty brown bag lunches monthly for the residents of White Sands, an underserved low-income community located on the west side of Lake Street in Delaware. Due to the generosity of donations, the lunches for our December 2023 Sandwich Sunday is covered.

Packers and deliverers are still needed for December 17. Packing happens at 10 am in the McCoy Kitchen. Deliverers go after church and distribute lunches to the residents. You can sign up to pack or deliver through this volunteer

Link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A094BAAAC2D6-45534471-december>

MISSION AND OUTREACH: 2023 IN REVIEW

Asbury UMC's outpouring of support and love into the community has been overwhelming this year. Together, we provided 4 weeks of meals for Family Promise. Supplied needs through our Giving Opportunities, including Laundry baskets, peanut butter, toiletries, hygiene products, supplies for DCP, Cleaning supplies, and can openers. Families in White Sands RV park were supplied with lunches monthly. We led the way with the October Crop Walk. Along with all of these actions, we supported organizations through donations, volunteering, and funding:

Andrew's House, Common Ground Free Store, DCP, Dempsey MS, Diaper Bank, Family Promise, Flat Rock, Grace Free Medical Clinic, Habitat for Humanity, Laundry Love, Mulungwishi School, Pacer Pantry, People in Need, Salvation Army, Treehouse Transition House, Turning Point, and Unity Community Center.

We look forward in dreaming what God has in store for Asbury UMC to be actively involved in creating spaces and places where transformation can and will happen!

Once items are collected, they can be brought to the Great Room through Sunday, December 31. The collection will then be taken to People in Need the week following. Last year, Asbury UMC was able to stock the shelves through March!

Asbury UMC Reverse Advent Calendar

For this entire Advent season, we are asking families to add an item to a box or bag. On Christmas Weekend, bring your box or bag to the church so it can go to support People in Need. You can substitute any item with a non-perishable item you have. Thank you for blessing others.



1: HOPE

Sunday: Find and decorate your box or bag.

Monday: box of cereal
Tuesday: peanut butter
Wednesday: stuffing mix
Thursday: boxed potatoes
Friday: macaroni and cheese
Saturday: canned fruit

Sunday: Make some Christmas cards to put in your box/bag.

Monday: pancake mix
Tuesday: peanut butter
Wednesday: dessert mix
Thursday: jar of applesauce
Friday: hot cocoa mix or coffee
Saturday: syrup

2: LOVE



JOY

3: JOY

Sunday: Discuss the joy of giving as a family.

Monday: canned beans
Tuesday: box of crackers
Wednesday: macaroni and cheese
Thursday: package of oatmeal
Friday: package of pasta
Saturday: spaghetti sauce

Sunday: Pray for the families receiving these gifts.

Monday: chicken noodle soup
Tuesday: tomato soup
Wednesday: canned fruit
Thursday: canned mixed veggies
Friday: chicken broth
Saturday: box of crackers

4: PEACE



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASSES: 9:30 AM, SUNDAYS

Children's Godly Play Class (PreK-Grade 5): Lower Education Wing

On December 3, we begin the time of waiting and preparing for the mystery of Christmas.

December Godly Play stories will be:

December 3 The Story of St. Nicholas, Bishop of Myra

December 10 Pageant Preparation, Stories, and Feast

December 17 Waiting: Stories of Prophets, Bethlehem, Shepherds, Magi, and the Christ Candle.

December 24 The Holy Family

December 31 No Sunday School

Youth Class (Grades 6-12): Upstairs Balcony in the Great Room – next to the Sanctuary

The Youth Class has begun its painting of their mural which reflects life and faith together. The youth look forward to sharing their mural with the whole church in the new year.

The Class with No Name: Upstairs McCoy Room

This laid back class has a weekly discussion on the scriptures which are the base for the week's service and sermon. There is no preparation required. Participants are welcome to bring their Bible with them to class. All are welcome!

Spiritual Journey Class: Main Floor Library

For the advent season, Spiritual Journey will be studying "An Unlikely Advent" by Rachel Billups. We will be studying the characters that are on the periphery or even entirely absent from the traditional creche scenes including Zechariah and Elizabeth, Herod, the wise men, and the shepherds. Why were they included in the story and what can we learn from them?

You are welcome to come even if you have not read the book or are unable to attend all the classes. If you would like to know which scriptures would be covered each week, contact Ed Hoar. The book is available in ebook form through the library in Hoopla. If you don't have a Hoopla account, you can make one with your library card here (or check in with an existing account):

<https://www.hoopladigital.com/title/16190232>

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING – CARETAKERS OF GOD'S CREATION

UMC Advance Special #3021583

https://www.umccreationcare.org/about_us

As we approach the end of November, members of Asbury Sunday school classes – children, youth, and adults – have together contributed nearly \$450 for the UMC's Caretakers of God's Creation. This project, along with the ongoing church-wide plastic recycling program, was initiated by children in our Godly Play Sunday school class. We celebrate the results of their wisdom and foresight in finding ways to care for Creation!

Merry Christmas!

December Schedule

Sunday, December 3 -
Intertwine "Advent Reflections"
at Zion UCC. Middle School 5:00-6:30 PM,
High School 7:00-8:30 PM

Sunday, December 17 - Intertwine
CHRISTMAS PARTY! All youth grades 6-12!
6:00-8:00 PM at Asbury UMC.
See flyer for all the details!

INTER TWINE

Please RSVP to Pastor Kara as soon
as you know you are coming!

CONFIRMATION

Sunday, Dec 10 @ 6:30 PM
Imago Dei and Salvation: Jesus

We will dive into the 2nd person of the Trinity, only to learn there is more "God math" with which to play.

Please save the date for February 23-25, which is the Winter Confirmation Retreat. For beginning details, please check out:

<https://wanake.typepad.com/wanake-camp-and-retreat-center/confirmation-retreat.html>

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITY: NURSERY AND CHILDREN'S CORNER

**I'm thinking about volunteering...
but what can I expect in the Nursery and Children's Corner?**

Nursery: You and one other volunteer will be in the nursery during the worship hour. We have a variety of toys, board books, and picture books to keep the little ones entertained for the hour. Parents leave their phone numbers so they can be texted in case they are needed.

Children's Corner: Two volunteers go downstairs with the children following the Children's Moment for about 15-20 minutes during the sermon. You'll have a picture book or Bible story to read aloud, and children have coloring pages and individual boxes with crayons and Play-Doh to use while you are reading. Children also add a bead to their necklaces at the beginning of the session. Jerrie Metz comes downstairs at the conclusion of the sermon to help line up the children and lead them back to the sanctuary.

To volunteer, see Angie Haase following the church service, or contact Angie at angela.haase@me.com or 740-513-5318.

Our sympathy to Don Smith and family in the loss of his wife, Judy Smith, on Tuesday, November 21, 2023.



December

BIRTHDAYS



Prayers for the Congregation

Bill Daniels
Nancy Henkle
Dick & Rosalie Hutter
Mike Jones
Malcolm MacLean
Sandy & Steve Mead
Ken Morton
Elaine Salsberry



Limited Activities List

Lois Benton	Helen Berrisford
Norma Chidester	Paula Gordin
Rosalie & Dick Hutter	Mike Jones
Kay & David Nardin	Yvonne Potts
Janet Schwab	Jeff Viri-Dunahue
Winnie Wright	

Friends in Need of Prayer

Sue Byers: Ann Davis's sister
Leigh Rabby: Ann Davis's friend
Vivien Backus: daughter of Bob Backus
Jeff Brubaker, Dan & Heather Phillips request
Kathy Childress and family, sister-in-law of Heather and Dan Phillips
Greg Maddox, friend of Dan Phillips
Carrie Hall, Carol & Dick Brulotte's daughter
Tom Ebbert, Doris Ebbert's husband
Brandon Crist, Sharon & Jim O'Neal's grandson
Linda Potter, friend of Carol Brulotte
Jeff Campbell, friend of Mary Jean Roach

Our Asbury church members whose families are serving in the military

- 1 Aaron Ahead
- 2 Wanda Harmon
- 4 Cheryl Shonebarger
- 6 Marie Lance
- 7 Jill Bixler
- 8 Frances O'Flaherty
Erik Peterson
Deborah Stansbery
- 9 Nancy Bartha
Donald Smith
Hayden Spiegel
- 12 Nathaniel Cook
- 14 Alan Spencer
- 18 Angie Haase
Sarah Jenkins
Seamus O'Flaherty
- 20 Helen Hetzel
- 21 Dana Goodman
- 28 David Miller
Emma Osier
- 29 Vicki Lefevre
- 30 Kelly Christopher
- 31 Peggy Porco



December 2023

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					1	2 Delaware Community Concerts @ 3 pm and 5 pm
3 9 am Children's Choirs 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship	4	5	6	7	8	9
5 pm Intertwine Middle School 7 pm Intertwine High School @ Zion UCC		6 pm Bell Choir 7 pm Adult Choir		6 pm SPRC 7 pm Mission & Outreach 7 pm DCP Board	8 am Morning Prayer	9 am Children's Pageant Rehearsal—Sanctuary
10 9 am Children's Choirs 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship 6:30 pm Confirmation	11	12	13	14	15	16
	10 am UWF Exec Board		1:30 pm Hannah Circle 6 pm Bell Choir 7 pm Adult Choir	10 am Prayer Shawls 7 pm Lydia Circle 7 pm Trustees	8 am Morning Prayer	
17 Sandwich Sunday	18	19	20	21	22	23
9 am Children's Choirs 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Worship 6:30 pm Intertwine @ Asbury		2 pm Alzheimer's Care Group	9:30 am Rebekah Circle 6 pm Bell Choir 7 pm Adult Choir	7 pm Longest Night Service @ William Street UMC or Zion UCC	8 am Morning Prayer	
24 9 am Children's Choirs 9:30 am Sunday School 10:45 am Advent IV/Christmas Eve—Family 8:00 pm Christmas Eve— Candlelight, Communion	25	26	27	28	29	30
	Office Closed				8 am Morning Prayer	
31						
	Office Closed					
	10:45 am Moravian Love Feast					

OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT AND STAY CONNECTED AT ASBURY UMC

- ◆ Participate or swing by the **First Friday Booth** on December 1 from 6 to 9 pm.
- ◆ Participate in the **New Prayer Shawl Ministry**
- ◆ For **December's Giving Opportunity (GO), Reverse Advent Calendar**
- ◆ Save plastic bags and mailers to turn in for the **Trex Recycling Challenge**
- ◆ Pack lunches and/or deliver for **Sandwich Sunday on Sunday, December 17**
- ◆ Participate in the **Sunday School Classes** on Sundays at 9:30 am
- ◆ Engage with children through assisting with the **Nursery or Children's Corner**
- ◆ Participate in a UWF Circle or General Meeting (See Newsletter for details)
- ◆ Sing in the **choir and/or ring bells, serve as Communion Server, Greeter, Liturgist** to lead worship

Support the transformational ministries of the church by your

Prayers (pray for ministry and people)

Presence (come and participate)

Gifts (Donating items and/or Joyfully offering a Financial Gift)

Service (Lead or Serve to help others)

Witness (Tell others about the Mission and Ministries of Asbury UMC and invite them)



Dear Asbury Church Members:

A belated thank you for your wonderful gift of a prayer shawl! At first, it brought tears as I thought of my move and then it brought many smiles as it brought many memories of our wonderful church family. I'm still watching services on TV! Many fond wishes and love, Grace Lang



SAVE THE DATE: ASBURY UMC TALENT SHOW—MARCH 2, 2024

Members, friends, and guests of Asbury UMC are invited to plan and prepare their talent as we come together in a night of fellowship on Saturday, March 2. More details to come in January.

WINTER WEATHER: If a Level 2 Snow Emergency is in place at 7:00 AM Sunday, Sunday School and the Worship Service will be cancelled for that day. For the Level of snow emergency, you may access your favorite up-to-date local news source or check the Delaware County Sheriff's website: <https://sheriff.co.delaware.oh.us>.

DEADLINE FOR THE JANUARY MESSENGER

Articles for the January Messenger are due by **December 15**. Send to asburychurchohio@gmail.com. Thank you!