

The Community Messenger

ERICA EXTEMPORANEOUS

December



I couldn't have been more than nine or ten years old. My mom asked me to go out to the car and bring something in from the trunk. Imagine my horror when I innocently glanced in one of the other bags nestled in the trunk and discovered several packages of underwear meant to be one of my Christmas presents. I was devastated. Not because I was disappointed it was underwear, but because I truly loved the magical surprise of Christmas morning. I never looked for my mom's hiding places. I didn't even rattle any wrapped packages. There was something exhilarating about the anticipation.

Advent is a time of anticipation. It is a time to prepare our hearts and minds. It is a time to tune out the incessant insistence of the season the rest of the world seems to thrive upon, while settling in for the true spirit always and already accessible to the world weary and worn.

During these festive days so very full of doing and making and getting and giving, I challenge you to take a moment, maybe even two. Allow yourself, encourage yourself, to discover the wonder you perhaps knew as a child. Be surprised by the mundane and the magnificent alike. Wonders await...

Take good care~*Erica*

MERRY
CHRISTMAS



Greetings from Gabby!

This just might be my favorite time of year. There is so much to do! The church is a very busy place in December. I can't wait for the cookie exchange. I can usually sneak in and gather up any crumbs that might be left behind. I also like to stow away in someone's pocket and go along for the caroling. I love to sing. The church is so pretty, with all of the candles and the sparkly lights. What is your favorite thing about Christmas?



~ Gabby

The organ fund continues to receive donations which are greatly appreciated. James Leek, of the Leek Organ Company, provided some updated numbers for the repairs to the organ. The initial repairs to keep the organ functioning would be about \$50,000. Further repairs to replace the electrical system and upgrade the console in the organ would be an additional cost of \$80,000. A bumper sticker fundraiser is ongoing and a church cookbook is underway. There are envelopes marked "Organ Fund" in the back of the church for your convenience. We don't want to lose such a great part of the church.



| October Finances | | |
|------------------|------------------|---------------|
| | October Activity | YTD Balance |
| Income | \$15,743.08 | \$193,349.28 |
| Expenses | \$26,323.82 | \$230,143.47 |
| Difference | (\$10,580.74) | (\$36,794.19) |



Fundraiser for the Organ
Bumper Stickers For Sale
\$5 each



Please contact **Patty DiGiacobbe** for any questions regarding finances. Thank you.



It's always the season for us to trust in God, or to love like God, or to feel the hope and security of God. However, there's something about the magic of the Christmas season that fills our hearts and souls with warmth and gives us that extra nudge to do our best to be Kingdom Builders on Earth, and to feel God working in our lives. There's one other thing we tend to do in this season, and that's to reflect on the year. To measure the good times and the bad, and hopefully learn some lessons to apply to the new year.

I am honored and excited to be the new Youth Pastor here at Howland Community Church. It is a dream come true. However, as I reflect on the road that led me to this wonderful position I am reminded of how trusting in God and following God faithfully brought me here.

As the bad storms rumbled through northeast Ohio at the end of August, a branch the size of a tree had torn loose and crushed our garage, our sunroom, and 3 of our 4 cars. It was a devastating event for our family. It didn't help that we were also without electricity, and with the whole area out a quick fix wasn't on the horizon.

Feeling a bit down and defeated on day two of no electricity, and the insurance company already showing signs that they were in no hurry to help with our house or our cars, I got a voicemail from Robin asking if I could call him back in regards to the Youth Pastor position. My first thought was, "Really, God?!" This was the phone call I had been waiting weeks to receive, and it came in the midst of a tragic event. I didn't even have a car to drive the 45 miles from Shaker Heights to Warren. My thoughts immediately went to, I guess this job wasn't meant to be, and I needed to call Robin back and let him know I'd have to decline. However, a little voice popped into my head that told me to trust God. Let God lead. To trust by the time I needed to drive to Warren I would have the means to do it.

I called Robin back and we set up an interview with Erica and the rest of the search committee. On that day, I drove down from Shaker Heights in our rental car, and by the time I got the job, insurance had come through and all of our cars had been replaced. It almost brings a sense of fear in my heart to think what would have happened if I had given into panic and not listened to and trusted God. Well, plain and simple... I wouldn't be your new Youth Pastor.

Reflecting back on this not-so-distant memory I pray that I go into this new year stronger and prepared to continue to trust the path God is placing in front of me with the realization that God knows the future, I don't, so why would I not faithfully follow no matter what earthly obstacles seem to block the way.

Best wishes, *Danny*



**American
Red Cross**



Donors may report to the North Hall from 12:00-6:00 p.m.
Call 1-800-733-2767 to make an appointment

Tuesday, January 2, 2024

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE IN NORTH HALL



Client Choice Pantry



The December pantry is scheduled for Friday, December 15 during the usual hours of 3-5 PM. We will be unloading and stocking the shelves at some point on Thursday morning, the 14th. Our November pantry was attended by 54 families, the largest number in several years, with several new families receiving food. Thank you to our volunteers for putting in the extra effort and time that this required. This large turnout shows to us that a food shortage continues to exist right here in Trumbull County. Our most pressing need at the Food Pantry continues to be the need for some sturdy persons who can help with carrying our client's food to their vehicles. We have had a successful year and appreciate the support of this congregation.

Linda Hitmar



Lectionary for December

Dec. 3, 2023

Isaiah 64:1-9
 Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19
 1 Corinthians,1:3-9
 Mark 13:24-37

Dec.10, 2023

Isaiah 40:1-11
 Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13
 2 Peter 3:8-15a
 Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 17, 2023

Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
 Psalm 126
 Luke 1:47-55
 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24
 John 1:6-8,19-28

Dec. 24, 2023

2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16
 Luke 1:47-55
 Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26
 Romans 16:25-27
 Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 31, 2023

Isaiah 61:10-62:3
 Psalm 148
 Galatians 4:4-7
 Luke 2:22-40

| DATE | ELDER | DIACONATE SANCTUARY (All Month) | DIACONATE KITCHEN (All Month) |
|---------|--------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| Dec. 3 | Kathy Purdum | | |
| Dec. 10 | Jeff Morrison | Judi Matyas Captain | <u>Sanctuary</u> Janice Wagner |
| Dec. 17 | Gretchen Hrusovsky | Larry Rambo Marilyn Rambo | <u>JHR</u> Susanne Shaulis & Naomi Foster |
| Dec. 24 | Dawn Adgate | Natalie Sanders | |
| Dec. 31 | Barb Turvey | | |

Merry Christmas
 & HAPPY NEW YEAR





HOWLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH



December

2023

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|--|
|   | | | | | 1 | 2 1P—NA Mtg--NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH |
| 3 10A-Worship Advent Workshop After Worship | 4  Red Cross Blood Drive 12-6P ♥ Paul & Linda Howard 7P Boy Scouts-NH | 5  Robin Sanders | 6 6P—Trustees | 7 | 8 | 9 10A Cookie Exchange in Colonnade  Pamela Boggs 1P—NA Mtg NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH |
| 10 10A-Worship Caroling After Worship | 11  Madison Bickerstaff 7P Boy Scouts-NH | 12 | 13  Matthew Vencel | 14 | 15  3-5P Client Choice Food Pantry  Pam Haller  Kate Wertz ♥ David & Mari-Lee Yerpoli | 16 4P Blue Christmas Service FFM 11-12:30 P (SH)   Jenny Hitmar 1P—NA Mtg-NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH |
| 17 10A-Worship  John Bobco ♥ Jack & Judy Clifford | 18 6:30P Finance 7P Official Board 7P Boy Scouts-NH | 19 ♥ James & Nancy Janek | 20 ♥ James & Sue Blosser  Christopher DiGiacobbe <i>January Newsletter Articles Due</i> | 21 5:30P Longest Night  Nancy Heim | 22  Marion Lamp  Mary Kay Vencel | 23 1P—NA Mtg-NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH |
| 24 10A-Worship  7P Christmas Eve  11P Christmas Eve  Sarah Wilson | 25 Office Closed  Kathy Purdum  Jane Walters <i>Merry Christmas</i> | 26  Fran Stroud | 27  Pat Walker | 28  Evie Coe | 29 | 30  Sheree Pascale 1P—NA Mtg-NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH |
| 31 10A-Worship  Ed Thompson New Year's Eve | | | | | | |

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CURRENT RESIDENT OR



The Community Messenger is the monthly newsletter of the
Howland Community Church

(affiliated with the Disciples of Christ, United Church of Christ, and International Council of Community Churches). Our church is **"A House of Prayer For All People."** We offer Sunday School for children and a fellowship gathering after Worship. Communion is served every Sunday.



OFFICE HOURS

Monday—Thursday
9:00AM—4:00PM
Friday
9:00AM—Noon

Reverend Erica Brown, Senior Minister
Danny DeMarco, Youth Pastor
Andrew Purdum, Director of Music
Rita Bobco, Finance Manager
Linda Mikula, Administrative Assistant
Minta Pitts, Custodian

Don't Miss the
DEADLINE!

Articles for
Next Month's
Newsletter are
Due Dec 20