



The Community Messenger

ERICA EXTEMPORANEOUS



**December
2024**



You might want to take a look at Luke 3:1-6 to provide a bit of context for what follows...

One voice cries out in the wilderness – Prepare the way of the Lord. A lonely voice, a coarse and gravelly voice, a voice that warns, a voice that disturbs. Prepare. Make sure all is ready. Sweep aside the brush, whatever may litter the way. Shovel the sidewalks, sprinkle the rock salt. Chip away at the thick accumulation of ice. The valleys – they will be filled; the mountains and hills – they will be made low. Everything must change. The crooked – it shall be made straight; the rough places – they shall be made smooth. Everything must change. Everyone must be open to being changed.

“And all flesh shall see the salvation of God.” Indeed, this Advent season, as in every Advent season, all flesh stands in hopeful expectation, necks craning, eyes eagerly scanning the horizon. All flesh awaits the birth of a baby, all at once gentle and unassuming, yet filled with the breath of God, the power of God, the glory of God. All flesh – vulnerable flesh, scarred flesh, flesh young and old, weak and strong, certain and unsure.

As we wait, we prepare. We get ready. We set the stage. We lay the groundwork. When I was growing up, my mom was one of the adult leaders for the Methodist Youth Fellowship group at our church. Each year, the young people were given the task of crafting a worship service, soup to nuts, Call to Worship to Benediction. I know I was not alone in looking forward to this annual occasion. It was something different, something creative, something crackling with energy. I remember one year in particular... When it came time for the Prelude, several of the youth rushed into the sanctuary with feather dusters, buckets and rags, and a vacuum cleaner. A curmudgeonly older gentleman served as a plant. He stood, all too ready to scold, asking, “Just what do you kids think you’re doing? We’re trying to worship here!” And the youth responded, “So are we! We’re preparing the way of the Lord!” And we fade into the wonderful chorus from Godspell, “Prepare Ye the Way of the Lord.”

(Continued on Page 2)

(Continued from Page 1)

So often, we forget that our Advent preparation and our holiday preparation are not one and the same. Our Advent preparation has nothing to do with decorations – with untangling strands of lights, trying to find the one that’s burned out, or worrying whether or not the wreath is hanging straight. It has nothing to do with cutout cookies or kolache, pizzelles or sugared pecans. It has nothing to do with travel plans and traffic patterns, delayed flights and long lines to get through security. It has nothing to do with the quest for the perfect present, or the perfect hiding place for that present.

That is not what our Advent preparation is meant to be. Rather, it has to do with preparing our hearts, our minds. It has to do with paying attention to the dark, crooked, gnarled places in our worlds, in our lives. It has to do with being unabashedly honest about what we see. It has to do with hope for the hopeless, and faith for those drowning in doubt. It has to do with peace for the battle weary and the war worn, and love for the lonely, the forgotten, the friendless. It has to do with promises.

God made a promise to our ancestors. And God will remain true to that word. But there are preparations to be made – there are things we need to learn, things we need to know. Salvation, forgiveness – we need to understand. We spend so much of our lives in darkness – in fear, frustration, sadness, despair. God’s mercy offers light. God’s compassion offers warmth and will “guide our feet in the way of peace.” How very important that is, when, all too often, we tend to follow paths which lead us to war without realizing what we have done. We cannot be at peace with the world, in the world, until we learn how to be at peace with and within ourselves. As often as not, we need someone to show us the way. Come quickly!

Take good care~*Erica*



Cookie Exchange Saturday December 7, 2024

11:00 am Colonnade

Bring cookies to share, or just come and take some cookies home. There are sure to be plenty!

All are welcome!

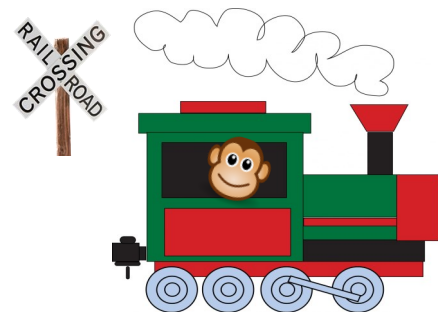


Greetings from Gabby!

There sure is a lot going on at Howland Community Church! All of the usual things, of course, but special things, too. Things that only happen during this time of the year. This time of the year is called Advent. Advent comes from a Latin word that means "arrival" or "coming." In a way, it means that Christmas is coming, and we have to wait for it to get here. But there are all kinds of things that we do to get ready. We decorated the church. We are making special baskets of food for people who need a little help. We are going to go caroling. We are having an Open House... So many things! I can't remember them all. It's a good thing there is plenty of information about all the things in this newsletter. I am looking forward to waiting with all of you!



~ Gabby



The holidays can be a difficult time when you have lost a loved one, whether recently or some time ago. It's hard to feel the joy of the season when so much weighs upon your heart and mind. There are places and spaces for you during this season of waiting and longing.

December 14 there will be a Blue Christmas Service in the Chapel. It will be a time to be together and share in silence and song as we feel what ever it is we are feeling, resting in the quiet peace of simply being. December 21 marks the longest night of the year. You are invited to decorate a paper bag, as many as you would like, in remembrance of lost loved ones, lost opportunities, whatever you might be missing. Return your bag (or bags) to the church office. On 12-21-24, we will place luminaries on the front lawn of the church, gathering outside at 5:30 pm for a time of prayer and moments of silence. You are also welcome to drive by and appreciate the glow of grief given room to breathe, the silence of sadness shared.



Client Choice Pantry



The December pantry is scheduled for Friday, December 20th during the usual hours of 3-5 PM. We will be unloading and stocking the shelves at some point on Thursday morning, the 19th. Our November pantry was attended by 51 families, 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

Schedules For December

DATE	ELDER	DIACONATE SANCTUARY (All Month)	DIACONATE KITCHEN (All Month)
Dec. 1	Dawn Adgate	Judi Matyas Captain	<u>Sanctuary</u> Janice Wagner
Dec. 8	Gretchen Hrusovsky		
Dec. 15	Sarah Sanders	Andrew Steele	<u>JHR</u> Susanne Shaulis & Naomi Foster
Dec. 22	Bim Turner		
Dec. 29	Barbara Layfield		

Lectionary For December

Dec. 1, 2024

Jeremiah 33:14-16
Psalm 25:1-10
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

Dec. 8, 2024

Baruch 5:1-9
Malachi 3:1-4
Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

Dec. 15, 2024

Zephaniah 3:14-20
Isaiah 12:2-6
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

Dec. 22, 2024

Micah 5:2-5a
Luke 1:47-55
Psalm 80:1-7
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45, (46-55)

Dec. 29, 2024

1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Psalm 148
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52





Howland Community Church

Christmas Open House

December 6, 2024

6:30 – 8:00 pm



Display of Nativities

Music

Cookies and Hot Cocoa

Crafts and Games for Children

Santa's Workshop – handmade gifts for children to purchase for loved ones – 25 cents!



198 Niles Cortland Road

Warren OH

ALL ARE WELCOME!



Advent Sunday Donation Items

We would appreciate donations of these items to be placed into the Christmas Food Baskets:

December 1 – Mittens and gloves for adults and children

December 8 – Hats for adults and children

December 15 – Body Wash

December 22 – Shampoo





(330) 349-9488
2260 Niles Cortland Rd SE
Warren, OH

FUNDRAISING
DINE-IN OR TO-GO

»» *Support* ««
Howland Community Church
December 19, 2024
3pm-10pm



10% DONATION NIGHT

Support Howland Community Church by presenting this flyer to the Niles, OH Location and Texas Roadhouse will donate **10%** of your total food purchases Howland Community Church!

Monday, December 2, 2024
RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE IN NORTH HALL

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



American Red Cross



THEY MAKE A GREAT GIFT FOR THE HOLIDAY!

\$15



HCC Cookbooks





STILL AVAILABLE



On behalf of the Mission Committee and myself, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who volunteered for the Helping Hands Craft Show. Your time, effort, and dedication made this event possible, and it truly would not have happened without your invaluable support. From setting up to assisting with the event and everything in between, your contributions helped make this show a success, and we are deeply grateful for all you did.

Thank you for your generosity and commitment to making a difference in our community.
Patty DiGiacobbe



ORDER YOUR POINSETTIAS

Dedication to read (please print neatly):

Send to a shut-in

Will pick up after worship



































Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

*Please include \$15.00 per poinsettia with your order. Make checks payable to Howland Community Church and mark it "Poinsettias".
 Deadline for orders is Sunday, December 15th, 2024
 No orders will be taken after the deadline.
 Sorry, prepaid orders only.*



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 10A-Worship Advent Workshop & Meal After Worship 	2  Red Cross Blood Drive 12-6P--NH	3 	4 6 pm Trustees 1P Women's Group	5  Robin Sanders 6-8P Girl Scouts NH	6 6:30—8P Christmas Open House JHR, Colonnade, Sanctuary, Library, & NH	7 11A Cookie Exchange (Colonnade) 1P—NA Mtg--NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH
8 10A-Worship NOISY COIN OFFERING Caroling After Worship	9 7P Elders  Pamela Boggs 7P Boy Scouts-NH	10 	11 6P—Trustees  Madison Bickerstaff 1P Women's Group 6-9P Girl Scout Mtg. NH & SH	12 5:30-7:30P Girl Scouts NH	13  Matthew Vencel 	14 4P Blue Christmas (Chapel) 1P—NA Mtg NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH
15 10A-Worship 5P Court of Honor—Eagle Scouts in Sanctuary Reception to follow immediately after service in SH  Pam Haller  Kate Wertz  David & Mari-Lee Yerpoli	16  Jenny Hitmar 6:30P Finance 7P Official Board 7P Boy Scouts-NH	17  John Bobco  Jack & Judy Clifford	18 1P Women's Group 	19  James & Nancy Janek 5:30-7:30P Girl Scouts NH	20 3-5P Client Choice Food Pantry  Christopher DiGiacobbe  James & Sue Blosser January Newsletter Articles Due	21 11-12:30 pm Free Fellowship Meal (SH) 5:30P Longest Night Takes place in Front Yard  Nancy Heim 1P—NA Mtg-NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH
22 10A-Worship Packing Christmas Baskets NH --Time TBA  Marian Lamp  Mary Kay Vencel	23 5-7P Christmas Food Baskets Distribution -NH 7P Boy Scouts-NH	24 Christmas Eve In the Sanctuary 7P Service 11P Service  Sarah Wilson Sanders	25 OFFCE CLOSED   Kathy Purdum  Jane Walters	26 OFFCE CLOSED  Fran Stroud 	27 OFFCE CLOSED  Pat Walker	28  Evie Coe 1P—NA Mtg-NH 6P—AA Mtg-NH
29 10A-Worship 	30  Sheree Pascale 7P Boy Scouts-NH	31  Ed Thompson				

HOWLAND COMMUNITY CHURCH
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ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED

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

Don't Miss the

DEADLINE!

Articles for
Next Month's
Newsletter are
Due Dec. 20th

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

