

Otterbein Outreach

January, 2024

New Year's Greetings!

As we begin the New Year, I wanted to share a scripture focusing on the first and last letters of the Greek Alphabet – “Alpha” and “Omega.”

As you know, Jesus refers to Himself as the Alpha and Omega in Revelation 22:13 (NKJV) 13 I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.”

We must remember that regardless of what we will face in the upcoming year, Jesus Christ will be there in the beginning and at the end!

The events taking place all around the world are not a surprise to Jesus! He has already been to the future, and we can rest assured that if we follow Him all our days, we will be secure and safe in His loving arms.

Not only will he be at the beginning and end of the year, but He was also at the beginning of Creation and will be there when time is complete.

All we are facing now may not be understood in totality by any of us, but if we know the “Alpha” and “Omega,” we can rest assured He will be exalted!

God is good all the time, and we can trust Him!

We continue to appreciate your faithful prayers and support for the ministry here at Otterbein United Methodist Church as we forge ahead in faith this year!

We must pray for our Nation and the World to experience a tremendous Revival! I pray that our thirst and hunger for the things of God will only intensify as the days, weeks, and months of this New Year come and go.

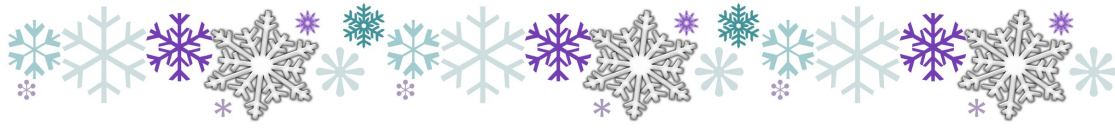
May God richly bless you this year, and we appreciate you so much!

Blessings in Christ,
Pastor Deb Stevens



Inside this issue:

<i>Announcements</i>	2
<i>Worship Help</i>	4
<i>Prayer List</i>	6
<i>Birthdays</i>	7
<i>Bible Quiz & Christian Symbol</i>	8
<i>Puzzle Page</i>	9
<i>Coloring Page</i>	10
<i>Calendar</i>	11



Special dates

- New Year's Day, *January 1*
- Epiphany, *January 6*
- Baptism of the Lord, *January 7*
- Martin Luther King Jr. Day, *January 15*
- Week of Prayer for Christian Unity, *January 18-25*



Mission Closet Thrift Shop

8:30am to 2:30pm



Sale Dates

January 13 and 27

February 10 and 24

March 9 and 23

April 20 and 27

(All dates are subjected to change)



Do you know a child who would like to be in the Confirmation classes. Pastor Deb will be using the book "making disciples". Classes will be via zoom. Please let Pastor Deb know if you know of a child that would like to do the classes.



United Women in Faith

Join us on Sunday, January 21 for United Women of Faith
Following worship
Bring your lunch.
All are welcome



If you would like to be a member of Otterbein, please let Pastor Deb know

Thank you so much for the Christmas gift card that I received from the congregation. It was so thoughtful. It is truly an honor and privilege to serve Otterbein in any way that I can. Many blessings to all for a happy and healthy 2024.

Dianne



Thank you to the Otterbein congregation for your thoughtful Christmas gift. It was greatly appreciated.

In Christ's Love,
Mona

If you are in need of assistance of any kind, please contact one of the church members listed below. Be assured that your church family will support you in every way possible.

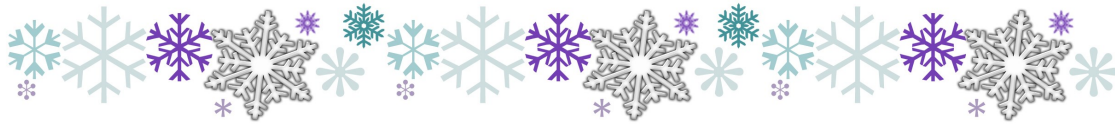
Pastor Debra Stevens (C) 610-733-6204 Email: pastor@otterbeinchurch.net

Lay Leader & Christ Servant Minister: Dianne Maylen 610-983-0113

SPRC Co-Chairmans: Vernon Readman and Dianne Maylen

Church Secretary: Mona Knauer 484-880-9001 Church Office: 610-933-8690

Church Email address: otterbeinumchurch@verizon.net Church Website: otterbeinchurch.net



First, contact

In *Unclean: Meditations on Purity, Hospitality and Mortality*, Richard Beck writes powerfully about Jesus healing a leper in Matthew 8:1-3. “What is intriguing about this story is the sequence. Jesus touches the leper first. Then the command ‘Be clean!’ is offered. That is, Jesus’ first move is into ritual defilement. By first touching the leper, Jesus ... [is] standing in solidari-

ty with the unclean.” Beck finds this “striking” because typically we expect purification before contact. But Jesus’ actions reverse the pattern: “Contact occurs first.”

How fortunate for us, too, that God didn’t wait to reach out to us until he had cleansed us of sin. God didn’t save us from afar and only *then* come to live among us. Rather, “God shows his love for us in

that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8, ESV). And continuously, Jesus loves us, comes to us and touches our hearts, even when we are at our worst — straying from God, trapped in sin, unworthy, unclean, unrighteous. For it’s not *our* righteousness or purity that heals and saves us, but Christ’s.

Resolve to go micro

Most New Year’s resolutions are so major they seem made to be broken. Maybe that’s why “micro-resolution” is the latest January buzzword. Setting smaller goals is more realistic and helps ensure follow-through, according to experts. People who try setting micro-resolutions say that approach is more positive and leads to longer-lasting change. For example,

instead of attempting to lose 30 pounds this year, make a micro-resolution to walk 10 minutes twice per day and to snack on fresh fruit at least once a day.

Micro-resolutions can also be helpful in matters of faith. If aiming to read the entire Bible in one year feels overwhelming, take five minutes each morning and evening to read a brief devotional or pray. If joining

your church’s missions committee isn’t possible, try to talk to one new person each week about your faith or church.

May God bless you as you take small steps that add up to big impact this year!

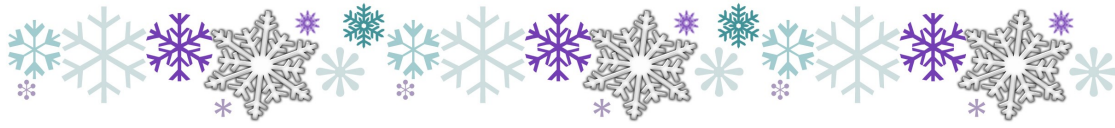


Predictions for the new year

Author Ronald Wilson, in *Stretching the Soul*, describes being certain that four things will occur in the days ahead.

- Trouble will come. Life is difficult. I must mourn as well as dance.
- In this long journey [of life], I’m not in control. God has reminded us of this.
- Many times I will fail.
- I will find forgiveness and get up and go on. God will wipe up the mess I’ve made of things, take me by the hand and set me back on the right path.

Praise God for his sure presence during the joys and challenges the new year brings!



Worship Helpers

Greeters

7th - Vernon and Jeannie Readman
 14th - Margie and Frank Cook
 21st - Wayne Wadsworth
 28th - Vernon Readman and Bill Knauer

Readers for January

7th - Lloyd Knauer
 14th - Mila Lambert
 21st - Betsy Ettinger
 28th - Dianne Maylen
 (If you can not read your Sunday, please switch with someone.)

Attendance

	In Church	On Facebook
12/3	17	3
12/10	20	4
12/17	21	5
12/24 PM	55	3
12/31		

Financial Report

December 3rd - 24th	
Current	\$3335.00
Plate	\$650.00
World Service & Finance	\$40.00
Building Fund	\$125.00
Mission Fund	\$50.00

To Call for Greeters

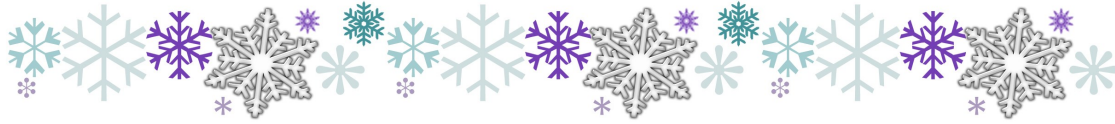
Months	Responsible for Getting Greeters
January & February	Vernon Readman
March & April	Kay Kunsch
May & June	Vacant-See Mona if you would help get greeters
July & August	Nancy Kukucka
September & October	Lloyd Knauer
November & December	Vacant-See Mona if you would help get greeters



We need volunteers to:

- ◆ read scripture
- ◆ lead worship
- ◆ run the PowerPoint
- ◆ pass microphone during prayer
- ◆ help with the offertory

See Mona, Dianne M. or Pastor Deb if you would like to help in anyway during worship.



Our source of Light

January 6 marks the day of Epiphany, when the wise men (who were Gentiles) came to worship Jesus and bring him gifts. During the church-year season of Epiphany, we remember that God's Son is the Light of the whole world.

Ponder the gifts of Epiphany with these two reflections, written centuries apart:

Your light, dear God, surpasses all other light, because all light comes from you. Your fire surpasses all fire, because your fire alone burns without destroying. The flames of your fire reach into the soul, consuming the sin and selfishness that

lie there. But far from damaging the soul, your fire sets it ablaze with love. What moved you to enlighten me with your truth? The fire of your love was the reason. You loved me so much that you could not bear to see me confused and perplexed. Can I ever repay the burning love which you have given me? No, because I have nothing of my own to give. Yet you assure me that the love which you put into my soul is repayment enough. You desire only the joy of seeing me receiving your gift. What more perfect Father could there be!

—Catherine of Siena (c. 1347-1380)

Epiphany beckons us to come to the light of Jesus Christ. Epiphany calls us to stare into that light until our inner darkness is fully expunged. Epiphany then sends us out into a dark and weary world as women and men with shining faces, until we say with the apostle Paul, "It is the God who said, 'Let light shine out of darkness,' who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ" [see 2 Corinthians 4:6].

—Jason Gaboury, campus minister in New York City

The heart of our faith

Christianity affirms that at the heart of reality is a Heart, a loving Father who works through history for the salvation of his children. Man cannot save himself, for man is not the measure

of all things and humanity is not God. Bound by the chains of his own sin and finiteness, man needs a Savior.

—Martin Luther King Jr.



A year that whispers Jesus

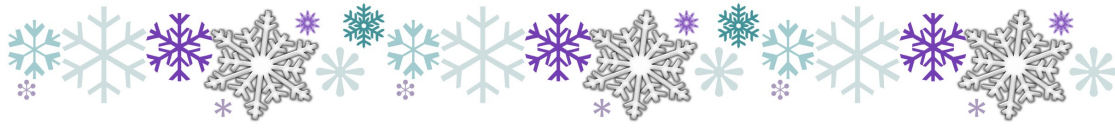
For author Nancy Tichy, a small holiday gift once sparked big-picture thoughts about Christian living. One December she received a kitchen towel with the message "I want a Christmas that whispers JESUS." That prompted thoughts of what it's like to have an entire year that whispers Jesus.

For starters, that involves daily

quiet time, devotion and prayer. "Sometimes I wake with the thought of a person on my mind," writes Tichy. "I'm quiet with this impression, interceding for the family member or friend until it has lifted. Could this be a whisper from our Savior?"

Many other daily occurrences are "worthy of [Jesus'] whispered response of love," Tichy points out.

That's true whether we're distracted by tasks and troubling thoughts or buoyed by encounters with contentment and joy. "For me," she writes, "whispering is part of intimacy, and that is what I want to make a hallmark of the coming year. I want closeness with our Savior that enables me to hear from him, even when he whispers."



PRAYER REQUEST

Prayer List

Joe
 Fred
 Family and friends of Ed
 Family and friends of Todd
 Georgy
 Nancy
 Amy
 Family and friends of Joyce
 Pastor Dan
 Irene and Eric
 Gloria
 John
 Megan

Serving our Country

TSGT Nicholas R Wilt

In Our Neighborhood

All Our Government Leaders
Pastor Debra Stevens and family
For those in storms, floods, and fires
Victims of Shooting and bombings
First Responders
Peace in the world

Pray for our Homebound

Beatrice Collemacine
 Pennsburg Manor
 530 Macoby Street
 Room 215B
 Pennsburg, PA 18073

Fran Erskine
 3314 Pine Forest Road
 Cantonment FL 32533

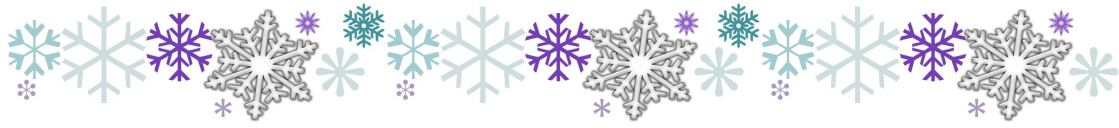
Cynthia Isaacs

Betty Jaworski
 233 Miami Avenue
 Eagleville PA 19403

Maryjane Schum
 Parkhouse
 Royersford, PA 19468



If you would like to add or delete someone from our prayer list, please let Mona Knauer know.



JANUARY Birthdays









- 1 Kimberly Pitts
- Robbie Harper
- 3 Jill Bemis
- Denny Morrow
- 5 Bob Murray, Jr
- 9 Dianne Maylen
- Robert Knauer
- 12 Brittany Myers
- Drew Patzuk
- 16 Connor Pope
- 20 Nathan Fitzcharles
- 23 Jaxson Walters
- Jim Maylen
- David Harper
- 25 Julie Mash
- 27 Sharon Rodenbaugh
- 28 Melody Hoffman
- Bill Knauer
- Vernon Readman, III
- 29 Dalton Mourar
- 31 Brenda (Fisher) Watters

If I have missed your birthday last year, please let me know. I am trying to update the birthday list.


Thanks
Mona


Puzzle!


Use the grid to discover what James 5:13-18 advises when challenges loom.


	A	F	L	P	T
	C	H	N	R	W
	E	I	O	S	Y
					


P

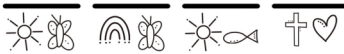

















Bible Quiz

In the book of Judges, the warrior Barak would go to battle only if a certain female leader went with him. Who was she?



- A. Rebekah
- B. Jael
- C. Michal
- D. Deborah

Answer on page 9

Christian Symbol

LATIN CROSS — The Latin cross is the simplest and most common form of the Christian cross, possibly dating from the second or third century. Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians typically display a crucifix — an image of Jesus hanging on the cross — to remember his death for the sake of the world. Protestant churches often favor the empty cross, commemorating Jesus' resurrection.



Two ships

The year like a ship in the distance
comes over life's mystical sea.
We know not what change of existence
'tis bringing to you or to me.
But we wave out the ship that is leaving
and we welcome the ship coming in,
although it be loaded with grieving,
with trouble, or losses, or sin. ...

The new ship comes nearer and nearer,
we know not what freight she may hold.
Hope stands at the helm there to steer her;
our hearts are courageous and bold.
Sail in with new joys and new sorrows.
Sail in with new banners unfurled.
Sail in with unwritten tomorrows.
Sail in with new tasks for the world.

—from "New Year," Ella Wheeler Wilcox

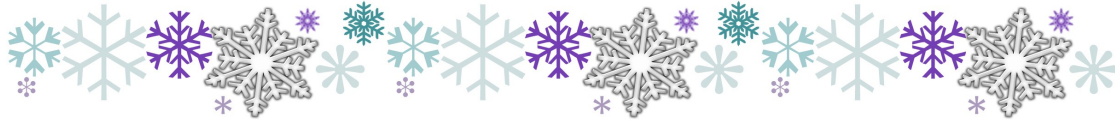
One hooky day a year

On a random Saturday, I threw the to-do list out the window, packed up the kids and headed to the mountains. Because Saturdays are usually for catching up on chores, my sons were surprised by their new, carefree mom. We played, laughed and explored — all with no agenda. I introduced them to the concept of a hooky day.

As a child, my parents allowed me one of those per year. It wasn't a sick day but a day off, just because. I could take it any time (but not to avoid a test), and I didn't need to plan ahead. It was okay to wake up one morning and play hooky.

Proverbs 17:22 (NKJV) wisely states, "A merry heart does good, like medicine." What will you do with an impromptu day off? Will you set your own pace walking through a park? Maybe stop at a restaurant you've wanted to try? Whether a fun day off includes spending time alone or with a friend, make the most of it as a God-given gift.

—Janna Firestone



PUZZLE PAGE

Sprinkle and split

A sprinkle of pepper and a dab of soap illustrate a big concept from God's Word.



What you need:

- Shallow dish
- Water
- Black ground pepper
- Toothpick
- Dish soap
- Bible

What you do:

1. With the dish on a table, fill it halfway with water. Don't jiggle the dish.
2. Sprinkle pepper on the water.
3. Dab the toothpick into a drop of soap. Then touch its tip to the center of the water and observe.
4. Read Psalm 103:8-12.
How does this experiment illustrate God's forgiveness?
5. Explain the science behind this experiment: The soap disturbs the water's surface tension. The soap molecules don't want to interact with the water. This repels the water molecules from the soap, causing the floating pepper to also move to the sides.



HAPPY NEW YOU!

Changing the calendar each January is a reminder that God makes all things new.

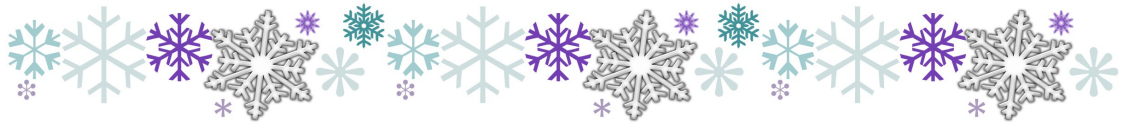
Directions: Use the clues and the calendar code to complete 2 Corinthians 5:17, ESV.

JANUARY 2024						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
	God	night	word	in	love	Jesus
7	glory	therefore	speak	give	light	Christ
14	saw	beginning	anyone	waters	help	is
21	he	again	through	earth	made	while
28	new	if	and	creation		

- The second Monday _ _ _ _ _
- The last Monday _ _
- The 16th _ _ _ _ _
- One day before the 20th _ _
- The day before the first Friday _ _
- The last weekday of the second week _ _ _ _ _
- The day after the 20th _ _
- The day after 18th _ _
- The first day of the second weekend _
- The last Sunday _ _ _
- The last day of the month _ _ _ _ _

Answers: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.

Answer: D (See Judges 4:1-10.)



Coloring Page





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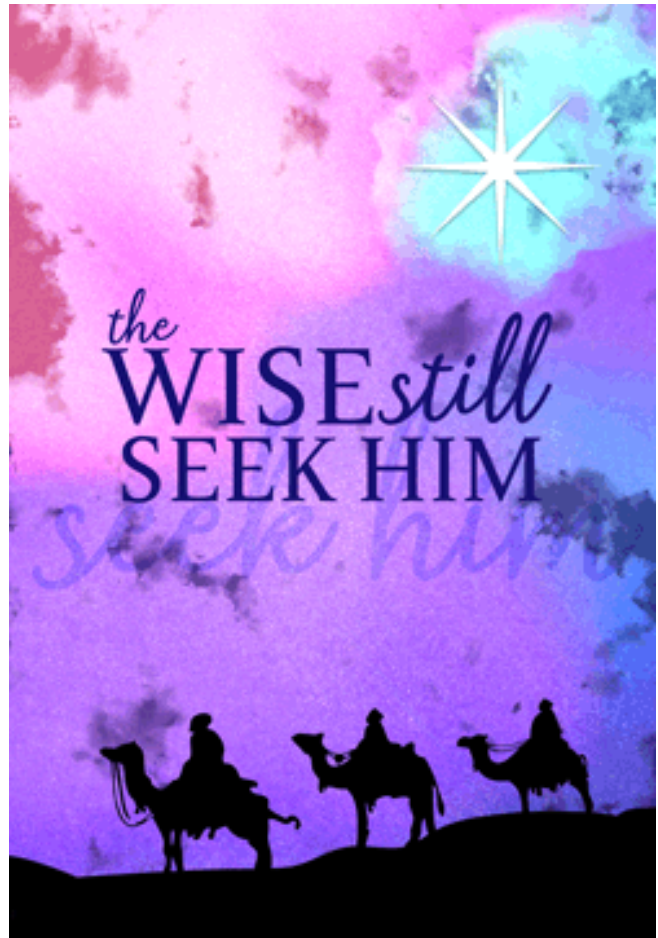
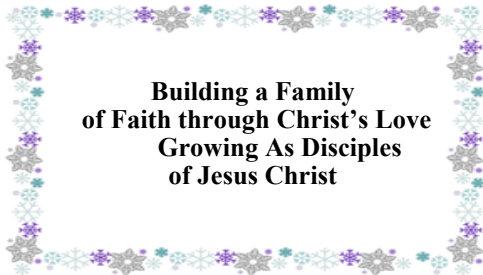
E-mail: otterbeinumchurch@verizon.net

Website: otterbeinchurch.net

Pastor Debra Stevens

Cell: 610-733-6204

E-mail: pastor@otterbeinchurch.net



11:00am Worship
First Sunday of each month is Communion