



The 2026 Altar Flower Calendar is posted in the hallway outside the church office.

If you'd like to provide altar flowers in honor of a special person or occasion, sign up now!

ALTERNATIVE CHRISTMAS

Sundays During Advent

Looking for meaningful Christmas gifts? Visit Wesley Hall to purchase alternative gifts that support several local organizations. Your gift will make a lasting impact while honoring loved ones with the true spirit of giving.

CAROLS & A MESSAGE

November 30, December 7, 14, 21

Pastor David will lead an early morning service in the Chapel each Sunday of Advent. Join us at 8:00 a.m. for carols and a brief message (different from the 10:00a service). We'll finish by 8:30a.



Volunteers are needed as WUMC welcomes the public to the Burning River Brass Concert on December 20 (see details on front cover).

It takes many hands to make it happen smoothly—can you help?

- **Cookie Providers:** provide home-baked or store-bought cookies
- **Greeters:** welcome & direct visitors
- **Reception Support:** refill cookie trays and water pitchers, help with clean up

Sign up at the *What's Up Table* or contact Nancy Franck.

CANDLELIGHT CHRISTMAS EVE

DECEMBER 24 • 5:00P

We'll gather in the WUMC Sanctuary as we set apart a time to honor the birth of Jesus, sharing the timeless Christmas story and singing familiar carols, finishing with a candle lighting as we sing *Silent Night*.



Would you like to place a poinsettia in the Sanctuary for Christmas in memory/honor of a loved one or celebration of a special occasion? Each plant is \$13; order forms are available at the *What's Up Table*. A list of the dedications will be published in the Christmas Eve bulletin.

LAY VISITATION TEAM

Lay Visitation Team Meeting
January 4, 2026 | Following Worship
Would you like to serve others but need something flexible that works with your schedule? Please consider joining the Lay Visitation Team where you can brighten up the day of one of our limited mobility or care facility members with a monthly visit! WUMC even provides gifts for you to take so your person is reminded of their church family. Interested in finding out more about this ministry? Stop in at their next meeting!



Sunday, December 7 | 2:00p

WUMC has rented a theatre at The Lyric in downtown Wooster! Join us for a showing of *A Muppet Christmas Carol*. Tickets are \$5; kids get a free snack pack! Friends and family members are welcome—scan the code or contact the WUMC office to purchase tickets.

USED SPORTS GEAR SALE

Donate Sports Gear for a Great Cause!
Getting new sports gear? Don't toss the old stuff! The WUMC Sports and Wellness Ministry visioning group is planning a Gently Used Sports Equipment Sale for March 2026—and we're collecting donations now! If it's still in good shape but you just don't need it anymore, bring it to the church office and we'll find it a new home. No used items to donate but still want to participate? New equipment will be gratefully accepted as well! Bring all donations to the church office.



Wednesday, December 17 | Noon

You're Invited! Join us for our monthly congregational lunch in Wesley Hall. Everyone is welcome! Everything is provided—just bring \$5 for pizza! Snacks to share are welcome. Let's enjoy food and fellowship together!



Sunday, December 14 | Meet at 3:30p

Spread some holiday cheer to WUMC members with limited mobility and join us for Christmas caroling! Sign up at the *What's Up Table* in Wesley Hall.



GIVING TREE

This year's Giving Tree, located in the Rose Room off the Sanctuary, supports Wayne County Children's Services with school supplies, clothing, diapers, etc. A detailed list of needed items can be found at the *What's Up Table* in Wesley Hall or near where the tree is displayed.

Circuit Rider

December 2025

WOOSTER UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

connect • grow • serve

Burning River BRASS

"Our Kind of Christmas"

FREE ENTRY

Composed of twelve of the finest brass and percussion players in the country, Burning River Brass is an ensemble on fire!

A free will offering will benefit both *OHuddle*, a local school-based 1:1 mentorship program, and *Lift Her Up*, a scholarship program for female refugees at Africa University.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20 | 1:30 P.M.
DOORS OPEN @ 12:45 P.M.

Wooster UMC • 243 N. Market St. • Wooster OH 44691 • 330.262.5641

Office Hours: Monday-Friday 9 a.m.-3:30 p.m.

Pastor David Rittgers drittgers@woosterumc.org
Office Manager, Stacy Rutt office@woosterumc.org

PASTOR'S PONDERINGS: DECEMBER 2025

“The Redemption of Scrooge”

Past. Present. Future. These are often lenses through which I find myself looking at the world and my life experiences. Maybe you do, too?

Advent is a good time of the year for us to consider these things in our own lives and how they connect to the story of a God who comes to us at this special time of year called Christmas.

Past: Advent is a time of year when we remember the events leading up to Jesus’ birth and the way God’s people anticipated the coming of Messiah.

Present: Advent is an occasion for us to turn our hearts and minds toward Christ amid the busyness of the season, recognizing his presence with us now, as we intentionally participate through activities like worship, music, learning, serving, and decorating.

Future: Advent is a season of preparation for the Christmas celebration as we create memories that will stay with us for many years to come, all the while anticipating Christ’s ultimate return.

This year’s Advent/Christmas series will look at how living in God’s economy of grace and justice is what we need to rescue us from the life-threatening addiction to only looking out for ourselves. The chimes of the clock –tower bells in Charles Dickens’ classic story, “A Christmas Carol,” provide a wale-up call for Ebenezer Scrooge. They turn him away from his resentment, fear, and isolation. Just as God’s presence was born anew into this world, we, too, can be born anew, woken up and redeemed into renewed life, joy, passion, generosity, humility, and love.

Below is our weekly schedule of worship themes:

- Nov. 30-Advent 1 “Bah Humbug! The Scrooge in Us” (Peace)
- Dec. 7-Advent 2: “The Remembrance of Christmas Past” (Hope)
- Dec. 14-Advent 3: “The Life of Christmas Present” (Love)
- Dec. 21-Advent 4: “The Hope of Christmas Future” (Joy)
- Dec. 24-Christmas Eve: “The Redemption of Scrooge: Keeping Christmas Well”
- Dec. 28-Sunday After Christmas—“God Bless Us, Every One!”

Note: “The Redemption of Scrooge” is a worship series based on “A Christmas Carol” by Charles Dickens and was developed by Marcia McFee (Worship Design Studio) and Pastor Matt Rawle.

With Peace, Hope, Love, and Joy in Christ,

Pastor David Rittgers (drittgers@woosterumc.org)

Kind words

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul, and health to the body. Proverbs 16:24

I stocked up the pantries at Buckeye Street and Spink Street. Thank you again and let everyone know how much what they give is appreciated. When children come up and ask if you have spaghetti or tuna fish or macaroni and cheese and they're not even interested in candy you know that they're hungry. There's one particular family where the mom works and the dad is very disabled, there's a girl about 9 or 10 years old who basically is Mama's helper and she takes care of the younger ones. She's always interested in good food. We helped her out today. You, me, and the Wooster United Methodist Church. Thank you. David Griffith, in response to picking up the latest donation of food for neighborhood give and take pantries

Thank you for choosing me as Person of the Week. I enjoyed the cards and the Christmas Cactus was beautiful. Nancy Ayres

Thank you to all who contributed in any way to making the Feast of Thanks a success! We appreciated all the helping hands! Bob & Nikki Reynolds

Thank you to everyone who came together for the Chili Cook-Off and Bake Sale! From those who made their delicious chili and baked goods to those who ate the chili and donated money, you helped make this a very successful fundraiser for our students. The support from our incredibly generous congregation is always greatly appreciated. Sincerely, Ali Vizzo and WUMC Youth

Please keep the church informed of illness and hospitalization of any person who may need a caring visit or phone call.



Above: Youth dress up as Bible characters and visit Sunday School classes.
Right: The annual Feast of Thanks congregational meal.
Left and below: The Inaugural WUMC Chili Cook-Off was a delicious success!



Below: WUMC Walking Group braves the cold!



Community Craft Night



WUMC Work Day



WUMC Work Day



Hanging of the Greens: Decorating for the season