



December 21 through December 27, 2025

Dear Friends in Christ,

[A]n angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21).

Here is a simple definition of tradition, found online:

A tradition is a belief, custom, or practice passed down through generations, serving as a core part of a culture, family, or group’s identity, often with special meaning, like holiday rituals or shared stories. Simply put, it’s “how things have always been done,” influencing present actions and behaviors because they were established in the past.

This past week I was talking to a church member, and the topic of Christmas traditions came up. We exchanged the things we do each Christmas season, year after year! Every family at OUPC has traditions they observe, some without even remembering how the particular one began.

We laughed as we discussed what we practice – some warm and full of love, others somewhat comical. Families watch particular movies, eat certain foods, do things with the tree, read the Christmas story in Luke, sing or play music, leave cookies for Santa – you get the picture! Some drawings or items brought out from storage may be fifty, seventy-five, or even a hundred years old.

As the definition above says, traditions become part of our identity as a family or community. If the person associated with a particular tradition passes on, the family struggles to keep it going; sometimes only fond memories remain; other times, a new person steps in to keep the tradition going.

Let us never forget the most important thing for us to recall, remember, or practice each Christmas – God himself left his heavenly throne and came to earth as a helpless baby, to... *save his people from their sins.*

Traditions connect us with our beloved past, sustain us in the present, and enable us to look to future events. New practices become old traditions! But let us remember the most important tradition of Christmas – recalling and celebrating the birth of Christ, or Savior.

My best wishes for you and yours this Advent season, this Christmas, and always.

In Christ,

Pastor Jim



Worship
• Sunday School for children 3yr.-6th grade is during worship after the children’s chat • Adult Sunday School is at 9am • 80 were in church on Sunday, December 14
Congregational Care
• Story Time continues on Wednesdays at 9:30 or 10:30am • No Story Time Wednesday, December 24 • December 21–Cantata • December 21–Congregational Meeting to elect Elders and Deacons • December 24–Christmas Eve Service @7pm with communion
Mission
Operations

The Ohio UP Church Christmas Card Box is in the narthex and ready for your Christmas Cards for members who regularly attend Worship in person. The Deacons will pass them out before and after our Worship Service. You may make a small donation to the Deacons if you wish.

Would you like to offer special music on Christmas Eve before the service? We are looking to have some pre-service music starting around 6:45pm. If you would like to do, please see Chris Mathias

If you are able to help with the snow removal from the sidewalks, please contact Charles Hendrick

We are looking for someone to make Communion wafers starting in January. If you are interested please contact Chris Mathais.

The Deacons are requesting donations for our food pantry. Any donations are appreciated but we are running low on health and beauty products – Shampoo, toothpaste, soap and deodorant. Donations can be placed in the bin at the back of the church

Highlights from the December Session Meeting

Actions by the Session:

- Approved the 2026 Budget.
- Approved having a Congregational Meeting to Elect Officers on December 21st, 2025.
- Elected Joe Glatz as the Clerk of Session for 2026.
- Removed the following from the Membership Roll of the Ohio UPC:

Jason Arzberger	Michele Sebastian
Gina Arzberger	John Smith
William Arzberger	Alaina Stroud
Kingsley (Sebastian) Corsi	Mark Douglass
Chandler Dameron	Marsha Douglass
Wendy Dameron	Allison Feszko
Kristine Dameron	Nick Feszko
Joshua Hribar	

- Gave authority to John Martin, Membership Committee Chair, to send to the Clerk of Session names (from the possible removal list) for removal from membership if they do not respond to the letter that was sent to them by the end of 2025.
- Approved Joe Glatz, Secretary of the Corporation/Clerk of Session to be a second signatory person on the WesBanco bank account.
- Approved the 2026 Communion schedule dates. They are 1/11, 2/8, 3/8, 4/12, 5/3, 5/24, 7/12, 8/9, 9/13, 10/4, 11/1, 11/29, 12/24.
- Approved a motion to pay the full per-capita for 2026.

Joseph R. Glatz, Clerk of Session



DECEMBER

Birthdays and Anniversaries

<u>Anniversaries</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>	<u>Birthdays</u>
Joe & Dana Gavita 12/04	MacKenzie Petrella 12/01	Joe Glatz 12/13	Richard Young 12/20
Holly & William Diccio 12/18	Shane McLynden 12/05	Betty Martin 12/17	Kathy Fouse 12/21
Mark & Marsha Douglass 12/21	Lynn Smith 12/06	Joel Mitchell 12/18	Kathy Lee Tolfa 12/25
Cherryl & Zbig Lachowicz 12/30	Sherri Murdoch 12/09	Mark Muslin 12/18	Mark Douglass 12/27
	Dale Fouse 12/13	Ken Strominger 12/20	



Prayer List

- Steven Ward—3 more immunotherapy's. In January will find out how treatments worked
- Pastor Jim—Joy for children's ministry!
- John Martin—His mother Betty will be 90!
- Diane Gennaro—Donna Olexick is having kidney problems
- Jen Davis—Her brother Jeff is having gall bladder removed on Friday.
- Kristy Otto—Peggy Franzese is having testing done for medical issues
- Sharon Neville—Joy to see Bonnie Martin
- Dawn Psik—Sister, Susan needs continued prayers as she meets with surgeon on Tuesday, December 30 to discuss treatment going forward.
- Jen Davis—I took Evelyn Lawson to Ohio on Friday to see Ed. He is doing well and we had a great time at their Christmas party at the facility. Mr. and Mrs. Lawson send their love and Merry Christmas to all.



A CHRIST-CENTERED CHRISTMAS ADVENT READING PLAN

Explore the true meaning of Christmas as you travel through God's Word. Discover God's promises he fulfilled through the birth of His only Son, the **KING OF KINGS.**





1 Isaiah 7:14

2 Isaiah 9:6-7

3 Malachi 3:1

4 Micah 5:2-4

5 Luke 1:5-7

6 Luke 1:10-15

7 Luke 1:18-22

8 Luke 1:24-25

9 Luke 1:26-29

10 Luke 1:30-33

11 Luke 2:1-5

12 Luke 2:6-7

13 Luke 2:8-14

14 Luke 2:15-20

15 Matthew 1:18-21

16 Matthew 1:22-25

17 Matthew 2:1-3

18 Matthew 2:4-6

19 Matthew 2:7-9

20 Matthew 2:10-12

21 Romans 15:13

22 Galatians 4:4-5

23 Philippians 2:8-11

24 James 1:16-18

25 John 3:16

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