



December 28 through January 3, 2025



Dear Friends in Christ,

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith (Hebrews 12:1-2a).

Last week, I wrote to you about traditions we practice, celebrate, or endure at Christmas. Traditions connect us to our past, and help us remember things as we move forward into the future. Christmas is also a time of remembrance and reflection, thinking about those who have gone before.

The author of the Letter to the Hebrews spends a great deal of time doing the same thing. In chapter 11 (take a moment to read it!), he speaks of the faithful who have gone before. Moving into chapter 12, he refers to all these saints as “...*a great cloud of witnesses*,” on whose shoulders we stand.

This time of year, we should all pause to recall those who are part of the great cloud, whose influence on our lives and faith continue. Maybe they joined *The Church Triumphant* this past year; maybe they’ve been gone for many years, even decades. But their legacy remains – their lives influence us still today. We are who we are thanks to their faithful witness.

Again, this time of year is a time for reflection – but it’s also a time for renewal and a look to the future. I encourage everyone – as the author says – to “...*run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.*”

Jesus is the ultimate, the perfect, the #1 witness for us. Let us look to him for the inheritance that is ours, and follow the path he has marked before us as we move into 2026.

My best wishes for you and yours this Christmas, the New Year, 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 starting again on January 4 with a study on the Holy Spirit • 104 were in church on Sunday, December 21
Congregational Care
• Story Time continues on Wednesdays at 9:30 or 10:30am • No Story Time Wednesday, December 31 • Installation and ordination of Elders and Deacons will be on January 11
Mission
Operations
• Property committee meeting on January 5 at 6:30pm • Finance Committee meeting on January 5 at 6pm

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.

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



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 Diccico 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	



Church FAMILY —PRAYER LIST—



- Pastor Jim—Joy to be here; sister in and out of hospital all week; Joy for the choir
- Jeff Davis—Joy for directing the choir; Prayers for Jen as she has a seasonal illness; praise for Simon, Shirley and Skye for their help preparing for the cantata.
- Missy Sardo—Joy that son Michael is in church
- Dianne Kanitra—Jim Williams needs prayers for health issues
- Ginny Adams—Prayers for new-born great grandson. He is a preemie in hospital
- Lynn Smith—Thankful for parents of kids who were in the program last week
- Bev Abate—Safe travels for everyone this week
- Micael Sardo—Joy to hear mom sing
- Kim Hughes—Prayers for husband Tom. He is being transferred to Allegheny General for possible surgery on blocked artery in his leg



Bob Keller 01/06	Camden Hoth 01/17	Simon Hunsberger 01/21	Jacob Cagnon 01/23
Eric Nan 1/12	Belinda Notte 01/20	Rich Kerlin 01/22	Megan Hunsberger 01/25
Sara Allen 01/16	Kevin Smith 01/21	David Kocher 01/22	