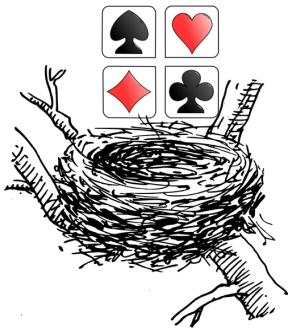


COOKING WITH CHRIST MONDAYS, JANUARY 8 - FEBRUARY 12



Join RRUMC member, Janice Perry, on Monday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm, as she connects the art and joy of cooking with our spiritual growth and nourishment. Please consider attending this unique "hands on" faith development experience. Registration for this study will be through the Church Office at office@rrumc.org or 440.331.7676.



EMPTY NEST EUCHRE GROUP STARTS WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10

Adjusting to life as an empty-nester is no easy task. Many people feel as if their life's purpose and their drive have left them

right along with their child's departure. It is a time when the support of faith family and newly forged relationships can be especially beneficial. The purpose of the Empty Nest Group is fairly simple, to provide that support and opportunity to venture into new friendships within the context of regular Euchre nights held at RRUMC. For those who do not know how to play Euchre, instruction will gladly be provided. Both singles and couples are welcome. When uneven numbers are present, we'll mix in other games to keep everyone engaged while waiting their turn. The group will meet every two weeks, but people are welcome to "drop-in" when convenient with their schedule. Light refreshments will be shared, along with laughs and a lot of fun. The first gathering is scheduled for Wednesday, January 10, from 7:00-9:00pm. Please direct questions to Nina Milenius at milenius@cox.net.



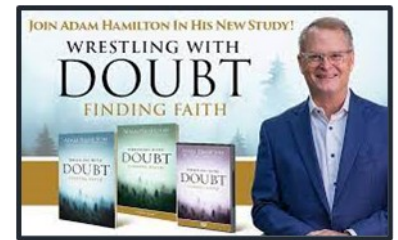
UPWARD SPORTS VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Upward Sports' 2024 season begins this month. Practices are in the evenings beginning January 8 and the first game of the season is Saturday, January 20. We are still in need of volunteers to referee, work the concessions, announce, and perform halftime devotionals. Keep an eye out for Sign-up Genius links on the Upward page of RRUMC's website or e-mail Vanessa Wagner, Sports Ministry Coordinator, at upwardrrumc@yahoo.com for more information or to volunteer.

MEET REV. ADAM HAMILTON!

WEDNESDAY,
JANUARY 17

Renowned UMC pastor and author Rev. Adam Hamilton will be at the Strongsville UMC on Wednesday, January 17, from 1:30-3:00pm to promote his newly released book, "*Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith.*" Rev. Hamilton will discuss some of our most significant sources of doubt and show how a steady trust in God can emerge from them. This event is free. For more information, visit www.eocumc.com and click on the tab "Events Registration."



GRIEF CARE

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Our church welcomes a new group called Grief Care on January 18 at 1:00pm in the parlor. Please join Mary Elin Halek and Lynn Gorton in a faith-based group to share devotions, prayer, and the comfort

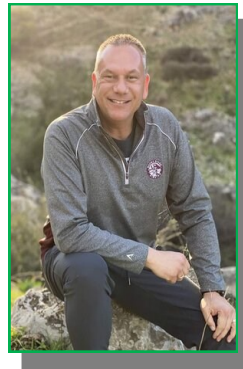
of friendship. Always confidential as people are going through many types of losses and are looking to find a safe place to find solace. Come, sit, and observe or feel free to share. This monthly group is to meet your needs as you process through your grief journey. For more information, please contact Lynn Gorton CLM, FCHP at L.Gorton@rrumc.org.

REFLECTIONS ...

by Rev. Daniel F. Bogre

Dear Friends and Family of RRUMC,

I think that when you receive this letter we will be in the week between Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. That being said, I hope and pray you had the most joy-filled and blessed Christmas Eve you have ever had. Now is the time we focus on the year that is just in front of us. I think one of the best ways to look forward is to look backwards first.



As I look back on 2023, I cannot help but to be so thankful. There were so many wonderful things that happened just in 2023. We hired our first Sports Ministry Coordinator because our Upward Sports ministry program has outgrown a volunteer position. On one Sunday afternoon in November, over 200 of you packed 10,152 meals to go overseas for children in need. We refurbished our beautiful sanctuary over the summer. There were many weddings and baptisms here. We welcomed 15 confirmation youth into full membership in the church. We have almost completely renovated our Story Church campus at West 99th Street and Madison Avenue on the west side of Cleveland. At our staff meeting this morning, Lisa and Lynn, our campus pastors at Story Church, shared that they had 75 people in worship last Saturday. I could go on and on.

The more I reflect on 2023, the thing that brings me the most joy is that you have given me the blessing of being your senior pastor. I have cherished the tears of joy I have shared with so many of you over the past year. I have also cherished the tears of heartache and sorrow you have allowed me to share with you. I am in my 12th year at RRUMC and I feel like each and every year just gets better and better. I consider my call to serve this incredible congregation a blessing, an honor, and a complete privilege. I am still in awe every time someone from this church family invites me to walk with them in their story. The story could be the loss of a spouse. It could be a marriage or a baptism of a baby. It could be a story in the midst of a struggling marriage. Maybe it is a new job or the loss of a job you have had for decades. No matter what, I want you to know how special all of your stories are and always will be. I hold them in my heart and, when I preach each and every Sunday, I see your faces and those beautiful stories rush through my heart and mind. Thank you for those stories.

I love Jesus Christ more than anything in the world and I want to thank all of you for allowing me to live out that relationship as your pastor here at RRUMC. I look at 2024 through the lens of 2023 and that brings me joy, excitement, wonder, and hopeful anticipation of what God is going to do in this new year. My prayer is that you can look at 2024, no matter what 2023 has dealt you, with that same joy, excitement, and hopeful anticipation. I pray that you have a blessed, joyous, and prosperous New Year. Thank you, church, for the way you have blessed and changed my life.

Peace and Blessings, Rev. Dan



January Anniversaries

(50 or more years and those in five-year increments)

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|----|
| 1/1 | Dawn & Charles Bowers | 30 |
| 1/4 | Katrina Posedel & PK Carelli | 5 |

January Birthdays

(90 years or more)

- | | | |
|------|----------------|----|
| 1/5 | Jim Boulton | 95 |
| 1/14 | Katherine Hess | 93 |

Births

Michael & Stephanie Poe, in the birth of their son, Rocky Sheldon Poe, on November 14; proud big sister is Penny; proud grandparents are Tom & Lori Poe.

Baptisms

Killian Maximus Swiney, Bentley Jordan Starcher, and Jameson Lee Starcher, children of Krystal Swiney, on November 19.

Thank You

Dear RRUMC Congregation, On behalf of the family of Marlys Arnold, I would like to express my thanks to the congregation and to the Fuller Sounds Handbell Choir for the beautiful alter flowers and special music "**When Morning Gilds the Sky**" presented to remember Mom. Your kindness will always be treasured by our family. Blessings, Randy Arnold.

HOLIDAY CLOSURES

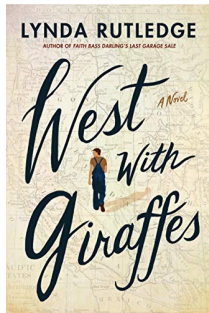
The Church and Church Office will be closed for the New Year's Holiday on January 1.



CLEVELAND FOOD BANK

MONDAY, JANUARY 8

The next Food Bank night for adult volunteers (age 14 and over) will be Monday, January 8 from 6:00-8:00pm. Those who wish to car pool will meet at the church at 5:15pm. To register, contact Dave Sagerser at dsagerser@aol.com or 216.525.0779.



BOOK CLUB

THURSDAY, JANUARY 18

Join us on Thursday, January 18, at 10:00am at the church as we discuss "*West with Giraffes*" by Lynda Rutledge. Questions? List of future books? Contact Bruce Biggin at brbiggin@netscape.net or 216.544.5980. Always happy

to see new faces, and regular attendance is not required.

CAREGIVER SUPPORT GROUP

MONDAY, JANUARY 15

Attention caregivers, if you are caring for a loved one and would like to meet with others from our church family in a similar role, please join our support group led by Marcia Hesselgrave and Leann Hofelich. Our next meeting will be on Monday, January 15, at 6:00pm. Light refreshments will be served. Questions? Contact Lynn Gorton, FCHP, at LGorton@rrumc.org.



LGBTQA+ SUPPORT GROUP

**THURSDAY,
JANUARY 25**

LGBTQA+ Support Group is a ministry of the Rocky River UMC which provides a safe space for members of the LGBTQA+ community and their friends and family to share their joys and concerns in a safe and confidential space. Meetings are held monthly on the 4th Thursday (usually) alternating every month on Zoom or in-person. On Thursday, January 25, at 7:00pm, **we'll meet in the choir room**. Questions or to receive the Zoom link? Please contact Mark Brandt at brandt486@gmail.com or Rev. Laurie Bruce at labruce83@gmail.com.



FAMILY MISSION FOR TBFS: SOUP IN A JAR

SUNDAY, JANUARY 28

Please join us on Sunday, January 28, at 3:00pm to make Soup in a Jar for our families at the Twice Blessed Free Store. This program is available for people of all ages. Help us to bring the generations together. We look forward to seeing you all there! Questions? Contact **Quinn Bennett** at QBennett@rrumc.org.



2024 LENTEN STUDY

Mark your calendars today for the 2024 Lenten study, "*In the Footsteps of the Savior*" by Max Lucado. Registration will begin February 4, with study sessions beginning the week of Feb 11. Watch for details in the February Circuit Rider and the bulletin. Plan

to journey through the teachings of Jesus Christ, learn of the people and places that shape His life.

Link-Up Bike Ministry

Community partners who have supported Link-Up this year:

- Century Cycles
- RTA
- Ohio City Bike Co-Op
- Upcycles Bike Shop
- Solon Police Department
- And you!

As winter settles in the Link-Up Bicycle shop stays open. We usually get caught up on work during colder months. Looking for a way to give back? We'd love your help at the shop! We're fortunate to have many bicycles to work on and keep our volunteers busy. Would you like to help? The shop is open most Wednesday afternoons from 12-3, and varying times throughout the week. Email Matt or Don at linkupbikeministry@gmail.com for more information.

NOURISH MINISTRY

Many thanks to our Nourish Ministry for providing a lovely Christmas brunch for the church staff in attendance. The food was delicious and plentiful. This ministry goes above and beyond the call of duty. They accommodate singles, couples, or families during a time where they are in need of a nourishing and comforting meal. The food is prepared with love and brought right to your door. Next time you or someone you know is going through a rough patch, don't hesitate to allow this ministry to be a blessing to you and the ones you love. To set up delivery of a meal, please contact the Church Office.



YOUTH MINISTRIES

by *Steven Young* at

SYoung@rrumc.org

Crossroads Youth Schedule for January

- 7 Crossroads 7:00-8:30pm
- 14 Crossroads/Common Ground 7:00-8:30pm
- 21 Crossroads 7:00-8:30pm
- 28 Crossroads 7:00-8:30pm

Sunday School Schedule for January

- 7 No Sunday School First Sunday
- 14, 21, 28 Sunday School 10/11:30am Services

Common Ground SUNDAY, JANUARY 14

Common Ground is a monthly program for middle and high school students in the youth ministry. It helps them connect with each other and share their faith walk experiences. The program takes place during Crossroads hours 7-8:30pm.

Youth Bowling SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 24



Join us for a fun and friendly bowling night. You don't have to be skilled, just come to have fun. We will meet on Saturday, February 24, from 2:00-4:00pm, at Fairview Lanes and enjoy two hours of bowling. The cost is \$15 per person. We hope to see you there!



IS THERE REALLY A FIRE?

by *the Safety and Risk Management Committee*

So you hear the fire alarm sound during one of our services. Do you know where the exits are located? Is there really a fire or is this a false alarm? Or maybe it is just a test of the alarm system. What do you do?

What you DON'T want to do is to hesitate and question whether or not there is a real fire. What you DO want to do is to evacuate the church immediately. Unless instructed otherwise, move quickly (don't run) and quietly to the closest exit and leave the building immediately.



Why do people not respond to fire alarms? People don't like to stop what they are doing, and often a fire alarm is not enough of a cue for people to drop their everyday tasks and exit the building.

Should you respond to every fire alarm? Even when there are no signs of fire, you should react to every fire alarm as if there is an actual fire.

Please be aware of where all of the fire exits are located.

ELEVENTH ANNUAL MARY ANNE & RICHARD CAVICCHI CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEMINAR - POWER, PURPOSE & LOVE: BECOMING CHANGE-MAKERS IN OUR COMMUNITIES



SUNDAY, MARCH 3, 2024, 4:00-7:30PM

Keynote Speaker and Facilitator:

Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones

Rev. Joy Fenton-Jones is an Authorized Minister in the United Church of Christ and a creative thinker about how congregations and their buildings may best serve the community. She serves two churches (DOC/UCC) in Cuyahoga Falls and devotes much time to navigating creative building reuse and church building redevelopment projects with congregations around Greater Cleveland and Akron.

Each one of us desires to make positive change. Whether in our personal lives, in our churches, or in the wider community, we want to leave circumstances better than we have found them. The biblical witness affirms this story: ordinary people, called by God, are catalysts for realizing God's Kingdom right in their own neighborhoods. Using the tools of grassroots organizing, this seminar will make the case that with God's help and the partnership of our neighbors, we can participate in the transformation of our churches, our neighborhoods and the broader community. We will discover and practice the art of relational meetings; we will unearth the power of community listening; and we will develop a toolkit for breaking down seemingly intractable problems into manageable tasks. This seminar will draw on the work of Robert Linthicum's book, "*Transforming Power: Biblical Strategies for Making a Difference in Your Community*," and will also include the voices of interfaith community leaders and organizers from Cleveland and Cuyahoga County.

On March 3, there are two ways to attend: in person, meal provided, at RRUMC or on Zoom, with breakout discussion groups and a break. There is no cost to attend. Registration opens in mid-January online at <https://www.rrumc.org/cavicchi-seminar-sign-up>. Questions? Contact cavicchichristianed@gmail.com.

NURSERY SCHOOL NEWS

by Aaryn Holland & Margery Wanosik, Co-Directors,
rrumns@gmail.com



Hello Rocky River United Methodist Congregation,

Greetings in the New Year from the Nursery School. As we progress through the long winter months, the PreK will begin assessing our students for progress notes to be handed out during our conferences that are held in early March. The 35 classes are continuing to work with the children on skills needed as they progress through preschool and get closer to their PreK year. The school approaches language and letter recognition as a whole. Each age group is working on the same letter during the week with various activities to enhance this depending on the age. Scaffolding is such an efficient way to ensure the students continue to work through the letters, the sounds that they make and how to blend the sounds together for consecutive years as they progress through RRUMNS. Art and music are also used daily to complete our curriculum. The children are using picture books as well to learn the difference between fiction stories and nonfiction stories. Wordless books also tend to be a big hit at this age. Registration is opening for new and non-church member families on January 9. Information can be found online through the church's website. There is a link for the preschool on the main page. Please help us to spread the word about the wonderful little school housed right here in Rocky River United Methodist Church!



Nursery School Children at work and play, learning every day.



Rocky River United Methodist Church
19414 Detroit Road
Rocky River, OH 44116-1873
Ph: 440.331.7676
Fax: 440.331.7637
E-Mail: office@rrumc.org
Web: www.rrumc.org

DATED MATERIALS - PLEASE RUSH
Mailed Dec. 27, 2023

Ministry

Daniel F. Bogre, Senior Pastor
Paul A. Bennett, Associate Pastor
Sheri B. Swartz, Director of Church Ministries
Quinn E. Bennett, Director of Children's Ministries
Lisa P. Sierk, Director of Endowment Ministries
Steven M. Young, Director of Youth Ministries
Lisa Thomas, Twice Blessed Free Store Director
Lynn K. Gorton, Faith Community Health Professional
Vanessa Wagner, Sports Ministry Coordinator

Music Ministry

Jeffrey A. Acker, Organist
Matthew Dolan, Director of Music
Carmen G. Massaro, and Lynn Young, Handbell Choirs
Robert W. Kimmel, Harbor Worship Leader

Mission Ministry

Dr. Belinda Forbes, Managua, Nicaragua

Deadline for February Circuit Rider:
Wednesday, January 10, 2023

IT'S ALL ABOUT THE STORY!

SAVE THESE LATE DECEMBER DATES

Dec. 28 - Thursday Morning Breakfast Group
Dec. 28 - LGBTQA+ Support Group
Dec. 28 - Harbor Worship Rehearsal
Dec. 31 - Open Gym Basketball

SAVE THESE JANUARY DATES

Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Men's Prayer Group
Jan. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30 - Women's Fellowship Group*
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 - Thursday Morning Breakfast Group
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 - Genesis to Revelation Bible Study
Jan. 4, 11, 18, 25 - Harbor Worship Rehearsal
Jan. 6, 13, 20, 27 - TBFS Open
Jan. 7 - Communion Sunday
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Open Gym Basketball
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Confirmation Class
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Crossroads Youth
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Joyful Sounds Handbell Choir
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Fuller Sounds Handbell Choir
Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Disciple IV Bible Study
Jan. 8 - Cleveland Foodbank Volunteering
Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 - Cooking with Christ Study Group
Jan. 8, 15, 22, 29 - Disciple I Bible Study
Jan. 8 - Upward Basketball & Cheer Practices Begin
Jan. 10 & 24 - Empty Nester's Euchre Group

Jan. 10, 17, 24, 31 - Chancel Choir Rehearsal
Jan. 11 - Shawl Ministry
Jan. 14 - Common Ground Youth
Jan. 15 - Caregiver Support Group
Jan. 17 - Adam Hamilton Event (at Strongsville UMC)
Jan. 18 - Book Club
Jan. 18 - Grief Care
Jan. 20 - Upward Sports Games Begin
Jan. 23 - RiverMen
Jan. 25 - Lydia Circle UMW
Jan. 25 - LGBTQA+ Support Group
Jan. 28 - Family Mission for TBFS

**virtual meeting via Zoom or other platform*

SUNDAY WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

- 8:30am - Chapel Service
- 10:00am - Sanctuary Service
- 11:30am - Harbor Service in Beacon Hall, also livestreamed at www.rrumc.org

OFFICE INFORMATION

Office hours are Monday to Friday, 9:00am-4:00pm. The Church Office will be closed on Jan. 1 and TBFS closed on Dec. 30 for the New Year's holiday.