

Volume 25 - Issue 1 - January / February, 2021

An Encouraging Word

CONTENTS

An Encouraging Word	1
Reflection On 2020	2/3
Drive-Thru Nativity	4
Bedtime Bible Story	5
Shoulder to Shoulder	
Children's & Youth News	6/7
Puzzle	8/9
Bible Quizzes	
Sermon Topics	
Deaths	10/11
Financial Pease Class	
Mortgage Balance	

Years ago, many people grew up in poor families by today's standards. Mine was in that number. Yet, my parents provided well for me and my sister and occasionally they did little special things for us. One of those things was chocolate. Mom would make it at Christmas. And a few times during the year, my Dad would bring some home. But chocolate was a rare treat.

I guess that's what prompted my sister to start getting into a stash of foil wrapped chocolate that she found in the medicine cabinet (Ex-Lax). Nasty stuff! But I guess when you crave chocolate, it will do. The discarded foil eventually gave her away. And at that point, the only wrong thing my sister was aware of was that she took them without asking. She thought that our Mom was just keeping some good stuff from us. But Mom explained later that it was medication, not candy, and that it could

harm her and that's why it was off-limits. It did make her sick and reinforced that what she had done was wrong. But eventually, my sister got into the medicine cabinet again! She had full knowledge that time that what she was doing was wrong and yet it didn't stop her.

After John the Baptist was put in prison, Jesus started proclaiming, "*The time has come, the Kingdom of God has come near. Repent and believe the good news!*" (Mark 1:15). And what Jesus said is as true today as it was when He first said it. The Kingdom of God has come near. Therefore, repent and believe the good news! A couple of the reasons that we turn away from God to our own ways are: 1) our sin nature is stronger than our life without Jesus. 2) And another reason is that our sin nature tempts us to think that God is withholding good stuff from us, therefore we should not trust Him and do what He wants us to do. That's why my sister thought that Mom kept the Ex-Lax from her. She was wrong and so are we when we think that God just wants to keep the good stuff from us. We struggle with the power of our sin nature, therefore, we have a constant need to repent of it and instead believe the good news. The good news is that God hasn't withheld the good stuff from us, rather He has come near to give us His best.

The first Sunday of the church season of Lent begins February 21st. Lent is our opportunity to ask God to look into our hearts and reveal any places where our sin nature is getting the best of us (any places where we have chosen spiritual Ex-Lax as a regular part of our lives). Then with the power of Jesus, we can repent, turn away from it, and believe the good news. The kingdom of God has come near in the person of Jesus to save us from our sin and give us the power to live a new life for God. Praise be to God for this indescribable gift!

—Pastor Mike



Each of us experienced changes during 2020 ... Some of your changes may have included working from home for your job, income or job loss, retirement, being physically distanced from friends and family, remote learning for many of our school aged children and attending Sunday worship in the parking lot. We added to our everyday vocabulary ... social distance, stay Q (which now is the medical lingo for stay quarantined, not stay quiet), Covid-19, the list goes on. For the first time that I can remember, I wanted to buy cleaning supplies and have ample supplies of toilet paper, paper towels and tissues.

Also, for the first time since I can remember Mt. Nebo UMC suspended in-person worship for a period of time due to something other than weather or a power outage. Mt. Nebo UMC did not host a Vacation Bible School, Easter Sunrise Service, traditional Easter or Thanksgiving meal or a Children's Christmas Program in the sanctuary.

Some of the blessings of 2020 were the many opportunities and time we had to spend with those in our households. I saw so many pictures of families having campfires, family fishing adventures, hiking together and giving or receiving 'door drop' items, all of these created memories that will stay in the hearts of those we love for a long time to come.

Let's look at the positives we've experienced as a congregation at Mt. Nebo UMC —

- Several adult small groups used available technology for the first time to connect weekly via an online format, either through Zoom or Facebook messenger. (I am personally grateful for the small group leaders who lead these weekly groups, either 'in person' or online.
- Children and youth small groups also connected via Zoom. Children's church connected for a lesson via Facebook messenger.
- For the first time we held Family Bedtime Bible stories at the Murphy Pavilion during the summer and continuing through the fall. (The focus was on spiritual growth and fellowship for families with children.)
- Our high school seniors, though their recognition looked a lot different, they were celebrated in a more personal way.
- Our children's and youth groups used the Murphy Pavilion on a regular basis, so they could safely meet face to face for several months. One of the Men's small groups also chose the Murphy Pavilion as a home base.
- Mt. Nebo UMC hosted its first ever parking lot chalk paint night—giving families an opportunity to create a work of art based on a Bible story or scripture.
- A weekly prayer group formed to pray for the needs of our world, country, community, church and individuals in our congregation.

—Continued on next page

- Our weekly church services are now available online in a video format rather than the previous audio format only. And we have added technology to make a drive-in worship service available in the parking lot.
- Mt. Nebo UMC chose to be a beacon of hope by creating a safe way to still work with the Hamersville churches for a Backpack Blessings school supply event before the start of school, prayer walk around the district's school buildings and still have Trunk and Treat for the community.
- Mt. Nebo UMC also found a way to be a blessing to the community by continuing to supply Backpack Blessings amid a pandemic and be available for a monthly drive-thru food pantry.
- Families packed more gift boxes for Samaritan's Purse shoebox ministry than ever before.
- Families with children had the opportunity to begin a new tradition at home during advent with a Giving Manger that they can use in years to come.
- For the first time Mt. Nebo UMC was blessed to be part of Angel Tree ministry (an outreach for families of incarcerated parents), thanks to Bill and Anna Henry for organizing this ministry which is an extension of the "Ride and Toy Drop" on September 19, 2020.
- Mt. Nebo UMC prayed and worked as a church family to host its first 'Drive-thru Nativity' — as a way to share the message of Christmas with many.

When we look back on 2020, let us count our blessings and remember the ways God has provided for us to live our mission ... **To Know Christ and Make Him Known.**



Welcome To Mt. Nebo's Drive-Thru Nativity





Family Bedtime Bible Story Event

Monday, February 8th at 6 PM

Monday, February 8, families can come together at 6 PM in the Classroom area for a Bedtime Bible Story Event. We will focus on ways to show the Love of Christ and how Jesus showed Love to Us...with story, games and crafts.

During the family event we will make Valentines and gifts to be taken to residents of local nursing homes connected with

Mt. Nebo UMC.

To help families travel their faith journey together, each family will receive family devotions that can be used during Lent, which begins with Ash Wednesday, February 17th.

—*Brenda Reed*, Discipleship Coordinator

Retailers eager to capture some of the \$20 billion that Americans spend every year for Valentine's Day gifts are moving beyond candy and flowers. For an outside-the-box edible present for that special someone, now you can purchase a bouquet of bacon roses, pickles or even Olive Garden breadsticks. If money is tight, you can visit Waffle House on February 14, the one night it takes reservations.

Last year, a most unusual Valentine's Day promotion had no takers. A reptile park in Mosca, Colorado, offered a two-for-one deal on gator-wrestling classes, but no one "snapped" up the opportunity. Maybe another heart-shaped box of chocolates isn't such a bad idea after all!

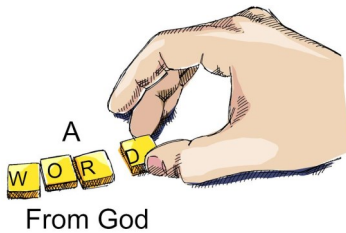


Men's Shoulder to Shoulder Small Group



Men's Shoulder to Shoulder Small Group will begin to meet for 2021 on Wednesday, January 13th, at 6:30 PM. During January and February this group will meet via Zoom to study, pray, and fellowship together. If you feel God nudging you to study with a group of brothers in Christ, now may be a great time to join - right

from your own home. Regardless of the physical distance separating one from the other, where two or more are joined together, God is with them. *"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."* Proverbs 27:17 NIV. Let 2021 be the year you connected with a small group. Please contact Christ Erhardt or Dan Reed if you would like to be part of this men's group.



A Word For The Year

Every January, some people pray and ask God to provide a word for their year ahead. Friends have shared theirs with me, but I was hesitant to embrace the practice myself. I'd love to receive a word like *flourish*; then again, I might be like the friend who heard *health* and then faced many physical challenges that year.

But I tried it for 2020 and heard *prepare*. My first reaction was that the word wasn't very exciting, which possibly confirmed I hadn't orchestrated it. Indeed, 2020 ended up full of significant, unexpected change for our family, with careers, school, church and friends. *Prepare* reminded me that amid chaos, God had prepared me for each moment and continues to prepare me for what's next.

Give it a try! Regardless of the word you receive or what lies ahead, you can trust that God loves you and is ultimately in control for 2021 and beyond.

—Janna Firestone

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on [Ash Wednesday](#) and ends on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo Saxon word *lencten*, meaning "lengthen" and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, [fasting](#) and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent, while Lenten fasts continue, the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection." (from the UMC.org article "What Is Lent and Why Does It last 40 Days?")

—Pastor Mike

D FORTY
Days
OF LENT

This fall, 456 (youth group for 4th–7th graders) met in a variety of settings over the past several months—the Murphy Pavilion to the Ministry Annex to Zoom meetings. The group studies together, prays together, and serves together. This fall the youth in this group took a spiritual gifts inventory to see areas and shared with one another how they might use these gifts to serve others and God. During Advent, 456 used video clips from Charlie Brown Christmas and scripture to prepare their hearts for Christmas. In January and February the group will meet on Mondays via Zoom—4:30 PM to 5:30 PM. Please contact Alyssa Eubanks if you know someone who would like to be part of this group. We are looking forward to growing in our faith as a group in 2021!



devos & donuts

During January and February, Devos and Donuts small group will meet via Zoom every Wednesday morning from 8 to 8:30 AM. Grab a quick breakfast and join us for weekly devotion and prayer before school. We will begin Wednesday, January 13th.

During January and February, a youth small group will meet via Zoom beginning at 6:30 PM. Please let Brenda Reed know if you or someone you know would like to be part of this group.



The high school youth group will continue to meet in January and February on the 2nd and 4th Sundays via Zoom at 6 PM. During November and December, the high school youth group has met via Zoom to focus on events and signs leading to Christmas. In addition to meeting as an online study group, several of our high school youth have served in many ways with outreach events; sorting toys for the Shoebox ministry project and drive-thru food pantry and several were cast members for the drive-thru Nativity.

NOTE- Youth groups will follow the schedule for Western Brown Local Schools.
If there is no school the group will not meet on Zoom at the regular time.

—Brenda Reed, Discipleship Coordinator

W
L
N
N
U
P

Complete each saying below. Then place the words from those blanks in the correct order to complete Proverbs 23:4.

1. When the going gets tough, the tough _____ going.
2. People who live in glass houses should _____ throw stones.
3. If the shoe fits, _____ it.
4. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is _____ to enter the kingdom of God."
5. Good things come _____ those who wait.
6. When in Rome, _____ as the Romans do.
7. Don't wear _____ your welcome.
8. If you want something done right, do it _____ .

Write the unscrambled proverb here:

_____ PROVERBS 23:4

ANSWER ON PAGE 11

Bible Quiz

What was the name of Moses' wife?

- A. Miriam
- B. Jochebed
- C. Zipporah
- D. Leah



Bible Quiz

In the story of the Magi, what word is used to give a sense of Jesus' age when the wise men visited? What does it tell us?

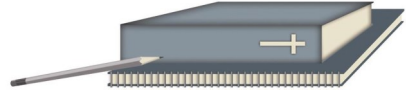
- A. "baby"; Jesus was still a newborn in a manger
- B. "child"; when the wise men visited, Jesus had grown past infancy
- C. "youth"; Jesus was probably between 10 and 14
- D. No word is used to suggest Jesus' age at the time of the wise men's visit.



Answer to Bible Quizzes on Page 11



January & February Sermon Topics



- Jan. 3 – The Best Is Yet To Come (Tracy Gibson)
- Jan. 10 – Bend But Don't Break (Lawrence Snyder)
- Jan. 17 – Prayer – Nothing Less
- Jan. 24 – Prayer – Nothing Greater
- Jan. 31 – TBA
- Feb. 7 – TBA
- Feb. 14 – What Do You Know?
- Feb. 21 – (1st Sunday of Lent) Time to Wake Up
- Feb. 28 – Company Worth Keeping



"This I declare about the Lord: He alone is my refuge, my place of safety; He is my God, and I trust Him." (Psalms 91:2)

Betty Haas, passed away on November 16, 2020, at the age of 94. Betty was the mother of Rickey Ernst and husband, Steve.

Mona Gaines, passed away on November 24, 2020, at the age of 79. Mona was the sister of the late Kirby Cornett and wife, Pat.

Emma Corinne Adamson, passed away on November 27, 2020, at the age of 84. Emma is the grandmother of Emily Myers and husband, Josh.

Marie Young, passed away on November 29, 2020, at the age of 93. Marie leaves behind her daughter, Sharon Nay.

In Memory
of those who
lost their
Lives.



Our prayers and love go out to all their friends and families.

Financial Peace University 2021



Are you looking for a path to financial freedom? Do you want to make changes in the way you handle your money in 2021? If you answer yes to either or both of these questions, then you may want to consider being part of Financial Peace University course at Mt. Nebo UMC. A 9 week course on personal and family finance is designed to help adults of all ages handle their money God's way. The video, discussion-based course outlines baby steps that will lead to a lifetime of financial peace.

Whether you are single or married, a college student, nearing midlife, edging toward retirement or retired on a fixed income, this 9 week course designed by Dave Ramsey will give you the opportunity to study with others as you work your way through the 'baby steps'. If you would like to be part of this 2021 class, please let Brenda Reed know by January 18th, so the materials will be ready for the group. The class will be led by folks who have completed FPU here at Mt. Nebo UMC.

NOTE-Each participating individual or couple will need to purchase the kit that is used during the class (Kits are available at Mt Nebo and the cost is \$95, which includes a reference book and a year's membership to access all materials online.)

A Daily Prayer

Whatever happens today, dear Lord, help us remember that you are present. If we find ourselves in the shadows of disappointment or rejection or pain, let us see your comforting light. If we're in the radiant light of success or acceptance or wholeness, may we acknowledge your providence and grace. Wherever we are, grant us the assurance of your nearness. Amen.



ANSWER FROM PUZZLE ON PAGE 8

Answer: Do not wear yourself out to get rich.
Proverbs 23:4

ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUIZZES ON PAGE 9

Top—C (See Exodus 2:21)
Bottom—B (See Matthew 2:1-12)



Mortgage as
of December

31, 2020:

\$488,479



2021 - A Time to Grow in Relationship to Christ

Are you looking for a daily devotion in 2021? Many of us are looking for readings that are scripture based to use during a personal quiet time. Here are two you might consider:

Upper Room — Mt. Nebo UMC makes available a small book, Upper Room, from Upper Room Publishing in Nashville, TN, that is available on a bi-monthly basis. Each day includes a scripture text, a related story, thought for the day and prayer focus. These devotion books are at the sign-up table in the church narthex. Large print books are also available.

Daily Seedbed Text — The Seedbed Daily Text are scripture readings along with a devotion sent daily either through text messages or email. This daily devotion is made available through Seedbed Publishing, Franklin, TN. To subscribe, please use the following link: www.seedbed.com/daily-text-subscribe.

[Seedbed Daily Text](http://www.seedbed.com) Subscribe to receive the Seedbed Daily Text by JD Walt in your inbox each morning. www.seedbed.com

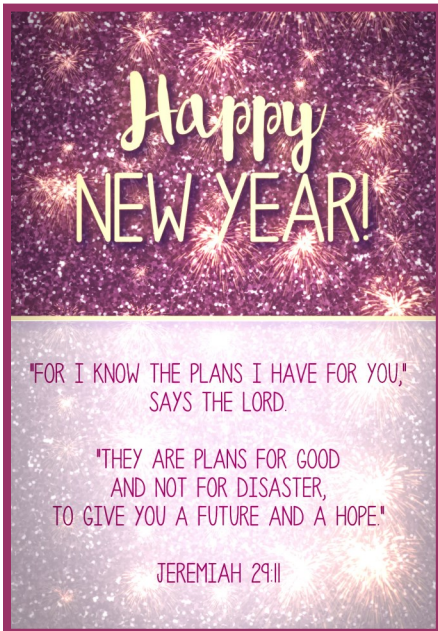
In addition to these resources, you will want to consider a Bible reading plan and/or studying together with a small group here at Mt. Nebo UMC.

Submitted by Brenda Reed



Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church

11693 St. Rt. 774
Bethel, OH 45106
Pastor Mike Starkey
Phone: 937-379-1225
Fax: 937-379-9038



Invite Friends and Family to Worship!

Service Times:

9:00 AM Worship with Band

Service inside and parking lot on 91.1 FM

11:00 AM Worship with Band

Service inside and parking lot on 91.1 FM

*Videos of all services are
offered on our website
www.mtneboumvooh.com
and on our YouTube channel
(Mt. Nebo UMC).*

Our Mission:
To Know Christ and Make Him Known