

DECEMBER

MESSENGER

2025



Wakeman
Congregational
Church

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As we enter Advent—a season of watching and waiting for Christ—I find myself returning to a moment from worship this fall. One Sunday morning, we watched a video of children around the world receiving Operation Christmas Child boxes. Their smiles were wide, their joy unrestrained, their gratitude overflowing. And a quiet thought rose in me:

“We need to learn from them as well.”

That moment planted the seed for this year’s Advent theme: Christ Among Us. This season, we will explore the four Advent themes—Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love—through scripture and through wisdom from different cultures where God’s Spirit is already moving.

Each week pairs scripture with a meaningful word:

- Hope — *Ubuntu* (South Africa): “I am because we are.” Hope grows when we remember we belong to one another.
- Peace — *Bulong & Orasyon* (Philippines): Traditions of whispered prayers and spoken blessings that remind us peace begins gently.
- Joy — *Pachamama* (Peru): A posture of gratitude that turns ordinary life into celebration.
- Love — *Theosis* (Middle Eastern Christianity): The invitation to grow into the likeness of Christ.

We are not replacing our story—only widening our wonder. Advent tells us the good news is for all people, and sometimes those very people become our teachers.

May this season draw us closer to Christ and to our neighbors near and far.

With anticipation,
Pastor Janet



NEWS FROM THE DIACONATE BOARD

The Advent season began on Sunday, November 30. Each Sunday during the month of December a family will read scripture and light an Advent candle during worship service. Advent devotionals are available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. If you would like one mailed to your home, please contact the church office.



Cheer bags will be distributed in mid-December to those who are unable to attend a church service or who may not have family nearby during the holidays. If you know someone who would welcome a cheer bag during this time of year, please call the church office.



A traditional Christmas Eve service will be held on Wednesday, December 24 at 4:00 pm. Both the bell choir and vocal choir will perform as we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior. We will close this evening service with the singing of Silent Night by candlelight. All are welcome.

During this holiday season, and throughout the New Year, share the peace and love of Jesus Christ, that friends, family, and complete strangers may come to know our Savior.

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. ~Matthew 1:23



CHURCH PHOTO DIRECTORY UPDATE

Our new church photo directory will be printed in early December, and will be distributed to members and church friends before the end of the year.

Many thanks to all those who participated in this project. Also, thank you to Joel Ross for all of the time and effort that he put into getting this directory completed for our church family.



*Thank
you*

CELEBRATE

On Sunday, November 9th, Wakeman Congregational Church celebrated a baptism and a dedication of two children in our church family. May God bless their lives with love, peace and wisdom as they begin this journey of faith with their families.



Harrison James Schneider,
son of Joe and Cara Schneider.



Ezekiel Richard Ashley,
son of Richard and Carli Ashley.

CHRISTMAS EVE SPECIAL DONATION

Each year at the Christmas Eve service, the missions committee designates a special place to send our Christmas Eve donation. This year, we have decided to split this donation between the following two organizations:

- The Firelands Local School District student cafeteria fund. This donation will be used by food service workers to pay for lunches for students not having enough money to purchase a meal.
- Reach Our Youth Program. Reach Our Youth (ROY) is a one-to-one mentoring program that matches volunteers with local children in Huron County who need a role model and an extra friend in life. ROY aims to help youth grow into well-adjusted adults who can contribute positively to their community.

Donations to this program help kids in the program by providing fun activities for them to participate in, purchases supplies that the program may need, and some program development.

All Christmas Eve donations will be split between these two organizations, unless otherwise specified.

**If you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday. Isaiah 58:10**



NEW MEMBERS CLASS

Interested in learning more about our faith community or considering membership? Join our upcoming New Members Class as we share our history, values, and visions for the future together.

New Members Classes
Sunday, December 7 & 14
Joining December 21



STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE CAMPAIGN

The Stewardship Committee will continue to accept 2026 financial pledges for the church through the end of the year. We want to thank everyone that has already turned in their pledge card for next year's general-operating fund. We appreciate all of our members, as you continue to practice generosity and stewardship by investing in our church's mission and ministries.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked. Luke 12:48

ANNUAL REPORTS AND ANNUAL MEETING

The annual meeting for the Wakeman Congregational Church is scheduled for after the worship service on Sunday, January 25, 2026.

The meeting will include board and committee reports, next year's budget, 2025 financial information, and the list of candidates for the 2026 church officers and committee members.

Members will receive a copy of the annual report in the mail during the second week of January. Because of this short time-line, annual reports are due to Olivia no later than January 6, 2026. (She would really appreciate them sooner, if possible.)

Thank you for getting your reports completed in a timely manner, and for attending the 2026 annual meeting.



DECEMBER COUNCIL MEETING

The Wakeman Congregational Church Council will meet on Monday, December 15th at 7:00 in the outreach building. The 2026 church budget will be discussed and voted on at this meeting, so please be sure to have someone from your board or committee there to represent you.

Council meetings are open to all members. You are welcomed, and encouraged, to attend these meetings.

TREASURE'S MONTHLY SNAPSHOT

10/31/2025

Oct	General Operating Income		\$7,511.32
Oct	General Operating Expense		\$ 10,838.40
			<u>-\$3,327.08</u>
Year to Date GO Income		\$100,374.67	
Year to Date GO Expense		\$103,548.34	
		<u>-\$3,173.67</u>	
Budget Year to Date			\$106,541.67
Budget Items Spent Year-to-Date			\$104,057.78
		<u></u>	<u>\$2,483.89</u>
	Under	Budget	

Ken Green, Treasurer

Year to Date General Operating expenses now exceed income by \$3,173.67.

This is a great time to catch up on our pledges!



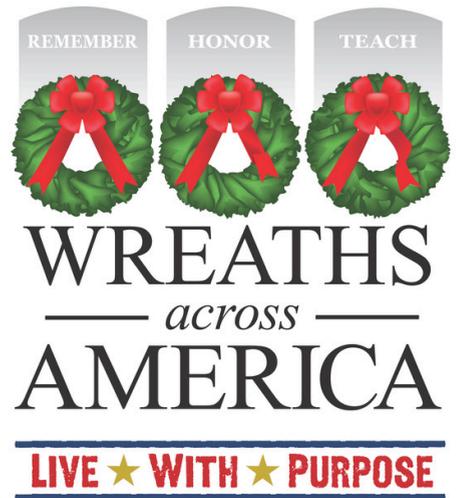
HOLIDAY MUSIC



Our church has traditionally been filled with music for the holidays, and we invite you to be a part of it! If you are interested in singing in the choir or playing the handbells, or even participating with any other musical instrument, please see, call, or text Keely Krumwiede (440)653-3017. We will be starting practices soon, and we have a spot for anyone interested!

WREATHS ACROSS AMERICA

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 13, 2025. Join the more than two million volunteers and supporters who will gather to Teach, Honor and Respect our veterans at more than 5,200 participating locations in all 50 states, at sea and abroad.



Teach: Invite your friends, family, coworkers and organizations to join us as we strive to honor every veteran.

Honor: Volunteer with us as we meet to honor our veterans at 10:00 on December 13th at the Wakeman Township Cemetery on Route 303. After this short ceremony, volunteers will place wreaths on veteran's graves at seven cemeteries in the Wakeman, Collins and Clarksfield areas.

Respect: Sponsor a local veteran's wreath by contributing \$17 per wreath. Wreaths can be purchased by mailing a check to Wreaths Across America, Diane Garner, 6715 Townline Road 162, Wakeman, OH 44889. You can also order wreaths for local use at the Willow Brooks Farms site by scanning this QR code:



CLOTHING CLOSET DATES

December

December 6th 9 to noon
December 11th 5:30-7:30
December 16th 9 to noon
December 20th 9 to noon
December 25th CLOSED



January

January 3rd 9 to noon
January 8th 5:30-7:30
January 17th 9 to noon
January 22nd 5:30-7:30
January 27th 9 to noon

February

February 7th 9 to noon
February 12th 5:30-7:30
February 21st 9 to noon
February 24th 9 to noon
February 26th 5:30-7:30

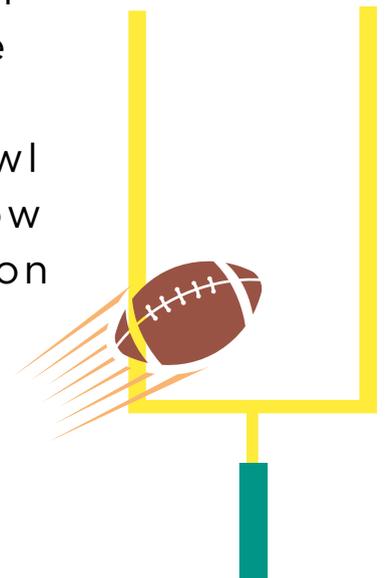
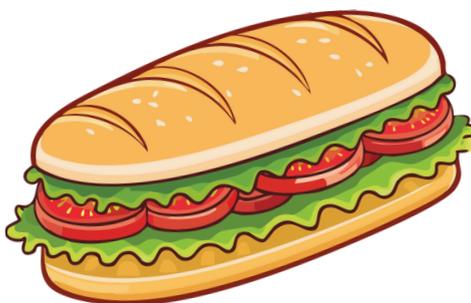


SAVE THE DATE FOR SUPER BOWL SUBS!

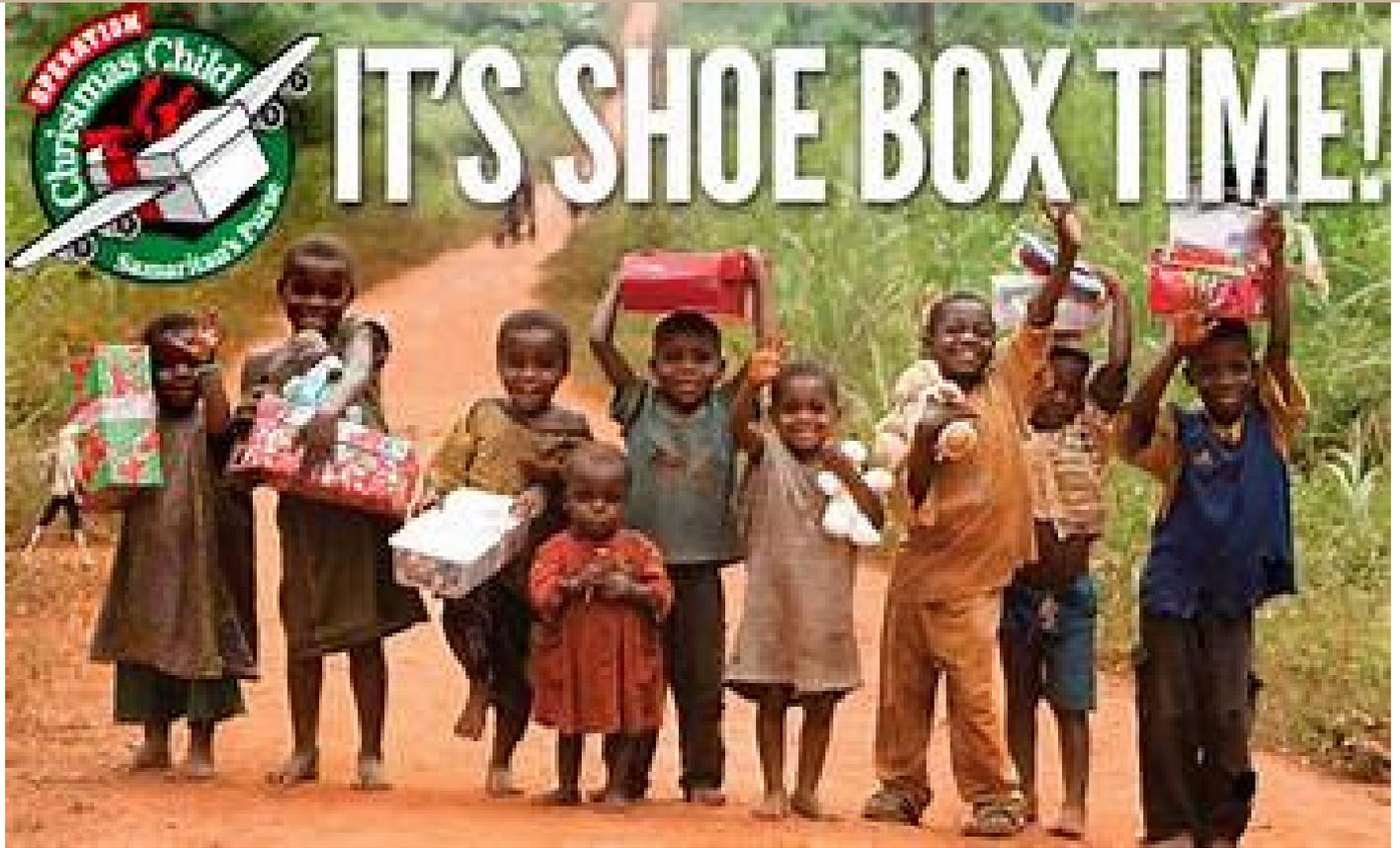
FEBRUARY

8

Keely will be working with our church youth to make subs to sell on Sunday, February 8th for Super Bowl LX. Mark your calendars now so that you don't miss out on this annual youth event!



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD SHOEBOXES



The Missions committee is delighted to share the success of our church's participation in this year's Operation Christmas Child ministry! Thanks to your generosity, we collected 5 shoeboxes packed locally and we ordered 67 boxes online, making this year's total giving of 72 boxes. This wonderful achievement greatly exceeded the goal that we had set for our church!



Thank you to everyone who took this opportunity to put their faith into action by packing a shoebox or by ordering one online. Please continue to cover this mission in prayer by asking God for the boxes to reach just the right children this Christmas Season. Also, pray that shoebox recipients participate in "The Greatest Journey" discipleship program that will be shared by local churches.



If you missed ordering a shoebox this year, it's not too late. You can still order one online by scanning this QR code:

Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it. Proverbs 22:6

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY



On Sunday, February 1, 2026, Pastor Janet and the members of Wakeman Congregational Church will have the honor of confirming four new members into full membership of our church family.

Isaac Dalton, Lucas Dalton, Adah Thomas and Nathan Winkler have been studying under the teaching of Pastor Janet to prepare for this special public event. During this religious rite, these four young people will affirm their commitment to their faith and to the Wakeman Congregational Church.

Please plan to join us for this very special Sunday Worship.

And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 1:13

FASTFOWARD TO FEBURARY 15, 2026

Back about forty years ago, our church held an annual social event called the "Birthday Dinner." This dinner was a potluck meal that was held in Pilgrim Hall. To prepare for the event, twelve church members had each set up a table with decorations for a specific month. The table included a tablecloth, napkins and other decorations themed to match a holiday or special event celebrated during that month.

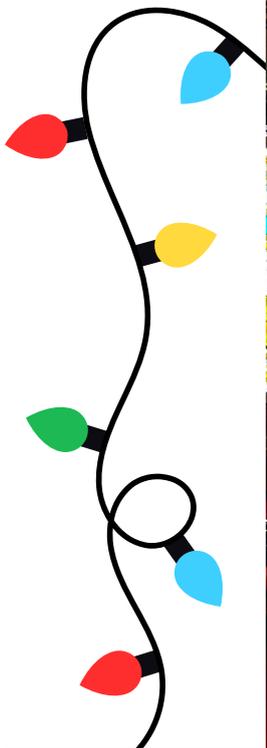
The decorations were festive, but the really fun thing about the event was that after filling your plate with delicious food, you sat at the table with your birth month. Each year, you might sit with people from past birthday dinners, but there was always someone new at your table. It was a fun way to socialize with different people.

Fast forward to a Saturday in February 2026... We are planning an ecumenical Birthday Dinner with St. Mary's Church members. The potluck dinner will be held at noon in Pilgrim Hall in the basement of the Wakeman Congregational Church. After the meal, we will pull out various board and card games to play together.

Things to do:

- Volunteer to decorate a table
- Come and join us at 12 noon for the potluck and games to follow. Bring a dish to share, and some of your favorite games. We hope to see you there to enjoy the fun!

HANGING OF THE GREENS



Our church family joyfully came together to decorate for Christmas, filling the sanctuary with lights, greenery, and the spirit of the season.

Laughter, teamwork, and plenty of holiday cheer made the work feel more like fellowship as we prepared our space to celebrate the birth of Christ.

COOKIE DECORATING



Decorating
Christmas
Gingerbread Men
Cookies.



Gingerbread Men ready
for the Cookies By the
Pound sale.

Kathy baked seven
batches of Christmas
sugar cookies. (She
didn't count them, but
that's a lot of cookies!)





Alice shared her skills and cookie decorating kit with the group.



The Pearls of Wisdom group enjoyed decorating cookies at their last event.



CHURCH LIFT

Sunday, November 9th was a very special day for Wakeman Congregational Church members. After months of anticipation and waiting, we were finally able to return to our church sanctuary for our Sunday worship service!

Before returning to the church, several cleaning crews worked to clean up the dust that accumulated in the Sanctuary during construction. Also, a representative from the construction company gave a demonstration on how to properly use the new lift. It is such a blessing to know that our church is now truly accessible to all people. Thanks be to God for helping to make this “Lifting Up to the Lord” project a reality.





When you enter the new double doors you will see our old side entrance to the right and the new lift to the left.



A glimpse inside of the lift.



CHILDREN'S CHRISTMAS PROGRAM

Join us on Sunday, December 21st during worship to watch the youth of our church tell the story of Jesus birth in the play "**Whose Birthday is it Anyway?**" by Phyllis Maclay.

With charming characters and a message that speaks to all ages, this play invites us to step back from the busyness of the season and refocus on faith, love, and the greatest gift ever given.



We will be rehearsing during Sunday School time (10:15 to 11:00) on December 7th and 14th. Our final rehearsal will be at 9am on December 21st.

All children are invited to participate!



SALVATION ARMY BELL RINGERS

The Salvation Army Red Kettle campaign continues every Friday evening and all day Saturday at the Wakeman Dollar General Store through December 20th. Volunteers will also be ringing in front of Key Bank on December 19th and 20th. We hope that you get the chance to donate to this worthy local charity sometime during the Christmas Season.

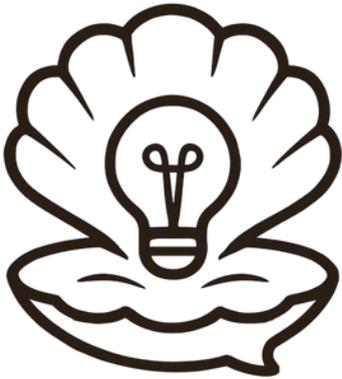


Doing the Most Good

PEARLS OF WISDOM



Wednesday, December 10 11-12:30



Join us for a White Elephant Gift Exchange Party—bring a wrapped, quirky, funny, or gently used treasure from home and enjoy a playful gift-swapping game filled with laughter, surprises, and fellowship. No shopping needed—just a sense of humor and holiday cheer!

CHRISTMAS IN THE VILLAGE

Cookies by the Pound & Holiday Mini Mall Saturday, December 6 Outreach Center



**Cookie Sale
9am-Noon**

**Mini Mall*
10am-2pm**

*Mini Mall

- Limit two gifts per child
- Kids 0-14 years old
- Volunteers will help kids select and wrap gifts