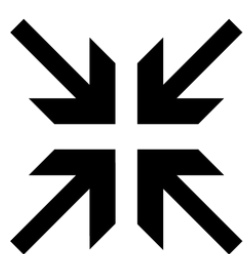


March

Messenger

2026



**Wakeman
Congregational
Church**

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

As we move into the sacred season of Lent, we find ourselves invited once again to walk closely with Jesus.

Lent is not simply a march toward the cross; it is a journey of the heart. It is a time to slow our pace, to listen more deeply, to notice where Christ is already present in our daily lives. We follow him through the wilderness, through the teachings, through the healings, through the quiet moments of prayer — and in doing so, we often discover that he is gently leading us somewhere new.

This season always raises an important question for us as disciples: How is God at work around me... and how am I being invited to join in?

With that question in mind, I am excited to offer a 12- week Bible study gathering on Wednesday evenings beginning March 18 and continuing through June 3 titled:

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God by Henry Blackaby

I have led this study in previous congregations, and without exception, it has been life-changing for those who participated. Truly. Participants consistently discovered new ways of recognizing God's voice, discerning God's activity, and responding with courage and trust.

This is not a surface-level study. It invites real spiritual reflection and daily attentiveness to God's presence.

Because of its depth, I want to be transparent about the commitment involved. The study includes approximately **45 minutes of daily reflection, five days a week**, along with our weekly gathering for discussion and video teaching. We will offer this study in a **hybrid format — both in person and via Zoom** — for those who would like to participate but are unable to attend weekly gatherings at the church. There is no pressure or expectation — only an open invitation.

But if you are sensing a desire to deepen your walk with Christ...

If you are longing to become more attentive to God's movement in your life... If you are ready to explore what it might mean not only to know God's will, but to live it...

Then I encourage you to prayerfully consider joining us.

Lent is a season of drawing near. Easter is the celebration of new life. My hope is that, together, we might experience both — walking closely with Jesus, and discovering just how fully He is walking with us.

Grace and peace,

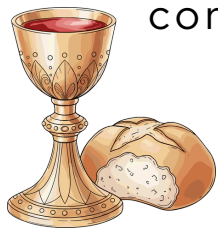
Pastor Janet

NEWS FROM THE DIACONATE BOARD

As you are reading this edition of The Messenger, the Lenten season will have begun. This year, Lent, a special period of reflection, fasting and prayer, began on Ash Wednesday, February 18 and ends on Maudy Thursday, April 2.

Christians around the world still take the 40 days preceding Easter to fast and prepare for the celebration of Jesus's resurrection on Easter Sunday.

During the Lenten season, family devotionals will be available on the table at the back of the sanctuary. If you would like a devotional mailed to you, please contact the church office at 440-839-2316.



Communion will be served on Palm Sunday, March 29 during worship service.

Our congregation will join St. Mary's Church for the Stations of the Cross Walk on Good Friday, April 3. The walk will begin at 12:00 noon at St. Mary's Church.

On Sunday morning, April 5 at 7:30 am, the congregation will gather at the cross on the northeast corner of the church property for Sunrise Service. Communion will be shared. After the Sunrise Service, a potluck breakfast will be served in the basement of the church followed by Easter service at 10:00 am in the church sanctuary. You are welcome to bring flowers of your choice to the Sunrise Service or to the 10:00 am service in the church sanctuary.

At the Annual Meeting held on Sunday, February 15, two new members were approved by the congregation to join the Diaconate Board Committee. Welcome Bruce Leimbach and Gina Van Dootingh!

We welcome each of you to join us not just during this Lenten season but every Sunday, to worship and praise our Lord and Savior.

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this? ~ John 11:25-26

Palm Sunday

March 29 worship includes readings led by members of the congregation of Jesus' last week.



Maundy Thursday

April 2nd take time on your own to to pray, reflecting on the Last Supper.

Good Friday Cross Walk

Gather April 3 at 12pm at St. Marys Church.



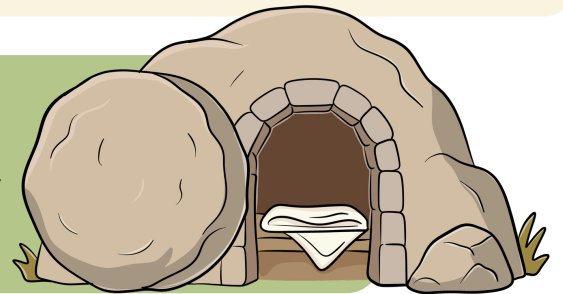
Sunrise Service

April 5th at 7:30am. Meet at the cross on the northeast corner of the property. You may bring flowers to show your devotion. Stay for a breakfast potluck following sunrise service.



Easter Service

April 5th at 10am in the Sanctuary



BIBLE STUDY

Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God

Pray and consider if this powerful 12-week study is right for you.

Offered in a hybrid format (zoom and in-person).

Sign up at the church or send an email to

pastor.wakemanchurch@gmail.com or call/text Pastor Janet 330-605-7417.

Starting **Wednesday, March 18.**

The participants will determine the best time for gathering.

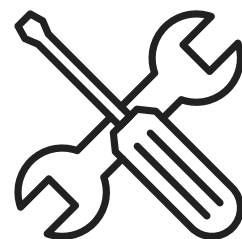


TRUSTEES NEWS

- The trustees want to thank an anonymous donor for the recent donation of a new, self-propelled snowblower to the church. This new machine will make it easier for church members to remove snow from the church sidewalks and paths.



- Renovations to the outreach center continue with electrical and eave repair on the outside of the building. They have also contracted with Norwalk Heating to replace the two furnaces, and add an air conditioning unit in the outreach center.
- Dale Layport continues to touch up and repair things in the church building and outside facilities. He has also been completing some much-needed cleaning.



NEW SING! HYMNAL

I hope you have enjoyed singing hymns from the SING! Hymnal as much as I have! Keely Krumwiede first introduced it to us following the worship conference we attended in September, and it has been a joy to begin incorporating these songs into our life together.



Our beloved sister, **Paula Koester**, was a wonderful singer who deeply loved lifting her voice in praise to her Lord. In loving memory of Paula's life and faith, her husband, **Neil Koester**, has graciously gifted our church a full set of SING! Hymnals for the congregation.

We will begin using them together on Easter Sunday — a fitting day to raise our voices in resurrection joy and gratitude for this meaningful gift.

COMPASSION SUNDAY

This year, Compassion International is celebrating Compassion Sunday on April 26th as a special day to step out in faith for vulnerable children.

The Missions committee would like to encourage members of our church family to consider sponsoring a child through Compassion.

- **Compassion is Christ-centered.** They boldly proclaim their faith and their belief in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior. For children to overcome poverty in all its forms, they must encounter the hope of the Gospel.
- **Compassion is church-driven.** They partner exclusively with local churches, ensuring each child is welcomed into a faith community that knows them by name, cares for their needs and champions their victory over poverty.
- **Compassion is child-focused.** They connect one child to one sponsor so each child is uniquely loved and supported. Whether a child faces hunger, sickness or loneliness, sponsorship enables their local church to provide meals, tutoring, medical care or even a comforting hug on a hard day.

Many of our church members already sponsor a child through Compassion, and they know how one person's faith and compassion can transform a child's life. Consider the impact that you could make if you would take that same step of faith!

For more information, talk to a member of the Missions committee or get more information online at www.compassion.com.

One Act of **Faith** Can Change a Life



CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE

Dear Wakeman Friends,

May the wonders of His love fill your hearts with joy this Christmas and throughout the year. Here's my 2025 gift to help with your many ministries sharing God's love, as I see in your awesomely wonderful newsletter! As I approach becoming 90 in January, I'm thankful for my many blessings, including the years 1990-97 as your Pastor.

Grace & Peace, Jeffery Atwater

Dear Members,

Thank you so much for your recent donation to Wakeman Caring Community. With your continual help, we are able to serve those in need in our community. Thanks again for helping us to "help others."

Nancy Wallace, Caring Community Board Member



Craciun Fericit! Merry Christmas! From our family and small team here in Romania! Thank you for your hospitality, praying for us and supporting us to live here and do this ministry. It means a lot to us, we need it, and we don't thank you enough! Merry Christmas! David Lee

Operation Christmas Child

Dear Janet & Wakeman Congregational Church,

In the Firelands Area, the number of shoeboxes donated for Operation Christmas Child this year was 5,746! What a wonderful joy, having so many people so lovingly want to share their love of Jesus.

I pray that as the children open their boxes, they will feel both the love from the people who packed the shoeboxes, as well as the love of our wonderful Lord Jesus.

Janet, I want to thank you and your church for all of the hard work you did in participating in OCC. I hope your hearts were warmed as you packed the shoeboxes and prayed for the children receiving those boxes. Continue to pray for these children, that they will come to know the love of Jesus and want to accept Him as their Lord and Savior.

Have a wonderful Christmas! Bobette Nemire

****A note from the Missions Committee:** Wakeman Congregational Church members contributed 82 of these boxes packed in the Firelands Area! Thank you for supporting this annual world-wide mission project.

Thank you for all the kindness you bring to the world. Your surprise box and directory was a wonderful gift. May all that follows bring special joy to all that made it. God Bless All!



Caroline (Green) Bechstein 93 years old!

Church Friends, Thanks so much for the goodie bag that was delivered to our front door. It's so nice to be remembered. We needed it this year! Enjoyed the card also - I love Christmas cards. Have a great 2026!

Marge & Paul Brookover



Thank you for the cheer box and the church directory. I remember doing them years ago, when I would deliver them. I'm sure that the Christmas programs were great. It's always good to see the young group get involved with church activities.

It was good to get birthday cards and Christmas cards from the church family. Tell them all that I said hello and thanks.

May God be with you, and keep you safe.



Love, Ginny Grady

CHURCH CORRESPONDENCE CONT.

The Firelands Board of Education greatly appreciates your donation of \$522.50 towards unpaid school lunch accounts in our Food Service Department. Please extend our gratitude to your congregation and all who were able to donate. Your generosity has helped many families in need! Your donation was formally accepted at the regular meeting of the Firelands Board of Education held on January 12, 2026.



Reach Our Youth

To the Congregation of Wakeman Congregational Church, Thank you for the recent generous donation of \$522.50 to Reach Our Youth (ROY) Inc. in Huron County. Your gift supports our big brother/sister type program that provides guidance and friendship to the local youth through one-to-one mentoring. This contribution will enable ROY to continue to help children reach their full potential. Thank you for thinking of ROY and for this very kind gesture through your generous offerings. I appreciate your continued support of ROY! Gratefully yours, Sarah Nutter, Executive Director



CHURCH COUNCIL MEETING



Church Council will meet Monday, March 16th at 7PM in the outreach center. All are welcome to attend.

THE PARABLE OF THE VINEYARD

We recently discussed the Story of the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-15) in Sunday School. The point of the lesson was: Life's not fair – but God is always loving.

To illustrate this point, we made up two charts, one listing the things that you need to do to care for a puppy during the day and then one for during the night (The puppy sleeps 12 hours at night, and doesn't have any accidents!)

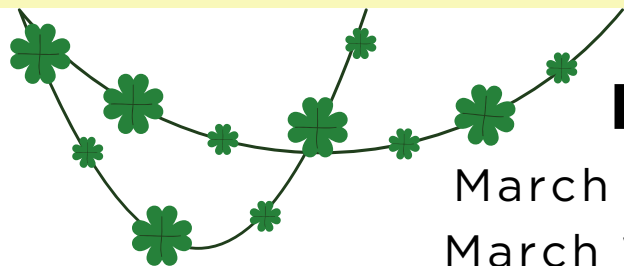
Then I asked them “If I paid the day and night person the same amount for caring for the puppy, which time would you pick? Of course, the point of the activity was for the children to realize that one of them would be doing all of the work, with no extra pay, so they should pick the nighttime.

However, both girls answered, “We'd pick the day time – it would be fun to take care of a puppy!”

What a wonderful life it is, as God's children allow us to see the world with fresh, joyful eyes. Thank you, Julia and Leona Krumwiede for a great lesson!



CLOTHING CLOSET DATES



March

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



April

April 4th 9 to noon
April 9th 5:30-7:30
April 18th 9 to noon
April 23rd 5:30-7:30
April 28th 9 to noon



May

May 2nd 9 to noon
May 14th 5:30-7:30
May 16th 9 to noon
May 26th 9 to noon
May 28th 5:30-7:30

CELEBRATE



We had four new members join the Wakeman Congregational Church in December. We welcome Peter Crosby, Gina VanDootingh, Jessica Draganic, and J.L. Draganic to our membership.



With joy and gratitude, we celebrated our confirmands—Isaac Dalton, Lucas Dalton, Adah Thomas, and Nathan Winkler pictured with Pastor Janet Ross, as they confirmed their faith in Jesus Christ and became full members of our church family.

A joyful day for our church family as we celebrated the baptism of Ben and Brittani Winkler's three sons—Nathan, Matthew, and Ryan—into the love and grace of Jesus Christ.



VBS 2026

SAVE THE DATE

June 22nd - 25th

for our 2026

Vacation

Bible

School!



Tall trees, roaring waterfalls, and...an anteater? Get ready to journey deep into the heart of the jungle!

We're excited to announce that this year's Vacation Bible School, Rainforest Falls VBS, will be hosted at our church **June 22-25 from 9:00am-12:00pm**. Kids will step through the mist into a vibrant rainforest world filled with towering trees, cascading waterfalls, and chattering wildlife as they embark on a meaningful adventure discovering the true nature of God.

More than just an exciting setting, Rainforest Falls VBS invites children to grow deeply rooted in their relationship with God—our Creator, our safe place, and our faithful guide through every season of life. Through engaging daily Bible points, Psalm-based memory verses, and interactive storytelling, kids will experience the wonder and wisdom of God in fresh, faith-building ways.

Rainforest Falls is built around five powerful truths from the book of Psalms. Each day features a Bible story and a fun animal buddy that reinforces the message, helping children understand who God is and why they can trust Him with their lives.

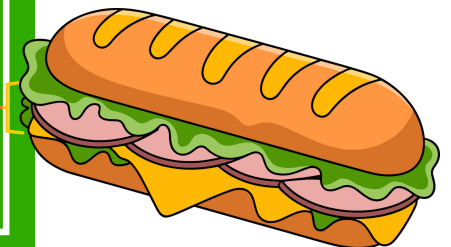
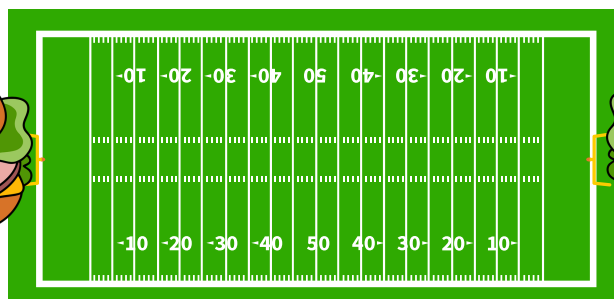
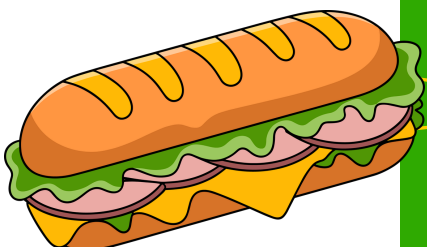
We look forward to an unforgettable week of faith, fun, and rainforest adventure!

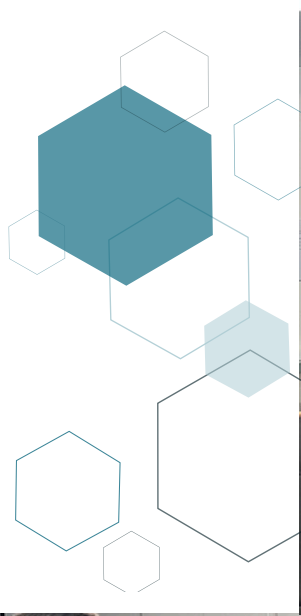
SUPER SUBS

On Super Bowl Sunday, the youth of our church prepared and sold nearly 95 sub sandwiches to church members. This sandwich-making outreach, organized by Keely Krumwiede, brought together many of our young people in a spirit of teamwork and service.

The subs were not only generously sized but also delicious—making them the perfect addition to Super Bowl Sunday celebrations in many homes. More importantly, the event was a wonderful example of our youth putting their faith into action and experiencing the joy of serving others.

Proceeds from the sale will benefit Blessing House in Elyria. This faith-based, non-denominational organization serves as a children's crisis care center, providing residential care for children from birth through age 12 who are experiencing difficult situations. Blessing House offers these children a safe, nurturing environment filled with compassion, stability, and hope during times of crisis.





Serving up smiles and sandwiches!

Our amazing youth spent time in the kitchen preparing fresh subs for our Super Sub Sale. Their hard work and servant hearts are making a difference.

Thank you to everyone who purchased, donated, and prayed over this mission!



BIRTHDAY DINNER



The revival of our church's annual Birthday Potluck Dinner, hosted with our neighbors from St. Mary's Catholic Church, was a fun evening. We each sat at our birthday-month themed table, and enjoyed the fellowship of friends with our same birth month.

After a delicious meal, Pastor Janet organized a group game, where we divided the months of the year into four groups.

Each group made a sculpture out of aluminum foil that matched an event from one of their birthday months. The sculptures included a school bus, Titanic, Statue of Liberty, and Mickey Mouse.

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There were also special prizes for:

Oldest participant - Pat Canfield

Youngest participant - Luke Krumwiede

Closest birthday - Tom Krumwiede

Closest half-birthday - Jen Baldwin

Birthdate with the most people - Leona and Julia Krumwiede

Birthdays shared with a holiday - Phyliss Brucker,

Pattie Eschen, and Joel Ross



It was a night of great food, laughter and fellowship.



SPOT LIGHT ON GINA VANDOOTINGH



Short Bio: I was born and raised in the area. I'm the only girl of five siblings; my four brothers live local. I've always felt extremely blessed that I had grandparents on both sides of my family who were a big part of my life growing up. My Mom grew up in Wakeman so I have been attending the church all my life. I was baptized at the church in March of 1959. I attended Wakeman Elementary School and am a 1977 graduate of Western Reserve High School where I played volleyball,

basketball and was a cheerleader as well as being in Drama club. I played on a traveling softball team in the summer for many years.

I moved to Portsmouth Ohio after high school graduation to attend Shawnee State. I graduated with an associate degree in applied science in Radiology Technology. I stayed there for 13 more years. I had a lot of opportunity at the hospital being able to perform angiography, mammography, CT and MRI exams.

I started working for Siemens Medical as an MRI Application Specialist which took me to Cincinnati, Ohio in 1992. That job opened so many doors for me personally and professionally, opportunities I never imagined. After ten years of traveling and my life consumed tremendously by work and travel, I took a position in MRI Education which was a work from home job.

In 2010 Siemens introduced a new 3D Advanced Visualization software to the Cleveland Clinic Health Systems in Cleveland, Ohio for Radiology & Cardiology. A trainer with a Radiographer background was needed, specifically in MRI. Since colleagues knew I was from northern Ohio originally, they approached me about this position.

No travel and knowing the base software of the product led to an interview. I was offered the position and accepted it which brought me back 'home' in 2011.

After 14 years teaching the software at CCHS, I retired in 2025. I spent 46 years in the profession.

I still like traveling, but love being in my own home too. I like to find something good about everyone I meet. People with positive energy are my favorite.

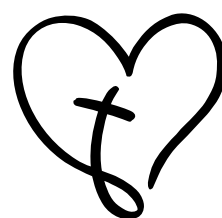
Hardest thing you've ever done: Leaving the comfort of the hospital MRI department and going to work for Siemens Medical as an MRI Application Specialist. Instead of going to work by car, now I was driving to the airport to fly somewhere I'd never been before and to work with people I didn't know. But it was such an opportunity, I never looked back.

Favorite bible verse: Joshua 1:9

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."



Songs at the top of your playlist: I listen to all genres of music based on my mood.



What you do for your spiritual well-being:

Read daily devotions.



Best advice you've gotten:

Have patience, everything will work out.



Occupation you'd pursue if not your current one:

Retired and I love it.

Favorite comfort food:
Hot soup.



Go-to place to pray: Anywhere that is quiet, peaceful.

A detail about you that people would find surprising:

That I twirled baton in my younger years. I marched in many parades throughout the area and I twirled fire baton at the Huron County Fair one year in front of the grandstand.