

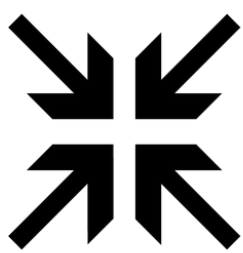
May

&

June



Messenger
2026



Wakeman
Congregational
Church

MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

Dear Friends,

Over these past weeks, the Experiencing God: Knowing and Doing the Will of God study by Henry Blackaby has been quietly shaping my heart—and, I suspect, the hearts of many who have been participating.

One simple but profound truth keeps rising to the surface: God seeks a relationship with us. Not just belief. Not just activity. Relationship.

That shifts everything.

It means that discerning God's will is not first about figuring out the right plan—it's about paying attention to the One who walks with us. The conversations we have, the people we reach out to, the nudges we feel, the opportunities that arise—these are not random. They are invitations to notice where God is already at work and to join in.

In John 15, Jesus speaks of abiding—remaining—in him, like branches connected to a vine. It's a living, ongoing connection. And from that connection, life flows.

For each of us, that relationship may take a different shape right now.

For some, it may be a desire for a closer walk with Jesus.

For others, a renewed rhythm of prayer.

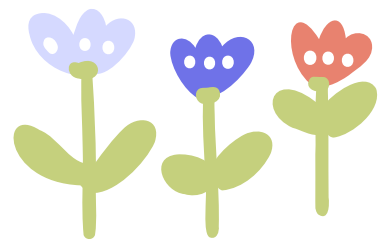
For others still, setting aside time to read and reflect on Scripture.

And for many, it may be expressed through deeper commitment to the life we share here—caring for one another, serving our community, and participating in the ministries of this church.

Wherever you are, the invitation is the same: draw near.

Not to accomplish more. Not to get it all right. But to be with God—and to trust that, in that relationship, you will be gently led.

Grace and peace,
Pastor Janet



NEWS FROM THE DIACONATE BOARD

Easter this year was celebrated with a beautiful sunrise service at the wooden cross located on the northwest corner of the church property. People were then welcomed into the church basement for breakfast, followed by church service at 10:00 am in the sanctuary led by Pastor Janet Ross.

On Sunday, May 10, we will recognize all the women who are present in the church with a small gift to celebrate Mother's Day.



If you know of anyone who is graduating, please contact JoDee Palmer at 216-401-3705. We will recognize our graduates at an upcoming Sunday service.



On Sunday, June 21, we will recognize all the men who are present in the church with a small gift to celebrate Father's Day.

Weather permitting, all church services during the months of June, July and August will be held outdoors in the pavilion.



I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase.

1 Corinthians 3:6-7

CHURCH COUNCIL



The next Church Council meeting is June 15th.
(No May meeting.)



TRUSTEES UPDATE

The Trustees are moving forward with a project to install new flooring in the church basement. The new floor will be a commercial-grade gray vinyl tile, selected for its ability to handle high-traffic areas. This tile also has the added benefit of not requiring waxing, which will simplify upkeep.

Before making a final decision, Trustees consulted with several flooring professionals and reviewed multiple estimates to ensure the best overall value. The installation will be completed by Hill's Interiors in Norwalk, a company experienced in this type of work. Along with the tile, a new vinyl baseboard will be added around each room to help protect the walls.

The project will include Pilgrim Hall, the kitchen, hallways, nursery and the bathrooms. Preparing the current floor for installation and installing the new tile will take about two weeks to complete. Depending on the availability of materials, the floor will be completed by the end of May, or after this summer's Vacation Bible School.

FILL A BOTTLE, HELP CHANGE A LIFE: A CAMPAIGN TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

Abigail Pregnancy Center is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing compassionate support to expecting mothers and families. They offer resources such as prenatal care, parenting classes, and emotional support. The center strives to help families make informed choices for their health and well-being.



Abigail's services are completely free and confidential, and its goal is to empower parents to make informed, healthy choices for themselves and their babies. With the help of this campaign, the Abigail Pregnancy Center will continue to offer free services, while growing its outreach to more families in need. The center remains committed to helping every parent and child feel supported, cared for, and loved.

Abigail's annual Baby Bottle Campaign asks participants to fill a baby bottle with coins. Your spare change could help a new mom receive free testing, allow a new parent to attend a class on infant care, or give a baby access to basic necessities.



Abigail Pregnancy Services

Educate, Encourage, Empower

How You Can Help

- Pick Up a Baby Bottle: Baby bottles will be available in the back of the Sanctuary starting on Mother's Day, Sunday, May 10th.
- Fill the Bottle: You can choose to use change, cash or a check.
- Return the Bottle: Once it's full, drop it off at the back of the Sanctuary. All donations are due by Father's Day, June 21st.
- If you prefer to donate through the church without using a baby bottle, all checks should be made out to Wakeman Congregational Church, with Abigail Pregnancy Center on the memo line.

With a little change, we can help create big change for local families!

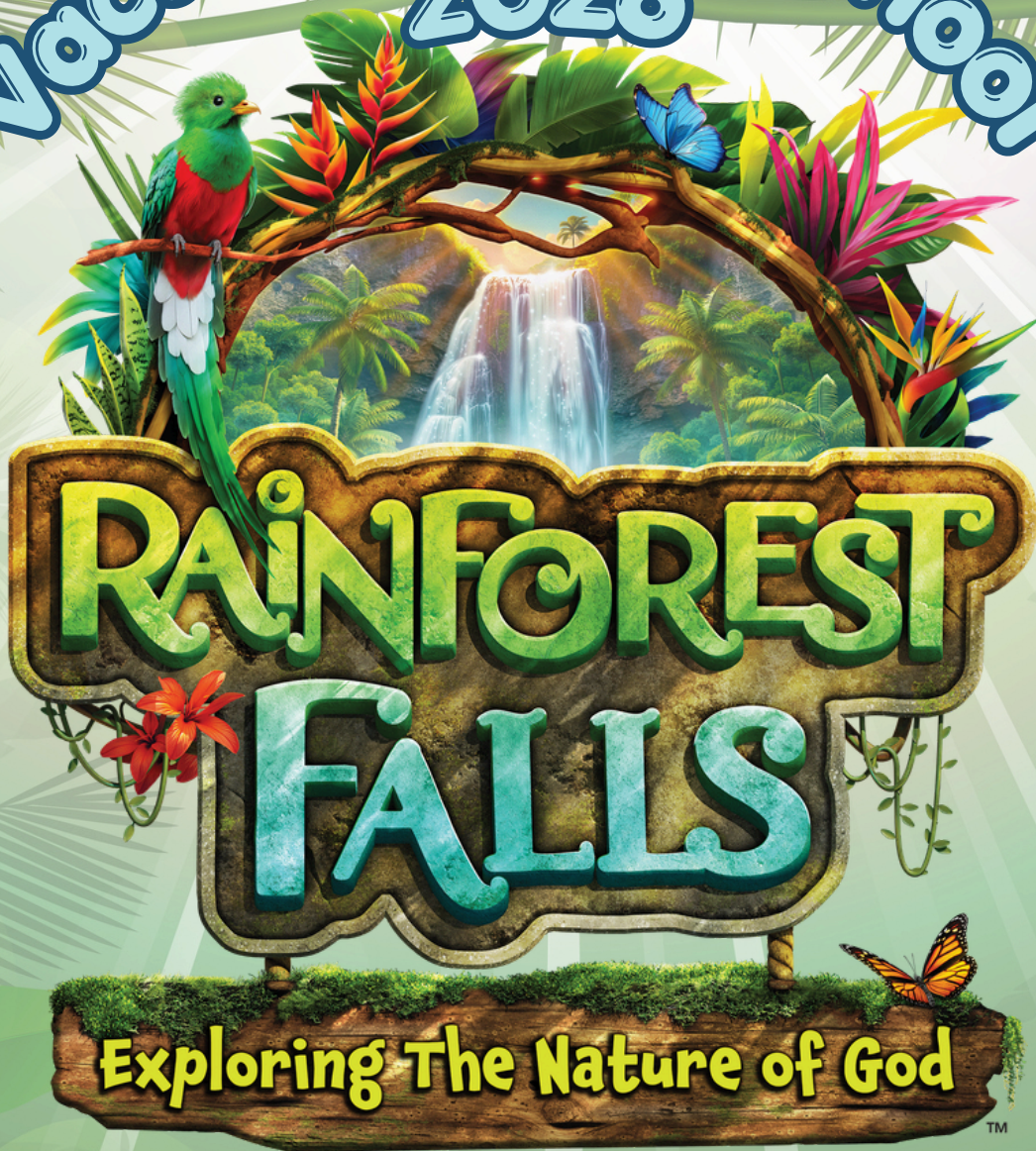


MEMORIAL DAY



On Memorial Day, Monday, May 25th, there will be a community Memorial Day Service starting at 8:00 a.m. The ceremony will be held on the church grounds next to the flagpole, and will include music played by the Western Reserve High School marching band. A free pancake breakfast will be held in the church pavilion following the service.

Vacation Bible School 2026 School



JUNE 22-25

9AM-12PM

**14 ABBOTT ST
WAKEMAN 44889**

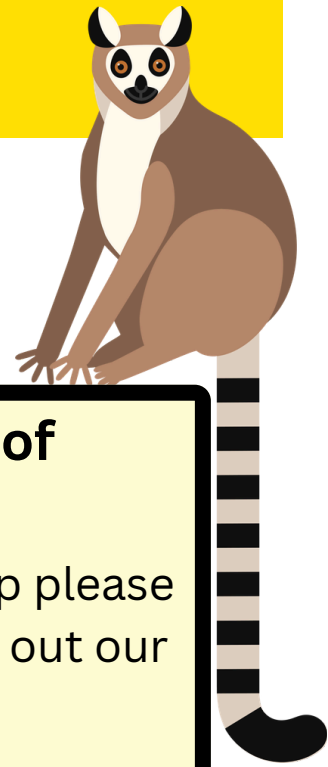
SCAN HERE

 **REGISTER NOW**



**Wakeman
Congregational
Church**

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL RAINFOREST FALLS!



**WE NEED
YOUR HELP**

A red megaphone with a black handle and a red cord, positioned as if it is shouting out the message.

We are in need of volunteers!

If you feel called to help please scan the QR code to fill out our Volunteer Form.

You can also reach out to Olivia in person, by sending an email to wakemanchurch@gmail.com, or calling 440-839-2316

Check out our Volunteer board next to the calendar by the pastors office!



Areas to volunteer:

Prayer
Decorating
Building Sets
Crafts
Recreation
Group guide
Technology/Sound system
and more....



MEMORIES OF OUR CHURCH BASEMENT



There's something special about our church basement. It's where we hear laughter during potlucks, where friendships are formed over folding tables, and where countless moments of fellowship unfold in simple, heartfelt ways.

As we reflect on the life of our church community, we realize that many of our most cherished memories didn't happen in the sanctuary, but downstairs in the kitchen and Pilgrim Hall. The basement has been a space where faith is lived out in everyday moments.



We would love to hear your stories about our church basement. Do you remember helping in the kitchen during a big dinner? Attending youth group gatherings filled with energy and laughter? Participating in holiday events, craft days, or Bible studies?

Whatever your memory may be—big or small—it is part of the story of our church.

We invite all members to share their favorite memories of time spent in our church basement. Please consider writing down your memory and emailing it to Melinda at daltonfarms@hotmail.com. Have any pictures of your memories to share? Please give a copy of your photos to Melinda or text them to 419-541-7528.



CHICKEN BBQ



Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 25th! We're excited to host a Church Chicken Barbecue for the Wakeman community following the Wakeman Fireman's Festival Parade. It's sure to be a great time of food, fellowship, and fun!

As we prepare for this special event, we'll be looking for many volunteers to help make it a success. If you'd like to lend a hand, please contact Melinda Dalton—we'd love your support!



THE LITTLE MERMAID, JR. MUSICAL



Recently, two students from our church performed in Western Reserve's musical, *The Little Mermaid, Jr.* The show featured Isaac Dalton as Flounder and Adah Thomas as the seagull.

The production was a team effort, and two of our church members volunteered to help out behind the scenes. Dan Stober was assistant director of the musical, and helped organize the set and costumes. Theresa Murdock, who was part of the "Under the Sea Seam Team", helped with altering and sewing costumes.

The performance was a success, and was enjoyed by our school community. Congratulations to these students and volunteers!



TREASURE REPORT

TREASURER'S MONTHLY SNAPSHOT 3/31/2026

1st Qtr	General Operating Income		\$60,147.37
1st Qtr	General Operating Expense		<u>\$ 31,216.87</u>
			\$28,930.50
Year to Date GO Income		\$60,147.37	
Year to Date GO Expense		<u>\$31,216.87</u>	
		\$28,930.50	
Budget Year to Date			\$36,217.50
Budget Items Spent Year-to-Date			<u>\$32,070.47</u>
	Under	Budget	\$4,147.03

Ken Green, Treasurer

Notes:

1st Quarter General Operating Income Includes \$45,894.36 in Prepaid Pledges

CLOTHING CLOSET DATES



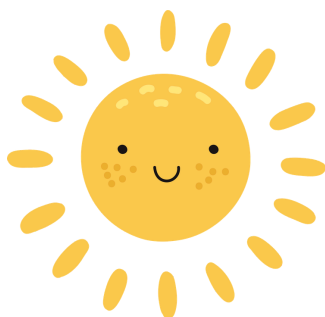
May

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



June

June 6th 9 to noon
 June 11th 5:30-7:30
 June 20th 9 to noon
 June 23rd 9 to noon
 June 25th 5:30-7:30



July

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

FROM HURT TO HOPE: A CHILDREN'S EASTER STORY

When you've fallen down and scraped your knee or elbow, bandages, hugs, and kind words help it feel better. When we get hurt, we need help to heal.

Easter is about something amazing. Jesus was hurt, and it was very sad. His friends thought everything was over, but then, Jesus came back to life. At His resurrection, Jesus showed us that love is stronger than hurt.

People don't just get hurt on the outside - sometimes they feel hurt on the inside, too. Sometimes we feel hurt because someone doesn't treat us right. And that's not okay. But just like Jesus didn't stay in the sad place, we are meant to heal and be safe.

When we plant a seed, we know that it needs water, sunlight, dirt and care to grow. When a seed is first planted, nothing happens, but with care, something new begins to grow.

Hope is like that. When someone is hurting, kindness, love and help are like water and sunshine for the seed. They help new life grow inside. We can help someone who feels hurt by being kind, brave and telling an adult.

Every time that you care for a friend, remember:

- God brings new life.
- We can help others grow by being kind and brave.
- If someone is hurting, we can tell a trusted grown-up so they can be safe.

When we do these things, we are sharing the hope of Easter. We're helping love grow, just like seeds grow.

WOMEN AT RISK

Our congregation donated \$542 to Women At Risk during our recent special Easter donation. The Missions committee is grateful that our membership so generously supported this nonprofit organization that supports men, women and children in crisis.



EASTER HIGHLIGHTS



Twelve members of our congregation joined members of St. Mary's Church for the Good Friday Cross Walk through the Wakeman village.



The Children's Bell Choir performed joyful music to celebrate Easter Sunday.



Piper Murray, along with Sean and Robert Murdock, enjoyed the many delicious foods that were available at the Easter morning potluck brunch.



It was a brisk, chilly morning, but about a dozen children braved the weather to hunt for Easter eggs on the church lawn after the Easter Sunday Service. Piper Murray also treated the younger children to an egg hunt in the church nursery during the Easter Service.

SPOTLIGHT ON JONI LEDINSKY



Short Bio: I grew up in Florida but spent my summers visiting family in Ohio and Pennsylvania. I always preferred the northern scenery and the appeal of four actual seasons compared to Florida's "hot: and "hotter."

After graduating with a pre-med degree, I moved to Cleveland to conduct research on then-incurable liver diseases like hepatitis B. However, I grew frustrated with the way insurance companies and administrators were influencing medical decisions. I decided to change careers, so I went to Cleveland State/Fenn College and earned a degree in manufacturing engineering.

I spent the next 20 years with USG, working in factories that produced ceiling grid and Sheetrock (drywall). Five years ago, I joined UL Solutions, where I now lead a global team of engineers, data scientists, and programmers. I also lead the labels operation - so when you see a UL sticker (usually shiny metallic) on your Christmas lights, extension cord and most electrical or safety products in the U.S. - that came from my team!

These days, I work from my dining room with a great view of the Wakeman countryside. Since my team is spread across the world, all of our meetings are virtual. I really enjoy the variety of the work—no two days are the same—and I love getting to collaborate with people from so many different cultures and backgrounds. I've been very fortunate to travel around the world in this role.

Best advice you've been given: Control what you can control.

Hardest thing you've ever done: Pick up the pieces and find purpose in life again after an unexpected divorce.

Favorite Bible verse: I don't have a favorite, but one Lent I decided to read the Psalms. In the past, they never appealed to me because they seemed too flowery. I was surprised by how much I related to what I read and found them to often be very encouraging and uplifting.

Hobbies: I love spending time outside with my critters, though most of my free time lately is spent doing homework. I'm currently working toward a PhD in Global Leadership from Tiffin University and expect to finish by the end of 2027. I hope to put the degree to use when I retire (not anytime soon) with a volunteer organization such as Mercy Ships.

Favorite food: Anything Asian! Although nothing can beat a bowl of homemade chicken soup.

A detail about you that people would find surprising: I've always had the travel bug, though I'm not sure where it came from. Growing up, my family didn't have much interest in—or the budget for—travel, so our vacations were usually just a week at a local campground.

As a kid, I was an avid reader, captivated by stories of different cultures and desperate to see them for myself. By high school, I found myself befriending the foreign exchange students and eventually decided I wanted to become one too. My parents agreed, provided I could fund the program myself. I spent my time organizing car washes, holding bake sales, and asking local businesses for small donations to make it happen.

I spent a summer in Japan living with a local family. Between the language barrier and the homesickness—back in the days before Skype or email—it was incredibly challenging, but it remains one of the most defining experiences of my life.