



*Church of
the Cross*

CHURCH OF THE CROSS
NEWSLETTER
FEBRUARY 2026

CROSSWINDS

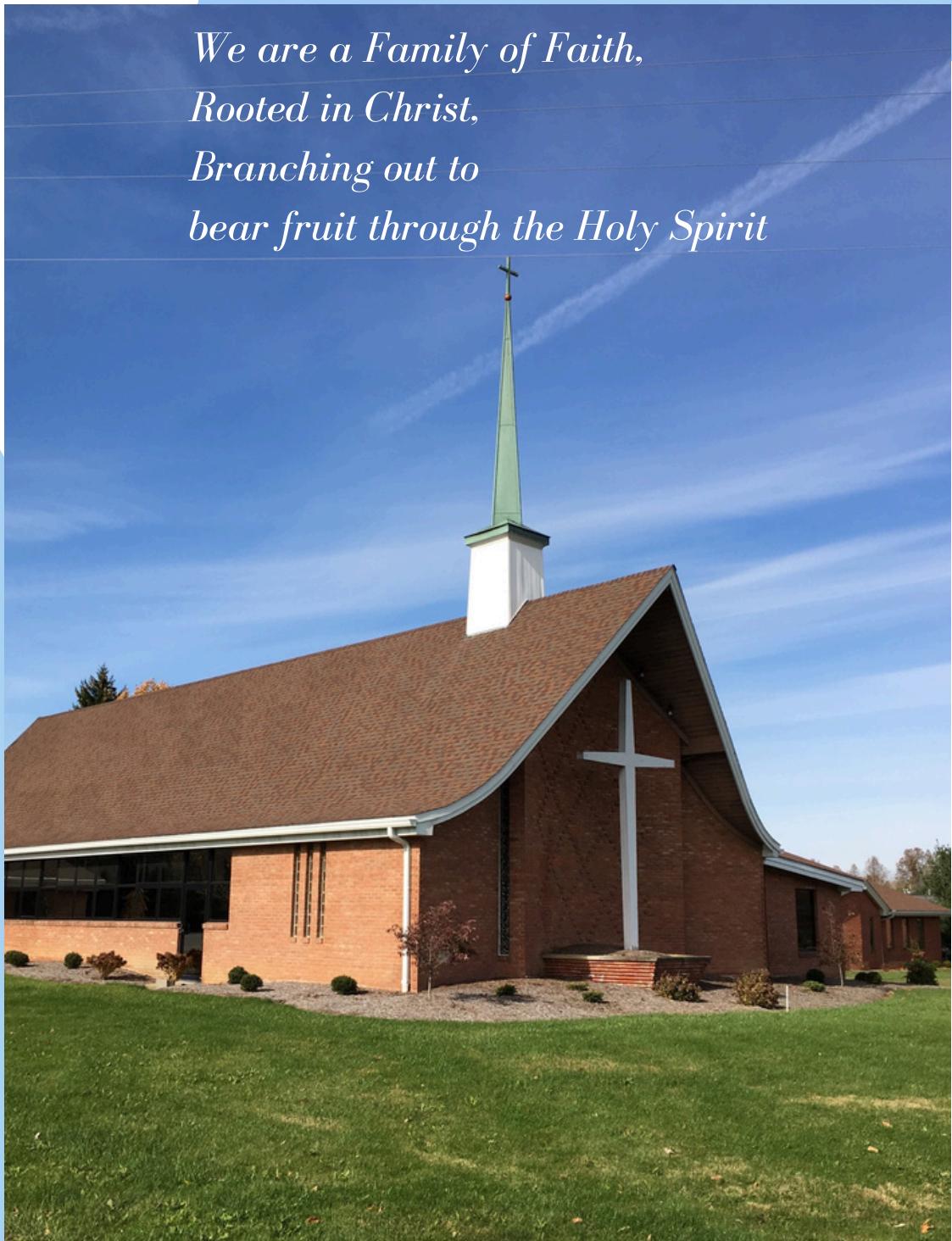
*We are a Family of Faith,
Rooted in Christ,
Branching out to
bear fruit through the Holy Spirit*

5100 Cleveland Road
Wooster, OH 44691

(330)345-6472

cotcumc@gmail.com

www.cotcwooster.com



from the desk of
PASTOR JAMES



Dear Church of the Cross,

We have spent the last several months asking, what makes us healthy? What makes us healthy as individuals? As a church? and as the body of Christ? We explored five different ways to understand health. While all of these are connected within us and influence each other, they can be split to help us focus and work on being healthier.

- 1.) Physically (Physical/body)
- 2.) Mentally (Mental/brain)
- 3.) Emotionally (Emotions/heart)
- 4.) Volitionally (Volition/will)
- 5.) Spiritually (Spiritual/soul)

In Philippians 2:12-13, Paul calls us to obey the Lord and work towards our salvation through fear and trembling. We as Americans, and as humans in general, tend to read this as an individual, you on your own do the work. However, this is a plural “you” in Greek. It would be better to say that Paul is calling us to work out OUR salvation as the body of Christ, in fear and trembling as a community together.

Here Paul is telling us that as we grow in God, as we work to be healthier, as we work to be healthier individuals so that we can be a healthier Body of Christ, we are called to do so together. We are called to work with one another, to support one another, to care for one another. As we look to enter Lent, let us recommit ourselves to work with one another as the Body of Christ as we continue to grow in our relationship with God. Let us continue to be healthier in these 5 aspects so that we can be healthier, better, living sacrifices that live out God’s call in the world. Let us continue to be a healthier community in Christ so that we can transform the world and bring it just a little closer to God’s kingdom.

Blessings,
Pastor James

from the desk of
PASTOR AIMEE



I hope that you all found yourselves staying safe and warm during the snow we had in January. It has been a while since we saw such a big snow and I don't know about you, but our 7-year-old was a huge fan! She and her dad love the snow, so they were really looking forward to it. They had their snow clothes ready before the first flake ever fell and I made sure I had the hot coco and marshmallows on standby for when they were on a play break. To be honest, we actually enjoyed the change of pace. We played games, ate soup that I made and watched it snow all day. We had prepared for the snow so when it came, we were ready. And not just for the "fun" stuff. We had the blankets and candles and extra water (just in case) set aside. The snowblower was ready to go, filled with gas with extra in the can, and we just had things prepared "in case."

But getting ready for even a day long snow got me to thinking....are we as ready to be with Jesus as we are ready for this snow? People were taking that storm pretty seriously. The news talked about it for days and days, the governor declared a state of emergency in preparation for it, the road crews took on extra hours and worked so hard, the line men were ready for power outages, the churches were ready for on-line services, and people stocked up on food and the essentials. Wow! All of that for a 1-day event.

My question is, do we put that much effort in when we are preparing for eternity? When we stop and look at our spiritual lives, are we putting in the time and effort and care it takes to prepare ourselves for our forever home?

Now I realize we cannot go to the grocery store to stock up on the fruits of the spirit or go to the mall to buy the armor of God...if only it were that simple! But, as someone that loves Jesus, I want to do an inventory of my life to make sure that I am being who he has called me to be. Am I spending time soaking up the truth of his Word? Am I loving the Lord and loving my neighbor? Am I living like I believe that God's Word is holy and true? Am I seeking to honor him? To obey him? To put his call before my comfort? To find joy in this journey of faith he has placed me on?

Being a disciple of Jesus takes a willingness to prepare ourselves. To be ready to share the love and hope and truth of the Gospel of Jesus with anyone he sends our way. So my friends, now that the snow (and soon the winter) has passed, I encourage you to find ways to prepare your own heart for a deeper connection with God. Don't be afraid to ask God what areas of your life need some work...I know it feels scary to ask God to do a new thing in us... but remember...he has created us, he has put a new spirit within us, and he will be faithful wherever he leads us. So let's prepare our hearts to enjoy the journey.

Prayer Box



Recently the Covenant Team met and discussed the church's ministries. We discussed the needs of the congregation and the need for prayer. We all have a need for prayer- medical problems, financial needs, family, friend or neighbor situations. When we have this in our lives, it comes with various intensity and sometimes needs immediate help. Others will take a little longer.

All are in need of prayer. Sometimes we wonder if God is listening. Sometimes we ask for the same thing over and over again. The Bible has an answer for us. In Philippians 4: 4-7 it says:

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.

We have started a program with your prayers at the heart. So, do you ever wonder if God is listening? or if He is busy and will catch it later? Now we would like to present a way for you to feel confident that your prayer has been given to God. There is a Prayer Box at the back of the sanctuary with prayer forms next to the box. Fill one out. You can sign your name if you wish. But it is not necessary. The prayers will not be read. Place the prayer in the Prayer Box. Now rejoice, because your prayer is in God's hands and will be prayed for each Sunday.

sermon CORNER

February 1 Pastor Aimee

"One Act of Kindness"

John 4:1-42

February 8 Pastor Aimee

"Do we really want to be free?"

John 5: 1-18 and John 8: 31-47

February 15 Steve and Deb Gilson

February 18 Ash Wednesday

"Are we sheep?"

John 10: 1-21 and Psalm 22 (Selection)

February 22 Pastor James

"Do we walk in the light?"

John 11: 1-16 and John 11: 38-57

Preaching Schedule for
Pastor Aimee and Pastor James

February 1- February 15
Pastor Aimee- SUMC/ COTC
Pastor James- AC/Moreland

February 22- March 8
Pastor Aimee- AC/Moreland
Pastor James- SUMC/ COTC

Meetings

Meetings:

Covenant: February 3

One Board: February 17



Food, Fun & Fellowship:
February 7 and 21

New! OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Aimee's New Office Hours

Sunday: 8:30am-12:30pm (services)

Monday: **10:00am-1:00pm – COTC Office**
2:00pm-5:00pm – Visitations

Tuesday: 10:00am-1:00pm – Smithville Office
2:00pm – 5:00pm – Visitations

Wednesday: 10:00am-1:00pm – Moreland Office
1:30pm-3:30pm – Apple Creek Office

Monday and Tuesday 1-2pm will either be at office hours or visitation depending on need that week

Visitation will be for any and all church members in need (for all four churches). If visiting a nursing home, Pastor Aimee will attempt to visit all church members from all four churches in that nursing home (Depending on if they are awake, able to visit, with nurses/doctors, etc...). could also include private home visits, hospital visits, coffee shops and other third location visits with church members.

Bishop's Visit

On Thursday, March 12th, Bishop Jung plans on visiting our churches.

Here is the TENTATIVE schedule for the visits:

- 8:15 to 9:00 a.m. – James Lance or Aimee Hare pick up the Bishop at his hotel in North Canton
- 9:00 to 9:15 a.m. - visit & pray at Apple Creek UMC
- 9:15 to 9:30 a.m. - travel to Moreland UMC
- 9:30 to 9:45 a.m. - visit & pray at Moreland UMC
- 9:45 to 10:15 a.m. - travel to Wooster: Church of the
- **10:15 to 10:30 a.m. - visit & pray at COTC UMC**
- 10:30 - 10:45 a.m. - travel to Smithville UMC
- 10:45 to 11:30 a.m. - conversation, visit and pray with all 4 churches (Apple Creek, Moreland, COTC and Smithville)

Please be sure to invite your church leadership & as many from the congregation to attend your scheduled time.

- We want to get this schedule to you now, so that each church has time to plan & invite folks to join.
- As you & your congregation prepare for the visit, please plan to respond to the following questions posed by Bishop Jung:

1. Do they have faith?
2. Do they have fire?
3. Do they have fruit?



**Offering for the Lent Services
People to People (Wooster) and
Urban Mission Ministries (Steubenville)**

People to People (Wooster)

People to People Ministries is an Emergency Needs Ministry and is available to residents of Wayne County when there is no place to turn. It was established in 1978 by the Wayne County Ministerial Association and a few caring community citizens to help families facing emergencies. The Ministry believes each person in our society has the need for adequate food, shelter and clothing. The Ministry also believes in any society a number of individuals will experience a crisis during their lifetime in which they are unable to obtain these life essentials. The purpose of People to People is to provide an immediate, realistic and compassionate response to people with these basic needs when the needs are not being met through any other programs.

People to People is a nonprofit ministry supported by donations from churches, civic organizations, private donations and the Wayne County Foundation and does not solicit government funds.

People to People is open Monday to Friday - various hours.

Services provided:

- **Food** – 3 day emergency supply of groceries every 30 days
- **Clothing** - 5 times per year or in an emergency + Back to School program
- **Household items** + blankets, sheets etc. 1 x per year
- **Financial assistance** with rent or security deposits, disconnection of utilities, prescriptions per personal situation
-

As former Director, Joe Szeker has stated - " We strive to bring the love of JESUS to our community and serve our fellow residents with dignity and respect, and to help people to understand GOD created all of us for a PURPOSE, and encouraging them to overcome the adversities life can sometime bring."

Urban Mission Ministries (Steubenville)

Urban Mission Ministries serves as a catalyst for transformation in our community by reimagining what a faith-based social service organization can be. We envision neighborhoods filled with abundance, purpose, and possibility. Grounded in relationships built on trust, love, and belonging, our ministries create spaces where people can experience healing, restoration, and genuine transformation within a supportive community.

Our current ministries include:

- **Fresh Market Food Pantry**, open five days a week
- **Urban Thrift & Opportunity Center**
- **Mission Rejoice** (worship + hot meals)
- **Unity Kitchen Hot Meal Service**
- **Clothing vouchers & hygiene kits**
- **Minority Health Month services**, including free mammograms and prostate screenings

We believe communities are only as strong as their most vulnerable members. Access to nutritious food helps build a healthier and more resilient community, while the Urban Thrift Center gives new life to donated items through reuse and repurposing, provides training and employment opportunities, and offers neighbors a Fresh Start. Together, our ministries create a welcoming "third space" where people can encounter God's love—not only through worship and Bible study, but also through shared community life.



UMC Lenten Rotation Schedule 2026

Sunday Services- 4pm

Date	Host	Preaching	Scripture
Feb 22	Church of the Cross UMC 5100 Cleveland RD Wooster, OH 44691	Rev. Brian Sheetz	Preachers Choice
March 1	Moreland UMC 138 Moreland Rd, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor John Finn	How David and Jesus Dealt with Conflict? 1 Samuel 17 John 18: 1-14
March 8	Smithville UMC 243 N Milton St, Smithville OH, 44677	Pastor David Rittgers	"How David and Jesus view the Temple" 2 Samuel 7: 1-17 John 2: 13-25
March 15	New Pittsburg UMC 9670 Ashland Rd, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor Aimee Hare	"How do we treat those who betray us?" 1 Samuel 24: 1-7 Mark 14: 1-31
March 22	Oak Chapel UMC 4203 W Old Lincoln Way, Wooster, OH 44691	Pastor James Lance	Last words of David and Jesus 2 Samuel 23: 1-7 Luke 23: 26-46
March 29	Wooster UMC 243 N Market St, Wooster OH, 44691	Rev. Kimberly Arbaugh	Preachers Choice
April 3 Friday 7pm	Oak Chapel UMC 4203 W Old Lincoln Way, Wooster, OH 44691	Good Friday Cantata	Good Friday Cantata

Maturing from Good as King David to being Great as Lord Jesus!

Sermon Series- This year, our four pastors (Pastor John, Pastor David, Pastor Aimee, Pastor James), will be preaching on a shared theme (The guest preachers are invited to preach as they feel called) for the Lenten rotation services. This shared theme will only be for the Lenten rotation services. Each pastor(s), will have their own Lenten plans/sermon series at their church(es).

Our shared theme for the Lenten rotation services this year is Maturing from as Good as David to being as Great as Jesus! We will be looking at four times where we see King David and Lord Jesus in similar scenarios or similar themes and how they responded. We will study their responses and what they teach us, on how to mature, and be greater than we are now. We will work to move from being as Good as King David, to being closer to Great like Lord Jesus.



Ministries at Liberty Preparatory High School

Baccalaureate - Thursday, May 21
Graduation - Thursday, May 28

Trustee Annual Report

Your Trustee team of George Mullet, Steve Carpenter, Beth Lea, Steve Deitrich, Larry Ouwerkerk and Pastor James have been meeting every other month to provide maintenance and plan future requirements for the church and the parsonage. Since the upgrades to the kitchen and a new boiler heating system was installed, last year was a relatively easy year. There were several pot holes in the driveway that were filled and the repair has been holding up well. New speakers were purchased to improve our streaming ministry. There was a work day on July 12th and we spread almost 18 yards of mulch around the church. We thanked the scouts for their assistance. The Kassermans continue to do the mowing and snow removal around the church. A big thank you for their continued support. We use outside sources if we need to apply salt to the parking lot.

More efficient light bulbs have been installed in the church sanctuary, rooms and the offices as necessary. We investigated installing a new digital sign out front. The price tag turned that off. People from Fought Sign came up and cleaned the present sign to improve its visibility. Thank you to them for doing that.

The church continues to be used by outside groups. This is a good ministry for our church.

Dear church family,
Thank you very much for your praying, ringing bells, singing, baking cookies, serving cookies, greeting, loading equipment, braving the snow to drive to the concert, supporting the silent auction and your donating money. The Caring Closet and Benenvolent Fund at West View Healthy Living shared equally in receiving half of the \$4000.00 that was collected because of this concert. Thanks be to God!!

Janet Borton 

For the Trustee budget expenses, we spent about \$16,000 for utilities, \$3700 for various maintenance projects and about \$3000 for our office operation.

For the parsonage we replaced the mower battery, power washed the house to remove mold, dirt and grime, and a parsonage inspection was done in September. A huge tree fell on the property at the back of the parsonage. Trunk was on the neighbor's property, but many branches were on the church property. The trustees cleaned up the mess. Several other minor problems were taken care of. We spent about \$1100 on projects in 2025.

The Trustees are getting to the point where many fixes that could have been done by us must now be done by outside sources. This applies to both the church and the parsonage. This will increase budget expenses as time goes by.

For 2026 we must continue to monitor the condition of the church parking lot, the wet basement issue and the aging air-conditioning unit at the parsonage. These are major cost items that will require action in the future.

Praise the Lord that we have good people in this church doing a great job and are dedicated to this ministry.

Larry Ouwerkerk, Trustee Chair



THANK YOU!

Dear Friends,

Thank you so much for your generous monetary Christmas gift. It is a blessing to serve with you.

Blessings,
Charline Engle

Pastor James, Pastor Aimee, and members of COTC,
Thank you for providing a fantastic breakfast for our students returning from winter break!
We appreciate all the kindness and generosity the church shows Liberty Prep staff and students throughout the year!
Mr. Weisend, Mrs. Rodgers, and staff and students

Dear Church Family.

Thank you so much for the money and variety of gift cards to my favorite stores! I will think of you when I enjoy using them! Thank you also for the gift of your support for the music ministry.

Love,
Janet Borton

Contact us:

Church office: 330-345-6472, cotcumc@gmail.com
Pastor James: jlance12@bu.edu
Pastor Aimee: aimeejohare@gmail.com
Church website: cotcwooster.com

Charline Engle, Administrative Assistant
Janet Borton, Director of Music/ Organist
Rev. Tom Shaw, Shut-in Minister
Teresa Arnold, Custodian

Dear Church Family,

Thank you for the Christmas gift! Your thoughtfulness and kindness speak volumes. It is a joy to be with you in ministry and to visit with the homebound and others. Sometimes a lot of ground gets covered in these visits, other times it's just one or two things on their heart, but either way it is always a blessing to share with them your prayers, your joy, your care and your concern.

Thank you!!

Pastor Tom

Happy Birthday

February

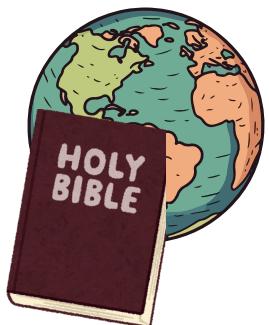
5	Joyce Kreider
8	Jason Dye
	Rebekkah Jolliff
18	Shawn Schartiger
22	Virginia Schubert



Missions

International

TMS Global
CAMO



Local

People to People
Salvation Army
CCHO
Pregnancy Care Center
Wayne United Chaplains

