



# The Wesley News

## Mission Statement

The Strongsville United Methodist Church is committed to building the body of Christ by  
Sharing God's Word,  
Showing God's Love and  
Serving in God's World.

Strongsville United Methodist Church

Strongsvilleumc.org

January 2010

## Grittner Makes Musical Debut

If you attend the 9:25 service here at Strongsville UMC, you are accustomed to seeing one of our high school students, Matt Grittner, on the piano next to Carl, helping lead our singing during worship. You have also seen Matt in the bell choir, helping out on occasion with the 11:05 band, and now singing in the adult choir for the Christmas season as they tackle a particularly demanding selection of music. Additionally, Matt also plays in a youth praise band in the area and is part of numerous musical groups at Strongsville High School, including orchestra, Cantorum, and marching band.

This past December 10<sup>th</sup>, Matt had a very special evening at the high school's annual holiday orchestra concert. During the symphony orchestra segment, Matt debuted his own arrangement of the Carol of the Bells. Furthermore, the evening also marked Matt's debut as a conductor, as he was guest conductor for his own arrangement. The splendid performance of Matt's piece was punctuated by a prolonged standing ovation and a graceful, well-practiced bow during his curtain call. We celebrate with one of our own. Congratulations to you, Matt, from your church family.

## Celebration Sunday

**Thank you** to everyone who supported Celebration Sunday by making a special gift to help reduce the outstanding principal debt of our new church building. By making a one time payment of the \$52,250 received, we will enjoy a savings of over \$120,000 in interest expense over the remaining term of our loan, for a net impact of \$172,250 – another incredible blessing to celebrate!!!

## SAVE THE DATE!

Nationally known trumpet/flugelhorn artist, David Wells, will be performing with his 4 piece band on **Saturday, February 13**, at 8:00 pm here at Strongsville United Methodist Church, for a special "Chocolate Jazz" concert. Heavily influenced by Louis Armstrong, Herb Alpert and the Tijuana Brass, David is a performing/recording artist who performs 200+ shows a year. Make this a night to remember and come see David Wells in concert!

Tickets are \$10 each in advance and \$12 at the door. Tickets are available for purchase between services in the Atrium or by calling 440-238-6135.

## 2010 Worship Team Jam

When: January 23, 2010: 9:00 A.M.-2:30 P.M.  
Place: Strongsville United Methodist Church

The Strongsville UMC 11:05 worship team, is planning a gathering of United Methodist contemporary worship teams to take place on January 23. The purpose of this event is to:

Meet and build community between those with a passion for presenting God's Word in new ways.

Break into groups with a moderator and exchange "how we do it" ideas.

Present workshops or demonstrations on topics such as technical, music, or drama.

Eat! (We are United Methodists you know!)

Worship together with music provided from some of the groups attending.

All are welcome! The cost is \$5 (to cover the meal) with the deadline as January 13. At the door, the cost will be \$8. If you are interested, contact Glenn Michalski.

### Contact Information for the church staff:

Rev. Ronald A. Mowry

[ronm@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:ronm@strongsvilleumc.org)

Pastor Abby Auman

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Jessica Van Lehn, Christian Education Director

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Jeff Herron, Youth Director

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Carl Fernstrum, Contemporary Worship

[carlf@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:carlf@strongsvilleumc.org)

Paula Dragovich, Treasurer

[paulad@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:paulad@strongsvilleumc.org)

Bobbi Vander Sluis, Secretary

[bobbiv@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:bobbiv@strongsvilleumc.org)

Betty Parsons, Pastors' Secretary

[bettyp@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:bettyp@strongsvilleumc.org)

Church Office – (440) 238-6135

Church website: Strongsvilleumc.org

# From the Pastor's Desk

## Light in the Dark

*The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it. John 1:5*



We've just made it through the shortest day and longest night, winter solstice, December 21<sup>st</sup>. For me, December 22<sup>nd</sup> is victory day. It falls right in the middle of the crazy preparation for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. But that particular day, the 22<sup>nd</sup>, gives me uplift because we're moving from darkness towards light.

I decided long ago that I could not live in a climate such as the far northern or southern hemisphere where a part of the year would be in total darkness. I need light. I'm not sure I suffer from light deprivation, but I do know that I like it when days are longer as opposed to shorter.

Oh sure, darkness has its beautiful parts, especially at this time of the year when Christmas lights reflect off of the snow in the darkness. That light pierces through the black and illumines all within its spread. There's something creatively beautiful about that. But I still like the light.

The evangelist, John, in his gospel, writes an introduction in the first 18 verses. Part of that introduction is stated above. John sees Christ as the light which shines in the darkness.

For John, the darkness is a symbol of that which is hostile to God. Darkness is that which would go against God's work and will. Darkness is the pain, evil and ignorance that attack the Word of life. Darkness represents all that is anti God's goodness.

In this darkness, John says, shines a light. That light is the word and power of God made known in Jesus Christ. The presence of Christ brings hope in the midst of darkness. It pierces the night of our souls just as a Christmas light breaks through the bleak winter evening.

As we enter a New Year let us ever be reminded that God's presence in Jesus Christ gives us the encouragement for our tomorrows. Days may seem bleak, nights may seem long, life may seem tedious, yet piercing the darkness is the light of God.

Try as it may, the darkness cannot put out the light. The word of God will not be eliminated. The hope of God's presence can never be snuffed out. We are the beloved and cherished of the Lord. We are God's significant creation. The Almighty looks upon us and gives us light in the darkness.

*Oh Lord, thank you for the light that shines in the winter night. Amen.*

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### Congratulations to

Rich Puzzitiello whose artwork was featured in the Strongsville Town Planner Community Calendar for 2010. He is featured for the month of September in his painting of Strongsville High School Stadium.



### Congratulations to

Mike Border, a student at Mt. Union College, who was recently honored for his Soles4Souls campaign which he coordinated.

As a matter of fact, a picture of him in the Mount Union newspaper also featured Brian Sheets from our congregation donating shoes at a Mount Union football game. Well done Mike. I'm glad that you're continuing to serve the community.

### Men's Bible Study

Rev. Ron will be teaching a short term Bible study for men only. A seven session study based upon Tony Dungy's book, [Dare to Be Uncommon](#). Classes will start on Feb. 4<sup>th</sup> and run on Thursday nights from 7:15 to 8:30. Study will be limited in number. If you would be interested please contact the church office or email Rev. Ron at [ronm@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:ronm@strongsvilleumc.org). Upon registration, Ron will be contacting you with information about obtaining Dungy's book and study guide.

**"Journey of Faith"** will begin a study of the book of Psalms on January 12<sup>th</sup>. Come join us on Tuesday evenings 7:00pm until 8:30pm. For information or to start the journey, contact Connie Border .

# From Pastor Abby's Desk



“And the one who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’” - Rev. 21:5  
“So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!” - 2 Cor. 5:17

New year, new calendar—what else is new? Often January 1 provides the occasion for us to make New Year's resolutions, goals for improving ourselves over the next year.

Quit smoking.

Lose 10 pounds. (I plan on accomplishing that one by mid-January this year!)

Exercise more.

Get a job.

Get published.

What's yours? Are you making any resolutions for improving your spiritual life? It is true that it is God who transforms and renews us, but only to a certain extent without our efforts. A common desire among Christians is an improved prayer life. But our prayer lives only deepen if we actually spend time in prayer! (Just like we only get published if we actually...write.) Many of us mean well, but...life gets busy and before we know it we're waking up the next morning without having prayed again! So you might resolve to try the simple 5x5 rule as something you can stick to: resolve to pray for at least 5 minutes at least 5 days of the week. (This rule applies equally well to beginning regular Bible study.) Or perhaps you might resolve to join the Prayer Warriors for intercessory prayer the 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month, or to take a regular turn praying in the sacristy for our worship services.

Others of us might feel that our interior spiritual lives are proceeding ok, but that we are lacking an action balance to our faith. We could start by volunteering to help with Logos, or take a turn serving on the Lift Jesus Up food bus or at City Mission. There are zillions of opportunities to put our faith into action, but sometimes it's like trying to put our bodies into action (exercising)—we need an excuse to get started. So let the New Year be your excuse, and let Christ transform you.

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## We're Gladly Taking Donations!

The Hospitality and Reception Committee is looking for silver tea and coffee pots which could be donated to the church for use. We have found that at our "teas" the tables look so elegant with the touch of silver and want to let you know where you might donate one you have sitting in a cupboard or closet. It does not have to be part of a full set, but it could be. We have had a couple donated in the past and we are putting them to good use. Please check your cupboards and find it in your heart to make a donation knowing that it will be used! If you have any questions or wish to make a donation, please call Ruth Brickley.

## Needed – Sunday Prayer Warriors

For almost a year now our church has been “prayer conditioned.” During each worship service on Sunday mornings, volunteer prayer warriors are intentionally praying for you, our worship leaders, Sunday school teachers, our congregation (children, youth and adults), concerns of the church, our families and communities, and especially, for the will of God. We hope, as you are regularly bathed in prayer, that you, too, would be inspired to pray for others as well.

Whether you can pray occasionally, once a month or every other month, we invite you to be a blessing to others, by taking a turn to pray silently in the sacristy during the worship service or services of your choice.

Simply provide your name and phone number below, detach this tear off and drop it into the offering plate on Sunday morning. Someone will contact you to answer any questions you might have and help you decide the best time for you. Or, contact the church office by phone at 440-238-6135 or email at [office@strongsvilleumc.org](mailto:office@strongsvilleumc.org).

Thank you for your prayers. And remember, prayer is vital to your own spiritual growth and relationship with God.

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Name (please print)

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

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The next **Grief □ Recovery®** Outreach Program, offered on Wednesday evenings from 7:00-9:00pm, will begin **January 13**. This twelve week program creates a safe environment in which to look at old beliefs about dealing with loss, to look at what other losses have affected your life, and to take new actions which lead to completion of the pain attached to a recent loss, or one that occurred long ago. The program is led by Betty Parsons, who has been trained and certified by The **Grief Recovery®** Institute. For more information or to register, contact Betty at 440-238-6135. Brochures are available on the table outside the worship area.

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## Winter Wonderland Tea

Make a New Year's resolution now to invite a friend and enjoy a warm afternoon at the SUMC Winter Wonderland Tea, Saturday, January 30, 2010, from 2:00-4:00 pm. Tickets are \$15.00. All proceeds for the Strongsville Food Bank and other outreach ministries. For reservations contact Ruth Brickley, or drop off this reservation form at the table in the atrium.



Names(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Please reserve \_\_\_\_\_ tickets for me for the Winter Tea. Please include your guest(s)' names if reserving multiple tickets.

# Christian Education News January 2010



## Winter Semester of LOGOS begins January 7<sup>th</sup>, 2010

God does not want any child or youth to stand alone spiritually. LOGOS provides an in-depth and well rounded experience of a Christian nurture in a loving supportive environment. This important Thursday night ministry is not a substitute for Sunday school; it is a part of the whole Christian Education program at the church.

LOGOS is open to all children/youth in Kindergarten through High School. We meet from 5:30 – 8:30pm at the church and share a family style meal, Bible study, children’s choir practice\*, puppet ministry\*, teen bell choir\*, youth choir\* and playtime.

To learn more about LOGOS or to register your children/youth, please pick up an information sheet in the atrium or call Jessica Van Lehn or Sue Wells. There are many opportunities for adults of all ages to serve in LOGOS. No matter how much time you have to give, we can put you to work. It is not necessary to have a child in LOGOS to serve as an adult volunteer.

\*Children do not need to be involved in LOGOS to take part in these worship skills activities.

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.” Acts 2:42*

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Every 3-4 years the children invade the morning worship service to show their stuff to the congregation through a Christmas program. Those of you who came to church on December 13<sup>th</sup> for the 9:25 service enjoyed our choirs’ performances in The Best Old Fashioned Christmas Pageant Ever. Performances by the Joyful Noise Angels & Rainbow Express were joined by the Commitments and the adult Sanctuary Choir. A big **Thanks** to choir directors Shirley Oltman, Vicki Eicher, & Don Shearer along with accompaniments by Carl Fernstrum & Tammy Haseley. The program was beautiful.

After the 9:25 service, all of the Sunday school children enjoyed a fun birthday party for Jesus, complete with cake, cookies and presents. Thanks to all of those who brought in hats, gloves, socks and school supplies for those in need.

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## SAVE THE DATE!!!!

Our Vacation Bible School will be July 12-16, 2010

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## Historical Society Annual Soup Supper

The Strongsville Historical Society's Annual Soup Supper will be held on Thursday, January 28th, 2010 at 6 PM at the Ehrnfelt Senior Event Center. Reservations are required. Make your reservations by calling Ruth Brickley.. The cost of this event is \$8.00 per person. If you would like to make a pot of soup, just let Ruth know. You do not need to be a member to attend this event. We hope to see you there.

# Thank You

**Thank you** to Bob Berendsen for a donation of a shepherd’s staff to the church for use in pageants.

A special **thank you** to all of our families who participated in lighting the Advent Candles each Sunday during Advent as well as during Christmas Eve services:

- Alan & Cathy Hirt
- Wendell & Betty Ann Ebersole
- Neil, Darlene, Eric & April Turner
- Tom & Carole Fleischer
- Brad, Jenell, Sydnee, Gavin, & Nancy Jones
- Max, Sherry, & Kaitlyn Mendoza
- John, Sharon, Molly & Katie Bennett
- Wesley, Nicole, Paige, Samantha & Nicholas Carlisle
- David Griswold & Joan Martin
- Richard Reese
- Janet Langstone
- Matt, Sue & Ben Koch
- Shelley, Jacob, Sarah, & Stephanie Puntel
- Bill, Audra, Nolan, Paige & Chloe Thompson
- Matt, Lisa, & Kristin Loveless
- Larry, Bev, Elizabeth & Rachel Wynn
- John & Renee McDermott.

**Thank you** to the families who served in the Christmas Eve Nativity scene:  
Tom, Allison & Madelyn Lake  
Stefan, Katie & Vivien Rittenbery.

**Thank you** to Marlene Kraatz for her faithfulness in collating and the weekly bulletins each Friday afternoon.

We gratefully **thank** our friends who folded, tabbed, and labeled our Wesley News and bulk mailing this past month: Sandy Kepke, Donna Dickey, Eileen Bambam, Janet Noss, Tami Chappelle, Carol Conrad, Craig Comstock, Randy and Connie Border.

To all of the SUMC friends and neighbors,  
On behalf of my family and myself I wish to **thank you** for all the cards, wishes and above all, the prayers during my recent condition and hospitalizations. The visits from Rev. Ron and Pastor Abby were received with love and hope -- just what I needed! May you all have a joyous New Year and may God bless you and hold you tight in his arms to let you know He is with you.  
Sincerely,  
Bev Starek and family

To all the participants who brought in their favorite nativity sets for the "Come to the Stable" display, the Worship Committee thanks you for your time and for sharing something very special to you with the rest of SUMC.

We know how exciting this event was to you and we want you to know that the congregation who attended the display thought it was wonderful and they showed their excitement and enthusiasm with so many compliments.

This event was a huge success **thanks to all of you** who participated. Everyone had a great time. Thank you again for sharing with all of us.  
Blessings to all,  
The Worship Committee

Dear Rev. Mowry & SUMC,  
Wishing you all the beauty of the season. **Thanks** for all you do for me.  
June Kelley, Dave & Kathy

## West Side Community House News

You did it again! Each year we seem to give more Christmas gifts to the children than the year before. We delivered 19 large black trash bags full of wonderful games, dolls and other toys, even 4 "Build-a-Bears" this year.

Dawn Kalograf, the person in charge of everything at WSCH, was very grateful. The Christmas party was Saturday, December 19<sup>th</sup>, when the families each get a big bag with 1 present for each member and the children got an extra 1 or 2 presents. About 60 families came to the party.

Thanks go to Eve Hill who always goes to Wal-Mart on "Black Friday" at 5:00am to get bargains for many of us to give. More thanks to Barb Shearer and Deb Bohlander for helping sort the toys and deliver them to WSCH.

We have always been a very giving and caring church and it happened again! Thank you!

Eleanor Bohlander

### FRIDAY FELLOWSHIP

Friday Fellowship will meet on Friday, January 15<sup>th</sup> at the Senior Center, for lunch at 11:30 AM. Following lunch our speaker will be Thomas Strong, a noted medical lecturer and patient advocate. He will bring us a message on non-medical options for controlling blood pressure. Since 90 % of Americans have a problem with elevated blood pressure readings, this meeting should be of interest and help to most of us. Please make your reservations with Betty Smith and plan to join us for food, fellowship and information.

#### January Birthdays

1 <sup>st</sup> Barb Krivos	3 <sup>rd</sup> Elizabeth Piper
9 <sup>th</sup> Eileen Bambam	14 <sup>th</sup> Bob Smith
18 <sup>th</sup> Dale Elgin	20 <sup>th</sup> Freda Kara
21 <sup>st</sup> Kimiyo Schultz	

#### THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Be ye fishers of men.  
You catch them --He'll clean them.

Sincerest thanks to everyone who donated shoes to our **Soles4Souls** project. The fellowship of Christian Athletes at Mount Union had a goal of 1,500 pairs. Over 4,000 pairs were collected! Our church generously donated almost 400. Your support is greatly appreciated.

Thank you,  
Connie Border

Happy 100<sup>th</sup> Birthday  
Thelma Love  
December 18, 2009



### Joys and Concerns

#### Births

Congratulations to **Matt & Ashley Hamer** upon the birth of their daughter, **Madalyn Taylor Hamer**, on November 16, proud grandparents are **Frank & Cheryl Buchwald**; to **Matt & Dana Thomas** upon the birth of their son, **Andrew Robert Thomas**, on November 19<sup>th</sup>, proud grandparents are **Bob & Diane Carlson**, proud great-grandparents are **Bob & Libby Bennett**; to **Gwynne & Joe Watkins** upon the birth of their son, **Micah Robert Watkins** on December 16, proud grandparents are **Dave & Dianne Powell**.

#### Deaths

The prayers and sympathy of the church are extended to **Greg & Paula Dragovich** and family upon the death of Paula's father, **James Wagoner**, on November 17; to **Pastor Julia L. Wertz** and family upon the death of Julia's father, **Harding Harris**, on November 25; to **Roger & Wendy Steller** and family upon the death of Roger's mother, **Susan Steller**, on November 28; to **Bruce & Lynne Wilson** and family upon the death of Lynne's mother, **Betty Bogatay**, on November 30; to **Charles Waldrop** and family upon the death of Chuck's wife, **Marianne Waldrop**, on December 11; to **Richard & Roni Klink** and **Henry Klink** and families upon the death of their brother-in-law, **Jerry Sayles**, on December 15; and to **Bruce & Susann Lerch** and family upon the death of Sue's mother, **Mary Hackman**, on December 30.