

## ***Five Simple Habits for a Meaningful Year***

Every January, many of us set resolutions hoping the new year will bring renewal, balance, or a fresh start. We plan to eat better, get organized, spend more time with family, or exercise more regularly. But often, by the time February rolls around, the excitement has faded and our old habits have quietly slipped back in.

What if this year could be different—not because we finally found the perfect system, but because we started in a different place?

This January at Monroe UMC, we're launching a new series called **Five Resolutions That Really Matter**. Instead of focusing on the surface of our lives, we'll look at five simple habits that shape us from the inside out. These practices come from an old but powerful idea John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, called the "Marks of a Methodist," and they still speak into our daily lives today. These are ways we live our faith out loud because our hearts are being transformed by God's grace. Each week we'll explore one resolution:

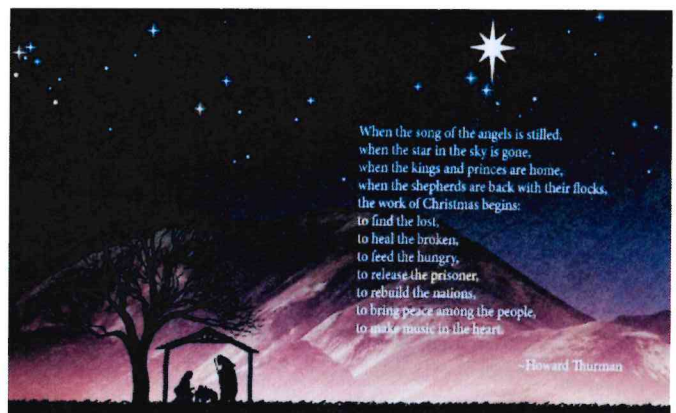
- Loving God in real, practical ways
- Choosing joy we can count on—even when life is hard
- Living with a grateful heart
- Learning to pray when we're busy or unsure what to say
- Loving people we don't always agree with



*Something new is beginning, and it starts right where you are.*

Each message will offer everyday action steps you can try at home, at work, in your neighborhood, and even in the middle of your busy schedule. Whether you've been part of Monroe UMC for decades, are returning after some time away, or are simply curious about faith, you are welcome.

Start the new year with a different kind of resolution. Join us in January as we discover **Five Resolutions That Really Matter**—and see how God can use these small habits to bring hope, healing, and purpose into our lives.





## *What Child Is This?*

“What Child Is This?” is a Christmas carol with lyrics written by William Chatterton Dix in 1865 and in 1871, set to the tune of “Greensleeves,” a traditional English folk song. Although written in Great Britain, the carol today is more popular in the United States than it is in the country of its origin.

At the time Dix was writing the lyrics to “What Child Is This?” he was working as the manager of an insurance company. He was afflicted by an unexpected and severe illness that resulted in him being bedridden and suffering from severe depression. His near-death experience brought about a spiritual renewal in him while he was recovering. During this time, he read the Bible comprehensively and was inspired to author hymns like “Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!” and “As with Gladness Men of Old.” The precise time in 1865 that the poem “The Manger Throne,” which became “What Child Is This,” is disputed. Dix penned the work after reading the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 2, verses 1-12 recounting the journey of the Biblical Magi. Some contend it was actually authored during Christmas of 1865.

Although written in 1865, “What Child Is This?” was first published six years later in 1871, when it was featured in *Christmas Carols New and Old*, a “prestigious” and “influential” collection of carols that was published in the United Kingdom.

At least in part, this song leads to my Story of Tinsel as shared with the congregation. The three wise men are an important part of each.

*Roger Miller*

## **Grow Deeper Together: A Small Group Journey This Winter**

As we begin the new year at Monroe UMC, we’ll be exploring **Five Resolutions That Really Matter** in worship: simple, life-giving practices rooted in what

John Wesley called the *Marks of a Methodist*. But spiritual growth

*doesn’t* happen best in isolation. It grows when we reflect, ask questions, listen, and learn together.

That’s why we’re inviting you to take the next step by participating in a **small group study** that builds directly on the sermon series.

Using two accessible and engaging resources—

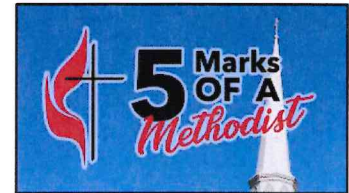
- Steve Harper’s *Five Marks of a Methodist: The Fruit of a Living Faith* and
- Magrey deVega’s *Five Marks of a Methodist: Participant Guide*—

these groups will explore what it means to love God, rejoice in God, give thanks, pray continually, and love others in everyday life.

Each session will last about **75 minutes** and will include guided discussion, reflection, Scripture, and practical application. You don’t need to be an expert or have prior knowledge, just a willingness to show up and engage honestly with others.

To make participation easier, **both daytime and evening sessions will be offered** (dates and times will be announced soon). Each household will need **both books** in order to participate fully in the study (cost for the books totals \$15). There are daily readings and/or activities to complete between sessions.

Whether you’ve been part of Monroe UMC for many years, are returning after some time away, or are simply curious about how faith connects with real life, this group is for you.



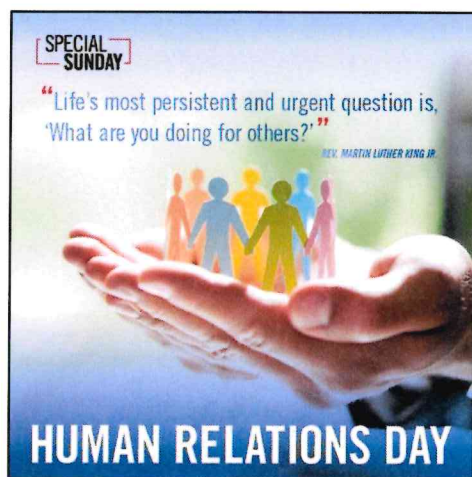


It's a chance to slow down, grow deeper, and discover how these ancient practices can shape a meaningful, hopeful life today.

If you'd like more information or want to express interest in participating, please contact **Pastor Jeff**. We'd love to grow together this winter.

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## ***Human Relations Day is Sunday, January 18, 2026!***



*"Life's most persistent and urgent question  
is,  
'What are you doing for others?'"  
– Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Human Relations Day is Sunday, January 18, 2026. This Special Sunday, one of six Special Sundays in The United Methodist Church, is a time to celebrate the Beloved Community, where unconditional kindness and compassion guide us toward justice, peace, and reconciliation.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. described the Beloved Community as "an engine of reconciliation," reminding us that the way we create change should reflect the love and justice we hope to achieve. By giving generously this Sunday, we support ministries that strengthen communities and transform lives—both near and far.

Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity as we work together to make the

Beloved Community a reality. You may designate an offering by marking the memo line of your check or your offering envelope for **"Human Relations"** and putting it in the offering during worship. You may also mail your offering to the church at PO Box 310, Monroe, OH 45050. You may designate an offering online at [MonroeUMC.org](http://MonroeUMC.org), click Give, and choose **Fund 8413-Special Sundays**. Or you can text **\$amount HRD** (example: \$25 HRD) to 513.547.9908 to give by text.

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***Thank you, Monroe UMC! Your generosity has helped to change lives during this holiday season!***



Thank you for your gracious and generous ways of sharing God's love this year! You have blessed so many people.

- Thanksgiving Baskets offering provided Thanksgiving food items/gift cards for Slinky families, church families, and clients at the Monroe Church of the Nazarene Food Pantry that we support
- Thanksgiving meal for the kids, families, and staff of Slinky
- Advent special offerings will help women and families at Hope House, the shelter in Middletown, as they rebuild their lives
- Giving Tree gifts and donations brightened Christmas for Slinky families with Christmas presents requested by the parents
- Donations to the Agape Fund, our church's assistance fund administered by the pastor, has helped families with groceries, utilities, prescriptions, and rent throughout the year



SUBMITTED BY  
MONICA BOLTON

HAPPY NEW YEAR CHURCH FAMILY FROM THE  
BOLTON HOUSEHOLD TO YOURS ~

THIS IS A PRAYER THAT YOU CAN PRAY  
EVERY MORNING IN 2025. FOUND ON FACEBOOK  
BY MARCUS STANLEY... (CONDENSED VERSION)

DEAR GOD,  
AS THE SUN RISES ON THIS NEW DAY, I COME  
BEFORE YOU WITH A HEART FULL OF GRATITUDE.  
TODAY I WANT TO THANK YOU. I INVITE YOU INTO  
MY HEART. I INVITE YOU INTO MY DAY. YOU ARE MY  
RESCUE GOD, THE ONE WHO'S GREATER AND STRONGER  
THAN ANYTHING THAT I HAVE ON THIS EARTH.  
WHEN I FEEL OVERWHELMED AND I FEEL LIKE MY  
BACK IS AGAINST THE WALL, I PRAY THAT YOU WILL  
REMINDE ME THAT I SERVE A LIVING GOD. A GOD WHO'S  
MORE THAN ABLE TO CARRY MY BURDENS AND GIVE  
ME REST. A GOD WHO WILL RESTORE EVERYTHING THAT'S  
BEEN BROKEN. NO MATTER WHAT I FACE TODAY, I  
KNOW THAT YOU ARE AN ALL-POWERFUL AND MIGHTY  
GOD. THERE'S NOTHING TOO DIFFICULT FOR YOU TO DEAL  
WITH. THERE'S NO MOUNTAIN THAT YOU CAN'T MOVE.  
THERE'S NO WALL THAT YOU CAN'T CAUSE TO FALL,  
AND I AM GRATEFUL, I AM SO GLAD THAT I HAVE  
THE PRIVILEGE TO BE ABLE TO CALL ON YOU FOR HELP.  
... GOD, I ASK THAT YOUR FAVOR AND YOUR BLESSINGS  
WILL REST UPON MY FAMILY AND LOVED ONES....  
GOD MAY YOU ALWAYS PROTECT ME FROM THE TROUBLE  
THAT I FACE. I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR BECAUSE YOU  
ARE BY MY SIDE. THANK YOU FOR HEARING THIS PRAYER.  
IN JESUS' NAME. AMEN



## January Birthdays

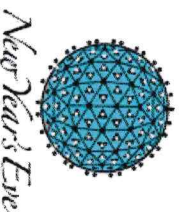



5 – Gina Craft  
11 – Lois Shay  
Don Kobert  
12 – Sharon Collier  
Dave Shaffer  
20 – Pam Routson  
24 – David Finley  
25 – Chelsey Sanvee  
28 – Danny McWhorter, Jr.  
31 – Elaine Kuth



February Newsletter  
Deadline  
Wednesday,  
January 21<sup>st</sup>



# January 2026

| <div> <div>Sunday</div> <div>Monday</div> <div>Tuesday</div> <div>Wednesday</div> <div>Thursday</div> <div>Friday</div> <div>Saturday</div> </div> |  |   |   |   |  |  |
|--|--|---|---|---|--|--|
| 28   | 29   | 30  | 31  | 1   | 2                                      | 3  |
|  | Church Office Closed<br>6:00pm Yoga/AH                     | 10:00am Share Group/Parlor  | <br>Church Office Closed   |  | 10:00am Exercise/AH<br>11:00am Yoga/AH |  |
| 4  | 5  | 6   | 7   | 8   | 9                                      | 10   |
| Holy Communion   | Church Office Closed<br>6:00pm Yoga/AH<br>7:00pm Scouts/AH | 10:00am -12:00pm Sewing Group/Youth Room<br>10:00am Share Group/Parlor                                | 11:00am -12:00pm Yoga/Narthex<br>6:00pm Youth Group<br>7:00pm Praise Team/AH  |   | 10:00am Exercise/AH<br>11:00am Yoga/AH | <br>2:00pm -5:00pm Eagle Scout Ceremony/AH |
| 11   | 12   | 13  | 14  | 15  | 16                                     | 17   |
|  | Church Office Closed<br>6:00pm Yoga/AH<br>7:00pm Scouts/AH | 10:00am -12:00pm Sewing Group/Youth Room<br>10:00am Share Group/Parlor                                | 11:00am -12:00pm Yoga/Narthex<br>6:00pm Youth Group<br>7:00pm Praise Team/AH  | 10:30am Worship Committee/Library   | 10:00am Exercise/AH<br>11:00am Yoga/AH |  |
| 18   | 19   | 20  | 21  | 22  | 23                                     | 24   |
|  | Church Office Closed<br>6:00pm Yoga/AH<br>7:00pm Scouts/AH | 10:00am -12:00pm Sewing Group/Youth Room<br>10:00am Share Group/Parlor<br>1:00pm Finance Committee/AH | <br>11:00am -12:00pm Yoga/Narthex<br>6:00pm Youth Group<br>7:00pm Praise Team/AH |   | 10:00am Exercise/AH<br>11:00am Yoga/AH |  |
| 25   | 26   | 27  | 28  | 29  | 30                                     | 31   |
|  | Church Office Closed<br>6:00pm Yoga/AH<br>7:00pm Scouts/AH | 10:00am -12:00pm Sewing Group/Youth Room<br>10:00am Share Group/Parlor                                | 11:00am -12:00pm Yoga/Narthex<br>6:00pm Youth Group<br>7:00pm Praise Team/AH  |   | 10:00am Exercise/AH<br>11:00am Yoga/AH |  |

MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
206 East Avenue, PO Box 310  
Monroe, OH 45050

REQUESTED RETURN SERVICE

Mission Statement:

*Shining the light on the hill by connecting with Jesus Christ,  
connecting with each other and connecting with the world.*



MONROE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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**Monroe UMC Staff**

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Gina Craft, Children's Ministries: [gmatcraft@gmail.com](mailto:gmatcraft@gmail.com)

Larry Daniel, Choir Director

Melanie Flower, Organist

Linda Larkin, Nursery Attendant

Arlene Horton, Treasurer

Jerry & Anne Lapham,  
Financial Sec'y

MINISTERS: CONGREGATION

OFFICE HOURS: TUESDAY-FRIDAY 9:00AM-4:30PM



FACEBOOK: *Monroe United Methodist Church*



C/*MonroeUnitedMethodist*



TWITTER: *@MonroeUMC*

