

Amherst United Methodist Church

396 Park Avenue

Amherst, OH 44001

440-988-8330

www.amherstchurches.org

aumc396@gmail.com

Worship at 10:30 AM

AUMC February Newsletter



Scripture: *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them light has shined."* (Isaiah 9:2)

It seems whenever we turn to a news broadcast or article the world becomes a very dark place. Fear and division seem to cast such long shadows that we begin to lose hope that the light will ever return. Isaiah had those same feelings as he watched people stumbling in the dark and wondering if hope would ever shine again in their lives. For the people of Isaiah's time God spoke of a promise of hope that would shine a great light on the path forward. For us today that promise was fulfilled in Jesus.

Jesus revealed, in John 8:12 "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness but will have the light of life". This was a light that revealed a new path to walk. A path that led to peace, understanding, and a "life in abundance". Throughout His ministry Jesus taught us by His example how to walk that path. He then instructed each of us to carry that same light into the world.

Romans 12 calls us to "live peaceably with all" with the understanding that peace isn't the absence of conflict, but the presence of Christlike calm in the midst of it. When we choose gentleness over retaliation, listening over shouting, and prayer over panic, each of us becomes a small candle in dark rooms. But when we all come together, we become a blazing light capable of removing the darkness forever.

As we reflect on the call to be lights in a dark world, following the example of Jesus who brought hope, peace, and guidance it's important to understand that peacemaking lies at the heart of living out this calling. The prophets remind us that God is not distant from our struggles: Isaiah proclaims that God "shatters the yoke of oppression", while Micah urges us to "do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly." True peacemaking is not a passive stance; it's an active, courageous expression of Christlike compassion. It means noticing the pain and injustice around us and choosing to respond with empathy and action. In this way, justice becomes the light that reveals brokenness, inviting God's healing and restoration to begin.

Paul calls us "ambassadors of reconciliation." Light doesn't just reveal what's wrong, it shows the path back to one another. Every apology offered, every conversation pursued, every act of kindness

extended becomes a sunrise moment in someone's life.

In Matthew 5:9 Jesus said: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God". In many places Law Enforcement Officers are called "Peace Officers". And in Matthew 22:21 Jesus "said to them, "Give therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's."

As Christians we don't get to pick and choose which of God's laws to follow and Law Enforcement officers don't get to pick and choose which laws they are to enforce. There is much darkness in places like Minneapolis, Chicago, and Portland. Law Enforcement officers are working to do their job of enforcing current laws and court orders. There are **peaceful** protesters that are doing their job of expressing their belief that some of those laws and/or court orders are wrong. The solution is for those peaceful protestors to lobby their lawmakers to change the laws. The solution is not to become rioters who interfere with and attack the law enforcement officers. The solution is not to attempt to order one branch of law enforcement to attack another. The solution is to follow the light of the world to a reasonable and peaceful solution.

In reflection, this message reminds us that even in times of darkness and division, the light of Christ offers hope, guidance, and a path toward peace. By following Jesus' teachings and embodying compassion, justice, and reconciliation, we are called to be peacemakers who actively shine God's light in our communities. Through unity, empathy, and faithful action, we can help dispel darkness and work together toward a more just and compassionate world.

Saints, among honorable people, there are no winners in violent conflict, only losers on both sides. Look to the Holy Spirit for guidance and not to the talking heads on the many news outlets.

Pastor Joe

Prayer

Lord, make us a bearer of Your light. Where there is conflict, let us sow peace.

Where there is injustice, give us courage. Where there is division, use us as a bridge.

Let Your light rise in us, through us, or in spite of us. Amen.

LEADERSHIP TEAM NEWS FOR FEBRUARY 2026

As I write this newsletter article, I see from my window that the snow is swirling around with these sub-zero windy conditions. Prayers for all to find warm shelter! Last Friday, January 16th, many members of Amherst UMC attended the funeral service for long-time dedicated member Phyllis Fravel. Pastor Carney conducted a beautiful service in celebration of Phyllis's faithful service to her church and The Lord. Rest in peace our dear friend!

Your Leadership Team met on Monday, January 12th for our monthly meeting. The 2025 financial statements are being completed and will be mailed to each household. This year's Christmas donation yielded \$1,860.00. After much discussion, there was a motion to donate \$800.00 to the Amherst Schools backpack program, which provides a backpack of food for the weekend for those children in need. The remainder of the Christmas fund money is in the general fund account and can be given to additional organizations. If anyone has a suggestion, please let anyone on the Leadership Team know of your idea. Thank you to everyone for their donation! Our donation is another way that our congregation is fulfilling our goal of community outreach!

We learned from trustees that installation of an additional railing in the sanctuary is "on hold." Further discussion needs to occur. The railing should not block the view of the altar as seen via zoom nor be an obstacle rather than an aid. If you have ideas, please share them with Leadership Team members. Trustee chair, Bob Kinser, reported that the clothing shed is being emptied weekly. Last year our church profited \$4,321.46 from the clothing shed.

Judy Gutman, worship chair, thanked everyone who aided in taking down the Christmas decorations. Ash Wednesday is February 18th and more information will be forthcoming. Nurturing committee continues to make homebound visits and sending of cards. These are continued ways that our church is fulfilling our goal of reaching out to our homebound. Chris McCourt, chairing Raise Right, reported that since beginning the

Raise Right fundraiser our church has netted \$6,000.

Mission's chair, Polly Makinen reported that we still are collecting personal items for the Office of Aging and will continue into February.

Aleah announced that further details are being completed for The Ark trip scheduled for June 25-27, 2026. Hotel reservations are being made. No cancellation fees are charged. Personal vehicles will be used for the transportation. A March meeting will be scheduled for provision of details. Estimated cost of exhibit entrance and hotel is \$3,501.00. To date, approximately half of the cost has been raised for this trip. As Lay Leader, Aleah has been working with Joanne to complete an updated membership audit. Members of the Leadership Team were able to provide information to aid towards completion of the audit. Aleah shared a draft of the latest church directory. A thank you to Jennifer Clark for her service in photographing and compiling the information! Jennifer will gather information regarding printing charges.

Jill Keller, SPRC chair, provided our opening and closing prayers in the absence of Pastor Carney, who is recuperating after knee replacement surgery. Prayers for Pastor Joe as he travels this medical journey to recovery!

Our next Leadership Team meeting is scheduled for Monday, February 9th at 11am. All are welcome to attend!

The month of February has us enjoying Valentine's Day with loved ones and also observance of Ash Wednesday. Stay warm!! Be well!!

Hugs from a social distance,

Jean Rounds

Chair

Communion Sunday	February 1 st
Leadership Meeting	February 9 th 11:00AM
Nurturing Committee	February 11 th 10:30AM
Mary Martha Circle	February 11 th 11:30AM (Weather dependent)
Ash Wednesday	February 18 th
St. Elizabeth meal prep	February 20 th 2:30PM
AUMC practices safe sanctuary and we do lock our doors for Sunday Service at 10:40AM. If you are running behind please ring the door bell and we will let you in.	
CALL IN NUMBER for CHURCH SERVICE (440) 462-2193	
Or watch us on Zoom at amherstchurches.org	



Tuesday – 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Wednesday 9:00 AM to 12:30 PM
Thursday 9:00 AM to 12:00PM
Office phone: (440)988-8330
Pastor Joe: (440)724-2433



Bonnie Brunner Feb 1 Kathy Blahay Feb 2

Susan Haney Feb 5 Jaimie Miller Feb 13

Barb Glover Feb 13 Annabelle Wilson Feb 14

Lisa Stanley Feb 14 Diane Nahorn Feb 15

Carolyn Odelli Feb 18 Doreen Baldrige Feb 22

Penelope Alley Feb 22 Blake Kucbel Feb 22

Mike Filbert Feb 23



If there is a Sunday with severe weather please be advised that the church will always be open for service. But if you do not feel comfortable driving in bad weather we ask that you stay home and watch on Zoom.



God blesses us daily with answered prayers.
 If you have a situation that could use a prayer, we are here for you.
 Please contact Pastor Joe or Judy Gutman

Amherst United Methodist Church

396 Park Ave.
Amherst, OH 44001



**Friday May 15, 2026 9:00AM- 3:00PM &
Saturday May 16, 2026 9:00AM- Noon**

**Drop off donated items on Tuesday,
Wednesday and Thursday from 9:00AM- Noon**

**GOOD CONDITION, CLEAN, gently worn clothing,
house hold items, toys, attic treasures in WORKING
ORDER gladly accepted!**

**All proceeds to support the missions and
ministries of Amherst United Methodist Church!**

Questions? Contact our office at 440-988-8330 or
aumc396@gmail.com

Hall Rental

Amherst United Methodist Church offers hall rentals
for Weddings, Birthday's, Showers, Anniversary, etc.
For more information please call the office at 440-988-
8330 or email us at aumc396@gmail.com.

Cost for 4 hour rental

\$50.00 deposit required (Refund after event)

\$150.00 Sanctuary uses for rehearsal and wedding

Other rooms \$100.00

Each additional room \$50.00

Pastor counseling/service for wedding- Set by Pastor

Organist for rehearsal and wedding- Set by Organist

Room Capacities

Dr. Elsie Room: 30

Fellowship hall: 102

Small Conference Room: 8

Front Sunday School Room: 18

Sanctuary (Balcony not available): 150



**For Dust you are and Dust
you shall return.**



Lorain County Office On Aging

*We are still collecting cleaning
supplies and personal care items to
be donated to Lorain County Office
of Aging. We will be collecting
items until the end of February.*

2026 SUMMER CAMPS
Register for Summer Camp today!



Scan to register.




Summer Camp Registration is Open!


Register now and make camp a part of your Summer 2026 plans!




East Ohio Conference
The United Methodist Church

No child should miss out on experiencing Summer Camp because of financial concerns. Financial assistance camperships are available. Scan the QR code to the right to learn more about financial assistance.



Camp is an important part of a young person's life: Spiritually, emotionally, mentally, and socially. Camp offers:

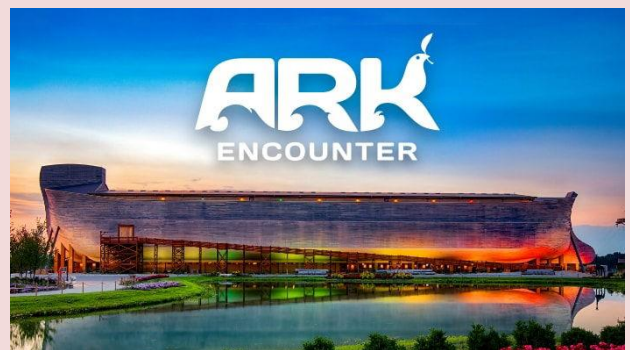
- **TRANSFORMED LIVES**
God loves us and has an amazing plan for our lives. Campers discover this love when they get away from daily routines, distractions, and packed schedules.
- **NATURE AND ADVENTURE**
In exploring the beautiful nature surrounding each site, campers experience new adventures and test their limits while immersed in the magnificence of God's Creation.
- **TEMPORARY COMMUNITY**
Campers get a fresh start, learning to live and work together, when they are unburdened from expectations and pressures of life.
- **LIFELONG FRIENDSHIPS**
Campers and staff share experiences and form bonds that last a lifetime.
- **ADULT MENTORS**
Caring counselors and mentors live alongside campers and help them think through experiences and decisions in ways that will prepare them for the future.

A life-changing experience at camp is right around the corner for the young people in your congregation and community.

Partner with the camp ministry at your church and invest in the Spiritual development of the children and youth in your congregation and community by making it possible for them to attend Summer Camp 2026.



Save the Date!
AUMC will be having our annual Easter egg hunt! Candy donations for this event will be greatly appreciated.



2026 Ark trip Meeting!

For those who have signed up to go AUMC trip to The Ark. We will be having a meeting on Sunday, March 1, 2026 after worship service to discuss, travel, hotel arrangements, itinerary for The Ark and Creations museum, and trip cost/ budget. Tiffanie Alley has also created a T-Shirt design for the trip and will have further information as well.