

The Monroe Doctrine



February 2024

“I Want to Grow in my Faith: What Can I Do?”



One of the most common questions I have been asked as a pastor is about growing in faith. Even people who have gone to church

regularly for a very long time can feel a desire to grow more. John Wesley, the founder of the Methodist movement, encouraged us to keep growing in our love for God and our love for neighbors. He said those are the key marks of Christian disciples.

Here are some practices to help you grow in faith.

Make a small change. Often, we want to make changes quickly, so we set lofty goals that we can't possibly meet. When we don't achieve those goals, we get discouraged. Instead, start small. Choose a spiritual practice, such as reading the Bible, and start by reading 10 or 15 minutes a day. Or increase your reading time by a similar amount. If you want to serve, find a way to serve a neighbor in need to begin. Maybe decide to visit them once a week or month. Once you have experienced the joy and blessing of this small step, you'll be encouraged to take further steps.

- **Step in a new direction.** Ask God to show you how to step out in faith. God might call you to do something

uncomfortable or unfamiliar to you. Let God lead you in how to take this step.

- **Get into God's Word.** God has given us the words of the Bible to point us to the Word made flesh, Jesus Christ. Spending time in the scriptures helps us listen for God's voice. Ask God to help you apply what you've read to your life. Write down one action step you can take from the passage, and prayerfully take that step of faith (see #2 above).
- **Find Biblical community.** Proverbs 27:17 reminds us, "As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens a friend." To grow in faith we need to be connected with other Christians in community through a small group, class, or congregation. Genuine Biblical community creates a place for friendships and accountability to take root and faith to grow. In community, we are surrounded by those who speak truth and love to us, explore God's Word with us, and worship beside us. We were not meant to be Christians alone.
- **Pray about everything.** Lift all matters to God in prayer. Whether we are praising God, thanking God for a blessing or answer, seeking God's guidance for a decision, or asking for strength in trouble, God is ready to receive our prayers, to listen to our hearts, and to respond with grace and truth. Talking with God and listening for God help us grow in faith no matter what season of life we are in.

We are about to enter the time of the Church year known as Lent, six weeks before Easter when Christians often reflect on their own faith journey and seek to grow. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14, with a time to reflect and to commit ourselves to the journey of faith. What steps might you take this Lent to grow in faith?

Monroe UMC Made a HUGE Impact in 2023



Thanks be to God for the generous spirit of our congregation in 2023! Last year, the Holy Spirit inspired our members to share generously through mission-directed giving. We gave a total of **\$21,621** to make a difference in the lives of people beyond our congregation. This represented an increase of \$5,071 over 2022 mission-directed giving.

These offerings provided meals, supplies, and support for homeless women and their children through Hope House. They provided food for the Monroe Food Pantry at Monroe Nazarene Church (which we regularly support), Thanksgiving meals and Christmas gifts to SLINKY families, and assistance to area residents struggling with meeting basic needs.

In addition, our mission giving supported the work of The United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR) as they helped people in Ukraine, Turkey, Syria, the U.S., and other parts of the world dealing with natural and human-made disasters. We also supported scholarships for UM students and UM ministries helping improve the lives of people in various communities by sharing God's love in practical ways.

These are some of the ways your generosity through special mission-directed offerings have touched the lives of people like you and shared the love of Jesus Christ. Thank you again for your generous giving to special mission offerings.

Lenten Series Focuses on Peter



During Lent (which begins on Ash Wednesday, February 14), we are focusing on the life and faith of one of Jesus' most famous disciples. In Peter,

we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady; a dear friend and a betrayer; a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out – just like us.

We'll reflect on Peter's faith journey using words from the song "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing." It's almost as if Peter himself might have written these lyrics. We'll sing our way through Lent, binding our wandering hearts to God.

We will affirm that faith is a constant journey of steadfast pursuit, one that ebbs and flows, seeks and wanders. We'll see ways that Peter keeps searching, yearning, and loving after missteps and mistakes. His story will remind us that God loves imperfect people. Time and again, that's exactly who God calls and claims.

To help us tune our hearts to sing God's grace, we will have some resources to assist us. We offer a free devotional guide that ties into the series themes each week with scripture, reflection, and prayer. Sometimes poetry or art are included to help us.

We also offer daily devotional cards. Each day as you read a card, you'll be invited to engage in a centering (or quieting) practice to help you focus on Christ. You'll find a reflection question that might inspire you to journal, as well as a prayer for the day. These free resources will be available at the church on February 11.

Or you may choose to receive the daily devotional card message as a text. Just text the words "Wandering Heart" to our text line, (833) 209-6622 (texting charges may apply depending on

your mobile plan). You'll receive the same message as on the daily devotional card. Remember to check our Facebook page and engage with our social media posts during Lent.

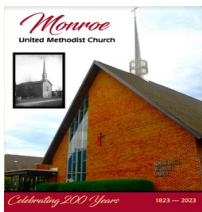
Mark your calendars now for special worship services on **Ash Wednesday**, February 14, at 6:30 pm in the Sanctuary. **Maundy Thursday** will be March 28, and **Good Friday** will be March 29, times to be announced later. **Easter** is Sunday, March 31.

This series provides a great opportunity to invite someone to church with you. Wherever they are on their faith journey, they can discover God's grace in the life of Peter. Through his story, we'll all reflect on the stages of our own faith journeys and recognize who and what have shaped us along the way. May we rest in streams of mercy never ceasing.

Thank you

From **Tim Draxler** and **Melanie Flower** to the congregation for the Christmas gifts. They were much appreciated.

New Church Directories



The latest edition of our church directory is now available at the church office. The directory was produced during our 200th anniversary year of 2023 and features historical information

along with photos of current members and activities. If you submitted a photograph or had a portrait taken at the church, you may pick up your directory at no charge. If you did not and desire a directory, they are available for a donation of \$9. An updated phone and email directory is also available to anyone who wants one.

UMW to LaComedia

The Monroe UMW will be going to LaComedia Dinner Theatre on Thursday, May 16. We will enjoy a delicious lunch followed by the all new musical comedy The Church Basement Ladies "Plowin Thru."

Make your reservation with a check payable to UMW for \$41.00 no later than April 1 to **Jane Majors**. Any questions contact **Sharon Warmoth** or Jane Majors.

Volunteer(s) needed

For the past 20 years our church has helped Family Promise (formerly Interfaith Hospitality Network) care for the homeless. They thoroughly vet the families and only accept those with a good chance to be successful. They have a great track record. We are one of several churches that partner with our Lady of Sorrows Church and on Wednesdays we provide dinner, play with the kids, and stay overnight in case of an emergency. We also provide breakfast for the week. We do this 4 Wednesdays a year. Before COVID, all this took place at the Catholic church. Now the food is picked up and taken to a motel rented by Family Promise in Lebanon where the homeless have been housed. Family Promise bought an old motel and they and the community and many churches have worked several years to rehab and furnish it. It will soon be ready to house the families. Now we will need to take the food, help with the kids, and stay overnight at this motel in Lebanon. I will continue to organize the food and help with the kids, but I am looking for someone who could stay overnight. It is pretty easy because you only need to sleep there. If you can help, please call **Anne Lapham** at 513-539-8095.

Children/Youth news

The **Blaze Youth Group** has a new mission site at The Monroe Lending Library. The youth will host a Reading & Craft Time with children Kindergarten through Third Grade every fourth Wednesday from 6 – 7 pm.

Easter Praise Dance practice is every Sunday. All ages/all skill levels are needed to express the joy of Jesus' Resurrection. The Easter Dance is on March 17.

Mark your calendars for **Pancakes with the Easter Bunny** on Saturday, March 23.

Scuba VBS is scheduled for July 7 thru 11.

February 2024

Sunday		Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday		Saturday	
28		29	Church Office Closed 6:00pm Yoga/AH 7:00pm Scouts/AH	30	10:00am Sewing Group/Youth Room 10:00am Share Group/Parlor	31	11:00am Yoga/AH 12:00pm Yoga/Narthex 6:00pm – 7:30pm Youth Group	1		2	10:00am Exercise/AH 11:00am Yoga/AH	3	
4	Holy Communion	5	 Church Office Closed 6:00pm Yoga/AH 7:00pm Scouts/AH	6	10:00am Share Group/Parlor	7	11:00am Yoga/AH 12:00pm Yoga/Narthex 6:00pm – 7:30pm Youth Group	8		9	10:00am Exercise/AH 11:00am Yoga/AH	10	5:00pm – 9:00pm Emmaus Gathering/AH
11		12	Church Office Closed 6:00pm Yoga/AH 7:00pm Scouts/AH	13	10:00am Share Group/Parlor	14	 11:00am Yoga/AH 12:00pm Yoga/Narthex 6:00pm – 7:30pm Youth Group	15		16	10:00am Exercise/AH 11:00am Yoga/AH	17	
18	First Sunday in 	19	 Church Office Closed 6:00pm Yoga/AH 7:00pm Scouts/AH	20	10:00am Share Group/Parlor 1:00pm – 2:00pm Finance Committee/Library	21	11:00am Yoga/AH 12:00pm Yoga/Narthex 6:00pm – 7:30pm Youth Group	22		23	10:00am Exercise/AH 11:00am Yoga/AH	24	
25	 Second Sunday in 	26	Church Office Closed 6:00pm Yoga/AH 7:00pm Scouts/AH	27	10:00am Share Group/Parlor	28	11:00am Yoga/AH 12:00pm Yoga/Narthex 6:00pm – 7:30pm Youth Group	29		1	10:00am Exercise/AH 11:00am Yoga/AH	2	

February

February Birthdays

4 – Anne Watts
11 – Barbara Conley
17 – Phyllis Richmond
18 – Phil Lacefield
21 – Alan Dyke
 Mike Kuth
22 – Nancy Alexander
 Phyllis Michael
23 – Elizabeth Horton
28 – Bob Riggs
 Becky Motter

February Anniversaries

1 – Dave & Karen Shaffer (**60 years**)
3 – Phil & Jennifer Lacefield (**56 years**)

Statistically Speaking. . .

	<u>Offering</u>
December 10	\$2,571
December 17	\$1,170
December 24	\$10,135
December 24 (7pm)	\$552
December 31	\$2,807
January 7	\$9,437
January 14	\$820



FEBRUARY 14

Deadline For
March Newsletter
Sunday, February 25th



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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Melanie Flower, Organist

Jerry Lapham, Newsletter Editor

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*



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