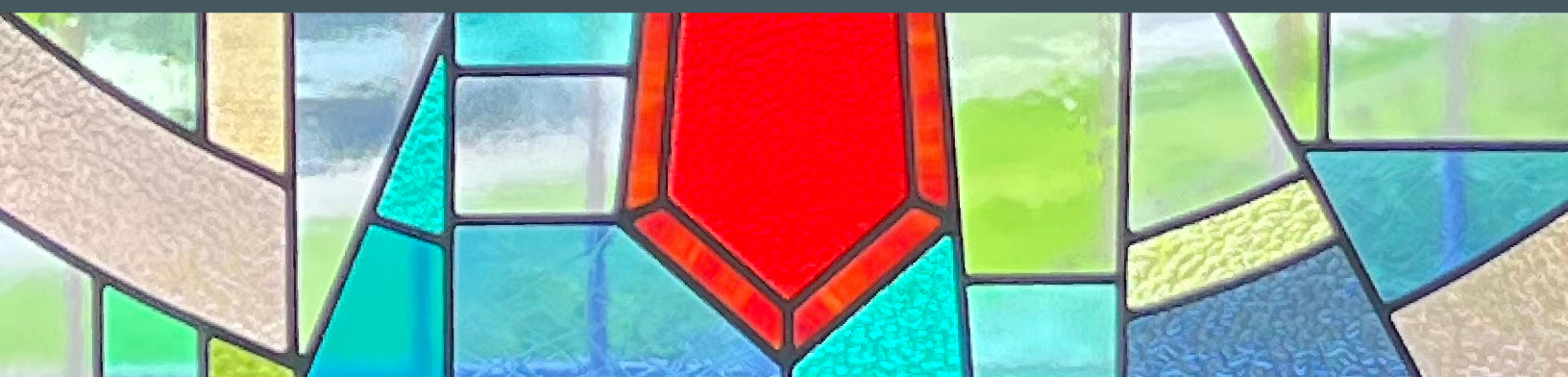




*Many Gifts, One Spirit*





# ***Letter from the Pastors***

Dear Friends,

Every season in the life of the church brings new opportunities to be reminded of who we are and whose we are. This year's stewardship theme, *Many Gifts, One Spirit*, invites us to celebrate the countless ways God's Spirit is already moving through this congregation — inspiring creativity, compassion, and courage in the people who make Northwest UMC such a vibrant community of faith. Every gift, every act of service, every quiet kindness is a thread in the tapestry of ministry we create together.

Inside these pages, you'll see faces and read stories of people who are using their God-given gifts for the greater good — teaching children, serving meals, singing, building, praying, leading, listening, loving. These are not just programs; they are expressions of the Spirit alive in us. They remind us that stewardship is not about sustaining an institution, but about sharing in God's ongoing work of renewal and hope in the world.

As we look ahead, I invite you to prayerfully consider how your own gifts of time, talent, and treasure can help us continue this good work. Together, we are the body of Christ: many members, one Spirit, united by grace and called to serve with joy. May this season of giving awaken gratitude, generosity, and a deep awareness of the sacred work we share.

Grace and peace,



Pastor Mebane McMahon



Pastor Chris Rinker

## ***About the Cover***

*Each message series comes with a challenge for me: translating the inspiration into a visual. Sometimes it is easier than others. This was one of the easier times.*

*I love this stained glass window that is found in the Northwest UMC prayer room, and I love the imagery of stained glass as we consider what it means to have *Many Gifts, One Spirit*. The pieces that make up the stained glass are different sizes, different shapes, and different colors, yet they come together and make one image. Likewise, the church is made of many people but comes together as one body. As Paul says in 1 Corinthians 12:27, "Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it." May it be so.*



*~ Katy Wright, Director of Communications and Digital Ministry*



# Worship & Prayer

We start this brochure with worship because that is where our faith life begins - with God. Worship is a place where we connect with God through our community and through the traditions that connect us to people of faith throughout the ages. We hear the same stories of birth and death and resurrection each year and yet we experience them in new ways because we are different than we were the last time we heard them.



We receive ashes on Ash Wednesday, share communion around the table, light candles at Christmas and through it all we are reminded that we are not alone on this journey of life. We sing old familiar hymns that bring us comfort and brand new songs that challenge us to widen the table and live out our faith in new ways. It is in worship that we are reminded over and over again of the many gifts that we each possess and that it is one spirit who has bestowed those gifts. We are all in this together.

And of course with worship comes prayer. It is in our times of prayer that we share our hearts. Each week we share good news stories to remind ourselves that God is at work in the world and we share the joys and challenges of this human life because that is what it means to be in community. We pray for those who are grieving and we pray for those who are welcoming new life. We pray for those who are ill and those who are recovering. We pray for transitions of all kinds. It is through prayer that we share life. In these prayers we are reminded that God's spirit is with us, here in this place.



We pray over children receiving their Bibles, students and teachers heading back to school, graduates entering new phases of life, and mission teams heading off to learn and work in other spaces. It is through these prayers that we are reminded that not only is God here in this space, but that God goes with us as we leave this place too.



Each time a mission team leaves, we offer prayers in worship for them. The summer mission team also includes prayer partners for each person on the team. These words are from one pair of prayer partners:

*I was Clara's confirmation mentor a few years ago, and it is special to me to be able to continue that relationship each summer by serving as her prayer partner. ~ Katy Wright*

*For the past 3 years I have had my at home prayer partner be my confirmation mentor: Katy Wright. I love the at home prayer partners because when we are on mission trips they make everyone feel cared and prayed for when we are doing service projects. My prayer partner was also my mentor for my own confirmation and it fills you with so much love to know someone who has been with you through confirmation is keeping you in their prayers at home. - Clara Sutton*



# Music and Drama

## Christmas Play

Last year was the first time our church presented a Christmas play in quite a while and it went great - everyone had a good time, we learned how talented and funny our youth (and somewhat more mature) church members really are, and there were a few tasty refreshments on hand as well. We look forward to building on that success this year with more laughter, some surprising plot twists, great refreshments, and a few easygoing reminders of the true meaning of the season; hope to see you there!



## Children's Choir

Our children's choir, led by Brian Luke and Barbara Luke, meets on Sunday mornings during the school year from 10:35 to 11:00 in the Music Room. The group is open to kids from Kindergarten to 4th Grade, no previous music experience required. They play music games, read picture books, learn songs, play together, pray together, make new friends, and have a lot of fun! Every few months they sing a song for the 9:30 service in the Sanctuary, and they also usually participate in the Family Christmas Service on Christmas Eve in the Ministry Center.





# Family Ministry

Our Northwest Kids small groups meet year round at both 9:30 and 11:00 for times of learning, play, and serving together. These small groups are a chance for kids to learn and play together. During the summer, they also spend time in the Northwest Children's Garden.



Every other month Denise Regenbogen, Chair of the Mission Team, comes to the children's small groups to share about our church partnerships and to give kids the chance to participate in those projects. The goal is to educate students of the needs in our communities and create opportunities for them to engage in meaningful and transformative work. Past projects included packing bags of dog food for Faith Mission, putting together hygiene kits for the homeless and Star House, baking cookies for Brown Bags as well as food bags and boxes for neighborhood families, writing cards to residents at Friendship Village, and organizing books for distribution for Abbey Church residents.

*The children's ministry is like a second home for our family. We made our decision to become members at this church in large part because of the garden. This garden pointed plainly to the work being put into the community by the church, and the involvement the children played in that work, and without it I might not have been able to discover the other great pieces of Northwest. The children's choir and the great teachers all work to shine God's light on my children, and I benefit greatly in camaraderie and faith from the mother's group, the Heart Sisters. I see His hands in all of it, and it's hard to summarize just how much love and faith I've found here. ~ Emily Lillard*

## Art Camp

Art Camp was held in June for children in preschool -grade 3. The theme was the Fruit of the Spirit as found in Galatians 5:22-23.



Each evening, campers learned about 2 fruits, created large banners for the classrooms, and made art to take home. There was also time for games, Bible stories and songs, prayer, and snacks. It was fun to watch all the children share their creative talent and enjoy sharing time together. We are grateful for the team of youth and adult volunteers who made this a memorable experience for the children and families.

## Kids Helping Kids

Held in late June, Kids Helping Kids was for 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students with 3 teens and 2 moms as team leaders. This 5 day camp included devotions, prayer time, reflections, and learning about our church partnerships.

- Julie from the Dublin Food Pantry came to discuss their work and campers packed birthday bags for their clients.
- The group prepared vegetable pasta for Star House and discussed healthy eating and nutrition led by Kati Linkous.
- Kids worked in the Northwest Children's Garden, helped with Brown Bag lunches and packed food bags for Ronald McDonald House.
- They took a field trip to the Franklin Park Conservatory and met with their Teen Corps toured their Community Gardens learning about sustainable agriculture.





## Youth Ministry



Our youth group includes children and teenagers aged 11-18 (6th-12th grade) and meets every Sunday morning during the 9:30 and 11a.m. services for Bible study, as well as Sunday evenings from 6-8 p.m. for a shared meal, fun and games, worship, and faith formation. Other youth activities include fun outings such as the Renaissance Faire and Snow Tubing, service opportunities (including Brown bag lunches and the C4AP Christmas Shop), and an annual Fall Retreat and Mission Trip. Additionally, we have 7 students in our Confirmation program this year, which runs year round and will conclude with a Confirmation service next August.

*Youth group really means a lot to me. It's a place where I can just be myself and feel supported - more than just something to do on Sunday night. I've made great friends, and get to connect with the younger kids too. We do fun things together, but also learn a lot and help out in the neighborhood and make a difference. ~ Cowen Grant*

*As a former Youth Ministry professional, I am aware of how important it is that a church prioritizes making disciples and invests in a quality, full-time youth program. I was impressed with Northwest's commitment to this ministry and how they provided numerous opportunities for our young people to grow in their faith, so I decided to serve as a youth mentor and volunteer. It has been a joy and privilege for me to serve alongside Chris, Zach and other volunteers to accompany and help guide our youth in their spiritual journeys.*

*~ Tracy Reed*



## Youth Serving in Children's Ministry



*We have amazing teens at Northwest, and each year I have the privilege in guiding and equipping them to serve alongside our teaching team share the good news with the young children on Sunday mornings, at our summer camps, and with family outreach opportunities on site and in the community. The collaboration with the teens is vital to the growth and success of the ministries here church. The shared leadership is what makes the relationships so important and inspiring for all involved.*

*- Doris Ing, Pastor of Family Ministries*



# Adult Small Groups

Adult small groups continue to be a place where community and connection happen. There are groups that have been meeting for years, groups that are newly formed, and even groups that only exist for a day or a weekend retreat, and yet still provide the human connection that we all need. Here are a few stories from some of these groups:

## The Biblical Story

This is a new study started by Pastor Chris that meets at his house on Thursday nights from 7-8pm. The group consists of both veterans and newbies when it comes to the Bible, and all are eager to learn and grow with each other. We are taking popular, well-known Bible stories and studying them in order as we seek to understand the bigger picture of the Bible and the wider Biblical story.

## Books to Bridges

Started in 2020 when everything was online by necessity, Books to Bridges continues as a weekly online small group. The group reads books from different perspectives that help widen understandings. Because it is an online group, people join from a variety of places. Since the group started, there have been participants from Arkansas, Florida, and New Jersey as well as throughout the Central Ohio area.



*Staying connected matters! The pastors and staff sometimes plan events at Friendship Village for times of reconnection with friends there. Pictured are cookies and caroling last December and lunch with the pastors this October.*

## Other Small Groups



*Raising the BAR enjoys food and fellowship at a local restaurant*



*Coffee Talk Daytime and Nighttime women's groups provide learning and fellowship!*



*Heart Sisters celebrated Lunar New Year together*



*The Interfaith Coalition for Racial Reconciliation continues to meet monthly to learn from each other. They also plan annual events including Martin Luther King Day and Juneteenth worship services, a health fair, and an anti-racism training event.*



# Outreach and Missions

Partnerships continue to be central to how we serve our community and beyond. We continue to work with long time partners and develop new partnerships with community organizations doing important work locally and far away. These partnerships allow our resources to go further as we seek to be the body of Christ together.

## Star House

This year we renewed our partnership with Star House, a drop in center for homeless youth here in Columbus. Star House is one of our go to partners when there is leftover food following church events that we don't want to go to waste. When we took food to Star House this fall, we learned that they were in need of new underwear for the teens. We knew Northwest could help! We held a one day pop-up for new adult underwear. In one day, we collected over 350 pairs of new underwear. This is something that is so easy but makes a HUGE impact for our neighbors.



## NNEMAP Food Pantry

The affiliation between Northwest UMC and the NNEMAP Food Pantry dates back more than 40 years. Our church is one of 33 churches in the Columbus area that support the pantry through donations and volunteerism.

The Pantry moved to the Short North in 1969 incorporating, at that time, with 12 area churches to become NNEMAP. The Pantry is currently located on 11th Avenue across from the State Fairgrounds. It is open 5 days per week and serves families from all zip codes. In addition to serving families at the Pantry location, NNEMAP also provides delivery service and has refrigerated lockers on site for people who cannot come to the pantry during hours of operation.

Over the past three years, the number of families NNEMAP serves has tripled. In 2024, the pantry served over 56,000 families. In that same period of time, food costs increased nearly 400% for the pantry. Northwest supports the pantry in the following ways: Monetary donations, monthly pantry item donations where we're asked to provide specific food items, opportunities to support Pantry Fundraisers including "Harmony for Hunger" concerts and "A Taste of German Village," and by members of our church community who volunteer.

Our long-time collaboration with the NNEMAP Food Pantry helps them to stay committed to the families who trust them for food and other services each week.



## Habitat for Humanity

Our connection with Habitat for Humanity started with the Heart Sisters Small Group. They were discussing how to learn more about the housing injustice in our city and to offer support to organizations already addressing the issue. So we reached out to Habitat in the spring and helped with a project in June. This October we have two groups helping with two different homes. We hope to continue to help with other Habitat projects in the new year.

*I enjoyed working with Habitat. I love building things. Everybody is so friendly. I feel like we've known each other longer than the day we work together. I saw the Lord working with everyone that day and enjoying what they did and getting along with each other. Can't wait to help out again! ~ Randy Brewer*



## ***Sparrow House***



The effort to provide Christmas gifts to children in the Laurelville, Ohio area began in 2011 when someone donated Barbie dolls to South Perry UMC and asked them to find homes for the dolls. Sparrow House is the outreach ministry for South Perry UMC; this ministry provides gently used clothing each spring, and new clothing in December, along with presents through their Christmas Gift Shop.

Northwest UMC has been involved with the Christmas Gift Shop since 2013. Each October we collect gently used toys, dolls, stuffed animals, puzzles, books, and sports equipment. The past two years we have also collected new hats, mittens, gloves, and underwear for children ages 5-17. Each December, Sparrow House provides clothing and Christmas Gift Baskets for over 500 children in the Laurelville area. Parents and Grandparents shop on a designated weekend in December. Extra donations are shared with surrounding communities. The Mission team of Northwest, the volunteers of Sparrow House, and the children of southeast Ohio appreciate your kind donations each year!

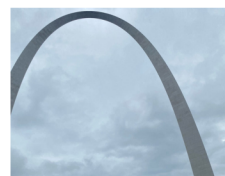
## ***Winter Blessings***

Winter Blessings began around 5 years ago. From our interaction with families along our Brown Bag Lunch route we realized there was a need for winter coats for children in the community. We received large donations from One Warm Coat to begin this ministry. With the help of donations such as these and donations from our church family we have continued to supply coats to help keep kids warm this winter. Receiving a coat offers more than just physical comfort, it's a gesture of kindness. This October, we gave away more than 250 coats, along with many hats and gloves.



## ***And so much more***

One of the challenges each year in making this brochure is choosing what ministries to highlight, and that is never more true than on the Outreach and Mission pages. We have made an effort to highlight different opportunities than we did last year because we just can't do it all. We are so grateful for the partnerships in these pages as well as many other partnerships that we have developed over the years. These partnerships expand our reach as the body of Christ. They are part of the Many Gifts, One Spirit we proclaim. While still not a complete representation, the pictures below represent some of the other outreach and mission ministries of Northwest, including Brown Bag Lunches, the Northwest Children's Garden, Manna Cafe, the summer mission trip, Church for All People, Soup for Linden Market, Santa on the Go, the choir sharing music at a prison, Find a Friend Bags, and the Blessing Cart. As we often say: Love has no ZIP Code.





# The Practical Stuff

The details on this page are behind the scenes pieces that make the rest of the pages in this brochure possible. As with any home or building, the church property needs regular maintenance and updating to function for the ministry to which we have been called. Here are some of projects we have undertaken this year:

- Over the course of this past year, we have spent more than \$18,000 on Heating/Cooling repairs. As we end this year, we will be getting a new heating unit at a cost of over \$45,000. We have been blessed with donor designated funds created for these types of expenses. During 2026, we need to help build this fund back up for replacements that will be needed down the road.
- We cleaned out and refreshed room 111 downstairs for additional meeting space and use by the Sunday morning children's ministry.
- There have been several thousands of dollars of clean-up, refresh, re-planting and movement of sprinkler system in the Memorial Garden. What a wonderful improvement to one of the most beautiful areas of our campus!
- In addition to the Riverside Drive property, we have also made repairs to the parsonage. Facilities Manager Tommy Davis has corrected electrical issues, installed a new dishwasher, repaired the garage door and so much more.
- We had the floor in the Ministry Center painted with lines for basketball, volleyball and pickleball. Expect to see activity in this room during the colder weather to help build community.
- We upgraded the electrical set up in the Chapel in the Woods and replaced the outdated sound equipment used in that space. We also updated our livestream equipment in the Ministry Center.
- The garage has been cleaned and reorganized, producing a workable area for projects.
- We are also aware of upcoming projects in our aging building. This includes repairing and adding new gutters across the front of the church and working on better drainage in the lower parking lot, as well as possible roof repairs and more updates to the HVAC system.

This is by no means a complete list, but it is a reminder that much of our work is the day to day tasks that make the rest possible. The pictures to the side represent just a few opportunities that taking care of the "practical stuff" makes possible.

When Randy retired this year, we knew his leaving would leave a void. We are so grateful for the hiring of Tommy Davis who has hit the ground running and helps us keep the building in great shape and functioning for the work we have been called to do. Some words from Tommy:

*I'm thrilled to be on staff as Facilities Manager. Also, I'm passionate about serving and supporting our community. My journey with Northwest includes Brown Bag Lunches and Manna Cafe. I'm excited to work behind the scenes providing hospitality and ensuring everyone feels welcome. Outside of church, I enjoy photography and hanging out with my wife. I am looking forward to growing in faith and serving alongside our amazing team. - Tommy Davis*



*Coffee and Conversation builds community and allows participants to practice English conversation.*



*Online Worship continues to be an important connection with people who can't make it to the building.*



*We were able to host the installation of the new District Superintendent and share our beautiful campus with other church leaders.*





# The Budget

As we celebrate the accomplishments of the past year, we also look forward to what we can achieve in the upcoming year. The 2026 budget outlines our plans for utilizing your generous gifts. This budget reflects an increase of less than 1% over the 2025 budget. We have carefully reviewed spending over the past two years and adjusted budget items to better match actual expenses, while accounting for necessary increases to essential services, such as electricity, natural gas, water, and sewer charges.

## Proposed 2026 General Fund Budget

### Missions

Local Community \$35,515  
Connectional Giving \$75,033  
Hospitality \$7,146

### Worship:

Altar Guild \$615  
Music \$12,322  
Worship Resources \$8,094

### Existing Ministries

Children & Family \$8,969  
Youth \$4,686

### Staff Salaries and Benefits

Staff Salaries \$463,993  
Staff Benefits \$20,556  
(Social Security, Workers Comp, Hospitalization, etc.)

### Regular Expenses

Trustees: \$136,473  
Parsonage \$20,231  
Traffic Control \$11,076  
Office \$4,575  
Finance/Stewardship \$13,882

**Total General Budget \$823,166**



*We continue to have a wonderful partnership with Boy Scout Troop 200. This balance beam added to the playground was one Eagle Scout project this year.*



*We celebrated 10 years of Brown Bag Lunches this year! This ministry continues to grow as we build community partnerships and get to know our neighbors!*



*Our summer mission team went to St. Louis, Missouri to learn and serve in the area of racial reconciliation. They led us in worship to share what they learned after their return.*





Loved by God, we find  
 belonging in community and  
 purpose in loving the world.

