Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 15

What does Martin Luther King Jr. Day mean to you? A day off work or school? A day not off work, while others are? Consider why we have this holiday.

King was the chief spokesman for nonviolent activism in the Civil Rights Movement, which successfully protested racial discrimination in federal and state law. The campaign for a federal holiday in King’s honor began soon after his assassination in 1968. President Ronald Reagan signed the holiday into law in 1983, and it was first observed three years later. At first, some states resisted observing the holiday as such, giving it alternative names or combining it with other holidays. It was officially observed in all 50 states for the first time in 2000.

The national Martin Luther King Day of Service was started by former Pennsylvania U.S. Senator Harris Wofford and Atlanta Congressman John Lewis, who co-authored the King Holiday and Service Act. The federal legislation

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Learning In God’s House Together

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in shadows but will have the light of life.” John 8:12

THANK YOU FOR AN OUTSTANDING PAGEANT!

Bravo! “Charlie Brown’s Christmas” on Dec. 18th was a meaningful intergenerational experience for our church family! We are very blessed by each and every one of you; Adults, youth and children of West Park UCC!

A special big thanks to all the actors and Jane Vogt, for all your help!

Thanks to Robin Jessen, Debbie Miller, and all the helping hands for making the Family Christmas party after the pageant another West Park success!😊

Wonderful Christmas memories for all of us!

Santa Angels, Thank you for the generous donations of Toys and Pajamas for Laura’s Home’s Christmas gifts! With the donations of the plush animals from Wild Republic there were close to 250 items donated! The ladies kept saying “Thank you, Jesus!” as I brought everything in!

Reminder - Please bring your filled Hope Totes to church by January 7!
UPCOMING EVENTS!

Jan. 14-15, 2018 MLK Overnighter @ Federated Church Family Life Center

Friday, February 9th, Weekend Winter Jam ~ Christian Music Concert 6PM at CSU’s Wolstien Center. We can car pool from WPUCC @ 5pm

MOPS - Mothers of Preschoolers - Our next meeting will be Tuesday, January 9, at 6:30 p.m. Contact Robin Jessen or Debbie Miller for more information.

Prayer shawl meets Jan. 9th at 2:00pm.

Reminder: Lenten devotions are due by Jan. 28th please submit to Debbie Miller or Lora Mosier.

RETREATS IN 2018 ~ SAVE THE DATE!!!
- Women’s Retreat March 3rd, 2018 at River’s Edge.
- All Church Retreat Memorial Day for 2018, May 26-28 at Templed Hills!

GOD IS ON THE MOVE COLLECTIONS!
We are refilling the Mitten Line at least 2-3 times a week!
ITEMS FOR THE MITTEN LINE: SOCKS, HATS, SCAVES, GLOVES ETC. FOR THE NEXT 3 MONTHS, through MARCH!!

SPIRITS WITH THE SPIRIT!
Sat. Jan. 27, 7:00 p.m. @ Tricia Melton’s home.

Martin Luther King
Please Check with Ms. Wendy for details, VERY IMPORTANT!

Remember to PLEASE Confirm if you’re attending by Jan. 7th 🙏

The youth group invites you to support the Souper Bowl of Caring during the month January. We will be collecting cans of soup and cash donations for Church Street Ministries.

Happy New Year! Thank you for being part of my many blessings! Peace and Light, Ms. Wendy
Sometimes I get stuck with a horrible case of writer’s block. I just cannot figure out what to say. My fingers just type and type and type but I just keep hitting the backspace button, deleting every thought that manages to make it to the page. It’s a terrible feeling.

Our faith teaches us that in addition to the fullness of divinity, Jesus Christ was also fully human. I wonder if in that humanness, in that frailty and frustration that it sometimes means to be human, did Jesus ever have writer’s block? Did Jesus ever stumble over his words when he was speaking to a crowd? Did Jesus ever get cold feet when getting out of bed at night?

We do have some clues in our Bible about human attributes of Jesus. We know that Jesus cried (John 11); Jesus ate food (Mark 2); Jesus got angry (Matthew 21); and two of my favorites: Jesus gives in to his mother (John 2) and, at one point, is so hungry he reacts with anger (Mark 11). So to use some modern slang, that means that Jesus even got **hangry**!

In his humanity, Jesus was like us. That is the uplifting and empowering message that we can sometimes overlook when we only reflect on the Christ and not the man. In his human body, Jesus would have washed his hair, shaved his face, done laundry and washed dishes. These are unremarkable tasks that many of us do every day. Of course, none of these things is recorded in our Bible, but I can imagine him this way, that is, as a person.

So what do the musings of your pastor on the humanity of Jesus have to do with us? I’m sure you might be thinking that at this point. Well, it means absolutely everything! It means that Jesus can fully understand your struggle. Jesus can fully empathize with your pain. Jesus can fully experience your joy. Jesus knows how you feel, how we feel, because Jesus is the Word made flesh. Jesus came into the world that we might fully know him. But Jesus also came into this world that he might fully know us.

And what a wonderful gift that is – to be known, to be acknowledged, to be noticed. Think about how it makes you feel when someone simply says “hello,” or looks you in the eye. And that is the gift of Jesus Christ into our world. God the Parent, God the Child and God the Spirit gives us a chance to encounter the divine by seeing the ordinary. We can see God, we can meet God, we can feel God in the fullness of humanity of all of our sisters and brothers.

As we embark on this new year together, let us all make 2018 the year we will strive to see the divine in each other just as we see the humanity in our God.

Pastor Jason
NEW NAME -- SAME FUN PROGRAM

Our Monthly Adult Education Program is getting a new name: 3rd Sundays! This Adult Christian Education program will meet on the third Sunday of each month at 11:30 for about 75-90 minutes. This month’s class will be a continuation of our conversation on Islam with a presentation and discussion on *Islam's Jesus*, the most recent book by Dr. Zeki Saritoprak, Director of the Bediuzzaman Said Nursi Chair in Islamic Studies at John Carroll University. Dr. Saritoprak comes to us from an invitation of our friends at the Turkish American Society. He will also join us in worship on January 21.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND OTHER THINGS

“UNHANGING” OF THE GREENS - Saturday, January 13, 9:00 a.m., during Work Morning - come and get donuts and coffee provided by the Deacons, and help put away the Christmas Season Decorations. Any questions, contact Jeff Dobransky.

NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS? Did you know that happiness is not a feeling that just comes over you, it’s a choice!

Here are three things you can do to increase your happiness in less than 20 minutes each day:

- Take 2 minutes to truly “Thank” someone in person, or by calling them, texting, emailing, or using other social media. Gratitude is key.
- Move your body for 15 minutes, your actions create results!
- Spend 2 minutes focusing on breathing. … Breath in the love of God and blow out, letting go of anything that you do not need!

Do these things each day and you may find yourself happier!

Blessings,
Ms. Wendy
Birthdays

4 Cindy Tabanji
Hannah Szabo
6 Lisa Gibson
7 E. Jim Zmina
10 Florence Boughner
Janice Jones
11 LaShanda Harper
12 Margaret Borrelli
15 Michael Carter
Julie Schleich
16 Chuck Kline
Felix Miranda
17 Larry Rennette
19 Debbie Schuerger
20 Kim Kozlak
22 Pat Rust
23 Doris Sloane
Robert Owens
24 Ivonne Marin-
Miranda
29 Corey McFadden

Anniversaries

Jeffery & Gail Kantura
01-31-1989

Our Wednesday Bible Study Topics

January 3 - No Study
January 10 - The Redemption of Scrooge
- last study, rescheduled
January 17, 24, 31 Bad Boys of the Bible

FOOTSTEPS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MISSION TRIP

We are finalizing our plans for our summer mission trip to Alabama. We will depart from Cleveland on July 24 with a return on July 30. The cost of the trip will be approximately $1500 per person, depending on the number of people who wish to go. We need confirmation of intent to go on the trip on or before January 15, 2018, with an initial deposit of $250 on or before February 1, 2018. Please contact Pastor Jason with questions or to confirm your intent to be included in this learning opportunity.

SAVE THE DATES- February

Jan. 7 - Time capsule From Youth Group of 1993
Jan 14 - Installation of Council during worship
Jan 15 - 2016 Annual reports due
Jan 28 - Lenten Devotional Articles Due
February 11 - Annual Meeting and Lunch
February 14 - Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00 a.m.
and 7:00 p.m.
Feb. 21, 28 - 12:15 pm Lenten Worship and 5:30 p.m. Supper and Lenten Study
OUTREACH AND THANKS

PINK ENVELOPE - YOUTH CAMPERSHIPS

For just a moment, reflect on those life experiences that have had the most profound and lasting impact on your spiritual enrichment. For many of us, those life-changing experiences have occurred at church camp. As a congregation, in the next few weeks we have an opportunity to ensure that our young people are given the opportunity to nurture their faith by helping to supplement the cost of their campership experience in 2017 through our February pink envelope offering. So please give generously to this important cause, a life-changing experience that not only enriches the lives of West Park UCC’s young people, but every member of this family of faith.

THANK YOU FROM OUR FRIENDS

Dear West Park United Church of Christ,
Thank you for your kindness and support of Blessed Trinity Parish. We are very appreciative of your Thanksgiving collection for our Bountiful Basement Food Pantry.

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Thank you for your kindness and support of Blessed Trinity Parish. We are very appreciative of your Thanksgiving collection for our Bountiful Basement Food Pantry.

Dear Rev. Thompson, Recovery, International greatly appreciates the use of the meeting room which your church provides for our weekly support group meetings. As a non-profit organization staffed by volunteers, we have very limited resources and depend on the kindness of organizations such as yours for our meeting places...

Very truly yours, Russell Novotny, Area Leader, Northern Ohio West Recovery, International

Dear Friends in Christ,
Thank you for your gift of $1261.00 received to support Hurricane 2017 Relief Efforts, designated to help the victims of Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria. We are asking for prayers for everyone impacted by the storms, and for your continued support as the long-term recovery takes shape.

Faithfully, Mary Paxton, Director, Office of Philanthropy & Stewardship, United Church of Christ.
This Church encourages people to think for themselves in matters of religion, following their best judgment and dictates of their own Christian faith and guidance of the Holy Spirit.

West Park UCC Constitution, Article III, Section 2

Drawn together by the Holy Spirit, we are a distinct and diverse community of Christians that come together as one church, joining faith and action. In covenant with the church in all of its settings, we serve God in the co-creation of a just and sustainable world as made manifest in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

“That they may all be one” (John 17:21)

From the home page, www.ucc.org

As Christians, and as citizens of the United States of America, it is our challenge to honor Rev. Dr. King in ways that further unite our community, country and our world by recognizing all our neighbors living in our community, our nation, or anywhere on this planet, treating all with respect, contributing in whatever way we can, and so fulfill our God’s declaration, “Truly, I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these, you did it to me.” (from Matthew 25:40)

So think about what you can do on MLK day. If you have the day off, volunteer somewhere to help those less fortunate than you. If you are working that day, treat all people you come in contact with using respect, kindness, and compassion, from the stranger on the street, to your coworkers and superiors. If you cannot get out, consider re-reading the history of Dr. King, or some of his speeches (look up the Bible references!), and ponder what it means to be a true citizen of the world.