



# Cross Talk

Making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world by loving, engaging, and serving our neighbors

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## CHURCH STAFF

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## Of Mercy and Mice

Sometimes, a piece of scripture will jump out you from your subconscious. It happened to me the other day. I was at the Nimisila Reservoir releasing two mice into the wild. I opened the traps and gave their sides a little tap to encourage the recalcitrant occupants to make their way out, and from deep in the recesses of my mind leapt forth, “A bruised reed he will not break, and a smoldering wick he will not snuff out.” It was, I think, a reminder that God is gentle.

The children had just finished up their stint as little menacing mice in the Akron University production of the Nutcracker when Madeline spotted something scurrying across our kitchen floor. We weren’t sure, but a light dusting of snow on the porch revealed tiny footprints that led toward the house and disappeared. The mouse hunt had begun. I thought about buying traditional mousetraps, but I wondered if there were options for humane traps. I looked online and found one that was highly rated and only slightly more expensive. As instructed, I baited them with a little peanut butter and waited.

The kids were incredibly curious. We talked about live traps versus kill traps. I explained to them that we cannot have mice in the house and I am determined to be rid of them one way or the other. If the humane traps didn’t work, I would try the others. I explained that, when possible, I prefer to be gentle, but life doesn’t always give you that option.

The scriptures are not very gentle to mice. Leviticus 11 declares them to be an unclean creature. Isaiah 66 says that anyone who eats them will be cut off. In 1 Samuel, golden mice are part of the guilt offering when the Philistines return to the Ark of the Covenant. They are unclean and they are a sign of sin. Although, I imagine the little things are rather grateful that we aren’t allowed to eat them.

We were all pleased when we had our first catch – two in one night! We tried not to terrify the poor creatures. I put the trap in a box until I could run them out to the park. I did indulge the children with a little peek. Four blue eyes staring down at four little black eyes staring up. We pitied them, and I was glad to release them. That’s when the scripture came into my mind.

It’s from Isaiah, and it’s quoted in Matthew. The scriptures say the Lord’s chosen will do justice, but they also say he will be gentle with the bruised, the broken, and the burnt out. In some ways we’re a little like mice. We are often unclean in the way we live toward God and neighbor. You aren’t supposed to eat people, but in a way we sometimes do – harming each other, taking from each other. Yet, God chose to be merciful with us. That may be why it feels good to be merciful to these little mice. Practice what you preach and give of what you have received. It reminds me of a poem by Rudy Francisco, from his collection Helium. Rudy writes:

“She asks me to kill the spider.  
Instead, I get the most  
peaceful weapons I can find.

I take a cup and a napkin.  
I catch the spider, put it outside  
and allow it to walk away.

If I am ever caught in the wrong place  
at the wrong time, just being alive  
and not bothering anyone,

I hope I am greeted  
with the same kind  
of mercy.”

I know I already have.

Blessings,  
Pastor Harlen



**FEBRUARY  
BIRTHDAYS**

- 2 Nick Sopher
- 7 Reese Cowgar
- 10 Caleb Smesko
- 12 Alaya Johnson
- 13 Cassidy Chaffinch
- 14 James Kocsis
- 16 Gina Laterza
- 17 Margery Aller
- Pete Peterson
- 20 Sydney Rossiter

**BED BRIGADE UPDATE— 45 INDIVIDUALS HAVE RECEIVED BEDS TO DATE**

The Bed Brigade mission continues to grow. On Saturday, January 7th about 35 individuals gathered for a great morning of fellowship, hard work and service. A group of about a dozen students from the Green Key Club were a great help and allowed us to assemble 20 bed frames in record time.

We continue to partner with Jackson and Green Local Schools, Summit DD, OPEN-M, Crossroads Ministry, Harmony House and others to identify people in need of beds.



I want to thank everyone who help make this mission a success by the prayers, donations, and time. Special thanks go out to Chase Borland who encouraged his fellow Green Key Club members to participate and to Broc Bidlick for cutting all the lumber for this build.

We ask that you keep this mission in your prayers. We still need to expand our ability to identify individuals in need of a bed and our corps of individuals able to deliver the beds.

Since the build, we have received requests for 5 beds which will be delivered in January.

This is GOOD NEWS to those who will receive the beds and those who build them. Thank you for your support.



*Happy Anniversary*

**FEBRUARY  
ANNIVERSARIES**

February 4th  
Robert & Pam Milhoan



## FAMILY AND CHILDREN MINISTRY—

In January, we at G.U.M. Club started our study on Love by taking a quiz to see what each of our Love Languages are. We used the book by Gary Chapman (The Five Love Languages of Kids) during the month. It was very fun to see how the kids like to give and receive love. We will continue learning about different ways we can show love ( truth telling, food, and compassion) in the first few weeks of February. Then our studies will switch to Lent at the end of the month.

We will also begin to raise money for schools in need as a service project to help the church's mission for the month of March.

Thank you all for your continued support through prayers, snacks, juice, and of course bringing the kids each week!

Miss Amy, Miss Beth, Pastor David



## FEBRUARY MISSION FOCUS– AKRON CHILDREN'S NICU PROJECT!

It is exciting to share this mission opportunity with our church family. This project has been such a blessing over the past few years. NICU staff, babies, and families alike benefit from this generous offering. The coverlets are used to block out the lights over the isolettes where the small premature babies sleep and grow. We also make sheets for the isolette and crib mattresses. When working in the NICU, I often see the blankets, coverlets, and sheets that GUMC has given for this mission!

We are asking for participation on **Saturday, February 4th from 9am to noon**, for fabric to be used to create blankets and coverlets, or monetary donations for this mission project. It is important to note that you do not have to be a seamstress or tailor to join in the fun! The blankets are for Akron Children's Newborn Intensive Care and will be dropped off to the NICU on February 11th. Please note the size of the fabric we need for the project.

The needs are as follows:

Coverlets/Blankets — 1 ¼ Yards, at least 45 inch wide

Cotton, Fleece or Flannel Blankets — 1 ½ Yards (avg width is 59")

Fleece — 2 ½ Yards (avg width is 59")

*(prewashed fabric donations would be appreciated)*

Sewing machines, thread

We're eager to engage in fellowship and fun for this annual event!

Snacks/food will be provided. You don't have to know how to sew!

If you have any questions, contact Marilyn Nibling 234.804.1428 or Carol Lynn Stratton



**Greensburg UMC**

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**LOVE, ENGAGE, SERVE OPPORTUNITIES: COME BE PART OF THE GUMC COMMUNITY!**

**PLASTIC COLLECTION FOR BENCHES -**

We have reached our final goal!!! Our last bench will be going to Loving Hands Preschool and they plan to place it in the playground for the children to sit with their friends.

We are no longer collecting plastic for benches.

Thanks for your help!!!

**THINGS To Consider~**

- Tis the season for puzzling! Check out the selection in the Kids Library! Check one out and have fun!
- Join the Chancel Choir—still looking for people that like to sing! See Brian Lawson.
- Participate in the Walking Group that gathers together on Saturdays at 9am. Meet by the church office entrance.



We will resume meeting on the third Thursday of the month on February 16th at 3:30. There will be a Women's Bible Study Retreat at Wanake Camp and Retreat Center in Beach City , Ohio on February 17th -19th.

I plan to attend and anyone is welcome to attend. Feel free to call me at 865-365-2202. Dana Stevens- UWF President

**CHURCH OFFICE HOURS**

**MONDAY, WEDNESDAY & FRIDAY— 9AM TO 1PM / TUESDAY AND THURSDAY—9AM TO 3PM**

**IF YOU NEED TO STOP BY THE OFFICE, PLEASE CALL AHEAD!**

**330.896.1936**