



A community with a conscience
The University Church



November 2021

Dear Friends

Merry Christmas from your friends at The University Church. We pray that this letter finds you safe and healthy.

Since the beginning of the global pandemic The University Church has been constantly reimagining what it means to be the Church in our community. We continue to ask:

- What challenges are facing our neighbors today?
- How can we adapt to meet the needs around us?
- How can we continue to share the love of Christ in a tangible and meaningful way?

Change is not something that churches are typically known to embrace, but thankfully, *YOU are not a typical church*. Light on your feet and agile in your thinking, **YOU, our church family, embraced change, took on new challenges, and showed up in a big way!**

The Great Pivot – our ongoing response to the global pandemic:

- Our Rogers High School after-school program moved online to continue to support students with tutoring, social emotional learning, and special events like cooking classes. Today, our after-school program is back in-person, following the safety protocols set forth by our school district.
- Early in the pandemic, our Rogers High School and Reynolds Elementary School HUB Directors quickly identified several urgent needs in our community and responded by creating distribution programs that provided food and hygiene items to families in need.
- The University Church's own food pantry did not miss a single Third Thursday distribution as we transitioned to a delivery and drive-up model, while protecting volunteers and food pantry clients through social distancing and masking.
- Our Community Health Worker continues to meet a growing need through her work with pregnant women and new mothers, connecting with clients online and over the phone.
- For 16 months our church family moved to an online format for Sunday worship gatherings. During this time The University Church's children's and youth ministry team created virtual spaces for Sunday school, book club, and game nights. Returning to in-person gatherings has been a joy, made possible by the safety precautions we continue to practice.
- During the height of the pandemic, new friends gathered online to read and discuss a total of 4 anti-racism books during the course of our virtual book club.
- Our community garden provided a safe and educational environment for 6 first-year medical students, 3 summer AmeriCorps VISTA members, 1 fulltime AmeriCorps VISTA member, and many other volunteer groups. Persevering through the pandemic, our garden team continued to provide food to our community through our CSA and other food distribution programs and even installed a prayer garden filled with beautiful native plants.
- Staff meetings, church Leadership Team meetings, trainings, and committee meetings moved to an online video format to help us continue the work of the church.

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theuniversitychurcholeedo.org * Pastor - Julian A. Davies, M.Div., Ph.D. * Mobile: 419-343-8783

Where do we go from here?

Today, community life, church, volunteering, and even education look quite a bit different than they did before the pandemic. What hasn't changed is our shared commitment to ushering in the Kingdom of God here on earth.

Donate



Share your gifts.

The church's operating budget is the small, but mighty, core that sustains The University Church's ability to serve our community in many meaningful ways. From after-school tutoring to caring for newborn babies, from feeding the hungry to clothing under-served teenagers, our operating budget is the trunk that supports and sustains the far-reaching limbs of our proverbial tree. We understand that finances are difficult for many of us right now. If you are able, we invite you to give generously toward our operating budget so that we can see the fruit of our work together. Online giving options are available. Visit theuniversitychurchtoledo.org and click the "donate" tab. Or text your donation to (419) 987-4075.

Engage



In-person and online

Community is beautiful. You are needed; without you, something very important is missing. Join us for in-person worship gatherings on Sundays at 10:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. or online through Facebook and YouTube. Please visit our website or our Facebook page for the online worship gathering links.

You are invited! Please join us on Friday, December 24, 2021 for Christmas Eve:

- 4:30 p.m. Hymns and Carols
- 5:00 p.m. Sunset Service including Holy Communion
- 10:30 p.m. Hymns and Carols
- 11:00 p.m. Candlelight Service including The Great Thanksgiving

Reach Out



Get involved.

Are you called to feed the hungry? Support young people? Care for the environment? Come and find your place to serve here at The University Church. Our website, Facebook page, and monthly e-newsletter are filled with opportunities to connect. If you are not receiving our e-newsletter please contact us at theuniversitychurchtoledo@gmail.com. Come and join your church family for socially distanced, in-person opportunities.

This has been a challenging and intense period for our church family, our community, and for our planet. We mourn over what has been lost with heavy hearts. We are also grateful to be part of a church family who tenaciously clings to the hope of God's Kingdom flowering here on earth.

May we continue to rise to meet our shared future with creativity, strength, and grace.

Grace and peace:

Rev. Dr. Julian A. Davies

Pastor

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