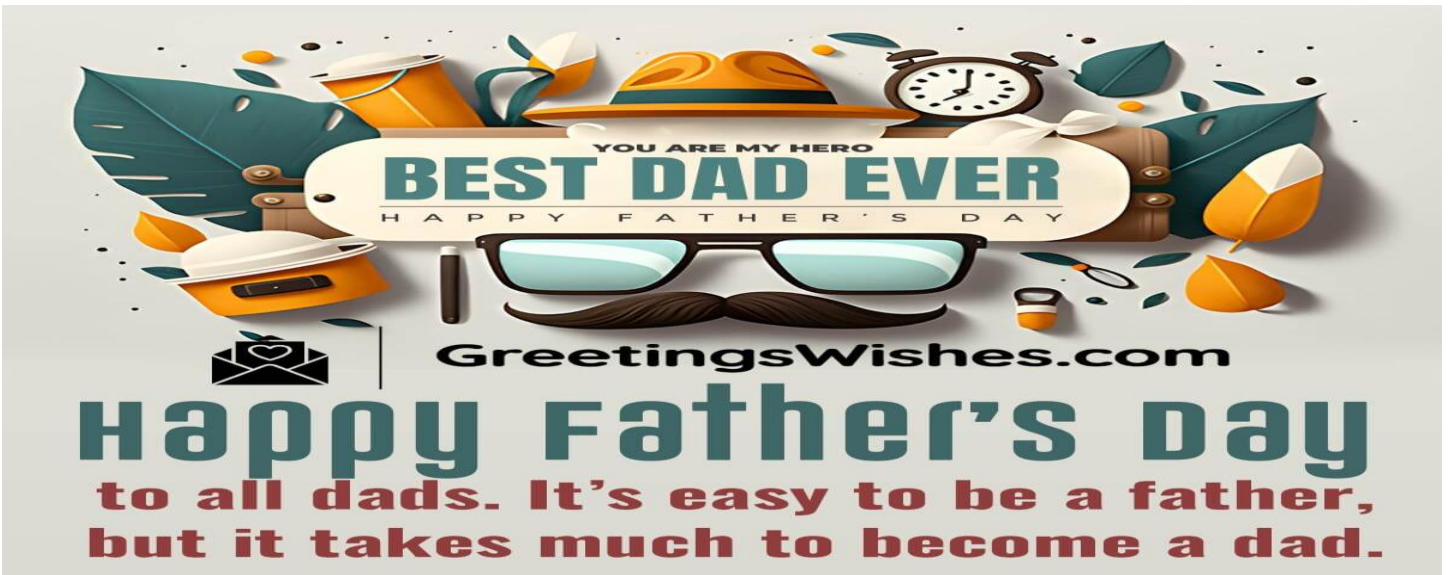




## *The Messenger*

NILES FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH  
608 N CRANDON AVENUE, NILES, OHIO 44446 330-652-1439



Worship with us.

Sundays @ 9:30 am

In house or Live stream on our Facebook page.

In Ministry Together....

Rev. Jennifer Wellington

Office Secretary.... Leona Krepps

Organist/Pianist ... Andrew Yaksich

Groundskeeper/Custodian.... John Hosu

# “But What If...?” — Questioning God as an Act of Hope

*By Rev. Jennifer Wellington*

At our Wednesday afternoon Bible Study at Niles First UMC we are learning about the book of Habakkuk, using a study guide entitled, “Staying Sane in a Crazy World” written by Jan Johnson. A few weeks ago, we opened by reading the following story.

When I was in third grade, I asked my substitute teacher a simple question. “But what if...?” I had thought of another way to complete the assignment, one that still accomplished what she wanted. But instead of welcoming my question, she snapped, “Don’t talk back to adults.” I was stunned. My regular teacher encouraged questions. She knew that asking “What if?” wasn’t rebellion. It was curiosity. It was trust. It was the confidence that the adult in charge cared enough to listen.

Years later, as a parent, I’ve learned what genuine backtalk looks like. It is the muttered comeback, the eye roll, the sarcastic remark tossed over a shoulder. Backtalk is rooted in resentment. But honest questions are something different. They often arise when someone still believes that the person in authority is fair, compassionate, and willing to help.

This got me thinking about “backtalk” in a whole new way. Backtalk could actually be an act of hope and faith. That is exactly what we see in the prophet Habakkuk.



Habakkuk looks around and sees violence, injustice, and suffering. He cannot understand why God seems silent. So he asks hard questions. He challenges God. He says, in effect, “Lord, how can this be right? What are you doing?”

Yet Habakkuk does not walk away. At the beginning of chapter 2, he says, “I will stand at my watchpost... and look to see what he will say to me.”

Habakkuk questions God because he still expects God to answer.

That is not rebellion. That is faith.

When we cry out to God about war, grief, injustice, or unanswered prayers, we are not “talking back.” We are saying, “Lord, I still believe you are loving and just. I trust that you hear me. I am waiting for your response.”

Questioning God is one of the deepest forms of hope.

It is the faithful “But what if?” that dares to believe God is listening—and that, somehow, God is still at work to make things right. Who knew that backtalk could be such a good thing?

# PILLARS

FOR OUR CHURCH  
AND LIFE

Remember these pillars of our church, who no longer can attend and sit beside you at service, with a telephone call or perhaps a birthday card or a thinking of you card.

Barbara Caldwell

Minnie Blose

Audrey John

Shirley Harris

Maria Allen

Evie Rice

Tony & Lolly Symcheck

Please contact the office for correct addresses and/or telephone numbers.

**To make your Messenger more interesting**.....If you have something you would like to put in the newsletter...the birth of a grandchild (great), wedding, graduation, birthday celebrations, anything that is important to you, **PLEASE** do not hesitate to contact the office. **THIS IS YOUR MESSENGER!!** What would you like to see/read??? **PLEASE** turn the information in to the secretary by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month by 10:00 am. If the 15<sup>th</sup> falls on a weekend, the articles are due the following Monday. **PLEASE** sign your name on the article, in case there is a question about what you wrote.

The beautiful fragrance of lilacs as you enter the Chapel Church entrance.





To my church family~~~Thank you for your much appreciated "get well wishes". I am recovering from a flu virus that just did not want to go away!

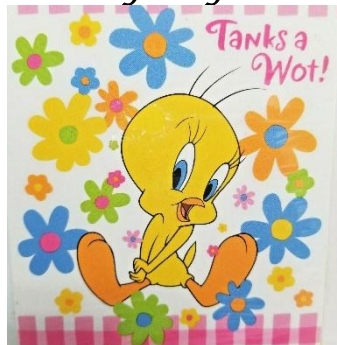
*Nancy Malone 03 May 2026*



Thank you to all of my church family who expressed their sympathy on the loss of my brother, whether by cards, messages, heartfelt words, prayers or visitation. It was truly appreciated. A loss is never easy but having support helps ease the circumstances.

*Thank you, Joan Ries*

*To my church family: Thank you for the many cards, telephone calls, food, and beautiful floral bouquet. And especially for remembering me in your thought and prayers. They are truly appreciated.*



*Elaine Walker*



We have decided that we will not have a craft fair/show this year. Previously, the earnings were used to support our holiday/Christmas endeavors. If anyone has any ideas for an event/fundraiser to replace the craft show, please let Amy or Patrice know. Thank you.



"It has been my honor to lead Niles First UMC Choir these past few months. In order to refresh the spirit and plan for the new church year, the choir will be on a break starting after May 24th. We will use this time to reflect, pray, and plan, and expect to begin rehearsals again in mid-August. Stay tuned for more!" Sincerely, *Andrew Yaksich*

## **RACHEL CIRCLE**

**(SUBMITTED BY *Rebecca Hanks*)**

Our meeting was held on 21 May, when we had our May outing. Nine (9) members and two (2) guests drove to Hartville to enjoy a day at the Hartville Kitchen. We visited many of the specialty areas and had delicious meals from their restaurant.

The performance in the theater was "Legends of Cleveland's Channel 8 TV". Five (5) stars told about their personal history and experiences on their shows. The audience then was able to ask questions which resulted in hearing about their warm experiences and "bloopers". It was truly a warm and enjoyable show.

Rachel Circle will celebrate their last meeting with a Tea Party on 10 June at 1:00 pm in Fellowship Hall with tea, scones, desserts and a special treat. If you have a fancy hat, you wish to wear, please do. Our hostesses are Pat Pfeifer (330-544-5296) and JoAnn Baugh. Please RSVP by Sunday, 07 June, to let them know if you will be joining us.



**You're Invited** ..... Please join Heidi and David Moyers in celebrating the graduation of their son, Andrew Moyers, from Liberty High School. The party will be held on Saturday, June 13<sup>th</sup> from 2:00– 5:00 at Churchill United Methodist Church in Liberty!

My granddaughter, Madison, is graduating from Kettering Fairmont High School. She recently received her certificate of completion for her Early Childhood Education Internship. She graduates on June 21st and is going to attend NYU to major in Education. Pictured with Madison is her dad, Nathan Doutt and her proud Grandmother. *Pat King*



Beckett Wargo is the grandson of Pat King. Beckett is a 2026 graduate of Keystones Oaks High School in Pittsburgh, Pa. In the fall, he will be attending Allegheny College to major in Computer Science and has been signed to play tennis with the college.



They gave their lives that you might live yours!



## Just a Little Prayer

God is always there for those  
Who really, really care,  
He helps dispel your cares and woes  
With just a little prayer.  
Invite the Lord into your heart,  
He has much love to spare,  
A love He gladly would impart  
With just a little prayer.  
Let Him know when things go wrong  
No matter where or or when.  
He can fill your heart with song  
With just a little prayer.  
It matters not your race or creed,  
God does not compare.  
He can fill your wants and needs  
With just a little prayer.  
No power on earth can give to many  
God's immortal blessings rare.  
He is the only One who can  
With just a little prayer.

# 2026

*Thanks to our veterans and soldiers who gave the ultimate sacrifice  
for our freedom~~~Their memories remain!!*



## IN MEMORY ~~ IN HONOR OF

Annmarie Anos

Howey Riley (Friend)

John, Amy &  
Annmarie Anos

Ann & Charles Wright  
Marie & Tony Anos  
Ray & Martha Smith  
Virginia & Carmen Caruso  
Theodora & John Anos

JoAnn Baugh

Mr. & Mrs. William Hunter  
& Daughter  
Mr. & Mrs. William Hunter

Nick & Linda Belcastro

Tony & Mary Belcastro  
Sam & Margaret Favkas

Barbara Caldwell

Loved ones

Debra & Robert Fink

Robert & Lois Fink Sr.  
Wanda Sullivan, George Hall  
Beloved pets: Sasha, Grissom,  
& Autumn

*IN MEMORY OF ~~ IN HONOR OF*

Karen Garcia

250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
of the USA

Kathie Hafely

All who have served & those  
currently serving our country

Richard & Becky Hanks    Loved Ones

Linda Haydu    Loved Ones

Anna Jones    William A. Jones

Pat King    Ray & Thelma Richards (parents)

Bob & Patrice Kish    Willie & Rosetta Butler  
James & Edith Kish

Leona & David Krepps    Fred Sr., Frank Jr., &  
Fred Jr. Powell  
David W. Krepps  
Patrick Hayes

Joe & Joyce Lukz

Loved Ones &  
Service Members

Nancy Malone

All Veterans of    our  
country

Pat Pfeifer & Family    Bill Pfeifer & Annie Christine

Joan Ries    Bill Williams (Brother)

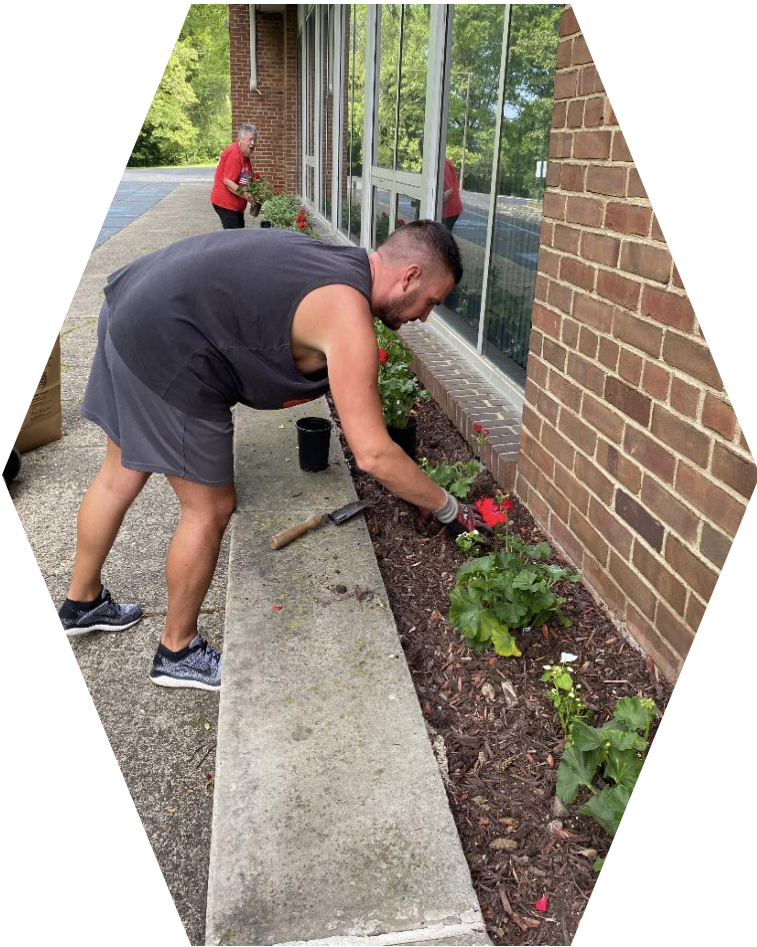
Elaine Walker    Loved Ones

*Thank you to the above-mentioned church members who are sharing the geraniums this Memorial Day Weekend in memory and honor of loved ones and friends.*



**Our Chapel was decorated with red, pink, white and salmon colored geraniums in memory and honor of loved ones for Memorial Day!**





**Ever wonder why or how the Church always looks so beautiful???**  
**A round of applause for Kyle Jones and Elaine Walker!!!!**



## **HISTORY HIGHLIGHTS**

### **(NANCY MALONE/HISTORIAN)**

**This story is from The Tribune Chronicle Plus, Tuesday, 03 September 1985.  
"Niles Woman Goin On Haitian Mission"**

Ann Wright is head cook at Washington Elementary School. Her three (3) daughters are grown and doing well in college careers and motherhood.

Ann will soon get on an Avi plane with sturdy clothes and supplies and will travel to Haiti to help build an education center there for school children.

Ann will be the designated cook for a two (2) week stay and will help eight (8) temporary missionaries from the Youngstown District Church who will build a dormitory for teachers at one of the few schools in the country.

Ann is Mission Chairman at the Methodist Church in Niles. She attended a church meeting several months ago when the subject of the Haiti trip came up. Ann said, "she would love to go if the trip ever came about."

Pastor Don Lefelar said, "if you want to go, we will find a way for you to go."

Financial help for the trip came through donations from the church's women's society.

Ann will join people from Methodist churches in Austintown, Struthers, Smith's Corners, Girard and Canfield to assist in building the dormitory.

Ann had said that the people of Haiti are very proud people and her family has been very supportive of her plans.



Does anyone recognize these birds?? They were seen from the Choir Room at Choir practice. We are thinking they might be turkey vultures.





# JUNE 2026

	Mon.	Tues.	Wed.	Thurs.	Fri.	Sat.
Niles Com. Pantry Items: Assorted Condiments						
	1	2	3	4	5	6 Zoey Martin
7 Coffee 9:30 Service Chuck Philips Joan Ries	8	9 Quilters 10:00 am Dick Bullock	10 Rachel Circle @ 1:00 pm AA 7:00 pm	11	12	13 Judy Shields Karen Garcia
14 Coffee 9:30 Service Chad Ries Kathie Hafely 	15 Shawn Spowart	16 Quilters 10:00 am	17 AA 7:00 pm	18	19	20
21 Coffee 9:30 Service Arya Duncan 	22	23 Quilters 10:00 am	24 AA 7:00 pm	25	26	27
28 Coffee 9:30 Service Amy Anos	29	30 Quilters 10:00 am				



*Niles First United Methodist Church  
608 Crandon Avenue  
Niles, Ohio 44446*