



Fall (Oct-Nov) 2021

Pathways

A monthly newsletter of Nashville UMC & Pastor Ken Smailes

Thanksgiving is a time when our attention turns to being thankful. And the scriptures urge us to have thankful hearts: "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever" (1 Chron. 16:34). "Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus" (1 Thess. 5:18). "For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving" (1 Timothy 4:4). But I want to challenge you as the holiday approaches. Are "thankfulness" and "gratitude" the same?

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

– Colossians 3:16-17

One dictionary states that thankfulness is "a feeling of being happy or grateful; well-pleased." Gratitude is defined as "readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness." It may be a subtle difference but "being thankful" is a feeling; "being grateful" is an action. We even find that distinction in Colossians 3:16-17.

The Greek word for "thanks" is translated as "good grace;" that is, to acknowledge God's grace. Gratitude, on the other hand, comes from the Greek "chariti," which means "extending favor toward," where we get our English word "charity." It implies taking action.

Gratitude is much deeper than thankfulness; it is a state of being – just as there is a distinction between joy and happiness. Yes, be thankful this Thanksgiving for all God has done in your life. But having a heart of gratitude is living out that thankfulness; or expressing your thankfulness. As the holidays and end of another year approach, consider how you can live out a heart of gratitude as part of finding true joy in the Lord.



Ken's Korner

Pastor Ken

Filled With GRATITUDE

Inside this issue are some highlights of our ministry in action and examples of ways that you can support us as we look forward to Thanksgiving, Christmas and the new year ahead.

Worship: 9:30 a.m. | Sunday School: 10:45 a.m.

This newsletter is published monthly by the Nashville United Methodist Church,
302 W. Millersburg St., P.O. Box 399, Nashville OH 44661



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Contact Information for Pastor Ken:

office phone: 330-378-2055 | home phone: 330-276-3871 | cell phone: 740-502-1913
email: pastorken@nashville-umc.org | mail: 180 Mark Ave., Killbuck, OH 44637





Guatemala

From a different view

Student spends 3 weeks in country

For Laura Irwin, a cross-cultural trip to Guatemala was both reinforcing and eye-opening.

Reinforcing, because she learned to never take her privileges in the United States for granted. Eye-opening, from a visit to a Conservation Cloud Forest. *"The breathtaking experience in the Cloud Forest was arguably where I felt God the most,"* she says. *"I had never seen anything like what I experienced there."*

An organization uses the forest to teach young Mayan women about sustainability in everyday practices, including agriculture. Food was prepared with as many homegrown ingredients as possible.

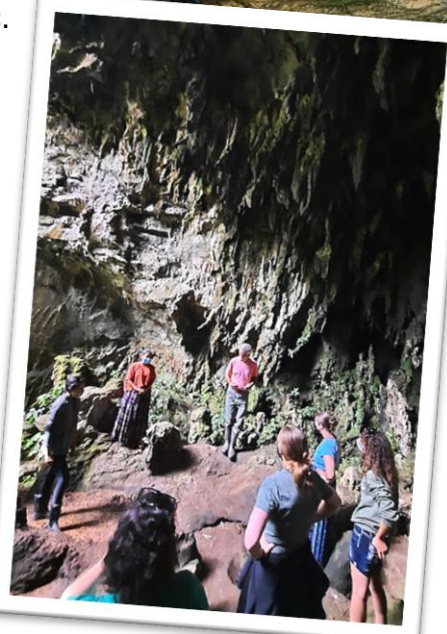
The Bluffton University junior from Holmes County was among six students and a professor making the three-week trip. They learned about the history of Guatemala, the Mayan culture, issues facing the country today, and about the heartbreaking genocides that took place over three decades, including what's called the "Silent Holocaust" from 1981 to 1983. More than 600 Mayan communities were destroyed, an estimated 200,000 Guatemalans – many of Mayan descent – were killed, and 1.5 million were in exile because of the violence and corrupt government. Last year in November, back-to-back hurricanes displaced more than 300,000 people.

"I sympathize with the immigrants," Laura says, noting disheartening comments she sometimes hears back home about Guatemalan farm workers. *"They make the heartbreaking decision to leave the very place they love, knowing that they may lose their lives. Why? Because they have no opportunities where they are – poverty, helplessly watching their families struggle."*

Among Irwin's treasured experiences: sharing a Mayan meal with a college mate's Guatemalan family. *"We had to eat the soup using our hands and sat on raised planks of wood. Pine needles were spread on the ground for decoration,"* she says. *"Wilmer's parents spoke primarily k'itche, the main Mayan language. His mother actually refused to learn any Spanish as she remembers her people being forced to learn it to assimilate with the Latinos that were oppressing the Mayans."*

✓ East Ohio plans trip in 2022

United Methodist Volunteers In Mission (UMVIM) are planning home repairs & children's programming in rural areas of Guatemala next winter, led by Kimberly & Doug Arbaugh of Carrollton First UMC.



Laura Irwin – whose family lives between Nashville & Killbuck and attends Nashville UMC – is studying music education and Spanish at Bluffton. She's also active in several band and choir ensembles, the Ministry Team, the SERVE Club, a dance club, and she helps with children at an area church.

While in Guatemala, Irwin witnessed long lines in which thousands of people were desperate to get COVID-19 vaccinations because of the helpless deaths and poor healthcare there – a situation she says made her feel guilty and furious about Americans who thumb their noses at the vaccines. *"The least we can do is get vaccinated and become one less person to carry the awful disease,"* she says.

Nashville UMC making a difference



**NATIONAL
COLLECTION
WEEK**

**NOV.
15-22**



**Collection week is upon us,
so drop off your boxes and
gift contents at the church.**

**If you'd like to help with
postage for mailing *Operation
Christmas Child* boxes, Janice
Tope is offering pickled beets
in the foyer for a donation.**

... and you can join us in ministry for the holidays

■ This year, in support of the Holmes County Share-A-Christmas, the Nashville & Killbuck



United Methodist churches are collecting **400 cans of soup**. Donations can be dropped off at either church through Sunday, November 28th.



■ Stop by Rodhe's on Friday, Dec. 3, and say "Hi" as volunteers from the Nashville United Methodist Church will be ringing the bells for the **Salvation Army Kettle Drive** to assist families in need. Proceeds support Holmes County residents.

■ Donations are being accepted toward **food gift certificates** for area families for Thanksgiving. A donation box is located in the lobby area of the church through Sunday, Nov. 21, for anyone wishing to give. If you know someone or a family in our area in need of relief, let Hazel Taft or Pastor Ken know. *"Carrying out this social relief work involves far more than helping meet the bare needs of poor Christians. It also produces abundant and bountiful thanksgivings to God. This relief offering is a prod to live your very best, showing your gratitude to God by being openly obedient to the plain meaning of the message of Christ"* (2 Corinthians 9:12-15, from The Message Bible).

■ **Do you know about "Giving Tuesday?"**

It's a movement designed to unleash the power of generosity around the world.

Whether it's making someone smile, helping a neighbor or a stranger, showing up for an issue or people you care about, or giving some of what you have to those who need help, every act of generosity counts, & everyone has something to give.

Since 2012, the Tuesday after Thanksgiving (Nov. 30 this year) has been designated as "Giving Tuesday" in contrast to the commercialism of Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

Included in this newsletter is Pastor Ken's "Annual Report." Consider how you might support the Nashville United Methodist Church, or through United Methodist Global Ministries and the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), our church has many opportunities to support projects that advance vital ministries around the world, as well.



The United Methodist Church supports missionaries, volunteers, & community development initiatives throughout the United States and around the world, including:

- ✓ Disaster Response & Recovery
- ✓ Migration & Refugees
- ✓ Hunger & Poverty
- ✓ Community Development
- ✓ Water & Sanitation
- ✓ Creation Care & Environment
- ✓ Global Health
- ✓ Women & Children

To find out more about an area of your interest, go to:
www.umcmmission.org/give

Detach and return to Nashville UMC, 302 W. Millersburg St., P.O. Box 399, Nashville 44661

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

I would like to contribute: \$_____ maintenance & capital needs of the church
\$_____ operational expenses & church ministries
\$_____ children's activities & youth initiatives
\$_____ assisting those in need & community outreach

I would like to volunteer, or learn more about: ☐ Mission Opportunities
☐ Children/Youth Ministry
☐ Hospitality & Fellowship
☐ Faith & Discipleship
☐ Helping with worship
☐ Other _____

Is this in honor/memory of someone? If yes, (name/s) _____

Please pray for: _____

☐ I would like information about Nashville United Methodist Church ☐ I would like Pastor Ken to contact me

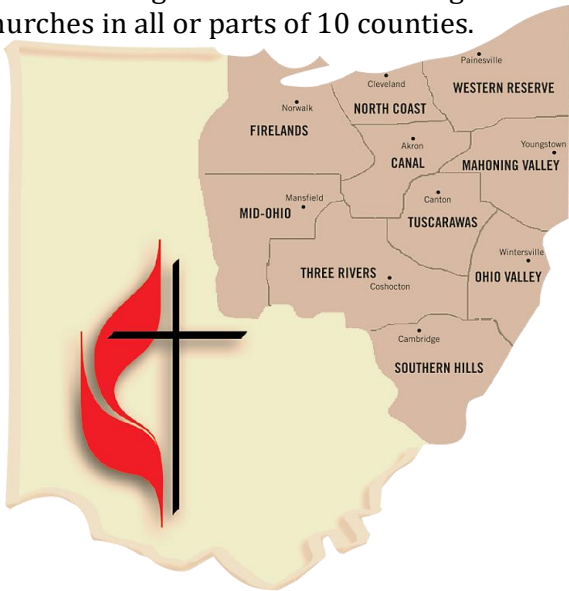
D.S. gives peek into guiding principles

At our annual Charge Conference in October, District Superintendent Rev. Kelly Brown previewed eight objectives to strengthen churches heading into 2022. Three Rivers District has 67 churches in all or parts of 10 counties.

- They include:
- **Being centered in Christ.**
That is, being committed to Him as Lord and focusing our motivation & ministry around Him.
 - **Everyone is an evangelist.**
No matter who or where you are, being able to share your faith.
 - **Transformational leadership.**
Increasing the number of leaders within the Three Rivers District.
 - **New spaces for new people.**
How we use space in our faith communities to welcome others.
 - **Every church is a vital church.** Having a plan for the future and living into that plan.
 - **Church in the community.** Engaging people around your church.
 - **Young evangelists.** Helping those under 35 to grow in faith and live into their purpose.
 - **Digital presence.** Using technology to connect to people in ways we wouldn't normally connect.



Rev. Kelly Brown



A View from the Pews

Dear Brother & Sister in Christ,

During our illness I did a lot of praying about our church and its future. It seems to me that we may need to hire a youth director to help tap into all of the children that are available in Nashville and those families associated with but not yet a part of our church.

If we continue as we are, in 20 years the Nashville UMC may no longer exist. On Sunday, Sept. 5, Beth had 7 children and I know of at least 4 children, ages 3 and 4 who would likely be here if a class was available. I know 2 preteens and 3 teens who would love to be a part of a youth group.

We have come through a pandemic, and it is hard to get back to a commitment to the Lord's work but our society is going to Hell without the knowledge of the Love of God.

Our commission is to tell them the Good News about our Savior, Jesus.

Janice Tope



Nashville, Killbuck & Blissfield United Methodist Churches

Three Rivers District, East Ohio Conference

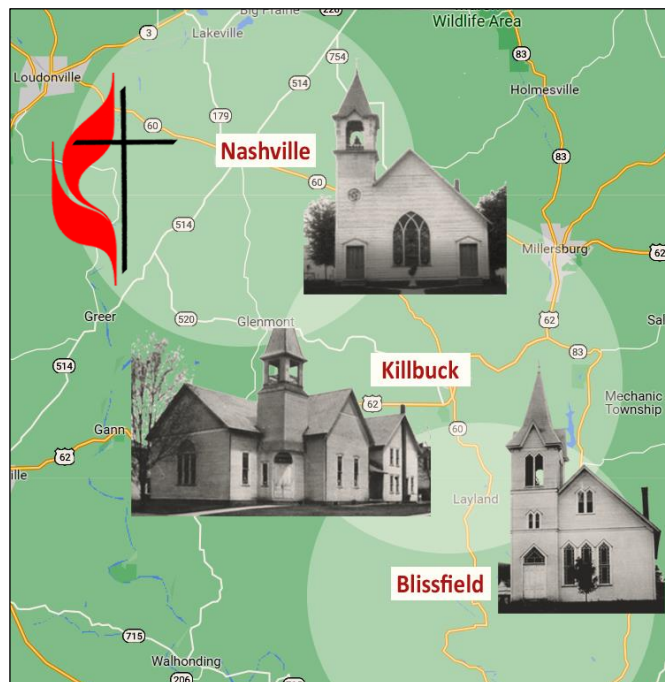
2021 Pastor's Report, by Kenneth Smailes

“The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision.” - Helen Keller

We find ourselves living in an extraordinary season of uncertainty. Political division, racial discord, the pandemic, foreign influences, domestic unrest ranging from employment challenges to threats of violence from within our own country, and dissent within the United Methodist Church itself. Some might say we are living in historic times. But certainly, our country – and the world – have been here before and it's during such times of challenge that Christ's church has grown. We have something to give. Are we up to the task?

In 1 Corinthians 2:9, Paul quotes from Isaiah: “no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him (NLT).” Paul is writing of God's blueprint for redemption through Christ Jesus; we, His church, play a vital role ... and that requires vision. Without it, we lack purpose – or as Helen Keller said, “sight but no vision.” The author of Proverbs puts it this way: “Where there is no vision, the people perish” (Proverbs 29:18, KJV). The Killbuck United Methodist Church will celebrate 150 years in 2022, and the earliest Nashville and Blissfield congregations began in 1812 and 1863, respectively. Those decades of ministry bring significant wisdom and heritage to position the churches for the future.

We began 2021 with 21 days of prayer to kick off this year's theme: “*Prayer: The Breath of Our Spiritual Life.*” As the year closes, that foundation of prayer positions the churches for our 2022 theme: “*Vision Quest: A Time of Discernment.*” For each of the churches, the upcoming year will be one of casting a vision into the future as we apply the answers of “Who we are” and “Why we're here” with “Where we're headed.”



A reflection on Pastor Ken's ministry of the past 10 years:

2012: *Fruitful Congregations:* Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith, Risk-Taking Mission & Service, and Extravagant Generosity.

2013: *Daring to Go Deep:* Spiritual Disciplines

2014: *Being in Relationship:* God's Mission for Us

2015: *The Church on Fire:* Stretching Beyond Our Comfort Zone

2016: *Soul Shift:* The Measure of a Life Transformed

2017: *Real. Relational. Relevant.* Bringing Meaning to “Church”

2018: *Christian Unity:* Why It Matters

2019: *Equipping the Saints:* Prepared With a Purpose

2020: *Culture Shock:* Who We Are, Why We're Here

2021: *Prayer:* The Breath of Spiritual Life

A few highlights from 2021

■ Beginning July 1, Nashville UMC joined Killbuck & Blissfield to create a **three-point charge**. The transition has been very smooth, and each congregation has a renewed excitement. Nashville adjusted its worship time to 9:30 a.m. with Sunday School following; and Killbuck is at 11 a.m., with a half hour of fellowship beforehand. Blissfield transitioned to a Sunday evening service at 7 p.m. to explore any potential for growth in that setting before considering merger with Killbuck.

■ Nashville hosted a **picnic to welcome Pastor Ken**, and a **joint worship** was held on Oct.

10 with the possibility of coordinating other fellowship and ministry opportunities going forward.

- The **parsonage at Killbuck** continues to be used as the pastor's residence while **Nashville's parsonage** will be retained as a church asset at this time by renting it through HER Property Management.
- Pastor Ken created a **monthly newsletter** for the Nashville UMC, which has been well-received and brings the total newsletter distribution among all three churches to 360.
- Two successful **Community Yard Sales** and lunch stands were held at Killbuck UMC, raising more than \$1,400 for ministries and outreach



- Monthly **Current Events Discussions** restarted after a hiatus during the early pandemic & included topics such as religious persecution, Middle East Conflict, the Olympics, the cancel culture movement, and others.
- The Killbuck UMC, Church of Christ, Valley Christian Church, and Wolf Creek Baptist Church collaborated for a 10-week summer ministry for kids and youth. It began with a three-day **Vacation Bible School** with the theme “*Digging for the Truth*” and then extended into each Wednesday July through August. Separate sessions were held for elementary students at the rec center and junior high and high schoolers at the park. Some 65 kids were reached.
- Killbuck UMC encouraged youth to undertake **Service Projects**, including cleaning the vinyl fencing at the community park, revamping flower beds and adding bulbs, planting four memorial planters at the church, and washing the outside of the library.
- **Connections Group Mentoring** reached eight youth.
- Nashville UMC sponsored eight children for **church camp**.
- Jazmine Bierley, a senior at the Buckeye Career Center from Garaway, prepared new **Freezer Meals** for our partnership with Love INC of Greater Holmes County.
- Wesley Zuercher repaired and upgraded the **retaining wall at the Nashville UMC** as an Eagle Scout project. The church in 2021 also **upgraded its internet service**.



Be a Star!

Students received incentives for academic strides and service.
Stay focused.
Try your best.
Act responsibly.
Respect others.



- The weekly **Men’s Fellowship Breakfast** continued to grow – a collaboration between Nashville, Killbuck and Wesley Chapel United Methodist Churches. Since spring, 23 men have participated.
- Nashville & Killbuck UMCs participated in a joint community **National Day of Prayer** observance at the Holmes County court square. And Blissfield UMC continued to support **Gideon’s bible distribution & the Fellowship of Christian Athletes**.
- Nashville UMC supports a “**Give a Book/Take a Book**” receptacle at Buckeye Deli, **Red Cross Blood Drives**, three **food pantries** and **Operation Christmas Child**, while Killbuck assisted the **H-15 Youth Center**. Both churches participate in the **Salvation Army Kettle Drive**, **Share-A-Christmas** and other holiday outreach.
- The **Coupon Ministry** at Killbuck UMC generated \$12,000 in savings for military personnel & their families, plastic lids support **recycled benches** for West Holmes Schools, and empty used medication bottles are collected and reused by **Central American Medical Outreach**.
- A **song-writing class** started at Killbuck.
- We celebrated two baptisms and three reaffirmations of faith last November after our fall “**Stepping Stones**” class. Six more people participated this fall, with one baptism and four becoming new members.
- Nashville & Killbuck churches implemented a single-board model in 2021: “**The Board of Stewards**.” Pastor Ken is working with Nashville to implement guidelines & procedures for the new administrative model. Dr. Brad Call provided “**Rule of Christ**” conflict resolution training for 10 members of the boards.
- All three churches paid 100% of Conference and District askings, amounting to \$30,000 in connectional ministry & second-mile giving that’s making a difference in East Ohio and around the country and world.

Goals for 2022

- Developing brochures about the ministries of each church
- Begin discipleship covenant groups
- Explore the feasibility of a part-time youth director/pastor
- Plan for the 150th anniversary celebration at Killbuck UMC
- Grow ministries & new ideas for younger children & youth
- Identify next steps to implement “Welcome Wagon” ministries
- Work with a college student to start a personal care & disaster relief pantry at Killbuck UMC
- Work with church and community leaders to explore barriers to transportation and identify possible solutions