

Rolling Plains Church
3350 Moxahala Park Rd
Zanesville, OH 43701
rollingplainsumc.com

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Maranatha Sisters and Brothers!

The most wonderful time of year is here! It's setting up the tree and decorating the house. It's visiting light displays and setting up some of our own. It's cooking, baking, and sharing meals with our loved ones. It's sending letters and cards. It's wrapping up, giving, and receiving gifts. It's listening to and singing Christmas carols. Why do we do all of this? We do this to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

For four weeks we live with the hopeful anticipation of Christmas Day. These four weeks are known as the season of Advent and are celebrated on each of the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve. Why is Christmas so special? Why the build-up of hope, joy, love, peace on earth, and good will toward men? Easy! We are celebrating the most holy of moments. It is the day the Lord our God came down from Heaven and took on all the characteristics of humanity. Jesus' birth was God in the flesh for all to taste, touch, smell, hear, and see. It is God shouting, "I am here." This is the day God fulfills His promise to the children of Israel to bring the Messiah and Savior of the world in order to deliver them from their slavery, brokenness, oppression, and sin. It is the day of all days!

Amazingly, God didn't just tell of His love, joy, peace, hope, and salvation – He showed up and showed it off in Christ. Our traditions and celebrations of Christmas highlight the wonder, Glory, and majesty of the birth of our King, Jesus. When we view lights, we can see the light that came into a darkened world. When we spend time with our loved ones, we see the personal God who desires a relationships with us. As we dine on food and drink, we taste of God's love that was the broken body and poured-out blood of Jesus for us. When we open gifts, our heart is touched by God, the ultimate gift-giver. Everywhere you go God's loving plan is on full display during Advent.

This is no more evident than when you view an Advent wreath with the five traditional candles. Each Sunday of Advent, a candle is lit. The candles symbolize hope, faith, joy, and peace. On Christmas Eve we light the Christ Candle and celebrate our salvation. What a visual display of the power of God for all to see! Yet so many people are challenged with having faith in God. Many want to see God,

in bodily form, standing in front of them – like when Jesus walked the earth. If that happens, then they will have faith. Consider God's Word:

"Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see."

Hebrews 11:1

Once, God came to earth and stood right in front of humanity for all to see. Guess what happened? His closest friends doubted and betrayed him. Religious leaders tore him down and framed him. He was mocked, spit on, beaten, tortured, and eventually crucified. He loved people, performed miracles, healed, and raised the dead – all clear displays of a highly visible God. Yet He was despised and rejected by men. Friends, when it comes to God, it requires faith. When we have faith, it gives us hope for an unknown future and the confidence to put one foot in front of the other, because even though today we can't see God in bodily form, we have faith that God is who He says He is. We have faith in the living history that Jesus was born of a virgin, walked this earth, and experienced hunger, thirst, exhaustion, pain, and suffering. He was fully human and fully God. Jesus died a brutal death and on the third day rose from the dead and is now alive and well, seated at the right hand of the Father, the Lord our God. Christianity is not a blind faith! Look around you. God is on full display everywhere you go this Advent season. Choose to see Him and He will reclaim the power of belief in you like never before, because "Seeing is believing."

"Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

Luke 2: 11-12

No matter how difficult life is right now or how small our faith, let us worship together, serve together, give together, and ask God to open our eyes to see Him. I am praying that God grows our belief in Him this Christmas season. Join us during the four Sundays of Advent and on Christmas Eve for a sermon series called, "Seeing is believing." God will fill you with His awe, wonder, and majesty if you choose to see Him.

Come on God!
Pastor John

If you would prefer to receive your monthly newsletter electronically, please write "e-newsletter" on the back of your Connection Card, or send an e-mail to office@rollingplainsumc.com.

Join us for our next Sermon Series beginning December 2nd
at 8:15, 9:45, and 11:00 AM

Seeing is Believing



Because of the service by which you proved yourselves, others will praise God for the obedience that accompanies your confession of the gospel of Christ, and your generosity in sharing with them and with everyone else. And in their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you. Thanks be to God for this indescribable gift! 2 Corinthians 9:13-15

As the seasons change, they can bring about all sorts of different emotions for people. Some of us feel joy, happiness, excitement, and peace as we move into the Christmas season; others of us may feel heartache, depressions, or sadness. Below is an interesting article from Wespath on Hygge, which talks about enjoying the small things in life and finding your happiness. I pray that you use these suggestions this Winter to remain active, healthy, and happy. This is your chance to be the light for someone else who is experiencing the darkness that can surround us this time of year. It is the greatness gift you can give someone! May God bless you this season with his indescribable gift so that you can bless others with the same!

Hygge for a Happier You

As Winter starts to make its presence known, you may get out warmer coats, find hats and mittens, and make sure boots still fit and are in good repair. This is also a good time to explore Hygge (pronounced Hoo-guh). Hygge is a Danish word and while it doesn't have an exact definition, it conveys a sense of comfort and coziness. According to the World Happiness Report*, Denmark is one of the happiest countries in the world, despite the long, dark, and cold Winters. In order to make the most of this time, Danes focus on creating an atmosphere of comfort, coziness, contentment, and living in the moment—spending time with friends and family; getting outside when the weather is good; and enjoying and celebrating the small things in life.

Whatever Hygge means for you, practice it this Winter. An example could be reading your favorite book in your most comfortable chair under a blanket made by a loved one, while drinking hot chocolate, tea, or coffee; or it might mean making your favorite chicken noodle soup recipe and inviting neighbors over for dinner.

* Read more at worldhappiness.report/



The Center for Health focuses on improving five dimensions of well-being—physical, emotional, spiritual, social, and financial—for clergy and laity of The United Methodist Church (UMC) and their families. Among the Center for Health's offerings are well-being programs, an interactive website, trends and research, educational opportunities, and connections to the UMC Health Ministry Network (UMCHMN) and related resources.

Blessings,
Chad Stoltz



SPOTLIGHT

Hygge

Happiness movements are trending!

The Germans have *gemütlichkeit*, the Dutch *gezelligheid* and the Danes *Hygge*. All have similar meaning: living in the moment and finding joy and happiness within that moment. Looking at life in a positive light and seeing goodness in those around you may not always be easy, but is worth the effort.

Finding joy in the little things can make the cold winter months a bit better.

Hygge!

Hygge means spending time with friends and family, getting outside when the weather is good, enjoying and celebrating the small things in life.

Birthdays

- 1 Brian Smith
- 2 Mathew Browning
- 3 Kevin Bailey
- 4 Sierra Browning, Mary Ann Graham, Lexa Freshly, Kathe King, Jason Valentine
- 5 Debbie Cooperider, Shelly Hartman, Mark Hann
- 6 Betty Wilson
- 7 Dan Ford
- 8 Brook Smith
- 9 Shauntae Bash, Judy Cornett
- 10 Tim Smith
- 11 Barb Handshy
- 13 Zachary Reed, Matt Snyder
- 15 Holly Herron, Mike Welsh
- 16 Christina Crooks, Tammy Roush
- 17 Kaitlyn Nykile, Brandy Stoneburner, Dave Taylor
- 18 Linda Swauger, Pat Wiseman-Jones
- 19 Mike Demp, JR King
- 20 Tess Davis, Sharon Stall
- 22 Jameson Curry, Pam Deaver
- 24 Dane Hunt, Chris Morrow, Linnie Slack, Carol Wilson
- 25 Kim Hearing
- 27 Rhonda Reed
- 28 Chris McCutcheon
- 29 Marla Morris
- 30 Janie Moore, Toni Ransbottom
- 31 Joe Graham, Chelsie Kim, Terry Weaver

Anniversaries

- 1 Brian & Shelia Smith
Terry & Sheila Weaver
- 14 Delbert & Joy Smith
- 16 Matt & Amber Stokes
- 24 Larry Jones & Pat Wiseman-Jones
John & Linda Kirkbride
- 28 Rod & Amy McDaniel
- 29 Steve & Shelly Dodge
- 30 Roger & Carla Samson

If you have a birthday or anniversary that is not listed, please notify us by calling 740-453-4192 or by emailing us (office@rollingplainsumc.com) and we will update our database accordingly.

All children and youth under the age of 18 are automatically excluded from the Birthday List due to our Safe Sanctuary Policy, which has been put into place in order to protect our children.

Thank you for your understanding.



Presented by...

The Rolling Plains Worship Choir and Drama Team

Sunday, December 2 @ 6:00 PM
Rolling Plains UMC Worship Center



December, 2018 Calendar of Events

Saturday (12/1) ~ Youth Parents' Christmas Caroling/Hot Chocolate Night 5:00 – 8:00 PM

Sunday (12/2) ~ First day of Advent

Sunday (12/2) ~ UMM meeting at RP (7:00 AM)

Sunday (12/2) ~ KidStuf Family Worship (9:45 AM)

Sunday (12/2) RP Choir Christmas Concert (6:00 PM)

Saturday (12/8) Brother's In Christ Breakfast (9:00 AM @ Golden Corral)

Sunday (12/10) Bring Helping Hands gifts to RP

Monday (12/10) - Wednesday (12/12) Maysville Helping Hands

Sunday (12/16) Family Christmas Play (6:00 – 8:00 PM)

Tuesday (12/18) UMW meeting at RP (4:00 PM)

Wednesday (12/19) Polar Express Movie Night (6:00 PM)

Sunday (12/23) Youth Christmas Party/Gift Exchange

Monday (12/24) Christmas Eve Services (See below)

Christmas Eve Schedule

5:00 PM ~ Family Service led by our Contemporary Worship Team (Children's Moment and Nursery provided)

6:00 PM ~ Christmas Eve Dinner with your Church family and community.

7:00 PM ~ Family Service led by our Contemporary Worship Team (Children's Moment and Nursery provided)*

11:00 PM ~ Worship service led by our Traditional Worship Team (no Children's Moment or Nursery provided)*

*Candlelight Services

Present Without a Bow

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified. ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior-yes, the Messiah, the Lord-has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David. Luke 2:8-11

As we enter this season of Great Joy and giving, let us remember the greatest gift we were given – Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. As we have been blessed by His gift, let's bless others with a present, whether it is through Advent Conspiracy, by volunteering, a kind word, a hug, a listening ear, a smile, or a prayer – a present isn't always wrapped in a bow.

May you all be Abundantly Blessed! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

Cathy Collins, Prayer Ministry Team Member



When the Cloud Rises, God's People Move



This was the theme (based upon how God led the Israelites) for our Spanish Field Prayer Days held a few weekends ago in Toledo. Organized by our Madrid team (which includes me), the focus was on what God is doing in Spain, in Missions, and in Europe; and how these changes impact our roles as missionaries and how we should respond. We know that God is on the move with approximately 2 churches being planted every 3 weeks in Spain, yet only 0.5% of the new believers are actually Spaniards. The majority of new evangelicals are foreigners, especially Latin American. A major highlight for me at the Prayer Days retreat was the fact that I was invited to give a 15 minute presentation in Spanish on "Transitions in Life." It went well, but I have to be honest and say that I'm happy to have it behind me.

"The Greatest Showman" Comes to English Camp

What an amazing weekend of speaking English we had with 61 Spaniards at Camp Peña de Horeb, near Guadalajara, the first weekend of November! Most of the attendees were families and individuals who participated in some of our other outreach programs, Summer camps, and weekly English clubs. Using the theme from the movie, "The Greatest Showman," our camp began on a Friday night by showing the movie, followed by a full day on Saturday of English conversation groups using 4 of the songs from the movie; special workshops in sports, crafts, cooking and drama; and "Minute-to-Win-It" games on Saturday night. In addition to helping Spaniards improve their English conversation, this camp offered a great opportunity to make connections and build lasting relationships by sharing God's love in practical ways.

Our entire group of campers



Me, leading a cooking class



Children's final performance



Prayers needed for:

- God's will to be clear in the selection of a new Exec. Director for ECMI-USA sending section.
- ECM Leadership Meeting in Sinsheim, Germany
- Upcoming trip to Romania in December to visit with missionaries working in the field.
- Pray for Zahira, a Spanish gal who started coming to church as a result of attending the English camp. PTL!

DONATE: ECMI-USA, PO Box 2217 Monument, CO 80132.

(Sharon Graves # 4060)

<http://www.ecmi-usa.org/get-involved/give/>

RP Youth
Neighborhood
Christmas
Caroling

Saturday, December 1, 2018
5:00-8:00 PM



BETHEL COMMUNITY CENTER – A LOCAL MISSIONAL OUTPOST
126 ONTARIO STREET, ZANESVILLE

Our Christmas Wish

We are a faith-based organization, established to share the love of Jesus with our neighbors in the Putnam neighborhood and beyond, so the Christmas message of love is at the core of why we exist. In the tradition of making out a Christmas wish list, here is ours:

- All that we do will radiate love, compassion, and hope
- More people will join with us in serving our neighborhood
- More children and families will connect and partner with us to bring peace and healing in our neighborhood and in the world
- All who come to Bethel will be welcomed with respect, knowing we are a judgment-free place and a safe haven
- We will increase in our capacity to engage and equip children and families, so that they succeed in school and life



December at Bethel

- **After School Programming continues:**
Monday through Thursday, from 4:00-6:00 PM. We follow the Zanesville City Schools schedule. When they close, we close. This free program for grades K-12 welcomes any child or teen from the Putnam neighborhood and beyond.
- **Christmas Caroling:** Join us to go caroling in the neighborhood on **December 7 at 5:30 PM.** We will have a time of fellowship, with hot chocolate and a snack afterwards.
- **Annual Christmas Celebration - Saturday, December 15**
 - 4:00-6:00 PM
 - Dinner!
 - Candlelight Service
 - Singing Carols
 - Games
 - **Santa Claus!**



Kay Miller, Board Member



The United Methodist Women will be wrapping up 2018 with a potluck at our regular meeting on December 19, from 4-6 PM. Bring a dish to share and come join us! We will be giving to our supported missions around the world and locally at this meeting. Our bazaars are over, where we raise part of our funds to give to missions and to meet our pledge to mission to the Foothills District. We continue to have Rada knives available year round, so feel free to call me and/or ask to see the catalog. We raise our own funds for support on a local level and also on a national level. We do not receive appropriations from the general church, locally or nationally.

As 2019 approaches, we look forward to celebrating 150 years of United Methodist Women by connecting to stories of past United Methodist Women and what impact they have had on our lives, past and present.

We will not be meeting during January and February, so look for information for our March meeting after the first of the year.

Vicki McConnell, President
740-704-9509

Volunteer Opportunity:

We are looking for volunteers who are willing to help with general cleaning of the church building, **December 26th – 28th and January 2nd – 4th.** Volunteers will enable our Building Maintenance Supervisor to take vacation and spend time with her lovely family. We need someone who is able to sweep the lobby, mop He-Brews Café and main entrance, wash windows in the entryway, and clean restrooms. If you are available, please contact Tina Peyton, Monday through Friday 8:00 AM – 3:00 PM, at 740-453-4192 or by email at tina@rollingplainsumc.com. Whatever you can do to help will be appreciated, whenever you are available. You need not volunteer to do everything, every day. Each volunteer can make a difference. Thank you in advance. We appreciate ALL of our volunteers and are thankful every day for the many hands of Jesus!



Thank You

I want to thank my Rolling Plains Family for the many visits, cards, and prayers I've received. I feel your love and care, and it has given me much strength and hope. At this Christmas season, I pray you and your family are truly blessed. The love of Jesus that you share with me is a wonderful gift.

Larry Miller

We love you, Larry! MERRY CHRISTMAS!!

Office Staff & Newsletter Team



Greetings brothers in Christ,

At our most recent meeting, we welcomed our newest and youngest member, Declan Ford. We also decided to start collecting inexpensive gloves and warm socks (both men's and women's) and hand-warmer packs to help out with the Homeless Hands backpack for our Christmas project. Homeless Hands, a 501(c)(3) organization, wants to put together backpacks loaded with socks, gloves, hand warmers, personal toiletries, and snack items for both men and women for Christmas.

Currently, Homeless Hands is working with 75 homeless men and 23 homeless women. The United Methodist Men want this to be a project driven by supported by all the members in the church, not just by our treasury, so we are asking that you bring in a pair of gloves, warm socks and/or a package of chemical hand warmers and drop them in the container in the church lobby.

Our next meeting will be held on the first Sunday in December (Dec 2) at 7:00 AM in the Embers Room.

In His service
Tim Collins, Secretary UMM

Operation Christmas Child

Rolling Plains collected a total of 519 shoeboxes from just our church family. As of Monday, November 19 we have collected just under 11,000 boxes including ours and those from the surrounding area. Thank you to all who participated in bringing joy and hope to children who otherwise might never have known about Jesus and His love and care for us. Many thanks to Gene & Linda Hartman for their dedication to OCC and for planning and organizing Collection Week at RP. Also special thanks to all those who helped during Collection Week.

RP FAMILY MINISTRIES

We have so many exciting things coming up in Family Ministry, it could take up the entire newsletter if we took the time to talk about each one! So, in the interest of space I am going to give the bullet point highlights and trust you will ask if you need or want more details.

- December 1, 5:00-8:00 PM:** Youth (Grades 6-12) will be caroling in local nursing homes and neighborhoods
- December 2, 9:45 AM:** Kidstuf FX Family Worship in the Kid's Chapel
- December 16, 6:00 PM:** We will announce the winner of our Family Dinner Challenge
- December 16, 6:00 PM:** Family Ministry Christmas Play.
- December 19, 6:00 PM:** *Polar Express* Movie Night with Pizza, Hot Chocolate, and Marshmallow Bar. (Please RSVP with the head count of your group and type of pizza requested i.e. Pepperoni or Cheese).
- December 23, 6:30 PM:** Youth (Grades 6-12) White Elephant Christmas Party
- January 13, 4:00PM:** Annual Family Fun Skate Night at Lind Arena- Skate Rental is \$1

In addition to all the above-mentioned activities, our Family Ministry Team will be focusing our Advent Conspiracy efforts on raising awareness and funds to purchase fruit trees, through Compassion International. We will kick-off our Advent Conspiracy Project on December 2 during Kidstuf FX Family Worship. Following Kidstuf FX each Family will receive an Advent Calendar and kit full of ways they can make a difference this season.

Needle Crafters for Christ (NCFC)

Do you like to knit or crochet? Would you like to learn? Is God calling you to use your talents for Mission work? We would love to have you join our group.



On April 16, 2018 NCFC held their first official meeting. Prior to this, it was a passion that was placed on Kim Hearing and JoAnn Paisley's hearts. After much prayer and thought about how we could involve people with their talents of knitting and crocheting to help others in need, our group was formed. Our mission is to create gifts of love and warmth, both locally and globally.

It was our thought that there are several people who would love to be involved in missions, but who are unable to serve, for many reasons. As we reached out to our congregation and beyond the walls for interest in the group, NCFC was realized, and now we have approximately 15 attending regularly on Monday evenings, from 6:00-8:00 PM, in He-Brews Café.

Our first project was to make 5" or 6" knitted or crocheted squares. These squares were sent to Colima, Mexico for Project Amigo, (www.projectamigo.org). We delivered enough squares to make 12 blankets in June. The first stop for our squares was in Cheshire, CT where they are put together in kits. These kits are then sent to Mexico and they provide a way for the women in Colima to earn a wage, as they sew the squares together to make blankets. The blankets are then given to the children in the schools. We are providing a way out of poverty for the families, as well as keeping them warm. This is our global outreach and we continue to make squares that will be delivered again in June 2019.

Our local projects include Heartbeats, Homeless Shelter, Free Store, and Bethel Missions. With each gift, we attach our NCFC card, which identifies us as a Mission of Love from Rolling Plains United Methodist Church. We have delivered 10 blankets to the "Free Store" along with several scarves, hats, and booties. While delivering to the "Free Store" there was a couple who were handed one of our blankets, which filled our hearts as we were able to see God's hands at work. We have delivered 15 sets of booties, 19 hats, 6 blankets, and 1 lovey. Currently we are working on hats and scarves to give to the kids at Bethel and 12 lap blankets for shut-ins. These will be gifted by the United Methodist Women of Rolling Plains and delivered for Christmas. We are also making prayer squares to have in our Welcome Center, as well as go with each person on mission trips. We sent Loren Anderson and his team prayer squares, as they are being the hands and feet of our Savior.



A little about our meeting: We open and close with a prayer and Cindy Scott shares a God-moment in story, with knitting or crocheting intertwined. Each meeting is filled with joy, laughter, and fellowship as we learn and create in God's love.

If you have any questions, you can reach Kim Hearing at 740-607-3883 or JoAnn Paisley at 740-819-0972. We are solely operating on donations and will gladly accept yarn or monetary donations to continue our mission. Thanks to all who have donated, it is greatly appreciated. You are truly a blessing to all.

BElieve **THE**re is **GOOD** in the world!

ADVENT CONSPIRACY 2018

Let's Turn Christmas Upside Down



Advent Conspiracy was founded on the radical idea that we can celebrate Christmas humbly, beautifully, and generously. Advent is the story of a wondrous moment when God entered our world to make things right. It is the greatest story ever told and it changes everything—including the way we celebrate Christmas.

Advent Conspiracy reminds us that Christmas is a time to spend less on us and generously give to God's people in need. It is a period to give more relationally to one another, as God gave His Son to us at Christmas. Following are the projects chosen for Rolling Plains to support this year. We encourage you to read about each one, pray about how God wants you to participate, and give generously.

HOUSE OF HOPE

This project started with a conversation between Jim & Kathy Currier in Nov. 2015, and construction work started by the end of March 2016. The building was originally built to house the "Alpha & Omega" Elementary School, which was run by the Methodist Church of Mexico until its closing in 2013. The church passed the administration of the property to Manos Juntas that year, and MJ agreed to have the Municipal Government of Rio Bravo to establish a CAIC (State run kindergarten) until August 2015.

Extensive remodeling has been done to adapt the building and more land bought to enlarge it. A neighboring house was bought to house their Director. House of Hope will have 20 minors under its care in the first stage: 10 girls and 10 boys. The range of ages will be 6-12 years. They will receive official schooling, counseling and medical care.

House of Hope is a long-term project that will help address the needs of children without parental care through abandonment or by mistreatment. It's estimated that approximately 800 children per year are left in this condition in the state, as a result of the war against drug cartels. These children are our target population. Support for House of Hope operation will be completely dependent on donations from churches and other sources.

These are the immediate needs of *House of Hope*, with their approximate cost. The project goal is \$7500.00:

- 10 Waterproof Emergency Lights – \$88.79 each, plus shipping
- 4 Emergency Exit signs in Spanish – \$89.90 each, plus shipping
- CCTV System – \$1,472.50
- 45 KVA Transformer – \$4,500.00



WATER FOR HEALTH



Are You Thirsty? What if that glass of water in your hand held contaminated water? For most Haitians, this is the situation they find themselves in every day. Haiti has some of the worst water in the world, ranking it last in water quality. It is a basic element of life, yet more than 4 million have no access to clean water and have to use contaminated water for all of their needs: drinking, cooking, cleaning, bathing, and laundry. Their water comes from springs that are often muddy or rivers where laundry is washed, baths are taken, vehicles are cleaned, and animals are watered.

Sixteen out of 100 children under 5 that die, do so because their family has no access to clean drinking water. Safe water and clean hands could prevent 90% of these deaths. Roundworm, whip worm, and hookworm stunt growth, cause debilitating anemia, and affect kids' cognitive learning potential. Illness causes absenteeism and early drop-out from school. The availability of safe, clean drinking water could literally save thousands from illness and many from death.

The solution is tragically simple: A bio-sand or similar water filter. Through the education of **Reciprocal Ministries International (RMI)**, bio-sand water filters are produced in Haiti by Haitians, delivered to needy families who are educated on how to take simple, pro-active steps in their everyday lives that will help stop the spread of sickness and disease. A Bio-sand water filter can transform the health and quality of life for the whole family.

Your donation of \$105.00 will provide a bio-sand or ceramic filter to a family in need. RMI will train the families on the use and care of the filter and educate them on how to prevent diseases.

These filters are designed to be simple to operate and maintain, and last for years without having to change parts. Bio-sand or similar filters are simple, inexpensive and effective.

COMPASSION INTERNATIONAL



For this year's Advent Conspiracy, Rolling Plains United Methodist Church has chosen Compassion International's *Fruit Tree Initiative* as one their projects. Compassion International is a child-advocacy ministry, whose mission is to release children from poverty in Jesus' name. Compassion is Christ-centered, child-focused, and church-based; pairing compassionate people with children suffering from spiritual, economic, social, and physical poverty.

Using donations like ours, Compassion provides families with trees to plant, agricultural lessons, and a source of income. The trees typically produce food for the family and extra fruit to sell at the market, whether they are growing bananas, mangos, jackfruit, papayas, pineapples, oranges, apples, limes, lemons, avocados, paw paws, cacao, or apples. While the trees mature enough to produce fruit, families receive lessons in land conservation, tree farming management, and disease and pest control. These resources help families escape poverty by allowing them to provide food and income for their family for years to come!

Children and families living in poverty are often so caught up in day-to-day survival, they just aren't able to allow themselves to dream. Your gift of a fruit tree today will change their tomorrow by creating an environment of hope. Hope can change the course of a child's life and impact their entire family.

To make sure that your gifts go to the children and families who need them the most, Compassion International partners with churches and denominations in 25 countries in Asia, Africa, Central America, South America, and the Caribbean. Your generous gift of **\$35.00 per tree** will help provide children with the opportunity to rise above their circumstances and become all God has created them to be.

Please consider these projects when you are shopping for Christmas gifts this year. Do you buy because someone NEEDS something, or because you NEED to give them a gift? If you give to one of these ministries in the name of those on your gift list, you will be setting an example for how we should celebrate the birth of our Jesus. Give true blessings to someone in NEED, and you will be blessed greatly!