

THE MESSENGER

January 2025

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

23 N. Seneca Avenue, P.O. Box 579

Newcastle, WY 82701

Office 307-746-4119

REVEREND CALVIN HILL

Our mission statement: *Passion for Christ, Compassion for all.*



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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Calvin Hill

As we begin this New Year, I am drawn to the words of Lamentations 3:22-23: *"The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness."*

These words of truth offer hope for every season of life, whether it is a season of harvest, joy, or challenges. God's love for us is unchanging, and His mercies are fresh with every sunrise. No matter what we left behind or what is ahead, we can trust in God's great faithfulness.

Looking back at the past year, I see God's hand in the life of our church—from forming our policies and processes, forming a youth group, having children baptisms, welcoming new members, and hosting our annual events, to even losing loved ones. God has carried us every step of the way. I want to thank each of you for your faithfulness, your dedication, and your prayers for our church this past year.

As we begin a new year, I see God calling us to deepen our commitment to Him, to His work, and to one another. This year, as a church, my hope is to focus on four subjects:

1. **Renewing our worship** will be the heart of our relationship with God. This year, I will focus on my personal prayer time, asking God to help us seek to worship Him with greater passion and authenticity, both in our personal lives and together as a church family.

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NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

(Continued)

2. **Strengthening our church family and community;** in a small-town setting like ours, relationships matter deeply. Whether through fellowship, small groups, or simply showing up in community events, I pray that we build a community rooted in love and care.
3. **Serving with purpose;** we are here to make a difference in our community. From supporting local events, our outreach ministries, and supporting local families in need, our mission is to be a light in everyday circumstances. Let us be the hands and feet of Christ in our town this year.
4. **Nurturing the next generation;** we will invest in our youth and children. They are vital for the future of our church and community. Let us pour into their lives with time, wisdom, and love, showing them what it means to follow Christ.

As we pursue these goals, let us lean into God's abundant mercy and grace. God will provide the strength, wisdom, and resources we need to fulfill His plans for us this year.

I encourage you to join in starting this year with a spirit of prayer and expectation of new things. Ask God to guide us as a church and to show you personally how He wants to work through life together in 2025. Together, we will make this year a season of growth, spiritual renewal, and impact God's Kingdom here in Newcastle.



MEMBERSHIP CLASS

Interested in becoming a member of the First United Methodist Church? If so, make plans to participate in the membership class being taught by Pastor Hill. Classes will be held each Sunday in January (except January 26) in the church parlor beginning at 11:30am.

Sign up for the class by calling the church office (746-4119) or email the church (fumc@fumcnewcastle.com).



First United Methodist Church Parlor
23 N Seneca 746-4119
9:00AM Every Tuesday

ALL are invited to come together for prayer—
for those in need of healing, those
experiencing difficult times, concerns, for joys
Let us be a reflection of God's
goodness and grace!
Join us or call the office with your requests!

SPECIAL OFFERINGS

The Finance Committee thanks everyone who donated generously to the weekly special offering in December, which was designated for pastor and staff gifts. We are blessed with so many cheerful givers!

The special offerings are being suspended until the need arises. Please continue to give generously to each Sunday offering to support the ministries of our church.

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

To begin: So many THANKS YOUs to share for the help with the Christmas Presentation! I pray that I remember everyone!

First of all, Thank You, PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS, for responding to our appeal to have the kids here consistently throughout December! We appreciate your support; it made the program so much bigger and better than last year.

Thank You, Amanda Sharpes and Sharon Fridley, for costuming the kids. Thank You to the youth members of Sunday School for helping costume the younger children. Thank You to Sharon, Brooke Costa, and Marina McIlvain for helping us get through the chaotic preparations for the presentation on Sunday, December 22!



Thank You Reverend Hill and Reverend Sample for making our children an important part of our church service from the beginning! And a special THANK YOU, Bette Sample, for writing, directing, and rehearsing with all the kids all month long!



In addition to all the rehearsals, our kids managed to make about 43 Christmas cards, which were shared with the residents of the Weston County Manor. The cards were delivered with the gift boxes the United Methodist Women (UMW) prepared for the residents.

WE ARE SO
blessed



YOUTH GROUP PLANS 2025 MEETINGS

Submitted by Phyl Sundstrom

The First UMC, Newcastle youth group, UMYF, will meet the last Sunday of the month, January through May, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall. We'll start with a meal and activity, then a youth-centered discussion time. The focus will continue to be application for our lives today.

Youth in grades 6-12 are welcome; youth may invite a friend who has attended our church at least once. Meeting dates are January 26, February 23, March 30, April 27, and May 25. Please contact Phyl Sundstrom at 307-941-1251 or Sharon Fridley at 605-517-2395 with any questions or for more information.

HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Sunday, January 19

Submitted by Betty Petranek

This is a special Sunday across our denomination focused on fostering better relationships. The Outreach Committee thought it would be fun to celebrate our heritage on this Sunday by having a carry-in dinner. We would encourage people to bring a dish that represents the country of their heritage. You can choose one of the countries your ancestors originated from, or bring a good old American dish. This, hopefully, shows us the true meaning of our country—that all people, all races, all religions can live together in harmony.



PARTNERING TOGETHER IN FAITH

A Message from the Finance Committee

We hope this message finds you well and encouraged in your walk with God. As we continue to grow together as a church family, we have been reflecting on the many ways God has blessed us as a church community—from vibrant worship, increased attendance, growing Sunday School program, and outreach programs that touch lives beyond our walls. It is clear that God's work is being done here at Newcastle First United Methodist Church.

As we look ahead to the new year, we are excited about the opportunities God is placing before us. Whether it is improving our facilities to better serve our ministries, expanding our mission programs, or supporting the spiritual growth of our members, we feel called to take the next step forward together. To help make our vision a reality, we are inviting you to prayerfully consider how you might contribute to this effort. Your support—whether through prayer, attendance, service, or financial gifts—plays a vital role in ensuring that our ministry continues to be a beacon of hope, faith, and love for everyone.

Every financial gift, no matter the size, makes a difference in helping our church cover the increasing operating costs (building maintenance, utilities, educational materials, salaries, etc.). More than anything, we are grateful for your faithfulness and for being part of this ministry with us.

Thank you for your love and commitment to Newcastle First United Methodist Church. We are excited about what God has in store for us, and we are so grateful to walk this path of faith with you. Have a blessed new year filled with God's love.

UMW BLESSES OTHERS

Submitted by Chris French

The United Methodist Women (UMW) met on Wednesday, December 4, with ten women in attendance.

During December, members of UMW blessed many by preparing and delivering Christmas gift boxes to residents of Cambria Heights and Weston County Manor; providing a goodie tray for hospital/manor nursing staff prior to Christmas; providing cookies for the Community Christmas Cantata and for Kid's Shopping; matching the congregational donation of \$343 to the Ministerial Association; and donating \$500 to the special offering for pastor and staff gifts.

At the December meeting, members discussed the "Christmas in Wyoming" bazaar and made suggestions for improving this successful community event. UMW donated 10% of the bazaar proceeds to the church. The current officers were re-elected: Chris French, President; Phyl Sundstrom, Vice President; Lavonne Roberts, Secretary; Vanita Epperson, Treasurer.

UMW will meet Wednesday, January 8, to discuss mission projects for 2025.



GiGi's Closet
OPEN
Every Wednesday
9 am—1 pm

Gently Loved Clothing available for Babies to Adults!
All Free/No Cost for All | Come and See!

First United Methodist Church
23 N Seneca | 746-4119
Basement Entrance (by the gazebo)

Winter Clothing and Bedding Needed

TRUSTEES CONTINUE PROJECTS

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Board of Trustees met Tuesday, December 3. Present: Carl Sundstrom, Lavonne Roberts, Sharon Roness, Melvin Costa, Adam McFarlin, Jake Shook, and Reverend Hill.

Reverend Hill offered an opening prayer. Carl offered a motivational thought from St. Paul: "Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." So often Paul and John opened their epistles this way, and so often we forget to share Grace with our fellow Christians.

The Cross and Flame project is moving along. Reverend Hill reported that painting the flame is complete, and he is waiting for the paint to cure completely before painting the cross.

A sample of the lighting for the steeple cross was viewed by the committee. We liked the brightness, but concerns were raised about hail damage to the sample provided. Carl will contact the supplier about alternatives.

The Trustees are selecting the appropriate LED replacements from a myriad of options for the fluorescent lights in the kitchen, parlor, and Sunday School classrooms.

The Trustees have begun the application process for a RAN (Renew America's Nonprofits) Grant to renovate the HVAC system for the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall.

A Trustees-only workday for cleaning and sorting the workroom was scheduled for Saturday, January 25.

The Trustees will meet again on Tuesday, January 7, in the church parlor at 6pm.

Reverend Hill offered a closing prayer. The meeting adjourned at 7:15pm.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE!

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Trustees are seeing a lot of misuse of the thermostats. Three times the thermostat in the Parlor has been set at either 61 or 59 degrees despite the note that requires a **MINIMUM** setting of 65 degrees, and twice it has been left in the "Cool" position. (The furnace won't run with the thermostat in this mode!) Whoever is doing this is creating a serious risk of the plumbing in that wing freezing! **PLEASE** leave that thermostat alone unless you have been shown how to use it! Carl will be glad to help those who need to use the Parlor understand how to set it.

Also, the thermostat in Fellowship Hall was turned up to 72 degrees, and the flood lights for the stage were turned on and left that way on a Sunday afternoon. The lights were off and the thermostat was set at 65 degrees following Fellowship Time. Leaving the hall like this wastes a lot of energy and money! Incidentally, no one reserved the hall for Sunday afternoon or evening as required by church policy.

JANUARY

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1: New Year's Day
- 5: Epiphany Sunday
- 5: New Member Class, 11:30am
Church Parlor
- 7: Prayer Team, 9am, Church Parlor
- 7: Trustees Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 8: UMW Meeting, 9:30am, Fellowship Hall
- 8: GiiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 12: New Member Class, 11:30am
Church Parlor
- 12: Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30am
Fellowship Hall
- 14: Prayer Team, 9am, Church Parlor
- 15: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 19: Human Relations Day—carry-in during
Fellowship
- 19: New Member Class, after Fellowship
Church Parlor
- 21: Prayer Team, 9am, Church Parlor
- 22: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 22: Administrative Council Meeting, 6pm
Church Parlor
- 26: UMYF, 5:30-7pm, Fellowship Hall
- 28: Prayer Team, 9am, Church Parlor
- 29: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES*

- 2: Shirley Borgialli
Brandon Wright
- 5: Steve Ruff
- 9: Anna Logan
Olivia Knight
- 10: Herb French
- 14: Hunter McFarlin
- 15: Wayne Oney
Jace Malsam
- 19: Dean Johnson
- 22: Sandi Shook
Caroline Zerbst
- 26: Myra Shaw
- 29: Donna Vorrath
- 30: Clarence Cox

CHURCH INFO

Office Hours: 8 am-noon M-TH

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Radio: Sunday Service at
10am on KASL

