

# THE MESSENGER

January 2026

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 turn into a New Year, we often begin talks of resolutions—things we promise ourselves that we will do better, try harder, or finally fix. Yet many times, we already carry enough pressure. I remember telling my mother, *“I’m going to fix the horse corral this year!”* With enthusiasm, I began; and suddenly, it became a huge challenge for a 14-year-old boy. I did have a truck, but no money for gas; and I had to travel up the mountain for logs. There was just no way for me to resolve this problem. Mom said, *“What if you just release something, and rediscover the life God is already offering you?”*

I invite us to journey into this New Year in ways to reclaim our faith in Christ, not as a list of expectations but as a living relationship. Faith is not something we perfect or work hard at; it is something we return to again and again. Christ meets us not at the finish line, rather he meets us right where we are. Matthew reminds us of Christ's ever-so-gentle call, *“Come to me, all you who are weary and carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest.”* (Matt. 11:28) Many of us carry more than we let on. We worry about family, health, work, politics, social issues, and eventually the future. Christ does not ask us to fix ourselves or any issue before coming to Him; rather he just simply invites us to come.

This year can be a year of releasing what binds us. Paul inspires us by saying, *“Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”* (2 Cor. 3:17) Some

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## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

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strongholds are heavy and loud, and others are quiet; but none are too strong for God's grace. Letting go is not weakness or resistance toward desires; it is simply an act of trust. This journey is not about being perfect; it is about being faithful.

When we walk closely with God, love begins to show up in ordinary ways, like helping a neighbor, listening with patience, offering grace where it is needed most. It inspires us to pray for and deeply care for each other; and it shows God's presence is with us.

May this year of 2026 draw us closer to Christ and closer to one another; and may our church be a place where weary souls can rest, breathe, and find hope again. Let us walk into this New Year together, not to fix but to reclaim our faith in Christ; and may God's steady love and faithful presence be in our journey.



### A NEW YEAR'S PRAYER

May you have joy for each day because God is our daily encourager.

May you have blessings that overflow because God is our generous provider.

May you have peace, hope, and love because God is our faithful Father.

Blessings in the new year.

### NO MEN'S BREAKFAST

The Men's Breakfast with devotions, scheduled for Saturday, January 3, has been cancelled. The funeral service for Gene Baldwin will be held that day at 1pm.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Christmas Story was the focus of Children's Sunday School this month, and Betty Petranek provided a special presentation reading a book about Santa Claus and whether he is a legitimate part of the Christmas celebration. Of course, Saint Nicholas is a canonized saint and has a place in the holiday's legacy. Discussion of the story included the tradition of gift giving started by the gifts of the Magi, their heeding the warning that came to them in a dream.

A special "Thank You" to Bette, Betty and all who have helped with Sunday School! All children are welcome to join us for activities in the Sunday School room.

Pictures: Pastor Hill shares a story with the children, and the children sing a Christmas song for the congregation.



## UMW BLESSES OTHERS

Submitted by Chris French

The United Methodist Women (UMW) met on Wednesday, December 3, with ten women in attendance. Maxine Groner shared a Christmas story before the business meeting.

During December, members of UMW blessed many by providing Christmas gifts of fleece blankets to residents of Mondell Heights Retirement Home and Weston County Manor; providing cookies for the First Northern Bank Open House and the Community Christmas Cantata; 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 (\$658) to the church. The current officers were re-elected: Chris French, President; Phyl Sundstrom, Vice President; Lavonne Roberts, Secretary; Vanita Epperson, Treasurer.

All women of the church are invited to the next UMW meeting, which will be held on Wednesday, January 7, in the Fellowship Hall. Bring ideas for mission projects.



# LIGHTING ADVENT CANDLES

Several youth lit candles on the Advent wreath.



Pictured L to R:  
Taylor, Ava, Jace,  
and Josiah with  
Marcia Romano.



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!

## TRUSTEES MEET

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Board of Trustees met Tuesday, December 2. Present: Reverend Hill, Carl Sundstrom, Lavonne Roberts, Adam McFarlin, Sharon Roness, and Betty Petranek. A quorum was not present so the meeting continued as an unofficial discussion.

Reverend Hill offered an opening prayer. The minutes of the November meeting were read; no corrections were noted. Actions taken:

- Adam will assemble the mailbox, build legs for it, and install it.
- New office chairs will be purchased for the pastor and administrative assistant. We appreciate the work they continue to do for our congregation!
- 21 Electric has been contacted to install cabling and power supplies for the new audio-visual installation.
- Smoke alarms and exit/egress lights were tested; all functioned normally.

The next meeting of the Trustees will be on Tuesday, January 6, at 6pm in the Parlor.

## SPECIAL OFFERING

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!

## CHRISTMAS TEA

Several UMW members attended the Christmas Tea, which was held Friday, December 5, at the Catholic Church.



# JANUARY

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1: New Year's Day
- 4: Epiphany Sunday
- 5: Media Ministries Meeting, 6pm  
Church Parlor
- 6: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am  
Church Parlor
- 6: Trustees Meeting, 6pm  
Church Parlor
- 6: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 7: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 7: UMW Meeting, 9:30am  
Fellowship Hall
- 11: Finance Committee Meeting,  
11:30am, Church Parlor
- 13: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am  
Church Parlor
- 13: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 14: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 20: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am  
Church Parlor
- 20: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 21: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 21: Administrative Council Meeting  
6pm, Church Parlor
- 27: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am  
Church Parlor
- 27: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 28: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm

## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES\*

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

## CHURCH INFO

Office Hours:  
8am-noon M-TH

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YouTube: Search for FUMC Newcastle WY

Radio: Sunday Service at 10am on KASL

