

# THE MESSENGER

December 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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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE: THE GREATEST GIFT

Pastor Calvin Hill

As December settles over our days, many of us are finishing our winter preparation. We are raking the last leaves, checking fences, changing feeding pastures, and making sure everything is cared for before the deep cold and snow arrives. It reminds me that Christmas, too, asks us to prepare, not just our homes, fields, and barns but our hearts.

This year has brought its share of sorrow for our community, church, and families. We have said goodbye to loved ones, neighbors, and friends whose absence is felt at every gathering. And while some among us will celebrate the season with full tables and healthy family moments, others carry quiet grief. In moments like these, Mary's actions speak to us, as Luke records: "*But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.*" (Luke 2:19) She welcomed God's gift by treasuring it deeply within, holding hope gently in her heart.

Christ comes to us the same way—quiet, steady, and full of grace like a gift. And as we receive Him, we may discover that we ourselves become a gift to others as a steady hand, a welcoming to those who need a table, a warm presence, a voice of encouragement, or a bit of strength to those feeling down. Sometimes the greatest gift one might receive this Christmas season is simply you—your love, your resilience, and your kindness. Others, like Mary, may ponder them deeply as the greatest gift this year.

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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE

(Continued)

May this season hold us, help us clear a little room in our hearts, not only for Christ's coming but also for one another. And may the peace, the peace in Christ, be felt across our families, community, and every ranch.

## CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

We have welcomed several new faces to children's Sunday School! All kids are welcome to join us for activities in the Sunday School room. Thanks to Melvin, Donna, and Nancy for helping, and a special thank you to Bette for taking the lead when Carl could not be there!

Lessons continued on the Golden Rule, based on the parables and actions of Jesus as examples for us to follow. Treat others the way you wish to be treated. Stories about excluding and including others were presented. Videos of the Parable of the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan were reviewed to reinforce the lessons from Children's Time during the worship service.

The history of Veterans' Day and the tradition of wearing poppies to honor the sacrifices of America's veterans was given on November 12.



During a worship service, Pastor Hill shares a story with the kids during Children's Time.



## CHRISTMAS COMMUNITY TEA

"The Gift of Love"

Friday, December 5  
Catholic Church  
11am—1pm

Everyone is invited to participate in this time of Christian fellowship! Finger sandwiches and cookies will be provided by area churches.

Merry Christmas!

## A NOTE OF APPRECIATION AND PASTORAL LOVE

Submitted by Pastor Hill

Thank you, members and friends, for your generous financial support during our 13<sup>th</sup> Month of Giving campaign. Your faithfulness and generosity shows how deeply you love God and the mission of Newcastle First United Methodist Church. Even during these trying times, as many of us carry burdens and loss, you continued to give with hearts full of hope, love, and commitment.

Paul said, "*Let us not grow weary in doing good.*" (Galatians 6:9) Your generosity is a living example of that truth. It strengthens our mission in keeping God's presence in our church and community.

I am grateful for each one of you. May God bless you for all you offer; and may your gifts, prayers, and support continue in Jesus' name.

## 45 SHOEBOXES DONATED!

Submitted by Phyl Sundstrom

Members of our congregation participated in Operation Christmas Child this year by filling 45 shoeboxes for distribution around the world. On Tuesday, November 18, the shoeboxes and \$450 shipping contribution were delivered to the Gateway Fellowship collection site.

Over four weeks, members of the congregation donated various items to be used for the shoeboxes, such as school supplies, socks and underwear, toothbrushes and toys or games. On Monday, November 10, six volunteers packed thirty shoeboxes from the donations. Linda and Rick Miller also packed and donated fifteen shoeboxes. The United Methodist Women contributed to this project through the suggested \$10 shipping per shoebox.

On Sunday, November 16, during Children's Time, the Operation Christmas Child project was explained and then Pastor Marcia blessed the shoeboxes; this way, all in the congregation could participate in this global mission project. A big thank you to all who contributed items or funds for the shoeboxes.



## UMW HAD BUSY MONTH

Submitted by Chris French

The United Methodist Women (UMW) met on Wednesday, November 5, with twelve women in attendance. Judi Wackerbarth gave the devotion before the business meeting. At the meeting, members:

- Signed Thanksgiving cards for church members
- Finalized plans for the "Christmas in Wyoming" bazaar
- Decided to give fleece blankets to Weston County Manor and Mondell Heights residents for Christmas
- Volunteered to provide finger sandwiches, cookies, and a centerpiece for the Christmas Tea on Friday, December 5, at the Catholic Church
- Volunteered to provide cookies for the First Northern Bank open house on Friday, December 5, and for the Christmas Cantata on Sunday, December 14
- Voted to donate \$100 for Kid's Shopping, which will be held Saturday, December 13, from 9am-noon at the Senior Center.

All women of the church are invited to our next meeting on Wednesday, December 3, at 9:30am in the Fellowship Hall.

## SPECIAL OFFERING

For December, the weekly special offering is designated for pastor and staff gifts. The Finance Committee encourages everyone to show appreciation for our pastors and church staff by giving generously to this special offering.

# “CHRISTMAS IN WYOMING” BAZAAR REPORT

Submitted by Bazaar Committee

The 2025 “Christmas in Wyoming” bazaar was a wonderful event for our church family and community. A heartfelt “thank you” is extended to the members of our faith community who helped make this a successful event—those who helped with setup/cleanup, those who prepared the delicious soups and pies, those who contributed items to the various booths, those who volunteered their time to work at the bazaar, and those who purchased items and drawing tickets. The United Methodist Women, along with the Bazaar Committee, truly appreciate everyone working together on this event.

## **BOOTH INCOME:**

Sewing	545.00
Cards/Dishcloths	331.50
Plants	399.00
Holiday	845.00
Baked Goods	1,497.50
Buckaroo	328.05
Lunch	1,047.00
Silent Auction Baskets	805.00
Drawings	424.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$6,222.05</b>

## **SILENT AUCTION BASKET WINNERS:**

Gingerbread Rules (\$85)	Sandy Martin
Pamper Yourself (\$125)	Sandy Martin
Ready for Christmas! (\$50)	Bev Taylor
Crystal Tree (\$65)	Jo Williams
Pinecone Wreath (\$60)	Pat Morgan
Words of Wisdom (\$45)	Michele Smith
In Memory of JoAnn (\$60)	Michele Smith
Pumpkin Patch (\$40)	Kyla Popma
Christmas Star (\$40)	Sharon Blessing
WY Bucking Horse/Rider (\$100)	Amanda Sharpes
Jim Shore Angel (\$55)	Norma Shelton
“Cardinals Appear when Angels are Near” (\$100)	Nancy Darnell

## **DRAWING WINNERS:**

Groceries at Decker’s: Helen Dower  
Groceries at Woody’s: Jenelle Larsen



UMW, and the Bazaar Committee Members, extend a special thanks to the youth who helped where needed, served food and drinks, and bussed tables. Your help was very much appreciated!

## TRUSTEES KEEP BUSY WITH PROJECTS

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The Board of Trustees met Tuesday, November 4, with Reverend Hill, Carl Sundstrom, Lavonne Roberts, Adam McFarlin, Melvin Costa, and Sharon Roness in attendance. Reverend Hill offered the opening prayer. Carl offered a motivational thought about needing help. The minutes of the September 9th meeting were read and approved; Carl gave a financial report.

Jake was elected Vice Chairman of Trustees. Filling the required position of Treasurer was discussed.

**RAN Grant:** A preliminary spreadsheet detailing the Church's planned "In Kind" contributions to its share of the project has been created, and a summary has been submitted to CU Boulder. The "In Kind" contributions suggested by the Trustees reduce the Church's cash outlay to meet the 20% commitment to the project by \$4,995. Five quotes from contractors have also been submitted to CU Boulder and reportedly have been forwarded to the US Department of Energy.

The following projects have been completed:

The concrete pad for the mailbox has been poured. Permanent signs to meet the Fire Marshall's requirements were discussed. Carl will see if they can be made in Newcastle. The handle on the outside door at the office was repaired. The sprinkler system has been winterized. A failed light switch in the storage room has been replaced. The annual work day to inspect and clean the gutters was held Saturday, November 15; Melvin, Jake, and Carl completed the gutter work, cleaned up leaves and placed the memorial plaque for Dusty Rhoades provided by the Garden Club.

In looking forward to several projects to be completed in the future, the Trustees approved purchasing masonry supplies to repair the fire walls in the furnace room. The Trustees will contact 21 Electric for the installation of cabling and power receptacles for the TV project. By consensus, keys to the furnace room will be provided to Adam and Melvin. Adam will construct legs for the mailbox to allow it to be installed so the bottom won't rust out.

The Trustees will meet on Tuesday, December 2, in the church parlor at 6pm.

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## POINSETTIA SUNDAY

December 21

The church will be decorated with poinsettias during Advent. If anyone would like to designate one of the artificial poinsettias in memory or in honor of family members and friends, please call the church office at 746-4119 to have the names listed on an insert in the Sunday bulletin for Poinsettia Sunday, December 21.

A donation is made for the person/persons being honored. Make checks payable to FUMC with the word "flowers" in the memo line. Donations are used to help maintain the church yard.

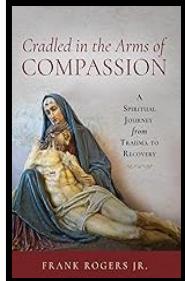




## ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL BEGINS NEW STUDY

Submitted by Pastor Hill

Come join the Adult Sunday School class where Pastor Hill will engage participants in a six-week study beginning January 4, 2026, using the book, *Cradled in the Arms of Compassion: A Spiritual Journey from Trauma to Recovery*, by Frank Rogers, Jr.



In this book, Frank shares his journey from childhood trauma and near suicide to healing through spiritual practices, therapy, meditation, and developing the transformative compassion practice along the way.

# Merry Christmas



## NEW YEAR'S EVE GRAZING & GOSPEL JAMBOREE

Wednesday, December 31  
Beginning at 6pm

- CARRY-IN DINNER & SNACKS
- GOSPEL SINGING
- WHITE ELEPHANT SALE
- GAMES FOR KIDS & ADULTS

Enjoy good food, have lots of fun, and just have great fellowship at

NEWCASTLE FIRST UNITED  
METHODIST CHURCH  
23 N. Seneca



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1: Media Ministries Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 2: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am, Church Parlor
- 2: Trustees Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 3: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 3: UMW Meeting, 9:30am, Fellowship Hall
- 5: Christmas Community Tea, 11am-1pm  
Catholic Church
- 9: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am, Church Parlor
- 9: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 10: Gigi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 14: Invitation Sunday
- 14: Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30am,  
Church Parlor
- 14: Grief Support Group, 2pm, Church Parlor
- 14: Christmas Cantata & Bell Choirs, 2pm  
Crouch Auditorium
- 16: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am, Church Parlor
- 16: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 17: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 21: Poinsettia Sunday
- 23: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am, Church Parlor
- 24: Christmas Eve Service, 7pm
- 25: Christmas Day
- 25-  
31: Office Closed
- 28: Grief Support Group, 2pm, Church Parlor
- 30: Prayer Team Meeting, 9am, Church Parlor
- 31: New Year's Eve Grazing & Gospel Event  
6pm, Fellowship Hall

## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES\*

- 2: Barb Riggs  
Elaine Wilcomb
- 7: Connie Hyatt
- 11: Geoff Knight
- 13: Paul Sharpes
- 14: \*Rod and Betty Petranek  
Marina McIlvain
- 18: Joan Borgialli  
Kara Lenardson
- 19: Tyler Bartlett  
Gary Clarke
- 20: Ayonna Hunter  
Tracy Ragland
- 21: \*Dan and Irma Fouch
- 23: Glenn Zerbst
- 24: \*Paul and Amanda Sharpes
- 25: Brenda Clarke  
Aurora Hunter
- 26: \*Tim and Pam Bertsch
- 28: Julie Day-Sharpes
- 31: \*Rick and Linda Miller

## CHURCH INFO

Office Hours:  
8am-noon M-TH

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