

# THE MESSENGER

January 2024

FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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

Newcastle, WY 82701

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REVEREND CALVIN HILL

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



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## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

Pastor Calvin Hill

Like many people, you may be looking for a fresh start, resulting in making resolutions for a more positive lifestyle. Reviewing some mistakes and old habits needing to be broken would lead to a healthier life. Resolutions or the idea of a fresh start seem to be on the minds of so many people every New Year. But, in the past most resolutions did not stick and eating seemed to be the only resolve for comfort. And yep, there goes that resolution. It wasn't even a month!

What then have we gained, or what should we claim as a fresh start? Here is a verse that I have always reviewed every New Year, a verse that does not require any resolutions but faith alone:

*"I am going to send an angel in front of you, to guard you on the way and to bring you to the place that I have prepared." (Ex. 23:20 NRSV)*

Knowing that God has "*sent an angel in front*" of me is so comforting. Walking into the New Year knowing that an angel is before me gives confidence, encouragement, and peace. My thought is someone will tell me if the path is right or wrong for every angel I read about has been a messenger. From Abraham to Mary, an angel foretold how God will use them. To me, that is reassuring. An angel in the year of 2024 kind of sounds like a movie title, but it's not. It is a promise from God to His people. We have an angel sent ahead of us in the New Year.

Also, the angel is "*to guard...on the way,*" there is nothing more reassuring in knowing that I am

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## NEW YEAR'S MESSAGE

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guarded in 2024. I have colts to start, rodeo events, and miles to travel in this coming New Year. Who knows what dangers might come? But the confidence in moving forward knowing that an angel is guarding the path is trustworthy, God has my back. So, claim with confidence, God has your back, too.

There is so much peace in knowing that God *"will bring [me] to the place that [God] has prepared."* There is no greater imagery than knowing that God sent the angel to protect and give guidance to the place prepared. I wonder what that place looks like. Is it academically, physically, or spiritually? Whatever or wherever that place is, God is definitely foreseeing we make it there. As an angel has been sent, I am confident that the New Year is filled with God's presence, grace, and love.

Will you take this verse with you in the New Year and know that God has an angel sent before you? The New Year is filled with God's grace, God's love, a personal angel, and a spot in His kingdom. It is a Year just for you.

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## 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.

## FAMILY MINISTRIES

Submitted by Judi Wackerbarth



The beautiful Church Family Christmas Tree! Fun was had with the children and adults making the garlands and decorating the ornaments.

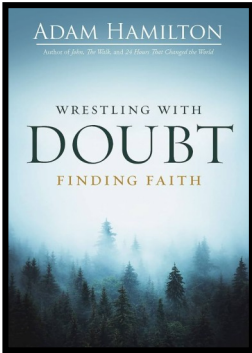
Mark your calendar and make plans to participate in the upcoming Church Family Ministries event:

Sunday, January 21  
4:30-7:00 pm  
Fellowship Hall

Potluck dinner followed by playing a variety of board games. All are invited to participate in this intergenerational activity.

# NEW ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL STUDY

Submitted by Pastor Ron Sample



Adult Sunday School participants will engage in a six-week study using the book, *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, by Adam Hamilton.

January 7 - February 11

8:45-9:45am  
Church Parlor

Everyone has doubts. Where is God when bad things happen? Does God hear our prayers? Is there a heaven? How can we know? Often we treat such questions as the enemy of faith. But uncertainty doesn't mean our belief is lacking. Doubt can be a path to a deeper, richer encounter with God.

In *Wrestling with Doubt, Finding Faith*, join best-selling author and pastor Adam Hamilton as he discusses some of our most significant sources of doubt and shows how a steady trust in God can emerge from them. Hamilton approaches these sources of doubt with honesty and insight, drawing on the rich wisdom of the Bible, Christian tradition, and his experience walking with thousands of people on their spiritual journey. Whether you're a longtime Christian or someone brand new to faith, this book will lead you to a trust in God that is unafraid of hard questions. Wrestle with doubt and find faith—belief and trust, not certainty; mystery rather than simple answers.

All adults are invited to participate in this study. Books are available in the church office.

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## TRUSTEES MAKE IMPROVEMENTS

Submitted by Sharon Roness

Trustees have now received a renewed insurance policy covering all the Conference requirements except wind and hail. Our Church Mutual representative continues to shop for coverage for these perils but has found only prohibitively expensive alternatives so far. She expects additional bids in January. We have also reached out to local insurers and are working with one of them, but so far have not found any who can offer us this coverage. A number of minor repairs were scheduled at our December 5 meeting. We learned that one of the furnaces in the church basement had failed. A new furnace has been purchased and installed.

Other work includes repairing the stucco where the abandoned duct work from the old swamp cooler was removed, various plumbing repairs in the church basement, and drainage improvements at the church. The RO system at the parsonage is being replaced as well.

We will be inspecting the recently vacated classrooms in the basement to determine what upgrades they need to be useable for our expanding Children's Sunday School. We are considering replacing the parlor carpeting with a more sanitary and lower maintenance flooring.

The next Trustees meeting is Tuesday, January 2.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

The culminating activity for our Children's Sunday School this year was their Living Nativity, "For God So Loved the World," presented to the church during the worship service on December 16. The children represented the various participants in the first Christmas story in costume and with props of stable animals they painted for the event.

We all are blessed to have a pastor who includes our children as an integral part of our worship service! They participated in offering the Benediction at his invitation.

The Trustees will be inspecting recently vacated rooms in the basement to determine what improvements they need for the expanding Sunday School program. With fourteen to twenty children in attendance each Sunday, expansion will provide more age-appropriate instruction and less crowding in the classroom.

Volunteers are still needed. A number of members have offered to help; but with the requirement of having two adults in each room, more volunteers are still needed! **SIGN UP!**



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## **UMW BLESSES OTHERS**

Submitted by Chris French

The United Methodist Women (UMW) met on December 6, with thirteen women in attendance. Sharon Roness gave the devotion on "Let Your Light Shine."

During December, members of UMW blessed many by preparing and delivering "Christmas Blessing Mix" goodie bags to residents of Mondell 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 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 will donate 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 3, to discuss mission projects for 2024.

## 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.

For January, the weekly special offering is designated for capital maintenance (replenish funds used to purchase a new furnace).



## HUMAN RELATIONS DAY

Human Relations Day (January 14) is a denomination-wide Special Sunday designed to celebrate and raise awareness to further the development of better human relations by involving congregations in community and youth outreach. A special offering, taken the Sunday before Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday, is used to build King's vision of "the beloved community" through programs such as Community Developers, United Methodist Voluntary Services, and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs.

**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)**

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# JANUARY

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1: New Year's Day
- 2: Trustees Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 3: UMW Meeting, 9:30am, Fellowship Hall
- 3: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 3: Adult Bible Study, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 7: Epiphany Sunday
- 7: Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30am  
Church Parlor
- 10: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 10: Adult Bible Study, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 14: Human Relations Day (special offering)
- 17: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 17: Administrative Council Meeting, 6pm  
Church Parlor
- 21: Family Ministries Potluck & Activities  
4:30-7:00pm, Fellowship Hall
- 24: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 24: Adult Bible Study, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 31: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 31: Adult Bible Study, 6pm, Church Parlor

## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES\*

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

## CHURCH INFO

Office Hours: 8 am-noon M-TH

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Radio: Sunday Service at  
10am on KASL

