

# THE MESSENGER

July 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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## PASTOR'S MESSAGE: CELEBRATING INDEPENDENCE

Pastor Calvin Hill

On my 18<sup>th</sup> birthday, I hopped on the recliner with a six pack of Coors beer. My mother turned to me and said, "What do you think you are doing now?" I replied, "I'm 18, an adult now; so I'm going to have a beer." I opened one up, and mom came running with the broom stick in her hand. I jumped out of the recliner, and I ran outside. As I was jumping off the porch, Mom caught me with the end of the broom. I fell to the ground, and I crawled away as fast as I could. I never brought home any beer since.

Independence and patriotism are usually what's celebrated this month of July, but not all will experience a celebration. Some will feel narrowed, restricted; but there will be some celebrating with great joy. We all want freedom and a country that capitalizes a great leader like in scripture as the ancient Israelites celebrate King David and build up a holy city.

This month the psalmist celebrates Jerusalem using the image of Zion—a name used for earthly Jerusalem as a gesture towards a heavenly city where God's people will celebrate freedom from sin and patriotism to the Greatest King of all time, Christ Jesus our Lord.

However, that time and place has not come. So as we read Psalm 48, the question comes to mind, "What place makes you celebrate God's presence, to where you feel free and give complete praise?"

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# PASTOR'S MESSAGE

(Continued)

Psalm 48 seems a little patriotic. Its descriptions of Mt. Zion, the holy city, are fit for singing in a crowd at an event. With all this majestic talk from the psalmist, it is easy to lose focus on why Zion is so blessed. The holy city is worthy of adoration and celebration, but the psalmist is careful to give praise not to a place or a single person but to God.

Notice the patriotic and freedom in the psalmist's voice: *"We ponder your steadfast love, O God, in the midst of your temple. Your name, O God, like your praise, reaches to the ends of the earth. Your right hand is filled with victory. Let Mount Zion be glad, let the towns of Judah rejoice because of your judgments."* (vs. 9,10,11)

Zion, the holy city, is a metaphor for God's people who have been saved repeatedly from destruction by God's grace and love. This reminds us that great indeed is God who is fashioning a new creation for God's beloved who are freed from sin. This truth gives real reason to celebrate independence and patriotism towards a real King—King Jesus, our Lord and redeemer.

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## STAFF AND VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Submitted by Betty Petranek

The Staff/Pastor/Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC) would like to recognize our staff and volunteers who put in many hours of time to keep our church running smoothly:

Calvin Hill and Ron Sample - Pastors  
Audrey Knight - Church Secretary  
Deb Mills - Church Treasurer  
Chris French - Financial Secretary  
Carl Sundstrom - Trustee Chair and all-around worker  
Adam McFarlin - Custodian and Trustee worker  
Melvin Costa and Jake Shook - Trustee workers  
Lavonne Roberts - Memorials Director  
Phyl Sundstrom - Administrative Council Chair  
Brenda Clarke - Administrative Council Secretary  
Sharon Roness - Projectionist  
Sheri Hill - Media Ministries Chair  
Lynda Russell - Music Director  
Homer Hastings - Head Usher  
Maxine Groner - Communion Coordinator  
Bette Sample and Carl Sundstrom - Sunday School Coordinators/Teachers



In addition, we are so grateful for those individuals who serve as greeters, for those who serve as acolytes, for those who serve as liturgists, for those who assist with the media, for those who assist with communion, for those who assist with counting the offering, for those who provide weekly refreshments for fellowship time, for those who keep our church yard looking beautiful, for those who decorate the fellowship hall and sanctuary, for those who assist with Sunday School, and for those who work at Gigi's Closet. Our church is so blessed with faithful staff and dedicated volunteers!



## 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

June 20-23  
Casper, Wyoming

### ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Submitted by Pastor Calvin Hill

This year the Annual Conference was held in Casper, Wyoming. We started out with the Celebration of Life memorial service Thursday afternoon, which was the first time the memorial service was held early and standing as an opening service. The attendance was still great, and the message of "Taking our Light from the Past and Present, and Moving into the Future" was a brilliant way to begin.

In the Plenary session, here are some highlights: In petition "MSC 124 UMC Mission Statement," the petitioner wants to change the wording of the "*Making* disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world" to read "*Influence* disciples..." The rationale is that the word "Influence" is the direct translation from Greek to English. The language change has to move on to General Conference, so there was no change made at this time.

In the petitions of Closure, there were four (4) churches that closed: Shields Valley UMC, Scobey UMC, Thomasville UMC, and Friendship UMC.

The Sand Creek commemoration and commitments took place Saturday afternoon. We remember the Sand Creek massacre and petition passed to commit in support of commemoration into the future relationship of the descendants of Sand Creek.

We nominated and voted on General and Jurisdictional leadership. Your pastor, Rev. Calvin Y. Hill, is now one of the leadership team representing Mountain Sky Annual Conference at General Conference and Jurisdictional sessions.

In discussing the new road of Regionalization, it was noted that there will be a committee that plans to host conversations on ratification of the future of Mountain Sky Annual Conference. These conversations will endorse the direction of the General Conference's future. It will be important for each local church to attend the upcoming conversations.

At this conference, we celebrated the retirement of Bishop Karen Oliveto with honor and great joy to her retirement. The next Bishop will not be known until July 13, and there will be arrangements for introductions across the Conference where all will be able to meet the new Bishop.

The Annual Conference ended with the ordination service, which included communion with the ordinands and their families.

The Annual Conference was spiritually filled with joys, fellowship, and God's presence more this year than previously experienced. It was a good feeling this year, and I pray that God continues to be with us in such spiritual movement.

## **TRUSTEES MEET**

Submitted by Carl Sundstom

At the Trustees meeting on June 11, persistent delays with the plumbing and ductwork projects were discussed.

The Trustees will supplement the Special Offering for the Middle Grades Classroom rug with money from the Hershey Memorial; the rug has been ordered.

Drafts of the proposed local church policy were distributed, and committee members were urged to review and annotate any changes they feel are in order. Possible changes were discussed, including defining specific budget terms.

Revisions of the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall heating system were discussed with the goal to make the system quieter and improve heating circulation. The consensus is to pursue an affordable solution with engineering input. Carl will contact an HVAC engineer to initiate the process.

Temporary repairs to the water supply for the lawn sprinkler system have been made, and the system has been restarted with maintenance and repairs completed. The correct control cable has been acquired, and the temporary cable will be replaced immediately so the open trench can be filled, allowing the use of the new hose bib to water the planters in front of the church.

Security of the office file cabinet was addressed. Keys to the cabinet will only be issued to those people whose responsibilities require access.

The Trustees approved depositing a dividend check from the insurance company in the general fund as premiums are paid from that fund.

The Trustees approved setting up the Youth Room for a bell choir after renovations in that room are completed.

Trustees will meet on July 9, due to the Fourth of July holiday.



Sunday School children enjoy Children's Time with Pastor Ron and Bette Sample during the church service.

## **CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES**

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

Though attendance has fluctuated due to summer activities, Children's Sunday School continues to meet. Mrs. Sample is teaching the story about feeding the five thousand. To make the idea real, it was suggested that the kids feed all the adults upstairs with just five marshmallows and two cookies!

"One of our own," Allysa Hunter, is volunteering to read to the children at the Little Ones' Preschool two days a week! Thank you, Allysa!

We hope to have three more graduate the First Communion class. The last lesson will be given June 30, and those completing it will be able to take Holy Communion on July 7. Two graduates of the previous class have volunteered to help serve on July 7. Thank you, Charlotte and Nolan!



## SPECIAL OFFERING

The Finance Committee thanks everyone who donated generously to the weekly special offering in May and June, which was designated for Youth Ministries. As of June 23, \$462 has been collected; a portion of this money will be used to purchase an area rug for the youth Sunday School room.

Our church is so blessed to have many faithful people who give generously to support our many ministries! Your financial support is so appreciated!

## HELPING THE HOMELESS

Submitted by Phyl Sundstrom

Many of us see homeless people and want to help, but we don't know how to do the right thing. Friends who live in a big city have put together Ziplock bags that contain two bottles of water, two granola bars, and 1-2 bags of peanuts. These can be handed out easily, and the bags could also include a note with a Christian message as well as contact information for services available.



**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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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 3: Gigi's Closet Open, 9 am-1 pm
- 7: First Communion
- 9: Trustees Meeting, 6 pm, Church Parlor
- 10: Gigi's Closet Open, 9 am-1 pm
- 14: Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30 am  
Church Parlor
- 17: Gigi's Closet Open, 9 am-1 pm
- 24: Gigi's Closet Open, 9 am-1 pm
- 24: Administrative Council Meeting, 6 pm  
Church Parlor
- 31: Gigi's Closet Open, 9 am-1 pm



## BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES\*

- 2: Kurtis Wood
- 4: Jim Darlington  
Judi Wackerbarth
- 5: Bev Kiesling  
\*Tyler and Nikki Bartlett
- 7: Sawyer McFarlin
- 8: Kathleen Engle  
\*Larry and Sharon Roness
- 10: \*Kelly and Heidi Wood
- 16: Gavin Day-Sharpes
- 20: LaShel Hampton
- 27: Orrin Owens
- 30: Nylah Costa

## CHURCH INFO

Office Hours:  
8am-noon M-TH

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Radio: Sunday Service at 10am on KASL

