

THE MESSENGER

July 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: CELEBRATING FREEDOM

Pastor Calvin Hill

This July, as our nation celebrates Independence Day, many of us do so with mixed emotions. We live in a time of uncertainty with divisions running deep, where trust is fragile, and anxiety seems higher. Whether it's concerns for our country, worry for our children's future, or burdens quietly carried in our hearts, these days are not easy.

Yet, we gather as people of faith. We will light up our grills, watch the fireworks, and carry out some family traditions. Some of us will celebrate without concern, and some will give testimony of concerns. We will affirm no matter the turmoil surrounding us that we still believe in a freedom that no government, no crisis, and no fear can be taken away. As John reminds us; *"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed."* (John 8:36)

This freedom that John writes of is about all the freedom of our soul to live in our faith--the freedom to forgive, to hope, to love, and to believe. It is the freedom we find at the foot of the cross and the faith of Christ's resurrection. It is the kind of freedom that fuels courage in hard times and kindness in divided times.

Our church and community may not make national headlines, but our prayers matter. Our love matters. Our faithfulness in these trying times is a powerful witness that God is still working, even when the world feels shaken.

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PASTOR'S MESSAGE

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So this July, let's celebrate not with denial of the world's problems, but with defiant hope in the promises of God. Let us be a people who shine like stars in the darkness, who live free in the Spirit, and who never forget that God's light shines brightest in the darkest hour.



MEN'S BREAKFAST WITH PRAYER & DEVOTION

Saturday, July 5

All men of the church are invited to a breakfast with prayer and devotion on the first Saturday of each month in the Fellowship Hall at 7am.

Reverend Hill will cook a breakfast for the men to enjoy during this time of fellowship.



FLAME & CROSS PROJECT

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

In our ongoing quest to improve the appearance of the church, the Trustees decided to replace the old, unused doors on the Parlor wing after they were found to be in such bad shape that they could not be repaired. After some discussion, it was decided to replace them with a solid backing and the symbolic United Methodist Cross and Flame. Betty Petranek coordinated with Weston County Museum which has accepted the old doors due to their historical value.



Adam McFarlin volunteered to build the cross and flame from durable structural steel. Reverend Hill offered his expertise as an automotive painter. He prepped the cross and flame by sanding and smoothing any rust prone areas, applying automotive grade primer and a base coat/clear coat finish.



Melvin, Jake, Carl and Adam removed the old doors, installed flashings and constructed a new wall in their place, complete with reinforced framing to support the cross and flame. After the wall was painted, Adam and Carl hung the cross and flame. In the future, the cross and flame will be backlit.

PHOTOS:

Before and After
Pictures of the Flame
& Cross Project

ANNUAL CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS

Submitted by Pastor Calvin Hill

The 2025 Mountain Sky Annual Conference took place June 11-14, 2025, at St. Andrew United Methodist Church in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. We opened with a heartfelt memorial service, where Rev. Valerie Jackson welcomed us to the conference, with the theme: Beloved, Belong, Becoming—On the Mountaintop with Jesus. It was a powerful beginning to our time together, setting a tone of remembrance, connection, and spiritual renewal.



During our plenary session, we voted to place the Regionalization Ratification petition on the Consent Calendar for consideration at the next General Conference. This petition is intended to support adaptive evangelism, highlight the global nature of our denomination, and strengthen our shared mission through deeper connectional relationships.

In the petitions of closures, this year we had four (4) churches close: Crawford UMC, Wheatland UMC, Medicine Bow UMC, Bethany UMC.

The petition MSC 128, titled “Asbury Korean UMC Use of Building Sale Proceeds” of \$300,000 was approved to be designated as a revitalization fund. This approval will create a three-year plan for Church revitalization in the areas of spiritual renewal, community engagement, and long-term sustainability of the congregation.

This was Bishop Karen Oliveto’s successor, Bishop Kristin Stoneking’s first Annual Conference with the Mountain Sky area. She led with courage, clarity, and a deep commitment to our shared mission. Her presence was both grounding and inspiring, and we look forward to the blessings her leadership will bring in the seasons ahead as we look ahead with hope.

During the appointment reading, it was announced that Rev. Calvin Y. Hill—your pastor—has been appointed to continue serving Newcastle United Methodist Church, as well as taking on the role of Congregational Resource Minister for the Wyoming District. This is both a blessing and a call to deeper ministry together. Let us step into this new season with faith, unity, and renewed purpose for what God is doing in and through our church.

CHURCH COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

Submitted by Pastor Hill

To help keep things organized and ensure your questions and requests are handled smoothly, the Staff/Pastor/Parrish Relations Committee asks that all church-related communication begin with our Administrative Assistant, Audrey Knight. Whether it’s a building use request, a ministry need, or a general question, please contact the church office first. From there, the Administrative Assistant will connect with the appropriate committee chair or ministry leader, and loop in Rev. Hill if needed. This process helps us respond more efficiently and ensures nothing gets overlooked.

Thank you for helping us keep communication clear and respectful across our church family.

TRUSTEES BUSY WITH PROJECTS

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

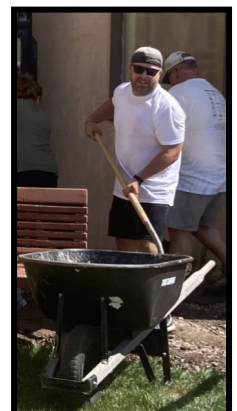
The Trustees met Tuesday, June 3, with six members in attendance. Items of business included:

- The RAN Grant application continues to move forward. An extensive walk-through of the church building and in-depth review of our needs was made by the individuals processing the applications. A Zoom meeting to learn of the evaluators' recommendations was held on Tuesday, June 24.
- Robin King fixed the kitchen sink drain; he was paid \$125 for his services.
- In the Trustees by-laws, the Church Policy Manual, and the Book of Discipline, it states that spending large sums of money has to be approved by a Church Conference. The Trustees will revise the wording of the local Policy Manual to define what constitutes a "large sum of money" and to determine if there are exceptions such as "earmarked sums" and "budgeted items" for consideration at the Annual Church Conference.
- It was brought up that the piano lamps need to have plaques that state these are in honor of Lynda Russell's service to the church.
- The water supply and control cable to the sprinkler system for the front lawn has been replaced, and much of the plumbing inside the furnace room has been revised.
- Sharon moved to pay \$1,300 from the Trustee Account for the insurance rider, Jake seconded; motion passed.
- Sharon reported that she will get output widgets ordered for the TV's, but she cannot select TV's. Carl will work on selection. Rev Hill offered to pick up the TV's when needed.
- Rev Hill asked about purchasing a TV that could be portable for use between the Parlor and the Fellowship Hall. The money could possibly come from Worship or Administration budgets. The idea was well received as that TV could also be a spare for the Sanctuary if one of them needs to be repaired.

The next meeting will be held at 6pm in the Church Parlor on Tuesday, July 1.

CHURCH WORK DAY

Aaron Logan, Tyler Bartlett, Adam McFarlin, Audrey Knight, David Kiesling, Jim Hutchinson, and Melvin Costa helped on the first of two work days to upgrade the appearance of the church yard. The gravel in front of the church was removed and given to the Knight family, who will upgrade their driveway with it. The fellowship, teamwork, and cooperation among these workers was phenomenal! The workers appreciated lunch served by Lavonne Roberts, Maxine Groner, and JoAnn Fassbender.



CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

Submitted by Carl Sundstrom

Children's Sunday School will continue to meet throughout the summer.

Bette Sample has retired from leading Sunday School but has offered to fill in when needed. The church owes Bette a huge "THANK YOU" for getting this program started and all the best wishes for her work with their "new" rescue dog which needs the kind of love and reassurance only Bette and Ron can give!

Currently, lessons parallel the growth of personal faith with growing plants from seeds. A video from a series about faith is presented each week, followed by planting actual seeds and talking about what makes plants and faith grow.



Assistant Sunday School teachers are needed this summer. Duties will include:

- Joining the children in the Sunday School classroom during worship with a sign-up schedule
- Participating in songs and activities with the children
- Planning and leading one Sunday School class a month with a second assistant
- Sharing provided treats with the children
- Watching children grow in the Faith and knowledge of our Christian tradition
- Enriching your own understanding of our Faith through the eyes of the students

Please contact Carl Sundstrom or Audrey Knight!

HELP WANTED

Submitted by Phyl Sundstrom

Transportation is needed for bags of clothing from GiGi's Closet. What isn't used at our church is donated to the Cornerstone Women's and Children's Shelter in Rapid City. What they don't use then goes to the Thrift Shop in downtown Rapid City. It's quick and easy to stop at the shelter on 5th Street and drop off the bags of clothing. Contact Carl (307-689-1730) or Phyl (307-941-1251) for more information.

THANK YOU NOTES

On behalf of my family, I express my deepest gratitude to FUMC for donating the gravel that was removed from the church yard to us. I thoroughly enjoyed working with the other volunteers on the Church Work Day.

Audrey Knight

We are so grateful and blessed to have such an awesome Trustees committee whose members are so dedicated to improving our church facilities! You and your work is very much appreciated!

FUMC Faith Community



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- 1: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 1: Trustees Meeting, 6pm, Church Parlor
- 1: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 2: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 5: Men's Breakfast, 7am, Fellowship Hall
- 7: Faith Walk, 6:30-8:00pm, Quarry Trail
- 8: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 8: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 9: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 13: Finance Committee Meeting, 11:30am
Church Parlor
- 14: Media Ministries Committee Meeting
6pm, Church Parlor
- 14: Faith Walk, 6:30-8:00pm, Quarry Trail
- 15: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 15: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 16: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 16: Administrative Council Meeting, 6pm
Church Parlor
- 22: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 22: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 23: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm
- 29: Prayer Team, 9:30am, Church Parlor
- 29: Choir Practice, 7pm, Sanctuary
- 30: GiGi's Closet Open, 9am-1pm

BIRTHDAYS/ANNIVERSARIES*

- 2: Kurtis Wood
- 4: Jim Darlington
Judi Wackerbarth
- 5: Bev Kiesling
*Tyler and Nikki Bartlett
- 7: Sawyer McFarlin
Abrienne Sharpes
- 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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YouTube: Search for FUMC Newcastle WY

Radio: Sunday Service at 10am on KASL

