



We are called to be a welcoming community of loving servants of Jesus Christ.

The Evangel December 2023

PASTOR'S CORNER



"Hark the herald angels sing, 'Glory to the newborn King; peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled!'... Veiled in flesh the God-head see; hail th'incarnate Deity, pleased with us in flesh to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel. Hark the herald angels sing 'Glory to the newborn King!' "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". (Charles Wesley, 1734)

Christmas is coming!! How do you receive this revelation? Is it, "Hooray!!" Or is it rather, run!! Run for your lives! It's coming! And it's mean, it's nasty and it's terrible! It will suck the very life from you if you let it get too close and overtake you!! Run!! Run, I say!

But seriously I'm being a bit coy, but we need to be careful in this time of the year. Certainly it is a time of great cheer and joy as we hear the familiar carols and see the signs and wonders in and on storefronts, TikTok creations, Facebook, circulars, etc. However, these should also be red-flag warnings that our Christmas, as merry, and as blessed as we would like it to be, may not become, or be the holy and spiritually uplifting time it can and should be.

Run away from the glitz and glitter, from the all-consuming consumerism this season is famous, or, rather, infamous, for, and find a hideout just big enough for you, your family and God to be alone together - and find, truly find what Christmas is really all about.

Here is a story that might help. Pastor Jim Schwartz of Christ Lutheran in Sedona, Arizona, tells a story that I hope will inspire us to think of Christ's birth as a very real event that happened in a very real place, Bethlehem, and for a very real and awesome reason. Pastor Jim's church had a LIVE nativity scene at their Christmas Eve service, complete with a real mother Mary and also including a very real baby Jesus, not in a manger, but in Mary's arms. Well, the child had a bowel movement - a serious one - which soiled the clothes of the child, as well as those of the mother. And the odor soon wafted through the entire sanctuary - while Madonna and Child-with-Poopy-Pants sat stoically throughout. Realizing that the congregation was aware of what was going on, Pastor Schwartz reminded the people "Now we have a little idea of what incarnational theology is all about. It's not clean, it's not pretty, it's not wonderfully fragrant, and there are no halos around the holy family. There's an odor, not an aura, and God becoming a human was a messy, smelly business!" Thanks be to God that the Savior of the world took on human flesh with all its shortcomings, pain and exhaustion, to dwell among us to live, heal, give life and be sacrificed for us all!

Christ's birth didn't just happen *in Bethlehem*; the truth is, it can happen *within us all the time*. The story above I hope, can help us to realize that. Because of this marvelous, messy, and smelly reality, Christ can be born in our hearts every single day, every minute, if we let him be. So, run! Run into the arms of the Savior, Jesus Christ; Son of God, Son of Humanity, God-incarnate, and sing with all your might: "Glory to the newborn King!"

All The Peace, Blessings and Joy of Christmas Be Yours,

Pastor Steve

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Saint of the Month

submitted by Pastor Steve

For December our **SAINTS OF THE MONTH** are the Boy Scouts, our own Troop 370 who came out in force & spent much of a Saturday morning into the early afternoon cleaning leaves and debris on the church and parsonage property! Thank you, scouts and their illustrious leaders, especially Rob Sibley and Steve Agnew for this incredible fete! For this reason and more, please give Rob and Steve and our Boy Scout Troop a big share of your gratitude!

Christmas Eve Services

Sunday Morning Worship 9:30am

The 4th Sunday of Advent will begin with a traditional service including a sermon, music by the choir and a special children's moment highlighting the Christmas story.

Sunday Evening Worship 7pm

Join us as we celebrate the miracle of Christmas with a worship service appropriate for all ages, celebrating with carols, the choir, trumpet and candlelight! *Rejoice! The Lord is come!*

A NOTE FROM YOUR MINISTER OF MUSIC

As we begin the Advent season so much wonderful music comes to mind, like this hymn by Daniel Charles Damon in The Faith We Sing hymnal:



"Like a child love would send to reveal and to mend, like a child and a friend, Jesus comes.

Like a child we may find claiming heart, soul, and mind, like a child strong and kind, Jesus comes.

Like a child we will meet, ragged clothes, dirty feet, like a child on the street, Jesus comes.

Like a child we once knew coming back into view, like a child born anew, Jesus comes.

Like a child born to pray and to show us the way, like a child here to stay, Jesus comes.

Like a child we receive all that love can conceive, like a child we believe, Jesus comes."

May we know the joy of that Child coming into our hearts and lives in a new way this year!

Many Blessings,

Sue



Sue had a great birthday on November 12!



A CELEBRATION FOR THE NEW YEAR!

Mark your calendars for Saturday, January 13, and don't forget to include an outrageous gift in your holiday shopping plans this December! It's almost time for NUMC's annual **TACKY GIFT PARTY!**

The night will begin at 6pm with a potluck dinner in Rauner Hall followed by the "tacky gift" exchange. This program is for adults only and RSVPs can be emailed to Dawn Ballard-Hesik at dawnrballard@yahoo.com. More details coming soon!

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Christmas Families

Mission & Outreach has received our adopted families' wish lists for Christmas! The sign-up sheet can be found in the narthex and [online](#).

All items are due by 10:30am Sunday, December 17. Gifts should be wrapped or in a bag with a label that is coded with the information as it appears on the sign-up sheet.

Thanks to everyone in advance for your compassion and generous spirit reflective of the season.

Lynette



Thank You!

Mission & Outreach would like to thank all who donated to the Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Your generosity provided a complete dinner for 6 families.

These food baskets are so appreciated and so is your thoughtfulness and caring.

Lynette

A CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION

Both programs are open to the community so invite your neighbors and loved ones to attend.

A Christmas Celebration
December 2, 2023

THE SINGING PRINCIPAL
(a children's program, registration required)
Register online at numc.us
Rauner Hall - 3:30 to 4:20pm

A CAROL SING
(appropriate for all ages, no registration needed)
NUMC sanctuary - 4:30 to 5:30pm

Then we bundle up and take a short walk down to Sandy Hook center for the annual tree lighting ceremony.
6pm

**Come for all or a part of the afternoon
as we welcome the start of Advent together!**

You Are Invited...

to experience a musical service of "LESSONS AND CAROLS" on Sunday, December 17 at 3pm. Jesse Lee Memorial Church in Ridgefield will be hosting the event in coordination with Bethel

UMC, both part of our Western Frontier Parish. The event is open to all so plan to enjoy a wonderful afternoon with family and friends.



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Office News

The pastor holds the following office hours:

Monday - Thursday
9:30am to 12:30pm
*No appointments necessary.
Simply knock on the office
door if closed.*

Fridays
Off

Pastor Steve can also be
reached at
revsev62@sbcglabal.net
and at 203.232.2752.

*Please note that Rae
will be out of the office
Dec 8, Dec 12 & the
full week of Christmas*

Parsonage Open House



Pastor Steve and his family cordially invite everyone in the church to the parsonage on January 7 immediately following worship. There will be coffee, cider, cookies, etc. Come and stay as long as you like and see the updates made by virtue of our Trustees. See the Plant Room, maybe see the cat, but certainly one or more of the two dogs!

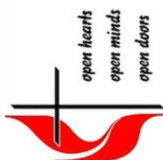
STEWARDSHIP 2024

As 2023 comes to a close, the work of our church ministry continues. We invite you to give prayerful thought to how God has blessed you and return a proportionate gift to our ministry in 2024.

Pledge cards are available below, in the narthex and on the homepage of numc.us (a red button below the image of the church). Returning a pledge card is an important step in allowing us to plan for a successful year.

All cards and questions should be directed toward our Financial Secretary, Barb Sherman. She can be reached at barks713@gmail.com.

As always, thank you for your support and best wishes for a wonderful Christmas season!



Newtown United Methodist Church

We are called to be a welcoming community of loving servants of Jesus Christ.
Stewardship 2024

With God's help, I/we pledge the following amount to our church's ministry
Weekly ___ Monthly ___ Annually ___

Name _____

Address _____

Email Address _____

Phone # _____

Please fill in all your personal information to make sure we have it correctly.

Thank you for being committed to providing for the future of our church!

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Worship Committee



As the year end draws to a close, please take a moment to review 2023 and make plans for the new year:

1: Please spend a few minutes to [sign up](#) for December and January **WORSHIP VOLUNTEER ROLES** (greeters, ushers, tellers, etc.).

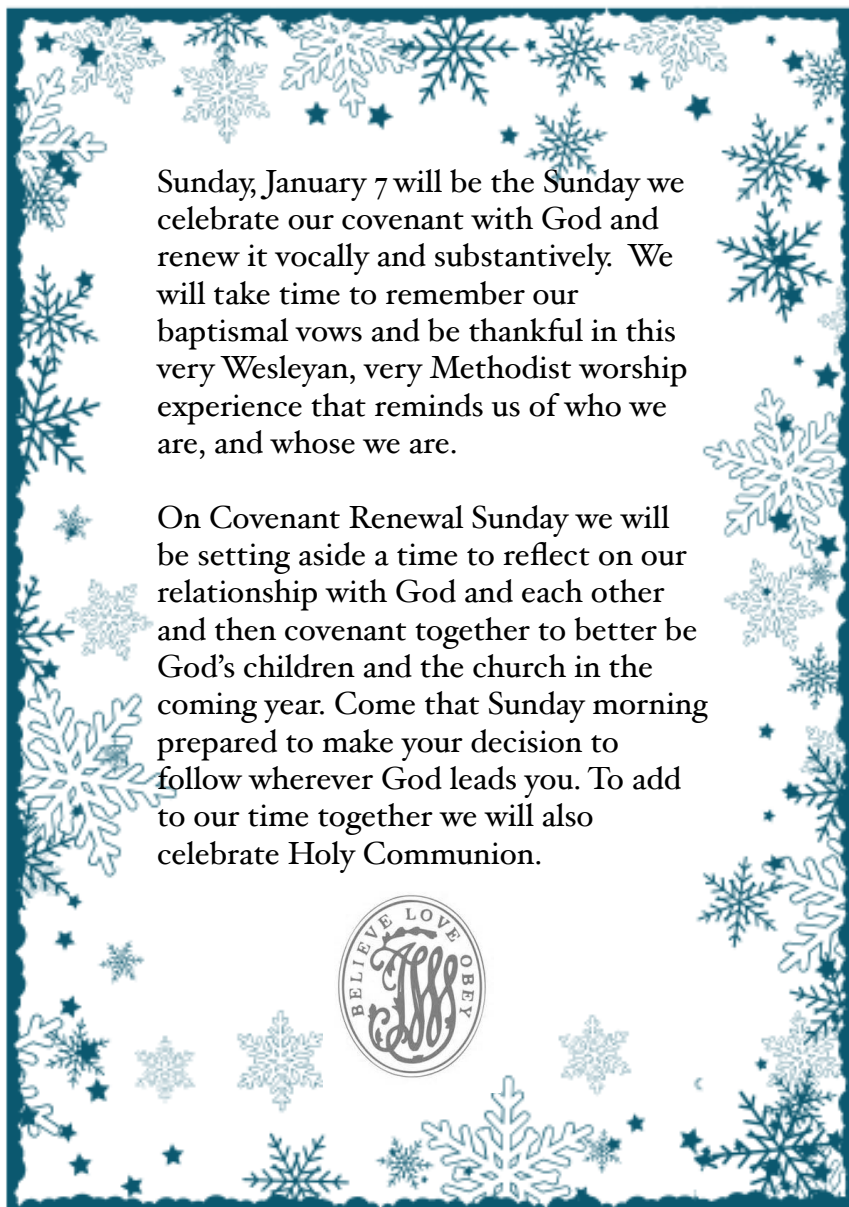
2. Please review your **ALTAR FLOWER DEDICATIONS** for the year and make sure you are up to date on payments, including Easter & Christmas orders as well.

[Sign-ups](#) for the 1st half of 2024 are available as well so don't hesitate to plan in advance!

3. **COFFEE HOUR** is a great time of fellowship for the entire church so please take a moment to [volunteer](#). It's really very simple and nothing elaborate is needed!

4. Don't forget to help us plan for great year! Please take a moment to complete the **2024 PLEDGE CARD**

COVENANT RENEWAL SUNDAY



Sunday, January 7 will be the Sunday we celebrate our covenant with God and renew it vocally and substantively. We will take time to remember our baptismal vows and be thankful in this very Wesleyan, very Methodist worship experience that reminds us of who we are, and whose we are.

On Covenant Renewal Sunday we will be setting aside a time to reflect on our relationship with God and each other and then covenant together to better be God's children and the church in the coming year. Come that Sunday morning prepared to make your decision to follow wherever God leads you. To add to our time together we will also celebrate Holy Communion.



SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT...

from the Rev. John Wesley

“By salvation I mean not barely according to the vulgar notion deliverance from hell or going to heaven but a present deliverance from sin a restoration of the soul to its primitive health its original purity a recovery of the divine nature the renewal of our souls after the image of God in righteousness and true holiness in justice, mercy and truth.”

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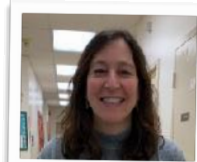


Birthdays & Anniversaries

12/1	Kaleb Birtwell
12/3	John Holden Mark DeFrance
12/4	Matthew Hoyt
12/5	Ray Hoyt 🎉 Woot Woot!
12/6	Debbie Nemecek 🎉 <i>Happy Mini Milestone!</i>
12/7	Rahanna Peck
12/10	Landyn Sigmund
12/12	George Hanlon 🎉 Wow!
12/14	Ally Paynter Michael Presnell Boyd Saxton
12/15	Matthew Linnell
12/15	Erika Corner
12/16	John & Karyn Holden 🍷 Charles Plank
12/19	Gary Weller 🎉 Wow!
12/20	Vikki Carlson
12/21	Andon Bambino
12/23	Lisa Marlin
12/25	Stephanie Burns
12/26	Carole Paige 🎉 Wow!
12/28	Harrison Yochum 🎉 HBD! Henry Yochum 🎉 HBD!
12/29	Yun Kee Chung
12/31	Rachel Taback

WESLEY LEARNING CENTER NEWS

I can't believe another month is already behind us! November was an exciting time as earlier this month we initiated our "Key to Kindness" project. Mrs. Daniels and Mrs. Riccio's class is in the process of collecting hats and mittens in support of the Newtown Police Department's outreach program, spreading kindness to all those benefiting from their efforts.



In the spirit of giving for December, WLC is collecting toys for Caroline's Toy Chest in cooperation with the St. Rose Knights of Columbus. All toys received go to support families in need, allowing them to select holiday gifts for their children.

December is always a hectic and joyous time at Wesley Learning Center and we are excited to invite you to participate in our annual Scholastic Book Fair. Stop by anytime between 8am and 2pm from December 11 - December 15 if you are interested in purchasing books for children ages toddler through grade 3. As we all know... *books make great gifts*, especially for the holidays!

And last, but not least... registration for the 2024-25 school year begins for current families in mid-December. An open house is also planned for new families on Saturday, January 20 from 9:00 - 11:00 am. So spread the word to anyone you may know looking for a caring, preschool program!

I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving with family and friends and that your holiday season is filled with love and wonder.

Diane Fuchs

Director, Wesley Learning Center,
a NAEYC accredited program for children ages 2 to 6.
wesleyfuchs@gmail.com
203.426.6149



Church Staff
Rev. Stephen Volpe, Pastor
Rev. E. Sue Klein, Deacon & Minister of Music
Diane Fuchs, Director, Wesley Learning Center
Rae Steare, Office Assistant

Newtown United Methodist Church
92 Church Hill Rd,
Sandy Hook, CT 06482
203.426.9998
churchoffice@newtown-umc.org
numc.us

C O M M U N I T Y E V E N T S

**Fundraiser Concert and Dinner
Benefiting**

Families United in Newtown

“We Have a Voice”

Special Guest

America’s Got Talent Semi-Finalist

Amanda Mammana

Sponsored by Colonial Subaru



Saturday, December 30th, 2023

@4pm

Newtown Congregational Church

14 West Street, Newtown, CT

\$45 per person for tickets: <https://bit.ly/FUNConcert23>



www.familiesunitedinnewtown.org

LIVE MUSIC - DINNER

The need is constant.
The gratification is instant.
Give blood.



**American
Red Cross**



Blood Drive

Newtown Congregational Church

14 West Street, Newtown, CT 06470

Fri, Dec 8, 2023 8:30 am—6:30 pm*

For an appointment, please visit redcrossblood.org,
call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767), or
Scan this QR code with a smart phone; enter 5320



Streamline your donation experience and save up to 15 minutes by visiting RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.

with appreciation to **Newtown Lions Club** for
host volunteers and
Women Involved in Newtown for snacks



Give Something that Means Something® | RedCrossBlood.org | 1-800-RED CROSS



Holiday Show

Featuring

Coastal Mix

and

The Mad Hatter Chorus

Saturday, December 9 | 7:00 pm

Newtown Congregational Church

14 West St | Newtown, CT

Free Admission | Donations Welcome



Mad Hatter Chorus™