



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

# The Evangel January 2024

## PASTOR'S CORNER



*"There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. We love, because God first loved us. Those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen." 1John 4:18-20, NRSV*

A new year has begun. Though the marking of a new year is a purely arbitrary human construct; it is never-the-less a good enough reason to look back on what has transpired over the past year, to take stock of our lives as individuals, as families, and as communities. It is also the time many make those fitful resolutions desiring a better year for one reason and another. "A better year" is about as general as you can get. That can certainly mean a lot of different things to a lot of people. "Better" How? Does it mean for you to be more productive? Do better at school? Get in shape? Save more, spend less? Stop and smell more roses? This is an endless list, so I'll stop.

Hoping for a better new year is one thing. In order for it to become one, steps on our part need to be taken, responsibility taken. I think it also behooves us to think outside of ourselves when considering a better year. The one Christmas song I love to hear, but didn't seem to hear often enough this past season is the John Lennon piece, "So, This is Christmas (War is Over)". John's words resonate in me,

"So this is Christmas, and what have you done?  
Another year older,  
and a new one just begun  
Have a very Merry Christmas  
And a Happy New Year!  
Let's hope it's a good one  
without any fear.  
War is over, if you want it.  
War is over now."

What have we done? Yes, another year older, and the new one has just started. What are we going to do with the new time, the new prosperity, the new opportunities given to us to make this place, this world, this community more peace-filled, more filled with compassion, empathy, joy, love? I think if we can start with Lennon's hope, "a good one without any fear" I think we'd be headed in a very good direction.

I think Mr. Lennon had in mind the very sentiment of the writer of 1 John quoted above. This is a very intimate detail about the Kingdom of God, "perfect love casts out fear." The angels with great, good, and astonishing news make perfectly sure their message is heard by those in need of peace, "Fear not," they say. At the empty Resurrection cave, the angel reassures with, "Do not fear,". Can you imagine a world without any fear? Can you imagine our community without any fear? A time and place where no one need have fear... of hunger, violence, our lives, racial division, abuse, injustice, homelessness, etc.? We all can make a difference as we all in our own ways find ways in working together to allay fear and make for peace, healing, justice, love, and a call to a spirituality of love and healing. It is possible. It will never be perfect. But, we are another year older, and what have we done? What can we be doing, not just for ourselves, but especially for God and one another?

Grow In the Grace and Peace of God,

*Pastor Steve*

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## Saint of the Month

*submitted by Pastor Steve*

For January our **SAINTS OF THE MONTH** are Vikki Carlson & Karan Goodhue for putting together the multi-generational Christmas event on Dec. 3 with the Singing Principal and Carol-Sing afterwards with a nice stroll down to the tree lighting. Brilliant! For this reason, and more, please give them a share of your gratitude this month!

## Thanks You!

Thank you congregation for your very thoughtful Christmas gift. Your kindness and generosity is what makes this church so special.

From all us at NUMC, we thank you from the bottom of our hearts.



## **A NOTE FROM YOUR MINISTER OF MUSIC**

*God is always doing a 'new thing'.*

May our new year be blessed by hymns that help us do a new thing! British hymn writer Fred Pratt Green penned this in 1979:



*"Of all the Spirit's gifts to me, I pray that I may never cease to take and treasure most these three: Love, joy, and peace."*

You can find the full text in our hymnal, No. 336.

Many Blessings,

Sue



## **A CELEBRATION FOR THE NEW YEAR!**

This Saturday, January 13, is our annual Potluck and Tacky Gift Party!

The night begins at 6pm with a potluck dinner in Rauner Hall followed by the "tacky gift" exchange. This program is for adults only and it's not too late to [sign-up!](#) Everyone should bring a "tacky gift" and a dish to share! Hope to see you there!

## **NEW YEAR, NEW BUDGET**

LAST CALL TO SUBMIT YOUR 2024 STEWARDSHIP PLEDGE.

Pledge cards are available in the narthex and on the homepage of [numc.us](http://numc.us) (a red button below the image of the church).

Alternatively, you may send a confidential email to Barb Sherman, our financial secretary at [barks713@gmail.com](mailto:barks713@gmail.com).

Additionally, be on the lookout later this month for your 2023 financial statement. Most statements are sent via email, so please check your spam folder if you don't receive anything by the end of the month.

*As always, thank you for your support and for helping make this a great new year at NUMC!*

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## Office News

The pastor holds the following office hours:

Monday - Thursday  
9:30am to 12:30pm

No appointment necessary. Simply knock on the office door if closed.

Fridays  
Off

Pastor Steve can also be reached at [revsev62@sbcglobal.net](mailto:revsev62@sbcglobal.net) and at 203.232.2752.

*Happy New Year*

## 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.”*

## COMMUNITY NEWS

Give blood on January 25 (to Celebrate Blood Donor Month and automatically enter to win a trip for two to Super Bowl LVIII in Las Vegas) or February 2 (to auto-register for a free \$20 Amazon card via email).

To schedule, please visit [redcrossblood.org](http://redcrossblood.org) (enter 5320), scan the poster QR code with a smartphone (enter 5320), or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).



## Blood Drives

Newtown Congregational Church  
14 West Street, Newtown, CT 06470

**Thur Jan 25, 2024, 12 noon—5:00 pm**  
**Fri Feb 2, 2024 11:00 am—4:00 pm\***

For an appointment, please visit [redcrossblood.org](http://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](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) to complete your pre-donation reading and health history questions on the day of your appointment.



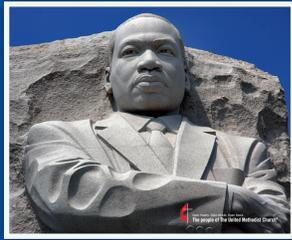
with appreciation to Newtown Lions Club for host volunteers and Women Involved in Newtown for snacks



Give Something that Means Something® | [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) | 1-800-RED CROSS

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With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair A **STONE OF HOPE**... we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into A **BEAUTIFUL SYMPHONY OF BROTHERHOOD**.

Martin Luther King, Jr.  
"I Have a Dream" speech,  
Washington, DC, August 28, 1963

## Birthdays & Anniversaries

- 1/1 Bill Van Gieson
- 1/2 Allison Holden
- 1/4 Kim Pearlman
- 1/6 Timothy Pearlman *milestone!* 🎉
- 1/7 Albert Miles
- (happy belated! to all above! 🎉)*
- 1/12 Billy Bloom *milestone!* 🎉  
Duane Jones
- 1/13 Barb Sherman
- 1/14 Andrew Benkovich  
Brandon Ghent  
Sage Volpe
- 1/15 Bob Sibley
- 1/16 Sage Volpe
- 1/17 Rebecca Keane  
Ethel Meadows !! 😊
- 1/18 Joanne Keane *wow!* 🎉  
David Manville
- 1/19 Leah Pinckney
- 1/22 Jim & Marcia Maurer 🍷
- 1/26 Ed Dahlstrom !! 😊
- 1/27 Erin Burns  
Wendy Leon-Gambetta *wow!* 🎉
- 1/29 Charlie Poarch

## WESLEY LEARNING CENTER NEWS

January is a quiet month at Wesley Learning Center. The excitement of the holidays are over and it's back to business as usual.



The only important information to note is that we have an open house scheduled for Saturday, January 20 from 9:00 am - 11:00 am. If you know if anyone looking for a wonderful preschool experience, please let them know!

I hope everyone had a wonderful break and a very Happy New Year!

*Diane Fuchs*

Director, Wesley Learning Center,  
a NAEYC accredited program for children ages 2 to 6.  
[wesleyfuchs@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:churchoffice@newtown-umc.org)  
[numc.us](http://numc.us)