

**NEWARKFIRSTUMC**  
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# THE MESSENGER



**2026**



*Rev. Garry McCaffery*

## A word from the Pastor

*<sup>5</sup>And when he comes, he will open the eyes of the blind and unplug the ears of the deaf. <sup>6</sup>The lame will leap like a deer, and those who cannot speak will sing for joy! Springs will gush forth in the wilderness, and streams will water the wasteland.” (Isaiah 35:5-6, NLT).*

HAPPY NEW YEAR!! We have walked right into the future. Yes, 2026 was the future we were looking towards, especially over the last couple weeks as 2025 wound down. Now, here we are, and 2026 is the present. It is our present reality and yet, it is a present that is pregnant with hope and anticipation. It is a present that we hold in tension with a new future. A future that holds much potential, much risk, much joy, much sorrow, and much hope. It is a future filled with wonder and mystery. It is a future that is filled with the presence, peace, grace, and love of God.

Yes, the future is always before us, and yet it quickly becomes the present. In the present we have the joy and comfort of encountering the presence of God. As we take our first few steps into the New Year it is important for us to remember that God is present with us. Many of us are entering 2026 with a great many challenges and decisions weighing heavily upon us. We want to be excited about the future, but we are having a difficult time because we cannot clearly see the outcome of our current situation. Let me assure you, this doesn't make us bad people or faithless people. This makes us people who are fully aware of our need of God's presence in our life.

Just like the people of long ago, we are often in need of a reminder of the love and grace of God. We are in need of the reminder that God cares for us and is interested in and aware of all the challenges we face. God is aware that life is not unfolding in quite the way we had hoped. Yet, God holds us in the palm of His hands, and He will never let us go.

Think about the promise the above passage from Isaiah offers. The people were in dire straits. They were being oppressed, and they were in trouble. They needed help. The help they received came in the form of a promise. The promise of one who would give sight to the blind and hearing to the deaf. The promise of one who would bring healing and cause those who had no voice to be heard singing for joy! Places that were dry and thirsty would have streams of water springing forth from within them. New life was going to be the result of the fulfillment of this promise!

Jesus is the new life that has been given to us! Jesus is the future that is here now in the present giving us the presence, peace, grace, and love of God! Jesus is the one who walks beside us and encourages us in the midst of the difficulties we face. Jesus is the one who will lead us through each day of 2026, giving us all the grace and peace we need for each day.

This year may be challenging for some of us and not so challenging for others. Regardless of where we find ourselves, we can be assured that we have Jesus walking beside us, holding us close each day. We can live in confidence and hope because the love of God is with us always!

Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Garry



January 15th Trustees

January 17th 9-noon Safe Sanctuaries Training

January 22nd Ad Council



## 2026 Leadership Teams

At our Charge Conference on October 25, 2025 our church leadership was elected for this year. Those serving are as follows:

**Administrative Council:** Nancy Schrader, Leah Talbot, Marlene Havert, Kyle Houser Steve Hallagan, Lucina Hallagan, Marcy Elmore, Diane Sheckler, Don Combes, Pastor Garry, Pastor Della.

**Lay Leadership Development Committee (Nominations):** Pastor Garry, Pastor Della, Elie Bump, Gail DeFisher, Eloise Miller, Jean Bendix, Kyle Houser, Steve Hallagan, Alice Crespo, Joanie Beman, Anne Farrell.

**Trustees:** Chad Sheckler, Ron Miller, Gail DeFisher, Ben Talbot, Richard Martin, Karen Weimer, Manny Crespo, Kirk Palmatier, Rusty Havert.

**Staff/Pastor Parish Relations Committee (SPPRC):** Lucina Hallagan, Jean Bendix, Kirk Palmatier, Leah Talbot, Rod Reeder, John Greene, Nancy Welcher, Jean Hoe, Gail DeFisher, Kyle Houser

**Finance Committee:** Steve Hallagan, Marlene Havert, Diane Sheckler, Nancy Schrader, Gail DeFisher, Bob Bendix, Carol Hyman, David Frank, Kyle Houser.

**Foundation Committee:** Steve Hallagan, Marlene Havert, Ron Miller, Carol Hyman, Diane Sheckler, Nancy Briggs, Kyle Houser.

**Together in Christ (TIC) Representatives:**  
Marcy Elmore, Eileen Godfrey, Cathy Knarr.

**Lay Member to Annual Conference:** Kyle Houser  
**Alternate Lay Member to Annual Conference:** Don Combes

**Lay Leader:** Kyle Houser

Anyone who is interested in attending any of these meetings is welcome to do so. The only exception is the Staff Pastor Parish Relations Committee. The reason for this is due to the confidential nature of the business discussed.

A big "THANK YOU" to everyone serving on these boards and committees. Blessings!



## From the Pulpit

**Sunday January 18th**

**Today's Message**  
"More Than We Realize"  
Pastor Garry

\*Isaiah 49:1-7, 1 Corinthians 1:1-9  
John 1:29-42

**Sunday January 4th**  
**Epiphany Sunday/Covenant Renewal**  
**Communion**

**Today's Message:**  
"The Greatest Gift"  
Pastor Garry

\*Isaiah 60:1-6 \*Matthew 2:1-12

**Sunday January 25th**

**Today's Message**  
"Called to a New Way"  
Pastor Garry

\*Isaiah 9:1-4 \*Matthew 4:12-23

**Sunday January 11th**

**Today's Message:**  
"Tied Together in the Water"  
Pastor Della  
\*Isaiah 42:1-9 \*Matthew 3:13-17



From Jan 5th-13th

If a Pastor is needed during this time please call Pastor Della @ 315.597.3494

Thank you

# EMMANUEL OUTREACH CENTER NEWS

## Christmas Blessing Bags Deliver Warmth on a Wintry Day

It was a balmy 18 degrees and snowing on December 13, but that did not dampen spirits or slow the work of love. Volunteers arrived bundled up, smiling, and ready to serve—joy clearly written on their faces and carried in their hearts. The cold morning quickly gave way to warmth as Emmanuel Outreach Center (EOC) gathered to share Christmas blessings with our neighbors.



EOC was prepared to walk alongside 150 families who could use a little extra support during the holiday season. Each family received a thoughtfully assembled Christmas Blessing Bag including a

roasting chicken, a pork roast, fresh produce, an assortment of canned goods, and special Christmas treats and gifts. More than food, these bags carried care, dignity, and the assurance that no one in our community is forgotten.

We extend a heartfelt and special thank-you to the Newark Rotary for their extraordinary generosity. Their partnership and support made a significant difference sharing the spirit of that defines this season.

This ministry was more than an outreach event—it was an opportunity to show love in action, welcoming all into the wide and gracious circle of this community. We are deeply grateful to every volunteer, donor, and supporter who helped make the day possible.



Emmanuel Outreach Center  
A NEWARK FIRST UMC MISSION

### Other Programs

**Over 60 Lunch** provided 465 lunches last month. Lunch served 11:30 Monday—Friday. Plenty of fun & fellowship.

**Newark Free Lunch** served 1,525 lunches last month. Program open to all. Meals served 11:00 Tuesday—Friday. Come share great food and fellowship.

**The Temple** provided personal hygiene items during lunch hours. Special backpacks with essential items are available for those who are unhoused.

**Medical Closet** lends equipment such as walkers and shower chairs, supporting those in need of medical assistance. We gratefully accept gently-used items for redistribution to those who need them most.

Call EOC  
for assistance:

315-331-8755

# EMMANUEL OUTREACH CENTER



Emmanuel Outreach Center  
A NEWARK FIRST UMC MISSION

## A Lenten Invitation: Journey Toward Restoration

Each Lent, the Spirit invites us to pause—to step away from the hurried pace of the world, and to open our hearts to the quiet, restorative work of God. This year, I would love for you to travel with me on a unique Lenten journey inspired by a simple yet profound image: the abandoned barn

In her book *Abandoned Barns: A Lenten Journey Toward Restoration*, Della Ludwig takes us down the back roads of New York’s Finger Lakes, where weathered barns stand as silent witnesses to both time’s wear and grace’s promise. Their silvered boards and leaning beams tell stories of neglect, but also whisper of repair and renewal. Like these barns, there are places in our own lives weathered by seasons of distraction, doubt, or weariness—places in need of God’s tender restoration.

This 40-day study offers daily scripture, reflections, prayers, breath prayers, activities, and images of barns from across the Finger Lakes region. Whether you are part of Newark First UMC or visiting for the first time, you are warmly invited to walk this path together.

We will meet each Wednesday morning from Ash Wednesday, February 18, 2026, through April 2, 2026 in the church lounge. These gatherings will be an “experience worship book study,” with hands-on activities to help us live out the lessons we read.

**Whether you prefer quiet personal reflection at home or sharing the journey with others, *Abandoned Barns: A Lenten Journey Toward Restoration* offers both paths.** The book can guide you through Lent as an **independent journey** of daily scripture, prayer, and reflection—or you can **enrich the experience** by joining our weekly group study, where we will explore the themes together, share insights, and encourage one another as we walk toward Easter.

In Lent, we are reminded that restoration is never a self-driven project. It is the work of the Divine Carpenter, who rebuilds what the world has worn thin—making us whole in Christ once more. My prayer is that this journey will be an opportunity for each of us to discover the beauty God is still weaving into our lives.

Come, and let us see what He will restore in us this Lent.

Grace and peace,

*Pastor Della*

### Lenten Study Details & Sign-Up

**Book:** *Abandoned Barns: A Lenten Journey Toward Restoration* by Della Ludwig

**Special Newark First UMC Price:** \$8.00 (Amazon Price: \$15.99)

**Copies Must be reserved by January 4, 2026.**

**Sign-Up Location:** Drop off in Newark First UMC office or email Pastor Della: [revdlludwig@gmail.com](mailto:revdlludwig@gmail.com)

**Study Dates:** February 18—April 2, 2026

**Meeting Time:** Wednesdays, 9:30—11:30 AM

**Location:** Newark First UMC Lounge

**Note:** Please reserve your spot so we can prepare enough supplies for hands-on activities.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Contact: \_\_\_\_\_

Save me a book: \_\_\_\_\_ copies

Sign me up for the group study: Yes No

## Safe Sanctuaries Training — January 24 at Newark First UMC

Newark First UMC will host **Safe Sanctuaries Training** on **Saturday, January 24, 2026, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.** This training is an important step in helping our church provide a welcoming environment where **children, youth, and vulnerable adults are protected, respected, and cared for with integrity.**

Safe Sanctuaries training offers practical guidance for ministry settings—helping volunteers and leaders understand healthy boundaries, appropriate supervision, and best practices that reduce risk and strengthen trust. It supports a culture where everyone knows what is expected and where safety is handled consistently and responsibly.

**We strongly encourage all who interact with children, youth, and vulnerable adults to attend,** including teachers, youth leaders, drivers, helpers, mentors, and anyone serving in ministry or outreach roles.

Please note: **All volunteers at the Emmanuel Outreach Center (EOC) must have completed Safe Sanctuaries training within the last five years.** As part of the process, **please be prepared to provide your Social Security Number (SSN)** so a required background check can be completed.

If you have any questions, please contact **Pastor Garry** or **Pastor Della**.



The end of 2025 has arrived. So much change occurred for our organization and with that change came a lot of positive growth. We are so blessed to have such wonderful people supporting our mission, people who clearly care deeply about being part of the solution in trying to end families experiencing homelessness in our community.

As 2026 kicks off, FPWC is not only challenging our supporters to consider sustainable giving such as recurring monthly donations, but also asking that you challenge those around us in the community. It is so easy to complain about the homeless epidemic in our county, but harder to be an active participant in being part of a group who wants to help in the solution. Are you willing to challenge your friends, your workplace or a local business to become a partner in our mission? If 10 donors gave just \$25 a month, that would be \$3,000 a year. Imagine the possibilities! Incremental giving from even a portion of our supporters would be a huge stride toward an amazing 2026 in sustainability! I not only make the mission part of my daily life, but I too joined the challenge to be part of the solution!

If you are interested in ways you can be an active volunteer with us please reach out to Sue Gibson at [susankgibson18@gmail.com](mailto:susankgibson18@gmail.com). She will be in contact with the next steps that follow!

Thank you for choosing to support Family Promise of Wayne County NY, Inc. Together, we can build a community in which every family has a home, a livelihood, the chance to build a better future and where every child deserves a home!

All my respect,

**Evonne D. Pomerantz**



*Actually "thank you" for making and buying a whole bunch of cookies!*

*Thank you to the generosity and support of our entire church family and friends in making the 22nd Annual Christmas Cookie sale another success. The proceeds will go towards various missions and projects throughout 2026. A heartfelt thank you to everyone who provided baked goods and/donations for cookie sale. Also thank you to our many volunteers who put in countless hours frosting, filling trays, preparing the dining room, building and labeling boxes. And of course the day-of-the sale.*

*Thank you to our loyal customers who always look forward to our cookie sale.*

*Merry Christmas and may God bless you and your families in the New Year!*

*First United Methodist Church*

*United Women in Faith*

### Rebecca-Ruth UWIF

We met December 4th in the dining room. We had invited our spouses and friends and had 21 in attendance. We enjoyed a dish-to-pass meal and fun gift exchange.

Our next meeting will be **Thursday March 12th @ 1pm** in the lounge.

Please remember that we do not meet in January and February. There will be a Fellowship meal in February and maybe some other events. We will keep you posted.



# Caring Connections

*And the words of the LORD are flawless, like silver purified in a crucible, like gold refined seven times. Psalm 12:6*

A reading from "Mornings with Jesus" mentioned a piece about "words to live by." I was thinking with the start of a new year this is something I wanted to think about. The piece talked about selecting three biblical words that had special meaning. One writer chose "Trust" "Joy" and "Peace" Reminding her to trust in Jesus and choosing joy on happy and hard days. Seeking peace that passes all understanding. I select these three words, "Love" "Light" and "Prayer." Jesus is love and trust Him to help me shine His light and love on others, and believe that all things are possible with prayer. Perhaps you might like to choose three words and post them on your computer or refrigerator-someplace you will see them often! Jesus's words can help and direct us in every situation that comes up during this New Year. Please remember our friends who cannot come to church. Perhaps you can write a note, call or visit.....and always remember them in prayer.

Jean Lansberry

Penny Proper

Maggie Mathis

Hazel Herdman

Margaret Rundel

Betty VanAuken

Doris Humbert

Lois Ludwig

Beatrice & Curt Richardson

Jean Strobridge



This month of January we will be collecting anything that you would like to bring for the Newark Food Closet. Please bring your contributions to church and put them on the right side of the altar area. The food gifts will be blessed on the last Sunday of the month. Ron and Kirk will deliver our gifts to the Emmanuel Outreach Center to share with our friends and neighbors.

Thank you for supporting this mission  
Eileen



Thank you to Diane Sheckler and a whole host of folks that helped put this program together. We are blessed.



*Didn't the December 14th message, "Twas the Night," warm your heart? It was a joy to see and hear the story of Jesus birth, beautifully illustrated by the FUMC children. The stained glass windows also tell the birth of Jesus and his life, surrounded by His parents, animals, angels, shepherds, and kings. When you view these reflections are you reminded that God's people will receive the gift of life that comes from God?*

Lois Ludwig

Thank you for donating money during our **Blessing Baskets** collection. We continue to provide funds for our various mission projects.

**All Totals include \$200 from Missions And \$100 from UWIF**

2025

- \***January:** Comfort Care Facilities (House of John & & Laurel House) **\$726.14**
- \***February:** Emmanuel Free Lunch **\$708.11**
- \***March:** Newark Food Closet **\$769.34**
- \***April:** Family Promise **\$802.36**
- \***May:** Care Net **\$876.75**
- \***June:** Blessings in a backpack **\$920.80**
- \***July:** Nomads **\$770.08**
- \***August:** Glow Up Girl **\$1,111.61**
- \***September:** Helpful Hearts **\$756.00**
- \***October:** UMCOR **\$704.00**
- \***November:** Mighty Oaks **\$1513.00**
- \***December:** Emmanuel Outreach
- \***January 2026 :** Care Net

The work of this committee is so important and we would love to have more members involved in this ministry. If you feel the calling to this mission, we would love to have you. If you are interested, please reach out to us.

Contact information:

Church office:

Phone: (315)331-3895

Email: Newarkfumc@gmail.com

Chair: Diane Sheckler

Email: dianasheckler@gmail.com

Chad Sheckler

Email:

Pg. 6 casheckler@gmail.com

### Blessing Basket Donations for January

**Care Net Pregnancy Center of Wayne County** is a non-profit Christian ministry with a mission to offer Christ-centered compassion, hope, and assistance to women and men facing unexpected pregnancies and significant life decisions. We are dedicated to providing families with support, life affirming care, and counselling for their spiritual, emotional, social, and material well-being.

We are committed to ensuring parents receive support after their child's birth. To that end, we provide parenting/life skills classes, baby, maternity self administered pregnancy tests, options counselling, and support for women and men seeking healing from an abortion experience.

We partner with local organizations to ensure comprehensive care for the families in our community. Besides our on-site services, we also conduct classes at Hannick Hall, a residential treatment center for women in recovery located in Newark, and The Margaret Home in East Rochester. All our services are free and confidential.

### Blessing Basket breakdown for Mighty Oaks Foundation

Blessing basket collection for Nov.	\$684
UWIF contribution	100
Mission budget	200
Veteran's Concert	<u>529</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1513</b>

*Thank you so much for all of your Missions giving throughout the year*



Beatrice Richardson	1st
Dylan Yatteau	1st
Tina Weston	2nd
Steven Weimer	2nd
Laurie Piampiano	3rd
Bob Dedrick	4th
Andrew Hallagan	4th
William Mahoney	6th
Joanie Beman	10th
Betty VanAuken	12th
Zoey Houser	13th
Pat Verdine	14th
Ray Elmore	15th
Jenna Havert	17th
Jane Westfall	18th
Joe Cepulo	25th
Morgan Mercer	26th
Kathy Polisse	26th
Jason Cornwell	27th
Grace Sheckler	27th
Ekaterina Barrett	28th
Karen True	29th



Matt & Jessica Wells 1st



**Join us Feb 8<sup>th</sup>** when Dr. Jacob Ertl, head of the piano department at Nazareth University returns with a program entitled "The Dawn of Modernism at the Turn of the Century". He will be performing music by Boulanger, Ravel, Rachmaninoff, Tanaka and Gershwin/Wild. Concert at 3pm in Newark First United Methodist's sanctuary.

Free admission.