

THE GOOD NEWS



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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Advent begins December 1st and it is a season of preparation and anticipation as we get ready for the Christ Child to be born on December 25th.

David and I have been enjoying the Advent devotions from Pioneer Presbyterian Church in Belpre, Ohio. A dear friend of ours collects daily devotions from church members and lovingly assembles them into a booklet. The theme this year is "New Beginnings." Their pastor, Rev. Rick Hastings, wrote a devotion that I wanted to share with you. I share it with his permission.

Blessings & Love,
Clare

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17



St. Marys UMC

Northern District

West Virginia Conference

Northeastern Jurisdiction

"I thought writing a story about 'New Beginnings' would be a piece of cake for me. After all, I've moved 27 times in my lifetime, attended five different grade schools, three different high schools, and a university all in different states. I was married and had a child by age 18. I divorced at age 38 and remarried at age 40 with three career changes sandwiched in. So you might think I would have no problem writing a 'New Beginnings' story.

(continued from page 1)

But here's my dilemma: When is the beginning?

As I look back on the new beginnings I've had, it feels as if they are interconnected, woven together to form the tapestry that is the journey of my life to this point. So maybe the 'new beginning' was the New Years Eve in 1959 when I was born.

But then, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, 'anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone, a new life has begun.' Maybe that's the new beginning: the day I got saved (or perhaps it's better to say, 'the day I realized I was saved').

But even that doesn't feel right either, because Ephesians 1:4 says, 'even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.'

THAT'S IT!

My new beginnings story is the Christmas Story. The day Jesus was born set into motion the redemption plan that God had for me (and for you) so that we would spend eternity with Him forever!

Prayer: Oh Lord, we thank you for the gift of your Son who brings us the gift of eternal life through faith in Him which you give to us. Amen."

In the Spirit of Christmas, the Finance Team and Church Council have approved for the entirety of the Christmas Eve offering to go to missions. This year, the offering will go to Dig Deep Water and designated for the Appalachian Water project. Dig Deep is a nonprofit organization that works with community support to make sure those in underserved communities have access to clean water and sanitation. The Appalachian Water project is currently working in McDowell County, WV and is supported by our United Methodist Annual Conference. Our confirmation class identified Dig Deep as a way we can give the thirsty something to drink as we are directed in Matthew 25. You can learn more at their web site: digdeep.org.



ADVENT IS HERE!

ADVENT STUDY

Our Advent study this year is All the Good, A Wesleyan Way of Christmas. Mark your calendars to take an Advent journey guided by the practices in John Wesley's means of grace. This study includes Methodist history and its connection to the message of Christmas.

Classes are in person and meet on **Tuesdays at 7 PM and Wednesdays at 11 AM at the church**, beginning November 28th. Guests are more than welcome. Books are available downstairs in the Educational Wing and upstairs in the Sanctuary. They are \$13 each and \$9 for the devotional companion. You are welcome to purchase a book even if you can't attend a class.



The St. Marys Community Concert Band will present their annual Christmas Concert on Tuesday, December 5th at 7pm at the SMHS Auditorium. Pre-Concert Christmas Music will be by Kris Hinrichs from 6:20-6:50pm.

Admission is free, but donations will be accepted for the Pleasants County Middle School Band Programs.

Newport Community Annual Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 3rd at 7 PM
At the Newport Baptist Church



SINGING CHRISTMAS TREE PERFORMANCES

Friday, December 8th at 7 PM
Sunday, December 10th at 2 PM

Both performances at the
St. Marys First Baptist Church Family Life Center



United Methodist Men

Meet on the 3rd Sunday morning for breakfast
at 8 AM in the Fellowship Hall.

All men are welcome



**There is no breakfast meeting in December
January meeting is the 21st.**

The UMM still has apple butter for sale.

The price is \$6 per pint and they make a great Christmas gift. Thank you!



2024 DATES TO REMEMBER

CHURCH COUNCIL - 6 PM

January 9 - March 12 - May 14 - July 9 - September 10 - November 12

TRUSTEES - 5 PM

January 14 - March 10 - May 19 - July 14 - September 8 - November 10

SPRC - 6 PM

February 7 - April 16 - July 16 - November 13

United Methodist Women News



United
Methodist
Women

FAITH • HOPE • LOVE IN ACTION

The unit meeting is the 1st Monday of each month at 6 PM
in the Chapel
(executive committee meets at 5 PM).

DECEMBER

Tureen Dinner

December 4th at 6 PM

Bring a covered dish

Program: Answering the Call
Vice President & Spiritual Life Leaders

New Member Recognition
Special Mission Recognition
50 Year Member Recognition

Reminder: *Bring baby gifts for the House of the Carpenter to the Tureen Dinner in December.*

JANUARY

There is no meeting in January



The UMW still has bags of nuts available for sale. They're on a table across from Clare's Office. The price is \$14 per bag.

POINSETTIAS

Poinsettias can be ordered in honor or memory of loved ones to decorate the Sanctuary. An order form is available at the church, or you can order by calling the church office at 304-684-3018. Poinsettias are \$10.00 each and order fare due 12/11/23. Questions can be directed to Charmel Radcliff.

An order form is on pg.15 of this newsletter.



December 9th from 4 to 5:45 PM, there will be a free North Pole at St. Marys event for families at the Marina. Our Church will be helping children make ornaments. Volunteers are needed to help with this community activity. Please see Judy Nutter for more information.

DECEMBER 9th COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARADE AT 6 PM



ANGEL TREE & WHITE GIFTS

White gift bags were distributed on November 26th for members to put their non-perishable items in for the Christmas Baskets. The white gifts should be returned by December 11th and placed in the first floor classroom nearest Washington Street. (**Non-perishable items include:** canned foods, household paper products and cleaning items, & toiletry items).

The Angel Tree - All angels have been adopted! Your support has been amazing!

If you would still like to help, please contact Neighbor Network at 304-684-3990 or Stonerise Health Care (formerly Belmont Health Care) at 304-665-2065. Thank you!

MISSION MONTH

Once again, this year we had our Mission Month in October, and once again, you gave generously! You gave \$1,820 and the Trustees matched it for a total of \$3,640. That money will be evenly distributed between the special offering recipients on pages 23 & 24 of your information guide. Each ministry will receive \$450 and those receiving money included: Crossroads UMC Camp in Parkersburg, Celebration of Mission Event, Burlington Family Services, Native American ministries, UMC student scholarships, UMC Disaster Relief and others. You can learn more about these important ministries in your information guide. Thank you for your ongoing support of missions in our area and beyond. It makes a difference!

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Dec. 3 - Newport Community Cantata - 7 PM (Newport Baptist Church)

Dec. 5 - Community Band Concert - 7 PM (SMHS Auditorium)

Dec. 8 - Singing Christmas Tree - 7 PM

Dec. 9 - North Pole at St. Marys, Marina - 4-5:30 PM

Christmas Parade - 6 PM

Dec 10 - Singing Christmas Tree - 2 PM

Dec. 24 - SMUMC Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service - 11 PM



*December 17th
Lunch after worship*

St. Marys United Methodist Church

Leaders – 2024

Members of the Church Council

Pastor	Rev. Clare J. Sulgit	684-7256	claresulgit@aol.com
Church Council Chairperson	Diane Braun	684-1842	tdbraun@suddenlink.net
Lay Leader	Keith White	684-3827	markei22@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Randy Nutter	684-7581	randynutter@gmail.com
Financial Secretary	Gary Loughner	305-0386	galoughner@gmail.com
Lay Member to A. Conf.	Beverly Stutzman	684-1136	bsoct11@windstream.net
Alt Lay member to AC	Pat Mays	665-3464	pmays@frontiernet.net
Sec. to Charge Conference	Karen Conaway	684-2496	conaways@suddenlink.net
SS Superintendent	Andy Hickman	684-0901	wahick@suddenlink.net
Church Council Secretary	Carla Conaway	684-9308	carlaconaway00@gmail.com
Membership Secretary	Louise McLaughlin	684-3202	
Chairperson – SPRC	Melissa Carder	684-3250	cardermj@hotmail.com
Finance Chairperson	Gary Loughner	684-7231	gloughner@suddenlink.net
Trustees Chairperson	Al Thacker	684-7598	althacker@ymail.com
UMW President	Liz Loughner	305-0292	eloughner@yahoo.com
UMM President	Bill Carder	684-3250	carderwml@yahoo.com
Youth Leaders	Randy & Judy Nutter	684-7581	randynutter@gmail.com
District Conf. Delegates	Beverly Stutzman	665-1136	bsoct11@windstream.net
	& Pat Mays	684-3464	pmays@frontiernet.net
Church Business Admin.	Lillian Blouir	305-3289	lrbloir@gmail.com

Church Council Members at Large

2024	2025	2026
Pam Hamilton	Linda Birkhimer	Pat Mays
Mike McGee	David Conaway	Robbie Evans
Sheila Hickman	Diane Braun	

Finance Committee

2024	2025	2026
Al Thacker	Melissa Ennis	John Fitzpatrick
Sherie Poling	Carol McFadden	Gary Loughner, Chair

Keith White, Lay Leader

Rev. Clare J. Sulgit

Diane Braun, Church Council Chair

Melissa Carder, SPRC Chair

Randy Nutter, Treasurer

Gary Loughner, Financial Secretary

Lillian Blouir, Church Business Adm.

Al Thacker, Trustee President

Beverly Stutzman, Annual Conf. Delegate

Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development

2024	2025	2026
Gretchen Himmeger	Mark Barnhart	Karen Conaway
		Karen Wilson

Rev. Clare J. Sulgit, Chairperson

Board of Trustees

2024	2025	2026
Mae Lewis	Al Thacker	Leslie Westfall
Tim Ambrose	Doug Poling	Andy Hickman
Liz Campbell	Wayne Birkhimer	Vernon (Louie) Lewis

Rev. Clare J. Sulgit

Youth Coordinator

Judy Nutter

Child Protection Coordinator

Dianna Lewis

ADVENT Quiz (pg. 14) Answers			
1. B	2. B	3. B	4. B
5. C	6. D	7. D	8. A
9. E	10. C		

GIVING

TOTAL GIFTS RECEIVED

November 6	\$4,455.00
November 13	\$3,302.00
November 20	\$2,249.00
November 27	\$2,495.00

ATTENDANCE

IN PERSON

ONLINE

November 6	73	136
November 13	107	113
November 20	66	80
November 27	77	

YTD Gifts received for our Budget - \$160,416.04

YTD needed for our Budget - \$164,736.00

Custodial Account Balance - \$20,423.00

INFORMATION FROM THE FINANCE TEAM:

Through your giving this year, we are above our budget requirements for the year, we have paid 100% of our Annual Conference Apportionment share and have given \$7,300.00 to selected mission projects. With your continued support, we expect to end 2023 in excellent financial condition. Not many churches in the conference have been as fortunate to share God's love as our church.

We have put great effort into developing the 2024 budget which was approved at our recent charge conference. The 2024 budget of \$196,372.00 is an 8% increase from the 2023 budget. This increase is necessary to support increases in conference apportionments, pastor health insurance costs, and rising insurance and utility costs. And this budget reflects as accurately as possible our projected expenses for 2024. We are presenting this information in hope that you will consider this budget increase as you prepare your personal plan for 2024 charitable giving.

Some contributors have found it beneficial for varied reasons to tithe by making considerable donations to the church only a few times during the year, rather than making traditional regular periodic donations. In some situations, such as IRA minimum distributions, there is a significant tax advantage to this type of charitable giving. Tithes of large amounts will be distributed uniformly according to instructions of the donor, so that we may continue to support mission projects, and maintain our General Fund to operate the church. If you have an interest in this form of giving, and would like additional information, contact your financial advisor, Pastor Clare or Gary Loughner.

Thanks again for your financial support to share God's love in our community through our church.

Neighbor Network Highlights for the Month of October

Total Donations: 196

Total Customers: 860

Total Families receiving services: 143

(Gabriel Project -9 , total of 13 children)

(food - 273 individuals)

(utility assistance - 6)

Total Thrift Store Transactions: \$8,558.96

Total Donations to NN: \$4,450.00

Total Expenses: \$10,794.74

Number of Volunteers this month: 30+

**Volunteers are
always needed,
please call the store
at 304-684-3990 if
you can help.**

NEIGHBOR NETWORK **FOOD DISTRIBUTION**

Our Neighbor Network partners with Mountaineer Food Bank for a monthly food giveaway. It is held at the Marina beginning at noon. Volunteers are always need and ask to be at the Marina by 9:45 AM. You may also know someone who would benefit from the distribution. Pleasants County residents only please.

Our next giveaway is December 9th

Did you know that our weekly radio broadcast airs on Sunday mornings at 9 AM on 93.9 FM. Our weekly worship video posts at 10:30 AM on our 2 Facebook pages and on YouTube. These are outreach ministries the church supports through its budget. Please share this information!

Birthdays

DECEMBER

Carol Carder	12/4
Rachel Willis	12/4
LeeAnn Carpenter	12/5
Andy Hickman	12/5
Chris Simonton	12/7
Brett Holt	12/9
Donna Boley	12/9
Thad Ennis	12/10
Claude Rolston	12/11
Jenifer Trunk	12/12
Richard Conaway	12/14
David Conaway	12/15
Matthew Powell	12/17
Bryan Poling	12/18
Lauren Shafer	12/18
Helen Wells	12/20
Ryan Powell	12/22
Sonya Bailey	12/25
Jennifer Wince	12/25
Chris Masters	12/27
Dianna Lewis	12/27
Mya Hatcher	12/29
Wayne Birkhimer	12/29
Keith White	12/29
John Fitzpatrick	12/30

JANUARY

Eleanor Little	1/8
Marshall Norman	1/12
Joe Fleegle	1/13
Morgan Poling	1/13
David Fetty	1/15
Natalie Ferrell	1/16
Liz Carpenter-Eddy	1/16
Reece Westfall	1/16
John Lanham	1/22
Patricia Moore	1/23
Thomas Thacker	1/23
Judy Nutter	1/25
Angela Scadden	1/26
Ty Flower	1/27
Chris Lewis	1/29
Darla Carpenter	1/29
Treasa Davies	1/29

MEETINGS

JANUARY

8 TRUSTEES - 5 PM

10 CHURCH COUNCIL - 7 PM

EVERY MONTH

First Mon. - UMW - 6 PM

Third Sun. - UMM - 8 AM

OTHER GROUPS MEETING AT OUR CHURCH

2nd Mon. Habitat for Humanity 6 PM

& Middle Island Ramblers 4-H 7 PM

Every Tuesday Boy Scouts 7 PM

Every Thursday AA / Al-Anon 8 PM



The Church Office
will be closed
December 22nd and 25th
for Christmas.



Do we have your birthday listed?
Please call Lillian at 304-684-3018
if we do not have it!

PRAYERS FOR:

Betty Moorhead	Dwight Davis	Jennifer Furr	Janet Nutter Matheny
Ginger Poling	Maddie Collins	Webb Carpenter	Carol McSpadden
Suellen Simonton	Dave Taylor	Greg Hill	Mike McGee
Caroline Hill	JD Williamson	Mary Brewer	Mary Alice Shafer
Shirley Seaboy	Evelyn Neely	Eleanor Pierce	Jim West
Carolyn Ashkar	Duane Larsen	Kohner Loughner	Cheryl West
Avery Clickenger	Dwayne Barnes	Adam Mallett	Ruth Blauser
Joe & Thomasine Troisi	Martha Poling	Debbie Bailey	
Benny & Ruth Wagner	Dan McSpadden	Matthew Beard	
Philip Starks	Sheila Scadden	Martha Hoyt	



*Christian Sympathy
is extended to the
friends & family of
Paul Tallman, Jr.*



*Christian Sympathy
is extended to the
friends & family of
Barbara Bullman*



*Christian Sympathy
is extended to the
friends & family of
Betty Wilson*

The January/February 2024 Upper Room is available at the church.
Want one mailed to you? Just let us know.

ADVENT QUIZ

1. What does the word Advent (from the Latin adventus) mean?
A. Before Christmas B. Arrival or coming C. To go on an adventure
D. A website for online Christmas coupons
2. True or false: Like the 40 days of Lent, Advent is a fixed number of days before Christmas. A. True B. False
3. Which of these Advent hymns was written by Charles Wesley?
A. "Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming" B. "Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus"
C. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" D. "Hail to the Lord's Anointed"
4. Who originated Watch Night services?
A. Martin Luther B. John Wesley C. John the Baptist D. Henry VIII
5. According to tradition, approximately how far did Mary travel to visit Elizabeth?
A. 10 miles B. 50 miles C. 100 miles D. 500 miles
6. Why are the Advent candles arranged in the shape of a circle?
A. They make a wreath, and wreaths are Christmassy.
B. It is the easiest way to see all four candles.
C. It takes up the least space.
D. Circles symbolize eternity.
E. None of the above.
7. What is a Jesse Tree?
A. Another name for a Christmas tree B. The tree decorated with
Chrismons
C. A tree that blossoms at Christmastime D. A representation of Jesus'
family tree
8. On the third Sunday in Advent, some churches light a pink candle in the Advent wreath. Why?
A. Pink (or rose) is a color of joy. B. Pink signifies Mary.
C. It represents the positive outlook we have in Christ.
D. The rose color symbolizes Jesus' childhood.
E. The rosebud is a sign of new birth.
9. Do you know how the Advent calendar began?
A. Chalk lines were drawn on the door to mark the days.
B. Religious families hung pictures on the wall, one for each day.
C. A candle was lit for each of the 24 days in December.
D. A mother fixed candies on a cardboard calendar for her son.
E. All of the above
10. What is the meaning of the Hebrew word "Emmanuel"?
A. Mighty king B. Christ child
C. God with us D. All of the above E. None of the above

(Answers on page 9)

Christmas Eve Service

*Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service
will be held at the church at 11 PM.*

*Our service will also be available on Facebook
and YouTube.*

*The service will be available to watch
beginning at 2 PM.*



COMMEMORATIVE POINSETTIA



If you would like to share a commemorative poinsettia in the sanctuary for the Christmas services in December, please **clearly print** the information below. The poinsettias will be **\$10 each** this year, and money must be received for the order to be placed. This form and payment may be put in the offering plate or mailed to PO BOX 100, St. Marys, WV 26170. You may also drop them off in the Office. You can also call the Office and place your order with Lillian. Checks should be made out to St. Marys United Methodist Church.

THE DEADLINE TO ORDER IS DECEMBER 12th

Please indicate: Number of Poinsettias _____

In Memory of _____

or

In Honor of _____

Given by _____

Outreach Ministry Opportunities

- Neighbor Network food pantry needs:
Boxed Mac. & Cheese, small pkgs. of Hamburger & Hot Dogs, Soup Beans, Peanut Butter, Jelly, Syrup, Soup, Instant Potatoes, Crackers, Pork & Beans, Canned Milk, Complete Pancake Mix, Jiffy Cornbread Mix, oil for cooking
- Size 5 diapers for Neighbor Network

St. Marys UMC
104 Washington Street
PO Box 100
St. Marys, WV 26170
(304) 684-3018
www.smwvumc.com
smumcwgw@outlook.com



Upcoming dates

- December 4th** UWF Tureen Dinner at 6 PM
December 5th Boy Scouts Planning Mtg at 5:30 PM
Advent Class at 7 PM
St. Marys Community Band Christmas Concert at 7 PM
December 6th Advent Class at 11 AM
Choir at 7 PM
December 7th Neighbor Network Board Mtg. at 4 PM
December 8th Neighbor Network Food Distribution at 9:45 AM
Community Singing Christmas Tree at 7 PM
December 9th North Pole in St. Marys from 4 PM - 5:45 PM
(Marina)
Christmas Parade at 6 PM
December 10th Community Singing Christmas Tree at 2 PM
Youth Group 5 PM - 7 PM
December 11th Christmas Gifts Due
Habitat for Humanity at 6 PM
4-H at 7 PM
December 12th Advent Class at 7 PM
December 13th Advent at 11 AM
Choir at 7 pm
December 16th Deliver Christmas Presents
December 17th Christmas Luncheon After Church
December 19th Advent Class at 7 PM
December 20th Advent Class at 11 AM
Choir at 7 PM
December 22nd Church Office Closed
December 24th Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service
at 11 PM
December 25th Office Closed
December 27th Choir at 7 PM