

First United Methodist Church Newsletter

December 2023 Issue

Deadline for January Issue — December 19, 2023

“Keep on loving each other as brothers and sisters. Don’t forget to show hospitality to strangers, for some who have done this have entertained angels without realizing it” (Hebrews 13:1–2 NLT)

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,



My family and I almost always watch a specific movie around Christmas time each year — well many different ones really. If you haven’t guessed it by looking at the picture, the specific movie I am referring to is “It’s A Wonderful Life” starring James Stewart and Donna Reed. It is a movie about a man (George Bailey) who has given and given to people, putting others ahead of himself and his own dreams, only to have other people’s mistakes crash down around him. None of his dreams of success, traveling, or any other ones are ever realized. Sure, he has a nice family, a lovely wife and

kids, and, sure, he has had moments of joy in helping those around him. But deep down, there is a longing to have more, to be more, to finally have something he’s dreamed of come true.

But this is real life we are talking about, not some tinsel town fairy tale, and Capra means to give George a whopping double dose of reality. Instead of finding Bailey being rewarded for all of his kindness and generosity, instead of seeing him defeat the Scrooge-like miser, Mr. Potter, and instead of seeing him amount to be more than a guy who nickels and dimes his way through life (literally), we find George facing fraud charges and prison time. His uncle lost \$8,000 and George is going to take the fall for it, just as he has his whole life. It’s just not fair. So, this man, at wit’s end, finds himself at a bridge. He’s contemplating suicide, when he runs into Clarence, who is an Angel 2nd class. After wishing he were never born, and Clarence granting him that wish, he comes to the realization how hellish life would be for the countless people George helped in those years of personal sacrifice that he has come to regret. So, in the end he finds himself realizing what a wonderful life he has, and how

happy he is to have his family. In the end, the town of Bedford Falls comes together and donates the \$8,000 to George to save him from prison. This encounter with truth has changed his life forever

Some might call this a happy ending. I have often heard people say how Hollywood always forces in a happy ending. But in this film, I don't know that I would call it a happy ending. Sure, he realizes what means most to him and how valuable his life really is, and that is a happy ending in that sense. But in terms of unrealistic Hollywood happy endings, this film does not have one. George may have his life back, but with that "gift" comes the reality that following Christmas he will go back to nickling and diming for the Business and Loan. The town members will go on in their poverty and need George's help as much as they have always needed it. And the most terrible of all the truths, Potter will continue on in his miserly ways, trying to ruin George and that miserable Business and Loan that always stands in his way.

The real happiness of this film does not lie in unrealistic, sappy Hollywood endings. The happiness lies in the fact that when we help others, when we put others first, when we value others' lives as much as we value our own, we end up entertaining angels. I am not one who espouses angel theology or gets enraptured by cute little cherubim. In fact, Clarence was borderline annoying to me in the film (I forgive him). Rather, the angels are the people all around George...and in fact, George is an angel too. He helped countless people, some of them even strangers, and in the end they all end up helping him. It is not so much that they help him financially because he has helped them all far more than they could probably ever repay. But, rather, they helped him in being present in his darkest time.

It was in that dark time that George realized what angels they all were. It was when he thought no one knew him, when he felt the lack of everyone's presence, that he realized that he had been entertaining angels his whole life. It is in that moment that he realized that he had neglected to see those angels for who they were; he had neglected to appreciate them and value them. Even in his selflessness he had been blinded by himself. But because he had been entertaining angels, they appeared before him in his darkest hour, when he needed them most. That is the beauty of Christmas! That is the heart of Christmas: recognizing that we are not alone in this world. If we recognize that we too have been entertaining angels, we might look up and see them standing all around us.

Merry Christmas! May God bless you with the wisdom to recognize the angels in your life.

With Love in Christ,
Pastor Todd





Blue Christmas Service

7:00 p.m., Wednesday, December 20
In the Sanctuary

Have you lost a loved one and just aren't feeling "in the spirit" of the holidays? Having the doldrums and just can't seem to be happy about or feel the reason for the season?

You will have the opportunity to light candles lifting up those people you are missing or the things weighing you down. Come hear some music and readings in a quiet, contemplative service where you can find solace and peace.



Sunday School

Our Sunday School has begun the Advent season with the next section of our new curriculum from Children's Ministries, "Escape From Bethlehem."

Thanks to Sunday School teacher, Linda Plimpton, who has volunteered again this year to teach all the Advent/Christmas lessons. Be on the lookout for the three related bulletin boards she is preparing.

There will be no Sunday School on December 24th (Christmas Eve) or December 31st (New Year's Eve). Class will resume at 9:00 a.m. on January 7th, as we get "A Fresh Start" in "A New Year." Hope to see each of you there!

Our thanks to Kathleen Meredith for downloading and printing as needed each of these 52 lessons as well as ordering our Sunday School supplies.

**Evelyn Cornwell
Sunday School
Supervisor and Teacher**



White Elephant Gift Exchange/
Potluck Dinner
Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 6 p.m.
Holland Hall

Bring a covered dish
and your family and friends.
Wear a silly Christmas sweater/shirt/tie/
hat.

For the White Elephant Gift Exchange,
bring a unisex gift worth not more than
\$10. It could be candy or something
funny. A good place to get a gift like that
is at Treasures!

I hope you all come for a festive, fun night.
Invite some friends!

Any questions, please call me at
(973)222-0487.

See you there! Linda



Treasures of Hope

Open every Saturday from 9-2.
Christmas decorations are out and going fast.
Donations welcome!

Questions? 973-222-0487

Merry Christmas, y'all!! Linda



ABC Book Club

**Thursday, December 21, 2023, at 2:00 p.m.,
via Zoom**

The book for December is “The Christmas Murder Game” by Alexandra Benedict. Laura Frasier will be leading the discussion of this novel.

With Zoom we are able to be connected with members in Massachusetts, West Virginia, and New Jersey! We would love to have you join us as well. If you need the Zoom link, please don't hesitate to contact the church office at 973-383-4450 between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. and it will be sent to you.

Silly Christmas Sweater Sunday
December 17, 2023

Wear a silly Christmas shirt,
sweater, tie, or hat. It is
always fun! You will go home
with a smile on your face.



This Advent pick 1 or more things you could do...



1. Read a chapter a day from the Book of Luke.
2. Pick 2 people and do acts of kindness for them without them knowing.
3. Pray every day at a certain time for 15 minutes for our church.
4. Pick 4 places of charity and give each of them a donation.
5. Visit people in the hospital, nursing home, or assisted living twice a week.

Have a blessed and healthy Christmas and a wonderful New Year!

Manna House

With appreciation, I would like to mention the expanded crew of volunteers we had working in the kitchen for Manna House on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Pastor Todd Lattig and Betsy Crum joined me in representing our congregation. Joining us, as they do regularly from their churches, are my friends and neighbors, Linda Messer and Tonia Hrynsweski. A group of Newton Rotarians have volunteered through Pastor Todd to work with us on our regular third Tuesday of each month. Three of these joined us for the Thanksgiving preparation: James Current, Cathy, and Alice (sorry I don't know the last names of these wonderful women).

Laura Lippencott, who has been in charge of the Manna House kitchen for over 25 years says, "The more the merrier!" We do have fun working together and serving our guests.

Together on that Tuesday, we helped prepare 135 Thanksgiving dinners! On Thanksgiving Day, some of these were delivered by Meals on Wheels and some were served to our in-person Manna House guests. At the same time, we prepared, served, and cleaned up on that Tuesday an additional 30 hot lunches for the day's regular guests.

I ask prayers of thanks for each of these volunteers. I would also ask for ongoing prayers for each of our Manna House guests. Each has his or her own story. Each has his or her own needs. Each of us is a child of God.

Evelyn Cornwell
Manna House Board Member and Volunteer

December

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed
12/20 7 p.m. Blue Christmas Service 12/24 10:30 a.m. Combined Sunday Service 7 p.m. Christmas Eve Candlelight Service			
3 Worship! 9 Joy Fellowship/ Sunday School 10:30 Sanctuary Service	4 10 Chair Yoga (HH) 11:30 LWJ Yoga (HH)	5 10-1 LWJ (HH) 6 Cub Scouts (HH) 6 Hypnosis for Health (Media Ctr)	6 10-3 LWJ
10 Worship! 9 Joy Fellowship/ Sunday School 10:30 Sanctuary Service	11 10 Chair Yoga (HH) 11:30 LWJ Yoga (HH)	12 10-1 LWJ (HH)	13 10-3 LWJ 6 Silly Shir Dinner (F
17 Worship! 9 Joy Fellowship/ Sunday School 10:30 Sanctuary Service	18 10 Chair Yoga (HH) 11:30 LWJ Yoga (HH)	19 10-1 LWJ (HH) 6 Cub Scouts (HH)	20 10-3 LWJ 7 Blue Chr Service
24 Worship! 10:30 Combined Service 7 Christmas Eve Candlelight Service	25 Merry Christmas! Office Closed	26 10-1 LWJ (HH)	27 10-3 LWJ
31 Worship! New Year's Eve 10:30 Combined Service			

er 2023

	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2 9-2 Treasures 11-1 Hanging of the Greens
(HH)	7 10-1 LWJ (HH) 7 Choir Rehearsal	8	9 9-2 Treasures 11 Celebration of Life: Terry Iliff	
(HH) Potluck (HH)	14 10-1 LWJ (HH) 7 Choir Rehearsal	15	16 9-2 Treasures	
(HH) Christmas	21 10-1 LWJ (HH) 2 ABC Book Club 7 Choir Rehearsal	22	23 9-2 Treasures	
(HH)	28 10-1 LWJ (HH) 7 Choir Rehearsal	29	30 9-2 Treasures	

Appreciation Corner

For my appreciation message this month, I'm sending you all on a Scavenger Hunt! I have been thankful for a number of people. Rather than reprint their names here, I would ask you to HUNT for them. They are not-so-deeply hidden in other reports on the pages of this newsletter.

Happy hunting! Thank you all! Merry Christmas!
— Evelyn Cornwell

I would like to thank my granddaughter, Allison. She has helped me so much with all the potluck dinners. Lately she has been helping load the cardboard for recycling. Plus she is always ready to help at Treasures whenever I ask, even though she is very busy with her 3-year-old son, Mario.

Thank you, Allie. I appreciate all you do around the church!

— Blessings, Linda

I also would like to thank my helpers at Treasures. Suzi Cox is my right hand helper, always making the place sparkle. Suzi can arrange all the decorations and dishes to make them look beautiful.

Betsy Crum is the best helper. She is so willing to do anything you ask. She also is the best vacuumer. Even her husband, Doug, never says no. Doug helps with lots of the heavy lifting. His truck is very helpful,, too.

Thank you, guys, so very much! Merry Christmas and many blessings.

— Linda

Appreciation Corner is an ongoing space in our monthly newsletter for people to share their appreciation of the actions of others. Please contact the church office at newtonumc07860@gmail.com or by phone (973-383-4450) to make someone's day a little brighter.

Hypnosis for Health

Next Gathering, Tuesday, December 5

at 6:00pm

join Tim Ringenberg

Board Certified Clinical Hypnotist

for

"Hypnosis for Health"

at First United Methodist Church

in Newton

Tim will lead and instruct this class on hypnotic techniques everyone can employ on their own for desired changes in their health and well-being. Enjoy a lively hour of learning and sharing while becoming a "hypno-hipster"!

Please meet in the Media Center.

Questions? Call Tim at 260.460.7783 or email tim@pshypno.com

Memorials, Special Gifts, and Requests



MEMORIALS AND SPECIAL GIFTS

When special occasions arise, consider the “Perfect Gift.” Gifts to our Memorials and Special Gifts fund perpetuate our church, providing special needs beyond the operating budget and making an eternal connection through our Book of Remembrance in the narthex.

Gifts received since publication of our November newsletter:

In Memory of Lois McCue *James and Dorothy Ruscin*
Kevin Post
Greater Andover Senior Citizens
Roland Post
Thomas and Patricia Dilts
Lois Mitchell
Janet and Kenneth Laurich
Mary Lou Holterman
Robert and Carol Williams
Jean Maher

In Memory of Terry Iliff *The Don Woods Family*
Norman and Nancy Weller
Joseph and Beulah Capitulik

BEQUESTS

Please remember your church in your will. Consider asking your loved ones to suggest that friends make a gift in your memory to the church memorial fund in lieu of flowers. This may be included in your obituary.



- 12/2 Jane Hartmann, John Rich**
12/3 Hannah Doyle
12/4 Dottie Johnston
12/5 Anne Demeritt
12/6 Stephanie Hontz, Charles Zangerle
12/10 Jacqi Ragsdale
12/13 Linda Miller, Steven Vogt
12/14 George Kaiser
12/15 Christopher Gorab
12/16 Jonathan Couce, Abby Siipola
12/17 Landon Stoner
12/18 Donald Carey, Keith Gourlay
12/19 Rebekah Beavers, Evelyn Schneider
12/20 Debbie Seebeck, Thomas Spooner
12/21 Jean Brendler
12/22 Eleanor Miller
12/23 Jason DeRose, Colleen Holman, Aaron Meredith
12/26 Lawrence Pittenger III
12/27 Evelyn Gould
12/28 Daniel Kovach, Carol Wallenburg
12/29 Vincent Macaluso
12/30 Timothy Edwards, Denise Morris
12/31 Claire Siipola

Is your birth date missing or incorrect? Call 973-383-4450.

PULL TAB COLLECTION

Thank you to all who have been faithfully saving the pull tabs from aluminum cans and bringing the tabs to church. Tabs can be from soda cans, soup cans, pet food cans, or any other source of pull tabs.

There is a container in the Narthex in which to put the tabs. The tabs are then taken to the Shriners' Hospital for Children in Philadelphia where they are recycled. The money earned from the recycling is used to help fund the care given to children at the hospital. Please see Barbara Repp if you have questions.

Thank you for all of your support!

Support Your Church

Giving has never been easier! We now offer online giving. Our church could really use your help right now. Please help us maintain our ministries.

<https://tithe.ly/give?c=1377216>

<https://paypal.me/newtonumc>





*In Need of
Prayer...*

The Albert Family
Lynn Anderson
Rebekah Beavers
Alexander, Vivienne, Max
and Sophie Beavers
Sam Bennett
Kate Bertelli-Wilinski
Lori Bischoff
Diane Bozzone
Jean Brendler
Richard Brizendine
Elsie Burdge
Jennifer Buyer+family
Bob Cambell
Nelson Ceslis
(Philippines)
Peg Coats
Family of Bill Coe
Larry Conover
Ted Cosgrove
Samantha Daniel
(Shirley's daughter)
DiGeronimo Family
The Edwards Family
Gail Ewin and family
Neil Faber
Laura Frasier
Muriel Gallo
Linda Gallo
Ron & Laurie Gallo
Rose Garten
Diane Gelone
The Halterman family

Family of Daria Hamm
Anne Handy
Jane & Peter Hartmann
Jaclyn Holmberg
The Hontz Family
Albert Huff
Family of Terry Iliff
Theresa Iliff
Jacinto family
Jackson family
Rhonda and Bob Kays
Edward Kuhn
The Lattig family
Laura Lewis
Kay Lid
Jean Maher
Peter Mahler
Family of Lois McCue
Anne McNally
Family of Al Mearns
Siblings of Kathleen
Meredith
Bruce Messina & family
Joe Miller
Bill Miller
Carole Monesmith
Morris family
Jay Morrison
Family of Joyce Post
Paul Rafalco
Henry and Barbara Repp
Willard Repp
Cindy Rich

Cousins of Cindy Rich
David Rich
Family of Elizabeth Roe
Scabet Family
Family of Claus Seebeck
Tina Simon
Mary Kate Sinclair
Spooner family
Allison Stapel
Merle Tanis
Sawyer Vaughan
Carol Wallenburg
Stephanie Walter
Jodi Wilson
John Wilson
Jeanette Zangerle

*Members and friends at
Bristol Glen*

*The members of our
military and their
families.*

***If anyone listed can
be removed, please
notify the church
office.***



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**Hollander, Strelzik, Pasculli, Hinkes,
Vandenberg, Hontz & Olenick, L.L.C.**

Attorneys at Law
40 Park Place, Newton, New Jersey
On the Green
P.O. Box 99, Newton, New Jersey 07860

*Mr. Hontz is a member of the
National Academy of Elder Law
Attorneys*



Smith-McCracken Funeral Home

Wood Funeral Home
Owned and Operated by Smith-McCracken

***Thank you to First UMC for all you do in our
community and around the world***

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## **Smith-McCracken Funeral Home**

*63 High Street, Newton, NJ 07860 (973/383-4600)*

## **Wood Funeral Home**

*16 Main Street, Branchville, NJ 07826 (973/948-3030)*

**Robert E. McCracken, Owner/Manager**

N.J. Lic. No. 3640

## **First United Methodist Church**

111 Ryerson Avenue Newton, NJ 07860

Phone: (973) 383-4450

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### **MINISTRY TEAM**

Pastor

Rev. Todd R. Lattig

Pastor Emeritus

Rev. Dr. H. Alden Welch

Lay Servants

Kathleen Meredith, Mark Hontz

Director of Music/Organist

Henry Repp

Music Coordinator-JOY Service

Christie Spriggs

Office Administrator

Kathleen Meredith

***The newsletter is produced 11 times per year.  
Deadlines are the third Tuesday of the month.  
It is available via e-mail, on the church's website,  
and in hard copy.***

**First United Methodist Church of Newton**  
111 RYERSON AVE  
NEWTON, NEW JERSEY 07860

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HERE

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