



# Hawley UMC Spring Newsletter 2024



## Pastoral Letter: Practicing a Holy Lent



Dear Hawley United Methodist Church Family,

Grace, and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! I hope that you are having a blessed Lent. The season of Lent is a time of spiritual preparation as we participate in the spiritual disciplines of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving (charity). It is a time for reflection, repentance, and renewal—a time to draw closer to God and deepen our relationship with Christ.

First and foremost, I want to extend my gratitude to Mr. Scott Beard. for sharing his heartfelt testimony with us on Transfiguration Sunday (the final Sunday before Lent). His experience learning about human trafficking in Nepal has undoubtedly left a profound impact on all of us. It serves as a stark reminder of the injustices that persist in our world and compels us to take action.

As a church family, we are called to love others as Christ loves us. That is why, this Lenten season, we are joining together to do our own small part in the fight against human trafficking.

I invite each of you to prayerfully consider giving up one item that frequently involves forced labor in its production process such as chocolate, coffee, or purchasing new garments of clothing, for the season of Lent. We will then donate the

money saved from these sacrifices to organizations that are actively working to end human trafficking, such as the United Methodist Advance or the New Community Project in Nepal, where Scott recently participated in a mission trip.

Let us remember the words of Jesus, who said, "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me" (Matthew 25:40). May our Lenten sacrifices be a tangible expression of our love for Christ.

**I also want to extend a warm invitation to join us for Easter Worship on March 31st at 8 AM or 10 AM.** It will be a joyous celebration of the resurrection of our Lord and Savior, and I look forward to worshipping together with you.

May God Bless You,  
Rev. Rebecca L. Holland



## Welcome, New Church Members!



We're thrilled to extend a warm welcome to our newest church family members! On January 7, 2024, during the Baptism of Our Lord Sunday celebration, we joyfully welcomed seven new members into our congregation: Brenna K, Tom K, Cathy K, Chris Jr. R, Chris Sr. R, Louise R, (during the 10 AM worship service) and Donita D. (at the 8 AM worship service).

It was an especially sacred day because both Chris Jr. and Chris Sr. received the sacrament of baptism. We rejoice in their decision to join our United Methodist family. As we approach Eastertide, we eagerly anticipate welcoming more new members into our church family. If you're interested in becoming a member, please contact Rev. Rebecca.

## Celebrating Christmas 2023 at Hawley UMC



In 2023, the fourth week of Advent coincided with Christmas Eve. This created a doubly special occasion for our congregation here at Hawley UMC. We began our day by celebrating the fourth week of Advent at 9 AM, followed by our traditional Christmas Eve service at 7 PM.

The sanctuary was filled with the warmth of fellowship and the glow of candlelight as we welcomed both familiar faces and newcomers alike. The musical offerings during our Christmas Eve service were nothing short of spectacular. The Joyful Ringers: Hawley Handbell Choir and our talented Chancel Choir filled the air with melodies that lifted our spirits and drew us closer to the true meaning of Christmas.

As worship commenced at 7 PM, we were led into the sanctuary with a beautiful processional, led by our acolytes and by our Liturgist, Cindy W, carrying the processional cross. The Chancel Choir also processed in singing the hymn, "O Come All Ye Faithful," setting the tone for a truly festive and reverent evening.





We extend our deepest gratitude to all our musicians, soloists, Choir Master Joy Stebbins, and Handbell Choir Conductors Celia & Rich, for their dedication and the beautiful music they shared with us. Thank you to everyone who worshiped with us and to everyone who helped to make Christmas Eve an especially sacred time of worship.

**Dave Zeiler** is our new chair of the Leadership Council. His love for the outdoors shows his appreciation for the beauty of God's good creation. We are fortunate to have someone of Dave's character and dedication leading our council, guiding us with grace and wisdom.

**Meredith Hellstern**, our former chair of the Leadership Council, has transitioned seamlessly into her new role as the coordinator for Sojourner's Cafe. Her exceptional leadership skills continue to shine as she now directs her passion toward serving those in need.

**Brian Lee** is now serving as our Church Sexton and Facilities Coordinator. Brian is highly skilled in various trades and possesses a natural aptitude for craftsmanship. His versatile abilities span across a multitude of tasks and we are blessed to have him.

**Janice Lee**, our former chair of the PPRC, brings her exceptional organizational skills and keen attention to detail to her new role as the membership secretary. Her meticulous approach will be a huge help as we work to get our membership records in good order.

**Sara Cox** of Dutch Girl BookKeeping has been contracted to serve as our treasurer. She is an independent contractor with many years of experience. She is well respected by the many churches and clients she serves. We appreciate the work she has already done for our congregation and look forward to working with her.

Please pray for all of those who have accepted a church leadership position this New Year, including the **new members of Our Church Leadership Council: Dick Teeter, Cindy Wright, and Tom Bates!** We thank God for all who are willing to serve and do the work of the Church.



## Changes in Leadership

**A Special Church Conference: On February 4, 2024**, we held a Special Church Conference. During this Special Church Conference, Diane Livingston was elected our new PPRC Chair. We are grateful to Janice for her faithful service and thankful that Diane has accepted this important position. Janice Lee will now be serving as membership secretary.

### Other Changes in Leadership for 2024:

**Diane Livingston** is now our new chair of PPRC. Diane is blessed with good sense, keen intelligence, and deep faith. We thank God for her willingness to take up this call to serve as chair of PPRC.





## New Directory & Membership Audit


We have completed the Photo Directory! If you find errors or omissions, please let us know. We will be re-printing the directory in six months to include any corrections. It will also include the new church members we will be receiving during Eastertide. **Please note:** Being listed in the Church Directory does not necessarily mean that someone is a member. The Church Directory is not a list of active *members*. It is a current list of active *members* **and** *constituents*. Please contact the church office with corrections to our additions to our church directory so that they can be fixed in the next printing. We will be printing a new copy of the church directory after Easter because we will be receiving new members

**Membership Audit:** Janice, our new membership secretary, and Rev. Rebecca are currently working on auditing our membership. This is a large and important task. We are grateful for any assistance and input. More information will be forthcoming.


## Lenten Bible Study



Join us on Sundays during Lent at 11:15 AM for our Lenten Bible Study as we journey through the Psalms together. Our first gathering on February 18th brought together a wonderful attendance, and it was truly a blessed occasion to be in fellowship together. This study will dive deeper into the richness of the Psalms and explore their timeless messages of praise, lament, and hope. It's not too late to join! The main book that we are using for this study is *Journey through the Psalms* by Dr. Denise Dombowski Hopkins, but you don't need to read the book to participate. We look forward to growing together in faith and understanding as we delve into the sacred words of Scripture.



**LENTEN BIBLE STUDY:**  
JOURNEY THROUGH THE  
PSALMS  
SUNDAYS IN LENT AFTER  
CHURCH AT 11:15AM  
FEB 18 & 25 &  
MARCH 3 10, & 17



March's Special  
Offering  
**WATER**

A graphic with a blue and white background featuring stylized waves and water droplets. The text "March's Special Offering" is in a blue, sans-serif font, and "WATER" is in a large, bubbly, blue font.

# Easter Flower Orders

We are currently accepting Easter Flower orders. There are a variety of colors and types of flowers available. Flowers cost \$10.00 a piece. Orders are due by March 17th. You can order your Easter Flowers by contacting the church office at 570-226-3875 or by completing an Easter Flower Order Sheet. Please put your name on your Easter Flower order and clearly mark your payment as "EASTER FLOWERS." Thank you and have a blessed Easter!

at 570-226-3875 and let us know.

FEBRUARY SPECIAL OFFERING:



Pastor's  
Discretionary  
Fund



# Easter Baskets of Food for Local Families in Need



We are currently collecting nonperishable food items to provide Easter Baskets of food for local families in need. We are accepting donations until March 17th. Everyone is invited to stay after the second service on Palm Sunday (March 24th) to help us pack up the food for local families in need. They will come to collect the food on Tuesday of Holy Week. Thank you so much to everyone who has donated! If you or someone you know could benefit from an Easter Basket of food, please contact the church office

# Ash Wednesday & St. Valentine's Day Worship



Ash Wednesday this year also fell on the same day as Valentine's Day. Our service was led by Rev. Rebecca Holland and Rev. Clarissa Holland. Although Rev. Rebecca Holland and Rev. Clarissa Holland are not related by blood, they are good friends who met when they both moved to Hawley at around the same time. Rev. Clarissa Holland is retired from the Greater New Jersey Conference of the United Methodist Church and it was a joy to have her assistance in leading the Ash Wednesday worship service.

Parishioners were given a prayer card that had a heart on it because God loves us and was also inscribed with the words, "Remember you are dust," to remind us of the importance of repentance. They were asked to put the prayer card somewhere they would see it every day throughout the Lenten season so that it would remind them to pray.

Rev. Rebecca Holland offered a message entitled "The Heart of the Matter," in which she emphasized that "the heart of the matter is that God loves us." She particularly emphasized that we are all children of God and that God loves those people that society often forgets, including victims of human trafficking. She encouraged the congregation to practice a holy Lent by partaking in the three key Lenten spiritual disciplines of Prayer, Fasting, and Almsgiving (Charity). She also invited the congregation to support the United Methodist Advance to end Human Trafficking and/or the New Community Project in Nepal.

The service also included a deeply moving musical offering from the chancel choir as well as a handbell duet by Rich W. and Celia T. Thank you to everyone who helped to make our Ash Wednesday worship service a sacred and special way to begin Lent.



## Altar Guild: In Search of New Members!

Would you like to be involved in worship, but aren't comfortable speaking in front of a group? Then the altar guild may be the perfect place for you to serve God from "behind the scenes." If you would like to join the altar guild or volunteer for the altar guild, please let Cindy W. and/or Dianne S. know. Members of the altar guild volunteer for the following list of sacred duties for the duration of one month:

- Altar Candles: The candles burn down at different rates, however, if one or more get to be approximately 4" or less, replace them all. The box of candles is in the sacristy closet on the first shelf above the paraments. If one box is left, ask the church office to order new ones.
- The Christ Candle: This candle burns on an oil cartridge. Please check the oil and make sure it isn't low (almost gone). If it needs to be replaced, please do so. They are also in the sacristy closet. If our supply is running low, please notify the church office to reorder.
- Bread/Wine/ Juice: Make sure there is enough Welch's Grape Juice (kept in the Office fridge) and Manischewitz Wine for the month you are responsible for. With respect to



purchasing bread for each Sunday in the month. If it is a large loaf, you may cut it in two for the 8 and 10 am Worship Services. Any full loaves you purchase can be kept in the kitchen freezer removed up to one day before service and left in the sacristy. BREAD MUST BE IN THE SACRISTY ON SUNDAY MORNING FOR BOTH THE 8 AND 10 AM SERVICES.

Paraments: Please check the calendar on the wall in the sacristy. This will show what color the paraments must be for the Sundays you are responsible for. Along with the Altar paraments (which are located in the closet in the sacristy), the bookmarks that go on the assistant's dais and /or the pastor's pulpit must be changed as well and they are in plastic bins on the floor of the closet. Please make sure that paraments, white overlay cloth, and palls that cover the wine and juice goblets are clean. If needed please wash, iron, and return to the sacristy.

If you feel called to volunteer as part of the Altar Guild, please let Cindy W. and/or Dianne S. know! Thank you and God Bless!



## We Are Searching for More Sunday Morning Worship Assistants!

Are you comfortable reading out loud? We would love to have you as a Liturgist/ Worship Assistant on Sunday mornings! Being a liturgist is a great way to get involved. If you would like to be a liturgist, please contact the church office. Here is a list of the sacred duties of the Liturgist:

- Prior to Worship beginning, set out bread, wine, and juice and place it on the altar. Juice and Wine are covered by a clear pall first followed on top by a white cloth pall.
- If you are comfortable, walk down the Center Aisle with the Reverend and stop before the rail, bow your head, and proceed to the assistant dais.
- Assist the pastor with leading worship on Sunday morning by reading prayers, Scripture, etc as directed in the order of Worship left on the dais.
- At communion assist the pastor by giving the pastor the bread and wine and saying, "The body of Christ broken for you, the blood of Christ shed for you". Then proceed with the minister, holding the wine and juice, to the front of the rail or behind the rail (on the first Sunday of each month) for all congregants. Please let the pastor know if someone needs Holy Communion brought to them in their pew.
- When service is over, please clean the altar by either drinking the remaining elements of wine and juice or pouring them outside by the side door (over by the piano). The leftover bread can be eaten or cut up and fed to the birds. Since these are consecrated elements, they must be respectfully disposed of after Holy Communion.

Do you feel the Holy Spirit nudging you to serve as a Liturgist? Please sign up in the Memorial Walkway or contact the church office!



## Online Giving & Yearly Giving Statements

As we embark on this new year, I want to take a moment to extend my heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of you who pledged your support to the ministries of our church for the year 2024.

Through your faithful and generous gifts, we can continue spreading Christ's love and teachings to people in our community and throughout the world. Whether through your time, talents, or financial contributions, your support plays a vital role in the growth and success of our ministry.

I would also like to take this opportunity to remind those of you who give online to please adjust your online giving to match your pledged commitment if you made any change on your pledge card for the year of 2024. If you encounter any difficulties or require assistance in this process, please do not hesitate to reach out to the church office. We are happy to support you in whatever way we can and we are grateful for your generosity.

Additionally, for those of you who would like a year-end statement of giving for tax purposes, please don't hesitate to contact the church office. We are more than happy to provide you with one and they are available upon request.

Once again, thank you from the depths of my heart for your continued support and dedication to our church family. Your generosity helps us to fulfill our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

May God continue to bless each and every one of you abundantly, and may Christ's light guide us as we journey together into 2024.



### February

Rachael B Feb 3

Peg C Feb 5

Elliot F Feb 17

Tim J Feb 22

Jeanette J Feb 25

### March

Ann M March 15

Susann G March 30



**HAPPY**  
*Anniversary*

### February

Carol & John Ulmer February 17

### March



HAPPY  
**SAINT PATRICK'S DAY**  
 Sunday, March 17th:

**St. Patrick's Day!**

Last Sunday bring in  
 donations of food items  
 for the Easter food drive!

*Then help us pack on  
 March 24th!*



**Honduras Trip:**

**November 2nd-9th 2024**

If interested in attending please let Joe, Dave, or Shannon know.

We are hoping to have our team together by Easter!

**Palm Sunday**

**Palm Sunday: March 24**

Join us after the second service at 11:15 AM to help pack Easter food baskets for local families in need!

## Upcoming Dates

**Sunday, February 25th:** Lenten Bible Study Session 2 at 11:15 AM

**Saturday, March 2nd:** Sojourner's Cafe at 11:15 AM. Join us for a free fellowship meal!

**Sunday, March 3rd:** Lenten Bible Study Session 3 at 11:15 AM

**Monday, March 4th-5th:** Rev. Rebecca at Board of Ordained Ministry Meeting (but still available through text or email)

**Sunday, March 10th:** Lenten Bible Study Session 4 at 11:15 AM

**Thursday, March 14th:** Leadership Council at 6 PM

PPRC at 7:15 PM

**Sunday, March 17th:** St. Patrick's Day. Lenten Bible Study Session 5 at 11:15 AM.

Last day for Easter flower orders.

Last day for donations to our Easter food drive.

**Sunday, March 24th:** Palm Sunday. Join us after our second service at 11:15 AM to help pack Easter baskets of food for local families in need!

**Tuesday, March 26th:** Pick-up day for Easter boxes of food.

Rehearsal for Good Friday Worship at 6 PM.

**Thursday, March 28th:** Holy Thursday Worship at 7 PM with anointing

**Friday, March 29th:** Good Friday Worship at 7 PM

**Sunday, March 31st:** Easter Sunday. Worship at 8 AM and 10 AM

