



Pastoral Letter:
Getting to Know You



Dear Hawley United Methodist Church,

May the peace of Christ be with you! In case we have not yet had the chance to meet in person, I would like to introduce myself. My name is Rev. Rebecca L. Holland and the Bishops of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church have appointed me to serve as the new pastor of Hawley United Methodist Church. My first official day serving as pastor here at Hawley is July 1, 2023. As an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, I am called to Word, Order, Sacrament, and Service. I have also taken a vow of itinerancy. This means I listen when the Holy Spirit says, "Go!" I served my previous appointment for almost ten years, and I am honored to now have the opportunity to serve you.

I earned my Bachelor's in the Science of English Education at Millersville University of Pennsylvania and my Master's of Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary in Washington D.C. While in seminary, I had the opportunity to gain experience working with both small and large congregations while interning at Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church, a multi-point parish. I also served as a pastoral intern at the General Board of Church and Society where one of my main focuses was the Imagine No Malaria Project. I began serving full-time in the Altoona District in 2014 and was ordained as an elder in 2018. My husband, Jeff, and I were married in 2017. We were saddened to discover that we could not have children because of some of my health issues, but we have two fur babies (Wesley the Dog and Zeus the Cat) that we love dearly.

My Jeff also began serving a new appointment this year. On July 1, he became the pastor of Daleville and Maple Lake United Methodist Church. Jeff and I enjoy trains, exploring antique shops, and trying new restaurants. We also both love history. I enjoy reading, writing, running, and taking our furry baby, Wesley the Dog, for long walks. Besides Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, two of my great loves in this life are books and music. I love music (I play flute as well as a little piano and guitar) and I feel incredibly blessed to be serving here at Hawley because I am so impressed by your music ministry. In the short time that I have been here, I have been deeply moved by the musical gifts of our Chancel Choir and our Bell Choir.

I am a voracious reader and I also enjoy writing. I am currently working on a book that explores Disability Theology through a Wesleyan lens. I have written three books and feel particularly called to write this next book because of my passion for Disability Ministries. I serve as the chair of the Disability Ministries Task Force of the Susquehanna Conference of the United Methodist Church and am also the chair of communications for the Disability Ministries Committee of the United Methodist Church. I hope to do my small part to help make the church a safe place for anyone and everyone who wishes to come and encounter Christ.

One of the reasons I am so passionate about Disability Ministry is because I am visually impaired. Please allow me to assure you that I am more than capable of fulfilling all my duties as a pastor-- I simply do things a little

differently. For example, you may see me reading large print from my iPad or walking to and from the church since I don't drive. If you see me out and about and I don't wave to you, please know that I am not ignoring you. I am just very nearsighted!

I am an extrovert and a people person. Please stop by my office hours if you would like to chat! I would love to hear from you and get to know you! My

office hours are Monday-Thursday, 10 AM-3 PM. You can also reach me on my cell phone at 570-854-8006 or through email at

RHolland@susumc.org.

As an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church, I never know what the future will hold. I don't know how long God will see fit to allow me to remain here at Hawley, but while I am here, please know that I am committed to serving our church family. My door is always open if you wish to talk.

May God bless the time we have together. May it be fruitful, and may we spread the love of Jesus Christ together throughout our community and the world. I am praying for you, dear Church Family.

Sincerely,

--Rev. Rebecca

The Hawley UMC Peacemaker Award 2023:



The People of Hawley United Methodist Church are pleased to honor Molly D. with the Peacemaker Award. Molly is blessed with both a compassionate spirit and a gift for academic excellence. She is a talented musician and active in her church's youth group. She will be joined us for worship on Sunday, July 16th, to receive this exceptional award.



We are creating a church directory! A church directory plays an important role in helping us stay connected as a church family. It helps us to pray for one another by name. It also enables us to celebrate milestones, such as birthdays and anniversaries, together. If you would like to be included in the church directory, please help us by making sure the church office has your most current information by completing the following form. Forms can be returned to the church office at hawleyumc@gmail.com or dropped off during our office hours Tuesday - Friday 8:30 AM till 3:30 PM

- **Name(s) of household members:**
 - **Birthdays (day and month only):**
 - **Anniversary (if applicable):**
 - **Street Address:**
 - **Email(s):**
 - **Phone Number(s):**
-



Worship Assistants for August::
August 6: 8 AM ____ / 10 AM ____
August 13: 8 AM ____ / 10 AM ____
August 20: 8 AM ____ / 10 AM ____
August 27: 8 AM ____ / 10 AM ____

Are you able to help us by serving as a Worship Assistant? *Please let the church office know!*



Music Ministries at Hawley UMC

“Make a joyful noise unto the LORD!” Psalm 100:1a

Hawley United Methodist Church is blessed to have many talented musicians! We have both a chancel choir and a bell choir. During my short time at Hawley UMC I have been deeply moved by the beautiful musical offerings of our church members. I truly believe that music is a gift from God and a wonderful way of

experiencing God’s grace. I have also been so impressed by the warmth and openness that all of our musicians have shown by their willingness to welcome new music lovers into their midst. If you also love to praise the Lord through song, please consider becoming involved in our music ministries here at Hawley by joining our bell choir, chancel choir, or offering special music on Sunday morning.

For more information, please contact me (Rev. Rebecca), Joy Stebbins (Music & Chancel Choir Director), or Celia Traves (Bell Choir Director).



Chancel Choir



**Happy birthday to our summer
birthdays!**

June

Jeannette B. *June 14*

Sally L. *June 19*

July

Shawn K. *July 3*

Larry K. *July 4*

Barbara L. *July 8*

Sharon W. *July 14*

Aug

Ginny H. *August 4*

Diane L. *August 8*

Sept

Celia T. *Sept 11*



**Happy anniversary to our summer
anniversaries!**

June

Jen & James S. *June 4*

Celia & Dick T. *June 17*

July

Shawn & Marcia K. *July 13*

Aug

Brenda & Dave Z. *August 22*

Brian & Janice L. *August 9*

Sept

Dave & Shannon P. *9-12-2020*

Don't see your name on the list? We would love to add you! Please contact the church office at 570-226-3875 so we can add you to our list!

What Do You Love Most About Hawley UMC?

What are our Wesley Trees?

Please let me know!



When I was in seminary, one of my professors shared the following story with our class. Although I heard this story ages ago when I was still in graduate school, it has stuck with me. Rev. Dr. Weems told us that in the Georgia Conference, there was a young pastor who was beginning to serve at a new appointment. He was eager to get off on the right foot with his new congregation and to make a good first impression.

Once all of his belongings had been unloaded at the parsonage, he walked over to the church. He was impressed by the large stone building, but he was deeply bothered by the fact that there was a large, gnarled, half-dead tree blocking one of the entrances.

“That’s a problem,” he thought to himself. “There are only two doors to this church, and that giant nearly-dead tree is blocking one of them! It’s a fire hazard!”

After examining the tree more closely, the new pastor decided that this was a problem he could solve. He went and got his chainsaw out of the garage. As he chopped down the big old tree, he smiled to himself and thought how pleased the congregation would be. He was sure that this action would show them that he was a strong leader who was willing and able to get things done.

The next day was Sunday morning, and the congregation was horrified when they saw that the new pastor had chopped down their tree. They believed that the tree had been planted by John Wesley during his missionary trip to Georgia. It was an important and historic part of their church. It was a key part of their identity as a church, and they were

deeply hurt that the new preacher had chopped it down without even consulting them. Within a month, they asked for the preacher to be sent away and for the Bishop to send them a new pastor.

When I think of this story, it makes me sad. It did not have to end that way. The new pastor had his heart in the right place and he meant well. I think he should have discussed the great old tree with his congregation. Maybe it was indeed a fire hazard and perhaps it was half dead, but perhaps they could have found a different solution together. Maybe they could have held a special service in which they gave thanks to God for the tree. Then they could have taken some of the wood trees and made it into a chalice and paten for communion. Or, if there was a lot of good wood left from the tree, maybe they could have made a cross or a communion table.

I tell you this story because I do not want to make the same mistake as the preacher who chopped down the Wesley Tree. What are our "Wesley Trees," here at Hawley? What do you love most about our church and our church family? What do you hope never changes?

It is my wish to honor the history here at Hawley and to help preserve what makes our church family unique. However, we also know that the only perfect person is Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. No person and no church is perfect. We all have room for growth. What are our growing edges here at Hawley? What growth do you hope to see here in the future? How do you think God is calling our church family to help those in need?

Together, I believe we can honor our past and make a beautiful future. I look forward to hearing from you! My cell is 570-854-806 or you can stop by my office during my office hours, Monday through Thursday, 10 AM-3:30 PM.

To all who are lonely and need

friendship, to all who are discouraged and need good news; to all who mourn and need comfort; to all who are tempted and need help ; to all who are sinners and need forgiveness; to all who are complacent and need disturbing; to all who have lost their way and need direction; to all who thirst for the water of life, HUMC welcomes all wanderers. Our doors are open wide and we bid you
WELCOME.



Rev. Rebecca L. Holland, M. Div.
Cell: 570 - 854 - 8006
Email: RHolland@susumc.org
<https://www.hawleyumc.com/>
Church Email: hawleyumc@gmail.com
Church Office: 570-226-3875

A Prayer for Hawley UMC, Inspired by Wesley's Covenant Prayer

(Please pray this prayer everyday with us for a month)

O Holy One: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I am no longer my own, but Yours.

We commit our beloved church into your gracious and loving care.

First and foremost, our church, and the people in it, belong to You.

A church is not only a building: it is the people.

May we comfort one another with the promise of Your Peace,

and spread Your love

throughout our community.

I am your servant. Make of me what you will.

Let me be employed by You or laid aside for You,

Exalted for You or brought low for You.

Let me be full, let me be empty.

Let me have all things, let me have nothing.

I freely and heartily yield all things to Your pleasure and disposal.

Just as we belong to You, O God, so does Hawley United Methodist Church.

Please send your Holy Spirit down among us to transform our hearts.

May we be a vibrant church, full of love and grace.

May we not be fixated on numbers, but instead focused on Your Love.

If it is Your will for us to be a great and large congregation, may it be so.

And if it is Your will for us to be a small congregation with great love,

may Your will be done.

And now, O glorious and blessed God,

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,

You are mine and I am Yours. So be it.

And the covenant which we have made on earth,

let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.

CHURCH LEADERSHIP

Pastor - Rev. Rebecca Holland - 570-854-8006- rholland@susumc.org

Church Office Administrator - Jenn Delia - hawleyumc@gmail.com

Music & Chancel Choir Director - Joy Stebbins - joypecks@netzero.net

Bell Choir Director - Celia Traves - celiat@ptd.net

Treasurer - Michelle Westbrook - treasurer.hawleyumc@gmail.com

Financial Secretary - Rick Hogg

Staff Parish Relations Chair - Janice Lee - janicelee9449@gmail.com

Leadership Chair - Meredith Hellstern- meredith.hellstern@gmail.com

Lay Leader - Ellen Silsby - esilsby@ptd.net

Honduras Mission Team Leader - Joe Faubel - faubelj@gmail.com

Facilities Manager - Brian Lee - blee9449@gmail.com

Endowment Team Chair - Larry Kipp - kippma@ptd.net

Worship Team Co Chairs - Marcia Knisely - wolfnote@ptd.net

Cindy Wright - cindy@ltcsource.com

Youth Team Chair - Dave Pugh - daveattheritz@icloud.com

Shannon Pugh - s.harding1224@yahoo.com

Sexton - Grace Frisbie - frisbie350@hotmail.com

Sojourner Café Coordinator - Ginny Hack - ginzerz@gmail.com