



# Newtown United Methodist Church

## February 2026 Newsletter



OPEN HEARTS.

OPEN MINDS.

OPEN DOORS.

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### Note from the Pastor's Desk

Dear NUMC Family,

February arrives carrying two realities at once. Winter still holds the land in its grip; bare trees, long nights, cold mornings, but this month also speaks the language of love. It reminds us that even when warmth feels distant, the heart still knows how to reach, to hope, to endure.

Many of us sense that the world itself feels wintry right now. There is weariness in the air. Headlines weigh heavy. Personal struggles linger longer than we expected. Faith, at times, can feel like a small flame fighting a strong wind.

Scripture is honest about this reality. It never denies the darkness, but it refuses to let darkness have the final word. "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it" (John 1:5). Notice what the verse does not say. It does not say the darkness disappears. It says the light remains.



The writer Albert Camus once named a similar truth from another angle:

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer."

Camus was not writing from a place of easy optimism. He understood suffering, absurdity, and the ache of a broken world. Yet, he pointed to something resilient within the human spirit, something winter could not destroy.

Faith speaks of this not as mere resilience, but as life planted by God. Scripture describes it as a light placed within us, a love poured into the heart, a hope that does not depend on circumstances. "We have this treasure in clay jars," Paul writes, "so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

That is why love belongs so naturally in February. Love is not sentimental or seasonal. Love is the steady force that endures when circumstances do not change quickly. Love stays awake in the night. Love believes that what is hidden beneath frozen ground is still alive.

Faith works the same way. It is not always loud or dramatic. Often, it is quiet persistence. Trust that keeps praying. Hope that keeps showing up. A heart that keeps choosing compassion even when the world feels harsh.

You may not feel like spring is near. You may not feel especially strong or joyful. But the promise of faith is not that winter disappears on command, it is that something eternal has already been placed within you. A light no darkness can overcome. A warmth no season can extinguish.

This February, may we tend that inner light. May we practice love not as a holiday gesture, but as a spiritual discipline. And may we trust that even now, especially now, the invincible summer is still alive within us.

Blessings,

Pastor Rodney

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## Bible Study

### Looking Ahead: Interfaith Study Series

Later in January, we will be offering a short interfaith study exploring **Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity**.

This study invites us to deepen our Christian faith by learning how people of different traditions seek meaning, devotion, and truth, and by reflecting on how Christianity speaks clearly and faithfully into those shared human longings.

As part of the study, we hope to include **guided site visits** to places of worship, such as the **BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham in New Jersey**, as schedules and opportunities allow.

The study will be held on Tuesdays starting January 27th @ 10:00 AM.



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## Mission Trip

We have been invited to go to ASP (Appalachian Service Project) for the week of July 19. That is a Sunday. We won't know until May exactly which ASP location we've been assigned to. If need be, we will leave on Saturday to break up the trip. Otherwise, we plan to leave from Jarrettown UMC very early Sunday morning. We head home on Saturday, July 25. We are planning to do that all in one day so I don't have to miss a second Sunday from worship. Jarrettown UMC has a van that holds 15 people. Plus we do our youth group joint with the local Presbyterian Church, and they also have a van we can use. We will need more than one vehicle while down there (one vehicle for every 5-7 participants). ASP charges \$375 a person for the week (which includes room and board) plus we will also need to cover the cost of travel and incidentals. A \$50 deposit is due by March 31st, payable to Jarrettown UMC. We have reserved 10 spots, first come first serve. If we have more than 10 people who want to go, we have to check with ASP to be sure they still have room. The sooner people register the better!



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## February Mission of the Month



### Mission of the Month

**The Mission of the Month (Advance) for January** is Heifer International. The organization works with communities around the world to end hunger and poverty, and care for the earth. It links communities and helps bring sustainable agriculture and

commerce to areas with a long history of poverty. It gives animals to families for food and reliable income, as products like milk, eggs, and honey can be traded or sold at markets. When many families gain this new sustainable income, it brings new opportunities for building schools, creating agricultural cooperatives, forming community savings, and funding small businesses. Our financial support can give hungry families the training it takes to feed themselves. It can give a young child the opportunity to have an education. Together, working with Heifer International, we can change the world – one family, one community at a time.

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## SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

**SOUPER BOWL OF CARING** Souperbowl of Caring Since 1990, young people have been leading the charge and inspiring others to collect dollars and food weeks leading up to the Big Game. Teaming up with local partners, these groups give 100% of donations to local charities, changing the nation's largest weekend of football into the largest weekend of caring. On **February 8th** you can donate canned goods or money to the Penns Park UMC Food Pantry.



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**Newtown UMC Women's Retreat! April 17- 19**

## 2026 Newtown Women's Retreat: True Blue



Ladies, how would you like to get away for a weekend and relax in your blue jeans, bask under the blue sky, and walk along the blue ocean? We will be using the Ocean Grove seaside as a backdrop to this year's retreat theme, "True Blue." The phrase true blue comes from the middle ages, when artisans in Coventry, England dyed

material blue in such a way that its color remained steadfast and true, despite washing. Through Bible study, fellowship, and prayer, we will reconnect to the steadfast love of God, and strengthen our faith so we can remain true to who we want to be, come washing, wearing, or whatever!

On hand to lead the Friday night and Saturday portions of the retreat is Rev. Dorry Newcomer, now pastor at Jarrettown UMC in Dresher, PA. Dorry was pastor of Newtown UMC from 2014 to 2018. She hopes the retreat will help foster faith in God that never fades!

A weekend of sharing and fellowship! Get Ready for Our Annual Women's Retreat! Join us for a peaceful weekend by the sea. Through self refectation, small group activities, and fellowship we will

**WHAT TO EXPECT:** A great weekend and a lot of fun! The retreat will begin on Friday evening with check-in between 6:30 and 7:30. Saturday morning there will be a program. After lunch, you'll have the afternoon free to do crafts, walk the beach, explore the quaint village of Ocean Grove, or just take a nap! We will have dinner as a group, then enjoy an evening of interactive programming. On Sunday morning, we have worship together with communion before heading home. **WHO'S**

**INVITED:** This retreat is being planned for adult women of all ages from our church and their friends. Any woman who would like to some spiritual refreshment is welcome! **ABOUT OCEAN**

**GROVE:** Known as "God's Square Mile at the Jersey Shore", Ocean Grove is just south of Asbury Park, roughly one hour from Newtown. It is a Methodist vacation and retreat community whose mission is to "provide opportunities for spiritual growth, birth, and renewal in a Christian seaside setting."

**Lodging:** There are three first floor, handicapped accessible rooms. Most rooms are on the second and third floors. A limited number of 2nd and 3rd floor rooms have their own bath only 5. All rooms are double occupancy. **Cost:** Per person, \$200 for shared bath; \$250 for private bath.

This covers two nights lodging, continental breakfast on Saturday and Sunday, dinner Saturday, and all retreat materials. The registration deadline is February 22nd 2026 Registration forms are available on the table in the gallery.

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### Caring for Friends

Caring for Friends will meet again on Wednesday, February 18th at 9:00 a.m.



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## February Schedule

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### Ushers and Greeters



## Ushers for February:

### Greeters:

February 1- Jim & Helene Mershon

February 8- Pat King and Joanne Tomlinson

February 15- Joe & Judi Swerk

February 22- Freeman Corson and Monica Flint

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## Finance Stewards & Communion Stewards

**Finance Stewards:** Erinn Demskis & Judi Swerk

**Communion Steward:** Pat King & Helene Mershon

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## Lay Readers

February 1-Erinn Demskis

February 8- Denise Dugan

February 15- Susan Smith

February 22-Nora Schenk



## Fellowship Time

February 1- Cheryl Burd

February 8-Barbara Burger

February 15-Chris Bethman

February 22-

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## 2026 Flower Chart

### 2026 Flower Chart

The new flower chart is posted. Please consider donating altar flowers, in memory of a loved one or in honor of someone or for a special occasion. The cost is \$35.00. If you have any questions please call Kathy in the church office.

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## Circle of Concern

Faith and fellowship during the day! The Circle of Concern will hold its first gathering of the new year on Monday, February 16th , at 9:30 a.m., in the library. We are a circle of women of all ages who gather for prayer, fellowship, and time to learn about United Methodist Women around our country and around our world. If you would like to find out how you can make a difference in your life and in the lives of others, come join us! We usually meet on the third Monday of the month. For more information please call the church office.

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## This Month's Birthdays!

### February Birthdays!

February's Birthday's

2/3- Dottie Detwiler

2/6-David Sottile

2/7-Bob Dilks

2/12-Barb Selah

2/18-Sammy Vile

2/18-Jim Mershon Jr.

2/18-Carolyn Parry

2/21-Lorelei Demskis

2/22-Dan Boltner



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