

'ARISE'

Northern Wilds District Newsletter January 2025

Trail Markers with Pastor Daniel

Everyone views the new year in different ways. There are those who have all their goals ready to go. People who wake up on the first with their bed made, clothes laid out, and a clear plan of how they want their year to go. Some enter into the year with a slight hope that this year will give them an opportunity to do a little better. I have found myself entering into 2025 a bit like this picture...

Another year just means more change, more challenges, and more defeats to face. I can go to a negative place real quick. I can feel the tiredness down to my bones and I'll let that exhaustion be the one who sings the song in my heart.

Yet, I am reminded of Eugene Peterson's rewriting of Jesus' words in Matthew 11. **"Are you tired? Worn out?"** And I feel like many of us would shout "Yes and AMEN" but we keep reading Jesus' words and we hear **"Get away with me and you'll recover your life. I'll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly."**

Our struggle in this work that we do as the church is that we can confuse our work for doing life with God. We prioritize so many other things and allow being with Jesus to be relegated to whatever is left over. Every year, I do a word for the year. It helps keep me grounded. In preparing for the year, I write down a bunch of words that are floating in my head and then on New Year's day, I take a hike into the wilderness to pray. This year the word I landed on was "Impossible."

In my 6 months, I feel like I have failed more than succeeded and yet God has done some mighty miracles among us. Friends, we have people exploring their call into ministry at all different ages. We have churches that are ready to turn things around. We have churches without pastors that are seeing the laity rise up to preach, teach, and lead the church into a glorious future. We have churches that many would consider down and out yet they are rising to the occasion to meet the needs of their communities and to share the love of Christ.

In the Disney movie "Encanto" there is a song that really resonates with me at times "Waiting On a Miracle". The movie is about a young woman trying to find her place in her family and world. It ends, like most Disney movies, with resolution and the line in the final song is "the miracle is not some magic that you've got, the miracle is you, not some gift just you."



You are a miracle. You all have fought hard and done great work. Through you, God has changed the lives and planted seeds into the hearts of many. Whether you are tired or fully energized, the world is in need of a beautiful miracle and God chooses to use you, but not just you. God is with All of us, in our work together.

So, this year, I pray that our priority as individuals is to get away with Christ and to trust in Him to lead us and energize us. As we flow from gym, to office, to driving, to gardening, to cooking, to cleaning, can we create rhythms where God be made manifest in those labors. As churches, my hope is that we hold fast to a God that does miracles. From VBS, to Bible Studies, to prayer gatherings, to food distributions may we stay firmly rooted into the reality that God will move mountains through and despite our work.

Take care as you enter this year and rejoice that we do not do it alone, but with God leading and guiding us in powerful ways! God is marking the trail before us, let us hike forward and rest faithfully this year!

INTRODUCING OUR NEW ADMIN. ASSISTANT

Hello! My name is Jarrett Eyer, and I'm excited to join the team as the new Administrative Assistant! I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself and express how thrilled I am to be part of this amazing community. I'm looking forward to supporting the team and helping everything run smoothly. Whether it's assisting with scheduling, coordinating projects, or managing communications, I'm here to ensure things stay organized and efficient. When I'm not in the office you can find me on a mountain snowboarding.

Please feel free to reach out to me if you need assistance with anything – I'm here to help!

2024 SHARES OF MINISTRY

We will receive payments for 2024 Shares of Ministry, to be recorded on the last 2024 Gift Statement, through Friday, January 10, 2025. A reminder that gift statements are accessible on the Conference website - <https://susumc.org/3462-2/> - as well as being sent in the mail the remainder of 2024. Kindly review the statements and contact us if there are any questions or concerns – (717) 766-5275. 2025 Shares of Ministry are available on the Conference website - <https://susumc.org/2025-shares-of-ministry/> - and have been mailed.

DISTRICT CONFERENCES ANNOUNCE NEW NAMES

Each of our five Districts recently celebrated spirit filled District Conferences where hundreds of laity and clergy gathered in worship to proclaim Jesus and the work that we are all called to as United Methodists. At each of these District Conferences the theme “Hands to the Plow” was lifted with an emphasis that indeed this is the season for the people of God to be connected with our communities. During these gatherings of praise each District lifted up a new name for the District. The five new District names will be:

Altoona>>> Freedom Trail

Harrisburg>>>River Valley

Scranton/Wilkes-Barre>>>North Central Rivers

Williamsport>>>Northern Wilds

In this transitional time, we embrace our new district names with the understanding that as 2024 Church Conference paperwork is completed, and year end statistical reports are submitted, the present seven District names will be used. As of January 1, 2025, the five new District names will be fully integrated into our ministry and work.

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

- 5 Rev. Robert Rice Jr.
- 6 Rev. Barbara Wodrig
- 7 Mrs. Debra Kerstetter
- 12 Mrs. Robin Rapp
Pastor Martin Parr
- 16 Rev. John Shafer
- 17 Mrs. Janice Stebbins
Pastor Sandi Hemker
Mrs. Sharon (Cole) Gensib
Mrs. Donna Preston
Mrs. Beth Shearer
- 23 Mr. Greg Jackson
- 25 Mrs. Lori Neiswender
- 26 Mrs. Stephanie Lee Bondhus
- 29 Mrs. Carol Spearly

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

- 21 Rev. Ed & Eileen Prowant
- 24 Rev. Robert & Lynn Rice

SUSQUEHANNA CLERGY CONSIDERING RETIREMENT IN 2025

As the Appointive Cabinet prepares for the 2025 appointment season, I want to share important information for any pastor (Local Pastor or Elder) currently serving in either local church or extension ministry and may be considering retirement.

Retirement Request Timeline:

First, it is essential to remember that appointments are fixed for a year from July 1 to June 30. While there may be a few extenuating circumstances, as the Cabinet does its work, the understanding is that retirements for this cycle will be effective July 1, 2025. Clergy are expected to complete their current missional assignment on June 30, 2025.

HIRING ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT Christ United Methodist Church

Christ UMC in Selinsgrove, PA is hiring a new part-time Administrative Assistant (AA). This vital position is the hub of communication in the life of the church. The AA will support the Pastor and other leaders in the daily overall function and activities of the church. The position is for Tuesday through Thursday from 8:30am-1:00 pm. The job pays \$15 per hour. If you have any questions or are interested in the position contact or submit a resume to

SOCIAL PRINCIPLES & ADVOCACY TRAINING FOR JANUARY 18, 2025

Join us for a Day with Rev. Dr. Lillian Smith (Altoona District Conference Superintendent) and Colleen Moore (Director of Peace with Justice at the General Board of Church and Society) as Dr. Smith gives us an opening message and Colleen Moore presents on various topics from The New Social Principles to The Future of The UMC to Advocacy.

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DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS
Monday – Thursday
9:00 AM – 3:00 PM
Closed Fridays

To be removed from this mailing, please email: williamsport@susumc.org