



THE
COOPERATIVE
PARISH

COOPERATIVE PARISH NEWSLETTER

January 2026

ACROSS *the* PEWS



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*"The light shines in
the darkness, and
the darkness did
not overcome it.*

John 1: 5 NRSVUE



MAKING ROOM FOR GOD IN OUR LIVES

- Pastor Eduardo Carillo -

Wow—December always feels like it should still be far away, and yet here I am, sitting next to my four-year-old, quietly admiring the glow of a lit Christmas tree. Advent has a way of sneaking up on us like that.

Over these weeks, we've talked about making room—room for hope, peace, love, and joy. And if we're honest, our first instinct when we hear "make room" is to clean something. Declutter. Organize. Get things just right.

MAKE ROOM CONTINUED

Because surely God prefers a tidy space, right?

I remember my mom telling me to clean my room. And I also remember discovering the most spiritual invention of my childhood: the closet. That magical place where everything I wasn't ready to deal with—and didn't feel like spending time on—could be shoved, hidden, and forgotten. Out of sight, out of mind. Mostly. Turns out, we're still really good at that. We stuff things into corners of our lives. We push emotions down. We label certain struggles as "later." We convince ourselves we'll make room for God once things are more organized, more healed, more presentable.

But this season, I want to invite us into something different. Making room for God doesn't mean having everything cleaned up. It doesn't mean stuffing the mess into the closet and pretending it's gone. It means making room right in the middle of the mess. It means trusting that God doesn't wait for perfection—but enters into our brokenness and begins transforming us from there.

So my prayer for us this Christmas is simple: *that we make room. Room for something special. Room for something transformational. Room for something divine.*

Merry Christmas.

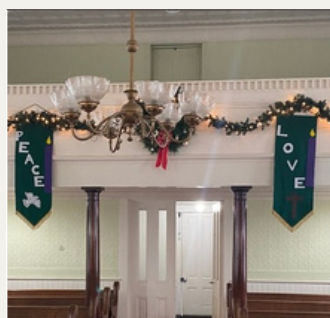
Make room.

ROSCA DE REYES



Join Rectortown UMC during fellowship hour
(9am) to enjoy in the Three Kings Cake on
January 4th!

THANK YOU



RUMC THANKS YOU!

Thank you to all who helped us set up for the holiday season!

CONGRATULATIONS!



We are happy to share that the winner of Middleburg UMC's recent raffle is Jamie Poston, who works at Safeway. Congratulations, Jamie! Thank you to everyone who participated and helped make the raffle a success.

THANK YOU



A special thank-you to Linda Conti for painting Middleburg UMC's beautiful bulletin board. Her creativity, time, and incredible talent have truly brightened our church and brought joy to all who pass by. We are so grateful for the gifts she shares with our congregation.

Middleburg's Christmas pageant was a true delight! Many thanks to Sarah for her leadership and dedication, and to our wonderful children who did such an amazing job. Their enthusiasm, sweetness, and talent filled our hearts and made the pageant truly special.

Middleburg UMC is also thankful for the great success of our recent fundraiser. A heartfelt thank-you to everyone who helped—from our generous vendors in the church yard to those who prepared and served hot dogs, sausage egg biscuits, hot chocolate, and coffee. Because of your support, proceeds from the day benefited several missions, including Angel Tree and Backpack Buddies.

MIDDLEBURG CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



MIDDLEBURG CHRISTMAS PAGEANT



BIRTHDAYS, ANNIVERSARIES, MEETINGS

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Luke Johnson - January 4th	Jill Wilson - January 24th
Elsie Brissing - January 6th	Matthew Miller - January 27th
Hadley Diamond - January 7th	Eduardo Carrillo - January 29th
Francis Dodson - January 8th	Paris Wegdam - January 31st
Kristen Hylton - January 9th	
Dawn Dohrman - January 12th	
Kayla Nickelson - January 14th	
June Brissing - January 19th	
Betty Kirk - January 23rd	
Reiko Lewis - January 23rd	

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES

None

JANUARY MEETINGS

Rectortown UMC

Admin Council	Worship
January 8 th at 7pm.	January 28 th at 10am.

Trustees	Fig Leaf
January 13 th at 6pm.	January 16 th at 10am.

Middleburg UMC

Admin Council
January 15 th at 10:30am.

PASTOR ANSWERS

*Pastor, what happens after Christmas?*

If you're like most people, you're probably feeling that warm, fuzzy, and happy feeling from Christmas. And why wouldn't you? After all, the Savior was born not just a long time ago, but in our hearts every day. The church is caught between celebrating, honoring, remembering, and feeling a bit of urgency, like the shepherds when they found the baby wrapped in cloth in a manger (Luke 2:12). The Bible says that after seeing the baby and telling Mary what they had heard, and then they go out. There was no big ceremony or religious event. The news had been given to them, and they were witnesses to God's presence in the flesh. Have you ever had news that you just had to tell everyone? The kind of news that makes you want to burst out and tell everyone, and you just have to? I think that answers the "what now?" question. I want you to share the Good News with others; it's too important and valuable to keep it to yourself only. Tell it, share it, and act on it.

If you have any questions about anything, I'd love to create a space for us to discuss them as we walk together. Please send me your questions; I'm looking forward to hearing from you!

*Cooperative Mission Statement*

As a cooperative parish, we gather to celebrate our shared ministry and to hold one another accountable in faith and service. We seek God's guidance and hope, trusting that the work of our hands bears fruit for His kingdom. In all we do, we act in the name of Jesus Christ, who loved us and gave His life for us. We commit to sharing God's love in a nonjudgmental and compassionate way, and we invite the Holy Spirit to guide our hearts, our decisions, and our actions.

ASK THE PASTOR



Ask The Pastor



Do you ever find yourself wondering, *“What does the Bible say about this?”* or *“How should we think about that as people of faith?”*

Each month, Pastor Eduardo will respond to questions from our church family and community—big or small—offering answers that are biblically grounded, pastorally inspired, and theologically sound. It’s a way for us to grow in faith together, ask the things that are on our hearts, and engage in open conversation.

Have a question you’d like to see answered? Drop it in the question box at church, email it to the office, or hand it directly to Pastor Eduardo. No question is too simple, and chances are, if you’ve been wondering about something, others have too! See the answer to your questions in the next newsletter!

Have a Question for Pastor Eduardo?

We’d love to hear from you! Use this space to write your question. Drop it in the basket at church, hand it to Pastor, or return it to the office.

My Question: _____
