



# The Vine

## New Life Lutheran Church Newsletter

# February 2024



Dear Folks and Friends of New Life,

How are we being called to serve Christ and our community this year?

On February 24th, our Church Council and Deacons will gather for the annual Leadership Retreat. This is a time of intentional fellowship, reviewing, and discerning. Discerning what, you might say? They will discern the leading priorities for the congregation in 2024: those new directions for ministry that will take most of their time and attention.



I like to introduce a question to help prompt that discernment. This time, though, the credit goes to our Council President, Wayne Kern. It's the question at the top of this article! Again: How are we being called to serve Christ and our community this coming year?

As your pastor, my role is to help guide this conversation. Ultimately, this is a conversation between the people in this congregation, the people in the larger community, and the Triune God. This conversation is ongoing, because the Holy Spirit is always at work! It may sound exhausting to have a never-ending conversation. However, when the Holy Spirit is involved, there is always life and energy. There is a catch: we need to be open to what the Spirit is saying. Sometimes, God asks uncomfortable things of us. For example, are we being asked by the Spirit to minister in new ways, and with new people?

If you have any thoughts on these things, feel free to talk with your leadership. Church Council members include Wayne Kern, Susan MacTaggart, Cathy Dietz, Barb Vogel, Bryant Payne, Roy Hager, and Lisa Dreher. Your Deacons are Ken Henderson, Gail Payne, Colleen Moore, and Pat Stewart. You can also talk to me!

It is by God's grace that New Life still finds itself as part of God's greater mission, 75 years on from its beginning. May we live into this grace together!

Peace of Christ,

Pastor Paul

### Offerings Year To Date

January offerings were	\$7,577
Amt. of offerings received (Jan 2024)	\$7,577
Amt. of offerings budgeted (Jan 2024)	\$8,167

### Offerings Year To Date 2023

December 2023 offerings were	\$7488.00
Amt. of offerings received (Jan through Dec. 17)	\$112,297
Amt. of offerings budgeted (Jan through Dec. 17)	\$96,000.00

### Epiphany and Season after Epiphany: January 6th to February 13th

*The Feast (on January 6th) and Season after Epiphany celebrate the amazing revelation that God has come to earth as a human being in Jesus Christ. The Feast Day (on a Saturday this year) celebrates the visit of the wise men to the baby Jesus. We will celebrate this on Sunday the 7th! The readings for the rest of the Season after Epiphany recount the beginning of Jesus' ministry, this year through the lens of Mark's gospel.*

*An ancient practice of the Church is to bless homes during the Epiphany season with Scripture, prayer, a sprinkling of water, and a little chalk. Pastor Paul would love to bless your home! Please contact Pastor directly if interested.*

### **2024 Church Council members sworn in January 14.**



### **Fellowship Snack Providers - February**

We are using the following schedule for fellowship snack providers.

Last names beginning with the following letters will be asked to provide snacks:

<b>FEB</b>	<b>ABCD</b>
<b>MAR</b>	<b>EFGHIJK</b>
<b>APR</b>	<b>LMNOP</b>
<b>JAN</b>	<b>QRSTUVWXYZ</b>

# Thank You!

### **BRYANT PAYNE**

Thank you, Bryant, for your work as Council Treasurer over the past year-plus, and now taking on the bookkeeping! Your time, skills, and thoughtfulness in these roles are incredibly valuable and appreciated. Thank you, also, for your work as editor for the Constitution Team as it prepares to provide this congregation with updates on the rules governing its ministry. And, of course, thanks for all the other things you do for the ministry of New Life. We are grateful!

## **Property Update**

We received good news in January. The city planning department officially approved our application to split our property into two lots: one lot containing the church and Food Share, and the other lot containing the undeveloped land. We have been waiting for this news for a couple of months. Now, the main thing that lies ahead is the official surveying work: making the boundaries official and registering the new lots with the city and county. This work will begin in early February. As of right now, the sell-by date for the property remains on or before the end of February. We will offer updates as they come up.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Pastor Paul

# Spiritual Renewal 2024

## Ecumenical Weekend

February 10 & 11

## Who Is My Neighbor?

### A Storytelling Workshop for Spiritual Connections

**Saturday Workshops 10:30 & 1:00**  
*luncheon served at noon*

**Ecumenical Worship Sunday 10:30**

**hosted at Presbyterian Community Church**  
**3996 Hwy 101, Florence**

**Workshop Leader: Rev. Dr. Jennifer Yocum Sponsors:**

**Lent: February 14th to March 27th**  
**(excluding Sundays)**

In the season of Lent, we enter into the forty-day fast that Jesus undertook in the wilderness. We prepare our hearts and minds for the celebration of Easter in this season through the traditional practices of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving—all things that are meant to deepen our connection to God.

The season starts with the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday. It is in this service that we are reminded that we are dust, and to dust we shall return.

You may be wondering: why doesn't Lent include Sundays? Even during Lent, we are called to treat every Sunday like a little Easter! On Sundays, we celebrate the paschal mystery: Christ has died. Christ is risen. Christ will come again. Sundays are always meant to be days of celebration and feasting.

## Ash Wednesday Announcement!

The Ash Wednesday service will be held on Wednesday, February 14th, at 4:30pm at Florence United Methodist Church.



### Lenten Study Small Groups

New Life is doing a joint Lenten Study with Florence United Methodist Church as part of our ongoing Friendship Process. The theme for the study is "Wandering Heart: Figuring Out Faith with Peter". There will be singing, reflection, Scripture study, and more!

There will be two opportunities every week in Lent for you to participate:

**Wednesdays at 4:30pm in the Parsonage (1135 2nd Street).**

—This session will be led by Pastor Paul and Beth and Patty Evans.

**Fridays at 10:00am in the Florence United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall (333 Kingwood Avenue).**

—This session will be led by Pastor Logan and Claudia Siebert

The sessions, lasting around an hour, will begin February 21st and 23rd and will take place every week until March 20th and 22nd.

Sign-up sheets are on the table in the Narthex for those who wish to participate. This is to help leaders know who to expect. However, you do not need to sign up in order to come! See you there!

**NLLC**  
**Church Council Meeting Minutes**  
**January 18, 2023**

Call to Order: President, Wayne Kern called the Council meeting to order at 4:00 pm. Present were Roy Hager, Sue MacTaggart, Cathy Dietz, Bryant Payne, Treasurer, Lisa Dreher, Secretary, and Pastor Paul Strike.

Meeting opened with Pastor Paul leading prayer.

**Minutes:** Approval of Council Minutes for two separate meetings held on December 21, 2023. Lisa made the motion to approve both minutes, Roy seconded, the motion was passed.

**Treasurer's Report:** Bryant presented December financials. Reviewed adjustments in previous year(s) payroll deductions. Explained new Quick Books system installation issues. Pastor Paul made Portico corrections to his contract. The revised contract was signed and dated by Wayne and Lisa.

**President's Report:** Wayne thanked returning council members and newly elected members. Wayne also provided special thanks to Bryant for the many roles he has accepted in the areas of finance for the church. A recent conversation with Andy Johnson indicated that there are no hold-ups with the buyer regarding the closing of the property sale. Andy asked for a copy of the approved partition request. Rob Ward, surveyor, will be setting flags to finalize the platting. We can't order the title until the survey is complete. An extension request for closing may be necessary; the Buyer would set a date. The survey will resolve the issue with the neighbor regarding the fence line.

**Pastor's Report:** Pastor Paul has been offered a part-time position at Camp Lutherwood beginning January 29, 2024. This will not interfere with his full-time position at church, and any scheduling issues will be discussed as they arise. Pastor Paul was congratulated on this great opportunity for outreach. No official approval is needed from the council. Friendship process with the Methodist church is proceeding. A successful potluck and game night was held at the Methodist church on January 17<sup>th</sup>. Further events include a combined study for Lent, more details to come. Shared Free Lunch service on February 29<sup>th</sup> at the Methodist church has been planned, volunteers have been arranged. Ash Wednesday/Valentine's Day service will be held at the Methodist church, February 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm.

**Old Business:** Camp Florence has finished working, and Wayne proposed additional work east to the new property line. Wayne has also proposed additional trimming to the south property line between Spruce Street and the east edge of the south parking lot. There was discussion on what can be done to shield the exposed refuse in the neighbor's yard, temporary vs. permanent solutions. Carpeting in the library. Sue and Cathy confirmed that a quote was received from Goodman's. It was decided to postpone this re-carpeting until a committee can be set up to prioritize implementation of building improvements. Sue will contact Goodman's to inform them of this decision. Dan and Wayne are continuing to look for materials to construct a chain link fence between the garage and the church. This has been budgeted and will be materials only, they will provide the labor. The Uptown AA contract will be modified to reflect our standard fee schedule for meetings. The change will be from \$13.24 per meeting for 4 meetings a week to \$15.00 per meeting for 3 meetings a week. Bryant made the motion, Sue seconded, and the motion was passed.

**New Business:** Wayne proposed we start planning for the influx of cash from the sale of the property. We will need a short-term plan for most of the funds as well as a long-term plan. For now, a short-term plan will be investigated by a 5-7-member committee with members from the council including Wayne, Roy, Bryant and Pastor Paul and will have congregation volunteers. An announcement was made at the January 21<sup>st</sup> service by Wayne asking for interested parties to contact any member of the council for information, and it will be in the monthly newsletter as well. Roy made a motion to create a short-term financial planning committee to determine appropriate investment options for the cash from the sale of the property. Bryant seconded and the motion passed. It was decided to discuss options to create a barrier along the south property line, Spruce to parking lot edge, at the Leadership retreat. Leadership retreat will be at the parsonage, February 24<sup>th</sup>, from 9:30 and to 12:30 pm. Wayne and Pastor Paul to plan the agenda to review the last year and plan for this year.

**Next Meeting:** February 15, 2024, at 4:00 pm.

**Meeting Closed:** Pastor Paul closed with the Lord's Prayer. Adjourned at 5:10 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Dreher, Secretary



# CHRISTMAS EVE 2023





*Celebrating New Year's Eve Services with Florence United Methodist Church and Presbyterian Community Church.*



*Good Bye to 2023*

*Welcome to the New Year 2024!*



**HAPPY NEW YEAR 2024**