



# Delaware Headwaters Charge

Through God's love and in community with one another, we welcome you!

## Winter 2025 Newsletter

### Welcome to the Delaware Headwaters Charge!

The Delaware Headwaters Charge has brought together Bloomville UMC, Conesville Chapel, Gilboa UMC, Harpersfield UMC, Hobart UMC, First Presbyterian Church/Stamford UMC, and Township UMC under the direction of Pastor Dawn Richards and Pastor Peggy Laemmel. We are happy to have you as a member or a visitor to our churches. God has been doing wonderful things in our communities . . . we invite you to come, share in the fellowship, take root, and grow with us.



There are two ways to stay informed about our Charge.

- Visit our website at [www.delawareheadwatersparish.com](http://www.delawareheadwatersparish.com)
- Follow us on Facebook. Facebook groups can be found by searching for
  - *Bloomville United Methodist Church*
  - *Delaware Headwaters Charge*
  - *Angels' Attic*
  - *Conesville UMC-Conesville*
  - *Harpersfield United Methodist Church*

### Pastor Contact Information

#### **Pastor Dawn Richards**

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Our wonderful thrift store run by the Hobart United Methodist Women in Faith is now closed until May. Thank you for donating, shopping and helping. Please hold your treasures until we reopen. For emergency requests call Pastor Peggy or 607-538-9691.

**Volunteers are  
desperately needed.**

# Office Hours

Delaware Headwaters Charge  
Office Hours with  
Pastor Peggy and Alice Tucker  
9-3pm, Thursdays  
at Hobart UMC  
607-538-9691

Or you may contact the Pastors  
directly for their assistance  
*Subject to change as needed*



As winter weather approaches, just a reminder that Delaware Headwaters Parish churches will be open for scheduled worship, except in very extreme conditions. Always use good judgment and err on the side of safety when inclement weather hits the area. Phone a friend or check the church's website or Facebook pages when in doubt.



March 7<sup>th</sup>

Soup's On is now known as **Community Potluck**. All these events will be posted on Facebook, the website and in the weekly bulletins.

Township UMC  
will be pausing services  
for this winter from  
January 19<sup>th</sup> - April 12, 2025.  
Reopening April 13<sup>th</sup>

March 9, 2025



# From Pastor Dawn

January 2025 Pastor's Report

As we begin a New Year together as a Charge and a part of the Mountain Beacon Parish, I want to highlight some of the things we are doing as a Charge and Parish. On our Statistical Tables one of the questions has to do with whether the church is doing any justice or mercy ministries with people in the community. We also have to report any Christian Formation studies or small groups that we have and how many participate. I wanted to share with you what we are doing and encourage your churches to think about increasing your participation in these ministries.

Justice and mercy ministries:

Community Potluck (formerly Soup's On)--for those from the community who come, they receive a free meal and fellowship  
Volunteers at CORE and Angel's Attic thrift shops---for those on limited incomes, thrift shops are essential. Jefferson (in our Parish) also has a thrift shop and thriving senior ministry

Food Pantries---we all know that the cost of food is increasing, that is why our Food Pantries are so important. Several of our churches help support Conesville's Food Pantry.

Food Pantry Donations: Many of our churches support local food pantries with their donations.

Mission offerings---monthly mission offering to people and non profits in the community that help others. Our churches send money to UMCOR

Grief Support Group: The Parish and our Charge are supporting this ministry, which is free and available for anyone who needs it.

Christmas Feeling Fund, Christmas Shoebox Ministry and Christmas Baskets:

The holidays are hard for many folks financially and emotionally. Our participation in these ministries during the holidays brighten spirits both locally and internationally.

Blessing of the Animals: We served many people by blessing their animals. It didn't matter how much money they had, or who they were, we blessed their fur babies, shared our faith and made people smile.

Glasses for those who can't afford them: Stamford Methodist/Presbyterian collects glasses that are shipped overseas

Christian Formation Groups:

Bible Study: We have had several Parish wide Bible Studies with good participation from several churches. We will be offering a Lent Bible study and a Fall Bible study again this year.

Prayer Walk: We serve a variety of folks with this ministry. Some from our churches, some from others. During the walk, on top of lifting up those with needs in prayer, we have spiritual conversation and fellowship.  
United Women in Faith: Each meeting, we have some type of devotional or information about mission presented, as well as a small business meeting and fellowship.

Youth Group: Beginning in January, we are offering a confirmation class for our youth to be held at Bloomville the second Sat. from 5-7p. And a senior youth group for those already confirmed the 4 th Sat. from 5-7p.

Children's/Youth Sunday School:

Bloomville and Conesville also have a Children/Youth Sunday School program.  
Ministry at the Assisted Living Center in Stamford: Besides our twice monthly worship services, during Spring-Fall we have laity leading crafts and a Soup's On.  
Prayer Meetings: Held monthly at Gilboa followed by pot-luck meal and fellowship

Assistance with Transportation and Visitation: Several churches assist members with transportation and visitation

As we look forward into 2025, we hope to not only continue these ministries, but encourage more people to be involved in Justice and Mercy ministries and Christian Formation groups.

Being a Christian isn't only about Thursday/Sunday worship. It is about what we do the rest of the week. That is what it means to follow Jesus. I hope and pray that if you are not involved in some type of ministry yet, you will be and that you will encourage others in your church to be involved as well. Please let me know if your church is doing something I have left off! Together we are stronger and can do more ministries.

I have continued to be in contact with and visit our homebound, those who are ill and our assisted living residents at least monthly.

As a UM pastor, we are obligated to serve on District and Conference committees as well as serve our local churches. For your information, I am presently serving on several committees:

District Superintendency Committee (meets quarterly by zoom)

District Committee on Ministry (meets one to two times per month by zoom)

Conference Board of Higher Education (this is a new committee I am on, so far we have mostly corresponded by email)

Mountain Beacon Parish Coordinator

As Pastors, we are also encouraged to share our gifts and graces within the Conference. I will be teaching a Lay Servant class in April for five weeks by Zoom on Laity Pastoral Care.

I will be taking three spiritual retreats this year, the first will be the last week of January. During this retreat I will be outlining what I am teaching in the Lay Servant Class. I will be taking one short vacation in the spring, dates unknown. And my family is having a celebration of my dad and step-mom's anniversary on a cruise June 15th-19th, so I will be taking vacation time then from the 13th to the 22nd.

## **EASTER CALENDAR**

**Ash Wednesday March 5**

**Easter April 20**

**Please check the weekly bulletins, the website and our Facebook pages for updates and further information.**



**We will celebrate  
Confirmation with a  
Charge wide worship  
service on May 11, 2025  
at 10am at Bloomville UMC**

# *From Pastor Dawn*

## **What is Our Mission?**

From a Christian perspective, our mission is to "make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world," meaning our primary goal is to actively spread the teachings of Jesus Christ and inspire positive change globally, emphasizing personal transformation through faith and actively engaging in social justice issues.

### **Key points about our mission:**

- Focus on discipleship: The core idea is to actively nurture individuals to become dedicated followers of Jesus Christ, not just church attendees.
- Transformation through grace: **We** believe in God's grace as a powerful force for personal change and societal improvement.
- Social justice commitment: **Christians** are called to address issues of injustice and oppression in the world, aligning with their faith teachings.
- Holistic approach: This mission encompasses spiritual growth, community engagement, and actively working towards a better world.

Given the above definition, what is your church, our Charge and our Parish doing that fits the above definition?

## **What's the Big Deal about Lent and Holy Week?**

### **Ash Wednesday March 5<sup>th</sup>, 4:30 at Stamford Presbyterian/Methodist church**

Lent begins with Ash Wednesday, which is a service in which we repent of our sins. We are marked with the sign of the cross with ashes, which represent our repentance. Although we do a prayer of confession each week in worship, Ash Wednesday's entire focus is on a new beginning through repentance and confession.

## **Lent Practices**

During Lent, many Christians practice fasting, increased prayer time, bible study, and attending the special worship services of Lent and Holy Week. John Wesley and many other denominational founders preached that fasting was an important way to exercise self-discipline. Many can not fast from food or a meal because of health issues. But there are other things we can fast from: TV for one night or several hours and instead read scripture or spend time in prayer; fast from sugar for one day and instead pray for those who are starving from lack of food; fast from reading or watching the news for one day and instead pray for the world during that time, etc. Which of the above practices will you commit to this Lent?

### **Seder Meal April 12<sup>th</sup> 5:30 at Jefferson**

The Seder meal is a reenactment of the Last Supper and Passover meal that Jews celebrate each year. In this reenactment we move from Exodus to the Last Supper and Holy Communion. It puts us in touch with what the disciples and Jesus grew up doing, their traditions.

### **Holy Week Services: Palm/Passion Sunday (Regular worship April 13<sup>th</sup>); Holy Thursday (6p at Harpersfield) Sunrise Services and Easter worship (April 20<sup>th</sup>)**

Lent culminates with Holy Week. A week in which we remember and celebrate Jesus' final week of life and ministry. It is a week of highs and lows. We remember his joyous entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Holy Thursday moves from the Last Supper, into the garden and then his arrest and crucifixion and the pain and loss of Jesus. Sunrise and Easter we remember the women who went to the tomb and realized that Jesus had been resurrected as we will someday. Once again, there was tremendous joy. These events are crucial to our beliefs as Christians. Not attending the services and remembering his sacrifice lessen the experience and the gratitude we feel for what he went through because he loves us.

# PASTOR PEG'S LETTER

Well after last year's mild winter I now get to experience a full-on Catskill winter! But while the weather might be cold and snowy, I don't find myself to be depressed by it. Some people might think that you can only find God in the warm, sunny times of your life, but I have the assurance that God is everywhere in every time. It's one of the reasons why *In the Deep Midwinter* is one of my favorite hymns, because even though the song paints a picture of a cold-as-iron, dark, wintery eve, God is still there working a miracle and bringing Jesus into the world.

That's worth remembering in the middle of the colder and darker days of our lives. When things change and seem like they will never go back to the way things were, when it seems that we need to try a new way to do something and we don't know how it will end, we can always remember that God makes something new even in the cold and dark. Remember that right now, under all that snow and cold, seeds and trees, bulbs and flowers are sleeping and getting ready to grow. We just need to be patient and let our new and uncertain things grow and become strong until they are ready to blossom and give joy and fruit.

Spring will come again, and we live with our God lives in the grace of His renewing actions. I pray that all of us will find our connection to Grace in all the weather of our lives.

Blessings, *Pastor Peg*

**TOWNSHIP UMC RESTORATION:** This fall and summer the Township church received a generous donation which allowed us to repaint the exterior of the church. The building was scraped, some repairs were made to the walls and then it was primed and painted, and now is a gleaming white. Thank you to Dave and Joyce Barber who generously donated funds, in memory of Carolyn Pardee, and made this possible and RRC Painting who did such a wonderful and careful job and made our church look beautiful. Since the project was finished very close to the first snowfall we will have a dedication of the renewed building in spring.

## LENTEN BIBLE STUDY: THE LETTER OF PHILLIPIANS

From the book, *Because of This I Rejoice*  
by Max O. Vincent

Dates: Mondays, March 3-April 14

10 am @ Stamford Presbyterian & 6 pm @ Harpersfield  
All are welcome.

You do not need to attend every lesson and, if you cannot physically make the class, you can make arrangements with Pastors Peg and Dawn to join by ZOOM.

## ANGEL'S ATTIC

Angel's Attic, is closed for the winter, but will reopen in April. While Angel's Attic cannot accept large furniture or electronics we can accept small household items, clothing, books, jewelry, and art. All donations go to the United Women of Faith to be used for missions in the local community and to help those in need. Come browse our collection of merchandise in Spring and see what treasures you can find.

## UNITED WOMEN OF FAITH

The United Women of Faith (formally United Methodist Women) meets every second Wednesday of the month at 2:00 pm, from September – June. At each meeting we have a fun program along with refreshments and fellowship. Mission projects are also discussed. In January Pastor Dawn did a program on prayer, and in February Pastor Peg did one on forgiveness. Pastor Donna LaRoy will be doing a program in February. All are ladies are welcome, you do not have to be a member of our church to attend.

### Future dates and locations:

March 12 @ Hobart Church Coffee Hour Room

April 9 @ Dorothy Wetmore's: 117 Pine St; Hobart, NY

May 7 @ Betty Reed's: 12 Elm St; Delhi, NY

June 11 @ Cathy Rappleyea: 21 Buckhorn Rd; Unadilla, NY 13849

## LENT & EASTER EVENTS

Ash Wednesday: March 5, 4:30 pm @ Stamford Presbyterian

Passover Seder: April 12, 5 pm @ Jefferson UMC

(Please call Donna LaRoy to make reservations so we have to correct amount of materials)

Palm Sunday: April 13

Holy Thursday: April 17, 6 pm @ Harpersfield UMC.

Community dinner followed by Service.

Easter Services: 7:30 Sunrise Service Township UMC & Harpersfield UMC

8:30 Community Breakfast and Easter Egg Hunt @ Bloomville UMC

9:00 Gilboa UMC

10:00 Bloomville UMC

10:15 Stamford Pres/UMC

11:15 Hobart UMC Easter service

## COMMUNITY DINNER (Formally Soup's On): 1<sup>st</sup>

Saturday of the Month, 4:30 – 6:30 pm

Last fall the Mountain Beacon Parish Committee decided that we would change our name to Community Dinner to show that we are a new organization. Last fall we had dinners at Stamford, Harpersfield, and Hobart. In January we held our dinner in Jefferson, but we decided to cancel our dinner in February because of the uncertain weather. We will resume our dinners in March.

March 1: Hobart & Township @ Hobart UMC Fellowship Hall 4:30pm Theme: Winter Soup Mission: UMCOR for LA Fires  
April 5: Bloomville @ Bloomville UMC Fellowship Hall 4:30pm  
May 3: Stamford Presbyterian & Gilboa UMC @ Stamford Presbyterian

### **BLOOMVILLE'S KITCHEN RESTORATION**

Last fall the gentlemen of the Bloomville church started the project of renewing the counters in the kitchen. Unfortunately, when they removed the counters, they found several structural issues and it was decided that it was time to fix all the problems by completely renewing the kitchen. We now have new cabinets and counters. The center table was removed, and we found out at the pancake breakfast that it was not needed, and the extra space made it easier to work. New shelving was given to the pass-through windows; the floor was redone; and new appliances were purchased. We could not have done this without the tireless dedication of the ladies who sorted and cleaned kitchen items, and the men who gave many hours installing the hardware. Thank you all who made our remodeled kitchen possible.

### **BLOOMVILLE YOUTH**

Because of our kitchen remodel the Bloomville Youth were not able to have Sunday School or Youth Group last fall. However, they enthusiastically participated in the Christmas Pageant, Angels Among Us, and brought joy to our holiday season.

In January we started up our Youth Group again. This year we have two youth groups: Our Junior Youth Group which is working towards their confirmations and full membership in our church; and our Senior Youth Group which is enjoying Bible study, fellowship and we are planning outings as well. Below is a calendar of the remaining meetings.

March 22: Senior Youth  
April 12: Junior Youth (At Jefferson Seder)  
April 26: Senior Youth  
May 10: Junior Youth  
May 17: Senior Youth  
May 11: Sunday Confirmation Day 10am: We will have an ALL CHARGE Worship Service to celebrate our youth

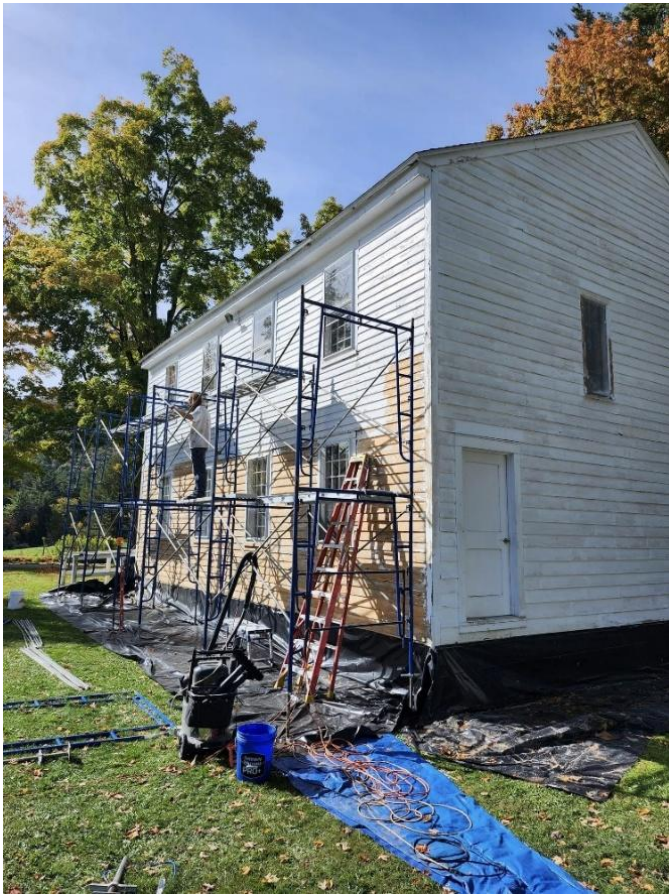
### **FELLOWSHIP of CHRISTIAN ATHLETES (FCA) YOUTH RALLY**

The Mountain Beacon Parish is planning on holding a Youth Sports Rally in August. We will be inviting athletic coaches and focusing on safe all-round training for our student athletes. The event will be open to all student athletes in our community. We are planning it to be an afternoon session and will include dinner for the participants.

## **Township United Methodist Church Restoration Project**

Township UMC received a beautiful gift from Joyce and David Barber in memory of Carolyn Sturgess Parady. RRC Painting of Roxbury completed this exterior project to preserve this treasure. Many accolades poured in. "What a special tribute to her, and know that this touches the heart of her family, and those who attend the Township Methodist Church." "This church holds a whole lot of history." "A beautiful tribute."







# Bloomville UMC

## Completes Kitchen Project

With the talents of our dedicated members and volunteers, we completed the renovation of our kitchen! We admire the great confidence that our talented team had to design, build, retrofit, and find solutions to every issue and problem. This renovation and the other essential projects keep our church facilities up to date and allow for continued growth. We are deeply in debt to the many people who donated to this project and support our church. Our church holds a special place in our community, serving as spiritual sanctuary and center of the congregation.



*Conesville lets their light  
shine at Gilboa UMC!*



## *A lovely tribute to Ruth*

Caregiver Art Show to honor Ruth Many, inspired by Rianna Pauline Starheim and sponsored by the Roxbury Arts Group, was held Nov. 29<sup>th</sup> – Dec. 21<sup>st</sup>. It included five generations of family and community art related to care. A personal caregiving journey wove art, family history, and community into a meaningful experience.



## *What is Lent and why does it last forty days?*

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on **Ash Wednesday (March 5)** and ends on **Holy Saturday (April 20)**. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word *lencten*, meaning “lengthen” and refers to the lengthening days of spring. The forty days represents the time Jesus spent in the wilderness, enduring the temptation of Satan, and preparing to begin his ministry.

Lent is a time of repentance, fasting and preparation for the coming of Easter. It is a time of self-examination and reflection. In the early church, Lent began as a period of fasting and preparation for baptism by new converts and then became a time of penance by all Christians. Today, Christians focus on relationship with God, growing as disciples and extending ourselves, often choosing to give up something or to volunteer and give of ourselves for others.

Sundays in Lent are not counted in the forty days because each Sunday represents a "mini-Easter." This is why you will see the designation "Sunday in Lent" rather than "Sunday of Lent" in the naming of these Sundays. On each Lord's Day in Lent the reverent spirit of Lent is tempered with joyful anticipation of the Resurrection.

Ask The UMC, a ministry of United Methodist Communications.



## **Alain & Katherine Niles' Update**

Dear Friends,

This Sunday I will be teaching on the end of Matthew 7 in the house church we attend. Our group has been slowly working our way through the sermon on the mount to learn what Jesus found important to the Christian life. It ends with the challenge to build our house on the rock and not on the sand so that when the storm comes, we have a sure and steadfast foundation. This rings true for us here in Mango, Togo. Not only because we had major flooding last month that wiped out many houses that were built out of mud on sandy soil.... but because life here is hard and without the rock-solid foundation in God we would collapse under the many challenges.

Don't worry, we are set up well for life here, but we work in a setting of suffering and deal with the burdens of broken, sick and hurting people every day. Learning to care for them and share their burdens is often a challenge.

A Fulani patient from Burkina Faso came to us recently with heart failure, kidney failure, uncontrolled diabetes, hypertension, blood clots in his heart and an infection in his leg that required us to amputate his left leg. Needless to say, he required a lot of care. Miraculously he survived, was discharged and has been following with me in our clinic for a number of weeks as I regulate his warfarin and adjust his medications. Through his ordeal, he surrendered his life to Jesus at our hospital and meets with our chaplains to pray with us on every visit he makes. On his visit last week he shared how he had left the clinic and was going to take a taxi way up north to Burkina Faso where he lives, but had not felt peace about returning home. The taxi only makes the trip once a week so he decided with his Mom to stay on the Togo side one more week. He shared how he received word that the taxi he would have been on made it to the village in Burkina right at the time of a massive terrorist attack that killed a large number of civilians including everyone in the vehicles except for the driver. He believes God spared him and is so

grateful for the chaplains who prayed for his safety. Talk about facing challenges!

At least every other day I care for prisoners who are brought to our clinic. The local prison recently received dozens more prisoners from another prison. The inmates were very sick and they have been brought in pairs for care. Most of them have scurvy, scabies, malaria, typhoid and many other illnesses from poor conditions. We always acknowledge the prison guards that bring them and have built a great relationship with them. Our team does a Bible study once a week in the prison and has a large gathering. Recently, one guard shared that if it wasn't for the care we provide many of the inmates would not be alive. He said we are their only hope and he was so impressed in how we showed love and care to the men.

We are nearing the end of a busy malaria season. Our emergency room was bursting at the seams from sick kids with cerebral malaria, typhoid, dengue and often severe anemia requiring transfusions. We lost many children, but our team was able to save so many others and continue to build the reputation of the hospital as a strong pillar in the community. How exciting to see written in referral sheets of very sick patients "référé à l'Espérance" (referred to the Hope). They leave out the full title of Hôpital de l'Espérance and just say go to 'the Hope.'

This month, one of our dear friends and long-time employees fell ill. He was known as "the Colonel". I hired him back in the fall of 2009 as a mason to help build the hospital. He was an integral part of the construction phase and then transitioned over to becoming the supervisor of our hospital guards. Despite incredible effort from our medical team, yesterday he passed away in our ICU. Today, I went with dozens of our staff out to his village and buried him. We are praying for his wife and kids and for the morale in the hospital. Losing one of our own who has served faithfully for the last 15 yrs is not easy.

#### HOUSE CHURCH

We are grateful for the growth taking place in our group. We are made up of local Muslim background believers, some hospital workers and a large group of

patients who live on the hospital grounds for long term care. We had over 30 adults along with a dozen kids this last Sunday. No empty chairs, no air flow, just a simple group that has been studying faithfully and enjoys singing and praying together. Pray for Yaovi and me who lead the group as we train 2 other men in leading and teaching.

#### SCHOOL

Our kids continue to thrive in their classes and in their lives in Mango. They have great teachers, great friends, lots of space for outdoor adventures and an endless supply of critters to catch. Katherine is enjoying the range of teaching at the MK school from her Kindergarten class, one-on-one 1st grade reading lessons, and Algebra 2 class. She is also doing some weekly French lessons and working on creating some resources for helping with French literacy.

#### WHAT'S COMING UP

-The big news is that 2025 will mark the 10-year anniversary since the Hospital of Hope opened! We have been planning what we hope to be several months of celebration. Lots of great friends of the hospital plan to come out to help us celebrate. You can pray for all the preparations that go into orchestrating the festivities. We are hoping it can be a time to encourage our staff, a time to connect with our community, and a time to look back, see, and celebrate all that God has done.

-Our team will also be facing a lot of change in the spring as a number of families will be leaving – some for scheduled home assignments and others who are wrapping up many years of ministry in Mango. You can pray for grace as our team adjusts to the changes ahead.

Thanks for praying for us, our team, and the ministry in Mango!

*Alain, Katherine, Camille, Caleb & Mia-Joy*



Thank You  
for your support

**abwe**  
GLOBAL FAMILY OF MINISTRIES