



NEWS from the Corner



First United Methodist Church—600 Wood Street, Clarion, PA 16214

Online at: fumc-clarion.org

December 2025/January 2026 Edition

Worship Services

Sunday mornings
8:30 and 11:00am

Sunday School

9:45am
Classes for all ages

Live Stream

Both services streamed
live on YouTube



MERRY CHRIST

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News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026

Memorials May 26, 2025 - November 15, 2025

In memory of Carl Stitt

Given by Marlene Steiner (Memorial Fund)

In memory of Valerie Stitt

Given by Jan Hartle (Memorial Fund)

Given by Marlene Steiner (Memorial Fund)

In memory of Thomas Siegel

Given by Marlene Steiner (Memorial Fund)

In memory of Eileen Heasley

Given by Marlene Steiner (Memorial Fund)

In memory of Rev. Sam Allaman

Given by Phyllis Polliard (Memorial Fund)

Given by Mary and Willie Wilson (Memorial Fund)

Given by Deborah Ackley-Killian (Memorial Fund)

In memory of Gwen Rhoades

Given by Jody and Becky Weaver (Love Cupboard)

Given by Jan Hartle (Love Cupboard)

Given by Mary Jo Ford (Love Cupboard)

Given by Sandra Foster (Love Cupboard)

Given by Becky Miller (Love Cupboard)

Given by Kathy Steele (Love Cupboard)

Given by Phyllis Buckley (Love Cupboard)

Given by Mary and Willie Wilson (Love Cupboard)

Given by Bill and Alice Saxman (Love Cupboard)

Given by Phyllis Polliard (Love Cupboard)

Given by Nancy Curl (Love Cupboard)

Given by Christina Keener (Love Cupboard)

Given by Richard and Cheryl Douthit (Love Cupboard)

Given by Stuart and Vivian Estes (Love Cupboard)

Given by Marlene Steiner (Love Cupboard)

In memory of Dr. Marvin Clark

Given by Kathryn Riedel (Mary McKissick Brooks Organ Fund)

Given by Phyllis Polliard (Memorial Fund)

Given by Merle and Janet Wetzell (Memorial Fund)

Given by James Gries (Memorial Fund)

In memory of James Knickerbocker

Given by Douglas Bills (Memorial Fund)

Given by Deon Knickerbocker (Mary McKissick Brooks Organ Fund)

In memory of Roger and Vera Allen

Given by Howard Rhoades (Mary McKissick Brooks Organ Fund)

In memory of Ian Doran

Given by Marlene Steiner (Memorial Fund)

In honor of Randy Cathcart and Howard Rhoades

Given by Carolyn Wright (Mary McKissick Brooks Organ Fund)

In honor of Donna Woodman's 80th birthday

Given by Susan Zeff and Raymond McGunigle (Love Cupboard)

CONSIDER GIVING TO THE MEMORIAL FUND

When a loved one dies, keeping his or her memory alive is a way of honoring his or her life and finding comfort in your own life as a survivor. Consider contributing a gift to your church's Memorial Fund as a tribute to someone you loved or have known.

News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Marvin Clark, M.D.** Marvin passed from this life on June 4, 2025.



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Ian Doran.** Ian passed from this life on July 30, 2025.



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Deanna Shpakoff.** Deanna joined our church on January 4, 1962 and passed from this life on August 22, 2025.



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Jason Cox.** Jason joined our church on May 22, 1988 and passed from this life on September 28, 2025.



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Declan Hile.** Declan passed from this life on October 3, 2025.



Our deepest sympathies go out to the family and friends of **Vera Allen.** Vera passed from this life on October 20, 2025.

Please call the church office for an address if you wish to send your prayers and cards.

News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026

Clarion FUMC,

On behalf of the Clarion County Chapter, DAR and myself, I want to thank you for allowing us to use the church facilities for our meetings.

It is such a welcoming place. Everyone from the Facilities Committee, A.V. help, the “lunch ladies” and custodian were friendly and accommodating.

Many of our members expressed what a nice place it was for meetings—very attractive and inviting.

Thank you,
Nancy Keen

Dear FUMC family,

Thank you so much for all the birthday cards I received. Mary, thank you for the birthday party with the choir.

Thank you again,
Raymond McBride

Dear church family,

Thank you for the kind graduation gift. I appreciate your support over the past five years. I feel truly blessed to be part of such a caring community.

Thanks,
Rachel Howard

Dear Friends at Clarion First,

Thank you so much for taking such good care of Ian’s family and friends at his “Celebration of Life” service!

We are so blessed to belong to a welcoming and loving church family!

God Bless,
Zachary Covington and Ian’s family

Dear First United Methodist Church of Clarion,

Thank you for your many gifts and expressions of love and care in this season of my illness. They have been of great comfort.

I am also grateful for your generosity here and abroad through your apportionment dollars. When churches contribute to Connectional Apportionments, the vast majority of those gifts remain here in Western Pennsylvania, allowing for ministries within the local churches, Districts and Annual Conference. Through these funds, programs such as the conference youth program, District training events, and the ministry multiplier grants for local churches are made possible here in the Western PA conference. I am grateful for the work and witness apportionments make possible.

As of September 5, First: Clarion has contributed \$25,271.75 toward its 2025 apportionments of \$43,323.

In grateful gratitude for your apportionment giving, I have given a personal gift of \$50 to be remitted to your apportionment account.

Again, thank you for your giving to God.

Gratefully,
Deborah Ackley-Killian
Conference Superintendent

News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026

Dear members of Clarion First Church,
Our family would like to thank the Steven Ministry team and the members of the congregation who supported us in prayer during my sister-in-law's illness.
We also cherish the cards, love, and support after her passing as well.
With sincere thanks,
Cheryl Douthit

Thank you so much FUMC,
Pastor Jodie, Darren and fellowship ladies, we truly appreciate everything you have done to honor and remember our mom, Deanna Shpakoff.
God Bless,
Noreen Shirey, Kevin Allen, Marjie Bish, Mary Jo McFeely

Many thanks to our church family for all the cards, thoughts and prayers in the loss of our mother and grandmother, Vera. The support was greatly cherished and appreciated.
The Allen Family

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for the prayers, visits, cards, notes, phone calls and flowers during and after my stay in hospital and home recovery.
May God bless you,
Donna Lewis

Dear Church Family,
Thank you for showing God's Love through cards and the many prayers that brought much comfort to me and my grandson, James Kern's family, on his passing.
Carol Leas

FUMCC,
We were so surprised—you all absolutely NAILED our needs (and our Walmart cart!). WOW—it's so cool to see how God works with many hands in partnership for life!!
Thank you for stocking our pantry and toiletries!
Next Step

Dear Church Family,
Thank you so much for the healing thoughts, prayers & cards.
My recovery is going well.
Hope to see you soon.
Nancy Keen

I would like to thank my church family for the outpouring of love and condolences over the loss of Ian. His family and I feel the love and support, and are overwhelmed by the love, cards, messages, and memorial contributions. From the bottom of my heart, "Thank you!"
Zachary Covington

Many thanks for all the prayers, thoughts and cards.
Susie Kapp

Thank you to everyone for your thoughts, prayers, and cards. Michael is on the mend—slowly but surely.
We appreciate all of you.
Mindi, Michael, Beau and Bailee Verdill

News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026

In June, the Caring Tree donations were collected for the Clarion Kindness Project (Diaper Bank). Thank you again for your generosity to this mission. Donations of body wash, hand soap, baby powder, diapers, feminine hygiene, baby wipes, baby shampoo and baby food were taken to the office on 4th Avenue in Clarion.

Thanks again for your continued support with our program.

Thank you to everyone who donated to **the Caring Tree** in the month of August. Our mission project was the Cancer Center and we collected the following:

20 boxes of Kleenex

25 bottles of hand sanitizer

10 bottles of Biotene

8 containers (various sizes) of healing creams

2 lip balms

Thank you to our congregation for your continued support of our mission projects.

Thank you again for all the donations for **Daily Bread** collected for the month of October.

Pastor Jodie, Darren, and other volunteers delivered the collected items on October 29.

These were the donations collected:

25 tubes of toothpaste

22 toothbrushes

6 deodorants

4 packets of wipes

6 conditioners

8 bottles of body wash

38 bars of soap

10 packs of razors

7 shaving cream

21 jackets

2 pairs of gloves

1 scarf

1 package of underwear

1 package of socks

We appreciate your generosity monthly.

Thanks again,

Missions committee

Thanks to your generosity throughout the month of November, the following children's items were donated to

Pennies From Heaven:

6 games

2 dolls

1 puzzle

14 books

3 toy trucks

4 haircut gift certificates

8 activity books

4 Crayon boxes

21 stuffed toys

9 boys underwear packages

1 girls underwear package

14 boys socks packages

1 girls socks package

1 boys glove package

7 girls gloves packages

3 boys hat/glove sets

6 girls hat/glove sets

7 boys clothes

5 girls clothes

News from the Corner - December 2025/January 2026

EARLY WARNING ALERT

Please be aware that for the calendar year 2026 there will be a change occurring in the numbering system on the boxes of church offering envelopes.

Nearly everyone will receive a NEW envelope number.

The 2026 boxes of offering envelopes will be available around Christmastime.

With the changing of the envelope number it will be imperative that the 2026 envelopes ARE NOT used until the year 2026.

Likewise, it is imperative that any offering envelopes that are dated 2025 and earlier should be discarded at the end of 2025 and NOT used in 2026.

Your offering history will follow you and your NEW envelope number in the church's accounting system.

If you have any questions or wish to have a box of offering envelopes, please contact me through the church office (814-226-6660).

This information will be published again in the coming months.

David M. Hauser

Financial Secretary

Thank you to the congregation for their continuing financial support of our church. Offerings were better than usual over the summer months. Generous giving has continued into the fall. Clarion First has been able to repair, upgrade, and maintain our buildings and provide staff salaries. The church budget for 2026, recently approved by the Finance Committee, reflects unavoidable increases in utilities and insurance costs. Your generous support for those in need in the greater Clarion community is witnessed by your contributions to the Love Cupboard and the Monday lunch program. This need in our community will likely continue into the coming months.

The church office has created a **text message/one call feature** to send important notifications to keep you informed of events, activities, and/or last minute schedule changes. If you would like to be added to our list, please let us know in the church office. We also provide Prayer Chain and Church News updates via email.

As another year is quickly coming to a close, it is good to reflect upon how the Lord has blessed First United Methodist Church in regard to updating the computer church family records. The year 2025 was filled joyfully with new professing members, shared in the covenant of baptism and celebrating marriages. Our hearts experienced grief with the passing of many of our church family. At the same time we celebrated those saints who have gone to their eternal rest, handing down their faithful witness to us.

The membership records and historical data have been gathered together into a new office area, centralizing all this information into one place. Marlene Steiner, the church historian, has been updating files as more information is given to her, while I continue to put information into the computer each week. These updates make information easily accessible.

It is greatly appreciated when the weekly attendance sheets and the individual information sheets are filled out. These reports help to maintain membership records and aid in year-end as well as conference reports. It continues to be a blessing for me to be involved in the ministry of working closely with the church office and with Darren Mackenzie. It was exciting for us to complete the 2025 church directory, updating the office files, and to make the office supplies even more organized.

It is with joy in service to my Lord and Savior to work with church records and get to know the church family better. Have a great Advent and Christmas Season.

Pastor Nancy



Opening the Holiday Season

On November 18th the **Missions Committee** allocated \$5,000 to help individuals and communities recover from hardship, illness, and disasters through donations to: Meals of Love, The Shelter Task Force, Ruth M. Smith Center, Clarion County Agency on Aging, The Mission Barn, Clarion-Forest VNA Foundation, Red Bird Mission, Clarion Area Fire Department, The Pastor’s Discretionary Fund, and a family in our community.

The 2026 recipients for Caring Tree donations were selected as follows:

January	The Shelter Task Force
February	Ruth M. Smith Center
March	The Mission Barn (cleaning bucket supplies)
April	SAFE
May	Next Step
June	The Clarion Kindness Project
July	Erie United Methodist Alliance (school supplies)
August	Clarion Cancer Center
September	Daily Bread
October	C-L Backpack Program
November	Pennies From Heaven
December	Clarion & C-L School Nurses

In addition to collecting food items for C-L students who lack adequate food on weekends, our church will provide much needed storage and assembly space for the C-L Backpack Program throughout the school year.

Feeding Those in Need

Each month we plan and organize our **Love Cupboard Food Pantry** to feed those in need. This mission is very well received by our neighbors in need who struggle to make ends meet. The recent freezing of SNAP benefits put many people in our community and across the nation in a real scare of how to feed themselves and their families. Families with low income have enough trouble making their dollars meet the expenses they incur each month. We partner with Second Harvest Northwest Food Bank out of Erie. In this last year they joined partnership with “Feeding America” organization and the benefits that their donation power brings to the food distribution system. In addition, we are benefiting by being able to get state-of-the-art computer technology with additional computer equipment and programming. In February we initiated our new check-in process by implementing a Loyalty program where each neighbor visiting has their own check-in card that is scanned, improving the efficiency of this process. This card allows monthly statistic reports to be automatically produced that are required for reporting. Once the check-in process is completed, the visitor is off to receive their “shop by choice”—14 different categories of groceries. Our registration numbers continue to grow with a steady flow of new visitors coming each month. Recently we have served around 100 of our neighbors monthly. This many visitors account for around 230 household members who benefit from our program monthly. How much food is distributed each month? Around 3,000 to 3,500lbs of nourishment and household supplies. As always, we welcome your participation in this mission ministry to our community and surrounding areas. Just call the church office for information and an opportunity to receive a real reward of helping our friends in need. You will leave the event feeling fulfilled and receive the blessing of helping others.

Church Calendar

For an up-to-date list of church events and scheduling, please visit the church website at fumc-clarion.org and click “Calendar” in the menu bar. Alternatively, you can call the church office with any questions.

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Love Cupboard Food Pantry

The donation item for the month of **December** is **DISH SOAP**.

The donation item for the month of **January** is **EGG NOODLES**.

Please place your donations in the wooden box located in the Gathering Area.

Please Note: Perishable items are now available. Distribution occurs on the **3rd Wednesday of each month from 4:00pm-5:00pm.**



Meals of Love ministry is a free community lunch offered every Monday from 11:30am to 12:30pm. We offer meals to eat in or to take out. We recently began to offer delivered meals to homebound members in our community. We are serving between 50-60 people each week. Meals of Love is blessed with the support of many people; our Monday volunteers who are willing to help prepare food, serve meals, assist with cleanup; our bakers who provide many wonderful desserts; and church members who support us through monetary donations and food items. Thank you! God has and is continuing to bless this ministry as we share His love with our community.

The Memorial Committee has purchased a three-piece blue/white reversible Advent/Christmas parament set for the altar, pulpit, and Bible. Please notice these items at the beginning of Advent. The committee also purchased luminary candles and new globes for the pew candle holders, which are used at Christmas.

As church historian, I am beginning to work to gather and organize information regarding our church's history. At this time I am asking that anyone in the congregation who has photos, especially older ones, of events like baptisms, confirmation classes, Sunday school classes, weddings, plays, concerts, recognitions, etc., to please provide copies to me (paper, email, text). This project will be ongoing, so photos will be appreciated at any time.

Thank you,
Marlene Steiner

The **Fellowship Committee** had our Celebration Sunday on November 30 with a luncheon after the service. Always a great time with great food and fellowship.

Carols Around the Table will be held on December 14 at 6:30pm in the Gathering Area. This event is always fun for everyone. We will serve a dessert to all.

Our committee will be willing to help with any events during the holiday season.

After the first of the year we are hoping to plan a movie night.

We are always open to any ideas that we can plan.

Children's Christmas Program

Please join us on December 21 at 11:00am to help us celebrate the birth of Christ, led by Jenn Stevenson and the wonderful kids of our congregation!

All are welcome to join us as the children share the Christmas story through scripture and music.

Program rehearsals will take place on November 23, December 7, and December 14 from 9:45am-12:00pm. We hope to see you there!

Safe Sanctuaries Training

Upcoming in January 2026, any paid staff or volunteer who has direct contact with children and vulnerable adults will need to complete Safe Sanctuaries Training. This training will be completed on Portico through the Western PA United Methodist Church website (wpaumc.org). More information will be available as we approach the new year. If you have any questions please reach out to:

Chelsea Bennett

814-226-6660

christianeducation@fumc-clarion.org



*Birthdays
of the Month*

December 1

Reed Bell

December 2

Nancy Keen
Bruce Kiser

December 3

Michael Foster
Joy Lignelli
Bailee Verdill

December 5

Wade Bearfield

December 6

Melinda Montoya

December 7

Emma Fiscus Sierko

December 8

Dianne Brosius
Katie Kapp
Chance Shick
Beatrice Snyder

December 9

Zachary Uber

December 10

Tony Kopp
Jameson McIlwain
Stephen Wilshire

December 11

Finn Dehner

December 12

Makenna Burns

December 13

Asher Bell
Robin McGinley

December 14

Ahmed Isar

December 15

Barbara Krupnik
Jack Winger

December 16

Chloe Kiser

December 17

Charlene Prody
Asher Steele

December 18

Judy Fiscus
Donna Woodman

December 19

Mary Jo Barger
John Flower, Jr.

December 20

Allie Brooks
Deryl Larsen
Chris Vincent

December 21

Jonna Matson
Greg Smathers

December 22

Cynthia Fox
Eric Kiser
Cole Stutzman

December 24

Gavin Brinkley
Michael Robertson

December 27

Darren Mackenzie

December 27

Marlene Platt
Marlus Platt
Craig Zamzow

December 29

Holly Gourley
Tantruh Hilyer

December 30

Christine Texter
Zackary Wolbert

January 1

Joshua Miller
Keyauna Valimont

January 2

Bill LaVelle, Jr.

January 3

Jane Miller
Zoe Robson
Christian Simko
Payton Simko
Willie Wilson

January 4

Larry Anderson
Richard Buskirk III
Amber Stutzman

January 5

Dale Fiscus

January 6

Cami Womeldorf

January 7

Scott Kuehn
Brecken McLaughlin

January 8

Justin Beck
Raymond Ewing
Lincoln Girt
Mason Gourley
Kyle Grabigel
Brooklyn Kopp
Aleisha Wilson

January 9

Patrick Johnson
Nicole Kitchen
Roberta Laird
Melissa McNutt
Karen Vandermeer

January 10

Carder Miller
Lynn Smith

January 11

Susie Kapp
Jeffrey Young, Sr.

January 12

Morgan Bailey
Gracie Wayland

January 13

Daniel Patton
Kade Phillips
Kaegan Phillips

January 14

Carrie Robertson
David Smith

January 17

Nancy DiStefano
Donald Johnson
Corey Williams

January 18

Terrance Lawson
Brycen Robson
Steven Smathers

January 19

Nora Martin

January 20

Sienna Greco

January 21

Damien Cherico

January 22

Linda McMaster

January 23

Pauline Marshall
Beverly Pasquarette
Haley Stutzman
Sarah Wiant

January 24

Hudson Burns
Heather Flower
Lisa Heasley

January 25

Connie Aaron
Annabelle Burns
Jeffrey Courson
Tracy Myers

January 26

Cassie Acey
Nico Stefanos

January 27

Laura Grabigel
Lois McFadden
Andrew Stevenson
Beau Verdill

January 28

Jeffrey McElhattan

January 29

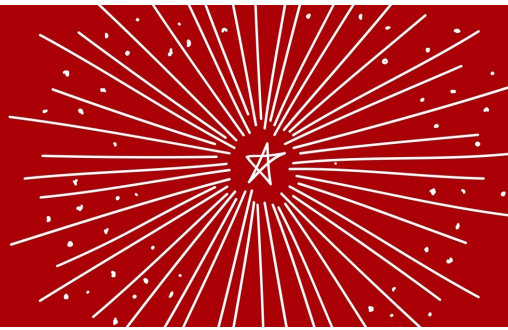
Janice Hartle
Myah Miller
Lauren Grey

January 30

Alexa Kitchen
Jenn Vandermeer

January 31

Crystal Jewell



Christmas

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday, December 7 at 7:00pm

The Clarion Community Choir presents "The Heart of Christmas" annual holiday concert, featuring Clarion First Presbyterian church handbell choir. This performance is being held at PennWest's Marwick-Boyd Auditorium.



Carols



Sunday, December 14 at 6:30pm

Join us in the Gathering Area to enjoy our annual Carols Around the Table. There will be gingerbread, angel food cake, and other refreshments. Special music will highlight the evening.

Join in the fun of singing your favorite Christmas carols with your church family.

Sunday, December 21 Children's Christmas Program

Our Children/Youth Christmas Program will be at 11:00am. We will only have one service that morning.



Wednesday, December 24 Christmas Eve Worship Service

7:00pm A traditional candlelight service with the Chancel Choir and the Messengers praise team.

Invite your relatives, friends, and neighbors so together we can celebrate the coming of Christ.

Sunday, December 28 Worship Service

One service at 9:30am





FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

600 Wood Street · Clarion, PA 16214 · 814-226-6660

www.fumc-clarion.org

Email: churchoffice@fumc-clarion.org

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Newsletters and Pastor Jodie's sermons are now available online for you to view, listen to, and/or download. If you prefer to receive your newsletter by email instead of print, or if you have any questions, suggestions or information for our website, please email Darren Mackenzie at churchoffice@fumc-clarion.org.

PLEASE NOTE "MAILER" SCHEDULE

Upcoming Mailers: Items for the **February newsletter** need to be submitted by **Thursday, January 15**.
Thank you!

To submit information: If you would like to submit information for the mailer, please contact the church office at 814-226-6660 or by email to churchoffice@fumc-clarion.org.

Acolytes and Liturgists

If you would like to be an acolyte or a liturgist at our 9:30am summer worship service, please notify the church office with a date and time.

The **Adult Bell Choir** is looking for a few more ringers to join in on making a joyful noise unto the Lord. If you would like to ring or learn how to ring, please contact the church office or see one of the ringers. We meet **Monday evenings** from 5:30 - 6:30pm in the bell room behind the balcony.



HOSPITALIZED? If you or a family member is going to be placed in the hospital, or have upcoming surgery, please notify the church office so that the church and pastor may come and minister to you. You may call the church office at 226-6660.