

THE BEACON

"Making disciples for Jesus Christ to share God's love."

Newsletter of Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church • January 2026

As we near the beginning of 2026, many of us are beginning to think about our New Year's resolutions. For 2025, the top New Year's resolutions focused on health, finances, and personal growth, with many people also aiming to organize their lives and improve mental well-being. While health and money consistently rank highest, goals like reducing stress, traveling, and giving back were also popular. However, try as we might, most New Year's resolutions fail, with many people giving up within the first month (around 25-43%), and even fewer achieving them by year-end (around 8-10%). These high failure rates stem from unrealistic goals, lack of planning, and low willpower. Surprisingly, those who set resolutions are 10 times more likely to succeed than those who don't.

Rather than giving up on resolutions, maybe it is time to try a different type of resolution. Maybe we should try resolutions that are spiritual in nature. The kind of resolution that will lead to abundant life without requiring any investment in high-cost gadgetry or memberships to succeed.

But the real question is, how do we get started on these spiritual resolutions? How can we start to make real changes in our spiritual life? One way is to start with few small changes and then allow the Holy Spirit to lead us to further change. Once we open the door to the Holy Spirit of the Lord, it will take the lead and guide us.

To begin with, try taking a rest from all the media noise that bombards us on a regular basis. Although we need to be responsible, informed citizens, we don't need to overwhelm our senses with all the noise of this world buzzing in our heads. We need to replace this time with a time

for prayer and reflection. Because we are called to constant prayer by our Lord, this is one of the most effective spiritual disciplines. We see in Romans 12:12 that we are called to, *"Rejoice in hope, [to] be patient in tribulation and [to] be constant in prayer."* This action is linked to the first part of the great commandment in Mark 12:30, *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."*



Another step in this journey is to replace focusing on our own needs and issues with focusing on the needs of our brothers and sisters around us, and connecting in a way that is meaningful with true love and compassion. We can do this by showing kindness and patience at all times to our brothers and sisters. At the same time, we should all work to eliminate envy and boastfulness, arrogance, and rudeness in all that we do. We should reach out to those that have the greatest needs. We need to remain steadfast in this care at all times. This is the call that we receive from the second part of the great commandment found in Mark 12:31, *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* I know this is not easy and can be a challenge, especially when we practice this in every interaction that we have in our lives! Not just in church, once a week for an hour, but for every waking moment in our lives for as long as we live!

We must also take time in our lives for the study of scripture. We need the guidance found in the gospels, which through the ministry of Christ, reveals to us the love God has for us and all of his great creation. The examples set by Christ in his earthly ministry give us the example for leading Christian lives in this very secular world that we

EPISTLE & CHURCH INFO

EPISTLE Continued

live in today. We must read the living word of God and allow it to speak to us on a daily basis. We must meditate on the readings and internalize them in a way that allows us to understand the full meaning for us in today's world. By regularly reading scripture, tied to a Bible study where we freely discuss scripture, we are opened to many new interpretations and possibilities gained from the diversity found in our Christian community.

Separating ourselves from earthly things requires us to not only give of ourselves, but to joyously and with a happy heart, make offerings to the church and other charitable organizations. This frees us from the desire to accumulate earthly possessions which allows us to focus on being the servants of God in this very broken world. In Luke 6:38, we are told, *"Give and it will be given to you."*

A final step is to attend church services on a regular basis and to take part in the sacrament of communion, whenever it is offered. In our church attendance, we stand in the holy presence of God and by partaking in communion we are united with God in a holy mystery that provides spiritual nourishment for the journey. Only by receiving this spiritual nourishment regularly can we be strengthened in our faith, which will allow us to endure all the challenges to our faith in Jesus that we will face in this world.

By setting a New Year's resolution to begin a spiritual journey with these simple practices, we will begin to see the fruits of this effort working in all that we do. As you start down this path, the Spirit of the Lord will guide and strengthen you and perfect you in the love of God. Your heart will be open and your ears will hear. You will be eager and joyous in serving our heavenly Father. Amen.

Pastor Bob

CHURCH INFORMATION

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday 9 a.m.—1 p.m.

Office Phone: 301-432-8741

Mt. Nebo Email: mt.nebo@myactv.net

Website: www.mtneboumc.com

Sunday Event Times:

9:00 a.m. Worship Service
with Children's Church

Pastor:

Pastor Bob Ruggieri

443-994-9505

Email: pastorbob2017@gmail.com

Staff:

Administrative Secretary – Brandi Puzonia

Minister of Music – Rose Gamblin

Finance – Patty Watson & Shana Wolfe

Sextons/Maintenance – Dennis & Sallie Dorsey
and Sara Halbritter

Mt. Nebo Christian Learning Center

Hours: Monday – Friday 6 a.m.—6 p.m.

301-432-6042

www.mtneboclc.org

Director – Kim Kelly

director@mtneboclc.org

Communications Team:

Toni Wetzel, Katie Smith, Pastor Bob,
Glenn deShazo, and Brandi Puzonia

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JANUARY ANNOUNCEMENTS

BIRTHDAYS

January 1	Mary Wade
January 2	Will Riner
January 7	Skip Kauffman
	Bella Wade
January 11	Lucinda Beard
January 14	Jenni Dorsey
January 15	Harper Shank
January 23	Patty Watson
January 25	Landon Parish
January 29	Jimmy Thompson



ANNIVERSARIES

None for January



CHRISTMAS CARDS

If you have not already, please be sure to pick up your Christmas cards from the Mt. Nebo Post Office in the Gathering Room!



WINTER BIBLE STUDY The Chosen Part 2

On **Sunday, January 11**, we will resume The Chosen Bible Study with Season 2 sessions. This will be held after worship on **Sundays at 10:30 a.m.** and will conclude on Sunday, February 15. Sign up on the Bulletin Board to receive a book.

CONTACTING STAFF

When contacting staff, including the CLC, with any questions or tasks, only text or call during their working hours. If there is an emergency, call Pastor Bob and he will get in touch with staff outside of working hours as needed.

Please Note Hours:

Brandi—Church Admin. Assistant — M-F 9a-1p

Patty — Bookkeeper — M, Th 9:30a-4:30p

Kim — CLC Director — M-F 9a-5p

JANUARY LAY READERS:

January 4 — Katie Smith

January 11 — Skip Kauffman

January 18 — Toni Wetzel

January 25 — Dianna Basile

THANKS-GIVING FOR THANKS-LIVING

Many thanks to everyone who participated in the cookie swap.

Special thanks to the helpers who wrapped the gifts for our Christmas Outreach families.

To the families who helped pack the Micah's Backpacks.

To Pastor Bob for leading the Advent Study.

Thanks to Rose and Mike Gamblin for the great job organizing the wonderful Puppet Program with our children.

To all of the musicians who have put in extra time preparing for special music during the Advent/Christmas Season.

And to those who took time to deliver gifts to our shut-ins.

CHURCH NEWS

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

It's time for the United Methodist Women's annual Soup and Sub Sale! Choose from pints (\$4) or quarts (\$7) of Chicken Noodle or Beef Vegetable soup. For subs (\$5), choose from Ham/American or Turkey/ Provolone, all with lettuce and tomato. All of the soups and subs will be made by the United Methodist Women. Orders are due by **Sunday, February 1** and pick-up will be on **Wednesday, February 11 from 4-6pm** in the Gathering Room. Please sign up for your order on the bulletin board in the Gathering Room. Proceeds from the sale will go to ministries that support women and children.

The next UMW meeting is on **Wednesday, January 21 at 10:00am** and all women are invited to join us!

Thanks, Alyssa Berg

FROM YOUR LAY LEADER



What a joyful season we have just celebrated with the birth of Jesus. Joy, Hope, Love, and Peace were themes throughout December. Let us remember that we all need to be joyful, hopeful, and loving all year round!

Mt. Nebo has many opportunities and ministries for you to practice serving those in our community and congregation. I find that service to others gives satisfaction and joy in my own life.

Micah's Backpack is an ongoing ministry to serve children in our area who experience food insecurity. Currently 157 children in our area are

FROM YOUR LAY LEADER Continued

being helped by this ministry. In December, we had an extra opportunity to pack for those children. Since it was a Sunday, the children and youth of our church were able to help and learn about serving! Nineteen of us cheerfully were helpers on December 14. Thanks to all of the families who participated. Every month, an opportunity is given to Mt. Nebo for this important ministry. We are helpers on the first Wednesday of every month at 1:00 p.m. We meet at Trinity Lutheran Church to pack and deliver the food bags to the schools. Packing takes about 40 minutes, which is not a large amount of time to commit, but often we stay to help prepare for the following week, as well as deliver to 3 or 4 schools. Let us begin to focus on another way that our congregation can help since not everyone is available in the afternoon. Beginning in January, I will have a container in the Gathering Room for us to donate items that are used weekly for this ministry. I would like to set aside the first Sunday of the month for these collections. That enables me to deliver those supplies on the week that we volunteer. For January, please consider donating individual popcorn bags. We will have a different item each month, which will be announced in church and in the Happenings.

We have been blessed during the month of December with our annual Advent Bible Study, which was called "Advent, A Season of Surprises." Of course, the first week focused on Mary's surprise



CHURCH NEWS CONTINUED

FROM YOUR LAY LEADER Continued

to be the mother of our Messiah. Prior to that we enjoyed “The Chosen, Season One.” Both of these studies were led by Pastor Bob. Beginning in January, we will continue with Season Two of “The Chosen.” Stay tuned to find out who will lead this study.

Another way to serve would be to “adopt” a shut-in and provide a monthly visit at a time of your choice. These folks are often isolated and so desire visitors. We have 16 identified individuals on our list. They already receive cards from the church, but that’s not quite the same as a visit. Trust me, you will receive a blessing if you choose to visit and provide some joy and connections to our church. You may talk with me any Sunday if you are willing or you can call the church office.

There is also a group of ladies who meet on the third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m. in the Conference Room. We have a time of devotion and discuss ways that we can support the church. This year, the group gave donations to Christmas Outreach, the Shoebox Ministry, the CROP Walk, Micah’s Backpack and others. In December, we hosted a Cookie Swap and had a wonderful evening together. We also have a get together and luncheon at our December meeting. Keep in mind, our annual Soup and Sub Sale will be coming up in February. This fundraiser helps us to be able to give to the various charities. We also sponsor the

monthly birthday gifts to Sterling Rehab Center just across the street from our church. Members of our congregation can sign up to provide goodie bags to the



FROM YOUR LAY LEADER Continued

residents that have birthdays for that month. Please see me if you have any questions or sign up on the Bulletin Board for the month that is convenient for you.

Cindy Kauffman

MUSIC NOTES

The Blessing of a Blended Worship Service

In congregations across the United Methodist Church, worship is the heartbeat of community life. Yet, as churches grow more diverse in terms of age, background, and worship preferences, many leaders face an ongoing question: How can we create a service that welcomes everyone? One solution increasingly embraced is the blended worship service—a worship experience that intentionally incorporates both traditional hymns and contemporary praise music. Far from being a compromise, blended worship can be a powerful expression of unity, vitality, and spiritual depth.

1. Honoring the Heritage of the Church

Hymns form the rich musical backbone of Methodist tradition. Rooted in Scripture and theology, the hymns of Charles Wesley and other historic writers teach, convict, and encourage. Including hymns in worship keeps the theological foundation of the denomination alive, connects congregants with the historical continuity of their faith, and engages worshippers who draw strength and familiarity from traditional liturgy.

Blended worship demonstrates that the church values its heritage—not as a relic of the past, but as a living voice still shaping disciples today.

2. Embracing New Expressions of Faith

Praise choruses and modern worship music resonate deeply with younger generations, as well as with those who connect spiritually through contemporary language and musical styles. Contemporary worship reflects the present-day movement of the Spirit, offers accessible, repetitive lyrics that foster reflection and heartfelt response,

CHURCH NEWS & OUTREACH

MUSIC NOTES Continued

and broadens the church's musical vocabulary.

United Methodists have always been an "open" people, eager to spread the gospel by new and innovative means. Incorporating praise music reflects that same evangelistic spirit.

3. Encouraging Intergenerational Worship

Many churches struggle to bring generations together. Music can be one of the strongest unifying or dividing forces in a congregation. A blended service creates a natural meeting place where children and teens experience the strength and beauty of hymnody, older adults witness and participate in the energy of contemporary praise, and families worship together without being split by stylistic preferences.

This shared worship experience builds understanding, reduces tension, and strengthens the bonds of Christian community.

4. Supporting a Theologically Balanced Service

Traditional hymns often provide rich, doctrinally grounded lyrics, while contemporary songs tend to be emotionally expressive and relational. Together, they create a fuller theological and spiritual experience. Hymns teach and proclaim truth, while praise songs respond in adoration and devotion. Together they engage the worshipper's mind, heart, and spirit. This balances the Wesleyan emphasis on "knowledge and vital piety"—understanding God and experiencing God.

5. Reaching a Broader Community

For visitors, a blended service can feel immediately welcoming; those from traditional backgrounds feel at home with familiar hymns, while those from contemporary or non-church backgrounds connect with modern praise. Seekers then experience a church that embraces diversity and avoids rigid gatekeeping.

A blended service communicates hospitality: "There is room for you here."

6. Encouraging Congregational Participation

Different types of music invite participation in

MUSIC NOTES Continued

different ways: Hymns encourage strong congregational singing and unity, contemporary songs often inspire movement, clapping, or expressive worship.

By offering both, the church cultivates a dynamic environment where people can worship authentically in various modes.

Conclusion

A blended United Methodist worship service is more than a mix of old and new songs—it is a testimony to a unified, Spirit-led community. It honors the past while embracing the future. It nurtures disciples of all ages. It reflects the inclusive, grace-filled identity of the church.

In a world that often fractures along lines of preference and style, a blended service models the reconciling love of Christ—showing that the church can lift many voices while still singing one song of praise.

Rose Gamblin, Minister of Music

MISSION MOUSE

The Christmas season is over and what will you do? Will you put away gifts, decorations, and forget the wonderful feelings of peace, love, joy and hope? How about looking ahead to 2026 and taking time to practice peace, love, joy and hope in your lives? Often, we make resolutions to eat more healthy foods, lose weight, exercise more, read more, watch less TV, etc. This year try finding special ways to make peace, love, joy and hope a part of your lifestyle for the whole year.



CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

It is with a grateful heart that we write to inform you that there are nine local children wearing lovely clothes and new sneakers, warm boots and winter coats. Some toys are under the trees to please the children's wishes. The five families

MISSIONS IN OUTREACH Continued

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH

each received a Share Holiday package for a delicious meal this Christmas. This was all possible due to the care and concern of our church family and CLC staff who participated.

A big Thank You to each one who purchased items for these children and for the giving hearts of those who donated funds so we could purchase gifts not signed up for. More thanks go to the UMW and individuals who purchased items for the Share packages. Then there were special elves that came to wrap those gifts. Each child had a Santa bag with their goodies. (Thanks to Candy, Cindy, Dianna, Katie, Toni and Ann.)

CLC NEWS

Happy New Year! We hope you had a wonderful Christmas, and a relaxing break with your families. The holiday season is such a great time to reflect and count our blessings! Thank you to all of you who brought us cards, goodies, and gifts! It is time to settle back into our routines and continue our learning journeys. We have lots of fun things happening in January!

During January, the children will be learning about Arctic Birds, Animal Hibernation, Snowmen and Snowflakes, and Outer Space.

Also, we will be celebrating National School Choice Week during the week of January 25th! What is school choice? It is the process of allowing every family to choose the best educational program that best fits their children. Every child deserves an effective, challenging, and motivating education. Each child has their own unique set of talents, interests, and challenges. What works well for one child may not work well for another child! In short, school choice ensures that each student can find a learning environment that allows them to be inspired, successful and happy. We are so grateful for the families that have chosen Mt. Nebo CLC for their child's early childhood education experience. For this celebration, we will be having

CHRISTMAS OUTREACH Continued

Can you feel it? Your loving generous spirit is sharing God's love and light to those less fortunate in our community. May you and yours be blessed.

Ann Wright



CLC NEWS Continued

a fun filled spirit week with fun activities planned!

Outdoor play strengthens the immune system with the fresh, chilly air, which helps fight off infections and builds resistance to allergies. It also helps burn extra energy, promotes problem solving and cognitive thinking, boosts Vitamin D levels and uplifts moods. We advise parents to make sure their children have appropriate winter weather attire: layers of clothing, coat, hat, snow pants, snow boots, and gloves, as we do go outside every day.

In the event of inclement weather, we do **NOT** follow WCPS policy. Our goal is to make sound decisions based on the safety of our families and staff, while still meeting families' needs for child-care. We make every effort to make the decision as quickly as possible.

WCPS will be closed on **Monday, January 19th and Tuesday, January 20th**. I am working on planning a field trip for our school agers. More information will be sent home once it has been finalized.

Hugs and High Fives, Ms. Kim, Director

PICS AROUND MT. NEBO



**MORE MICAH'S
BACKPACK**

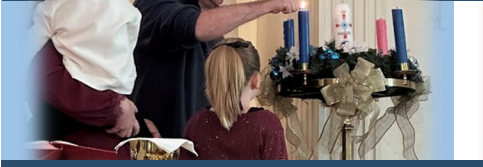


COOKIE SWAP



ADVENT PHOTOS AROUND MT. NEBO

KIDS PUPPET SHOW



ADVENT PHOTOS CONTINUED



January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
*BAAA in FLC every M/Th 630-830p 1st & 3rd Th 730-930p	**Jr Warrior Basketball in FLC every Tuesday 630-830p			1 <i>HAPPY New Year</i>	2	3 9a Pickleball
				Church Office Closed		
4 9a Worship 1030a Take Down the Greens Bible Study	5	6	7 1p Micah's Backpack 1p 6p Pickleball	8 5p Bells 6p Choir	9	10 830a UMM Breakfast 9a Pickleball
Pastor Bob Vacation 1/4-1/10						
11 9a Worship 1030a Winter Bible Study Starts	12 630p Trustees Meeting 630 Bball	13 630 Bball	14 6p Pickleball	15 Newsletter Articles Due 6p Girl Scouts 5p Bells 6p Choir 730p Bball	16	17 8a SHARE Pickup 9a Pickleball
18 9a Worship 1030a Bible Study <i>Human Relations Day</i>	19 630 Bball	20 630p Council Meeting 630 Bball	21 10a UMW Meeting 6p Pickleball	22 5p Bells 6p Choir 630 Bball	23	24 9a Pickleball
25 9a Worship 1030a Bible Study	26 No Basketball	27 No Basketball	28 6p Pickleball	29 5p Bells 6p Choir 630 Bball	30	31 9a Pickleball

Mt. Nebo United Methodist Church
134 S. Main Street
Boonsboro, MD 21713

Change Service Requested

