Leadership Team News

Our Leadership Team met in July, focusing on spiritual discernment, ongoing ministry goals, and planning. Wendie led the team in leadership development discussing *"Pursuing God's Will Together"* by Ruth Haley Barton. Our Bishop encourages us to step forward, leave behind what no longer works, and accept God's leading. You can find this book available on loan on the table outside Pastor's Lisa office.

As we acknowledge the on ongoing work of the church, we are pleased to share the following:

- 2 new members in June
- 1 baptism in June
- Our Visitation Team continues to connect with our shut-ins.
- Safe Sanctuaries sessions will be available in the Fall for anyone working with children and youth.
- The Leadership Development & Nominations Team is beginning the annual membership audit. Small group formation to make IDP more impactful
- Summer Bible study *"A New Vision, A Shared Calling: Embracing a New Era of Ministry as United Methodists"* – will be offered again in the Fall
- The Parking Lot ministry will continue during the summer concert season – ALL are welcome to participate
- 22 people have signed up for Our Way Forward dialoguing sessions 10/18, 10/25, 11/8 facilitated by Georgia Whitney – she will visit on 8/30 to meet the LT and the church.
- The CE Planning Team continues work on the CE plan for all ages incorporating GOOD NEWS Planning for confirmation class in the Fall
- The Scholarship Committee awarded 4 for tuition assistance scholarships, and 3 for student loan assistance scholarships, and 4 campership scholarships.

Leadership Team News

Elma UMC's Leadership Team is seeking strong communication between itself and the members and friends of Elma UMC. Everyone is welcome to reach out to Team members about the church and to find out more about the new ways we get to do the administrative and visioning work. Items for consideration for the LTeam agenda must be submitted by the 10 th of each month. There are forms on the table outside the office. Meeting minutes are posted on the bulletin board. Here is your Team for 2026:

Class of 2026 – Steve Buechi, Annette DeNies (team chair for 2026), Wendie Stockton
Class of 2027 – Sue Brunner, D'Lynn Zurek
Class of 2028 – Randi Dressel, Dan Sank, Jim Wojnar
Lay Leader - Rose Shiesley, and Lay Member to AC - Andrew Hartley also serve. Pastor Lisa works with and is accountable to the Leadership Team for all program, ministry, and mission areas, and to the UNY Annual Conference for oversight of all administrative functions.

In addition, your Leadership Development and Nominations Team (Pastor Lisa-chair, Rose Shiesley, Steve DeNies, Martha Horohoe, and Pam Thauer) The Leadership Development and Nominations Team is currently seeking people interested in the well-being and future of Elma UMC to serve for one three-year term on each of the teams required by the UMC's Book of Discipline – Leadership Team, Board of Trustees, and Leadership Development and Nominations. Please reach out to Pastor Lisa or any LD&N member to let us know how you believe God's Spirit is leading you to serve Elma UMC. We are now forming teams for the 2027-2029 class. We are also seeking people to serve on the Christian Education Team (adults and/or children/youth), Missions, and Scholarship Teams.

Elma UMC's Board of Trustees – Peter Buechi – Chair, Steve DeNies, Randi Dressel, Greg Fuer, Dan Sank, Bruce Stockton, James Trombley, and Dave Wainwright

Sunday Mornings!

(coffee/tea/juice and conversation available every Sunday at 8:45am and following worship)

Welcome Back Sunday!

We will be back in the Sanctuary for Worship at 9:15am beginning September 13th followed by a Kick-Off Potluck Picnic! The church will provide hot dogs and rolls, condiments and beverages. Bring your favorite end of the summer picnic foods and join us! Some Church Family Members are providing games for children and adults, so come join us for a wonderful time of family food and fun!

Monthly Prayer Opportunities

Wednesday, September 16th 10-10:30am and/or 7:00-8:00pm.

Prayer is the foundation of the life of Christ's Church. Our Bishop has called all Upper NY UMC's to focus on prayer together as Christ's body. Please join Pastor Lisa in a time of gathering for informal prayer for our church, our community, and personal needs. You are welcome to come and pray silently with those praying aloud and to pray aloud if you are so led by the Holy Spirit. You are also welcome if you have never tried a prayer group before and want to learn, or just want to try this one. Prayer for healing with laying on of hands and anointing with oil will be available for those desiring this form of prayer ministry. Come, join in prayer together!

Fish

The FISH item for September is canned stew, Hash and Chili. The need is great and ANY non-perishable food item is greatly appreciated

Pastor Lisa's Doctor of Ministry Project

Many thanks and much appreciation to everyone who has in any way participated in the workshops and prototyping that are making this doctoral project possible. I am entering into the "home-stretch" of this three-year program and am looking forward to celebrating with you all after graduation. (Yes – it does look at this point like I am actually going to make it to a DMin degree!)

This fall term requires me to complete and test the project. For those of you who participated in the prototyping, I'm going with the "red folder" project that is titled, "An Invitation to Growing into the You God Made: Discovering Who You Really are Through Bible Stories." This is an 8- part study that looks into Old and New Testament stories to discover our Christian humanity as we identify with the situations and sensibilities of biblical characters in their relationship to God, self, and each other, and allow the Holy Spirit to enable us to see ourselves – who we are, where we are, and where we are going as the Spirit leads.

I will be reaching out via email to everyone who has already been involved as I seek to put together a group and create a schedule that will work for everyone who is able and willing to participate. BUT – EVERYONE AT EUMC IS WELCOME TO BE PART OF THIS! If you have not participated so far, let me know if you are interested. Each group has been made up of new voices, and your voice will be very much appreciated.

This project testing needs to be completed before we enter into the Our Way Forward process – 1) because we don't want to be doing the two at the same time, it's too much 2) because I have to have the testing completed before I can write the paper about it, and there is no room for incompletes/extensions this year.

As I said – I have greatly appreciated the support I have received spiritually and practically from all who have participated. You have been a terrific source of insight and encouragement over the past two years.

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Lisa

2026

Worship Volunteers	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Wool Gatherers	**2** 3:30 PM Online Devotion 6:30pm Book Club	3	4	5
Ushers: Cheryl & Peter Buechi Liturgist: Steve Buechi Greeters: Carrie or Ryan Schmitz Communion Servers: D. Wainwright & Steve DeNies Up & About: Fellowship:	6 **Last Outdoor Service** 8:45 AM Fellowship Time 9:15 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Fellowship Time	7	8 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Wool Gatherers	9 3:30 PM Online Devotion	10	11 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 4yr olds Only	12
Ushers: Steve & Laura Buechi Liturgist: Sue Brunner Greeters: Rose Shiesley Communion Servers: D. Wainwright & Claire DeNies Up & About: We need 2 people to cover Fellowship:	13 **Welcome Back Sunday** 8:45 AM Fellowship Time 9:15 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Fellowship Time Kick-off Potluck Picnic following worship service	14 12:30pm Lunch Bunch @ Olive Tree	15 **Methodelma Articles Due** 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 3 &4yr olds 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Wool Gatherers	16 10am Monthly Prayer Gathering 3:30 PM Online Devotion 7pm Monthly Prayer Gathering	17 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 3 &4yr olds	18 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 4yr olds Only	19
Ushers: Liturgist: Ella Vidal Greeters: Wendie Stockton Communion Servers: D. Wainwright & Annette D Up & About: We need 2 people to cover Fellowship:	20 **Christian Education Starts** 8:45 AM Fellowship Time 9:15 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Fellowship Time 11am Choir Rehearsal 11am Trustee Meeting 11am Christian Education	21	22 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 3 &4yr olds 9:30 AM Bible Study 10:30 AM Wool Gatherers	23 3:30 PM Online Devotion	24 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 3 &4yr olds	25 8:45-1145 AM Preschool 4yr olds Only	26 9:00 AM Church Work Day
Ushers: Bruce & Wendie Stockton Liturgist: Greeters: Pam or Hank Thauer Communion Servers: D. Wainwright & Rose Shiesley Up & About: We need 2 people to cover Fellowship:	27 8:45 AM Fellowship Time 9:15 AM Worship Service 10:30 AM Fellowship Time 11am Christian Education	28 7pm Leadership Team Mtg	29	30			

Bible Challenge

Read Through the Bible in a Year by Reading 4 Chapters Each Day!
This year's sequence of readings takes us back and forth between the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament. John Wesley believed and taught that the Bible is the most important book for Christians to read to help us know Jesus and understand Christian faith. So please make it a priority to read your Bible this year! If you are unsure about which version to use or would like to know about study helps for your reading, ask Pastor Lisa.
Paper copies of the entire year's readings are available on the table outside Pastor Lisa's office, in half and full-page sizes for you to tuck into your Bible. If you prefer to follow the chronological reading schedule, copies are also available to pick up, or Pastor Lisa can email it to you. Enjoy a blessed year in God's Holy Word!

Week 35 – August 27th -September 2nd : 2 Chronicles 18-36; Nehemiah 1-9
Week 36 – September 3 rd -9 th : Nehemiah 10-13; Esther 1-10; Luke 1-14
Week 37 – September 10 th - 16 th : Luke 15-24; Acts 1-18
Week 38 – September 17 th – 23 rd : Acts 19-28; Proverbs 1-18
Week 39 – September 24 th – 30 th : Proverbs 19-31; 1 Corinthians 1-15
Week 40 – October 1 st – 7 th : 1 Corinthians 16; 2 Corinthians 1-13; Ephesians 1-6; Habakkuk 1-3; Galatians 1-5

Elma Page Turners

Shirley Schildkamp

The Elma Pager Turners will meet Wednesday, September 2, at 6:30 PM in the Church library. The book to be discussed is THEO OF GOLDEN by Allen Levi. This book is an OPRAH SELECTION and a current best seller. Everyone is welcome and the discussion usually lasts an hour.
October's book is WAYWARD GIRLS by Susan Wiggs.

Church News & Announcements

Typically everything you need to know about what's happening at Elma UMC can be found in the Methodelma via hard copy that's mailed to those on the Methodelma mailing list, emailed copy that's emailed to those on that list, or the copy posted on the website. There is always hard copy available at the church to pick up as well. For Current Announcements, check out the Announcement Board positioned near the coatroom. All Methodelma submissions are due to Jill by the 15 th of each month. Thank you!

Church Events

Church members and ministry leaders are welcome to schedule meetings and events related to their established church ministries. Please let Jill in the office know about your plans so they can be put on the office calendar and dates/times checked for potential conflicts, and so she can respond to questions those coming may call the office about. Most uses of the building that are directly related to established Church/district/conference ministries do not require prior building use approval. However, use by outside groups, and special personal family events usually do. Please check with Jill and she will confirm with the church trustees.

LAST CALL For Confirmation Call

In response to a couple inquiries, Pastor Lisa is prayerfully considering offering a Confirmation Class for our young people at Elma UMC entering grades 7 and up. The structure of the confirmation program will depend upon the number of young people participating. We hope this will be a wonderful experience for EUMC young people, and are looking forward to creating time and space for deep and meaningful spiritual growth for all involved. If you are interested, please respond to the church office by September 13 th .

Creation Care

Did you know? Our congregation has a set of policies, and they are printed and available for your review in a binder next to the office. These policies help ensure we all live harmoniously together, steward responsibly the parts of creation God has placed in our charge, and live out our mission in the world.

The newest policy, numbered 2026-02, is entitled "Promoting and Opposing Government Candidates, Partisan Organizations, Officials and Legislation." I encourage you to read it, as a Christian and as a US citizen. The health of our democratic republic, and of God's creation, depends on your involvement; this policy provides principles for that involvement that have been prayerfully prepared by your leadership team.

This new policy is grounded in the United Methodist Church Social Principles and Social Creed (https://www.umc.org/en/content/our-social-creed), and the policies (in particular, https://www.unyumc.org/post/from-the-desk-of-bishop-h%C3%A9ctor-endorsement-of-political-candidates) of the Upper New York Annual Conference, of which we are a part. It also helps us adhere with US Law regarding non-profit organizations.

As the US approaches the November 2026 mid-term election, wise, thoughtful and courageous political engagement by citizens is as important as ever. Christian creation care—and many other tasks of God's people—likely will become more or less effective and even feasible, depending on election outcomes. Therefore, I encourage you to

- Read the policy, social principles and social creed
- Brush up on how to identify and obtain fair, unbiased and accurate news
- Research the positions and voting records of political candidates, and evaluate how well they adhere to the social principles
- Check your voter registration at https://elections.ny.gov/register-vote . This is highly recommended even if you've voted in previous elections and your personal information (address, name, political party, etc.) has not changed

Plan to Vote! Granted, the elections are 2 months in the future, but when those dates come closer, your voting location, times and other information can be found at https://ballotpedia.org/New_York_elections,_2026 .

The health of the nation, and of the planet, depend on your active and wise political engagement!

Important dates to note:

- **August 24** – next Leadership Team meeting 7:00pm in the library – all are welcome to attend
- **August 30** – next Town Hall 11am with Georgia Whitney (facilitator for the Our Way Forward dialoguing) –will come afterward to meet us all.
- **September 13** – Church Fall Kick-off picnic following worship
- **October 18, 25, November 8** - *Our Way Forward: Graceful Conversation and Covenanting*, a resource helping United Methodist congregations engage in respectful dialogue on human sexuality and ministry with LGBTQ persons. Commissioned by the Northeastern College of Bishops, the resource fosters unity, trust building, and understanding of the 2020/24 Book of Discipline update. The tool will help our church embrace unity in diversity and strengthen our shared mission to transform the world.
- **This Fall** – stewardship campaign - encouraging us all to RISE UP, love boldly, serve joyfully, lead courageously, transform the world.

Our meeting minutes and a list of the current committee members are posted on the bulletin board just outside the church office. Take a look if you're ever wondering what we're up to.

Happy Birthday

9/3– Olivia Kowalski	9/5– Barry Hunt	9/6– David Wainwright
9/6– Nina Wargula	9/7– Kristen Sugrue	9/9– Helen Nelson
9/9– Cheryl Samulski	9/11– Casey Everhart	9/15– Hanna Wargula
9/15 - Jim Keller	9/16– Carter Wright	9/18– Thomas Wantuck
9/20– Julie Everhart	9/20– Gary Kegler	9/21– Thomas Plauman
9/22– Michael Ball	9/23– Stephen Buechi	9/23– Sue Lawrence
9/25– Marion Molenda	9/25– Wayne Parks	9/26– Gregg Parete
9/27– Roselyn McCarthy	9/28– Zak Tanner	

Happy Anniversary

9/06– Mark & Cheryl Kowalski	9/08– Carl & Mylinda Plauman
9/14– Bill & Amanda Nolan	9/29- Kevin & Ann Marie McCarthy

If your birthday or anniversary (or someone you know) is ever omitted, please call or email Jilliane in the church office: (716) 652-5427 or elmaumoffice@gmail.com

Thank You!

Worship

Dear Elma UMC Family,

Over the next several months, I want to dig deeper into one of my favorite Bible stories from Jeremiah 18: 1-6 and a contemporary Christian song I love called "The Potter's Hand". Please take time to read this passage of Scripture for the next several months along as you read my thoughts in the newsletter.

PART 1- IN THE HANDS OF THE MASTER

Have you ever taken a ceramics class? The teacher "spins" a vessel on his wheel, creating a unique piece of pottery. It is amazing, revealing, and profound. What we witness is in a picture of God as the potter.
When I picture the potter at the wheel, I'm reminded of something I often forget—I am not random. I am not an accident. I am not a product of chance. I am in the hands of a Master. God, because of who He is, has intention. He has design. He has purpose.

And just like clay cannot shape itself, I can't become who I was created to be apart from Him.

Believe me, I've tried. I've taken control, attempted to define my own life, and every time, I end up with something distorted. BUT, when I surrender to His hands, everything changes. Listen to this amazing declaration about God's design in YOU!

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made." (Psalm 139:13–14, NIV)

That verse means my life has value—not because of what I produce, but because of who is shaping me.
God's hands are not harsh. They are careful, intentional, and loving. They can apply pressure, but it's always for the good of the "pot." When the vessel yields, it can not only withstand the fire, but it can come out even more beautiful!

Even when I don't understand the process, I can trust the Potter.
Because He sees what I cannot yet see, and He knows what I am becoming.
Today, I choose to rest in that truth—I am in His hands, and there is no safer or better place to be.

Held by Him,
Nan Keller, **Worship Music Minister**

Pastor's Typical Weekly Schedule

Pastor Lisa is typically in Elma Sundays, late afternoon Mondays through Wednesday evenings, works from home on Thursdays, takes her Sabbath on Fridays, and has her day off on Saturdays. The schedule for Wednesday through Saturday sometimes changes depending upon the needs of the church. In general, she prefers not to work past 9:30pm, although this is sometimes unavoidable. As the church is a pretty busy place, it may be best to make an appointment if you want to have time to talk with Pastor Lisa. But you are always welcome to stop by. In emergencies please use the Pastor's cell phone 716-341-1896; especially during hours when no one is scheduled to be in the office.

Note: Pastor Lisa will be studying the life and ministry of John Wesley with Bishop Burgos, and a group of Upper NY clergy and lay leadership, in the UK from September 30th -October 8th. Rev. Larry Baird will be available for pastoral emergencies and will lead worship October 4th.

Our Way Forward

By now you have received a letter concerning the content and importance of the Our Way Forward process for the future of Elma UMC.

Elma UMC will be exploring Our Way Forward, Upper New York's Graceful Conversations and Covenanting Process for Navigating the 2020/24 General Conference Changes about Human Sexuality. Our conference leadership has provided a process and resources for prayerful discernment that will ultimately lead to establishing a covenant that authentically reflects Elma UMC's position and practices. The Organizing Team: Peter Buechi, Sam Coatsworth, Martha Horohoe, Belle Sank, and Carrie and Ryan Schmitz, have created a schedule of sessions that will allow everyone the opportunity to participate.

Based upon responses received thus far, and considering the church's fall calendar, the sessions are scheduled as follows:
Sunday October 18 th and 25 th , and November 8 th , 12:30-2:30pm
Lunch will be served beginning at 12:00pm for all participants.
The sessions build upon one another and will be facilitated by Georgia Whitney who currently serves in Conference level lay leadership and has experience with facilitation.

If you have any questions about this process, please reach out to Pastor Lisa, any of the organizational team members, or a member of the Leadership Team.

It is very important that everyone, members and constituents, participate in this process so the true position of the whole body is faithfully discerned. Please make participation in the process a priority this fall.

Pastor's Message

Put on Your Own Oxygen Mask First!

Everyone who's ever traveled on a plane knows the drill. Before you take off, you have to listen (or not) to all the instructions the flight attendants provide in the event of an emergency. One of the most important is to realize that you will be unable to help anyone unless you attend to putting on your own oxygen mask first. No matter how much someone nearby may need help, unless you remain conscious by inhaling the O2 nourishment your body and mind need you will quickly come to be in need of someone else to help you.

This is true of our Christian spiritual lives as well. Unless we are each taking care of receiving our own spiritual nourishment, we will not have what we need – the discipleship skills - to help someone else who needs us to grow in relationship with Jesus themselves. It's unlikely that we will often face spiritual emergencies ourselves or in the lives of others around us; but it's important to Christ's mission that we are prepared. And even the events of day-to-day Christian life offer opportunities to nourish a fellow Christian who needs a boost, or even speak into the life of a non-Christian or non-practicing Christian with a word of wisdom or encouragement that points them to Jesus.

John Wesley referred to the practices through which we grow in connecting to the Holy Spirit's voice, power, and discernment as "means of grace" – ways we spiritually "breathe" in everything we need from God to help us live and prepare us to serve as Christians in the church and the world. The beautiful hymn,

"Breathe on Me Breath of God" (UMH 420), speaks to all we receive from God, and become, as we practice Intentional Discipleship: "Breathe on me, Breath of God, fill me with life anew, that I may love the way you love, and do what you would do. Breathe on me, Breath of God, until my heart is pure, until my will is one with yours, to do and to endure. Breathe on me, Breath of God, so shall I never die, but live with you the perfect life for all eternity."

Friends, it's time to revisit Elma UMC's Intentional Discipleship Plan – the IDP! You'll find a copy of it on the Christian Education table in the main hallway (or you could save paper by digging out the copy you already have stashed somewhere). Take a look at where you're at in each of the Good NEWS categories – Nurture, Education, Worship, Service – and prayerfully consider how you can take a next step in one or more of them. Every day you eat and drink, work and play, rest and consume entertainment for the purpose of sustaining and enjoying your natural life. For your Christian life, nurturing your spiritual growth is something you can't afford to neglect. It's your lifeline to God's best life for you in the present world and the world to come. It's the foundation of fulfilling your part of accomplishing Christ's mission.

Peace and Blessings,
Pastor Lisa

Elma United Methodist Church

2991 Bowen Rd.
Elma, NY 14059

September 2026 Methodelma

"We are loving, Spirit-led

Disciples of Jesus Christ growing in God through

Nurture, Education, Worship, and Service."

Elma United Methodist Church
2991 Bowen Rd. Elma, NY 14059
Rev. Lisa D. Taylor, Pastor

Sunday Worship Service
In person Worship starts at 9:15am

Church Office Phone Number: 716-652-5427
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