



# The Steeple

January 2021

*From the Pastor's Desk*

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! Most of us cannot wait for 2020 to end because we have been overwhelmed by bad news this year. Some of us have had a difficult year filled with personal hardship and loss. There were three major distressing news items which impacted all of us –the Covid-19 pandemic, increased racial tensions in our country and the political discord leading up to the November election. Any one of those situations would have been enough to cause concern in a year. It has been too much to take. We are ready to have 2020 end!

Many people hope that flipping the page on the calendar will change our circumstances. We know that probably is not the case. While distribution of the Covid-19 vaccine has begun, the process will take months until the majority of the population is safe. Racism will not end easily or quickly and political differences will continue to be with us. The hurt that some of us feel does not heal rapidly. As much as we would seek an end to our problems, it is not found simply in the passing of time.

We trust in God to get us through the problems that we face personally and as a nation. The beginning of the new year does not bring an end to last year's problems or challenges. God alone can bring complete healing, comfort, and wholeness.

While the end of 2020 probably will not solve all of our problems, a new year does present an opportunity to start fresh. If you are like me, you realize that there are places in your life where you need to improve. You may not pray as often or for as long as you might like. You may not spend as much time reading and studying the Scriptures. You may have become judgmental or bitter towards others. You might realize that you should be more aware of the needs of others and discover ways to reach out to them with compassion.

Perhaps 2021 brings an opportunity for us to become part of the solution to many of the problems facing our world. If we would look to God to change our hearts and lives, our church, our communities and even our nation might look differently. If we are motivated by Christ's love to grow into His image, we might be the change that is needed.

My prayer for all of us is for a better year and a better world. I look for God to transform my life so I can follow Christ more closely and grow in Him. I pray you will do as well.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Keith*

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP! ON SUNDAYS AT 8:30AM AND 11:00AM**

## COVID-19 UPDATE

Governor Tom Wolf's latest mitigation efforts aimed to reduce the spread of the Covid-19 virus went into effect on December 12<sup>th</sup>. Indoor gatherings and events of more than 10 persons are prohibited by this order through January 4<sup>th</sup>. While worship services were excluded from these limitations, our pastor and leaders agreed to follow the governor's orders. This action was strongly recommended by our bishop and cabinet. We will continue to post our services on our Facebook page, YouTube channel and our church's website. During the first week of January, we will update you regarding our plans to move forward. Please watch your inboxes and mailboxes for more information.

\*\*\*This is a reminder from Financial Secretary, Kay Cramer:\*\*\* Contributions for the year 2020 will be accepted until Sunday, January 3, 2021. All checks must be dated for 2020 and in Kay Cramer's hand by Sunday, January 3, 2021. If you have any questions, please give Kay a call at 724-443-2847. \*\*\*

### **The Neighborhood Table | Jan. 7 | Fellowship Hall**

BUMC is continuing to partner with the Fox Chapel UMC to provide meals to the Sharpsburg Community.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the meal at BUMC starting at 2:30 PM. The meals are then transported to Sharpsburg and volunteers are needed there to help serve and clean up afterwards. This has been a very rewarding ministry so far, so please consider volunteering by calling Roger Cramer at 724-443-2847.

### **Drive Thru Dinner | Jan. 12 | Fellowship Hall**

The Mission Team is committed to begin serving a monthly meal for The Lighthouse beginning in January. This new ministry is being funded for the first year by The New Endeavor Fund. What is needed to make this ministry viable is a complete team including a kitchen crew, a cleanup crew, and servers to manage the distribution of meals as we continue with the drive thru format. Our vision is to be able to serve our neighbors in New Fellowship Hall whenever covid restrictions are lifted. Our most significant need is for someone to head up the kitchen crew. That person would work with the team that prepares and serves a monthly meal for The Neighborhood Table in Sharpsburg. We envision The Lighthouse meal would be served the week following TNT meal. That would allow both teams to plan the same menu and do all the shopping at once. If the Lord is calling you to participate in this new ministry in one capacity or another or if you have questions, please contact Carol Skolnik at [cnik-skol@gmail.com](mailto:cnik-skol@gmail.com). Thank you for your support!

### **GriefShare Outreach Ministry 2021 Winter/Spring Schedule**

We will meet once a month this winter – our next meetings are Wednesday evening **January 13<sup>th</sup>** and **February 10<sup>th</sup>** at 7pm in Fellowship Hall, masks and social distancing required.

### **NEW weekly meetings will begin Wednesday March 3rd through May 26th, from 7:00pm till 8:30pm.**

If you or someone you know is experiencing the loss of a loved one, we encourage you to please accept this as your personal invitation to join with us. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences so that you don't have to go through the grieving process alone. Our GriefShare program is co-led by Rev. Bill Dambach, Marcia Shipley, Marge Kirkpatrick and Janet Pagniello. GriefShare is a drop-in anytime group and open to anyone in the church or community. All are welcome.

**Kindness Update:** A year ago, the mission team challenged the Bakerstown congregation to make 2020 a year of kindness. While this year didn't turn out to be what we expected at all, there have been countless deeds of kindness done over the last several months of quarantine. You have funded meals for strangers, sewed masks for friends, shopped for groceries for shut-ins, held drive-by birthday parades, and so much more! We would love to hear your stories! Please tell us about deeds of kindness done for you during this time. If you have been touched in an unexpected way by something you've done for others, please share that as well. Your stories will be posted anonymously on the Kindness Tree in the narthex. You can submit your stories by email to [BUMCmteam@gmail.com](mailto:BUMCmteam@gmail.com). Thank you for all you have done in the name of Christ to make 2020 truly a year of kindness!



Save the Date! Our Mission Trip this year will be open to the whole church congregation. The date for this year's trip is July 25-31, 2021. The location is still to be determined. Save the date and stay tuned for more information.

**Committee News:** As the new year begins we would like to welcome all the new committee members:

**Church Council**

Cindy Rice ~ **Chair**  
 Leslie Olson-Secretary  
 Drew Bechtold  
 Frank Ferguson

**Finance**

Marie Edinger ~ **Chair**  
 Larry Halliwell  
 Dave Meuschke  
 Jim Semler

**Trustees**

Sharon Platt  
 Dan Pouchot  
 Bruce Smith

**SPRC**

Denise Grier ~ **Chair**  
 Tim Shipley  
 Patti Sworden

**Nominations**

Lake Barrett  
 Patty Ferguson  
 Becky Kyle

**Lay Leaders**

Todd & Jody Mankamyer

**Memorial Committee**

Alyssa Negley '21  
 Louise Himes '22  
 Penny Fischetti  
 Wilson Haller  
 Miriam Perriello

**Lay Members to Annual Conference**

Keith & Jennifer Vulhop

Please be sure to keep an eye on the bulletin and newsletters for upcoming meetings.

**If you are new to a committee in 2021, please make sure the church office has a current email address so that you can receive meeting notices and other important information throughout the year.**

Thank you. Please email the church office at

**[lstafura@bakerstownumc.org](mailto:lstafura@bakerstownumc.org)**

We also want to thank those that served over the past 3 years:

**Church Council**

Dan Pouchot ~ **Chair**  
 Amy Jewitt ~ Secretary

**At Large Members**

Penny Fischetti  
 Miriam Perriello

**Finance**

Lake Barrett ~ **Chair**  
 Patti Kenzie  
 Marge Kirkpatrick

**Trustees**

Barb Williams ~ **Chair**  
 Carl Stevens  
 Chuck Koval

**SPRC**

Bruce Smith  
 Paul McLeister  
 Drew Bechtold

**Nominations**

John Staub  
 Kim Szelc  
 Jayne Cain

**Lay Leaders**

Keith & Jennifer Vulhop

**Annual Conference Delegate**

Evelyn Dick

## **From The Prayer Corner: The Best New Year's Resolution – Prayer!**

The new year is a time of new beginnings – chances to try new things, start over, shed old bad habits, and encourage healthy new ones. Below are some examples of praying through your resolutions. This year consider adding “More Prayer” to your list of New Year’s Resolutions.

**1. Be Better to My Body** - Dear God, This is the year I will be better to my body. I will be careful in my diet, walk more, exercise with regularity, and visit the doctor for check-ups. Thank You God, for the gift of my body, I will care for this amazing network of muscle, bone, fluids and organs that You lovingly made for me. ~Amen

**2. Read and Learn More** - Dear God, This is the year I will use my mind for good. I will read, watch, and listen with intent and purpose. No longer will I fill my mind with gossip, hyped-up news stories, or cheap fiction. I will make reading Your Word a priority. I will seize every learning opportunity. Thank You God for the brain You ingeniously built just for me. ~Amen

**3. Be Kinder** - Dear God, This is the year I will be kinder to my family, friends, co-workers, and neighbors. I will do random acts of kindness for strangers. I will embrace all of Your creatures with consideration and compassion. I will be conscious of nature and do what I can to keep it in its cleanest and most productive state. I will honor everyone and everything of Your creation. ~Amen

**4. Be Better With Money** - Dear God, This is the year I will be more responsible about money. I will work hard and work smarter. I will save more and spend less. Neither a lender nor a borrower I will be. I will let money flow through me and see it used to better myself and to make the world a better place. ~Amen

**5. Pray More** - Dear God, This is the year I add more prayer to my life. I will praise and thank You more. I will offer daily prayers not only for my own sake but for others as well. I will be more active in a spiritual community that shares my values. And God, each and every day this year, I will pray for peace. ~Amen

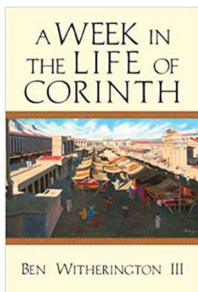
**\*\*TIPS** - Easy ways to set aside 15 minutes each day to pray: You could wake up 15 minutes earlier; Pray in the shower; Pray while you’re shaving or doing your hair/make-up; Pray during your morning or evening commute; Pray while folding laundry; Pray on your lunch break; Pray while walking or exercising; Pray while making dinner; Pray with your kids before they go to sleep every night. The possibilities are endless!

## **A PERSONAL NEW YEAR’S INVITATION TO YOU!!**

We would like to extend an invitation to you to be part of the BUMC Prayer Team and have the privilege of praying for our church, our community, and each other. All are welcome. Simply send your e-mail address to Lora Stafura [lsta-fura@bakerstownumc.org](mailto:lsta-fura@bakerstownumc.org), Cathy Dambach ([hwdambach@consolidated.net](mailto:hwdambach@consolidated.net)) or Heather Brown ([hldrdb@hotmail.com](mailto:hldrdb@hotmail.com)) and you will begin to receive the e-mail prayer requests that go out periodically.

## Sunday Morning Small Groups

**\*\*The Women at the Well Sunday Morning Small Group will continue to stay on hiatus for the winter.**



**Digging Deeper:** Ben Witherington III attempts to reenchant our reading of Paul in this creative reconstruction of ancient Corinth. Following a fictitious Corinthian man named Nicanor through an eventful week of business dealings and conflict, you will encounter life at various levels of Roman society--eventually meeting Paul himself and gaining entrance into the Christian community there. The result is an unforgettable introduction to life in a major center of the New Testament world. Numerous full-page text boxes expand on a variety of aspects of life and culture as we encounter them in the narrative.

Witherington is a world-renowned New Testament scholar, Professor of New Testament Interpretation at Asbury Theological Seminary, and an ordained pastor in the United Methodist Church. This 7 week study begins on January 3.

## *Financial Report*

As the end of the year approaches, your Church Council and Finance Committee continue to be amazed by how blessed our congregation has been by God's goodness and your faithful support. We anticipate ending 2020 with our obligations met and a small surplus to begin the New Year.

When the pandemic began, we applied for a loan through the Paycheck Protection Program. We received those funds due in part to extra effort by our treasurer, Skip Lancaster. We placed them in a set aside "just in case they were needed." In November, the loan was forgiven by the Small Business Administration and we still had the original amount in our account. Council decided to put half back into our community by funding our new monthly dinners and through gifts to the Lighthouse Foundation of Butler; Roots of Faith and the Bakerstown UMC Day School. The rest of the PPP monies are in a "Pandemic Reserve Fund" for use if they are needed.

Another example of how blessed we have been this year is the excellent work of our Trustees in making necessary improvements and upgrades to our buildings. There have been two major projects completed this year. The roof on our entire building has been replaced and the old steeple on the former sanctuary removed. This project was funded by the Major Project Fund, which is part of our operating budget with some assistance from a generous gift last year. The second improvement to our building was an upgrade to our sound system to improve the audio both in worship and on the live stream. This was funded by individual gifts. We also purchased 2 new cameras for our live stream Sunday mornings services from the Memorial Fund. Some other building improvements include replacing emergency lights in our building. A portion of the funding of this project came from the proceeds from selling the Giant Eagle gift cards.

Thank you for supporting the ministry of Bakerstown United Methodist Church. Your generosity enables us to minister to one another, our community, and our world in Jesus' name. Happy New Year!

### **Memorial gifts**

This year the landscaping near the fellowship hall was refreshed in loving memory of Dan Himes

A new AED was purchased for the sanctuary in Loving Memory of Frank Sutton.



Bakerstown United Methodist Church  
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724-443-3184  
[www.bakerstownumc.org](http://www.bakerstownumc.org)



*Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ  
for the transformation of the world.*

## Staff:

Rev. Keith Dunn  
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[kdunn@bakerstownumc.org](mailto:kdunn@bakerstownumc.org)

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## January Birthday's & Anniversaries

01/02 Ray Wilson  
01/04 Nathan Humenik  
01/05 Debbie Lokay  
01/07 Lyla Kennah  
01/09 Lauren Dick  
01/10 Jayne Cain  
01/12 Risa Snowden  
01/13 Andrew Rossi  
01/14 Mike Eddy  
01/14 August Whipple  
01/15 Miriam Perriello  
01/17 Michelle Fischetti  
01/19 Ian Holcomb  
01/19 George Kress  
01/22 Reid Rinker  
01/23 Sabrina Humenik  
01/24 Kim Szelc  
01/24 Grace DeVore

01/25 Babe Barton  
01/30 Benjamin McLeister  
01/31 Kevin McGrath  
01/31 Velma Covert

01/12/1952 Jay & Helen Deer

01/14/1998 Brian & Kim Szelc

01/16/2010 Sam & Julie Cramer

01/31/1998 Don & Joyce Gindlesperger