

The Steeple

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! We are about to start a new year! When you read that sentence, you may have thought I am a bit premature with that statement. After all, we do not turn the calendar to 2019 until January.

The liturgical year, the annual cycle marking the worship and spiritual life of the church, begins with the season of Advent. It starts this year on December 2nd, which is the first of four Sundays leading up to Christmas.

The word advent means arrival or coming. For Christians Advent is a time of getting ready for the coming of Christ. We anticipate both the celebration of his first advent, his birth, and the ultimate arrival of Jesus when he returns in glory. Advent reminds us to turn our hearts away from those things that separate us from God. It is a call to receive what Jesus Christ has done and what He is about to do.

All of this sounds very lofty and spiritual doesn't it? It feels removed from what our lives are like this time of year. We are about to begin a flurry of activity leading up to Christmas. There are presents to buy and decorating to do. Some of us will be baking Christmas cookies and treats. There are holiday parties, special events and concerts to attend. We will be adding more to our already long "To Do" lists and our busy lives will become even busier!

Preparing for Christmas can be stressful and hectic. The season of Advent helps us to focus on the reason for all that we are doing this time of year. We are making way for Christ's arrival in the world. We are getting ready to celebrate God's greatest gift, a Savior born to bring peace and joy to all.

During the season of Advent, our church will provide opportunities for worship and service. Instead of viewing these as one more thing to do or another activity on an already packed calendar, I invite you to see them as a way of preparing your heart and spirit for the coming of Christ and the celebration of his birth. My prayer for all of us is that God will use the Advent season to draw us closer to Him.

Blessings,
Pastor Keith

JOIN US FOR WORSHIP! ON SUNDAYS AT 8:30 & 11:00 AM
Sunday School at 9:45 am Sunday Nursery ALWAYS available!

Something for Everyone.....

Hanging of the Greens—We would like to invite EVERYONE to help trim the church for the coming Christmas season. We will be decorating on **Saturday, December 1st**, starting at 11 a.m. We need men to assemble the trees and others who enjoy decorating. please come and help. Any questions or suggestions call the church office at 734-443-3184.

Advent Season begins on Sunday, December 2nd

Advent is a period of spiritual preparation in which many Christians make themselves ready for the coming, or birth of the Lord, Jesus Christ. Celebrating Advent typically involves a season of prayer, fasting and repentance, followed by anticipation, hope and joy. Many Christians celebrate Advent not only by thanking God for Christ's first coming to Earth as a baby, but also for his presence among us today through the Holy Spirit, and in preparation and anticipation of his final coming at the end of time.

During Advent **DIGging Deeper** will be using the study "When God Comes Down" by James Harnish. The study looks at the stories of the primary biblical characters in the birth stories through whose lives the miracle of incarnation happened: Zechariah, Elizabeth, Joseph, Mary, and Jesus. Harnish also looks at a traditional character in nativity plays, one who is not mentioned in the Bible, the innkeeper. Through all these characters, he helps us claim for ourselves the reality of God's presence with us. Beginning Sunday, December 2 at 10:00 in the Wesley Room.

The Women at the Well discussion class will be doing the Advent study "The Gospel of It's a Wonderful Life" during December. Join us in the Library at 10am on Sunday mornings to watch snippets of this well loved classic movie and discuss the Christian themes found in it.

F.A.I.T.H. Foster and Adoption, Inspiration, Training, and Hope Meeting the first SUNDAY of every month on **December 2nd at 12:30pm**. Open to families that have or are considering opening their homes for foster or adoption. We will provide a Christ Centered approach to offering support and education to these families. Childcare will be provided. Please contact the church office at 724-443-3184 with any questions.

Mommy and Me Christmas Ornament making day, Monday, December 3rd from 10-11am looking for something to do with your little ones? Come on over to the New Fellowship Hall with Miss Rachel and bring your kids to make some Christmas ornaments!

The Neighborhood Table

BUMC is continuing to partner with the Fox Chapel UMC to provide meals to the Sharpsburg Community. The next scheduled meal we will be serving is on **December 6th** 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.

Cookie Walk

Friday, December 7, 2018

6:00pm to 7:30pm

**Bakerstown UMC
New Fellowship Hall**

Come shop a wide assortment of delicious, Christmas cookies ♥ hand made with love♥ by our Bakerstown Women. Bring your own tray and fill up on these delicious cookies.

Cookies are \$6.00 a dozen.

Bakerstown UMC Variety Show—Sunday, December 9th at 6:00pm Come on out for an evening of musical fun with a short play and songs from our Bakerstown kids, and music, musical dramas from other members of our Bakerstown Family. Cookies and refreshments will be served after the show.

Soul Sisters- Bible Study Group that will meet the 2ND Monday of each month from 6:30 – 8:00PM. We will have a time of biblical study/devotion, discussion, prayer, and fellowship. Women with teenage daughters are encouraged to bring those young ladies along to participate. It's just once a month with no pressure and no homework except for an optional challenge each month. Bring a snack to share if you wish. We will meet in the Library. If you have any questions, please contact the church office at 724-443-3184. **Our next meeting will be December 10th**

Something for Everyone....

*All Women of the Church
are Invited to
The Women's Annual Christmas Party*

**Christmas Hors D'oeuvres
and Dessert Party
Tuesday, December 11th**

~Appetizers at 6:30 pm~
~Fun & Entertainment at 7:30 pm~

**RSVP by
December 7th
to
the church office at
724-443-3184 or sign up in the Narthex**

Please bring an appetizer or dessert
for 6 to 8 to share.

Child care will be available

**We are also collecting women's
toiletry items for Bethlehem Haven**

Saturday, please contact Heather Brown at 724-687-7187 We are always in need of younger teenager gifts...some suggestions for them are make-up, jewelry, fishing rods and tackle boxes, hoodies (hooded sweatshirts), nerf toys, remote control helicopters/airplanes/cars, etc. ****The Lighthouse is also giving out \$25 gift cards for teenagers aged 16-18 this year, so if you would like to donate one, they'd appreciate it.**** Thank you so much for all of your support!



Prime Timers-This fun group meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month for food, fun and fellowship! Anyone interested in joining this group, mark your calendar, NOW for **January 16th at 11:30**. Bring a pot luck dish to share and a big appetite. We will be playing games and just having a great time in fellowship. This group is open to anyone in the congregation wishing to have a good time with friends.

A Circle of Friends Choirs (ACOFC) will perform at Bakerstown United Methodist Church, 5760 William Flynn Highway at 7:30 p.m., Friday, December 14. The concert is open to the public. There is no ticket price, although free will donations will be given to The Lighthouse Foundation. ACOFC's Christmas concert will feature secular and non-secular music performed by more than 30 members and features handbells, musicians and vocalists who perform on behalf of local organizations to raise funds for various causes. Directed by David English, O.D., and Jennifer Bowers, ACOFC is itself a 501c3 non-profit organization comprised of non-professional singers and musicians to "support those in need in all communities."

Lighthouse Toybank Drive at Bakerstown UMC—Pick a paper ornament from the Christmas tree in the Narthex. Bring back an unwrapped gift back under the tree, with your paper tag attached **by December 9th**

We will be hosting the Lighthouse Toy Bank on Saturday, December 15th 9:00 am—1:00 pm. Your donations are greatly appreciated. It allows families in need to receive presents for Christmas for their children. *****Look for the angel tree before Thanksgiving*** If you would like to volunteer on**

All-U-Can-Eat Breakfast! Mark your calendars now for **Saturday, January 19th** (8:00 - 11:00 AM) and a great price (Adults = \$6, kids age 6-12 = \$2.50 and under age 6 eat for free). Enjoy all you can eat of made-to-order pancakes, sausage, bacon, home fries, eggs, and beverages. Be served by our wonderful Bakerstown United Methodist Men. All proceeds support their outreach efforts. Contact Roger Cramer at 724-443-2847 if you have questions, or if you wish to join our UMM Group!

A Stitch and a Prayer Saturday, January 19th at 10am to 2pm. Sewing, knitting and crocheting blankets and prayer shawls for Linus Project, baptisms and ill in our church. Need help sorting, sewing, ironing, pinning, cutting.....all hands welcome. Bring a lunch!!!!

If you sew, crochet, or knit your talent can be used in making quilts for Project Linus, shawls for shut-ins or even lap robes for people in nursing homes. If you are not able to join us when we meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10-2, please contact Louise Himes, Mary Pouchot or Marge Kirkpatrick if you have questions regarding how you can help.

Bakerstown Happenings....

On the Mission Front:

We have assembled a great team, so far, for the Costa Rica Mission trip (July 2019). If God is putting a burden on your heart to come, it is not too late for you to be a part of it! Contact Pastor Luke at the church or by email to express your interest.

But if you are not going, there are plenty of ways to be involved in this exciting mission trip - especially with our fundraiser endeavors. In the coming Christmas season, we will be offering soup mixes and Christmas gift tags. Both can be nice additions to your Christmas shopping. The soup mixes would be a nice stocking stuffer and the tags are a small, but meaningful way to give a gift that also supports ministry work. We will have tables set up in the narthex, coming very soon. You can support by buying one of these Christmas gift items, or if you'd like - we can use your help to sell the items at the narthex table.

Costa Rica Mission Trip ~ 2019

When: July 6-13(or 14), 2019

Where: Carrillos, Costa Rica - *Closest large city is Alajuela, Costa Rica*

Who Can Go: Anyone who has completed 8th grade to adult.

Why You Should Go: We have been in relationship with *La Iglesia Evangélica Metodista Palabra Viva* (The Living Word Evangelical Methodist Church) for over 15 years. In that time we have sent several work groups down to serve in construction of the church building, as well as providing ministry to the children and women of the church and wider community. In the past several years, we have also hosted the pastor and founder of the church, Rev. Eddier Cortes, as a guest to Bakerstown UMC. *La Iglesia, Palabra Viva* is a church that has been welcoming and deeply appreciative of our presence and help over the years. But any help we have offered has been far more greatly repaid by their love, kindness, and generosity they have demonstrated to our groups. Your life will be changed, your vision of the kingdom of God broadened, and your love for your brothers and sisters in Christ will deepen on a trip to Carrillos, Costa Rica.

How do I sign up? There are two ways. There is a sign-up sheet in Bakerstown UMC on the information desk. Otherwise there is a sign-up link on the church website under "current events." Signing up and coming to the meeting is not a firm commitment, but lets me know of your interest. An initial deposit won't be collected until January 2019. If you are interested but have financial concerns, please come to the meeting to learn how you can be helped (*Money should not be the final obstacle in order to serve God in mission.*)



From the Prayer Corner – A Prayer for the Merry . . . and the Not-So-Merry

Heavenly Father, we thank You and praise You for the miracle of Your Son's birth. Thank You for bringing great JOY to the whole world! Thank You for giving us the assurance that because You came to us in the form of a human, we who believe in Jesus can know with absolute certainty that we'll spend eternity with You.

We thank You, Lord, for the many reasons we have been given a merry Christmas. And we rejoice for each blessing. Our families. Our good friends. Our home. Our jobs. Our health. Our church. New opportunities. New life. New love. Second chances. And more. We know, Lord, that You bring the sun and the moon and set the stars in motion. You tell the ocean were to stop, the flowers when to bloom, the leaves when to turn color, and the snow when to start. And so we also thank You for the mighty gift of Your amazing creation here on earth.

Thank You, Father, for our church, and for spiritual leaders and faith-filled friends who keep encouraging us when we are struggling or close to giving up. And although we have many reasons to rejoice today, Lord, we also know December 25th can be not-so-merry for a whole lot of people for a whole host of reasons.

We pray for those who are experiencing loss and grief this Christmas, whether relational, financial, physical or spiritual. We pray for those who are coping with loving a prodigal, as well as our friends and family members whose hearts are far from You. We pray for those dealing with unemployment, addictions, tragedy, illness, and unending pain and frustrations of all kinds.

Thank You, Lord, that You are always the Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace, even in the midst of our not-so-merry circumstances.

Finally, Lord, we ask You to grant us Your peace. Peace in our homes, peace in our churches, peace in our community, and peace in our hearts, when the world all around us spins out-of-control. Help us to stay focused on You, this Christmastime and always. Thank You for loving the whole world enough to send the greatest gift ever, Your Son Jesus, so that we might truly have a very merry Christmas. In Jesus' name, Amen.

(Portions taken from a Steph Raquel Crosswalk article)

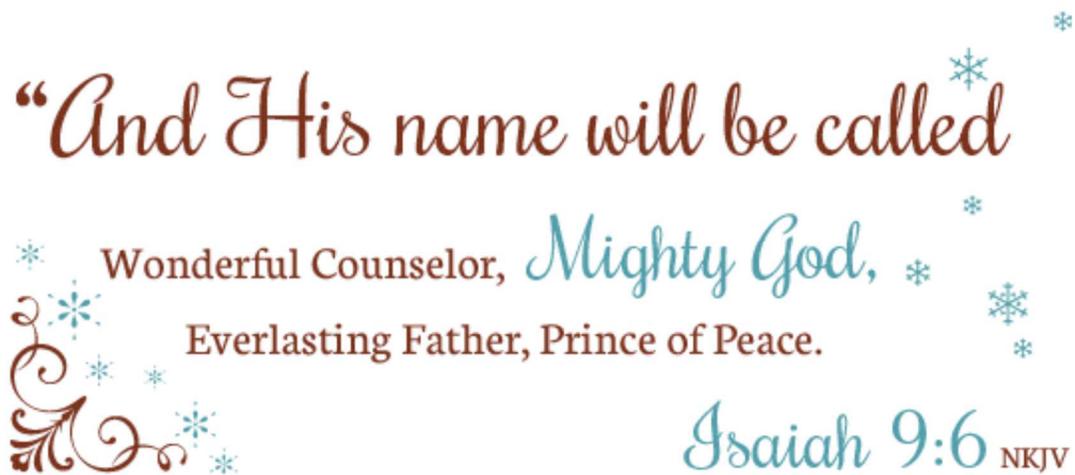
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“And His name will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Isaiah 9:6 NKJV



December Birthday's and Anniversaries

12/01 Andrew Lightcap
 12/06 Phil Swisher
 12/08 Katie Mawhinney
 12/09 Jim Mershimer
 12/09 Owen Cramer
 12/09 Kim Zynn
 12/09 Ryan Cosgrove
 12/10 Pam Lunn
 12/10 Sheria Mason
 12/13 Maggie Rice
 12/13 Julien Marentay
 12/16 Zoey Campbell
 12/17 Jeff Reynolds
 12/17 Jay Deer
 12/17 Annie Haselrig
 12/17 Matthew Sarver
 12/17 Todd Mankamyer
 12/19 Jonathan Ometz
 12/24 Troy Lunn
 12/25 David Cain
 12/25 Nathaniel Swarmer
 12/26 Tracey Rossi
 12/27 Alexis Rieger
 12/30 Loretta Irwin
 12/31 Jerry Miller

12/11/2009 Chris & Tish Miller
 12/27/1986 Tim & Marcia Shipley

Bakerstown News...

To my Bakerstown family and friends...thank you so much for your prayers, cards, phone calls and support to me and our family during the difficult decision in admitting Dan to Concordia of Fox Chapel. I am truly blessed to be a part of this caring church. Louise Himes



I will be on vacation December 21st - January 1st. I will return to the office on Wednesday, January 2nd. **If you would like anything in the January newsletter, please have it to me by December 14th. Bulletin articles for December 23rd and December 30th are due Tuesday, December 18th.** Thank you. Lora Stafura ~ Secretary

Day School Chalkboard

What a successful dessert sale fundraiser! Thank you so very much for your support! 334 items were sold this year! It is such a blessing to be a ministry of Bakerstown United Methodist Church. Thank you for helping us help all the children and families who come through our doors.

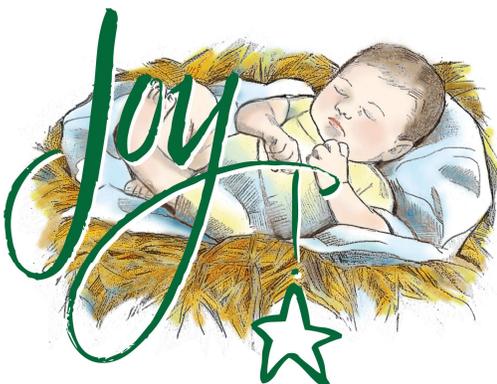
Rachel continues our Faith Based instruction with the Kindergarten students and shares her amazing program with the preschool teachers to offer in their classrooms. She is such a talented and strong Christian and her enthusiasm and faith are contagious to all.

The school will, once again, collect new and gently used children's books for the Toy Bank. These books are offered for free to the families who come to the Toy Bank. We love being a part of such a wonderful event for families right in our own community. Thank you for this opportunity.

We are so excited to hold our second annual Scholastic Book Fair, this year in conjunction with the church Cookie Walk on December 7. Santa will be here again this year for photos! The Cookie Walk will run from 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m. The Scholastic Book Fair and Selfies With Santa will run from 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Hope you can stop by for some books for the special people in your life as well as treats!

Preschool Open House!

Sunday, January 27 we open our doors to the church and public to visit our preschool, meet our teachers and see our beautiful learning spaces. Current preschool families will also be here to talk with you and share their perspective on our school. We have a special preview time for church members at 12:00 p.m. We will open our doors to the public at 12:30 until 2:30 p.m. Registration for the 2018/2019 school year will be accepted. Please stop by; we'd love to see you! Please spread the word to families looking for classes for children aged 2 up through Kindergarten! More information about the preschool can be found on the website at www.bakerstownumc.org



Calendar of Events

- Dec. 1 — Hanging of the Greens
- Dec. 2 — F.A.I.T.H., 6:30pm
- Dec. 3 — Mommy & Me Ornament Making, 10:00am
- Dec. 5 — Trustees Meeting, 7:00pm
- Dec. 6 — Neighborhood Table, 2:30pm
- Dec. 7 — Cookie Walk, 6:00pm
- Dec. 9 — Bakerstown UMC Variety Show, 6:00pm
- Dec. 10 — Soul Sisters, 6:30pm
- Dec. 11 — Women’s Christmas Party, 6:30pm
- Dec. 12 — SPRC Meeting, 7:00pm (tentative)
- Dec. 14 — Circle of Friends Concert, 7:30pm
- Dec. 15 — Lighthouse Toy Bank, 8:00am
- Dec. 24 — Family Worship Service, 4:30pm
Carols and Candlelight, 7:00pm
Carols and Candlelight, 9:30m

Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving

Bakerstown United Methodist Church wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church’s bank account. This service is offered for a once a month donation for withdrawal on the first business day of the month.

Online Giving lets you go to www.bakerstownumc.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history. As you contemplate the future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Authorization forms and additional information are available from the church office or by contacting Kay Cramer, financial secretary at 724-443-2847.

Thanks, Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary

Bakerstown UMC is looking to hire a Nursery

Coordinator. This person will coordinate volunteers and nursery staff for child care on Sunday mornings and special services. The Nursery Coordinator will not be expected to be present in the nursery for every service. A more detailed job description is available from Pastor Keith, Pastor Luke, Cindy Rice, Sharon Platt or from the church office.

❖ Sundays:

Worship – 8:30 & 11:00 am
Children’s Sunday School, 9:45am
Adult Small Groups, 9:45am
F.A.I.T.H., 12:30PM (1st Sunday)
Ignite, 6:00pm

❖ Mondays:

Soul Sisters, 6:30pm (2nd Monday)
Grub and Stuff, 6:30pm

❖ Tuesdays:

Jeremiah Bible Study, 7:00pm
Rhythm of Grace Practice, 7:00pm

❖ Wednesdays:

Wednesday Morning Prayer, 7:30am
Jeremiah Bible Study, 9:00am
Body and Soul, 7:00pm
Grief Share, 7:00pm

❖ Thursdays:

Sanctuary Choir, 7:30pm

❖ Saturdays:

Body and Soul, 8:30am



Offering Envelopes

Once again we are going to have the offering envelopes for 2019 available in the narthex. **Look for the envelopes to appear soon.** If you have any questions, you can

always call me.

Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary [724-443-2847](tel:724-443-2847).

*****This is a reminder from Financial Secretary, Kay Cramer:***** Contributions for the year 2018 will be accepted until **Sunday, January 6, 2019**. All checks must be dated for 2018 and in Kay Cramer’s hand by **Sunday, January 6, 2019**. If you have any questions, please give Kay a call at 724-443-2847. ***

Bakerstown United Methodist Church
 5760 William Flynn Highway
 Gibsonia, PA 15044
 724-443-3184
 www.bakerstownumc.org



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

Staff:

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Christmas Worship Schedule

CHRISTMAS EVE—DECEMBER 24

Family Service—4:30pm This worship service is engaging for families of all ages. We will celebrate the birth of our Messiah by: singing familiar Christmas hymns, meeting the characters of the Nativity and hearing a short Christmas message. There are interactive activities for the children to participate in during the worship service so it is a great option for families with younger children.

Carols & Candlelight—7:00pm & 9:30pm Both services are a celebration of Christ's birth with joyful singing of carols and the beauty of candlelight. Enjoy the surrounding beauty and the warmth of God's love during this special time.



FINANCE REPORT

	Oct 2018.	YTD Oct 2018.	YTD Oct 2017
Donations	\$42,658.00.	\$401,380.91.	\$455,974.07
Expenses.	\$39,202.76?	\$439,087.41.	\$458,307.48

Thank you for your love of your church and its ministries.
 The Maintenance fund has been paid thru August while the Future Endeavor fund has been paid thru September. Mission share and Trustees are current.
 If you have any questions, please give me a call. Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary. 724-443-2847