

The Steeple

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! On November 17th our United Methodist Men sponsored a bus trip to the Wheeling Nailers hockey game, which included dinner on the way home. While we were eating, we noticed the staff at the restaurant putting up a Christmas tree. One of our members asked, “Isn’t it a bit early for that?”

For many, the answer to that question depends on personal preference. Some people think that as soon as the Halloween candy is distributed, it is time to pull out the Christmas decorations. Others wait until after Thanksgiving. Retailers like us to think of shopping for gifts early and often. In the church, we have a whole season of preparing for Christmas. It is called Advent.

Since Christmas decorating, shopping and music, seem to be coming earlier each year, I thought it might be appropriate to think about the importance of Advent, which takes place the four Sundays before Christmas. Our sermon series for those Sundays will seek to answer the question, “What Is Advent?” Each sermon title will begin with the words, “Advent Is About ...”

December 1

Scripture: Romans 13:11-14
Message: “Advent Is About Time”
Pastor Keith preaching.

December 8

Scripture: Romans 15:4-13
Message: “Advent Is About Hope”
Pastor Keith preaching.

December 15

Scripture: James 5:7-10
Message: “Advent Is About Patience”
Pastor Keith preaching.

December 22

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25
Message: “Advent Is About Jesus”
Pastor Luke preaching.



The purpose of these worship services will be to prepare ourselves spiritually for the celebration of Christ’s birth. I invite you to join us as we grow in our understanding of Advent and to grow closer to Jesus.

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!

Events, Outreach & Small Group Opportunities....

Advent Season begins on Sunday, December 1st

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.

Women at the Well – A New Advent Study beginning Sunday, December 1st!!

Come join us at the Women at the Well Discussion Group as we travel through the Old Testament during the month of December where the Christmas Story really began. We will be using the study guide A Look at Advent Through the Old Testament! Join us as we read of the prophets Jeremiah, Malachi, Zephaniah, and Micah, who all proclaimed the Christ that was to come. Sunday mornings in the Library from 10am to 10:50am. Bring your coffee or tea and join in the discussion with us as we prepare for Christmas.

Digging Deeper — It's a Wonderful Life — Come along with DIGging Deeper this Advent as we take a closer look at, what for many people, is a favorite Christmas movie, It's A Wonderful Life. It's a Wonderful Life Study Guide examines this beloved holiday classic and reminds us how easily we can become distracted from what is truly meaningful in life. This five-week Bible study experience comes complete with discussion questions for each session, Scripture references, detailed character sketches, movie summary, and related commentary. We will watch short video clips from the movie then discuss questions from the study guide as we dig deeper into the meaningful things in life. The study guide is available in both Kindle and paperback formats from Amazon.

SAVE THE DATE!!!
Holiday Wreath Making
Monday, December 2nd
6:30pm | \$ 45 per person

Make your holiday a little more festive as Pisarcik nursery guides us as we make our own wreath for the front door. Join us for some fellowship and fun.

RSVP: Lora at lstafura@bakerstownumc.org or 724-443-3184

DEADLINE TO REGISTER, Nov. 25th



Let's Go Caroling! Join us on Wednesday, December 4th at 7:00pm, at Concordia at Rebecca Residence, 3746 Cedar Ridge Road, Allison Park, to sing Christmas Carols for the residents. Anyone that wants to attend that needs a ride, meet at the church at 6:30pm and we will carpool over. Joy Lancaster will be playing for us that night and there will be sheet music available. **This is for people of all ages, young kids, teens, young adults with/without kids, empty nesters ETC!**

The Neighborhood Table | Dec. 5 | N.F. 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.

Cookie Walk
Friday, December 6, 2019
3:30p to 5:00pm &
6:00pm to 7:30pm
Bakerstown UMC
New Fellowship Hall

Bring your favorite container and come shop a wide assortment of delicious, Christmas cookies ♥ hand made with love♥ by our Bakerstown Women.

Cookies are \$7.00 a dozen & Specialty cookies \$9.00 a dozen

Events & Small Group Opportunities...

Prison Ministry opportunity: Wings Family Day, **Sunday, December 8** at the Noble Correctional Institute in Caldwell, Ohio. See Carol Skolnik for details.

The Bakerstown United Methodist Men --Grub & Stuff | Dec. 9 & 23 | 6:30-8:00pm | New Fellowship Hall

All Men (and boys) of BUMC are welcome to attend the Grub-n-Stuff dinner and Bible Study events that return to action on Monday, September 9th.

No homework or studying needed. Just bring your appetite, a dish to share (if able), and plan to join in whatever we choose to discuss that night.

Dinner starts at 6:30 and we will have you out the door at 8:00 pm.

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 8th**. We will be hosting the Lighthouse Toy Bank on Saturday, December 14th 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 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 sweat-shirts), 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!

Do you shop online at Amazon for Christmas?

Choose smile.amazon.com instead! At Amazon Smile you can opt to have your purchases support the Bakerstown UMC Mission Team. Just use the search feature to locate and select **Bakerstown United Methodist Church** as your charity.

You can find the same products, prices, and shopping features you enjoy with your current Amazon account, and 0.5% of your purchase of eligible items will support our mission team!

Remember that only purchases made at smile.amazon.com will generate support.

Bookmark the site today! If you order on your mobile device add smile.amazon.com to your home screen and use it instead of the Amazon app. Thank you for your generous support!

In 2019 we welcomed the following people into our church. If you haven't had a chance, please take a moment, to welcome our new members. We are glad you are here!

Babe Barton
Paul and Katie Macik
Velma Covert
Theresa Murray



**Welcome
Our New
Members**

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

**Christmas Hors D'oeuvres and Dessert Party —
Tuesday, December 10th**

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

**The Greater Harmony Chorus –
a FUN group of women who like to perform
singing a cappella**

**RSVP by December 6th to the church office at
724-443-3184 or sign up in the Narthex**

Please bring an appetizer or dessert that serves
6 to 8 to share.

And bring a friend or family member along to enjoy
the fun as well!

Child care will be available

**We are also collecting items for
Operation Troop Appreciation:**

Men's or women's body wash, deodorant, triple blade
razors, granola bars, energy bars,
trail mix, beef jerky & beef sticks.



January Happenings....

Kingdom Kids | Friday, January 10th | New Fellowship Hall

- The program will run the 2nd Friday of the month from 6:00-8:30pm
- All children 4 years old to 5th grade are welcome to participate
- Children do NOT need to be members of Bakerstown UMC to attend!
- We will close each evening with a service project
- All registrations are due the Sunday before the date of Kingdom kids.

If you would like information on the KINGDOM KIDS program, please contact Rachel at rwhipple@bakerstownumc.org or 724-443-3184

Bible study for parents with young children| Tuesday, January, 14th & 28th |6:15-7:30 pm | Wesley Room Come join us bi-weekly for fellowship, encouragement and small group discussion at our new Bible study geared toward parents of young children. There is no time commitment- come as you are and as you can. Childcare will be provided. If you are interested in attending or have any questions please contact Katie Lowell at klowell33@gmail.com or 412-760-2682.

Prime Timers | Wednesday, Jan. 15 at 11:30am | New Fellowship Hall This fun group meets for food, fun and fellowship! Anyone interested in joining this group, bring a pot luck dish to share and a big appetite. We will be playing games and just having a great time. This group is open to anyone in the congregation or community.

All U Can Eat Pancake Breakfast | Saturday, Jan. 18 | 8 -11 am |New Fellowship Hall Adults = \$6, kids age 6-12 = \$3.00 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!

Stitch and A Prayer | Saturday, Jan. 18 | 10 am- 2 pm | Old Fellowship Hall - 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. Bring a lunch!

Body & Soul—Start off the New Year with the right program! Burn off those extra holiday pounds! Get “pumped up” and “stretched,” both physically and spiritually! Led by Andy Jakub, a certified personal trainer. This class will combine total body conditioning and wellness with a spiritual workout of prayer. Meetings will be held here at the church, and the cost is only \$6.00 per session. Come on Wednesday night at 7:00pm or on Saturday morning at 8:30am.

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 with 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.

Did you know that after each service on Sunday you can purchase Giant Eagle gift cards at face value? These can then be used for groceries or to purchase any of the gift cards Giant Eagle sells. For instance The Home Depot...purchase gift cards from the church and then get the Home Depot from Giant Eagle to then go to Home Depot and get your home improvements.



The proceeds were originally used to fund the mortgage of the church. They now help with ongoing maintenance, which we all know can be costly the older our building gets.

Shop and Save Perks to Pray and Play

When Shop and Save did away with their gift card program for the church, this took its place. There are sheets on the information center in the narthex that need to be filled out and returned to the store service desk for this program. The church will benefit from everyone using the Perks card.

From the Prayer Corner — Christmas 2019 Prayer

Loving God, in this Christmas Season, we praise You for the newborn child, Your Son, and our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Please open our eyes to see the mystery of faith and help us claim the promise and gift of Emmanuel, “God with us”, our most treasured gift the whole year through.

We remember that Jesus was born in a manger, and then walked through His life as a humble suffering Savior.

Lord, like He did, help us to share the love of God with everyone we encounter, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, support the poor, and stand against injustice and oppression.

May there be bread for those who are starving, love for the unloveable, healing for the sick, protection for our children, and wisdom for our youth.

We pray for the ending of war and for peace upon the earth. We pray for the forgiveness of sins and for abundant life in Christ.

We thank You for our family and friends, and we pray for their salvation.

We thank You for the many blessings we have received, and we pray Your blessings on all people.

We rejoice today with the best gifts of Hope, Peace, Joy and the Love of God in Jesus Christ. Amen.

Rev. Lia Icaza Willetts, United Methodist Pastor

Join the Email Prayer Team!!!! It's easy. Here's how:

Contact Lora Stafura lstafura@bakerstownumc.org, or Cathy Dambach hwdambach@consolidated.net, or Heather Brown hldrdb@hotmail.com and the monthly prayer list will be emailed to you. Occasionally we also have weekly urgent requests that are sent out as well. Thank you!

Wednesday Morning Prayer – 8:00am-8:30am

Prayer is a powerful way for us to receive the grace of God in our life. As we pray God moves. God moves in response to our requests. God moves closer to us in relationship. God moves on our hearts so that we more deeply experience his love. These are powerful things we don't want to miss as a church community. Come join your pastors every Wednesday in the sanctuary, as we set aside time to pray to our God. Make the effort to come before work! Come as a way to jumpstart your day!

Christ the Savior is Born!

December Birthday's and Anniversaries

12/06 Phil Swisher
 12/08 Katie Mawhinney
 12/09 Owen Cramer
 12/09 Kim Zynn
 12/09 Ryan Cosgrove
 12/09 Paul Macik
 12/10 Pam Lunn
 12/10 Sheria Mason
 12/13 Julien Marentay
 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
 12/24 Jamie Khambatta
 12/26 Tracey Rossi
 12/28 Phyllis Brown
 12/30 Loretta Irwin
 12/30 Alyce Weaver Dunn
 12/31 Jerry Miller

12/11/2009 Chris & Tish Miller
 12/27/1986 Tim & Marcia Shipley
 12/27/1985 Randy & Maura Burd

Day School Chalkboard

Thank you from the bottom of all our hearts at the Day School for your Dessert orders! We exceeded last year's total and are feeling so blessed. We go through so many supplies each and every day and your support helps us to keep doing what we are doing. Thank you for helping us touch all the lives of the children and their families who walk through our doors each day.

One of our favorite days at the Day School is the Pastor's Assembly. Once a month Pastor Keith, Pastor Luke and Rachel and sometimes, Evie and August put on an amazing faith based program for all the children in the school. We sing, we clap, we dance, we learn all about how wonderful God is and we pray. Thank you, Pastor Keith, Pastor Luke and Rachel for taking the time out of your busy days to pour God's goodness into these sweet souls.



Fun Events Coming Up:

Once again, we will team up with the Ladies' Cookie Sale with a Scholastic Book Fair, Cookie Walk and Selfies with Santa. Join us on December 6 from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. for a night of fun. Purchase gifts of books for anyone and everyone in your life. The variety of books will span the ages and interests of all. Be sure to say hello to Santa and pause for a selfie with him. He is looking forward to seeing you and your little ones! Take a walk through the cookie tables for delicious, homemade cookies and treats to share at all of your Holiday gatherings. Hope to see you there!

Day School Open House!

Sunday, January 26 we open our doors to the church and public to visit our day school, meet our teachers and see our beautiful learning spaces. Current day school 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 2019/2020 school year will 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 day school can be found on the website at www.bakerstownumc.org

Calendar of Events

Dec. 2 — Wreath Making, 6:30pm
Dec. 3 — Trustees Meeting, 7:00pm
Dec. 4 — Caroling at Concordia @ Rebecca Residence
Dec. 4 — Safety Team Meeting, 6:30pm
Dec. 5 — Neighborhood Table, 2:30pm
Dec. 6 — Cookie Walk, 3:30-5:00pm & 6:00-7:30pm
Dec. 6 — Book Fair, 6:00-8:00pm
Dec. 9 — Grub and Stuff, 6:30pm
Dec. 10 — Women's Christmas Party
Dec. 11 — Mission Team Meeting, 7:00pm
Dec. 14 — Lighthouse Toy Bank
Dec. 17 — Parent's Bible Study, 6:15pm
Dec. 23 — Grub and Stuff, 6:30pm
Dec. 24 — Family Service, 4:30pm
Carols & Candlelight, 7:30pm
Carols & Candlelight, 9:30pm



Once again we are going to have the offering envelopes for 2020 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.

- ❖ **Sundays:**
Worship – 8:30 & 11:00 am
Adult Small Groups, 9:45am
- ❖ **Mondays:**
Grub and Stuff, 6:30pm (2nd & 4th Monday)
- ❖ **Tuesdays:**
Jeremiah Bible Study, 7:00pm
- ❖ **Wednesdays:**
Wednesday Morning Prayer, 8:00am
Jeremiah Bible Study, 9:00am
Body and Soul, 7:00pm
Grief Share, 7:00pm
- ❖ **Thursdays:**
Rhythm of Grace Practice, 7:00pm
Sanctuary Choir, 7:00pm
- ❖ **Saturdays:**
Body and Soul, 8:30am



We are still collecting and sending coupons for the troops and their families around the world. If you can cut-sort or bring them in, please put them in the box on the information center. Please contact Joyce Koval at 412-327-8890.



I will be out of the office December 20th - January 1st.. I will return to the office on Thursday, January 2nd. **If you would like anything in the January newsletter, please have it to me by December 16th.** Bulletin articles for

December 22nd and December 29th are due
Tuesday, December 17th.

Thank you. Lora Stafura ~ Office Administrator

This is a reminder from Financial Secretary, Kay Cramer: Contributions for the year 2019 will be accepted until Sunday, January 5, 2020. All checks must be dated for 2019 and in Kay Cramer's hand by Sunday, January 5, 2020. If you have any questions, please give Kay a call at 724-443-2847. ***



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



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

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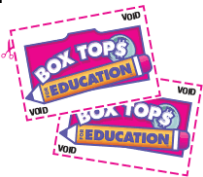
Christmas Worship Schedule

Christmas Eve, December 24th

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—7:30pm & 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.

Box Tops for Education



Clipping box tops is an easy way for you to help our school buy what it needs. Box tops are worth \$0.10 each, and they quickly add up to real cash for our school. Simply collect them in a baggie and place them in the collection boxes at the North and South entrances of the church. Contact Kim Szele with any questions, 412-980-4723.



FINANCE REPORT

	October 2019	YTD October 2019	YTD October 2018
Donations:	\$37,842.00	\$379,687.81	\$431,255.91
Expenses:	\$36,305.02	\$370,519.73	\$438,997.41

Thank you for your continued support of our church. Because of your faithful donations we have been able to pay all of the bills, including the connectional support and Trustees support. However, nothing was funded to our savings for the Major Project fund nor the Future Endeavor Fund.

As always, if you have any questions, give me a call. Kay Cramer 724-443-2847