



The Steeple

March 2021

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! Each season of the church year has its own significance and meaning. Advent prepares us for the coming of Christ into the world both in Bethlehem and at the completion of all things. Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus. Epiphany begins by commemorating the wise men following the star to pay homage to the newborn king and continues with reminding us of the ways God is revealed to humanity through Christ.

We are currently in Lent. Traditionally, it is a time of repentance as we prepare for the celebration of Easter. I view Lent as a time for growing spiritually. It is my favorite time of the Church year. I first committed my life to Christ during Lent many years ago. I began reading the Gospel of John early in Lent and by the time Holy Week arrived, I trusted in Jesus based on the promises found there. As your pastor, my prayer is that we will grow into a deeper relationship with Christ. This is a desire for the entire year but especially during this holy season.

I am pleased this Lent to be preaching a sermon series from the Gospel of John that was so instrumental to the beginning of my spiritual journey. Matthew, Mark, and Luke follow a similar pattern in the way their book is structured. Each of them includes stories or phrases unique to their Gospel. John follows his own unique pattern and emphasis.

John uses symbols throughout his book to describe who Jesus is. John opens his gospel with the words, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Jesus is the word and Jesus is God. Throughout the book, Jesus tells us who he is by using symbols his listeners would have known. These "I Am Sayings of Jesus" are the basis of the sermons for Lent. They describe who Jesus is and what he does for us. They also describe our relationship with Christ in dynamic ways.

I am sure that each of us will grow during this exploration of Jesus as depicted in John's Gospel. I expect that God will give us new insights and draw us into a closer relationship with Him this Lent. I hope that you will join us in person or online as we discover who Jesus is through "The Seven I Am Sayings of Jesus."

Blessings,
Pastor Keith

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

Our GriefShare Outreach Ministry begins NEW Weekly Meetings Wednesday, March 3rd, at 7:00pm

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. GriefShare is a highly recommended nationally known program of bereavement support groups that meet weekly and are led by people who understand what you are going through and want to help. Our GriefShare program is led by Rev. Bill and Cathy Dambach, Marcia Shipley, Marge Kirkpatrick, Judy Moore, and Janet Pagnello.

We will begin a new series of weekly meetings starting on March 3rd through May 26th. This group meets every Wednesday evening in New Fellowship Hall, masks and social distancing required, from 7:00pm to 8:30pm. GriefShare is a drop-in anytime group and open to anyone in the church or community. All are welcome.

The Neighborhood Table | Mar. 4 | 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.

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation Classes will be held beginning Sunday, March 7th at 9:45 AM for youth in grades 8th through 12th interested in joining the church. Due to Covid-19, Pastor Keith is offering the option of confirmation via Zoom or in person. Please e-mail kdunn@bakerstownumc.org with your child's name and your preference for learning. Confirmation Sunday will be May 16th.

Drive Thru Dinner | Mar. 9 | Fellowship Hall

The Mission Team is committed to begin serving a monthly meal for The Lighthouse. 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 cnikskol@gmail.com. Thank you for your support!



Don't forget to turn you clocks a head 1 hour on Sunday, March 14th.

Drive Thru Pancake breakfast| Saturday, Mar. 20th

Come to BUMC any time between 8:00 am and 10:00 and take home a great breakfast. Each breakfast will contain bacon, eggs, sausage, home-fries and your choice of blueberry, buckwheat, chocolate chip or plain pancakes. All of this for only \$5.00. Pull in, give your order to one of the masked men and park and wait for the meal(s) to be delivered to your car. It cannot be any easier!

Audio Visual Ministry

We need a few people who are focused and reliable and like to work behind the scenes to help in this meaningful ministry. Training will be provided for those who are interested in running slides, sound, or cameras. Let Pastor Matt know by emailing him at msscott@bakerstownumc.org.

Holy Week in a Box

BUMC is offering a fun way for your child to grow closer to God this Lent. "Holy Week in a Box" will provide an activity for everyday in Holy Week, which begins on March 28. You must register your child for their box (one per child) by Monday, March 15. You can email Lora in the church office at lstafula@bakerstownumc.org, with the number of boxes needed.

Boxes will be available for pickup beginning Sunday, March 21st. Each box will be personalized and will have something for each day starting Palm Sunday.

Mission Team News....

The Good Neighbor Update: Over 300 meals were provided through The Neighborhood Table in Sharpsburg and the Drive Thru Dinner for the Lighthouse in the month of February. The families receiving meals are so grateful! Some of their stories are heartbreaking. The need is great in all of our nearby communities. Here are a few ways you can help:

- During the month of March the mission team will be collecting jars of peanut butter for the Lighthouse Food Bank. Donations can be placed in the wooden bins next to the choir room.
- Volunteer to transport the donated peanut butter to the Lighthouse at the end of March. (bumcmteam@gmail.com)
- Volunteer to help with the Neighborhood Table in Sharpsburg or the Drive Thru Dinner.
- Volunteers are needed for the kitchen crews, the cleanup crews, the delivery to Sharpsburg crew, and for runners to take the meals from the narthex to waiting cars. (bumcmteam@gmail.com)
- Contact Heather Brown (hlbdab@hotmail.com) and offer to provide a dessert for either meal.
- Contact Cindy Rice to help with the distribution of supplies to those who are homeless on the South Side. (crice@kta.com)
- Pray for those who have fallen on hard times.

The next **Neighborhood Table in Sharpsburg will be Thursday, March 4.** The next **Drive Thru Dinner will be Tuesday, March 9.**

Costa Rica Update: In December, former Bakerstown Associate Pastor Luke Whipple made an appeal to help our sister church in Carrillos, Costa Rica. Between Bakerstown UMC and the churches pastored by Luke, over \$5,000 was raised! Praise God for your generosity! Our friends in Costa Rica have been affected by the pandemic just as we have been, but are without the resources available to us. This gift will mean so much to them!

The Mission Team is so thankful for your support of these outreach ministries and so many others. We seek to show God's love to our neighbors near and far. Thank you for providing the means to feed the bodies and souls of so many!

Day School Chalkboard

Each March we talk about the month coming in like a lion and going out like a lamb. March of 2020 came in like an unsuspecting lamb and went out like a lion! The beginning of March brought us our normal lessons on weather, lion crafts with mounds of yarn used for lion manes and heaps of cotton balls for lamb crafts. By the middle of March we had to close our doors and move to virtual learning due to the pandemic. As we prepare to head into March 2021 a lot has changed and a lot has stayed the same. We still do those fun crafts and learn all sorts of amazing things we just do everything a little differently. There is still children playing, learning and discovering. There is still lots of laughter in our halls. We are all a little different from where we were a year ago. There is a lot of talk out in the world about the children being behind and needing to catch up. I don't see any children who are behind. Rather, I see children who are more prepared than they have ever been. We have learned a lot over the past year. We have learned to appreciate all that God has given us and the people in our lives. We had a lot more practice putting others before ourselves. We learned how to slow down, and patience. We had time to let our creative juices flow. I believe the children will catch up what they may have missed academically in no time at all. Children are amazing and resilient. I am not worried about academics. I can't wait to see all that God will do through the children who went through the pandemic as they grow up. I expect we'll see amazing things.

Day School Registration
NOW OPEN



We have a few openings in our classes for the 2021-2022 school year. We are not holding an Open House this year. Instead, private tours are being given to families interested during non-school hours. We will have classes for 3 year olds, Pre-K classes for 4 and 5 year olds as well as our full day Kindergarten. Please help us spread the word.

From the Prayer Corner – Prayers for March 2021 – the Season of Lent

We are deep in the Season of Lent right now. And Lent is an especially important time to be spending time with God in prayer. Prayer is God's invitation into conversation with Him. And it's our way to be thankful, bring our needs and desires to God, confess our sin, and offer up prayers on behalf of others. To help us along with that

First, we strongly suggest that everyone use this year's Lenten Devotional created by Pastor Keith, Pastor Matt, Lora Stafura, and a couple members of the Prayer Team. This is a wonderful – and sometimes fun – resource to walk through Lent with – taking only about 5 minutes a day. And it's a wonderful family activity to do together. Stop at church and pick up a paper copy available in the Narthex or download the PDF to your computer, laptop, iPad or smart phone, where you can read it each day there. It doesn't matter if you didn't start exactly on Ash Wednesday – just get started when you can – and pray through each day's topic.

Second, another option is to join with other United Methodists in our District with the Lenten Video Weekly Devotions "Cross Sections: A Spiritual Lenten Journey" found on the Western PA United Methodist Church website here: <https://www.wpaumc.org/Lent> The website says "The sincere hope is that this journey into the "cross sections" will be an opportunity to experience afresh the Way, the Truth, and the Life of Jesus Christ in a manner that leads to greater healing, deeper discernment, and a more vibrant experience of the joy of our salvation".

Third, if the 5 minute daily devotional or the Conference website videos don't appeal to you, consider this simple Lenten ritual. Grab a small notebook and a pen and place on the end of your kitchen counter or the center of the kitchen table. Each day during Lent – or during the month of March – write down one thing you are grateful for, thankful for, and appreciate. A blessing from God. Something that made you smile. It's a great family activity too – just have each person grab the pen and write down their own "Daily Gratitude" item. And then give God thanks and praise for these wonderful blessings.

"If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is Thank You, it will be enough!"
Meister Eckhart

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!



If you plan on buying Sarris for St. Patrick's Day, and/or Easter, please consider buying with this link to support the Bakerstown United Methodist Day School. Shipping is FREE and

it will be delivered right to your door (there is a \$5 packaging & handling fee applied by Sarris, though). It's a pretty yummy deal! You can order online at www.sarriscandiesfundraising.com and use the organization name Bakerstown United Methodist Day School and Group Id 10-3713. Thank you for your support!



Our mission trip this year is open to the whole church congregation! Please sign up today in the Narthex or South Entrance. You can also visit <https://bakerstown-umc-missions.square.site/> to sign up.

Click on Contact Us and scroll to the bottom of the page. The date for this year's trip is July 25-31, 2021. Location will be determined based on how many sign up. The cost is currently estimated at \$350 for adults and \$175 for youth.

Notes of Appreciation....

The first 4 notes are from people who have received meals from the Drive Thru Lighthouse Dinner.

Thank you so much for the unique chicken sub, never seen anything like that! We enjoyed the meal so much. Bless all of you who prepared it. It was nice meeting Carol who delivered the meal with a beautiful heartfelt prayer (you have a gift). Many thanks to you all—feeding someone you don't know or part of your church family. That's true dedication of people of God.

Oh my thank you so much. We are very grateful.

Thank you so much! God bless!

I can't express how much the generosity of your church means to me & my family. We are struggling right now because my husband has been out of work, because of covid. We were struggling with food for our 3 kids. The meals that we got tonight really helped us. I ordered them for my ex-husband too who is struggling. The meals were so good. Thank you again for having this program. Thank you for making kids happy with dinner tonight. Thank you for blessing us .

The following 3 notes are from places we have touched with our donation of the PPP money we received.

I wanted to let you know how much we appreciate your church's generous donation that we received in the second week of December. I happened to get the mail that day, I immediately shared the good news with our staff; I was ecstatic. As you know, we depend on donations like these from people like you and churches like yours.

*This was my first year as a pastor, and seeing that check and knowing that it came from your worshipping community had a big impact. I view Bakerstown as already partnering with us in so many ways. **You understand Roots of Faith.** You have been a solid provider for the Thursday Neighborhood Table, and you understand what it means to serve the community. So this was really special.*

When the pandemic started, we all wondered how ministries would be affected. We made decisions that had to be altered. We wanted to keep certain programs going, but we had to make adjustments. Thanks to God and the blessings of people like you, we were able to offer the community several programs and make the best of a strange year.

Bless you, Pastor Keith. Your gift will go a long ways in helping our work. Thank you! -Barry

Thank you so very much for the incredibly generous donation to the BUMC Day School. The teachers, parents, children and I are so deeply blessed by your kindness. This school year has been a challenging one and God has provided through you. In order to make this school year work we had to go from over 100 children enrolled to just 41. We had to lay off teachers. I was very worried we would not make ends meet. We put all our worries in the hands of God and took a step of faith this year.

Because of your donation we do not have to worry and stress we won't be able to make payroll to pay the amazing staff. We have been able to order extra supplies for cleaning etc. We are putting some money aside for scholarships for children and families in our own community who need a helping hand to attend our school. You have made a difference in the lives of so many. Thank you ~ Kelly Campbell, director.

Are you tired of hearing how bad 2020 was? Me too! We have so much to be thankful for as I look back on this past year. I continued to hear how "everything has changed" and people yearn for the "pre-COVID days".

Let me inform you of what has NOT changed. The Food Pantry never missed a beat. We transitioned to a drive up model and our volunteers rose to the occasion by wearing gloves and masks. Thankfully we were able to meet the increased demand that the many layoffs and closings caused.

2020 has seen no change in our outreach to homeless individuals and families. The doors are open to our many facilities and our Resident Managers have gone above and beyond to make sure everyone is warm, safe and healthy.

Our staff had to make last minute changes to the Christmas toy drive this year as well. But thanks to God's bountiful supply of toys we received, the Lighthouse Foundation was able to provide Toys for 200+ families this year. We have been able to continue to love and serve those in need, despite the "bad" around us!

*One final thing that has not changed is the generous support of our donors! I'll never tire of thanking you!
~ Victoria Spreng, Executive Director of the Lighthouse Foundation.*

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

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March Birthday's & Anniversaries

03/03 Becky Kyle	03/18 Tyler Szelc
03/03 Kristyn Robinson	03/18 Marlene Haller
03/03 Roman Mason	03/19 Joy Lancaster
03/03 Chase Rinker	03/19 Tahnee Hines
03/04 Kurt Olson	03/20 Rachel Lapp
03/05 Dorothy Cramer	03/21 Verna Feather
03/06 Jim Werkmeister	03/24 Paul Edinger
03/08 Penny Fischetti	03/24 Tommy Waite
03/08 Eva Hines	03/25 Ellen Kelley
03/09 Chuck Koval	03/26 Sally Borland
03/10 Sarah Olson	03/27 Harold Swift
03/12 Benjamin Haselrig	03/27 Joyce Koval
03/14 Bryce Cramer	03/27 Jeanine Daluisio
03/14 Kathy Cleary	03/28 Jamie Van Lenten
03/16 Wilson Haller	03/29 Ross Shipley
03/17 Alice Berkner	03/31 Jim Semler
03/17 Dean Kelley	03/31 Shawn Negley
03/17 Drew Bechtold	
03/18 Marie Edinger	

Kurt & Leslie Olson ~ March 18, 1978
James & Maria Stewart ~ March 31, 2012

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.



	January 2021	January 2020
Donations:	\$29,914.00	\$38,798.50
Expenses:	\$32,573.18	\$33,754.65

Who would have thought we would still be in this pandemic? I am so thankful for technology that makes it possible to watch church from my house, especially when the weather makes it unsafe to travel. So we have a good that has come out of this! Also we have your faithful support. Even if you aren't physically coming into the church building you are faithfully sending in your contributions either by postal mail, or online giving, or by setting up contributions via your bank. All bills were paid including our connectional apportionment and contribution to the trustees.

If you have any questions, please give me a call. Kay Cramer, financial secretary 724-443-2847.