

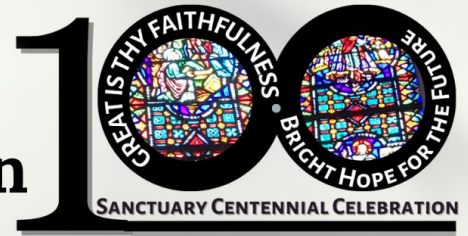


The Window *into the heart of*

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

Volume 9, Number 3, Fall 2023

Great is Thy Faithfulness 100th Year Sanctuary Celebration



During 2023 and 2024, Mount Lebanon United Methodist Church will be celebrating a major historic milestone in the life of our congregation. Our beautiful sanctuary and Asbury Center will be 100 years old on November 24, 2024. To mark this major event, we will have a year long celebration that will include worship services, lectures, concerts, receptions, a banquet, capital improvements and new mission projects. The theme "Great is thy Faithfulness - Bright Hope for the Future" is an adaptation of the beloved hymn, "Great Is Thy Faithfulness." We want to recognize God's faithfulness during these past 100 years, but we are looking to the future with the hope of building even a stronger church.

Our first event will take place on **Sunday, October 29, 2023** when we commemorate the cornerstone laying ceremony that took place in 1923. Just following the 10:45 service, we will process to the breezeway for a short service that will be similar to the original service that took place 100 years ago. Our new district superintendent, Rev. Paul Ritchey, will be present to participate in this event. Following this service, we will move to the front of the church where we will bless the newly refurbished front doors that will be completed by then thanks to the contributions given in memory of Dr. David Watson and Mrs. Lillian Schultz. The afternoon will end with a light lunch served in The Welcome Center.

Listed to the right are the other events that will take place during 2024. We hope you can attend as many of these as possible.

BAPTISM RECOGNITION

Since it is Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, all three worship services will be emphasizing our baptismal vows. All those who have been baptized in our sanctuary will be given a special invitation to attend and be recognized as well as be given the opportunity to remember their baptismal vows. A reception after the 10:45 service will give us the opportunity to socialize with former members who have returned for this occasion.

14
JAN

Ordination of Clergy Celebration

In previous years, our sanctuary was a sight of ordination services for the conference. The clergy who were ordained during those years will be invited to attend the 10:45 service to be recognized and to remember their ordination. A reception will follow the service so that we can greet our guests.

11
FEB

Kneelers, Banners, & Altar Cross Recognition

Over the years, many worship aids have been added to our sanctuary. During the 10:45 service, we will recognize the people who created the banners and the communion rail kneelers. The history of the unique cross that appears on the altar will be shared. A reception will follow the 10:45 service.

17
MAR

Youth Recognition Service

For many years, our church has hosted a Youth Sunday where the young people have led worship. On this Sunday, during the 8:30 and 10:45 services, the youth will again lead worship. In addition, we will welcome and recognize any people who have participated in these services. A reception will follow the 10:45 service where current members can socialize with former members who have returned for this event.

14
APR

Confirmation Recognition Service

During all three services, any persons who were confirmed in our church throughout the years will be invited to attend so they may be recognized, and they will have the opportunity to remember their membership vows. A reception will follow the 10:45 service where current members can socialize with former members who have returned for this event.

19
MAY

History of Asbury

Following the 10:45 service, we will proceed to Asbury Center where a short history of that room will be presented since it is also 100 years old. Following the program, a light lunch will be served.

2
JUN

2024 EVENTS CONTINUED

15
SEPT

Renewal of Wedding Vows

During all three services, people who have been married in our church will be recognized, and they will have the opportunity to renew their wedding vows, as a group, in front of the congregation. Surviving spouses will also be recognized. Following the 10:45 service, a reception will be held so that we will have the opportunity to greet our guests and current members who will be renewing their vows.

13
OCT

Choir & Bells Recognition Service

During the 10:45 service, our choirs and bells will provide special anthems. Former members will be invited to join us, and a reception will follow the service.

23
NOV

Evensong & Banquet

On this Saturday, we will hold an afternoon event that will encourage community members to visit our facility. One of the activities will be a tour of the church. At 5:00 PM, we will meet in the sanctuary for an Evensong Service and at 6:00 PM, we will assemble in Asbury Center for a festive banquet celebrating our 100 year old facility.

24
NOV

Consecration & Rededication

To conclude our year long celebration, during the 10:45 service, we will include elements of worship that took place 100 years ago when our sanctuary was consecrated.

Conference Ratifies Disaffiliation Agreements



The Western Pennsylvania Conference of the United Methodist Church ratified the disaffiliation agreements for 298 churches during a special session in Erie, PA on June 14, 2023. Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi presided. Voting on churches in blocks by districts, the body overwhelmingly affirmed all the disaffiliation agreements with no contestations. Churches must fulfill their settlement obligations in order to complete the disaffiliation process, which many did immediately following the session.

The Rev. Dr. Renee Mikell opened with prayer and before the vote, Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi reminded the body that the room was bathed in prayer by our prayer team. The Conference trustees then took turns reading the legislation for each district.

In an emotional show of gratitude after the completion of voting, Bishop Moore-Koikoi thanked the Board of Trustees for the difficult work they've done through this process. "This has been difficult work to do," she began. "It has been challenging spiritually, intellectually and emotionally. These persons before you were here for such a time as this. Because of their deep spirituality, their deep faith, because of their trust in God, they were able to carry out this painful process."

Rev. Scott Gallagher joined in giving thanks for the team he worked with. "These were big tasks," he said. "But God is much bigger than any task we place before God." He also lifted the shared experiences, the stories, the baptisms, and the calls to ministry of those gathered. Despite the parting of ways, he voiced optimism.

"In the midst of separation, God is planting the seeds to lead us into the future."

Worship followed the voting and was a spirit-filled time of repentance and forgiveness. "This may be the last time we all sing or pray together. So come on," Bishop Moore-Koikoi urged. "Everybody! Let's praise the Lord!"

The body sang "The Church's One Foundation," a hymn that speaks of trials and tribulation but ends with the optimistic words, "But soon the night of weeping shall be the morn of song." Bishop Moore-Koikoi then led a Litany of Confession and a litany both seeking and offering forgiveness for one another. She encouraged those remaining in the United Methodist Church to read the first part, with those departing responding with the second.

She then offered a parting word, encouraging both those remaining in the United Methodist Church and those disaffiliating to leave the place in a way that builds up our siblings in Christ, rather than tear them down.

"We have a choice. As we go from this place, we can choose bitterness, envy, and selfish ambition. Or we can choose wisdom that is pure and peaceable... gentle and willing to yield... full of mercy and good fruits without a trace of hypocrisy and partiality."

"I am begging us to show the world who God is through the actions of those who are remaining in the conference and the actions of those who have disaffiliated. Begging us to show the world who God is through how we will love each other and choose the better way."

She urged everyone to leave the special session with a spirit of peace and to bless each other. Those remaining and those departed were asked to turn to one another and speak in unison the following blessing: "May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always. Amen."

Reprinted from WPAUMC Communications

Our Local Perspective on this Issue

This summer has been a notable one for our United Methodist denomination, and for the Western Pennsylvania Conference, of which our church is a part. At a special session on June 14th, the Western PA Conference ratified the disaffiliation of 298 of its churches, which had expressed dissatisfaction over our denomination's decades-long debate over issues pertaining to human sexuality. The vast majority of these churches have expressed their intention to become part of the new Global Methodist Church, a new traditionalist denomination which was launched a little over one year ago. As you might imagine, our Church Council has been monitoring this developing situation for months, and has consistently concluded that the best interests of our church, its members, its mission, and our community will be served by continuing our historic affiliation with The United Methodist Church. Many of our surrounding churches have obviously reached a similar conclusion, since only three small churches within the Pittsburgh District are among the group of disaffiliations which were approved on June 14th. According to the rules of our denominational process for disaffiliation, churches which desired to remain United Methodist were not required to undergo the divisive process of holding a special charge conference, followed by a vote on the subject of disaffiliation. We could remain United Methodist by simply continuing to be a faithful church in mission to our community. This is the path which our church leadership has chosen.

We continue to believe in the mission of every United Methodist Church, which is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. We intend to achieve this mission by welcoming all people into the life and ministry of our church. Our fellow parishioners consistently tell us that although theological and political differences have always existed between us, we value our church as a place where we can join forces together to the glory of God. We believe that The United Methodist Church continues to be a denomination in which all of our people can live and thrive as disciples of Jesus. To the greatest extent possible, we will make this our focus in the weeks and months ahead. As you can see in this newsletter, we are looking forward to an exciting new year of ministry ahead. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you always. Amen.

Yours in Service,

Pastor Tom Strandburg

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Kate Naugle, Office & Communications
Coordinator

CONFERENCE NEWS



New Supervisory Model

Conference Announces New Supervisory Model

The past few years have been difficult for us all, due in large part to the COVID pandemic and conversations around disaffiliation. Yet, despite this challenging season we have been witness to innovative ways of doing ministry that cares for both United Methodists and new people seeking a faith community. We celebrate the emerging relationships and opportunities as vital and unique ministries flourish, in spite of significant upheaval.

While the full impact of disaffiliation is yet unknown, Conference leadership is working to be proactive in the ways we care for our members and churches. We are examining ways to become more nimble and deliberate, to capitalize on our strengths and restructure in ways that make sense. We are experiencing some transitions in our congregations and conference, allowing us to dream of fresh ways to do ministry. Through these transitions, we believe God is guiding us forward and providing a unique opportunity for God's church to do new things – even in supervision.

Therefore, after much prayer and discernment we are excited to announce that we will begin a new model of supervision for pastors and churches in the Western PA Conference of the United Methodist Church.

While the boundaries of the ten districts will remain the same, five supervisory areas will be established with superintendents providing supervisory care and oversight for two districts each. We are not recommending redistricting as part of this supervisory plan, but simply reorganization and refocusing.

This new supervision model will happen in two phases, with the ultimate goal of full implementation of the **five supervisory areas in July of 2024**. This two phase approach was decided to best use natural transitions and to minimize disruption. Beginning July 1, 2023, we will begin reducing the number of Conference Superintendents who will provide supervisory care and oversight.

Three initial supervisory areas will be established immediately on July 1 of 2023:

Butler & Franklin:

Rev. Deborah Ackley-Killian

Pittsburgh & Greensburg:

Rev. Paul Ritchey

Johnstown & Indiana:

Rev. Sung Chung

Two more supervisory areas will be established on July 1 of 2024, :

Connellsville & Washington:

Rev. Ross Pryor

Erie-Meadville & Kane:

Rev. Sang Choi

Cluster Charge Conferences to Be Held

Pittsburgh District Superintendent Paul Ritchey has announced that he will convene a series of "cluster charge conferences" this fall, to handle essential administrative actions within our churches. Our Cluster Charge Conference will be held on **Saturday, October 28th, at 10:30 a.m. at Baldwin Community UMC**. Our church will be joined by representatives from Christ UMC, First Bethel UMC, Jefferson UMC, and Windover Hills UMC. All interested persons and church leaders are invited to attend.

TERRIFIC TUESDAY

Our popular Terrific Tuesday mid-week gatherings resume: Begins weekly, October 3rd – December 12th (except for Halloween October 31st, Election Day November 7th, and Thanksgiving week November 21st)

Each Week:

6:00 p.m. Dinner in Asbury Center

6:30 p.m. Activities for Children & Youth

6:45 p.m. Adult Discussion Series

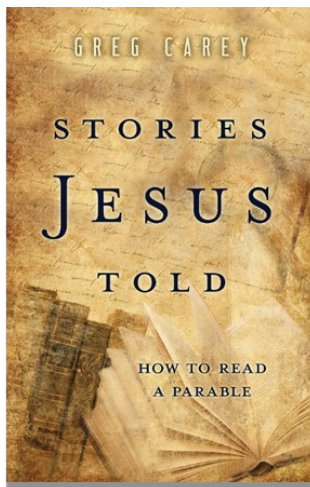
Join us for our Fall Video Study & Discussion Series

During Our Weekly Terrific Tuesday Gatherings:

Stories Jesus Told: The Parables

Professor Greg Carey, Lancaster Theological Seminary

We love stories. That's why we go to movies, read books, and listen to friends recount an experience. That's also why teachers use the technique of storytelling to make a difficult concept easier for us to process. Jesus told stories, or parables, for that very reason—and to help us understand how God wants us to live life. Sometimes, however, stories like the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son can be interpreted in more than one way. Even Bible scholars are divided on their meanings. In *Stories Jesus Told*, you'll explore six of Jesus' parables to learn how to read, interpret, and live them in your daily life.



Begins on Tuesday, October 3rd, with dinner at 6:00 p.m. and study at 6:45 p.m.



United Women in Faith

Pop-Up Mum Sale

Saturday, September 23 10:00a - Noon Church Parking Lot	\$10 - 6" pot \$15 - 9" pot Cash/Check ONLY
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*Assorted colors; come early for best selection.
Proceeds benefit women, children and youth.
Please make checks out to United Women in Faith*

UWF Salad Supper

Tuesday, Sept. 19 at 6 pm in Wesley Hall

The United Women of Faith will gather for a salad supper to kick off the new service year. Please bring your favorite salad to share. We'll supply drinks and dessert.

We've also invited the Pittsburgh-based Friends of Aseema founder to join us and give us a brief update on how our donations are being used to educate India's slum children.

ALL women are invited – and not just church members. Please bring a friend!

Call the church to make your reservation: 412.531.7131.

Christmas Cookies & British Tearoom are BACK!

Saturday, Dec. 9

This year, the UWF will hold its annual Christmas cookie sale and tearoom on Saturday, Dec 9 in the education wing. Choose from a delicious assortment of homemade Christmas cookies (sold by the pound). Do a little holiday shopping with a select group of crafters. Stop by our authentic British tearoom for a homemade scone and a cuppa! Look for more information in upcoming church bulletins!



Harvest Love Vacation Bible School 2023

Kim Rhoton, Christian Ed. Director

You are beautifully and wonderfully made! Psalm 139:14

VBS 2023 was all about God’s richly diverse people: with our different languages, cultures, races, identities, and more, God loves each of us, and calls upon us to love others!

Our fun farm theme came through with various special guests like Tater Tot - the pig ambassador of Dormont, the Pittsburgh Zoo, and therapy dogs from Animal Friends. We created seed bombs, played with color in science experiments, made our own tie-dye shirts, sang songs, and played games.

More than 50 children from our church and the wider community participated in the program, and we had over 20 adult and teen volunteers who worked to bring it all together. No VBS is possible without their tireless energy! I’d also like to acknowledge two volunteers in particular: Cori DeLuca and Laura Ward. Cori and Laura met with me throughout the past year to develop and write the curriculum for VBS, and were absolutely key in booking our special guests and designing the activities.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this year’s program a success!

New Season, New Rooms!

Beth Brack, Weekday Ministries Director

Big changes at Weekday Ministries!! We have shuffled some of our classrooms and made a few new ones. A big thank you to the staff at Weekday Ministries and Michael Drabick and Mike Staab for helping us make this project a success!!

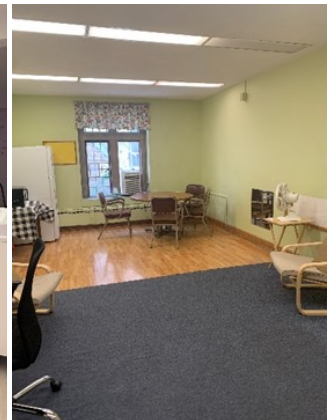
We have used Grant money to open a new Infant room on the second floor of the education building. The room

has some very nice new flooring, updated lights, and a fresh paint job!

The next phase was to change the 1-year-old rooms! We had two small rooms that we merged into one bigger room!! The children love having more room to run and play! This also has allowed us to utilize our staff more efficiently.

Now the two smaller rooms that we have empty are becoming a new break/resource room for the teachers of Weekday Ministries and the second is in the process of becoming a therapy/conference room.

A place for children who need in-school speech, physical, eating therapies and more !!



Window Article for Youth Group - Fall 2023

Stephanie Lowe, Youth Director

The youth have had a busy summer traveling. Five youth joined the group that traveled to Germany to meet with our sister church, Friedenskirche in Zwickau, Germany. The following week seven youth and five adults returned for our ninth trip to Project Crossroads in Marion, VA. We built a concrete ramp and walkway to allow a gentleman to access his house. We also removed the cast iron bathtub and replaced it with a walk-in shower to make his bathroom more useable.

Youth group will be starting back on **Sunday, September 10th**. We will be meeting immediately following second service this fall. We will start with a lunch and then have youth group. In addition, under the leadership of Mitchell Stecker, we will be restarting our youth choir. No experience is necessary. So if you have any interest, come give it a try.



Completed Concrete Path



FALL RUMMAGE SALE

**SAT., NOVEMBER 4
9:00 AM - 2:00 PM**

The Fall Rummage Sale is the perfect opportunity to donate all of the treasures you found while spring cleaning, but no longer have a use for. You can support the rummage sale and missions it benefits in two ways:

Donation of Your Items: Contributions include clothing, housewares, furniture, jewelry, books, children's clothing, toys, and decorations. We cannot accept computers, older TVs, or non-working appliances. Please bring your donations to Asbury Center. As always we have volunteers with trucks who can pick up large pieces. Please call the church office if you need assistance with the donation of your goods. We will begin accepting donations in October.

Donation of Your Time: We need volunteers to set up and sort items. We will also need volunteers the day of the sale to assist in selling, bagging, and clean up.

Keep an eye on the bulletin for more information and updates!

If you have any questions or wish to volunteer, please email one of the following individuals:

MARY GARBER: MGARBER1989@AOL.COM
ROB SPICHER: ROBERT.SPICHER@PNC.COM
LINDA MINNOTTE: LINDAMINNOTTE@GMAIL.COM

Community Events and Outreach Committee 2023 Events and Activities

The Community Events and Outreach Committee is sponsoring a number of 2023 events and activities. Several (such as our Lenten Community Fish Fries) have been completed. Others (such as our monthly Daily Bread lunches and bi-monthly East End Cooperative Ministries dinners) are on-going. And more (such as a multi-part series on addictions) are pending. Please plan to attend and/or volunteer for as many of these events and activities as you can.

If you would like to learn more about these events and activities, please contact Rob Spicher (Chair) at robert.spicher@pnc.com or 412-720-4589.

SEPT

September 7
Daily Bread Lunch
September 17
Addiction Program -
Gambling

OCT

October 5
Daily Bread Lunch
October 15
Addiction Program-Drugs
October 22
EECM Dinner
TBD
Community Fall Festival

NOV

November 2
Daily Bread Lunch
November 23
Community
Thanksgiving Meal

DEC

December 7
Daily Bread Lunch
December 10
Christmas Caroling
December 24
EECM Dinner
December 25
Community Christmas Meal

Note – Daily Bread Lunches are served on site at their Northside location; EECM (East End Cooperative Ministries) Dinners are served on site at their East Liberty location (adjacent to the East Liberty Home Depot); the Christmas Dinner is served on-site at Castle Shannon Presbyterian Church; all other events originate on-site at MLUMC

MISSIONS COMMITTEE

COMMUNITY EVENTS

MERGE

Our Church has been blessed for decades with a very active Missions Committee, and more recently with a very active Community Events and Outreach Committee.

Although their focuses have been different, their visions have been the same - to provide hospitality, fellowship, and much needed ministry locally, nationally, and around the world to help make disciples of Jesus Christ.

In recent months, both committees have discussed the pros and cons of merging and have agreed that "the whole will be bigger than the sum of the parts" by banding together. While some of the particulars regarding the structure of this new committee are still being worked out, a final recommendation is expected to be presented first to Church Council and then to Charge Conference for approval sometime this fall. Please be on the lookout for more information on this "new" committee and how you can help it.

Louanne Baily and Dick DiBella, Missions Committee Co-Chairs

Rob Spicher, Community Events and Outreach Committee Chair

NEW MINISTRY AT MLUMC



Casa San Jose (CSJ) is a local non-profit based in Brookline that serves the Hispanic population in Pittsburgh. They provide a number of services, one of which includes English as a second language (ESL) classes. This fall, MLUMC will be collaborating with CSJ to provide space for the growing demand for these classes. Mondays through Thursdays each week, volunteer teachers will use Literacy Pittsburgh materials to help native Spanish speakers learn English. CSJ will provide most of the volunteer teachers, but they are in need of some more! No teaching experience or foreign language experience needed. CSJ will hold a training session in the Welcome Center at 9:00a.m. on Saturday, September 23 in the Welcome Center. If you are interested in helping out one evening a week as a regular teacher, or as a substitute teacher, please send an email to Kim Rhoton at krhoton@mlumc.org.

Sunday School Begins Sunday, September 10 at 9:30

The teachers are busy getting their rooms ready and planning lessons for children ages three years through 12th grade.

If your child was not enrolled last year, please contact Kim Rhoton to register. We are looking forward to seeing your children soon!

Albright Society Annual Meeting

The annual meeting of The Albright Society will be held on Friday, September 22nd at 6:00 PM in Wesley Hall. A social time will be held until 6:30 when dinner will be served. Afterwards we will hear information how our endowment has been vital for our church's ministries. The Albright Society is open to any people who have remembered our church in their wills and/or made a contribution to our endowment. Please call the church office at 412-531-7131 by September 18th if you wish to attend.

The following people have generously remembered the church in their wills and/or have made contributions to the endowment fund. Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church thanks them for their generosity and love for the church.

Pat and Betty Lou Albright
Arthur and Marian Belton
Brookline UM Church
JoAnn Conner
Cleon and Vera Jane Cornes
John and Ruth Ann Esaias
Mary K. Gibson
William and Grace Gullborg
Harold and Micki Heard
Newton and Mary Lou Heston
Ella B. Ion

Oscar and Annie Larson
William and Kathryn Karns
Sara Mercer
Bill and Judy Moeller
Dormont UM Church
Scott and Natalie Miller
Josephine Newman
Spencer and Gayle Radnich
Edward and Bette Lou Reichard
Lee Rumberger
Bradley, Laura, Emily and Evan Shoff

Elmer and Frances Shumaker
Andrew and Jane Smith
Elizabeth Stevenson
John and Mary Taylor
Chuck and Brenda Vogel
Kay Wasser Family
Irene Wickline
Dwight and Ellen Worthy

Church Financial Information

Rob Spicher, Finance Committee Chair

The 2023 budget projects a deficit of over \$100,000, assuming payment in full of the Connectional Contribution (aka Apportionment). The 2022 budget projected a similar deficit, but the actual results were much better due to a reduction in personnel costs (staff restructuring) and payment of just over half of the Contribution "ask." Thanks in part to payment in full of several pledges during the 1st quarter and most pledgors keeping current with their pledges, YTD revenues through June are ahead of budget. It will be important that pledgors keep up with their pledges and non-pledged givers remain consistent with their giving if the performance through the 2nd quarter is to be maintained.

Any questions regarding the actual and budget information shown below should be directed to Rob Spicher (Finance Committee Chair). He can be reached by calling the Church office (412-531-7131) or by e-mailing him at robert.spicher@pnc.com.

Church Budget	2022 <u>Actuals</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>	2023 <u>Budget</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>	2 nd Qtr. 2023 <u>Actuals</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>
Revenue:	\$744,890*	98.2%	\$745,560	87.7%	\$391,168	95.3%
Expenses:						
Personnel	\$412,921	54.4%	\$409,825	48.2%	\$201,432	49.1%
Programs & Facilities	145,070	19.1%	196,542	23.1%	89,065	21.7%
Utilities & Taxes	97,868	12.9%	103,800	12.2%	68,220	16.6%
Insurance	54,923	7.2%	62,426	7.3%	32,741	8.0%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference**	36,374	4.8%	66,238	7.8%	13,200	3.2%
Loan Payments	11,251	1.6%	11,251	1.3%	5,626	1.4%
Total Expenses	\$758,407	100.0%	\$850,082	100%	\$410,284	100%
Total Net Income (Loss)	(\$13,517)		(\$104,522)		(\$19,116)	

* Includes estate gifts of approximately \$27,750

** \$69,652 requested in 2022

Net losses are covered by cash on hand, special gifts, and reserves.

Financial Partners Needed

Rob Spicher, Community Events & Outreach Chair

Many of the events (such as large community meals) hosted by the Community Events and Outreach Committee are self-sustaining, with free will donations covering event costs. Relative to activities organized by the Committee, however, such is not always the case.

As the Committee continues its 2023 activities, there is an opportunity for members of our congregation to play a major role in ensuring their success. By becoming a "financial partner" of the Committee, you will not only help to underwrite the cost of these activities but also be given the opportunity to assist with them.

One of the activities undertaken by the Committee during the past few years has been the providing of backpacks filled with school supplies to children of Food Pantry clients, St. Paul AME members, and Beulah Baptist members. Although one-time donations play an important part in the funding of these backpacks, funds provided by "financial partners" help ensure that all who need backpacks get them. Having "financial partners" in place will ensure that activities such as this continue to flourish.

Several Church members and friends have already become "financial partners" of the Committee. If you would like to join them, please contact Rob Spicher (Committee Chair) at either 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com. please contact Rob Spicher at either 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com.

Girl Empowerment Pad Program

'Give a man a fish and he will eat for a day. Teach a man how to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.' This proverb, dating from at least the 1880s, suggests long-term capabilities yield greater benefits than short-term fixes. It is one that the Girl Empowerment Pad (GEP) program takes to heart.

GEP, whose aim is to teach girls to sew their own reusable cotton pads, helps keep students in school and women at work during their menstrual cycles. GEP operates under the umbrella of The Nyadire Connection (TNC), a multi-church non-profit in Western Pennsylvania. GEP is structured to provide co-equal leadership from its Zimbabwean and U.S. partners, who have worked to take the GEP program to its next step in self-sufficiency.

Initially, U.S. GEP volunteers provided fully sewn pads that were distributed to TNC schools and clinics in Nyadire. Then they assembled kits with materials and instructions, in English and Shona, that allowed girls to sew their own pads each by hand. The U.S. Coordinator, Bonnie Lawson, also identified and purchased booklets on menstrual hygiene management to integrate health education with hand- and machine- sewing skills needed to make pads.

The GEP program is now pushing forward with its next, two-part strategy: (1) Sourcing materials in Zimbabwe to avoid local dependence on U.S. supply chains, and (2) Training a cadre of local professionals to lead sewing training that results not only in pad production but tailoring skills that give girls and women the opportunity to generate income.

The first part of the strategy has been advanced by Knowledge Lindgren Janasi (Procurement Agent). Based in Harare, she has discovered domestic suppliers and overcome logistical issues to enable local purchases and (when necessary) importation to Zimbabwe of materials for GEP kits. These consist of cotton fabric, a waterproof material, needles, thread, etc.

Knowledge is no stranger to Nyadire. Members of the TNC team meet Knowledge in 2006, when she was living and being raised by Nursing Sister Rut. Nursing Sister Rut, an orphan herself, was from Finland and worked at the Nyadire Mission Hospital. Her life's work was to serve women and children in the remote areas of Zimbabwe. Knowledge flourished under Rut's care, excelled in school, and was often selected to be the head girl or prefect of her classes. After Rut's passing, she attended Chinoyi University and received a bachelor's degree in accounting with the financial support of the Finnish United Methodist Church. She settled in Harare and has worked hard to establish her own business of selling imported goods. She continues to be a guide and big sister to others of Rut's "adopted" children. She is now married and has continued her business and her outreach work with The Nyadire Connection. We are thrilled that she is part of the GEP team.

The second part of the strategy is the establishment of a GEP scholarship fund to the Tabudarira Vocational School in Harare to train girls and women in tailoring skills. GEP scholarship recipients are required to teach pad sewing and other sartorial techniques to the students in Nyadire as a condition of their award. This ensures that a pipeline of teaching talent will endure as current teachers retire, and that sewing skills are an established offering within the GEP program.

Lawson says, "We want the Zimbabwean communities of women we serve to have no obstacles to living their lives and pursuing their work and studies. Moving toward local supply chains and "training the trainers" is a logical next step in the development of the GEP program, which from the start has embraced local concerns and culturally appropriate education." To donate to the GEP program or learn more, contact Bonnie at blawson58@gmail.com.

TNC Planning Mission Trips To Zimbabwe

Join The Nyadire Connection on a mission trip to Zimbabwe!

Ralph Duckworth, TNC Chairman, is planning a mission trip to Zimbabwe in November this year and invites others to join him. The team would be involved in various programs and projects, with a possible focus on refurbishing the guest house at the Nyadire Mission.

"We would really like someone who is skilled in construction to make an assessment of the repairs needed at the guest house at Nyadire," Ralph says. "We would then plan/lead a team at a later date to assist with those repairs. The guest house is where visitors to Nyadire stay during mission trips, and it could use some maintenance and improvements."

If you have the skills and desire to join Ralph on this trip, please contact him directly at either taxplan1951@gmail.com or 724-272-0069.



Nyadire Sponsors

Join 15 MLUMC families in becoming a sponsor to make a difference in a child's life. These children are orphans who walk to the Methodist Mission in Nyadire, Zimbabwe, to attend school. They do not live at the mission orphanage.

Approximately 30 students need sponsors. The program must stretch its budget to cover their expenses.



\$100 sponsors one child

\$75 a year pays the child's school fees.

\$25 a year buys a backpack and school supplies

School sponsorship forms are sent out in September to be returned with your check by October 31. To become a sponsor, please contact Brenda Vogel at 412-276-5473 or btvogel44@comcast.net

The Food Lift

Volunteers Loving Their Neighbors

Once a month, MLUMC's Food Lift donates food to Beulah Baptist Church for their full-day Food Pantry distribution. Volunteers for the Food Lift also go to Beulah on that day, working as good neighbors. Located in the Beltzhoover neighborhood, Beulah gives food to approximately 150 families and over 200 individuals. Recently the distribution day was in need of a special skill, and a Food Lift volunteer provided it.

Cephus Moore is a volunteer for the Food Lift, once a regular volunteer for Family Promise when it was active at our church. He is a loyal member of the Kerygma adult Sunday school. Cephus is a French/Spanish teacher at Upper St. Clair High School, and because he works during the school year, he is only able to help with the Beulah food distribution during the summer. A few months ago, the Food Pantry coordinators noticed a new group of people in line at the food distribution. The hungry people were immigrants, many unable to speak English. They had difficulty communicating and registering for food - but Cephus was there, being a good neighbor. He listened to their needs and spoke Spanish with the immigrants from Ecuador, Mexico and other Latin American countries, and they received food.

Cephus also invited a group of students to volunteer for the Food Pantry Days. The students are members of the Upper St. Clair High School Black Student Union, a club that Cephus co-sponsors. The Black Student Union is under the umbrella of another high school group called No Place For Hate, an organization whose name sounds like a perfect fit for volunteers for the Love Your Neighbor Food Lift.

Honor and Appreciation for the Food Lift

Last month, the City of Pittsburgh and Beulah Baptist Church acknowledged and honored the Food Lift at a luncheon. The Food Lift was awarded an appreciation certificate from the office of Pittsburgh Mayor Ed Gainey and received recognition and gratitude from Beulah's Senior Pastor, Rev. Katrina Organ and the church's Food Bank Coordinator, Trustee Denise Helton. The luncheon featured homemade delicacies, and took place amidst live jazz entertainment and welcoming decorations.

If you would like to be a part of this community of love, contact Don Langston, 412-894-5559.



Food Lift volunteer and teacher, Cephus Moore

Volunteer USC High School students (l to r): Mason Chambers; Jem Elomba; Serenity Foster-Walker; Phina Darko



Starting the School Year off RIGHT!

Rob Spicher, Community Events and Outreach Committee Chair

In what has now become an annual tradition, the Community Events and Outreach Committee provided over 350 backpacks filled with school supplies to children/grandchildren of Food Pantry clients, St. Paul AME members, and Beulah Baptist members in mid-August. Kudos to the members and friends of MLUMC who helped to make this happen!

The Food Pantry has been a long-standing outreach ministry of our Church. St. Paul and Beulah are churches of color with whom we have recently forged relationships. All recipients from the Food Pantry, St. Paul, and Beulah received their filled backpacks with open (and thankful) arms!

Total cost of the backpacks and supplies approximated \$3,600. Thanks to generous donations from over 25 individuals (who will be individually thanked), all costs were covered. Thanks be to God!

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

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Pittsburgh, PA 15216

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Blooming with Appreciation

Thanks to everyone who helped prepare the flower beds, plant flowers and water the flowers around the church.

We had a dedicated group who consistently watered the flowers and saved them from our very dry spring weather.

The flowers were beautiful, thanks to you all.