



The Window into the heart of

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

Volume 10, Number 1, Lent/Easter 2024

Journey Together *through Lent*

*Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church
2024 Lenten Devotional*

Through combined efforts, we have created a Lenten Devotional comprised of daily devotions featuring your church family and friends.

If you wish to read through the daily devotional with us, please pick up a hard copy of "Journey Together Through Lent." Hard copies are located in the narthex, on the welcome desk, and outside of the church office. You can also access the devotional electronically on our website, mlumc.org.

Special thanks to Judi Phelps for spearheading this project and to Nancy Lutz for all of her help in the finalizing process.



Thank you

To my MLUMC family for all the cards and prayers that were sent my way during my surgery and recovery. Also, thank you for all the delicious dinner foods that were prepared these past 6 weeks.

A special thanks to Caryl Drabick for organizing the food that was brought to my home for us to enjoy. My family and I would like to thank you all so much for all your kindness and support you have given us. I hope it will not be long now that I am back to work and thank you all personally

All our love to you all,

Mike Staab and Family

Offer Them Christ

"Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it."
1 Peter 3:15

First Peter 3:15 enjoins the followers of Jesus: "Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it." I find that you and I are living in a world today that is constantly demanding from us an accounting for the hope that is within us. After all, we live in a world where there is war and suffering, need and pain. Perhaps the most important thing that we can do as followers of Jesus in such a world is to proclaim the Gospel through word and deed. As we perform Christ-like acts of self-giving love for the meeting of human need, our very lifestyle gives others a reason to hope.

In 1784, John Wesley gathered three Anglican clergy and sent them to North America to share the gospel of Jesus Christ. That was two hundred and forty years ago this year. Empowering them with a passion for evangelism, rules for holy living, a list of theological affirmations, and a prayer book entitled *The Sunday Service of the Methodists in North America*, Wesley charged Thomas Coke, Richard Whatcoat, and Thomas Vasey to journey to the fledgling United States of America. Artist Kenneth Wyatt captured Wesley's commission in 1984, in honor of the bicentennial of Methodism in America, in his painting entitled *Offer Them Christ*. You can view prints of Wyatt's painting hanging in many United Methodist Churches, including our own. Most prominently, I would invite you to check out the print that is hanging in Wesley Hall. Several months later, in Baltimore, Maryland, Coke, Whatcoat, and Vasey ordained thirteen additional clergy and consecrated two bishops to form The Methodist Episcopal Church. The new denomination was the first to have the name Methodist and the first new Christian denomination in the newly forming United States of America. A flame that began in a rural English parish expanded to a Bible study at Oxford, jumped to a small meeting house in London, crossed the Atlantic Ocean, reached across the North American continent, and spread like wildfire across the world. Today over eighty million people in a variety of denominations across our planet are the spiritual heirs of John Wesley and the early Methodists.

I believe that the passion of the first people called Methodist is still alive in our congregation and in our denomination today. I believe that there is reason for hope, even in the midst of the dissensions, disagreements, and disaffiliations of the past year. We remain United Methodists today, because we still believe in the historic General Rules of this denomination, which instruct all of us to live out the Great Commandment of Jesus (Matthew 22:36-40) to love God and neighbor as we follow three simple precepts – do no harm, do good, and practice the spiritual disciplines. Throughout this year of 2024, let us offer our community and our world Christ by living as people of the Great Commandment in everything that we say and do.

Yours in Service,

Pastor Tom Strandburg

Pastor Tom Strandburg

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The Nyadire Connection

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412-531-7131 | www.mlumc.org

Kate Naugle, Office &
Communications Coordinator

Lent & Holy Week Service Times

Ash Wednesday February 14th

7:00 am Service of Morning Prayer
w/ Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
in Sanctuary

7:00 pm Service of Evening Prayer
w/ Holy Communion & Imposition of Ashes
in Sanctuary

Maundy Thursday March 28

7:00 pm Tenebrae Service
in Sanctuary

Good Friday March 29th

3:00 pm Good Friday Service
in Sanctuary
(followed by Fish Fry from 4:00-7:00pm)

Easter Sunday March 31st

7:00 am Outdoor Sunrise Service
on Wesley Patio, (Rain location- Wesley Hall)

8:30 am Traditional Worship in Sanctuary

9:30 am The Gathering in Asbury Center

10:45 am Traditional Worship in Sanctuary



2024 Easter Memorials

Purchase flowers in honor or memory of friends or loved ones! The flowers will be on display in the sanctuary on Easter Sunday, March 31st, and may be picked up after the 10:45 services or any time after Easter. Consider brightening someone's day - deliver your flowers to a shut-in or ask the church to deliver on your behalf. You can also decide to forgo flowers and make a donation to our Food Pantry.

2024 EASTER MEMORIALS

ORDER DEADLINE— MARCH 3

Make check payable to MLUMC with memo line marked "Easter Flowers," or "Food Pantry."

Flower Selection (color cannot be guaranteed)

Food Pantry Donation \$ _____

Given in (circle) "memory" or "honor" of (please print): _____

_____ Lilies (1 stem)	@ \$12.50 = _____	_____ Mums	@ \$10.50 = _____
_____ Tulips (5 plants)	@ \$8.50 = _____	_____ Daffodil	@ \$8.50 = _____
_____ Hyacinths (3 plants)	@ \$8.50 = _____	_____ Gerber Daisy	@ \$10.50 = _____

Pansy Baskets are not available this year. With Easter being so early in the year, pansies will not be in bloom.

Total Flower Amount \$ _____

Given in (circle) "memory" or "honor" of (please print): _____

Donor Name (Please Print) _____

Phone _____

I will pick up flowers

I will deliver to a shut-in

Deliver to shut-in

TERRIFIC TUESDAY

Join us for our Lenten Study
Offered in-person and online!

Happening now until the week
before Holy Week

In-Person on Terrific Tuesdays

6:00 p.m. Dinner Provided
6:45 p.m. Study in Asbury Center
Concludes at 7:30 p.m.

Online via Zoom

Thursdays

6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Please register with the church office,
and the Zoom link will be provided to
you.



Jesus came to lift up the lowly. Throughout his ministry to his final days on the road to the cross, we find stories of his relationships with ordinary, flawed, and unexpected people. He met, dined, and traveled with people who were not perfect. Many of them were struggling, some were outsiders or even outlaws. Whoever they were, from those he healed to the outlaws with him at his crucifixion, Jesus brought the good news of God's kingdom to those who most needed to hear it.

In Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws, pastor and bestselling author Adam Hamilton explores the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus as told in the Gospel of Luke. Through Luke's stories we find Jesus' care and compassion for all as he welcomes sinners and outcasts. As we study Luke and see Jesus' concern for those who were considered unimportant, we hear a hopeful and inspiring word for our lives today.

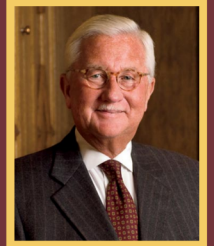
REVEILLE MEN'S BREAKFAST

"Leadership/Followership; the Dynamic Interplay"

Saturday, February 17

8:00-9:30AM

Mt. Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church
255 Washington Rd.
Pittsburgh, PA 15216



Richard Jewell,
Former President, Grove City
College



ADAM'S QUEST

EGGSTRAVAGANZA 2024

SATURDAY, MARCH 23

10:00AM - 12:00PM

MLUMC'S ANNUAL EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA WILL TAKE PLACE ON SATURDAY, MARCH 23 FROM 10 A.M. TO NOON. THIS FAMILY FRIENDLY EVENT IS PERFECT FOR ALL AGES, ESPECIALLY CHILDREN PRESCHOOL THROUGH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL AGE, AND IS OPEN TO EVERYONE IN THE COMMUNITY AT NO CHARGE. PLEASE INVITE FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS TO COME! CHILDREN AND THEIR PARENTS WILL MOVE AT THEIR OWN PACE BETWEEN SEVERAL STATIONS INCLUDING EGG DECORATING, CRAFTS, AND GAMES. NO FOOD WILL BE SERVED AT THIS EVENT.

PLEASE CONSIDER VOLUNTEERING TO HELP MAKE THIS YEAR'S EGGSTRAVAGANZA A SUCCESS! WE NEED ADULT AND TEEN HELPERS WITH STATIONS, SET UP HELPERS ON FRIDAY AND SATURDAY, AND A CLEAN-UP CREW. PLEASE CONTACT KIM RHOTON (KRHOTON@MLUMC.ORG) TO HELP.

CAN'T BE THERE THE DAY OF THE EVENT? CONSIDER DONATING HARD-BOILED EGGS FOR THE EGG DECORATING STATION. THESE MAY BE DROPPED OFF IN THE CHURCH KITCHEN IN THE MARKED REFRIGERATOR ON FRIDAY, MARCH 22. NO OTHER FOOD OR CANDY DONATIONS ARE NEEDED.



FISH, FISH, & MORE FISH

MARK YOUR CALENDARS AND READY YOUR TASTE BUDS!

The Missions and Outreach Committee will once again be hosting Community Fish Fries during Lent. This year there will be 3 for the first time ever (prior years had 2). These Fish Fries will take place on

**Friday, February 16th (1st Friday of Lent),
Friday, March 8th (midway through Lent),
and Friday, March 29th (Good Friday).**

Eat-in as well as take-out will be offered. There will also be limited delivery to shut-ins and Food Pantry clients.

The tradition of Lenten Fish Fries at our Church started in 2016. Covid 19 limited us for several years to only having one Fish Fry on Good Friday, but we were back with 2 in 2023 and will do 3 in 2024.

The menu for the February 16th and March 8th Fish Fries will include fried and baked fish as well as chicken nuggets (for non-fish eaters), French fries, hush puppies, macaroni 'n cheese, Cole slaw, buns, fruit, and desserts. The March 29th (Good Friday) Fish Fry will likely include a few additional items as well as Communion elements administered by Pastor Tom.

As is our practice, there will be no charge for the Fish Fries, although donations will be accepted. To paraphrase Pastor Tom, those able to donate will help ensure that those unable to do so can still eat.

These Fish Fries have proven to be very popular, not only for our Church members but also neighbors in our surrounding communities. They are a great way for us to provide hospitality and all to share food, fun, and fellowship.



Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. And, if you would like further information on these Fish Fries or wish to help in some manner with them, please contact Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair, at 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc

Help the UWF Assemble

Hygiene Bags for Food Pantry Clients Thursday, March 14th 10 am in Wesley Hall

The UWF will assemble hygiene bags for our food pantry clients, which currently serves 68 families.

Please join us for this fun event – and bring a friend!

We also need donations of the following items, which will help us fill the hygiene bags:

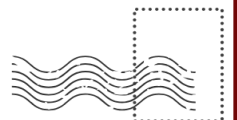
Soap bars (full size)
Shampoo
Toothbrush (soft)
Fluoride toothpaste
Unisex deodorant
Dental floss/picks
Medicated lip balm
Band aids
Unscented panty liners
Multipack tampons (light, medium, heavy)

Please put your donations in the collection bin located in the 1st floor education wing hallway outside Wesley kitchen -- or on the 2nd floor outside the office.

If you'd prefer to make a monetary donation, please make checks payable to United Women in Faith with "hygiene items" on the memo line.

Thank you, in advance, for your generosity!

**BETTY LOU ALBRIGHT
CHANGE
OF
ADDRESS**



**BETTY LOU ALBRIGHT
200 ADAM'S AVE. APT 201
PITTSBURGH PA 15243**

2024 Berries 'n' Bells

Nancy Lutz, Director of Handbells

**Saturday, May 11
6:30pm | Asbury Center**

SAVE THE DATE for the 2024 Berries 'n' Bells. Our fun and flavorful Handbell Concert with Dessert will happen on SATURDAY, May 11 at 6:30 in Asbury Center. Once again we will have delicious pie from The Spring House in Washington Co. topped with vanilla ice cream. Sugar-free option will be available.

You may have noticed that the ranks of ringers has been reduced dramatically post-Covid but our enthusiasm for making beautiful music has not diminished one bit. We will have many lovely tunes to share after you enjoy your dessert. We hope to have a guest artist- stay tuned for updates.

The cost is \$12 per person. Pre-schoolers are free. No tickets, but we must have reservations to ensure there's ample pie and ice cream! Please call church office at 412-531-7131 M-Th to make your reservations or email Nancy at Lutzbelz@aol.com. We need to hear from you by Wednesday, May 8th. Doors open at 6:15, dessert served at 6:30.



412 ORGAN RECITAL SERIES

4 Organists - 1 Common Purpose - 2 Amazing to Miss!

CALVARY UMC - SUNDAY, FEB. 18, 4:00 PM

971 BEECH AVE, PGH, 15233 BRIAN BURNS, HOST

BALDWIN UMC - SATURDAY, FEB. 24, 2:00 PM

5001 BAPTIST RD, PGH, 15236 FRANKLIN MOSLEY, HOST

MT. LEBANON UMC - SATURDAY, MAR. 2, 2:00 PM

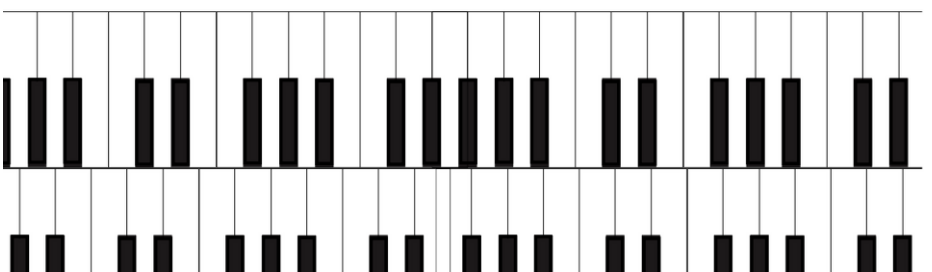
3319 W. LIBERTY AVE, PGH, 15216 MITCHELL STECKER, HOST

INGOMAR UMC - SUNDAY, MAR. 10, 4:00 PM

1501 W INGOMAR RD, PGH, 15237 BENJAMIN BUGAILE, HOST

CONCERTS FREE OF CHARGE AND OPEN TO ALL

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF CHURCHES IN
THE PITTSBURGH DISTRICT, WPAUMC



Great is Thy Faithfulness 100th Year Sanctuary Celebration



English Classes at MLUMC

Ordination Recognition

February 11, 2024

In 2024, many events will be held to recognize the 100th anniversary of our sanctuary. As mentioned in the below article, those who were baptized in our sanctuary were recognized on January 14.

Our next special service will take place on February 11 at the 10:45 service. It is interesting to note that our sanctuary was the setting for three ordination services. In 1930 and 1956, the Pittsburgh Conference met here, and during the meetings, clergy were ordained by the bishop. In 1980, the Western Pennsylvania

Annual Conference held an ordination service in our sanctuary when 37 candidates were ordained as deacons and elders. So many people attended that the sanctuary could not hold the entire congregation! We have located several ordinands who will be attending worship at 10:45 on February 11. To date, four pastors will participate in the service. Rev. Bill McCartney was ordained in 1956 and he plans to attend. Following the service, there will be a reception in The Welcome Center to greet the participating pastors.

On March 17, at the 10:45 service, we will celebrate the beautiful worship aids that enhance our sanctuary. We will learn about the beautiful banners that adorn our place of worship in addition to the communion rail kneelers and our unique altar cross. Members who created the banners and kneelers will be honored, and a reception will follow in The Welcome Center.

April 14 is the Sunday we will recognize the youth who have participated in Youth Sunday worship services throughout the time these services have taken place.

We hope many current and former members will attend to be recognized for their participation in Youth Sundays. Our current youth group will be the worship leaders on April 14. A reception will follow in Asbury Center.

All those who have been confirmed in our sanctuary will be recognized at the 10:45 service on May 19.

You are encouraged to attend as many of these services as you can. The celebrations held to date have been very meaningful for those in attendance.

You may have noticed that the church parking lot has been busier than usual on weekday evenings! This is because in September MLUMC began a partnership with Casa San Jose (CSJ), a local non-profit dedicated to providing services to Latino immigrants in the Pittsburgh area. Their main office is located in Brookline, and many of the more than four thousand clients they serve live near us in the South Hills. CSJ provides a number of services, including social services, youth programs, emergency housing, immigration status support, and English classes.



MLUMC has been providing space for some of these English classes, commonly called ESL classes (English as a Second Language). Each Monday through Thursday at 7:00p.m., up to 100 students enter our building

and climb to the 4th floor Sunday school wing to attend a 90-minute class.

Most students attend twice a week, and are placed in classes according to their English proficiency as determined by volunteers from Literacy Pittsburgh and CSJ.

As you can imagine, this kind of program requires a large volunteer base to succeed, and we would love to add you to the group! You can contact Kim Rhoton to sign up to teach or to be a door greeter, or just to come one evening to observe. No special skills or teaching experience is needed, and you do not need to speak Spanish. The only qualification is that you are willing to help immigrants in our community.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Kim Rhoton at krhoton@mlumc.org.

Remembering Our Baptisms

Sunday, January 14th, was a memorable day as we continued to celebrate the hundredth anniversary of our sanctuary.

People who were baptized in our place of worship were given the opportunity to remember their baptismal vows during the service as they gathered around our marble baptismal font. In addition, the entire congregation was invited to participate in the baptismal portion of the service. Those who were baptized here, dipped their hands in the font, and with the water, formed a cross on their foreheads as they remembered their baptisms. Then many from the congregation came forward to do the same. Our most senior participant, Chuck Vogel, was baptized in 1931. Our most recent participant was Cecelia Demich who was baptized last year.



A large group from the congregation attended the reception in Asbury



Hall coordinated by Donna Chesleigh. During that time, Chuck Vogel made a presentation along with Rob Spicher who was baptized in 1955. Both gentlemen spoke of how much our church has meant to them throughout their lives.

Responding to God's Call

Stephanie Lowe, Youth Ministry Director

One consistent thing in our lives is change. And for our family, we will be experiencing a major change in the next few months. As many of you are aware, for nine of the past ten years, we have taken the youth group to Project Crossroads in Marion, VA, for their annual mission trip. Our association with Project Crossroads actually goes back much further. Kirk began working with Project Crossroads as part of youth mission trips in high school over 25 years ago.

In December of this year, Rev. Harry Howe, the executive director of Project Crossroads, will be retiring. The Board of Directors has asked Kirk to be the next director for the ministry. We will be moving down there in mid-late May to allow for a season of transition at the mission. We are very excited for this new opportunity for our family and for full-time ministry.

However, we are going to miss our many friends and church family in Pittsburgh. Never fear, we have every intention of being back in Pittsburgh periodically and look forward to seeing you all then.

In the meantime, I will be keeping the youth as busy as ever. Look for the traditional soup sales and chocolate covered pretzels to raise money for this year's mission trip. Yes – the plan is still for the youth to come to Project Crossroads July 7-13th for the mission trip. We will also be having a special youth Sunday this year as part of the 100th anniversary celebrations. It is scheduled for April 14th. Also Scout Sunday will be February 25th. This year 6 of our young people will be receiving their Religious Emblem for Scouting. We hope to see you at these events and appreciate your continued support of youth ministries.

Spring & Summer at Weekday Ministries

This is the day the LORD has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm 118:2

Our classrooms are full of adorable little faces and sweet voices. Spring and summer are so much fun at our center. The children and teachers enjoy the outdoors as much as possible. The sunshine gives the children vitamin D and the exercise has so many positive aspects on their little bodies. Being out in nature helps the children build their imagination, promotes happiness, and puts their energy to good use!

The older children enjoy participating in outdoor science experiments and planting a little garden on the patio. Water play is always a highlight. We are thankful for so many wonderful options our property has to offer the children!!



Church Financial Information

By Rob Spicher, Finance Committee Chair

Since 2018, every edition of The Window has included financial information on our Church – this edition is no different. Summarized below are the Church’s 2022 actual, 2023 budgeted, and 2023 actual financial results.

The 2023 budget projected a deficit of over \$100,000, assuming payment in full of the Connectional Contribution (aka Apportionment). Thanks to some unanticipated financial gifts, many expense categories coming in well under budget, and sufficient cash on hand, the Church was able to not only end the year well ahead of budget but also pay the Contribution in full for the first time since 2016.

2023 was a difficult year financially for the WPA UM Conference, due to disaffiliations by numerous churches. 2024 likely will pose similar financial challenges. Hopefully, financial support from our congregation via pledges, unpledged donations, and special gifts will enable both the financial needs of our Church and the amount apportioned to us by the Conference to be satisfied.

The Finance Committee would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all whose pledges, unpledged donations, and special gifts contributed to the 2023 financial results. Here’s hoping for the same support with similar results in 2024!

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.

	2022	% Of	2023	% Of	2023	% Of
Church Budget	Actuals	Expenses	Budget	Expenses	Actuals	Expenses
Revenue:	\$744,890*	98.2%	\$745,560	87.7%	\$769,428	96.1%
Expenses:						
Personnel	\$412,921	54.4%	\$409,825	48.2%	\$397,223	49.6%
Programs & Facilities	145,070	19.1%	196,542	23.1%	166,363	20.8%
Utilities & Taxes	97,868	12.9%	103,800	12.2%	96,467	12.1%
Insurance	54,923	7.2%	62,426	7.3%	62,771	7.8%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference**	36,374	4.8%	66,238	7.8%	66,238	8.3%
Loan Payments	11,251	1.6%	11,251	1.3%	11,251	1.4%
Total Expenses	\$758,407	100.0%	\$850,082	100%	\$800,313	100%
Total Net Income (Loss)	(\$13,517)		(\$104,522)		(\$30,885)	

* Includes estate gifts of approximately \$27,750

** \$69,652 requested in 2022; \$66,238 requested in 2023

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

MISSIONS & OUTREACH

YOU are making a DIFFERENCE for Missions

You have positively impacted the lives others through MLUMC! How? You contributed to the Hello Neighbor Christmas Tree giving tree by donating 53+ household goods for recently arriving immigrants and refugees!

You helped with the Rummage Sale either providing goods to sell, organizing donations or buying gently used treasures! Past Rummage proceeds have gone to support those in need around the globe:

Ukraine via Brother's Brother and UMCOR

Washington Mission

Haiti

Zwickau, Germany

Nyadire, Zimbabwe

Project Crossroads; Marion, VA

Spirit Lake Mission, ND

Eastbrook Mission, PA

Connellsville Area Community Ministries

Erie United Methodist Alliance

Prison Outreach Ministry, WPAUMC UM Human

Svc of Johnstown, PA

Ruth M. Smith Center

Pittsburgh Ukrainian refugees by purchasing perogies during lent

And MLUMC's Church Apportionment!

Upcoming distributions are likely to go to efforts above and UMCOR work in Israel/Gaza;

Urseline Support Services aiding senior citizens of Allegheny County; and the United Methodist Appalachian Ministry Network (UMAMN).

You have another opportunity: Between now and our June Rummage Sale, the Mission and Outreach Committee seeks your suggestions for ways to positively impact those experiencing homelessness in Pittsburgh; if you have recommendations or contacts to share, please contact L. Bailly through the church office.

You are making a difference,

Thank YOU!!!

Missions & Outreach Committee

A New Committee Continuing MLUMC's History of Providing Hospitality, Ministry, & Service to Others

On October 28, 2023, Charge Conference approved the merger of the Missions Committee and the Community Events and Outreach Committee into a new committee – the Missions and Outreach Committee. Said merger became effective on January 1, 2024. The Missions Committee had for decades distributed monies received from rummage sales, designated endowments, and individual donations to social service organizations throughout the world. The Community Events and Outreach Committee had for years provided hospitality and fellowship through hosted events (such as fish fries) and outreach through connections with churches and social service organizations in the Greater Pittsburgh area. The synergies between the two committees led to this merger with the expectation that “the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts.”

The new Missions and Outreach Committee, chaired by Rob Spicher, has four subcommittees;

- 1) Hosted Community Events
- 2) Local Ministry Partnerships
- 3) Community Outreach
- 4) Missions

Long-standing activities and initiatives in these areas will be carried forward – new ones are sure to be spawned as well. Members of the former Missions and Community Events and Outreach committees, as well as several individuals appointed by Charge Conference, comprise the membership of this new committee. Additional members are always welcome.

An organizational meeting of this new committee was held on January 7th. Future meetings will be held bi-monthly (every other month) and will be open to the congregation in person or via ZOOM. If you would like more information about the newly formed Missions and Outreach Committee or would like to join it, please contact Rob Spicher at 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com.



MLUMC Promotes Self-Care & Sustainability For Girls in Zimbabwean Communities

Thanks to a grant from MLUMC Mission Team in 2023, a twelve-year-old program in Nyadire, Zimbabwe is helping more girls sew their own reusable sanitary supplies to avoid missing school during their monthly cycles.

The first program volunteers were led by MLUMC's own Bonnie Lawson, now the U.S. Coordinator. Serving the multi-church nonprofit known as The Nyadire Connection (TNC), they made pre-sewn, reusable cotton sanitary napkins, held sewing parties, and shipped unassembled materials for participating students to make their own pads and padmaking kits. Dubbed the Girl Empowerment Pad (GEP) program, in 2023 it transitioned to purchasing all the materials in Zimbabwe through a newly appointed purchasing agent responsible for domestic procurement of supplies.



The Zimbabwean partners of this grass roots effort, supported by MLUMC, now "own" 100% of the operational portion of the program. The program no longer incurs shipping costs or storage fees, and local procurement of supplies ensures that funding goes directly to support local businesses and entrepreneurs.

While the Nyadire team has successfully assumed control of operations, the transition to complete self-sufficiency is ongoing. Currently GEP funding comes from individuals and small grants. The program will continue to rely on these funding sources, but is looking to diversify its support and empower the community to be self-sufficient.

To generate income to purchase GEP materials, Nyamhara Primary School has proposed a Girl Empowerment Garden. Offered by school leaders and families, the proposal reflects the value of the GEP program in the community. They will provide and manage a 1.25-acre plot for a pilot farming project whose proceeds will be funneled into the school's GEP program. This program is in the early stages, and investments will be required. The first step is to develop a basic agricultural educational program for the primary schools.

Lawson and other GEP supporters are grateful to the Mission Team and other church support for this program. "I am excited about the next chapter and look

forward to sharing our journey," Lawson says. "Nobody can do it alone; it takes different talents in various networks to make things happen."

To make a donation, write a check to TNC with "GEP Program" in the memo line, and mail to: Bonnie Lawson; c/o Christ United Methodist Church (the depository); 44 Highland Rd., Bethel Park, PA 15102



HOME OF HOPE OUTREACH SCHOOL SPONSORS

The children are back to school this month in Zimbabwe.

A big THANK YOU to those who paid for fees and a backpack with school supplies for a child.

Louanne Baily

Brad Shoff - Network

Gloria Barber *

Bette Lou Reichard *

Dan & Lori Barr *

Marsha Resinol *

Martha Clarke - Kerygma

Pete & Beth Santore

Vera Jane Cornes

Rob & Jane Spicher *

DeLuca family

United Women in Faith *

Gretchen Franz

Brenda Vogel

Judy Lewis

Rich & Sandy Waters

Dawn Lonsinger *

Barbara Watson

Bill & Karen Manning

Paul & Kathy Watson

Mixers/Homebuilders *

(* New in 2023)

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

3319 West Liberty Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15216

412-531-7131 | Fax (412)-531-7155 | www.mlumc.org

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Permit No. 245

Thank you for a successful Christmas cookie sale!

Thank you to everyone who made the annual UWF Christmas cookie sale and British tearoom a success - especially those who baked such delicious treats!

We enjoyed seeing so many familiar and new faces at the first in-person sale we've held since the pandemic.

Special shout out to members of the youth group (and Andrew Carvender) who made the tearoom especially merry!

Thanks to your support, we made over \$2,500 at the event – some of which we've already donated to local and global charities benefitting women, children and youth, including:

- MLUMC Youth - \$100
- UWF Legacy Endowment Fund Day of Giving - \$200
- GEP Solar Hydration Project - \$500
- Ruth M Smith Center - \$250
- Henderson Settlement - \$200
- Red Bird Mission - \$200

Our next fundraiser is the annual flower basket sale on Saturday, May 11 from 10 am to noon.

Look for more information in upcoming church bulletins.

