

The Window into the heart of

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

Volume 10, Number 2, Summer 2024

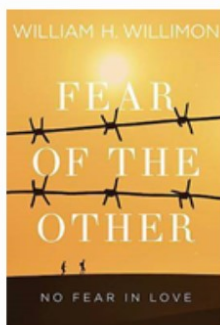


FAITH FOR TODAY

**SUMMER
SPEAKER
SERIES**

9:30AM | SUNDAYS | WELCOME CENTER | JUNE 2 - SEPT 1

FEAR OF THE OTHER | JUNE 2



John Esaias will lead a discussion of Bishop Will Willimon's book, which invites us to consider the gospel command to love those considered to be "Other" or outside the mainstream Christian culture.

DR. JAMES MOORE | JUNE 9

Dr. James H. Moore was inaugurated as President of West Virginia Wesleyan College on September 29, 2023. His presentation will highlight current trends in higher education and their impact on small Christian colleges.



UWF | JUNE 23 MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD ON BEHALF OF WOMEN, CHILDREN, & YOUTH

Join UWF members for a brief history of this 150-year organization that began with 8 women and now includes nearly half a million members. Learn more about the ministries we support, thanks to your generous support.



VBS 2024 PREVIEW | JUNE 30



Come learn what VBS campers will be doing this summer, and what you can do to support this community mission!

MISSION BARN | JUNE 16 A MEMBER OF THE UMCOR RELIEF SUPPLY NETWORK



Katie Peterson will present the four-fold mission of the Mission Barn, the immediate needs and opportunities for volunteers to assist UMCOR providing disaster response, and education about local and nationwide mission.

DR. AMY-JILL LEVINE | JULY 7

Internationally recognized theologian, Dr. Amy Jill Levine, will return for a third year via Zoom to discuss her new study book, *The Gospel of Mark*. We will have the opportunity to ask questions about her interpretations of the stories of Jesus's life that are written in that book of the New Testament.



MAKE JOYFUL NOISE | JULY 14



This annual program will include favorite hymns to sing together, in addition to musical selections from church members of all ages.

JOHN DELANO | JULY 21 INTERSECTION OF FAITH AND POLITICS

Jon will discuss how faith and politics have become intertwined and the impact of such during an election year. He will also discuss his careers in politics, education, and broadcasting.



CASA SAN JOSE | JULY 28



Come learn about the many programs offered at CSJ for Latino immigrants in Pittsburgh, and how you can get involved.

PACKING SCHOOL SUPPLIES AUGUST 4

Join members of the Missions and Outreach Team in packing school supplies for local children in need. All materials will be provided, we just need those willing to help!



UNITY SERVICE OUTSIDE AUGUST 11



Our normal worship services and Faith For Today program will be combined into a single outdoor service on this day. Please join us for worship and mission opportunities, followed by a cookout.

GERMANY TRIP REFLECTIONS AUGUST 18

Mr. Mitchell Stecker will share reflections and photographs from his Germany trip earlier in the summer.



YOUTH MISSION TRIP REPORT AUGUST 25



Our youth and adult leaders will report on their 2024 mission trip to work with Project Crossroads in Marion, VA.

COMBINED ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL | SEPTEMBER 1

Pastor Tom Strandburg will lead a combined Sunday School lesson for the holiday weekend.



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Multiplying Love: God's Vision for the Church in the World

Much has already been written and published since the closing gavel was sounded at this month's meeting of the General Conference of the United Methodist Church in Charlotte, North Carolina. I would refer you to our Western PA Conference website for a complete recap of General Conference events (www.wpaumc.org/post_gc). We will also make some printed copies of the General Conference recap available on the literature table in the Narthex, outside of our sanctuary. I would encourage us all to inform ourselves of the actions, some of which were quite historic, of this most recently completed General Conference session.

News from this conference has sparked a variety of reactions throughout the denomination, particularly here in Western Pennsylvania. As a pastor and a leader in the United Methodist Church, I must confess to feeling much like I did forty years ago when my parent's marriage was ending in divorce. The arguments, the hurt feelings, the misunderstandings, the "taking of sides," and the need for separation of the divorcing parties are all too familiar to me. As a child, I loved **both** of my parents. It seemed to me that they had once been so very good together. Of course, by the summer of 1984 even I realized that that day had passed. Suddenly, my hope was transformed. The new desire of my young heart became this – that my parents' lives would

be better apart than they had been together.

That is now the desire of my heart for our beloved denomination, the United Methodist Church, and the alternative expressions of Methodism which have been or may yet be spawned through recent movements of disaffiliation. I pray to God every day for what Dr. Paul Chilcote has recently called "*the multiplication of love that transforms the world.*" (*Multiplying Love*, p.6) As Jesus himself instructed his disciples. "*This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.*" (John 15:12) Love is the source, the means, and the goal of our discipleship and inclusive love must be the foundation of a renewed Methodism in our own communities and around the world. Our founder, John Wesley, provides the template in his sermon, "*On Pleasing All Men:*"

Let love not visit you as a transient guest, but be the constant ruling disposition of your soul. See that your heart is filled at all times and on all occasions with real, genuine benevolence; not to those only that love you, but to every soul. Let it pant in your heart; let it sparkle in your eyes, let it shine on all your actions. Whenever you open your lips, let it be with love; and let there be in your tongue the law of kindness. Your word will then distill as the rain, and as the dew upon the tender herb. Be not constrained or limited in your affection, but let it embrace every child of God.

So Be It!

Pastor Tom Strandburg

**Thank You,
Stephanie Lowe
& Scott Miller**

**Farewell Reception
for Pastor Scott
& Natalie Miller**

**June 2
Asbury Center**

Pastor Scott has accepted an appointment in a Washington County church so his last Sunday with us is June 2.

Immediately following the 10:45 service, we will honor him during a reception in Asbury Center.

This will be held in conjunction with our program on the history of Asbury Center.

**Love Gift for
Stephanie Lowe
&
Pastor Scott Miller**

In appreciation for all the dedicated service Stephanie and Pastor Scott have offered during their years on staff, we would like to present them with gifts during their receptions. If you would like to contribute, please make checks payable to the church and mark them, "Love Offerings." We will combine all of the contributions and share them equally with Stephanie and Pastor Scott. Checks may be placed in the offering plate or sent to the office.

**SUMMER
RUMMAGE
SALE**

SATURDAY, JUNE 1ST | 9:00A - 2:00P

On Saturday, June 1st, we will once again have an opportunity to show that rummage can do good. That is the date of our mid-year Rummage Sale, sponsored by the Missions and Outreach Committee. The sale will run from 9am to 2pm, with proceeds going to mission and outreach projects/organizations locally, nationally, and around the world.

MLUMC has for decades conducted rummage sales, generally in June and in November. This long-standing tradition has been supported by a changing stable of volunteers. As folks have moved on, others have stepped in to ensure that this vital outreach ministry remains vibrant. One thing that has remained constant, however, is the rummage! We all seemingly have lots of it, and it is always a sight to see some of the items that are donated. To see these donated items turned into proceeds for missions and outreach reinforces the adage of "one person's trash being another person's treasure!"

If you have not previously volunteered or shopped at one of our rummage sales, June 1st will be your chance! Mary Garber is coordinating the sale, and I will be assisting as needed. We will no doubt have plenty of items to sell and many shoppers eager to buy. To ensure the sale's success, a full compliment of volunteers will be needed. If you would like to help but have not yet communicated your availability, please reach out to either Mary (mgarber1989@aol.com) or Rob Spicher (robert.spicher@pnc.com) and we will add you to the list.



Asbury Center full of rummage & shoppers



2023 Fall Rummage Sale, line out the door

**THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR SUPPORT
OF THE JUNE 1ST RUMMAGE SALE.**

ROB SPICHER, MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE CHAIR



SHINE BRIGHT

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

"YOUR WORD IS A LAMP UNTO MY FEET AND A LIGHT UNTO MY PATH"
PSALM 119

JULY 29th - AUGUST 2nd

9:30am - 12:00pm

AGES 4 & UP

Vacation Bible School planning is well underway! This year we are doing a camping theme, and all of the stories involve the outdoors:

Garden of Eden (Genesis 1) We take care of God's creation!

God Goes with Jacob (Genesis 28:10-22) God is always with us!

Ruth Chooses to Go (Ruth 1) We will trust in God!

John the Baptist Prepares the Way (Matthew 3:1-17) Tell the Good News!

Fishing with Jesus (John 21) Cast your nets!

In addition to Bible stories, children will explore science concepts such as bees, animal habitats, food webs, and the water cycle. We will reinforce the Bible stories and science lessons with games, crafts, and a snack that fits the daily theme. MLUMC Music Director Mitchell Stecker will also be on hand to teach music in small groups.

This year we are extending our day by 30 minutes: children will arrive at 9:30 a.m. and stay until noon. We are also planning a special field trip for the last day. Children and adults will travel by school bus to Bird Park for our activities that day, which will include a nature walk and a water cycle lesson.

We need your support to have a successful week! To help, please pray for the children and adults all week long. Second, if you are a teen or adult able to volunteer (even for one day), please contact Kim Rhoton to sign up. Third, if you are able to make a financial donation to help with the cost of supplies, these can be directed to the church office and noted for VBS. Finally, please share VBS information with anyone you know who has children ages 4 years and up. Parents can register online by going to the church website.

Thank you for your continued support of Vacation Bible School!

REGISTER AT MLUMC.ORG

United Women In Faith Summer Events



RUMMAGE SALE LUNCH

June 1

Members of the UWF will, once again, coordinate and serve the Saturday rummage sale workers' lunch. An important tradition, the lunch gives us an opportunity to show our appreciation for everyone's hard work and dedication to this semi-annual fundraiser. More importantly, the sale brings people into our church to witness our outreach and love for God's people.



FAITH FOR TODAY

June 23

We hope you'll join us during the Sunday School Faith for Today series on June 23 when UWF members will offer a brief history of our 150-year-old organization, as well as information about the women, children, and youth ministries we sustain, thanks to your generous support.



POP-UP MUM SALE

Autumn

UWF members will hold their annual pop-up mum sale in the church parking lot sometime in early autumn. Look for more information in upcoming church bulletins.

Great is Thy Faithfulness

100th Year Sanctuary Celebration

Schedule of Events



**2
JUN**

CELEBRATING ASBURY CENTER AND RECEPTION FOR PASTOR SCOTT & NATALIE MILLER

Immediately following the 10:45 service we will proceed to Asbury Center. John Conti will share the history of this gathering area since it is also 100 years old, and it will be followed with a reception for Pastor Scott and his wife, Natalie. Since he has accepted a new appointment, this will be his last Sunday with us. Everyone is encouraged to attend this event to learn more about our historic building as well as to offer Pastor Scott and Natalie best wishes upon their departure.

RECOGNITION OF THOSE WHO WERE MARRIED IN THE SANCTUARY

During the 10:45 service, we will give special recognition to people who have been married in the sanctuary. Part of the service will be devoted to couples renewing their wedding vows, and all married couples will have the opportunity to do so even if they were not married in our sanctuary. Surviving spouses will also be recognized during this occasion. Immediately following the service, a reception will be held in Asbury Center, and we hope many couples will bring their wedding portraits for display.

**15
SEPT**

**13
OCT**

CELEBRATION OF MUSIC

On this Sunday, during the 10:45 service, our musical program will be highlighted with recognition given to all of our musicians and instruments that enhance our worship services. In addition, on a date to be determined in October, we will have a special musical program that will honor our church musicians from the past and present.

CELEBRATION BANQUET & REDEDICATION SERVICE

On this weekend, we will have major events taking place on both Saturday and Sunday.

We will begin with an Evensong Service in the sanctuary on Saturday evening, and then enjoy a grand banquet in Asbury Center to enjoy fellowship and reflection upon the past year's activities. On Sunday, during the 10:45 service, we will conclude our year long celebration with a rededication of our sanctuary in recognition of its first Sunday on November 23, 1924.

**23 & 24
NOV.**

WEEKDAY MINISTRIES

SPRING/SUMMER 2024

BY BETH BRACK, DIRECTOR OF WEEKDAY MINISTRIES

We just finished our yearly state inspection. The inspector had all praises about our facility and our staff!!! Currently, we are preparing to celebrate Teacher Appreciate Week. The families of our center have joined together to make it a very special week for the staff of Weekday Ministries! The week will begin with an early rise and shine breakfast and finish with a pizza party lunch.

We have 12 Pre-K graduates this year. They are busy preparing for a graduation ceremony which will be May 23rd. The next few months will be filled with plenty of outside time exploring and enjoying. A favorite time of year for the children and teachers too!



STORKBITES A FREE GROUP FOR NEW MOMS

By Edi Davidson

A group of moms and babies met in the Welcome Center starting at the end of March.

There were 8 to 12 at each meeting. Storkbites is a free group for new moms with babies under a year old. It got started in 2003 by two OB nurses from Sewickley Hospital and met in Moon Township. During the pandemic, meetings were held on Zoom. When I moved to Brookline 3 years ago

I started thinking about meeting in person again. I have been happy to meet at the church where there is a projector so we can bring speakers in on Zoom and plenty of parking.

My qualifications for this work are my background as an registered nurse working on an OB unit for over 40 years, and the experience of offering this support group for so many years. I love hearing the stories that new moms have to tell. Many of our groups went on to become friends for many years.

I hope to be able to continue meeting here, and would love to find someone to partner with me in leading these meetings.

EDIDAVIDSON@HOTMAIL.COM

412-445-3123

My Beloved Church Family ,

Saying good-bye is hard! Each time I looked at what I'd written, I shook my head and said "no, that's not it." But, The Window has a deadline, and I need to tell you what is on my heart before my time as your pastor comes to a close. I can't believe my 26 years of association with MLUMC is coming to a close. Twenty-one years as a plain old member, and five as your Associate Pastor.

First, I loved being one of your pastors. For the past five years, we have laughed together, cried together, worked side by side, and endured unimaginable challenges and change together. I have loved getting to know so many of you (first as a fellow member, then even more as your pastor), celebrating your milestones, mourning the difficult changes, and helping you grow in your faith in Christ.

Did we always do it right? Maybe not always. Were there hurts and disappointments? Maybe some. Are there regrets? Maybe a few. But, they pale in comparison to the ministry we've done, the relationships we've built, and the lives we've changed for the better all in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Second, your love has made me a better pastor. I will take with me so many cherished memories not just of the things we did together but, of so many of you who have been good and godly examples of Jesus and His love. As much as I have tried to show you the love of God, you have outdone me in showing it to Natalie and me. From day one, you welcomed my family and me into your lives. From notes of encouragement over the years, to your countless prayers, your trust, your friendship, your willingness to try new things, your patience, and most of all, how you embraced my wife and our daughter, I can say Natalie, Madeline and I are truly blessed. Thank you. Your love has made me a better pastor.

Unfortunately, like in *The Mandalorian*, this is the way. As much as I would have liked to continue being your pastor, it is time for me to go, if I am to remain faithful to my beliefs about God and His Word. This is the way of Methodists. God has been faithful to us in the past and will remain faithful to the end. So, I have every confidence that you will be in good hands as you stay faithful to God and keep growing in Christ together. I am praying for all of you as you move forward under Pastor Tom's excellent leadership.

Part of my saying good-bye is to let you know that I cherish many of the relationships and friendships my family and I have forged at MLUMC, the UMC policy is generally that I can no longer provide any pastoral counseling, as well as any baptisms, weddings, and so on. This also is the way of Methodists.

My time as your Associate Pastor officially ends on June 2nd, which will be my last Sunday in the pulpit. There is a farewell luncheon on that day after the 10:45am service. I hope to see you there. Bring tissues, cause while it may not be well known, I tend to be a crier at things like that.

Friends, as I close this letter know that this is my prayer for each and every one of you. It's a combination of several Bible verses I have found particularly poignant and moving over the years:

I pray that all of you will trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight. Be careful, then, how you live, not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. I also pray that out of God's glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

(from Proverbs 3:5-6; Ephesians 5:15-16; Ephesians 3:16-19).

Thank you and may God richly bless you, my beloved.

With many fond blessings,

Pastor Scott

WELCOME, NEW MEMBERS!



NEW MEMBERS AND THEIR SHEPHERDS

On Sunday, March 17th, we accepted three new members into our congregation: Maria Olivo, Glen Connell, and Rich Dalzatto. Get to know a bit about our newest additions to our church family below!

MARIO OLIVIO

"Many thanks to the MLUMC congregation for the warm welcome that I received as a new member of the church and a special thanks to Francie Robb for her gentle presence and guidance. I am also eternally grateful to those family members and friends who have demonstrated what it looks like to be a Christian and in particular to my husband, Michael, for his unwavering support. I was born in Pittsburgh and have spent the majority of my adulthood in the Pittsburgh area. Michael and I have been longtime residents of Mt. Lebanon where we raised our two children, Natalie and Joseph.

I earned a BA in Economics and Latin American Studies at the University of Pittsburgh. After graduation, I worked in the insurance industry for several years and then retired to be an at home mom. I returned to the workforce as a Benefits Specialist at Mt. Lebanon School District while earning an MBA at Waynesburg University. I am now enjoying my second retirement.

I currently volunteer as an ESL teacher at MLUMC. I am grateful to MLUMC for their support of Casa de San Jose by providing the much needed classrooms. My favorite hobby is spending time with my husband and our children. I also enjoy hiking, traveling, watercolor painting and reading."

GLEN CONNELL

"I grew up in the Philadelphia suburbs (but a Pens fan now) before moving to Pittsburgh in the early 2000s. When moving west to Pittsburgh, my family moved south to Florida. I enjoy camping and traveling with my wife (Marcia) and daughter (Parker) and spending time at out rental property on Hatteras Island, NC. Currently work for the Catholic Cemeteries Assoc. and manage Queen of Heaven Cemetery in McMurray. I started attending to MLUMC after Parker went on the mission trip and I started to see all the positive things the Church does through her eyes."

RICH DALZATTO

"Rich Dalzatto is a native of the South Hills but currently lives in North Strabane. He is married to Michelle and has two children in college, Sarah and John. Rich graduated from Penn State University in 1995. After graduation he trained to be an investment advisor, which he does to this day at South Hills Financial Group. In his free time Rich enjoys golfing, reading and going to the movies. He is looking forward to becoming an active member of the church and making new friends."

SECRETARIAL POSITION FILLED

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is pleased to announce that Lori Barr has been selected to fill the position of part-time secretary.

Lori is a long time member of our congregation who has volunteered in numerous ministries of our church. She is very familiar with our church's organization and is known well to many of our congregants. Combining these attributes with her office experience and working in the public school system, the committee feels she is well suited for this position.

WELCOME LORI!



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 2023 actual, 2024 budgeted, and 2024 first quarter financial results.

The 2024 budget projects a deficit of over \$100,000, assuming payment in full of the Connectional Contribution (aka Apportionment). A projected deficit of this amount is consistent with deficits that have been projected in recent years. Fortunately, revenues from unbudgeted sources plus expense management have resulted in actual deficits being far less than those budgeted. Let's hope we can say the same at the end of 2024!

The first quarter 2024 numbers have us off to a good start. The revenue number was bolstered by pledgors who have paid their 2024 pledge in full. Expenses (if annualized) are also in line with the budget, notwithstanding payment of one-time expenses such as worker's compensation. And thank goodness that we had so little snow...lol.

The Finance Committee would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all whose pledges, non-pledged gifts, and other financial contributions ensure that our staff is paid, our buildings are maintained, and our ministries continue to flourish. Please keep that financial support coming!

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	2023 <u>Actuals</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>	2024 <u>Budget</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>	2024 1st <u>Qrt. Actuals</u>	% Of <u>Expenses</u>
Revenue:	\$769,428*	96.1%	\$746,560	87.8%	\$260,571	125.4%
Expenses:						
Personnel	\$397,223	49.6%	\$411,305	48.3%	\$97,588	47.0%
Programs & Facilities	166,363	20.8%	192,041	22.6%	47,799	23.0%
Utilities & Taxes	96,467	12.1%	101,800	12.0%	34,580	16.6%
Insurance	62,771	7.8%	65,929	7.8%	17,853	8.6%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference*	66,238	8.3%	68,287	8.0%	7,200	3.5%
Loan Payments	11,251	1.4%	11,251	1.3%	2,813	1.4%
Total Expenses	\$800,313	100.0%	\$850,613	100%	\$207,833	100%
Total Net Income (Loss)	(\$30,885)		(\$104,053)		\$52,738	

* \$68,238 requested in 2023 and paid in full

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

MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE – FINANCIAL PARTNERS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!

Many of the events (such as large community meals) hosted by the Missions and Outreach Committee are self-sustaining, with free will donations from attendees covering event costs. Relative to activities organized by the Committee, however, such is not always the case. Fortunately, some members of our congregation have become regular financial supporters of these activities, sparing the general church budget from taking a financial "hit" to cover them.

As the Missions and Outreach Committee ramps up its 2024 activities, there is an opportunity to provide similar financial support. By becoming a "financial partner" of this 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 in the latter half of 2023 was the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner, which for the first time was exclusively at MLUMC and featured eat-in, take-out, and delivery. Although one-time donations played an important part in covering the costs of the dinner, funds provided by "financial partners" helped guarantee the dinner's success. Having "financial partners" in place will ensure that activities such as the Community Thanksgiving Dinner can continue to flourish.

If you are interested in becoming a "financial partner" of the Missions and Outreach Committee, please contact Rob Spicher (Committee Chair) at either 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com.

Thank you in advance for your financial support.

2024 Lenten COMMUNITY FISH FRIES

**A HAT TRICK IN PROVIDING GREAT FOOD
AND OUTSTANDING HOSPITALITY!**

ROB SPICHER, MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE CHAIR



Three goals by the same player in a hockey game is a tremendous achievement known as a “hat trick.” By any measure, the 3 Community Fish Fries sponsored by the Missions and Outreach Committee during the 2024 Lenten Season certainly scored a “hat trick” for all involved!

We served approximately 2,100 meals in total (eat-in, take-out, limited delivery) during our February 16th, March 8th, and March 29th (Good Friday) Fish Fries. We are unique in that we do not charge – all can eat regardless of financial means. Thanks to generous donations not only from attendees but also financial partners of our committee, we were able to cover all costs – an amazing testimonial to those who believe in these events and the ministry they are providing. We had quite the menu with plenty of everything (particularly desserts). Rest assured that no one went home hungry! Live piano music at all 3 Fish Fries, as well as the offering of Communion elements and a prayer table on Good Friday, were all big hits. Attendees were from all parts of our larger church “family” – congregants, friends, Weekday Ministries, Scout Troop 23, English Second Language, Dormont neighbors, Duplicate Bridge, Bethany Evangelical, First Presbyterian of Castle Shannon, St. Paul AME, Beulah Baptist, etc. Hospitality and fellowship were plentiful for all!

Many thanks to all who supported these Fish Fries through your volunteering of time and/or donating of money. We could not have done it without you! And special thanks to the Fish Fry leadership team of Donna and Alan Chesleigh, Liz and Tom DiPietro, Linh Quach and Dave Langenbacher, and Matt Baker –



WE REALLY COULD NOT HAVE DONE IT WITHOUT YOU!

Missions & Outreach Committee

*Continuing MLUMC's Long History of
Providing Hospitality, Ministry, &
Service to Others*

In October 2023, Charge Conference approved the merger of the former Missions Committee and the former Community Events and Outreach Committee into a “new” committee – the Missions and Outreach Committee. Said merger became effective on January 1, 2024. The “new” committee has hit the ground running!

The former Missions Committee had for decades distributed monies received from rummage sales, designated endowments, and individual donations to social service organizations throughout the world. The former 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 Missions and Outreach Committee, chaired by Rob Spicher, has four subcommittees;

- 1) Hosted Community Events
Donna Chesleigh - Coordinator
- 2) Local Ministry Partnerships
Don Langston- Coordinator
- 3) Community Outreach
Liz DiPietro-Coordinator
- 4) Missions
Louanne Baily- Coordinator

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.

The committee meets bi-monthly (every other month). Meetings will be open to the congregation in person or via ZOOM.

If you would like more information about the Missions and Outreach Committee or would like to join it, please contact Rob Spicher at 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com.

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

3319 West Liberty Avenue

Pittsburgh, PA 15216

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*Martha Clarke & son Jeffrey
working the Dessert Table*

The Dessert Table: more blessed to give than to receive

by Monica Matviko Kao

"Desserts put smiles on faces!" says Dessert Table volunteer Martha Clarke. The smiles are one of many blessings for volunteers who work the Dessert Table for the MLUMC Fish Fries and other food events hosted by our church's Outreach Committee.

Because our Fish Fry dinners are free or paid for by donations, they are different from others in Pittsburgh. That difference is delicious when it comes to dessert. The table where people choose their dessert is overflowing with cookies, cakes, pies and pastries, donated by businesses. These bakery businesses give to the church's Food Lift which feeds hungry people every day. When the church is providing a free dinner, the Food Lift and the bakeries donate to the Dessert Table. The donating bakeries are the Giant Eagle Market District, Panera's, La Gourmandine, Party Cake and The Pie Place.

Once the baked goods have been delivered and before the Fish Fry doors are open, the Dessert Table volunteers begin unpacking, cutting, dishing out and displaying the wide variety of sweets. It can be a workload, but as volunteer Martha Clarke says, it has its rewards, "I happen to like desserts—and others like them too! We always have a big selection, thanks to the Food Lift folks. Our guests take their time looking at the desserts to make sure they find a favorite or one with the most chocolate, or ask if we have more pie. Little kids look at their moms to make sure it's okay to take a cookie or two. Desserts put smiles on faces!"

This year's Good Friday Fish Fry served hundreds of people. Martha was prepared because her son Jeffrey, who grew up in the church, was visiting for Easter weekend. "He volunteered to help at the dessert table," she said. "He seemed to take over and organized it in a more efficient way, all the while remembering the events and fun times he had in Asbury Center. I was happy to share this experience with Jeffrey, and he was impressed with how active our church is now." And so for Martha and Jeffrey, the day was blessed.