



The Steeple

February 2022

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! Many of us associate February with love. This makes sense since it the month when Valentine's Day occurs. We will be seeing images of hearts and red. We will be reminded to purchase our cards, gifts, and candies for our sweethearts. Many of us will be going out for romantic dinner, while others will have a special meal at home. February is a month where love is in the air!

When we hear the word love, we most often associate it with feelings of romance even though we know that there are other types of love. There is a special bond that we feel for members of our family and close friends. We also love God, our country, our favorite sports teams, and special kinds of food. In these examples, the word "love" is the same, but we know it means something different depending on what we are talking about.

There are times when love evoke positive emotions but there are moments when loving even a family member is difficult. We might express it by saying, "I love you, but I don't like you right now." Even though we may not appreciate their behavior, we are still committed to them as a spouse, a sibling, or a friend no matter how hard it may be. Others are more difficult for us to love either because of what they have done, who they are or how they have treated us. This could be a close relative or just an acquaintance.

The issue of loving difficult people is not a new one. In fact, Jesus had a few things to say about loving others. They are as relevant in our day of social media and political divide as they were to people living under the reign of a foreign government centuries ago.

As we continue through a series of sermons based on things Jesus said, we will examine what Jesus taught about loving our enemies on February sixth. In some ways it is one of the more challenging things that Jesus preached. Most of us can justify our dislike even our hatred for those who have hurt us. The call to love our enemies whether political or personal seems like a monumental task. Jesus reminds us that it is rooted in the very character of God.

Jesus' teaching to love our enemies expands our understanding of who God is and how we are to treat each other. On February thirteenth we consider another area where we are challenged to think beyond our comfort zone. We remember that scripture teach us to love God and to love our neighbor. In a world where there is so much need, who is my neighbor? Where does my obligation to love the other end? Jesus addressed those questions by telling a familiar story. I hope that you will join us as we consider what Jesus said.

As we think about some of the things Jesus said over the next couple of months, I pray that we will grow in our relationship with God. I want us to have a deeper understanding of the things Jesus taught and I desire for us to apply them to our lives. I am looking forward to worshiping with you in person or online.

Blessings,
Pastor Keith

**JOIN US FOR WORSHIP! ON SUNDAYS AT 8:30AM AND 11:00AM
ADULT SMALL GROUP AT 9:45AM
CHILDREN'S CHURCH AT 11:00AM**

Happenings....

The Neighborhood Table | Feb. 3 | Fellowship Hall

BUMC is continuing to partner with the Fox Chapel UMC to provide meals to the Sharpsburg Community.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the meal at BUMC starting at 2:30 PM. The meals are then transported to Sharpsburg and volunteers are needed there to help serve and clean up afterwards. This has been a very rewarding ministry so far, so please consider volunteering by calling Roger Cramer at 724-443-2847.

Drive Thru Dinner | Feb. 8 | Fellowship Hall

The Mission Team is committed to begin serving a monthly meal for The Lighthouse. Our vision is to be able to serve our neighbors in New Fellowship Hall whenever covid restrictions are lifted. If the Lord is calling you to participate in this new ministry in one capacity or another or if you have questions, please contact Carol Skolnik at cnikskol@gmail.com.

Bakerstown Book Club – Our next meeting will be on Wednesday, February 9th, at 7:00pm in the Library. Two books have been chosen to read and discuss: *The Unlikely Yarn of the Dragon Lady* by Sharon Mondragon and *The Secret Keepers of Old Depot Grocery* by Amanda Cox. If you love to read, join us on February 9th, whether you've read the books or not. Please just come along and join us for food, fun, and fellowship. All "Book Lovers" are welcome!! There's always chocolate!!

GriefShare Outreach Ministry 2022 Winter/Spring Schedule

Once a month Winter Get-togethers: February 16th at 7pm in the Wesley Room.

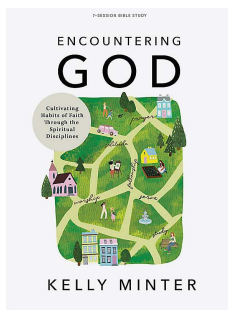
NEW series of weekly meetings begins March 2nd through May 25th, Wednesday evenings from 7:00pm till 8:30pm.

If you or someone you know is experiencing the loss of a loved one, we encourage you to please accept this as your personal invitation to join with us. GriefShare is a friendly, caring group of people who will walk alongside you through one of life's most difficult experiences so that you don't have to go through the grieving process alone. Our GriefShare program is co-led by Rev. Bill Dambach, Marcia Shipley, Marge Kirkpatrick, Judy Moore and Tim McDermott. GriefShare is a drop-in anytime group and open to anyone in the church or community. All are welcome.

No Pancake Breakfast in February

The UMM will not be doing a Pancake Breakfast in February 2022.

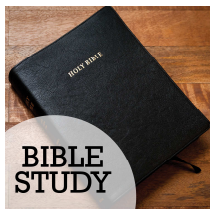
We will assess the situation in February to see if we can return to indoor dining or if we will need to continue with Drive-Thru Breakfasts in March 2022.



Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study – NEW LENTEN STUDY! Beginning Thursday morning, February 24th, at 9:00am, we will begin a new Bible study for Lent entitled: "Encountering God: Cultivating Habits of Faith Through The Spiritual Disciplines" by Kelly Minter. Spiritual disciplines are essential to a more vibrant spiritual life and knowing God more intimately. Join with us in this 7 session Bible study as Kelly unpacks the biblical foundation for these sacred habits along with approachable ways to practice disciplines like prayer, Bible study, worship, rest, simplicity, generosity, celebration, and many more. Instead of being just one more thing on your to-do list, you will find that

these habits of faith can actually create more margin in your life – providing peace and rest as you walk closer with Jesus. Come along with us as we "Practice His Presence" this Lenten season. Study Guides are \$15.00.

Happenings....



Are you looking for a new opportunity to deepen your faith, grow as a disciple, and serve others? Pastor Matt is creating a Bible Study to do just that. Through the next few months, the sermon series will be focusing on discipleship. The Bible Study will be designed to start a conversation around the Scripture the sermon was based on. These Bible studies work best in small groups (less than 12-15 people). They are designed to start conversations without much preparation beforehand, making it possible for anyone to lead a group. Finally, having multiple groups meeting at different times on different days will give more people the opportunity to join in.

Pastor Matt will be holding two separate informational meetings at the church on January 31 at 7pm and on February 2 at 6pm. Come to learn more and participate in a brief study. A zoom link will also be provided for those who cannot attend in person.



Save the date for the 2022 Mission Trip. July 24-30, 2022. Sign ups will follow. Location still to be determined.

Year End Financial Report

	November 2021	December 2021	YTD December 2021	YTD December 2020
Donations:	\$30,400.00	\$44,330.48	\$429,973.92	\$546,116.62
Expenses:	\$36,179.24	\$36,624.78	\$429,618.27	\$531,576.33

Well, here we are finishing another year that has been anything but "normal" by prior pandemic standards. But what is still normal is that our church is still preaching the word of God and you all have been faithful supporters of your church. Thank you!

We have paid all bills. Apportionments have been paid in full. We were able to move money into our savings for Major Projects Fund.

If you have any questions, please let me know. Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary. 724-443-2847

Enjoy the Convenience of Electronic Giving

Bakerstown United Methodist Church wants to remind you that we offer electronic giving as a convenience for individual congregation members and provides much-needed donation consistency for our congregation.

Direct Debit Giving is used to automatically transfer funds from your checking or savings account to the church's bank account. This service is offered for a once a month donation for withdrawal on the first business day of the month.

Online Giving lets you go to www.bakerstownumc.org at any time to set up an automatic donation plan, change your donation plan, make a one-time donation or view your online donation history. As you contemplate the future contributions, please consider electronic giving. Authorization forms and additional information are available from the church office or by contacting Kay Cramer, financial secretary at 724-443-2847.

From The Prayer Corner- Write a Love Letter to God this month.

Don't we all enjoy receiving love notes or love letters? We read and re-read them. We save them and savor them because they make us feel wonderful – because someone thought enough of us to write to us, taking the time and effort to reveal their innermost loving thoughts, trusting us with the greatest gift of all, their heart.

It is the gift of our whole heart that God most desires too – a heart in all its honesty, beauty, and brokenness – a heart of love, sadness, joy, anger, pain, and doubt. True love expresses all emotions, and true love – God's true love for us – accepts them. Write Him a love letter today.

Now don't think this is something beyond you. We often find it hard to successfully verbalize our love to our heavenly Father. We feel self-conscious and stilted, and often find it difficult to concentrate and articulate our deepest feelings for God in a prayer. BUT – if we take the time to begin to write down a letter for Him, we may just find our emotions pouring forth, spilling over from our heart. Because sometimes the very act of writing – praying on paper – will release the outpouring of feelings formerly unexpressed.

Yet this experience should come as no surprise. After all, God, the Great Romancer of our soul, knew that a wonderful way to woo His beloved and express His emotions for us was through a love letter, the Bible. He gave us His heart-print in ink so that we would have the joy of reading and re-reading its testimony of His love for us over and over again. God took great pleasure in giving us this written love letter. And we can assume He would also take great delight in receiving our written response.

This month celebrates Valentine's Day and many of us will be out buying cards for our loved ones. God is one of our most beloved loved ones! Surely He would love to hear us tell Him how much we love Him and why. Write Him a love letter today!

(Portions taken from an article by Lynn Morrissey)

“My heart is overflowing with a beautiful thought! I will write a lovely poem to the King, for I am as full of words as the speediest writer pouring out his story”. Psalm 45:1

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

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



My name is Katie Lowell and I am delighted to begin serving Bakerstown UMC as the children's ministry director. I was raised in the United Methodist church and earned my Bachelor of Science and Master of Arts in Teaching degrees from the University of Pittsburgh. After graduating, I taught 8th grade science in Upper St. Clair school district for over 6 years and married my husband, Micah. After the birth of our daughter, I pushed pause on teaching in the classroom to focus on raising our family. We currently live in Hampton Twp with our two children, Natalie and Paxton. I am eager to begin planning and coordinating programs that engage children in many aspects of ministry including fellowship, discipleship, and service. I feel very blessed to have the opportunity to share both my love for education and Jesus with the children of Bakerstown!

Mission Team News.....

2021 was a very busy year for the mission team! Here is a summary of what kept us on our toes during those twelve months:

- The team created two documents to guide our service: a statement of purpose and guidelines for the distribution of funds.
- A history of our relationship with the church in Carrillos, Costa Rica was written.
- A van load of supplies was collected and distributed to people living under a bridge in Pittsburgh.
- 150 meals were prepared and delivered for take-out at the Roots of Faith ministry in Sharpsburg every month.
- Roughly 125 - 150 meals were prepared and distributed each month at the Drive Thru Dinner.
- Pastor Keith and Pastor Matt saw the Prayer Station at the DTD grow from just a few folks stopping to pray, to nearly everyone stopping to pray. We have gotten to know the folks who regularly visit the DTD and have begun building relationships with them.
- The team was able to do some much needed repair work at the home of one of the DTD regular clients.
- In October the team began to deliver meals to some members of our own congregation as a way to let them know that we care about them.
- The team put together Advent candle holders and an Advent devotional for distribution at the DTD as well as putting together a nativity craft and some small treats for the children.
- “Blessing Bags” were distributed to every DTD family in December. These bags were given by the Women’s Bible Study members and truly were a blessing!
- The team prayerfully determined the year-end distribution of funds to the following ministries: *Camp Allegheny, Jumonville, and Wesley Woods, Casa Cielo Orphanage (Honduras), Shram Ashram Ministry (India), Roots of Faith, Missionary, John Chitester (Harvest Alliance), Heifer International, Iglesia Metodista Palabra Viva! (Costa Rica) and its pastor, The Lighthouse Foundation, North Hills Community Outreach, Northside Common Ministries, UMCOR, Wings Prison Ministry, Wycliffe Bible Translators, Samaritan’s Purse, and the Light of Life Mission.*
- The mission team grew from a handful of people to more than 25 regular volunteers who range in age from a middle schooler to senior citizens, and include a DTD client.
- The team enjoyed the active, prayerful, and financial support of the congregation. We held no fundraisers, yet we were never short of funds or volunteers. Thank you!

All in all, 2021 was a year of blessing in spite of the global pandemic! God is so good! In January of 2021, probably none of us could have imagined what the year would bring. None of us knows what God has in store for us in 2022. There is one sure thing, though. The Bakerstown Mission Team is excited to discover how God is calling our congregation to serve next!



Lighthouse Food Pantry Collection for the month of February: skillet dinners

Notes of Appreciation.....

Bakerstown folks went the extra mile And it genuinely shows.
We appreciated the meals, visits, and calls This we want you to know.

The cards that fill our homes are overwhelming It's true.
We know the power of the prayers That came from each of you.

You made a difference as our Matriarch Went to meet Jesus face to face.
We know that no one
Can ever take her sweet place.

As we wait for the bloom Of all the spring flowers
Thank you again for your love During our toughest hours.

The Family of Joyce Koval Chuck Koval
Jackie & Bill Hutz Chuck & Carole Koval
Cinnamon & Jason Gilch



Dear Bakerstown Family, I want to thank the congregation for the generous gift I received at Christmas. I was so humbled and blessed by your generosity. I also want to thank everyone for the gift cards, candy, goodies, books and everything else I received for Christmas as well. I also want to thank the Day School, The Methodist Women and Trustees for the gifts I received too. I am truly blessed to work here and be part of Bakerstown. Thank you all again. Lora Stafura

Dear Toy Shoppe Supporter, Thank you for supporting the 2021 Lighthouse Foundation Toy Shoppe. Your donation was an incredible blessing to local families in need. The Toy Shoppe allowed parents from both Butler and Allegheny Counties to receive toys and stockings for their children's Christmas gifts. We were able to return to the shopping model this year, where parents could personally pick out the presents for each of their children. Each family also received a stocking for each child and the opportunity to have all their presents wrapped. Due to the generosity of donors such as yourself, over 380 children from 183 families received Christmas gifts! We look forward to 2022!

From a Toy Shoppe Family to the Lighthouse: As many of us know the holidays can be a stressful time for parents. I found myself in a situation where I knew I needed help. The cascade of emotions of guilt, fear, envy and anger clouded my mind. I sat down and prayed and asked our Lord for help. I realized and accepted that I couldn't do it on my own. The Lord answered my prayers by connecting me with one of your patrons, Christy N. She gave me some information and told me that maybe you could help. I had done all I could to supply a Christmas filled with love, the story of Christ and the few presents I could afford for the kids. When I was put in contact with Lee Ann in one day she showed me what understanding and caring could be. Your organization completed my holiday and reaffirmed that people in any situation can ask our God for help, and if you have faith and keep trying He will help. I wanted to reach out and say thank you from the bottom of my heart, and to let you know that I will pay it forward!

To see the pictures attached the Lighthouse mailing, you will find them on the bulletin board outside my office.

Dear Bakerstown Church Family, We want to thank you for the generous gift we received at Christmas. We also want to thank everyone for the cards, cookies, and Christmas Greetings. We are truly blessed to be your pastors. Blessings Pastor Keith, Pastor Alyce, Pastor Matt and Alyssa.



Welcome Sharon Chapman!

Our Day School hired Sharon Chapman as our new director in November. She has been with our school as a teacher since 2016. Sharon started the school year teaching both the morning and afternoon 4 days a week preschool class. Last month she began splitting her time between director duties and teaching the afternoon classes.

Sharon Chapman brings creativity, energy, and dedication to the classroom. She has a tremendous passion for children and teaching. She brings the stability needed to help us as we continue to navigate through the pandemic and the transition into being our director. She is committed to leading our school and staff. Sharon has a vision of building upon our strengths and continuing to grow our enrollment. We are looking forward to her leading this ministry!

Day School Registration for the 2022-2023 School Year is now open to the public!

We are pleased to announce that we will be opening all our classes back up for the next school year! Each child must be 2, 3, or 4 years of age by **September 1st 2022** to be enrolled in the corresponding class. **All children except those in the Two Year Old classes must be potty trained.**

Two Year Olds: Mon. & Wed.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
Two Year Olds: Tues. & Thurs.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
Three Year Olds (Morning class): Mon. & Wed.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
Three Year Olds (Morning class): Tues. & Thurs.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
Three Year Olds (Afternoon Class): Mon. & Wed.	12:30-3:00 p.m.
Three Year Olds (Afternoon Class): Tues. & Thurs.	12:30-3:00 p.m.
3 Day Pre-K: (Morning) Mon., Wed. & Fri.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
3 Day Pre-K (Afternoon): Mod., Wed., Fri.	12:30-3:00 p.m.
4 Day Pre-K (Morning): Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.	9:00-11:30 a.m.
4 Day Pre-K (Afternoon): Mon., Tues., Wed., Thurs.	12:30-3:00 p.m.
Full Day Kindergarten: Mon., - Fri.	9:00-3:00 p.m.

Families who are interested in finding out more information about the school should contact Sharon Chapman for more information. Email: director@bakerstownumc.org Call or text: (724) 272-6032



If you plan on buying Sarris for Valentine's Day, St. Patrick's Day, and/or Easter, please consider buying with this link to support the Bakerstown United Methodist Day School. Shipping is FREE and it will be delivered right to your door (there is a \$5 packaging & handling fee applied by Sarris, though). It's a pretty yummy deal! You can order online at www.sarriscandiesfundraising.com and use the organization name Bakerstown United Methodist Day School and Group Id 10-3713. Thank you for your support!

Bakerstown United Methodist Church
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724-443-3184
www.bakerstownumc.org



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

Staff:

Rev. Keith Dunn
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Rev. Matthew Scott
Associate Pastor
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Joyce Gindlesperger
Director of Music
jgindlesperger@bakerstownumc.org

Lora Stafura
Office Administrator
lstafura@bakerstownumc.org



Confirmation
NEWS

Confirmation Classes

Confirmation Classes will be held beginning Sunday, February 20th at 9:45 AM for youth in grades 8th through 12th interested in joining the church. Due to Covid-19, Pastor Keith is offering the option of confirmation via Zoom or in person. Please e-mail kdunn@bakerstownumc.org with your child's name and your preference for learning. Confirmation Sunday will be May 15th.

Our church council would like to thank our congregation for the high percentage of compliance with our mask requirement. At its last meeting, the policy was reviewed, and the council agreed to continue requiring masks in the church building. The monthly meeting agenda includes pandemic response where Covid-19 procedures are discussed. It is our hope that the mask policy will be changed as soon as it is deemed safe to do so. Our council is representative of all viewpoints on this matter. We appreciate your prayers, patience, and understanding as we continue to lead and serve our congregation. Pastor Keith & Cindy Rice ~ Council Chair

February Birthdays & Anniversaries

02/01 Frank Ferguson
02/04 Jack Brown
02/06 Becky Olson
02/07 Thomas Pouchot
02/07 Alex Shipley
02/08 Megan Werkmeister
02/08 Jessica Barrett
02/08 Jim Episcopo
02/11 Brian Szelc
02/17 Allen Perriello
02/18 Matthew Lancaster

02/19 Jim Kelvington
02/19 James Stewart
02/22 Heather Brown
02/24 Greg Mason
02/25 Bonnie Rodgers
02/26 Erin Lunn
02/26 Thomas Reynolds
02/27 Elsie Strader
02/28 John Cleary
02/28 Paxton Lowell
02/28 Evan Marentay

02/29 David Zynn

2/2 — Reid & Beth Joyce

2/6— Mike & Miriam Perriello