

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! As we begin 2023, we have the unique opportunity to start off our year with worship. New Year's Day is a Sunday, and we will have one service only that morning at 11 AM. We will reflect on the great things God has done for us. We will remember God's presence with us. We will respond by praying the Wesleyan Covenant prayer to dedicate ourselves to the Lord. What a wonderful way to get the new year off on the right foot!

For many January 1st marks the end of the Christmas season. I am not ready for the lights of Christmas to be extinguished. In fact, I associate the Christmas season with light. There are lights on trees and around our homes. In some local neighborhoods, it might be a good idea to have sunglasses handy when driving or walking by certain houses! There are holiday light displays to break the gloom of the long winter nights. Of course, the highlight of our Christmas Eve services is singing "Silent Night" by candlelight or glow sticks if you come to the family service.

For the church, the season of light does not end when the decorations are put away, and the lights go into storage. Epiphany is also a season of light. It begins by commemorating the visit of the Wise Men who followed the star to Bethlehem. We will celebrate Epiphany Sunday here at Bakerstown UMC on January 8th with Communion at both services. It will be the last worship service of the season where the Christmas tree, lights, and nativities will be present. Epiphany reminds us of Isaiah's prophecy fulfilled in Jesus:

"Arise, shine; for your light has come,
and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.
For darkness shall cover the earth,
and thick darkness the peoples;
but the LORD will arise upon you,
and his glory will appear over you.
Nations shall come to your light,
and kings to the brightness of your dawn." (Isaiah 60:1-3)

Epiphany is more than one day. It is a season of the church year that continues until Ash Wednesday, which begins Lent. I'll talk more about that next month!

I will preach a two-part series on walking as children of the light on January 15th and 22nd. As people who have received God's light into our lives by faith in Christ, our lives are changed. We are children of the light! First, we will consider the fruit that children of light bear. How can we live in a way that pleases God? Second, walking as children of light means being prepared for the coming of the Lord. How might we be spiritually ready for Christ's return?

I am excited about beginning a new year and growing in our faith together. I pray that you will have a blessed New Year and allow Christ's light to shine throughout the year!

*Blessings,
Pastor Keith*

Join Us for worship! ON Sundays at 8:30am and 11:00am

Adult small group at 9:45am

Nursery (available at 11:00am) *Upper Education Wing* **Nursery is available for infants and children up to 4 years old**

Junior Church will be dismissed after the children's moment at 11:00am worship



Sat., December 24th, Family Service—4:30 pm

This Worship service is particularly designed for families with children. There is a celebration of Christ's birth in a relaxed atmosphere appreciating the child in all of us as we welcome the birth of the child of heaven. We will be using Glow Sticks at this service.

Sat., December 24th, Carols & Candlelight—7:30pm & 9:30pm

This service is a celebration of Christ's birth with joyful singing of carols and the beauty of candlelight. Enjoy the surrounding beauty and the warmth of God's love during this special time.

Sunday, December 25th— 11am This is a year when Christmas Day is a Sunday. We will have one service only that morning at 11 AM. It will be filled with traditional Christmas music played on organ and piano. We hope that you will join us! Please feel free to dress casually, ugly Christmas sweaters, PJ's etc.

Sunday, January 1st— 11:00am (ONE WORSHIP SERVICE)

Sunday, Jan. 8th - 8:30am & 11:00am — Epiphany Communion Sunday

The church office will be fully closed from Sunday, December 25th at noon until, Sunday, January 1st at 8:30am. Pastor Keith and Lora will be on vacation (Not together, lol). We are asking that if you ordered Poinsettias, that you please take them on December 24th and 25th as there will be no one here to take care of them. Thank you, Pastor Keith and Lora



As we begin a new year and many of our activities continue to increase, please remember to check with the church office when you are planning to use our building for meetings or ministry opportunities. Our published calendar does not contain all the activities happening in the building, as many are subject to change. Thank you for helping ministry run smoothly here at Bakerstown UMC.

DIGging Deeper will not meet on December 25 and January 1. On January 8, 15 and 22 we are continuing are discussion of the book "Roots: Advent and the Family Story of Jesus." **Beginning January 29** we will be discussing in class the episodes of Season 3 of the wonderful TV series "The Chosen". The best way to watch this at home and for no charge is through the app available for either iPhones or Android phones. Each week watch an episode at home and discuss it when we meet Sunday morning in the Wesley Room at 9:45. This hugely popular show has a mission of reaching 1 billion people world wide with the story of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

The Neighborhood Table |Jan. 5 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.

NEW!! Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study is starting a new study on January 5th at 9:00am!! Ruth: Loss, Love, and Legacy by Kelly Minter.

Most of us like a good rags-to-riches story, especially one that includes a bit of intrigue and a moving tale of love. We can easily get lost in a narrative where, at the beginning of the story, heartache reigned, but it was soon replaced by joy. Perhaps we're drawn to these tales because they not only provide an escape, but hope. Many of us struggle through seasons of bitterness, tears, and loss, wondering if there could ever be a happy ending to our stories. The story of Ruth affirms that yes, there is hope. However, it's not found in a happy ending described by a novelist's pen, but in the power and protection of a sovereign God who never takes His eyes off of us for even a moment.

In this 7-session study from Kelly Minter, we'll examine Ruth's journey of unbearable loss, redeeming love, and divine legacy. We'll see how God proves Himself faithful as the One who rescues, revives, and restores. Please come along and join us as we follow the story of Ruth in Fellowship Hall on Thursday mornings, January 5th thru February 16th from 9:00 am to 10:45am. Workbooks are \$15.00.

Drive Thru Dinner | Jan. 10 | Fellowship Hall

The Mission Team has been serving a monthly meal for The Lighthouse. If the Lord is calling you to participate in this ministry either by helping with food prep in the kitchen, packing meals, delivering them to our church friends or to cars, please plan on coming to the fellowship hall at 2:30pm, or if you have any other questions, please contact Carol Skolnik at cnik-skol@gmail.com.

NEW GriefShare Opportunity: As an extension to our current GriefShare program, we will be offering a 3-week study, based on the book, and movie, "The Shack" during the month of January 2023. This is a unique opportunity to explore the very human and personal side of loss, grief and one's personal relationship with God.

There are many types of losses that will occur for each of us, as we journey through life. Some will be minor and more easily managed, while others will be more challenging. Many times, we can find ourselves struggling with feelings of guilt, anger, regret, denial, fear, anxiety and forgiveness.

If you have experienced a loss, whether it has been foreseeable or not, sudden or over time, or one that has been UN-IMAGINABLE. A loss that has stopped your world. One that has made you question everything. This will offer you the opportunity to find answers, to find peace, and to grow stronger in your faith.

Please join us on the following Wednesdays, January 11, 18 and 25, from 7:00PM to 8:30PM, in the Wesley Room. The movie will be shown in 3 parts with a discussion following each part. Everyone is welcome. If you have a friend who is struggling with any type of loss, please invite them to come along with you.

All-U-Can-Eat Breakfast! | Saturday, Jan. 21 | 8:00-11:00am | Fellowship Hall Breakfast will be served from 8:00 am to 11:00 am. \$7.00 for Adults, \$3.00 for ages 6-12 and under age 6 eat for free. Come and get your choice of Plain, Blueberry, Buckwheat or Chocolate Chip Pancakes and the options of eggs, bacon, sausage and/or home-fries to go with them. Wash it all down with coffee, tea or OJ and then go out and change the world!

A Stitch and a Prayer | Saturday, Jan. 21 | 10am to 2pm | Old Fellowship Hall Sewing, knitting and crocheting blankets and prayer shawls for Linus Project, baptisms and ill in our church. Need help sorting, sewing, ironing, pinning, cutting.....all hands welcome. Bring a lunch!!!!

If you sew, crochet, or knit your talent can be used in making quilts for Project Linus, shawls for shut-ins or even lap robes for people in nursing homes. If you are not able to join us when we meet on the 3rd Saturday of the month from 10-2, please contact Louise Himes, Mary Pouchot or Marge Kirkpatrick if you have questions regarding how you can help.

Bakerstown Book Club | Wednesday, February 8th, at 1:00pm in the Library. (Please note the new time change – we will be meeting in the afternoon.) The two books that have been chosen to discuss are: I Will Always Write Back: How One Letter Changed Two Lives by Caitlin Alifirenka and Martin Ganda and God's Guest List: Welcoming Those Who Influence Our Lives by Debbie Macomber. If you love to read, join us on February 8th, whether you've read the books or not. Please just come along and join us for good discussion, fun, and fellowship. All "Book Lovers" are welcome!! There's always chocolate!!

Children's Ministry

JUMP- Calling all 3rd-5th graders! Please join us in New Fellowship Hall for our next meeting on Sunday, January 8th for a pizza lunch and activities from 12:15pm-1:45pm. Please RSVP using [this link](#) by 1/1. Please contact Katie Lowell at klowell@bakerstownumc.org with any questions. (Save the date! JUMP will also meet on February 12th and March 12th.)

Kingdom Kids- All kindergarten-2nd graders are invited to join us in New Fellowship Hall on Friday, January 6th from 6-7:30pm. We will spend the evening learning a Bible lesson, playing games, creating crafts, and enjoying a snack of course! Please RSVP using [this link](#) by 12/30 so that we can prepare accordingly. Please contact Katie Lowell at klowell@bakerstownumc.org with any questions. (Save the date! Kingdom Kids will also meet on February 10th and March 10th.)

Junior Church- On Sunday, January 8th, Junior Church will resume during the 11am service. After the children's moment with Pastor Keith, children will be dismissed to the education wing. This winter we will be using the *Digging Into Foundations of Faith* curriculum to answer the questions: "How Do I Live?"

Children who are preschool age and younger should report to the nursery. Children who are enrolled in elementary school will be divided into two classes: Kindergarten - 2nd grade and 3rd-5th grades. To RSVP for Junior Church, please use [this link!](#) Please have your children join us even if you forget to RSVP. We always have room and extra supplies on hand.

Junior Church Volunteers- To support this program during the 11am service, we need your help please! We are looking for volunteers to serve as rotating lead and assistant teachers each week. If your child will be attending Junior Church, we ask that you please volunteer at least one Sunday this winter. NO PREP WORK IS REQUIRED!!! Activity directions and materials will be provided to you each Sunday morning. This volunteer opportunity is for both adults and youth. Current child abuse clearances must be on file with the church office in order to volunteer. If you are interested in serving in this ministry, please sign up using [this link](#).

From the Prayer Corner - Prayers for the New Year 2023

God of all time, help us enter this New Year 2023 quietly and prayerfully, thoughtful of who we are to ourselves and to others, mindful that our steps make an impact and our words carry power.

May we walk gently. Act carefully, kindly, and purposefully. And may we speak only after we have listened well.

God of Peace, and Creator of all life, help us enter this New Year 2023 reverently and thoughtfully, aware that you have endowed every creature and plant, every person and habitat, with beauty and purpose.

May we regard the world with tenderness. May we honor rather than destroy. May we always allow Your peace to rule in our hearts.

God of Joy, help us enter this New Year 2023 joyfully, willing to smile easily at strangers, willing to share the joy of Jesus with all, and willing to laugh and dance and dream. May we remember our many gifts with thankfulness, looking forward to the blessings yet to come.

God of Steadfast Love, help us enter this New Year 2023 welcoming your lavish love into our hearts, and allowing it to spill out of our lives into the lives of others. May we always live loved! May we always share Your love with others.

God of Eternity, You gave us such a good gift: the gift of life, the gift of time here on earth. As we enter this coming New Year 2023, help us use it wisely.

May we grow in generosity, kindness, forgiveness, hope, faith and love, and in our relationship with You and others in this New Year. We love you, Lord. Amen.

(Portions by Vinita Hampton Wright – New Years Prayers)

A PERSONAL NEW YEAR'S INVITATION TO YOU!!

The Prayer Team would like to extend an invitation to be part of the BUMC Prayer Team and have the privilege of praying for our church, our community, and each other. All are welcome. Simply send your e-mail address to Lora Stafura (lstafura@bakerstownumc.org) or Cathy Dambach (hwdambach@consolidated.net or Heather Brown (hirdab@hotmail.com) and you will begin to receive the e-mail prayer requests that go out periodically.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

from the Staff of Bakerstown UMC

As 2022 draws to a close, the BUMC Mission Team has so much for which we are thankful. Here's our short list.

Continued ministry at the Roots of Faith in Sharpsburg where The Neighborhood Table is back in-person

Two full years and two months of Drive Thru Dinner ministry

Our first in-person community meal

2,369 meals served in 2022!

Many new friends made.

Pastor Keith, who is like the US Mail – neither sun, nor rain, nor snow, nor gloom of night keeps him from praying in the parking lot with our DTD friends.

Lora, who takes reservations, keeps us stocked with paper bags and containers, facilitates the pickup of meals that were not able to be picked up on time, and generally does whatever else we ask of her.

Joyce, the Ellwood City Area Civic Chorale, the BUMC Choir, and the Glory Ringers for their support of the mission team.

A faithful and ever-growing bunch of **volunteers** of all ages, (middle school – upper nineties!) who are both great cooks and great sports.

All the **drivers** who deliver meals to our church family members.

The women of the church who regularly provide desserts for The Neighborhood Table and the Drive Thru Dinner AND who baked approximately 1500 cookies for the December DTD!

The **Women's Bible Study** who collected and assembled 50 Blessing Bags at the beginning of summer AND did it again in December!

The members of the **Prayer Team**. They are prayer warriors for the work of the mission team.

The **BUMC Men** for their financial support of the mission team.

The **BUMC Youth Group** who help out whenever asked.

The ability to financially support not only the DTD and TNT, but also the following:

All three conference camps: Camp Allegheny, Jumonville, and Wesley Woods

International Ministries: Igelsia Metodista Palabra Viva! (Costa Rica), Casa Cielo Orphanage (Honduras), Missionary John Chitester (East Africa), The Nyadire Connection (Zimbabwe), Dr. Clement (India), Heifer International, Operation Christmas Child, and Wycliffe Bible Translators,

Other Ministries: The Lighthouse, North Hills Community Outreach, Wings Prison Ministry, and Henderson Settlement.

The **congregation** of Bakerstown UMC, who prayerfully and financially support the efforts of the mission team.

Most of all, we are so thankful to God, who continually shows us new ways to love our neighbors and equips us with everything we need. We are so blessed to be a part of this particular Body of Christ. Who knows what great adventures await us in 2023?

Day School Chalkboard



Day School Open House!

Sunday, January 22 we open our doors to the church and public to visit our day school, meet our teachers and see our beautiful learning spaces. Current day school families will also be here to talk with you and share their perspective on our school. We have a special preview time for church members at 12:00 p.m. We will open our doors to the public at 12:30 until 2:30 p.m. Registration for the 2023/2024 school year will accepted. Please stop by; we'd love to see you! Please spread the word to families looking for classes for children aged 2 up through Kindergarten! More information about the day school can be found on the website at www.bakerstownumc.org

Committee News: As the New year begins we would like to welcome all the new committee members:

Church Council

Kellen McGrath ~ Vice Chair

Finance

Dave Meuschke ~ Chair

Lake Barrett

Trustees

Tim Jarosz

Bill Shepherd

SPRC

Paul McLeister ~ Chair

Mark Jorden

Jamie Khambatta

Gary Torick

Memorial Committee

Gregg Platt

Marge Kirkpatrick

Patsie Evans

Nominations

Denise Grier

Deb Lokay

Jim Skolnik

Please be sure to keep an eye on the bulletin and newsletters for upcoming meetings.

The Trustees will be meeting the 2nd Wednesday of the month, Church Council will be meeting the 3rd Wednesday of the month, and SPRC will be meeting the 4th Wednesday of the month.

If you are new to a committee in 2023, please make sure the church office has a current email address so that you can receive meeting notices and other important information throughout the year.

Thank you. Please email the church office at Istafura@bakerstownumc.org

We also want to thank those that served over the past 3 years:

Church Council

At Large Members

Nicole Edinger

Finance

Marie Edinger

John Humenik

Trustees

Don Gindlesperger

Joan Donaldson

Bob Rodgers

Memorial Committee

Aaron Jewitt

Larry Williams

Louise Himes

SPRC

Don Allaman

Darrick Brown

Patsie Evans

Nominations

Alice Berkner

Evelyn Dick

Gayle Santillo

January Birthdays & Anniversaries

01/02 Ray Wilson

01/04 Payton Streiff

01/05 Debbie Lokay

01/07 Lyla Kennah

01/08 Paul Sullivan

01/10 Jayne Cain

01/15 Miriam Perriello

01/17 Michelle Fischetti

01/19 Ian Holcomb

01/19 George Kress

01/19 Chris Sasada

01/22 Reid Rinker

01/23 Liz Sasada

01/24 Kim Szelc

01/24 Grace DeVore

01/24 Clark Peters

01/29 Leo Gagen

01/30 Benjamin McLeister

01/31 Kevin McGrath

01/31 Velma Covert

01/14 Brian & Kim Szelc

01/16 Sam & Julie Cramer

01/31 Don & Joyce Gindlesperger

Notes of Thanks and Christmas Wishes from the DTD clients...

Just got home from picking up dinner and, I first of all wanted to thank you for sticking around a few minutes late to accommodate us. And second, we wanted to thank you for the wonderful meal and the cookies and the gifts. Everything was so delicious and it was really nice to have a home cooked meal. Not to mention it was way more than what we expected. It was so kind of all of you.

Awesome, thank you so much! We both thank you for the food and the Christmas presents. Thank you, thank you, very much. Praise the Lord! Hallelujah! Thank the Woman's Bible study group that blessed the blessing bags. They're wonderful.

Your Blessing Bag was truly a blessing. Thanks so much to all of you putting it together. Your thoughtfulness will always be remembered. May God enrich you all for being his hands and feet to others.

Thank you for all the great meals. Wishing everyone a Merry Christmas!

Thank you for all yinz do! Merry Christmas!

We would like to thank you for all the wonderful meals we have received through the year. Thank you all. Merry Christmas!

OCC; Childrens Ministry of Samaritan's Purse

It is so rewarding being part of this ministry. I love serving in Charlotte each year where volunteers are so congenial, energized and productive. Lasting friendships have been made.

Following prayers, dedications and announcements several times each day videos are shown of children receiving shoeboxes. Their smiles and bright eyes warm the heart...rewards for all our hard work and long hours.

As of the end of my last day we had inspected, processed and loaded 2,113,785 boxes at the Charlotte Center. Their delivery will be to Peru, Tanzania, Ukraine, Philippines, Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Ecuador, Malawi and Turks and Caicos Is.

One day we were told Tanzania customs denied enclosure of bars of soap in boxes so all were removed during inspections and put in 5 gal. buckets. The next day we were told we had reached the quota for boxes to Tanzania. SO, the saved soap was included in boxes being sent to a different country. ALL donations are used!

Thanks to everyone who participated in this worthy Childrens Ministry, leading many to become believers in Jesus Christ. Thanks also to all who prayed for my traveling as well as safety while there these many days being the hands and feet of Jesus in this outstanding ministry.

Blessings, Verna Feather

P.S. Franklin Graham (CEO) came on Saturday. He visits each Processing Center during December to thank, encourage and update volunteers.

Thanks to everyone who generously contributed money, items, time, and gift cards for the Christmas Blessing bags. We were able to bless 50 families at the December Drive Through Dinners. The spirit of Christmas is alive and well. Blessings to you all, Rita Sullivan and Peggy Hill

In October 2022 Heather Brown suggested we fundraise and supply desserts for the Drive Through Dinner with Cupcakes for Coen. Coen has a brain tumor and the family bakes cupcakes to sell. They have been doing this since 2017. The family was sick and could not supply the cupcakes so Heather and her family supplied the cupcakes from Sam's club for the dinner.

The decision was made to send them all the money collected. The family could use the funds collected so the money was finally sent to them in December. The amount collected and sent to them was \$832.00.

Thank you for supporting this family and the mission work of the church.

Bakerstown United Methodist Church
 5760 William Flynn Highway
 Gibsonia, PA 15044
 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
 Senior Pastor
kdunn@bakerstownumc.org

Joyce Gindlesperger
 Director of Music
jgindlesperger@bakerstownumc.org

Lora Stafura
 Office Administrator
lstafura@bakerstownumc.org

Katie Lowell
 Children's Ministry Director
klowell@bakerstownumc.org

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.



FINANCE REPORT

	November 2022	YTD November 2022	YTD November 2021
Donations:	\$28,820.49	\$359,992.42	\$389,083.60
Expenses:	\$27,042.69	\$447,843.37	\$393,809.55

This report is for all the donations and expenses the church has incurred.

	November 2022	YTD Nov 2022	YTD Nov 2021
Current Fund donations:	\$28,820.49	\$359,992.42	\$385,543.44
Current Fund expenses:	\$27,042.69	\$375,879.55	\$373,131.44

This report will show you that our current fund giving is running short of the expenses that the church incurs. Thanks for your faithful support. It has been good seeing the children at church and participating in the new programming Katie has for them. If you have any questions, please give me a call. Thanks Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary 724-443-2847

Amazon Smile...thank you to all the shoppers. Amazon Smile has donated \$49.52 for the third quarter shopping you have done.

Shop N Save Perks to Pray and Play...Thank you for purchasing your groceries at Shop and Save and designating our church to be the recipient of these perks. We received \$217.78 in gift cards to use as needed. Lora has used them in the summer to purchase desserts for Sharpsburg and/or the Lighthouse Drive Thru Dinner to give our bakers a break.