



The Steeple

August-September 2026

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of Jesus! I wrote in our last newsletter about June and July being months of transition. Those words certainly proved to be true. As expected, we said goodbye to Pastor Amanda and were hoping to hire someone to fill our part-time youth ministry position. The Staff Parish Relations Committee has not received any qualified candidates even though we are still searching.

With the program year approaching, the Church Council has decided to try a new approach as proposed by the Staff Parish Relations Committee. Jennie Smith will become our Youth Ministry Coordinator in addition to being our Children's Ministry Director. This position will provide administrative support to our youth ministry team of adults including planning curriculum, coordinating volunteers, managing finances, and communicating with the congregation, Church Council, and parents of our youth about the ministry. Jennie will begin this new role on August 1st.

A few weeks ago, Claus Cleaning resigned as our cleaning service effective July 31st. Since we received this word, the Board of Trustees has begun the search for a new company to take over these duties, and are in the process of receiving bids. In the interim, Claus Cleaning has agreed to extend their contract with us through the month of August. The winds of change continue to blow at Bakerstown!

During our training in Dream Tables, Dr. Sue Nilson Kibbey introduced the concept of a coracle, which is a small boat without a sail or a rudder. It can either be steered by paddle or not at all! Legend has it that Saint Brendan of Ireland set out on many voyages in a coracle depending only on the winds, the waves and the guidance of the Holy Spirit to lead him. Dr. Kibbey uses this image for the church. What if we invited the wind of the Spirit to direct us to new adventures God has in store? What if in addition to the winds of change it is the breath of the Spirit leading us?

Many of us have been praying the Breakthrough Prayer asking God to guide us:

*Loving God, breakthrough the busyness of our lives
so that we might stop to hear your voice,
discern where you are leading and
go in the power of your Spirit in Jesus' name. Amen.*

We have asked those attending church this summer to share how God is breaking through in your lives – you can place a paper butterfly, parrot or leaf near the tree on the dividing wall in the narthex – if you want, you can write on the paper what God is doing or simply add the paper to the wall as a symbol of God moving in your life.

As we move towards Fall, we will be looking for ways to envision God's new and next for us. I am looking forward to the new things God has in store for us as we continue to pray and discern together.

Blessings,
Pastor Keith

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

Adult small groups 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

August Happenings...

Liturgists – Beginning August 2nd Signup sheet in the narthex on the stand near the elevator

One of the greatest privileges in worship is the opportunity to proclaim the Word of God. As a liturgist, you are entrusted with reading Scripture clearly, reverently, and faithfully, helping prepare the hearts of the congregation to receive God's message.

Reading Scripture is more than simply speaking words aloud—it is an act of worship and a ministry to the church. Through your voice, God's Word is shared with His people, reminding us of His promises, His love, and His truth.

The Bible reminds us in **1 Timothy 4:13**: *"Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching."*

Thank you for your willingness to serve in this important ministry. Your preparation, reverence, and faithfulness help create a meaningful worship experience and encourage the congregation to hear God's voice through His Word.

May every Scripture you read inspire faith, bring hope, and draw others closer to Christ.

The Neighborhood Table | Aug. 6 | 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 | Aug. 11 | 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 cniskol@gmail.com.

The Bakerstown Book Club will meet on

Wednesday, August 12th, at 1:00pm in the Church Library. The books that are being suggested to read for discussion are: All Booked Up by Melody Carlson; A Most Peculiar Providence by Angela Hunt; or The Lumber Baron's Wife by Lynn Austin. Or - bring along a book you've read and enjoyed this summer – and join us for a fun discussion of the books. There's ALWAYS chocolate!!

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study goes to "Third Thursdays @ 10am"

for the Summer. All women of the church are welcome. Please consider dropping in to Fellowship Hall at 10:00am to join in our session. The date and teacher leading the session will be:

August 20 – Dawn Conroy

GriefShare Outreach Ministry - Summer 2026

Once-a-Month Summer Sessions:

August 12th | 7pm in the Wesley Room

****New Weekly Session Series begins September 2nd, 2026**

*Lighthouse Food Pantry Collection for the month of **August** – Jello, Pudding and Fruit Cups*

August Birthdays & Anniversaries

08/01 Jacob Meuschke
08/02 Lora Stafura
08/02 Wes Shipley
08/02 Dawn Conroy
08/02 Ryan McClish
08/03 Liam Kennah
08/06 Cindy Rice
08/06 Pamm Holcomb
08/06 Shannon Sworden
08/06 Heather Ladesic
08/06 Maegan Brennan
08/08 Darrick Brown
08/08 Robert Ladesic

08/12 Zach Meuschke
08/13 Palmer Holcomb
08/16 Louise Himes
08/18 Elaine Schmidt
08/19 Allisa Negley
08/23 Dawn Brennan
08/26 Janet Allaman
08/27 Keith Irwin
08/29 Alana McGrath
08/30 Jack DeVore

08/01 Jim & Sue Fritz
08/02 Robert & Gayle Santillo
08/02 Rich & Isabel Conley
08/08 Don & Janet Allaman, Sr.
08/10 Bruce & Jackie Smith
08/12 Andrew & Heather Detar
08/18 John & Debbie Brumberg
08/21 Bernard & Jayne Cain
08/28 Roger & Kay Cramer

September Happenings...

GriefShare Outreach Ministry Fall 2026

NEW weekly meetings start up on Wednesday evenings, beginning **September 2nd through December 9th**, from 7:00pm till 8:30pm in the Wesley Room.

GriefShare is a special support group designed to offer you help and encouragement after losing a loved one. Our group is led by caring people who have experienced grief and want to help you through the difficult days ahead. We know it hurts, and we want to help. Our GriefShare program is co-led by Rev. Bill Dambach, Marcia Shipley, Tim McDermott, Judy Moore, and Marge Kirkpatrick.

Please feel free to call the church office at 724-443-3184 if you have any questions or would like more information about GriefShare. GriefShare is a drop-in anytime group and open to anyone in the church or community. All are welcome.

Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study | Thursday September 3rd at 9:00am | Fellowship Hall The Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study will start back up with weekly gatherings. We will begin a NEW study by Lisa Harper - Song of Songs: The Love We Long For. Join us and discover the divine love story written for us, the beautifully intimate bond we can enjoy with God. In this 7-session study, Bible teacher Lisa Harper unveils an eye-opening truth: This ancient, often-misunderstood book that sometimes reads like a racy romance novel is actually a passionate declaration of our Creator Redeemer's relentless love for His people. With her signature blend of humor and deep biblical insight, Lisa peels back the layers of history and allegory to reveal Jesus as the Divine Bridegroom who didn't just come to deliver us—He delights in us!

Through relatable stories and teaching, you'll discover how intimacy with Jesus isn't based on our deservedness—or lack thereof. It's about letting our guards down and leaning into the unconditional love He initiates with us. Whether you're single, married, widowed, or have a difficult time with relational intimacy in general, this study will help gently dismantle the self-protective walls around our hearts and create pathways into a much deeper, much richer relationship with the One who loves us more than we can possibly imagine. YOU are the object of God's affection! Workbooks are \$15.00. Sign up in class on August 20th or newcomers please call the church office to register.

The Neighborhood Table | Sept. 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 | Sept. 8 | 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 cnikskol@gmail.com.

Tuesday Night Bible Study | Sept. 8 | 6:30-7:30pm | Fellowship Hall

Join us as we study Zechariah and learn about the Jewish people returning to build the temple and end times. Bring your bible along and fellowship with others.

All-U-Can-Eat Breakfast! | Saturday, Sept. 19 | 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.

A Stitch and a Prayer | Saturday, Sept. 20 | 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

Do it for the children/ Operation Christmas Child

BUMC has been partnering with the Samaritans Purse organization for many years by packing shoeboxes for the Operation Christmas Child program.

A volunteer is needed to coordinate this activity going forward. It is a low stress job that does not require too much time.

We need somebody to handle publicizing the collections and organizing the contributions closer to the time when the shoeboxes get packed. If interested, please let Pastor Keith know.

Lighthouse Food Pantry Collection for the month of September – Cereal, granola bars, cereal bars and Pop Tarts

Bakerstown News...

FUN Churchwide Project!! You may recall that the BUMC Women put together a cookbook of our favorite recipes this past June for Pastor Amanda to remember all of us by and to let her know how much we appreciated her time here with us. Since then, we have had numerous requests for copies of this cookbook!! So – we are going to publish the cookbook – and we would like to gather a few more recipes from others in the congregation.

BUMC Men's Group Pancake Breakfast Guys – can we have your recipe for Blueberry Pancakes? Mission Team – can you share a couple of your favorite Drive Through Dinner or Sharpsburg meal recipes? Kevin McGrath – how about that Denver Skillet dish you make for the Women's Christmas breakfast? Can we have the recipe?? YUM!! Men Doing Stuff – can we have a recipe or two or three from you? Pastor Keith and other church staff members – can we have a recipe or two from you too?? Ladies – there were a few of you who said you were sorry you didn't get your recipes to us in time, well, now's your chance!! And if you have already submitted a recipe or two, feel free to send in another. We would like to add at least another 50 recipes to this cookbook of any type – but we are especially in need of the following categories: Appetizers & Beverages, Soups & Salads, Breads & Rolls, and Cookies & Candy. You have until **September 30th** to get them into Lora in the church office. Easiest way is to email them to lstafula@bakerstownumc.org. But you can also drop off a paper copy to her as well. We will then have the cookbooks for sale just in time for Christmas! Thank you in advance for your contributions! ❤️

Children's Ministry and Youth Group News...

Youth Group

Calling all 6th-12th graders!

Join us for the start of youth group on **Sept. 13th from 6-7:30 pm**. I hope you will join us!

Please contact Jennie Smith at jsmith@bakerstownumc.org if you have any questions.



We are in need of volunteers for youth and children's ministry

If you are interested in volunteering for either (or both) [please fill out this interest form](#).

In order to volunteer, we will need ACT 33, ACT 34 clearances on file and to complete Safe Sanctuaries training. Don't worry! We can help you make sure you have everything you need!

Children's Ministry

Thank you to everyone who supported our VBS this past summer! We had an amazing week with 47 participants and over 30 youth and adult volunteers who helped before and during the event. The children learned about the true nature of God, and we are so grateful for your help in sharing His love with our community.

Junior Church

Junior Church for ages preK-5th grade returns September 13th during the 11:00 service.

We will begin learning about God's grace this fall! From Creation to Christmas, God never stops showing Grace to His people whom He loves. We will have a sign in sheet each Sunday in the Narthex.

September Children's Ministry Event:

Join us Sunday, September 20th from 12:15-1:45pm for our September Children's Ministry Event. This is a drop off event, lunch will be provided. Volunteers needed! To register your child, please [fill out this form](#).



Mission Team News....

Matthew 5:16

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

In the verse above, it is quite clear that Jesus wants us to be out in the world doing good works. Many Christians find mission trips as a way to fulfill this calling. Spending time working side-by-side with other Christians from your own church or from far flung corners of the world is a wonderful way to grow in faith and commitment to our heavenly Father.

Unfortunately, due to responsibilities at work and/or at home, or the uneasiness of being in strange places, eating strange food and sleeping in a strange bed prevents many people from going on a mission trip. It is also sometimes difficult for the local church be able to plan for and fund a work mission trip.

After being prompted by the Holy Spirit, the Bakerstown UMC Mission Team came up with the idea of having a “Sleep In Your Own Bed Work Mission Week”. During the week of July 20 through July 24, 2026, the members of the congregation had their choice of five different one day volunteer opportunities at local service organizations.

This allowed our members to pick an organization that spoke to their heart and where they thought their skill sets could be used. It also took a lot of pressure off the Mission Team as all they had to do was contact the local service organization and tell them that we had a team of volunteers that wanted to help. These organizations were overjoyed to accommodate our teams and there was no cost involved for our church other than the last night when we hosted a picnic.

The Mission Team was pleasantly surprised to have at least 40 different people associated with our church get involved. They ranged in age from a 6-year-old to some well into their senior citizen years! Some signed up for just one event and others signed up for multiple events.

The organizations and service work done at each included:

- **The Mission Barn** (part of the UMCOR relief network) – where we worked on assembling sections for ramps, made up hygiene and menstrual kits and checked contents of cleaning buckets
- **Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank** – where we bagged fresh apples and pasta that gets distributed to many different food pantries in the Pittsburgh area and surrounding counties.
- **North Hills Community Outreach** – an organization that addresses the needs of people in crisis, hardship and poverty in Northern Allegheny County. There we spent time beautifying the much-neglected landscaping around their office building.
- **The Lighthouse Foundation** - a Christian outreach organization meeting the needs of impoverished individuals and families in northern Allegheny and Butler County. We spent several hours cleaning out the box trucks used for food deliveries and gave the food pantry area a thorough cleaning.
- **And finally, a free summertime picnic at the church for members and clients of the local food bank.** Our kitchen crew went above and beyond preparing a fantastic array of summertime favorites and we got a chance to sit and dine with and pray with the local foodbank clients that take advantage of the monthly drive-thru-dinners that BUMC provides for them.

We already have people asking what we are going to do next summer!

Thanks, thanks, thanks to everybody that helped. It has been a great week of service !

More Mission News:

While BUMC members were busy serving our local communities, Shawn Mankamyer and Liam McGrath traveled to North Carolina to participate with 16 other churches in the Carolina Rebuilding Ministry. Earlier this month Kevin McGrath repaired outside stairs for one of our drive thru dinner friends. Thanks to all who became the hands and feet of Jesus this summer!

From the Prayer Corner – The Power Of Prayer : A Lifeline To God

As summer's warmth begins to soften into autumn's embrace, August and September invite us into a season of reflection, renewal, and preparation. These months remind us that every ending carries the seed of a new beginning, and every harvest is the result of seeds once sown in faith.

Prayer is a place of new beginnings. Prayer is also a seed sown in faith. And prayer is so much more than words we speak into the air—it is a sacred conversation with the One who knows us best. In moments of joy, it becomes our song of gratitude; in seasons of struggle, it is our anchor of hope.

When we pray, we are not simply asking for things—we are opening our hearts to God's presence, aligning our will with His, and allowing Him to shape our thoughts, attitudes, and actions. Prayer draws us closer to His heart, reminding us that we are never alone, no matter what we face.

Why Prayer Matters

It deepens our relationship with God – Just as friendships grow through conversation, our bond with God strengthens when we speak to Him and listen to Him daily.

It transforms our perspective – Prayer shifts our focus from our problems to God's promises.

It unites the church – When we pray together, we share in each other's burdens and joys, building a stronger spiritual family.

For the next two months, please set aside a few quiet moments each day to pray—not just for your own needs, but for others in our congregation, our community, and the world. You might be surprised how God uses those prayers to bring peace, guidance, and even unexpected answers.

Let us continue to be a church that prays together, that is always willing to pray for one another, that prays without ceasing, trusting that every whispered prayer is heard by a loving Father who delights in drawing near to His children.
(Portions taken from Guideposts.com)



September Birthday's and Anniversaries

09/01 Doug Kyle
09/01 Gail Strain
09/02 Kay Cramer
09/02 Barb Testa
09/02 Liam McGrath
09/03 Glenn Palmer
09/04 Erin McGrath
09/07 Anderson Peters
09/11 Emma Ladesic
09/12 Michael Fischetti
09/14 Jennifer Kyle
09/16 Wally Swarmer
09/16 Caitlyn Brennen
09/19 Dylan Brennen

09/21 Leaugeay Staub
09/21 Beth Joyce
09/22 Catie Edinger
09/22 Jeff Amick
09/24 Bill Shepherd
09/26 Anne Stevens
09/28 Aaron Stevens
09/29 Terri Murray
09/30 Cynthia Young

09/02 Clyde & Phyllis Szwaczkowski
09/07 Howard & Lisa Cope
09/10 Jeff & Chelsea Amick
09/20 Chris & Liz Sasada
09/20 Gregg & Sharon Platt

Trustees Corner..

The Trustees remain busy addressing the physical needs of the church building and its properties.

In May, our restoration contractor completed the repairs to the damage from the February 2026 ice dams and water intrusion. This work included several upgrades, including a new ceiling in the South Entrance Lobby, room repainting and a new ceiling in the Day School Director's Office, many new tile replacements in the Narthex, and a repaint of one of the Day School classrooms.

In June, Trustees contracted to have the 12 light poles in our parking lots to be repainted. Some of the poles were heavily corroded from winter and salt related affects.

Through the generosity of the Memorial Committee and the United Methodist Men, all three water fountains were replaced this year. These new fountains now include refrigerated water and bottle filling capabilities. Thanks to Bill Shepherd for installing these fountains in the Narthex, New Fellowship Hall Lobby, and the Education Wing Hallway.

In late June, we had our parking lot spaces restriped. The old lines were showing their age, and the new lines will make it easier to identify the various parking spaces available to our members, guests, and visitors.

In July, the Trustees upgraded the island along the entrance drive with the placement of river rock. This upgrade will help to reduce longer term maintenance on this island and will now match other islands on the property. Trustees also worked with the UMM and the Boy Scouts to place mulch in the planting beds surrounding our building.

Trustees are planning many other projects for the Fall as funding becomes available. The Trustees would like to thank all those who contribute to the work that is performed to maintain the professional appearance of our property and buildings.

Looking Ahead....

Men Doing Stuff

Due to the fact that the first Monday in September is Labor Day, the next get together for the Men Doing Stuff group will be on **Monday, October 5, 2026.**

There will be a slight change starting this fall where we will still start the get together at 6:30, but instead of a dinner, we will gather for dessert, and then do a work project that gets determined closer to the date. All men/boys are welcome.

Oktoberfest Pancake Breakfast

Mark your calendars now for the October 17th Pancake Breakfast. Members of the Western Pa Button Box Club will be returning to entertain you with traditional style Slovenian polkas and waltzes while you enjoy the All-you-can-eat Pancake Breakfast. See you there!

Bakerstown Methodist Women's Third Annual "Sleep In Your Own Bed" Retreat!

Ladies – Please join with us on **Friday night October 23rd from 6:30pm to 9:00pm** and again on Saturday October 24th from 8:30am to 2:30pm in New Fellowship Hall. The wonderful Rev. Alyce Weaver Dunn will again be leading this retreat for us and her message to us will be **"The Psalms: Echoes of the Heart"**. Last year we had 44 women attend!! Can we get 50 women this year??!! Come and join us again in 2026 and spend part of a crisp Fall weekend with Jesus and each other. You can even come in your jammies if you want! (Just like Marie and Nicole Eddinger!!) So grab a friend and sign up!! Snacks will be available Friday night and a Continental Breakfast and a Soup & Sandwich Luncheon will be served on Saturday. No need to bring anything except your Bible and yourself!! Cost is \$20 per person to cover the cost of food and supplies. Please RSVP to Lora in the church office or sign the sign up sheet in the Narthex by Friday October 16th. Hope to see you there!!!!!!!!!!

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.*

Ushers & Greeters: The First Smile of the Church Beginning September 13th -

Staff:

Rev. Keith Dunn
Senior Pastor

kdunn@bakerstownumc.org

Lora Stafura
Office Administrator
lstafura@bakerstownumc.org

Joyce Gindlesperger
Director of Music
jgindlesperger@bakerstownumc.org

Jennie Smith
Children's Ministry Director
JSmith@bakerstownumc.org

Tracy Hefner
Worship Leader
thefner@bakerstownumc.org

Every Sunday, before a song is sung or a sermon is preached, our ushers and greeters begin an important ministry. With a warm smile, a friendly handshake, and a welcoming heart, you help create an atmosphere where everyone feels seen, valued, and loved.

Whether you're opening a door, helping someone find a seat, answering a question, or simply offering a kind greeting, you are demonstrating Christ's love in practical ways. For first-time guests, your kindness can make the difference between feeling like a visitor and feeling like family.

Greeters are often the first faces people see as they arrive. A warm welcome, a smile, and a kind word can help guests and members alike feel at home. Your ministry sets the tone for worship and reminds everyone that they are valued and loved.

Ushers play a vital role in helping the worship service flow smoothly. Ushers will receive the offering and reverently bring it to the front of the church during the service.

Pray before serving, asking God to use you as His hands and feet. The Bible reminds us in **Romans 15:7**, "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

Thank you for faithfully serving in this vital ministry. Your dedication reflects the love of Christ and helps make our church a place where everyone can experience God's presence from the moment they walk through the doors.

Serving with a smile is more than hospitality—it's ministry. May God continue to bless you as you welcome others in His name. There are sign up sheets in the Narthex if you feel called to help with this ministry.

Financial News....

	May 2026	June 2026	YTD June 2026	YTD June 2025
Current Fund Giving	37,029.46	\$40,290.46	\$243,727.73	\$227,416.78
Current Fund Expenses	\$37,637.14	\$40,380.87	\$250,388.10	\$249,617.27

Hello Church Family...Here we are in the midst of a very hot summer. I hope you are able to keep cool. Thanks to your faithfulness to our church all of our bills have been paid in addition to commitments to the trustees. Please continue to keep our church in prayer as we navigate the summer season with our folks traveling with families or to visit families. Hope to see you in church. Kay Cramer, financial secretary 724-443-2847