



The Steeple

January 2022

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear Friends

Greetings in the name of Jesus! During Advent, we have been looking at what each of the gospels tell us about Jesus in their opening sections. This series of sermons will conclude on Christmas Eve as we consider Jesus the light, who came into the world. After Christmas we will shift our focus away from what each Gospel tells us about Jesus to how people responded to his arrival.

It is easy for us to assume that everyone enthusiastically welcomed the birth of the new-born king. We remember the shepherds who hurry to the manger as soon as they heard the words of the angels telling them about the birth of the Christ child. We recall the diligence of the Wise Men, who followed the star to Bethlehem from afar. We think about the strangeness of the gifts they brought. Prompted by poets and song writers, we reflect upon the gifts that we can bring to the baby Jesus.

The biblical narrative hints at a range of emotions that accompanied the arrival of God's Son into the world. People who were in power reacted differently to the birth of the King of the Jews than those who wanted to be liberated from the Roman Empire. People seeking salvation do not respond to the birth of a savior in the same way than those who have it all together. Some heard that God was doing a new thing and felt threatened by that news. Others responded with obedience and devotion to the new king. Jesus arrived on the scene, and many were expecting to meet God.

As we continue through the month of January, we will shift our focus from the birth of the Christ child to the earthly ministry of Jesus. We will examine the call and response of the first disciples who followed Jesus. We will begin thinking about what it looks like for us to be followers of Jesus.

We often view living the Christian life through the lens of the Epistles. Those are the letters written to believers after the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. They provide a Spirit inspired description of the life of faith and interpret the teachings of Jesus. Rather than looking at following Jesus from this perspective, we will spend the first few months of 2022 reflecting on what Jesus said.

The Gospels provide a rich tapestry of the words of Jesus. His teachings impacted the lives of those who heard them. As we think of what it means for us to follow Jesus, we will examine his words. Some will be familiar to our ears. Others may be new to us. There may be some things we have forgotten, or others may bring new insights to us. The words of Jesus are rich and powerful. They can change our lives and bring us closer to God.

I am excited to discover what God may be saying to us in the New Year. I am looking forward to seeing what God has in store for us through the teachings of Jesus. I am anticipating a season of growth and inspiration for all of us!

My prayer for the New Year is that God will bless us. I do not pray for material prosperity or physical health alone. I am asking for the Lord to help us grow closer to God and to continue in our service to the world around us. As I reflect on all that has happened in the past year, I see both positive and negative events. Through it all I see a God who remains faithful. I give thanks for God's presence with us and anticipate being drawn even closer to the Lord.

*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...



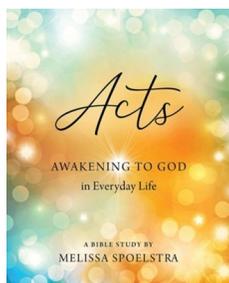
Family Service—4:30 pm

This Praise and 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. This service will be live streamed on our YouTube Channel.

Carols & Candlelight—7:30pm & 9:30pm

These services are 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. The 7:30pm service will be live streamed on our YouTube Channel.

This is a reminder from Financial Secretary, Kay Cramer: Contributions for the year 2021 will be accepted until Sunday, January 2, 2022. All checks must be dated for 2021 and in Kay Cramer's hand by Sunday, January 2, 2022. If you have any questions, please give Kay a call at 724-443-2847. ***



Ladies, looking ahead to after the holidays - **Mark Your Calendars for a new Women's Bible Study beginning at 9:00am Thursday Morning, January 6th in New Fellowship Hall - Acts: Awakening to God in Our Everyday Lives,**

a six-week study of the Book of Acts by Melissa Spoelstra. Whether it's because of distractions, busyness, or a case of the blahs, we can experience a drift toward indifference in our spiritual lives. We will journey with the first followers of Jesus and witness the birth and

growth of the early church through spiritual awakening to the power of God's Spirit, message, freedom, grace, mission, and direction. From their experiences we will learn how to attune our own spiritual hearts to experience God's presence, hear God's voice, and see God at work all around. This study offers a fresh encounter with God to prepare us to: Face our daily battles - Be able to discern the messages of our culture - Be ready to share God's love with others always. Please come and join us. Workbooks are \$10.00.

The Neighborhood Table | Jan. 6th | 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.

DIGging Deeper s | Sunday, January 9th | 9:45am | Wesley Room Join us as we continue to study Romans.

John MacArthur wrote the following about Romans. "Paul's letter to the Romans is an inspired masterpiece of doctrine highlighting God's grace, truth, and redemption. Within its pages, the apostle shares his message of good news and eternal salvation with the church, advises believers on theological truths, gives practical applications for living the Christian life, and shows how God's righteousness comes by grace alone through faith in Christ. The book of Romans underscores that Christianity is far more than just a doctrine—it is an essential road map for daily living."

Dr. David Jeremiah writes this, "Romans reads like a first-century course in theology, culminating in the incredible truth that God has made a way—through the sacrifice of Christ—for all to find salvation."

Happenings....

Drive Thru Dinner | Jan. 11th|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.

GriefShare Outreach Ministry 2022 Winter/Spring Schedule

Once a month Winter Get-togethers: January 19th and 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.

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!!

No Pancake Breakfast in January and February

The UMM will not be doing a Pancake Breakfast in January or 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.

Many thanks to everybody that has supported our Drive-Thru Breakfast in 2021.



Day School Open House!

Sunday, January 23 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 2022/2023 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

Did you forget one gift?? This Christmas season we'd like to ask you to consider giving one more gift... the *gift of life!* You can help save lives by donating blood at the next **Gibsonia Community Red Cross Blood Drive**. The best part is that you have a month to get ready! The drive will be held from 2:00 to 7:00 pm on Thursday, January 20, at Trinity Lutheran Church. Please take a moment now to make an appointment, or at least mark your calendar with a reminder. To register on line, go to <https://www.redcross.org/give-blood.html>, and type Trinity Gibsonia in the search box. For more information or help with registration, call the Trinity church office at 724-443-8110.

From The Prayer Corner- Starting Anew

The great thing about having a friendship with God is that there is always the opportunity to start anew – God always offers us a new day and a new dawn, no matter what has gone before. What a blessing that is!! At the start of the New Year, why not take a moment to thank Him for last year, ask His forgiveness for where you have failed, and dedicate the year ahead to Him – to serve and love the Lord afresh.

A good way of reviewing the year ahead is to write down the main areas of your life (things like work, family, friends, church, and leisure time) and then think about what God might want to do in these areas during the next year. Make this a matter of your prayer time, giving these areas and your decisions over to God in prayer.

The Year Ahead

As we start anew with a brand new year
 May God make our year a happy one!
 Not by shielding us from all sorrows and pain,
 But by strengthening us to bear it, as it comes;
 Not by making our path easy,
 But by making us sturdy to travel any path;
 Not by taking hardships from us,
 But by taking fear from our hearts;
 Not by granting us unbroken sunshine,
 But by keeping our faces bright, even in the shadows;
 Not by making our life always pleasant,
 But by showing us when people and their causes need us most,
 and by making us want to be there to help.
 May God's love, peace, hope and joy bless us for the year ahead.

- Author Unknown; Adapted by Debra Mooney

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 hldab@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!



Mission Team News.....

Tuesday, December 7 was a special Drive Thru Dinner. In addition to an amazing meal, clients of The Lighthouse received "Blessing Bags" put together by the Thursday morning Women's Bible Study Group. The kitchen crew worked together to stuff Santa hats for all the children and each child received a paper bag nativity kit as well. This brings our first year of monthly meals to a conclusion with a bang! The Drive Thru Dinner Team can't wait to see what the new year brings for this ministry.

The Mission Team continues to support other ministries in the name of Jesus locally, nationally, and internationally. However, we want you to hear just how grateful our neighbors are for the DTD. Here are just some of the responses we have received from clients through cards, emails, and verbal thanks:

Wow!!!! Thank you all So very much for the incredible blessings this evening!!!! We are very touched!!! The kids asked if they could please say thank you!!!

Both my husband and I want to thank you for the wonderful surprise. We will put all to good use. We are both only children and have no family so it was nice to get a present. Your cooks are wonderful and we always enjoy our meals. Thank you again for all you and your wonderful women of the church.

I was so blessed and deeply touched with the gifts in the Blessing Bag. Blessings to all of you wonderful ladies who made this generous gift possible. I especially love the soft plush blanket. I was Christmas shopping the other day for my 4 precious grandkids and wanted a blanket just like the one in the gift bag. I walked away from buying it because I needed the money for their presents. Imagine how blessed I was to find a blanket for me in the gift bag just like the one I was wishing I could buy. I will feel God's loving arms wrapped around me when I snuggle on cold winter nights. Thank you all so much for everything.

The lasagna meal was awesome and an extension of my birthday. It is one of my favorites, so thank you for making my day special. The "Blessing Bag" certainly was a blessing. You certainly thought of everything! We'll be sharing with a few folks. Your love is so astounding – you certainly are the hands and feet of God.

The meals are amazing and delicious and everything that was given out to us yesterday was unbelievable. I felt like a little kid at Christmas time. I was so excited! Thank you all so much! There are no words big enough to express our appreciation! We want to thank all of you involved in touching all of our hearts with your kindness and thoughtfulness and giving, caring hearts. It's amazing how all of you care so much to help to take care of people's needs. God bless you all!

A report from the church driveway: Tonight was yet another reminder of what this ministry means to people. I had several people tell me how much they are enjoying the Advent Devotionals we passed out last month. One gentleman was so happy to have the Advent candle holder because he said he never had one before. A woman told me that her kids cannot wait to light the candles and read the devotions. I had a woman tell me what a blessing the meals are since she had to rush home to get her son to an appointment and not having to worry about getting a meal ready is a huge relief. I had a gentleman tell me that the chili he had last month was the best chili he ever had. And finally, one gentleman told me that he has never had anybody take care of him like we are by cooking a meal for him and adding in the gifts we have been able to provide. There are so many hands involved in making this ministry happen, so I thought I would pass on the expressions of gratitude that I get to hear as we distribute the meals. And boy oh boy....did eyes light up tonight when they saw the blessing bags, the cookies and the stockings for the kids! – Roger Cramer

Bakerstown News....

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

Church Council

Kellen McGrath ~ **Vice Chair**

Camille Barrett

Finance

Marie Edinger ~ **Chair**

Mike Perriello

Tracey Rossi

Trustees

John Cleary

Parvez Khambatta

Elaine Schmidt

SPRC

Don Allaman ~ **Chair**

Jayne Cain

Paul McLeister

Jackie Smith

Nominations

Kathleen Meuschke

Nancy Shipley

Andy Detar

Memorial Committee

Mary Pouchot

Evelyn Dick

Paula Shepherd

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

There has been a change in the meeting schedule for 2022. The Trustees will now be meeting the 2nd Wednesday of the month and SPRC will be meeting the 4th Wednesday of the month.

If you are new to a committee in 2022, 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

Mark Jorden

Diana Matusik

Finance

Pamm Lunn

Jaison Rinker

Trustees

Heather Detar ~ **Chair**

Sam Cramer

Ray Wilson

Memorial Committee

Mary Pouchot

Frank Wood

Alissa Negley

SPRC

Denise Grier

Wally Swarmer

Nominations

Kay Cramer

Mary Pouchot

Notes of Appreciation....

To the Women of the Church from the Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study: THANK YOU!! Thank you all so much in assisting us with the Blessing Bags project for the Lighthouse clients. We couldn't have done it without you. It started out with just a few small ideas to do a very small mission project – but God grew it by leaps and bounds! It was amazing to watch. And it was such fun for us to pack those bags full with some wonderful donated gifts from you. The workers who gave them out have told us they wished they could have recorded all the touching responses from the recipients as they were given one of those bags. We can't thank you enough for making this Christmas a little brighter for some people who are struggling this year. And we also want to thank you for the great assortment of Christmas cookies which we packed up for the December Lighthouse Drive Through Dinner. They all looked yummy!! Thank you all for being the wonderful generous ladies you are!!

When we talked about getting 36 \$25 gift cards for Giant Eagle, we thought it was a stretch! God blessed us more than we every could imagine!!!! Every bag was able to have a Giant Eagle card, cards for eating out, and cards for hair cuts! This could not have happened without the generosity of the congregation and with the businesses that gave to the Blessing Bags. We also want to thank all the businesses that provided the gift cards we put into each blessing bag, Dunkin, Taco Bell, Sheetz, Eat N Park, McDonalds, Caliente's Pizza, Chick Fil A, James R. Werkmeister DMD, MS, LLC. Thank you again.

Additional Giving Options

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.



Once again we are going to have the offering envelopes for 2022 available in the narthex. If you have any questions, you can always call me. Kay Cramer, Financial Secretary 724-443-2847.

Bakerstown United Methodist Church
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*Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ
for the transformation of the world.*

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Lora Stafura
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January Birthdays & Anniversaries

01/02 Ray Wilson
01/04 Nathan Humenik
01/05 Debbie Lokay
01/07 Lyla Kennah
01/09 Lauren Dick
01/10 Jayne Cain
01/14 August Whipple
01/15 Miriam Perriello
01/17 Michelle Fischetti
01/19 Ian Holcomb
01/19 George Kress
01/22 Reid Rinker
01/23 Sabrina Humenik
01/24 Kim Szelc
01/24 Grace DeVore
01/25 Babe Barton
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