

The Steeple

August—September 2025

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of Jesus! This year's session of our Annual Conference was held on June 12th through 14th at the Bayfront Convention Center in Erie. Our church was well represented. In additions to Pastor Amanda, Pastor Alyce and me, Patty Burdett served as our lay member. Jennie Smith, our Children's Ministries Director, worked in childcare. Our youth present included Olivia Gilligan, Samuel Gilligan, and Chase Rinker. Shane Hinderliter served in his role as Camping Coordinator for our Annual Conference and Mallory Miles was an equalization member for the Pittsburgh District. Larry Burdett worked at the display table for "At the Lake Ministries."

Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball presided over her first Annual Conference as our episcopal leader. The theme for this year's conference was "Reconnect" based on Romans 12:5 "We, who are many, are one body in Christ." Much of what we did focused on reconnecting with God and with each other as the body of Christ. This was the first of a four-year process developed by the bishop and conference leaders with the goal of bringing us back together following Covid and disaffiliation.

We reconnect as the body of Christ by remembering our baptism. During opening worship, water from around our conference was poured together to symbolize our oneness in Christ - many streams, one Spirit. This theme flowed throughout the sessions and into the closing worship. As attendees departed the Erie Bayfront Convention Center on Saturday, they were encouraged to take a vial of water from the four baptismal fonts lining the exit hallway, carrying home to their local churches a portion of the connectional waters from the Annual Conference. In fact, a few drops of water from one of those vials were added to our baptismal font prior to a baptism celebrated in our sanctuary in June.

There are special events that take place at each session of the Annual Conference. The celebration of ministry included the ordination of one Elder, the commissioning of three Provisional Elders, and the consecration of a Deaconess. Our own Leah Swineford was recognized and blessed in absentia as she continues her work in Zimbabwe. This service also included the recognition of our retiring clergy.

The Memorial service gives opportunity to remember the clergy, spouses and lay members of conference who have gone on to the Church Triumphant. That service also includes the list of the churches, which are closing or have closed. All those names are read in the hope of resurrection.

In addition to inspiring worship and Bible studies, there is business to be done. We heard the State of the Church address. It was a collaborative effort from conference leaders and the bishop. They shared that while we are smaller than we were, the ministry is still vital in Western Pennsylvania. Bishop Seiner Ball concluded it with a breakthrough prayer for our conference. I hope that concept sounds familiar to you since we have been praying our own breakthrough prayer as a church this summer!

There was legislation discussed by the whole conference instead of being split into smaller section meetings. This revised way of doing business served us well. The bishop read and fixed the appointments, including appointing Pastor Amanda and myself back to Bakerstown! To read more, you can go to the Annual Conference 2025 link at wpaumc.org, which served as the foundation of this report. As I conclude the first month of the appointment year, I look forward to continuing in ministry with you and seeing what God has in store for us!

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....

Page 2

DIGGing Deeper | Sunday | 9:45am | Wesley Room
The Chosen returns to DIGGing Deeper On August 3, DIGGing Deeper will begin a study of season 5 of The Chosen. Christianity Today says in its review of season 5, “Vivid, artful, imperfect but faithful: Even if you know every beat of the Holy Week narrative by heart, the hit show’s latest season is worth watching.” This incredibly popular (97% audience rating on Rotten Tomatoes) continues to present the life of Jesus as seen by those around him. Season 5 covers the events of Holy Week up through the Last Supper. This season is streaming now on Prime Video. It will be available on The Chosen app beginning on September 13. Watch each episode at home then come join us as we dig deeper into the episode on Sunday mornings.

The Neighborhood Table | Thurs. Aug. 7 | 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 | Tues. Aug. 12 | 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.

The Bakerstown Book Club |Wednesday, August 13th, at 1:00pm|Church Library. Our Discussion Book will be The Atlas of Untold Stories by Sara Brunsvold. 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!!

GriefShare | Wednesday’s | 7:00—8:30pm| Wesley Room

Once a Month Summer Sessions: August 13th – 7pm
**New Session Series begins weekly September 3rd, 2025

The Thursday Morning Women’s Bible Study “Third Thursdays @ 10am” Summer Session All women of the church are welcome to join us on August 21st as Pastor Alyce leads us in our final session for the summer. Please consider dropping in to New Fellowship Hall at 10:00am to join in this session with us.

Bakerstown Youth Group

August 16: heading to the Mission Barn for assist with various jobs there

August 17: Youth Bible Study at Pastor Amanda’s house 6 pm

Please contact Pastor Amanda at amitchell@bakerstownumc.org if you have any questions.

August Birthday’s & Anniversaries

08/01 Jacob Meuschke
08/02 Lora Stafura
08/02 Wes Shipley
08/02 Dawn Conroy
08/02 Ryan McClish
08/03 Rita Sullivan
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
08/08 Don & Janet Allaman, Sr.
08/09 Paul & Rita Sullivan
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

GriefShare Outreach Ministry | Wednesday's 7:00pm | Wesley Room

NEW weekly meetings start up on Wednesday evenings, beginning **September 3rd through December 3rd**, 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.

GriefShare recently put out their best edition of GriefShare yet and we are using it here at Bakerstown United Methodist Church. The curriculum is Christ-centered and biblical and the weekly videos feature some of the nation's foremost Christian experts on grief and recovery. 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.

Women's Bible Study | Thursday September 4th at 9:00am | Fellowship Hall

The Thursday Morning Women's Bible Study will start back up with weekly gatherings. We will begin with two weeks of NO homework, NO workbooks study on Prayer. And then we will start a NEW study on Esther by Kelly Minter. In this 7-session study, Kelly Minter invites you into the daring faith modeled by Esther and her cousin Mordecai—a faith rooted in the goodness of God, lived out through extraordinary circumstances, and used to change the world. Although our time looks different from Esther's, our God is just as active and faithful today, and He has called you for such a time as this. If you would like a workbook, they are \$20.00. Please sign up in the Narthex or call the church office to register.

The Neighborhood Table | Thurs. Sept. 4 | 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.

Bakerstown Youth Group Calling all 6th-12th graders!

Join us for the start of youth group on **Sept. 7th from 6-7:30 pm**. ! I hope you will join us! Please contact Pastor Amanda at amitchell@bakerstownumc.org if you have any questions.

Men Doing Stuff

The "Men Doing Stuff" group will kick off our fall season with on **Monday, September 8**.

We will have a light dinner starting at 6:30 pm followed by an activity TBA. If you can join us, please shoot an email so we make sure we have enough food. Email: bakerstownumm@gmail.com

Drive Thru Dinner | Tues. Sept. 9 | 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 | 6:30-7:30pm | Fellowship Hall | September 9th

Join us as we study "The Holy Spirit"

The Father, Son and Holy Spirit. How many times have we said that? Yet, what do we really know about the third member of the Godhead? The value of studying the Holy Spirit can be seen in noticing His prominence in several areas.

The prominence of the Holy Spirit is seen in the Bible, in the life of Christ, in the Christian life, and in the importance of recognizing biblical truth and error.

Join us as we go on a journey to discover the deity of the Holy Spirit-The One who is the third member of the Godhead and who is so involved in our everyday lives as Christians.

All-U-Can-Eat Breakfast! | Saturday, Sept. 20 | 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



ALL WOMEN OF THE CHURCH ARE INVITED!!

Monday September 22nd at 6:00pm in Fellowship Hall "Potluck Picnic with Pastor Amanda!!"

We plan to provide a main dish – ham or chicken – and the drinks - iced tea, lemonade, and ice water - so bring your favorite potluck dish to share – potato casserole, vegetable side dish, fruit platter, salad, dessert, whatever - and enjoy a fun evening with friends as we get to know one another better including a Q and A with Pastor Amanda. So come with your questions! It will be a fun night for sure!! Sign up in the Narthex or contact Lora Stafura in the church office. ***Any women over 80yrs old, or moms with children under five, please just come and enjoy yourselves – no need to bring a potluck dish to share. And anyone with a crazy busy schedule and no time to cook, please consider donating \$5 to the Women's Ministry in lieu of bringing a dish. At BUMC, there is ALWAYS enough food! We just want you to enjoy a fun evening out.***

****Ladies, Please Note:** The dates for the THIRD Annual "Sleep in Your Own Bed Retreat" with Pastor Alyce and Pastor Amanda have been moved up a week. It is now scheduled for Friday, January 30th, and Saturday, January 31st. Please mark your calendars.



New Church Photo Directory! We are updating our church photo director, and we'd love for everyone to be included! Sign up sheets will be available in the narthex throughout the month of August. Photos will be taken in September and October. We have decided to not use an outside photographer for this directory. If

you have any questions or would like to volunteer, please contact Kim Szelc at 412-380-4723, kszelc@zoominternet.net or Peggy Hill at 330-687-4342, peggywardhill@gmail.com. We will need volunteers to help take photos and assist with registration before the photo sessions.

Join the Sanctuary Choir or the Glory Ringers!!

Practices are on Thursdays and a schedule will be provided. Joyce understands that people can't always be there every week so we always rehearse way ahead for maximum preparation even when people have to miss. So, no excuses like, "I can't be there every week." The Bottom line is, WE WANT YOU TO BE IN MINISTRY WITH US! Music is the most beautiful way to glorify God...taking a gift He gave us at the time of creation and turning it back to bring glory, honor, thanks and praise to Him. If you are interested in joining the Sanctuary Choir or Glory Ringers, please contact Joyce at jgindlesperger@bakerstownumc.org

September Birthday's & 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
09/08 Jody Mankamyer
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
09/27 Ashley Mankamyer
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

From the Prayer Corner – Put Hands and Feet to Your Prayers!!

Some of our favorite movies are ones that have a redemptive ending. No matter the trouble or tragedy a story may hold, we find great hope when it comes together in the end and goodness wins. We serve a God who is in the reconciliation business and promises a time when things will be as they ought to be – the happy ending we have been waiting for.

There is hope – no matter how bad things look in your life or in the world today – and He has a name: Jesus. And Jesus invites us to join Him in His people's redemptive stories. Whether it be our family, friends, neighbors, or strangers we pass on the street, people are looking for hope, and to know their lives have a purpose. Sometimes we focus too much on doing big things for God and we lose sight of the opportunities right in front of us. We may think, *I don't have many resources, or money, gifts, or abilities*, but all of us can join God in bringing about His kingdom on earth. We encourage you to pray and discern where God asks you to participate in one or all of the following ways:

***Pray:** What if you turned “I’ll pray for you” into “May I pray with you right now?” We have direct access to the source of all things good. When you encounter someone in need of prayer, pray right in that moment. Pray for your church, your community, the schools, leaders, and businesses. Pray for the poor and needy, for people you know and those you don’t – continually lay people, places, plans, and problems before God’s throne of grace.

***Serve:** Put hands and feet to your prayers!! We guarantee that someone in your life can use extra support. A simple act of kindness. You may be surprised to hear it was exactly what was needed. Check in with our pastors, or find other volunteer opportunities nearby. Just show up and be open to helping others in whatever way you can.

***Invest:** We are called to invest in God’s kingdom. Many people and organizations do their part to be a light and bring hope to a hopeless world. These efforts cost money. Whether you have a lot or what you perceive to be a little, we have all seen God use generosity to provide exactly what someone needed. Investment in people has ripple effects.

***Ask** for eyes to see the needs before you. That God would bring people and places to mind for you to pray for, check in on, and support financially. While God doesn’t need us, He invites us to do good works, to be servants who help push back the darkness, and proclaim the Good News. Everyone can do something – there is no “thing” too small. And then go watch a good movie!!

(Portions taken from Outside Your Front Door)

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 (hldrdb@hotmail.com) and you will begin to receive the e-mail prayer requests that go out periodically.

Mission Team News....

Page 6

The Bakerstown mission team has been busier than usual this summer! In addition to providing monthly meals for The Neighborhood Table and the Drive Thru Dinner, many of our folks have ventured beyond Gibsonia and its surroundings to the larger world in general.

Michelle Fischetti traveled with Dennis and Deborah Swineford to Zimbabwe to minister alongside of Leah Swineford to the deaf and hard of hearing students in Nyadire.

Our youth traveled to Jumonville to minister to families in that area. Thanks to Pastor Amanda, Dan Pouchot, and Heather Detar for joining in as well.

Our Costa Rica team made a 20th anniversary trip to Carrillos. Roger Cramer, Pastor Keith, Shawn Mankamyer, Susan McGrath, Penny Fischetti, and Connie Martin were joined by a team from the Riverview/Ashes to Life Methodist Church. That team included our own (formerly) Rachel and Evie Whipple.

Finally, Liam McGrath followed his calling to minister to those affected by last fall's hurricanes by joining the Ebensburg mission team doing construction in hard hit North Carolina.

We are a blessed congregation to have so many people involved in mission right here at home and to the ends of the earth! None of these folks would have been able to become volunteers in mission without the active, prayerful, and financial support of those who stayed at home. We have been blessed in order to be a blessing. It's clear that it is a calling our congregation takes seriously!



Food Pantry Needs *Lighthouse Food Pantry Collection for the month of August / September are : jello or pudding packs, fruit cups, cereal, breakfast bars, granola bars, and pop tarts.*

Financial Update

	May 2025	June 2025	YTD June 2025	YTD June 2024
Current Fund Giving	\$37,094.39	\$44,181.88	\$227,416.78	\$229,121.81
Current Fund Expenses	\$34,584.56	\$41,032.52	\$249,617.27	\$213,309.27

Hello church friends..

We are in the heat of the summer for sure. Air conditioning running at full blast. Vacations to fun places going on.

Mission trips to multiple places happening in July. With all the fun things we do in the summer, the finance committee wants to thank you for supporting your church even though you are not present in the pews. We look forward to hearing what everyone has been doing over the summer. Please also remember to look to see if your checks to the church have cleared the bank...electronic giving, or manual checks, or giving from your investment brokerage account. If you have any questions, please let me know. Kay Cramer, financial secretary 724-443-2847

Message from Kay Cramer, financial secretary:

Thank you for remembering Bakerstown United Methodist Church when you do your required minimum distribution from your retirement accounts, like JP Morgan Securities or Baird. Please have your financial institution put an identifier on the check since I am unable to get the information from the institution issuing the check (I have tried) so I will not be able to have these donations on your giving statement at year end. Thanks a bunch.

Children's Ministry News — August & September

Thank You for an Incredible VBS!

What an amazing week we had at **True North Vacation Bible School** from June 23–27! We welcomed over **50 children** for a week full of music, worship, games, and hands-on Bible adventures—all centered around the message that **Jesus is our True North** in this wild world.

It took a village—and you showed up! Nearly **30 volunteers** served before, during, and after the week. Your generous donations of time, resources, and prayer helped us raise **hundreds of dollars** for our mission team, gift **every child a copy of the Gospel of Matthew**, and send home **over 20 full Bibles** with families. We cannot thank you enough. **All glory goes to God** for the way He moved during that hot week and planted seeds of faith in young hearts!

What's Coming This Fall

Junior Church Returns!

Junior Church will begin again the **Sunday after Labor Day** during the 11:00 service. Children will be dismissed after the Children's Message to enjoy a Bible story, snack, and fun activity tailored just for them.



JUMP & Kingdom Kids – Together Again!

This fall, we'll once again combine **JUMP (grades 3–5)** and **Kingdom Kids (PreK–2nd)** for a once-a-month Sunday event after the 11:00 service in the **New Fellowship Hall**. Our next set of dates will be announced in August. These gatherings are always filled with laughter, learning, and connection!

We Need YOU: Volunteers Wanted!

Children's Ministry **can't happen without volunteers**. If you feel called to support the next generation, please **prayerfully consider getting involved**. Volunteers must have current clearances on file with the church.

Here are some ways you can serve:



- **Junior Church Helper (11:00 service):** Materials and lessons are prepared in advance! Jennie leads the activities, but we need a second adult present to comply with **Safe Sanctuary** policies.
- **JUMP/Kingdom Kids Volunteer (Once a month):** Help kids have fun while they grow closer to God and each other during a time of fellowship and fun!
- **Behind-the-Scenes Helpers — Join the "Hearts & Hands Team"!**



Love organizing, crafting, or getting things ready but prefer not to work directly with kids? Our new **"Hearts & Hands Team"** will meet **once a month** to help with cutting, assembling, and setting up materials for Junior Church, JUMP/Kingdom Kids, and seasonal events. Watch for Hearts & Hands Team dates coming soon in August!

Have questions or ready to jump in? Email **Jennie Smith** at jsmith@bakerstownumc.org

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

Rev. Amanda Mitchell
Associate Pastor/Youth Director
amitchell@bakerstownumc.org

Joyce Gindlesperger
Director of Music
jgindlesperger@bakerstownumc.org

Lora Stafura
Office Administrator
lstafura@bakerstownumc.org

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

Tracy Hefner
Worship Leader
thefner@bakerstownumc.org

Salad Supper & Spring Fashion Show

