



# The Window *into the heart of*

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

Volume 12, Number 2, Summer 2026

## FAITH for 9:30AM SUNDAYS TODAY JUNE 7 – AUGUST 30



**Healthcare for  
Underserved  
Populations**  
*Mary Herbert,  
Birmingham  
Free Clinic*

June 7th

**Celebrating 250 Years:  
Methodism as the  
Quintessential American  
Denomination**  
*Francie C. Robb, Ph.D.*



June 14th



**VBS 2026  
Preview**  
*VBS Team*

July 27-31

June 21st

**Temperance**  
*David Seitz*



June 28th



**Human Sexuality &  
Gender Identity**  
*Kim Rhoton*

July 5th

**Uncommon Women**  
*Diane Miller*



July 12th

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**Current  
Immigration  
Issues**  
*Sister Janice  
Vanderneck CSJ*

**July 19th**



**250 Years of Religious  
Freedom**  
*Rev. Drew Harvey*

**July 26th**



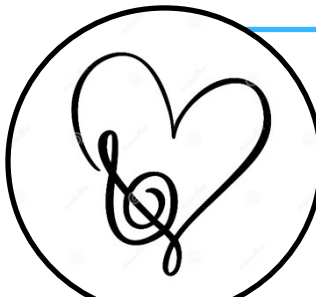
**Backpacks Mission  
Project**  
*Missions and  
Outreach Committee*

**August 2nd**



**Difficulty with  
Standing**  
*Dr. Jack Aupperle*

**August 9th**



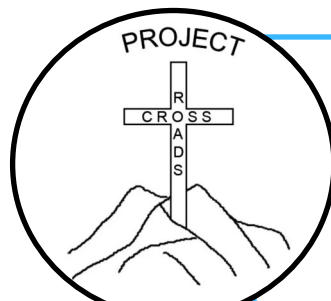
**Joyful Noise Music  
Program**

**August 16th**



**The Role of Methodism  
in Early U.S. History**  
*Rev. Dr. David L. Morse*

**August 23rd**



**Youth Mission Trip  
Report**

**August 30th**

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## **Body Building**

***“From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”***  
Ephesians 4:16 (NIV)

People sometimes ask me what is my “favorite passage in the Bible.” I actually have many favorites. My favorite passage concerning the church is Ephesians 4:16, printed above. The Apostle Paul uses the image of a body because it’s impossible to miss the point: a body only thrives when its parts are connected and functioning. A hand can’t flourish apart from the arm. A heart can’t beat without the support of the lungs. And a church can’t grow in Christ if its members are disconnected or passive.

Christ is the source — “from Him the whole body...”  
But we are the structure — “joined and held together by every supporting ligament.”  
And we are also the builders — the body “builds itself up in love.”

That’s the beautiful tension of Christian community: Christ empowers, but we participate.

## **Every Part Matters**

Paul doesn’t say some parts. He doesn’t say the gifted parts or the visible parts. He says each part does its work.

That means:

- The quiet encourager matters.
- The behind the scenes servant matters.
- The prayer warrior matters.
- The new believer matters.
- The tired parent matters.
- The elder saint matters.

In Christ’s design, there is no such thing as an unnecessary Christian. If you’re part of the body, you’re essential to its health.

## **Love Is the Atmosphere of Growth**

Paul could have said the body grows through strategy, programs, or leadership structures. Instead, he says it grows in love.

- Love is what makes the church more than an organization.
- Love is what keeps us connected when personalities clash.
- Love is what motivates service when no one notices.
- Love is what turns a group of people into a family.

Without love, the body becomes rigid and lifeless. With love, it becomes flexible, strong, and fruitful.

## **A Call for Our Church Today**

Ephesians 4:16 invites us to ask: What part has Christ given me to play in this body? Not out of guilt, but out of gratitude. Not out of pressure, but out of purpose.

- Maybe your part is prayer.
- Maybe it’s hospitality.
- Maybe it’s teaching, giving, listening, encouraging, or simply showing up faithfully.
- Whatever it is, the body needs it. Christ designed it that way.

When each of us brings our part — however small it may seem — Christ knits it all together into something far greater than the sum of its pieces.

## **Closing Thought**

A church doesn’t grow because a few people do a lot. A church grows because everyone does their part in love. Paul’s message in Ephesians 4:16 is simple and demanding at the same time: the church only becomes what Christ intends when every person contributes their God given part. Growth isn’t accidental. It’s relational, intentional, and rooted in love.

May we be a body that is connected, committed, and continually built up in the love of Christ!

*Pastor Tom Strandburg*

# Welcome New Members!



(Left to Right: Chris and Shana Slaybaugh, Katie and Devon Babcock, Ellen and Bill Carpenter and Kirby Dilworth)

## DEVON AND KATIE BABCOCK

Devon has lived in Pittsburgh since high school and is a senior property manager at The Buncher Company. Katie is originally from Alabama and has lived in Pittsburgh for 9 years and currently works as the director of development for Pittsburgh Area Community Schools. They have a 19-year-old son named Lucas who is currently pursuing the Pittsburgh Institute of Aeronautics and a 1-year-old son named James whose mission in life is to point out every light and make silly noises with his mouth. Devon and

Katie love doing outdoor activities such as kayaking, hiking, riding bikes on the Pittsburgh trails, and walking their two dogs, Loki the German Shepherd and Kiah the Australian Shepherd.

## BILL AND ELLEN CARPENTER

Bill and Ellen come to Mt. Lebanon UMC from the Virginia suburbs of Washington, D.C., where they were members of Mount Olivet UMC for over 15 years. Bill, now retired from the National Archives and Records Administration, was born in Mt. Lebanon and was baptized and confirmed at Mt. Lebanon UMC before his family moved away in the 1980s. Ellen grew up in Virginia and worked at the Department of the Interior, National Science Foundation, and Department of Housing and Urban Development before their move to Pittsburgh in 2025. She now enjoys working part-time at a local yoga and wellness studio. They have been married for nearly 28 years and are happy to be here among such a welcoming community.

## KIRBY DILWORTH

I was born, raised and educated in the western suburbs of Detroit. Baptised at 13, I became a member of the Norwayne American Baptist Church and was very active in the Chancel Choir and as a vocal soloist. I hold degrees in music and library/information science from the University of Michigan, and performed in European concert tours and opera festivals with the Men's Glee Club & Chamber Choir. Following grad school, I joined Michigan's School of Music staff before moving to Pittsburgh in 1978. I've sung in the choirs of Eastminster U.P., Congregation Rodef Shalom, and Mt. Lebanon U.P. before joining the Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church music program in 1988. I retired in 2021 after 43 years as a reference librarian at Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh in Oakland.

I first met my domestic partner of nearly 46 years, the late John Middleton, when we were performing J. S. Bach's Magnificat. John played double bass in the Civic Orchestra, and I sang (of course) in the choir. A decade later, I bought the charming red brick duplex where we lived until his passing on June 12, 2025, frequently debating the issues of taste that often consume classical musicians! All who remember John (the bearded fellow who always sat in the middle pew of the balcony) are welcome to attend his memorial service at 11 am June 12, 2026.

## CHRIS AND SHANA SLAYBAUGH

Chris and Shana both grew up in the church, met at Messiah University, and married shortly after graduation. Shana finished grad school to become a librarian and Chris started his career as an actuary while we attended Chris' hometown church of Zion UMC in East Prospect, a little borough on the outskirts of York County. While there, we both led youth group, sang in choir, served on committees, and Chris played in the handbell choir and taught an adult Sunday school class. In 2013, we officially adopted our son Josiah after a year and a half of fostering, and Chris' job moved us to Pittsburgh, where we settled in Mt. Lebanon. Until we started attending MLUMC last summer, we were members of a local non-denominational congregation where we continued serving and leading in various ministries. We are excited to now be coming back "home" to the United Methodist Church and are looking forward to getting to know and serve with you all.

# VBS 2026: JUSTICE BEGINS WITH ME!

*"What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?" -Micah 6:8*

July 27 – 31  
9:30 a.m. to noon  
Ages 3 years and older



VBS 2026 is almost here! This year our focus is on how we work to bring God's justice to an unjust world. We will play games, make crafts, sing, and even visit the Lebo Fire Station. Each of our Bible stories will teach us a lesson about helping others in need:

- Esther saves her people (Esther 4-8)
- Jesus feeds the 5,000 (Matthew 14)
- Zacchaeus (Luke 19)
- Jesus flips tables in the Temple (John 2)
- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10)

We need your support to have a successful week! To help, please:

- Pray for the children and adults all week long.
- Volunteer, even if for only one day. Contact Kim Rhoton to sign up ([krhoton@mlumc.org](mailto:krhoton@mlumc.org))
- Donate online or in person to help with the cost of supplies; note that it is for VBS so we route it to the correct fund.
- Share VBS information with anyone you know who has children ages 3 years and up. Parents can register online by going to the church website.

Thank you for your continued support of Vacation Bible School!

## APRIL 3rd COMMUNITY FISH FRY COMPLETES A HAT TRICK OF FOOD, FUN, AND FELLOWSHIP!



Our final Lenten Community Fish Fry, held on April 3rd (Good Friday), was a tremendous success. Approximately eight hundred meals were served via eat-in, take-out, and limited delivery. Meal recipients included Church members as well as those from our larger church "family" (including groups that use our building, ministry and outreach partners, and neighbors from our surrounding communities). Seeing folks break bread (AND EAT FISH) together was truly a remarkable sight!

For those who could not join us, the menu consisted of fried and baked fish, chicken nuggets, assorted side items, and a variety of desserts (particularly for those eating in – they had their own dessert table). Those eating in also had the opportunity to take Communion and share prayer with Pastor Tom. Many compliments were received, not only on the

food but more importantly on the hospitality that went with it. Monetary donations were plentiful and helped ensure that those unable to donate were still able to get a great meal at no cost.

We served approximately 2,100 meals during our 3 Lenten Fish Fries. They were truly fellowship-makers. Hockey fans know 3 goals in a game (an amazing feat) as a "hat trick." Consider us as having scored a Fish Fry "hat trick!" And thanks again to all who helped to make it happen!



Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair

# A 'Melon' Things Going On

## **Considering a Visit to Zwickau with MLUMC?**

Did you enjoy our German guests last fall during their visit to Mt. Lebanon? Please consider a summer 2027 visit to Zwickau! An introductory meeting for this intergenerational trip will be held on **Wednesday, May 20, at 6:00PM in the Kergyma Room** off the balcony. We will share basic information about the trip activities and estimate the group size so that the Germans can begin to plan for hosts. This is not a meeting for commitment – that will begin in the fall. If you are curious and have interest, though, please plan to attend in person or through zoom. Send Deanna Baird a request for the zoom link (fraubaird@aol.com). If you can attend neither but have interest, please e-mail Deanna or Lori Barr (lbarr@mlumc.org).

## ***UWF' summer events focus on food, fellowship, and history***

### **Rummage sale workers' lunch – June 6**

On June 6, members of the United Women in Faith will coordinate and serve the Saturday rummage sale workers' lunch. An important tradition, the lunch gives us an opportunity to show our appreciation for everyone's hard work and dedication to this semi-annual fundraiser. More importantly, the sale brings people into our church to witness our outreach and love for God's people.

### **Faith for Today – July 12**

We hope you'll join United Women in Faith members on July 12 at Faith for Today when speaker Diane Miller takes us on an historical trip through the past 200+ years as we learn about the work of women in missions.

## **Calling All Bakers!**

Help us raise money for our 2027 Zwickau trip by providing baked goods! We will be hosting an Election Day Bake Sale and need treats to sell. All treats, including cookies, muffins, and cupcakes can be placed in Wesley Kitchen on Sunday, May 17th or Monday, May 18th. If possible, please package baked goods in small bags. If not, that's okay! Thank you for your support of MLUMC and our partnership with Friedenskirche!

## **Summer Angel Tree**

Casa San Jose is requesting donations to help them purchase supplies for their summer youth programs. If you would like to contribute, please pick up an envelope from our summer angel tree in the Narthex! You can fill the envelope with cash, a check made out to Casa San Jose, or gift cards in any amount for Walmart, Sam's Club, Costco, or Amazon. Please place your envelope in the offering plate or turn into the office by May 31. Contact Kim Rhoton with questions. Thank you!

## *JUNE 6TH RUMMAGE SALE – ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THAT RUMMAGE CAN DO GOOD!*



On Saturday, June 6th, we will once again have an opportunity to show that rummage can do good at our annual Spring Rummage Sale, sponsored by the Missions and Outreach Committee. The sale will run from 9am to 2pm, with proceeds going to mission and outreach projects/ organizations locally, nationally, and around the world.

MLUMC has conducted rummage sales for decades, usually on the first Saturdays of June and in November. This long-standing tradition has been supported by a changing stable of volunteers. As folks have moved on, others have stepped in to ensure that this vital outreach ministry remains vibrant. One thing that has remained constant, however, is the rummage! We all have lots of it, and it is always a sight to see some of the items that are donated. To see these donated items turned into proceeds for missions and outreach reinforces the adage of “one person’s trash being another person’s treasure!”

Our Fall Rummage Sale, held on November 1st, netted just over \$ 10,000. Many projects and organizations benefited from these proceeds. Let us hope we do just as well, if not better, on June 6th!



If you have not previously volunteered or shopped at one of our rummage sales, June 6th will be your chance! We will no doubt have plenty of items to sell and many shoppers eager to buy. To ensure the sale’s success, a full complement of volunteers will be needed. If you would like to help, please reach out to me ([robert.spicher@pnc.com](mailto:robert.spicher@pnc.com)) and we will add you to the list.

Thank you in advance for your support of the upcoming June 6th Rummage Sale.

Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair

## ***MISSIONS AND OUTREACH COMMITTEE – FINANCIAL PARTNERS NEEDED AND APPRECIATED!***

Many of the events (such as large community meals) hosted by the Missions and Outreach Committee are self-sustaining, with free will donations from attendees covering event costs.

Relative to activities organized by the Committee, however, such is not always the case. Fortunately, several members of our congregation have become regular financial supporters of these activities, sparing the general church budget from taking a financial “hit” to cover them.

As the Missions and Outreach Committee continues with its 2026 activities, there is an opportunity to provide it with financial support. By becoming a “financial partner” of this Committee, you will not only help to underwrite the cost of these activities but also have the opportunity to assist with them.

The Lenten Fish Fries, the annual Back-to-School Backpack Drive, a Sunday afternoon picnic at the Daily Bread Mission, the Fall Festival, and the Community Thanksgiving Dinner were some of the Committee’s recent activities. Although one-time donations played an important part in covering the costs of them, funds provided by “financial partners” helped guarantee their success. Having “financial partners” in place will ensure that activities such as these continue to flourish in 2026 and beyond.

If you are interested in becoming a “financial partner” of the Missions and Outreach Committee, please contact Rob Spicher (Committee Chair) at either 412-720-4589 or [robert.spicher@pnc.com](mailto:robert.spicher@pnc.com). Thank you in advance for your financial support.

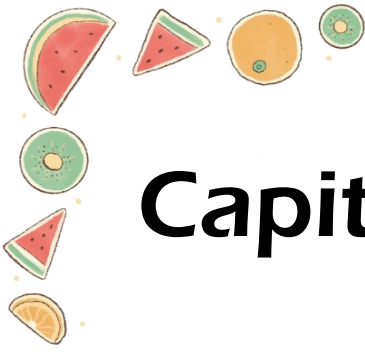
## ***Missions and Outreach Committee – Continuing to Provide Hospitality, Fellowship, and Service to Others***

In late 2023, Charge Conference approved the merger of the former Missions Committee and the former Community Events and Outreach Committee into a “new” committee – the Missions and Outreach Committee. Said merger became effective on January 1, 2024. The “new” committee hit the ground running and continues to go strong!

The Committee, chaired by Rob Spicher, has four subcommittees: 1) Hosted Community Events (Donna Chesleigh – Coordinator); 2) Local Ministry Partnerships (Monica Kao – Coordinator); 3) Community Outreach (Liz DiPietro – Coordinator); and 4) Missions (Louanne Baily – Coordinator). So far in 2026, the work of these subcommittees has included three Lenten Fish Fries and daily/bi-monthly/monthly food distributions. A Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, a Back-to-School Backpack Drive, Spring and Fall Rummage Sales for Missions, and a Community Thanksgiving Dinner are among the activities and events planned for the balance of 2026.

The Committee meets bi-monthly (every other month). Meetings are open to the congregation in person or via ZOOM.

If you would like more information about the Missions and Outreach Committee or would like to join it, please contact Rob Spicher at 412-720-4589 or [robert.spicher@pnc.com](mailto:robert.spicher@pnc.com).



# Capital Campaign Update

Now that the weather has turned warmer, we are able to continue with the projects that were funded by the Capital Campaign. As you can see in the attached photo, the landscaping on West Liberty is blooming, including phlox plants that were recently planted. These flowers are perennials so they will not need to be replaced each year. Our annual flowers will be added to the landscaping next month.



In the other picture, you will see that the Asbury Center doors have been temporarily removed so that they can be refurbished in the same way as the West Liberty Avenue doors. When those doors have been refurbished, the exterior doors on Scott Road will be refurbished. The picture illustrates the need for that refurbishment project. The William Karns Memorial Fund and Capital Campaign contributions made the Asbury doors project possible.



Our sanctuary roof is in need of repairs as shown in the pictures where the ceiling is damaged. A contract was signed recently to complete repairs on the roof starting in mid June. After the roof is repaired, the sanctuary ceiling will be patched and painted.



Thanks to all the generous contributors who made all of these projects as well as several others possible. We are still accepting gifts since there are more projects throughout the church that need attention. Our hope is to have a major celebration in the fall when all of the projects are complete.

## CHURCH FINANCIAL INFORMATION

**By Rob Spicher, Finance Committee Chair**

Since 2018, every edition of The Window has included financial information on our Church – this edition is no different. Summarized below are the Church’s 2025 actual, 2026 budgeted, and 2026 1<sup>st</sup> quarter financial results.

As noted in the table below, the Church’s financial performance during 2025 reflected declines in both Church stewardship and Weekday Ministries. Notwithstanding the negative bottom line, special gifts (including several bequests) helped to cover any gaps. Through the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2026, financial performance is ahead of budget on an annualized basis, due primarily to some stewardship pre-payments and improved Weekday Ministries performance. Let us hope such continues throughout the balance of 2026.

The Finance Committee would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all whose pledges, non-pledged gifts, and other financial contributions have ensured and continue to ensure that our staff is paid, our buildings are maintained, and our ministries continue to flourish.

Any questions regarding the actual and budget information shown below should be directed to Rob Spicher (Finance Committee Chair). He can be reached by calling the Church office (412-531-7131) or by e-mailing him at [robert.spicher@pnc.com](mailto:robert.spicher@pnc.com).

	2025	% Of	2026	% Of	2026 1 <sup>st</sup> Qtr.	% Of
<b>Church Budget</b>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
<b>Revenue:</b>	\$705,401	85.5%	\$728,884	80.1%	\$214,357	96.5%
<b>Expenses:</b>						
Personnel	\$409,970	49.5%	\$423,613	47.1%	\$101,664	45.7%
Programs & Facilities	192,321	23.3%	207,925	23.1%	51,076	23.0%
Utilities & Taxes	112,332	13.6%	121,700	13.5%	43,793	19.7%
Insurance	69,581	8.3%	63,066	7.1%	15,241	6.9%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference*	32,882	3.9%	71,898	8.0%	7,500	3.4%
Loan Payments	11,251	1.4%	11,251	1.2%	2,813	1.3%
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>(\$828,336)</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>\$889,153</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>\$222,087</b>	<b>100%</b>
<b>Total Net Income (Loss)</b>	<b>(\$122,934)</b>		<b>(\$160,168)</b>		<b>(\$7,730)</b>	
* Payments in 2025 totaled 46% of the requested amount.						
Net losses are covered by cash on hand, special gifts, and reserves.						

# Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

3319 West Liberty Avenue

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MLUMC now offers email and print communications for giving statements and *The Window* newsletter. You can update your preferences in two different ways:

- Fill out this form and return it to the church via mail or offering basket.
- Contact the church office via phone (412-531-7131) or email ([jdempe@mlumc.org](mailto:jdempe@mlumc.org)).

*Please Note: End of Year Giving Statements will be mailed regardless of preference chosen.*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Please Check One:

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive <i>The Window</i> via mail.                | <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive my MLUMC giving statement via mail.                |
| <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive <i>The Window</i> via email.               | <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive my MLUMC giving statement via email.               |
| <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive <i>The Window</i> via both mail and email. | <input type="radio"/> I would like to receive my MLUMC giving statement via both mail and email. |