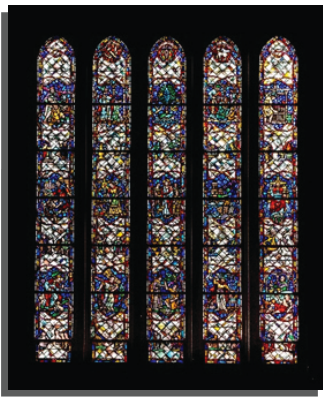




The Window into the heart of

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

Join Us For:

*Forward in Faith:
A Vision Gathering
for MLUMC*

**September 27th
9AM - 12PM**

Forward in Faith: A Fresh Vision for Our Church's Future

*"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing!"
Isaiah 43:18-19a*

In the fall of 2025, our Church Conference established the goal of developing a new vision statement for our church during the present year, to guide our ministry in the years 2027 and beyond. Our Church Council has been working on this task during each of its monthly meetings this year. As our inspiration and starting point, we have used the new vision statement for The United Methodist Church which was established in May of 2025, as follows:

The vision states:

The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections.

This vision statement complements the Church's longstanding mission statement, inspired by Matthew 28:1-20: *"The mission of The United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world."*

The vision encourages United Methodists to embody the following principles:

- **Love Boldly:** Passionately love God and, like Jesus, embrace and include people of every age, nation, race, gender and walk of life.
 - *Inspired by Matthew 22:37-39 and John 13:34-35*
- **Serve Joyfully:** With a Christ-like heart, journey alongside the most vulnerable, offering care and compassion with joy.
 - *Inspired by Psalm 100:1, Nehemiah 8:10, John 13:14-15 and 1 Peter 4:10*
- **Lead Courageously:** Follow Jesus' example by resisting and dismantling all systems of evil, injustice, and oppression, striving for peace, justice and reconciliation.
 - *Inspired by Joshua 1:9 and Ephesians 6:10*

This fall, we would like to urge all members and friends of Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church to engage with this process. I would ask you to reserve the date of **Sunday, September 27th, 2026** on your calendars. Our usual Sunday schedule will be fundamentally changed on that morning to include a single service of worship, followed by a meal, and a vision-casting exercise in which your input is sorely needed. Our goal is to accomplish all of this prior to our dismissal at Noon. Would you devote a single Sunday morning to this worthwhile task? I thank you in advance for doing so. I have asked all of our Sunday School classes to stand down their operations on that day, and they have agreed to do so. Childcare will be provided to enable our younger families to attend also. Please consider this your invitation to attend!

In 1908, clergyman and poet Frederick L. Hosmer penned the words for a hymn that was inspired by the early social gospel movement. His hymn was included in the 1989 United Methodist Hymnal as #555, "Forward Through the Ages." The words of the first stanza and refrain are these: *"Forward through the ages, in unbroken line, move the faithful spirits at the call divine; gifts in differing measure, hearts of one accord, manifold the service, one the sure reward."* May Hosmer's words ring true in our hearts as we contemplate moving "Forward in Faith" this fall. I'll see you in church!

Pastor Tom Strandburg

Programming Focus for 2026-2027: Peace with Justice

For the 2025-2026 program year, the Diversity, Equity and Belonging Committee (DEB) sponsored an overview of the UMC Social Principles, which were updated at the 2024 General Conference. Each month we explored a different area using a variety of methods and materials including guest speakers, large and small group discussions, book studies, and Sunday School class lessons. Many of these topics were difficult to tackle and left us with more questions than answers.

So, what is next? Over and over again we discover that the Social Principles at their heart are about loving our neighbors and bringing God's justice to an unjust world. As our VBS 2026 attendees learned, Micah 6:8 spells out God's requirement of God's people: "...do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God." These words are deceptively simple, but not easy to put into practice. Each part of the verse begins with an action verb: Do. Love. Walk. What should we DO when we know that justice is withheld from certain people? How do we actively LOVE those in need of physical and emotional care? How do we answer the call to WALK with our God to bring peace to a troubled world?

In order to explore these questions and more, DEB's focus for the coming program year will be Peace with Justice. Each quarter we will dive into a topic that addresses a broad group of marginalized people. Our first quarter (September, October, November) we will be Celebrating Diversity in the church, our nation, and the world. Please watch the announcements for specific activities. If you would like to help with planning for the year, please get in touch with Kim Rhoton (krhoton@mlumc.org).

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TERRIFIC TUESDAYS



Terrific Tuesday Resumes on October 6th

Our long-running mid-week gathering, known as Terrific Tuesday, will resume on Tuesday, October 6th at 6:00 p.m. in Asbury Center. As usual, each week's session will include a shared meal (provided by the church, free-will offering accepted), followed by activities for all ages. Nursery care is available each Tuesday night. We will not meet on November 3rd (Election Day / Rummage Sale) and November 24th (Thanksgiving Dinner Preparation). We will conclude our sessions on December 8th.

Our adult study this fall will focus on the theme "Perfectly Flawed," a study of the often imperfect people whom God has used for holy purpose. As usual, dinner will begin at 6:00 p.m., with each night's special activity kicking off by 6:45 p.m.

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. Thank you in advance for your financial support.

UWF Rejuvenation

Throughout time, women have occupied a central role in Christianity. We have operated under different names and expectations, but women have always found fellowship and faith in women's groups. Since COVID, Kathy Michael, and a small executive board, worked hard to keep our United Women in Faith (UWF) active. With changes in leadership, now is an ideal time for our UWF to restructure and rejuvenate.

Our current proposal is to organize three special interest groups (circles) under the UWF umbrella. The three circles are:

1. UWF Book Club-explore, read, share and discuss books from the national UWF Reading Program lists. (<https://uwfaith.org/resources/reading-program/>)
2. Women in Action-focus on physical activity (starting with walking) and fellowship
3. Coordinating Partners-organizing the larger and traditional UWF sponsored activities, including the cookie sale, flower sale and other occasions.

Additional circles can be added, based on involvement and attraction. Right now, we are simply trying to gauge overall interest among MLUMC members in UWF circles.

If you are interested in being a part of the United Women in Faith at Mt Lebanon United Methodist Church, or are interested in receiving additional information, please contact Francie Robb at francierobb@gmail.com.

Your generosity in action!

At the last UWF board meeting, we disbursed \$2,600 to organizations that support women, children, and youth. The money comes from our ongoing fundraising efforts — which YOU so generously support, so thank YOU!

The organizations included:

Ruth M. Smith Center	\$500
Brothers Brother Foundation - Breast Cancer Outreach	\$200
Kidcelerate	\$200
The Blessing Board	\$200
MLUMC Trustees	\$500
Pittsburgh District UWF (<i>as a part of our annual pledge</i>)	\$1000

Our goal with the money we raise is to put it into action on your behalf as quickly as possible.

SUN-SATIONAL NEWS

Vacation Bible School 2026

Thanks to approximately 75 children, teens, and adults, we had a very successful Vacation Bible School July 27-31. Our theme, Justice Begins With Me, took inspiration from Micah 6:8, *What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?*

Each day we focused on a different Bible story that helped us understand how we can be an instrument of God's justice in the world. We learned about speaking up for those who are being persecuted (Esther), sharing our abundance with others (Mathew 14), making amends to those we have wronged (Luke 19), using our strong feelings to make positive changes (John 2), and helping our neighbors in need (Luke 10).

We also played games, sang new songs and played instruments, made crafts, and explored hands-on activities to reinforce our Bible stories. For our last day we took a walking field trip to the Mt. Lebanon Safety Center.

We met first responders (fire, police, EMS) who taught us more about their jobs, let us explore their vehicles and equipment, and even fly a drone!



VBS is a huge year-long project; planning begins each fall and the work continues until after the designated week. This type of outreach simply cannot happen without the support of our congregation! I appreciate everyone who participated by praying, volunteering, and making financial contributions, and especially to the VBS team who met with me throughout the year to make the vision come to life. God's justice begins with YOU!



VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION DINNER THANKS THOSE WHO DO SO MUCH FOR OTHERS

On Saturday, May 23rd, the Missions and Outreach Committee hosted a Volunteer Appreciation Dinner as a way of thanking those who give their time and talents to support the Church's many programs, missions, and ministries.

Approximately seventy people attended the dinner, which was expertly prepared and coordinated by Donna Chesleigh with help from other Missions and Outreach

Committee members and many of our youth. The scrumptious meal was followed by a power point presentation detailing many of the programs, missions, and ministries. Powerful testimonies were given by a number of those present, as they shared not only what they do but more importantly why they do it. Truly inspirational for all those present.

Those who attended are but a subset of the Church members and friends who volunteer in some way on a regular basis. The outreach, hospitality, and fellowship that these volunteers provide will help ensure that our Church continues to fulfill its mission of furthering God's work for many years to come.

Many thanks to all who helped to put on this event. And special thanks to Donna for not only organizing the event but also providing some special touches for all who were able to attend.



RED-Y FOR FALL!

Fall mum fundraiser

The UWF will hold its annual mum sale this fall in the church parking lot on September 12th from 10am to 12pm.

Mums (in various festive fall colors) are \$15 per pot. Cash or check only made out to the United Women in Faith. Please note, we will not be able to make change at the event. Come early for best selection.

As always, all proceeds benefit women, children and youth locally and globally.

Food, Fun, and Fellowship: UWF Salad Supper on Tuesday, Sept 8

On **Tuesday, Sept. 8 at 6 pm** in Asabury Hall, the United Women of Faith will gather for a salad supper to kick off the new service year. Please bring your favorite salad to share. We'll supply drinks and dessert.

After dinner, we'll hear a brief update about one of the many local organizations we support that uplift women, children & youth.

ALL women are invited – and not just church members. Please bring a friend! Call the church office to make your reservation: 412.531.7131.

LEGACY GIVING SEMINAR – IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR ALL

On Tuesday, September 15th, the United Methodist Foundation of Pennsylvania will give a seminar at our Church on Legacy Giving. The seminar will begin with a light meal at 5:30pm followed by an informational program. Program content will focus on topics such as charitable giving, bequests, and providing for beneficiaries. Look for more information on this program in upcoming announcements.

Come One, Come All, and Bring a Friend To Our Fall Festival

Save the date, October 3rd to join the Missions and Outreach Committee at our annual Fall Festival. Rain or shine there will be games, food, crafts, activities, and special sweet treats for all. Look for more details in upcoming announcements.

🎵 Handbell Open House! 🎵

We know you love our handbells so here's a chance to give ringing them a try. Come to our Open House on Thursday September 17 at 6:30 in the Handbell Room on the second floor of the education building around the corner from the Choir Room. NO obligation, simply an opportunity to determine if handbells might be your new Team Sport!

Send me a text at 412-334-7987 or just show up! It's FUN! 🎵 🎵

Nancy Lutz, Director of Handbells

NOVEMBER 7TH RUMMAGE SALE – ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY TO SHOW THAT RUMMAGE CAN DO GOOD!



On Saturday, November 7th, we will once again have an opportunity to show that rummage can do good. That is the date of our annual Fall 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 Spring Rummage Sale, held on June 6th, netted just over \$11,000. Many projects and organizations benefited from these proceeds. Let us hope we do just as well, if not better, on November 7th!

If you have not previously volunteered or shopped at one of our rummage sales, November 7th will be your chance! We will no doubt have plenty of items to sell and many shoppers eager to buy (see photo). 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) and we will add you to the list.

Thank you in advance for your support of the upcoming November 7th Rummage Sale.

Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair

MLUMC'S LONG-STANDING FOOD MINISTRIES CONTINUE TO NOURISH BOTH BODY AND SOUL

Four (4) long-standing food ministries fall under the umbrella of the Missions and Outreach Committee, most notably the Food Pantry, the Northside Lunch, the Food Lift, and the East End Cooperative Ministries Dinner.

- The Food Pantry (led by Liz DiPietro and Tom Wagner) has been in existence for over 20 years and provides perishable and non-perishable items twice a month to approximately sixty families (totaling 160 individuals) in our surrounding communities. The Food Pantry's reach increased during 2025 when it added families involved with the fledging Spanish ministry that our Church is sponsoring.
- The Northside Lunch (led by Louanne Baily and Francie Robb) has been in existence for over 40 years and provides lunch on the first Thursday of every month to approximately 150 impoverished individuals in the North Side neighborhood. During the height of Covid, these lunches were supplemented with sanitary and protective supplies.
- The Food Lift (led by Monica Kao) has been in existence for over 15 years and receives/distributes perishable food items daily (year-round), not only to our Food Pantry but also to churches and social service organizations in economically challenged neighborhoods throughout the Pittsburgh area. The Food Lift also supports a monthly food distribution (third Tuesday of every month) by the Beulah Baptist Church in the Beltzhoover neighborhood.
- The East End Cooperative Ministries Dinner (led by Rob Spicher) has been in existence for over 30 years and provides dinner on a bi-monthly basis (4th Sunday of the "even" months) to the EECM housing/social service facility in the East Liberty neighborhood. The dinner feeds approximately fifty residents transitioning from homelessness, addictions, and incarcerations. MLUMC was recognized earlier this year as the "Volunteer Group of the Year" for our long-standing service to EECM (see photo).



In addition to the folks mentioned, many other volunteers contribute their time and talents to these food ministries to ensure their success and sustainability. MLUMC is certainly making a positive impact on the lives of all whom these food ministries touch, both recipients and volunteers alike.

If you would like more information on any of these food ministries or wish to help with any/all of them, please contact Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee chair, at robert.spicher@pnc.com or 412-720-4589. Volunteers are always welcome!

Capital Campaign Update

We are nearing the completion of the projects that were funded through the Capital Campaign. During the past few months the doors to Asbury Center and the Scott Road doors to the sanctuary were beautifully refurbished. Funds from the William Karns Memorial also contributed to this project. (Refer to the before and after pictures)



Recently the sanctuary roof repairs were completed. This will help to prevent further leakage on the sanctuary's ceiling. (See pictures) Unfortunately, the roofing contractor uncovered additional roof damage during the reconstruction work. These problems will need to be addressed in the near future, and they will be funded through the Trustees' Fund. Any contributions for this work will be greatly appreciated.

The last project to be completed is the improved exterior lighting of the church. That project is in the planning stages.



MT. LEBANON UNITED METHODIST CHURCH SANCTUARY CENTENNIAL CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES

AMOUNT	ITEM
\$118,157.03	Pledges and Contributions to Date
\$0.00	Anticipated future contributions
\$118,157.03	Total Anticipated Contributions
	CAPITAL CAMPAIGN EXPENDITURES
\$42,635.00	New Digital Sign (actual-completed)
\$2,485.00	Sign - Electrical Work (actual-completed)
\$909.90	Sign - permit/engineer fees, etc. (actual-completed)
\$23,485.00	Sidewalks (actual-completed)
\$16,362.27	New Landscaping (actual)
\$1,995.00	Columbarium Alcove Wall Repair (actual-completed)
\$2,500.00	Exterior Lighting Upgrades (estimate)
\$3,390.67	Refinishing Outside Doors - Asbury & Brookline (\$3,303bid+\$87.67incidental)
\$13,950.00	Roof Repairs for Scott Road Side of Sanctuary (bid)
\$7,375.00	Slate Replacement - Various Areas (bid)
\$2,692.51	Partial Pmt Roof Repairs for Pkg Lot Side of Sanctuary (bid: \$10,475 total)
\$376.68	Incidental Campaign Costs (mailing, recognition reception)
\$118,157.03	Total Capital Campaign Expenditures

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 mid-year 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 first half 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.

Church Budget	2025 Actuals	% of Expenses	2026 Budget	% of Expenses	2026 6 Month Actuals	% of Expenses
Revenue:	\$705,401	85.1%	\$728,884	82.0%	\$451,470	104.6%
Expenses:						
Personnel	\$409,970	49.4%	\$422,528	47.4%	\$203,372	47.2%
Programs & Facilities	\$192,319	23.3%	\$207,960	23.4%	\$98,853	22.7%
Utilities & Taxes	\$112,332	13.5%	\$106,490	12.0%	\$76,370	17.8%
Insurance	\$69,581	8.5%	\$70,800	8.0%	\$32,444	7.6%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference*	\$32,882	3.9%	\$70,023	7.9%	\$15,000	3.4%
Loan Payments	\$11,251	1.4%	\$11,251	1.3%	\$5,626	1.3%
Total Expenses	(\$828,335)	100%	\$889,052	100%	\$431,665	100%
Total Net Income (Loss)	(\$122,934)		(\$160,168)		\$19,805	

*Payments in 2025 totaled 46% of the requested amount.

Net losses are covered by cash on hand, special gifts, and reserves. Does not include revenues/expenses tied to the capital campaign.

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

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