



The Window into the heart of *Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church*

Volume 11, Number 4, Holiday 2025

Join us in celebrating the Christmas season at Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church! We warmly invite you to experience the cheer of hearing the Nativity story, singing beloved Christmas carols, and lighting candles of joy. With a variety of worship services to choose from—including Candlelight Traditional Services, a Service for Family and Children, and The Gathering's modern Christmas service—you can find one that suits you. Come and share in these special moments of worship and reflection with us.

Join us for our Christmas worship, which begins with a Traditional Candlelight Service on the evening before Christmas Eve. Pastor Tom Strandburg will be officiating on Tuesday, December 23rd, 2025 at 8 pm while Director of Music & Liturgy, Mitchell Stecker leads the music in the Sanctuary. The liturgy, candle lighting, music, and atmosphere will be the same as our Christmas Eve traditional Candlelight Service. For younger attendees, we invite you to join us for the family-friendly Service for Children & Families at 3 pm on Christmas Eve. And if you prefer upbeat Christmas music, you won't want to miss The Gathering at 5 pm on Christmas Eve.

If you find yourself unable to attend a Christmas Season service in person, there's no need to worry. MLUMC has got you covered. You can still worship and celebrate with us virtually through our livestreamed Christmas Eve services, including The Gathering and the Traditional Candlelight Service. Additionally, we will be livestreaming Christmas and Sunday services on December 24th, 2025 and December 28th, 2025, so you can stay connected with our community during the holiday season.

CHRISTMAS SEASON WORSHIP

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 23RD

TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

8:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 24TH

SERVICE FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

3:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

THE GATHERING CHRISTMAS EVE

5:00 PM IN ASBURY CENTER

LIVESTREAMED & RECORDED ON FACEBOOK

TRADITIONAL CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

8:00 PM IN THE SANCTUARY

**LIVESTREAMED & RECORDED ON THE MLUMC
WEBSITE, FACEBOOK & YOUTUBE**

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28TH

MORNING WORSHIP

10:45 AM IN THE SANCTUARY

**LIVESTREAMED & RECORDED ON THE MLUMC
WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, AND YOUTUBE**

**NO 8:30 AM MORNING WORSHIP OR 9:30 THE
GATHERING SERVICE FOR SUNDAY, DECEMBER
28TH**

**THERE WILL BE NO CHILDREN'S SUNDAY
SCHOOL OR KIDS' PRAISE ON SUNDAY,
DECEMBER 21ST OR SUNDAY, DECEMBER 28TH**

Salt & Light

Matthew 5:13-16

"In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."

Matthew 5:16 (NRSV)

Whenever I read this passage of Scripture, my mind is immediately filled with memories from Vacation Bible Schools past. I can see the faces of children, many of them now grown to adulthood, singing that old Sunday School song – *"This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine! This little light of mine, I'm gonna let it shine! Let it shine, let it shine, let it shine!"* In my experience, young children have always liked the second verse of that old song the best – *"Hide it under a bushel . . . NO! I'm gonna let it shine!"* With gusto they would always shout that word "NO" at the suggestion of hiding it under a bushel. I'm gonna let it shine! I've loved the way that some of the leaders would then personalize the song by leading the children in singing: *"Shine all over (insert the name of your town here), I'm gonna let it shine!"* We all love that old song, but I have a question for you today – Do we really let it shine? As individual Christians, and as a congregation, how do we let the light of Christ shine through our lives?

Ten years ago, several of us had the opportunity to tour some United Methodist historic sites with a group that was visiting from our church's partner congregation in the city of Zwickau in eastern Germany. On one beautiful day, we visited Old Otterbein UMC in the city of Baltimore. Located mid-way between Camden Yards ballpark and the Inner Harbor, this was the place where Philip William Otterbein spent the last thirty-nine years of his life and ministry. During his long pastorate there, Otterbein was known for his very direct (some might say "meddling") pastoral style. He was determined to ensure that all of his parishioners actually lived the faith which they professed.

In the spring of 1807, Otterbein was informed that one of his sheep had strayed quite dramatically from the path of the Christian life. This man, by the name of Hoefflich, had left his wife and family in Baltimore while he traveled to a town some miles away for his business. Word soon began to reach the 81 year old no-nonsense preacher that Hoefflich was bringing dishonor to his family and to his faith by his lifestyle away from home. On June 5th of that year, old Otterbein wrote his wayward parishioner a scathing pastoral letter that included these words: *"A man that knows the truth and confesses it fallen so awfully! This we had not expected. We hoped that you would be salt in your neighborhood – a light and a leader. Alas, it is to the contrary."* I continue to be challenged by those words. Be salt in your neighborhood, a light and a leader! Those old words, written by one of our denomination's founders, are good advice for us today. Salt, light, and leaders have one thing in common – when present, they fundamentally change the circumstance into which they have been placed for the better. Your church leadership continues to investigate ways in which we can be salt, light, and leaders in our neighborhood from our very prominent location on the corner of Scott Road and West Liberty Avenue. Consult the other pages of this newsletter for more information about our congregation's work of mission and outreach and help us to shine the Light of Christ throughout our community in the weeks ahead.

Yours in Christ,

Thomas Q. Strandburg

Pastor



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POINSETTIA & FOOD PANTRY FUND CHRISTMAS MEMORIALS

Early poinsettia purchase deadline because of supply issues!

It is early, but time to order your Christmas poinsettias in honor or memory of family, friends, and loved ones. The red poinsettias cost \$12.00. Because of greenhouse supply issues, orders must be early and on time.

THE FIRM CUTOFF DATE TO ORDER POINSETTIAS IS SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2025.

Also consider making a donation to the Food Pantry in honor or memory of your loved ones. The deadline for the Food Pantry donation memorial will be in December.

The poinsettias will be on display Sunday, December 22, 2024, at the Christmas Eve candlelight services. You may pick up your plant after the 8 pm Christmas Eve service or after Christmas Day. Spread the cheer by volunteering to deliver the poinsettias to shut-ins, or ask the church to deliver.



Christmas Memorials 2025

FIRM Poinsettia order deadline: Sunday, November 23, 2025

Make check payable to MLUMC. Mark the memo line *Poinsettia* or *Food Pantry*.

of Purchase poinsettias _____ @ \$12.00/each = _____ Given in (circle) “memory” or “honor” of:

Donation to MLUMC Food Pantry \$_____ Given (circle) “memory” or “honor” of:

☐ I will pick up my poinsettia ☐ I will deliver to a shut-in ☐ Church to deliver to a shut-in

Donor Name _____

Phone _____

Oh, What Fun We and Our German Zwickau Partners Had!!

Twenty-five Zwickauers, ranging in age from 10 – 55, visited us from October 5 – 15. This partnership with the Friedenskirche (Peace Church) was begun at the suggestion of Rev. Jeff Miller in 1995. This year's visit was filled with mission work, cultural events, and common worship events. Language does not seem to matter, but our common beliefs and values do matter! Below are the activities that we enjoyed.

MISSION PROJECTS

Conference Barn
Northside Lunch
Light of Life
Pgh Food Bank
Our Harvest Festival
Providence Point Performances

FUN ACTIVITIES

Pgh. scavenger hunt
Museums of Illusion and Warhol
Grove City Shops
New Wilmington Carillon bells
Jumonville
Ohiopyle biking
Hoogie and pie making
School visits
Oakland
High school football games

CONGREGATION EVENTS

Zwickau Band at Gathering
Zwickau Band at 10:45
Recorder Trio at 10:45
MLUMC/Zwickau combined choir
Zwickau guest organist
Discussion of Social Principles
Two Terrific Tuesday evenings
Harvest Festival
Donna and Sven cooking!

Lori Barr and Deanna Baird thank all the people below who made it all happen! So many thanks to you--**Danke schön!!**

HOSTS

Kathleen Amant
Louanne Baily
Dan and Lori Barr
Martha Clarke
James Hansen
Brian and Kim Kappeler
Jim and Nancy Lutz
Noel and Sharon Slater
Mitchell and Sarah Stecker
Tom and Kathy Strandburg
Nate and Laura Ward

DRIVERS

Louanne Baily
Laura Ward
Sharon and Noel Slater
Kim Palmer
Ethan Von Hedemann
Francie Robb
Scott Bowes
Bonnie Lawson
Dick DiBella
Mike Paine

DRIVERS

Pastor Tom
Mitchell Stecker
Lori and Dan Barr
Kim Rhoton
Betsy Raynor
Kathleenj Amant
Martha Clarke
Dave Langenbacher
Linh Quach
Alan Volek
Alan Chesleigh

ACTIVITY LEADERS

Pastor Tom
Rob Spicher
Kim and Eric Palmer
Mitchell and Sarah Stecker
Caryl and Mike Drabick
Lori and Dan Barr
Donna Chesleigh
Louanne Baily

ACTIVITY LEADERS

Kathleen Amant
Martha Clarke
Laura Ward
Linh Quach
David Langenbacher
BJ Thomas
Sandy and Rich Waters
Deanna Baird

ZWICKAU PLANNING COMMITTEE

Kathy and Tom Strandburg
Kim and Eric Palmer
Lori and Dan Barr
Laura Ward
Dave Langenbacher
Sarah and Mitchell Stecker
Linh Quach
Martha Clarke
Kathleen Amant
Deanna Baird

Lori and Deanna would also like to thank everyone who has supported the Zwickau partnership and the Zwickau Committee work through our Schnitzel lunches, our election day bake sales, and, of course, our Mission/Outreach donations. Because of this help we already have a fund begun for our 2027 Zwickau trip. Planning will begin in 2026. Consider joining up! Questions? Contact Lori Barr (lbarr@mlumc.org), or Deanna Baird (fraubaird@aol.com).



Let the Gourd Times Roll

November 1st Rummage Sale Delivers for Missions!

Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair



The November 1st Rummage Sale was a resounding success. Although the financial results are not yet final, the sale is expected to net more than \$11,000 for missions in Western PA, elsewhere in the United States, and around the world. The expression “one person’s trash is another person’s treasure” was certainly in evidence!

Special thanks to the volunteers (both regulars and first timers) who made the sale possible, particularly the Scouts sponsored by our Church who did much of the “heavy lifting” during the pre-sort of items. Special thanks as well to Alan Volek, who assisted in many areas



prior to and during the sale, and Caryl and Michael Drabick, who helped coordinate set-up and clean-up. And last, but certainly not least, special thanks to all who donated and/or purchased items. It took a village, and with God’s help a village we had!

Our next Rummage Sale will be on Saturday, June 6, 2026. Please mark your calendars and plan to help. And start collecting that rummage!

Fall Festival Delivers Food, Fun, & Fellowship!

Rob Spicher, Missions and Outreach Committee Chair

On Saturday, October 11th, the Missions and Outreach Committee hosted our Church’s annual Fall Festival. The Upper Parking Lot was the location for free food, family fun, and festive fellowship. There was truly something for everyone!



The bounce house was very popular along with our game and craft booths. Participants were able to remember the day with our seasonal photo booth. We had so much fun, we almost forgot to eat!

Thankfully, we had a lot of good food! Among the food was hot dogs, hamburgers, and walking tacos. Our cookie decorating, s’mores, and Kona Ice were a sweet treat!

As a special treat, our twenty-five guests from our sister church in Zwickau, Germany provided some German delicacies to the food line-up (sauerkraut, stick bread), and musical entertainment compliments of their praise band, Praise Center. It was great to have them with us!



Mother Nature cooperated and approximately three hundred attended the festival – a record crowd, for sure!

Many thanks to Donna Chesleigh for coordinating the festival logistics and the volunteers who helped make this awesome day happen! What a fantastic way to spend a Fall Day!

That's Fall Folks!



Adult Mission Trip a Great Success

In September, 4 adults made a trip down to Marion, VA to partner with Project Crossroads to help with their home rehab ministry. With the assistance of Kirk Lowe who was able to work with our crew for the majority of the week, we were able to patch, repair or replace 5 ceilings in the homeowners house which had been damaged by a leaking roof. We replaced 2 light fixtures, 2 ceiling fans, stabilized the bathroom floor and replaced the toilet. Further repairs and rehab on the bathroom will be



needed next season, but we were able to create a safer and cleaner bathroom until then. We were blessed with beautiful weather and enough hands to allow us to do even more than originally planned to help this couple feel more comfortable in their home. We will be planning another adult mission trip in the fall of 2026. If you would like to join us, please stay tuned for our first planning meeting in January. Anyone 18 or older is welcome to attend.

Mum sale nets funds and friendship!

The UWF's annual September mum sale in the church parking lot quickly sold out -- and raised approximately \$325 for organizations that support women, children, and youth. Thank you to everyone who bought mums and made donations! It was a beautiful morning and we enjoyed the fall fellowship! We hope to see everyone again soon at our

New Digital Sign Arrived

We are pleased to announce that the major component of the Capital Campaign, the digital sign, has arrived. On Sunday, November 16, immediately following the 10:45 service we will dedicate our new digital sign along with our sidewalk improvements. On the dedication Sunday, the full capabilities of the sign will be demonstrated. We hope many of you can join us for this wonderful celebration that recognizes the generosity of two families who made major donations for the sign as well as many others who contributed to our Capital Campaign.



MLUMC Revels in Hosting Reveille Breakfast

For many years, men affiliated with churches throughout the South Hills have gathered quarterly for a morning of food and thought. Along with a hearty breakfast, these gatherings (known as Reveille due to their 8am start time) feature a testimonial as well as an inspirational message. Although our neighbors at Mt. Lebanon Evangelical Presbyterian Church generally host these gatherings, MLUMC has worked our way into the hosting rotation by providing scrumptious food and a welcoming environment when our turn comes up each year.



The most recent of these gatherings at MLUMC took place on Saturday morning, October 11th. Thanks to the leadership of David Seitz, a kitchen crew of MLUMC men, and the assistance of Caryl Drabick and Donna Chesleigh, upwards of 150 men enjoyed a morning of hospitality and fellowship. Pancakes, egg bake, bacon and fruit got the morning rolling, followed by messages from a wounded veteran and an Iranian refugee. Truly time well spent for all who attended!

In the Holiday Spirit

Christmas Cookie Sale & British Tea Room return Dec 13th

Festive fellowship returns on Saturday, December 13 from 9am to 12pm when the UWF holds their annual Christmas Cookie Sale & British Tea Room in the Education Wing and Asbury Center. Come early to have the best selection of delicious homemade Christmas cookies sold by the pound. After you're done shopping, stop by the British Tea Room for one of Barbara Watson's homemade scones and a hot drink.

All proceeds benefit women, children, and youth! We hope you'll join us for this time-honored event!



Mission Sale

The Sunday school children work together throughout the year to support an orphan in Zimbabwe named Moreblessing, who lives in the Home of Hope Orphanage. Moreblessing is approximately nine years old (in many cases children come without any documentation such as a birth certificate, so exact ages are unknown). Our sponsorship helps to provide for all the necessities of life, including food, medical care, and education expenses.

On December 7, the children will offer a variety of small treats and crafts they have made for sale. Please plan to stop in the Narthex after both services to help support this mission. All proceeds will go to help support Moreblessing and the Home of Hope Orphanage in Zimbabwe. For more information about Nyadire United Methodist Mission, please go to www.Nyadire.com

Community Christmas Caroling

Please join us for Christmas caroling in the neighborhood surrounding the church on Sunday, December 14. This is a fun event that requires no special singing talent, just the willingness to spread good cheer to those who live near MLUMC! We will meet in Asbury Center at 6pm for a light dinner, followed by caroling, and then back to the church to warm up with cookies and hot cocoa. The entire evening will wrap up before 8pm. Please dress for the weather and bring a flashlight; caroling booklets will be provided. Register with Kim Rhoton, krhoton@mlumc.org.

Founders Day - Sunday, November 23

For the third consecutive year, we will celebrate Founder's Day during the 10:45 service. The third group of long time members will be recognized by awarding them the Sanner Commendation which will be a surprise to those receiving this award. In addition, immediately after the service, we will conduct dedications of improvements to our sanctuary and vestibule as well as an addition to our Wall of Bishops. We will begin in the sanctuary to dedicate the restoration of the wall in the columbarium transept. Then we will move to the narthex to dedicate a memorial window provided by funds in memory of



Fish, Fish, & More Fish: Mark Your Calendars & Ready Your Taste Buds!

The Missions and Outreach Committee will be hosting their Community Fish Fries during the 2026 Lenten Season. These Fish Fries will take place on Friday, February 20th, Friday, March 13th, and Good

Friday, April 3rd. Eat-in as well as take-out will be offered. There will also be limited delivery to shut-ins and Food Pantry clients.

The menu for the Fish Fries will include:

- Fried & Baked Fish
- Chicken Nuggets (for non-fish eaters)
- French Fries
- Hush Puppies
- Macaroni and cheese
- Coleslaw
- Buns
- Fruit
- Desserts



The Good Friday Fish Fry, will include a few additional items plus Communion elements offered by Pastor Tom.

There will be no charge for the Fish Fries, although donations will be accepted. Those able to donate will help ensure that those unable to do so can still eat.

These Fish Fries have proven to be extremely popular, for our Church community and surrounding neighbors. They are a great way for us to provide hospitality and share food, fun, and fellowship.

Please mark these dates on your calendar and plan to attend. If you would like further information on these Fish Fries or wish to help in some manner with them, please contact Rob Spicher at 412-720-4589 or robert.spicher@pnc.com.

William Karns. From there we will proceed to the outer narthex and dedicate a picture of Bishop George Bashore that will be added to the pictures of other bishops who have served our congregation. Following the dedication ceremonies, we will move to the Welcome Center for a light lunch and fellowship. We hope many of you can join us for this wonderful celebration that will recognize the generosity of many members, dedicate great improvements to our beautiful, historic sanctuary, and honor our beloved Bishop George Bashore.



Spread Holiday Cheer



Christmas Cookie Sale



To make the UWF's annual Christmas Cookie Sale & British Tea Room a success, we need your help in two ways:

1. Donate delicious, homemade cookies. In the weeks leading up to the December 13th event, please consider baking a batch or two of your favorite cookies and freezing them in sealed bags. You may even want to bake with a friend or host a cookie-baking event in your home or at the church.

Please drop off cookies in the church kitchen anytime on Thursday, Dec. 11th or Friday, Dec. 12th before noon.

2. Volunteer at the event. Please join us on Friday morning at 9 am, in Asbury kitchen to tray cookies. Or stop by on Saturday and volunteer an hour or two in the tea room, cookie area, or in the kitchen for cleanup.

If you have questions, text or call Sandy Waters at 412.996.0502.

Candle Lighting and Christmas Tableaux

Volunteers are needed to help with lighting Advent candles each Sunday and Christmas Eve services on December 23 and 24. No special skills are required!



Candle lighters can be families (including children), couples, or friends. If you are interested, please contact Kim Rhoton with a service preference.



Volunteers are also needed to assist behind the scenes and to participate in the annual **Christmas Tableaux**, scheduled for December 21 at the 10:45 service. Children and



teens are needed to play the parts of angels, shepherds, and kings. Adults are needed to help the

participants get into costumes and enter the sanctuary on cue. Participants and adult helpers must be available for a rehearsal on Tuesday,

December 16 at 6:30p.m. in the sanctuary. Please contact Kim Rhoton to volunteer or with questions – krhoton@mlumc.org



Community Thanksgiving Dinner



On Thursday, November 27th, MLUMC will be the place for the annual Community Thanksgiving Dinner. Eat-in, take-out and delivery will be provided. Over five hundred meals will be served, along with a generous amount of hospitality and fellowship.

Hosted by the Missions and Outreach Committee, this dinner has been a fixture in the South Hills for over 40 years. Originally started by our friends at Bethany Evangelical Lutheran, MLUMC has taken on an increasing role over the years and is now managing the entire event.

There are four ways that you can make this dinner a success, as follows:

- 1) Donate a turkey (roasted and carved) – Turkeys should be dropped off at the Church on November 25th (Tuesday) and November 26th (Wednesday) of Thanksgiving week.
- 2) Donate a pie – Apple, cherry, or pumpkin are preferred. Please drop them at the Church on November 25th (Tuesday) and November 26th (Wednesday).
- 3) Donate your time – We will need volunteers for set-up on November 26th (Wednesday) and for cooking, serving, and delivering on November 27th (Thanksgiving Day).
- 4) Donate funds to cover costs – We provide a full course meal. Your financial support will ensure that recipients get a hearty meal with all the trimmings.

If you would like to donate a turkey(s), pie(s), time, and/or money to this important outreach effort, please contact Rob Spicher as soon as possible at robert.spicher@pnc.com or 412-720-4589. Thank you for your support of this long-standing outreach ministry.

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 concludes its 2025 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, and the Fall Festival are some of the Committee’s 2025 activities YTD. 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 2025 and beyond.

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



Love Boldly
Serve Joyfully
Lead Courageously

Help us to fulfill our church’s mission in the coming year by submitting your stewardship pledge for 2026. Pledge cards are available from the sanctuary literature tables and the church office. You may also e-mail your pledge to our Financial Secretary, Joanne Dempe, at jdempe@mlumc.org. Your input will assist us in finalizing our church budget for 2026.

Social Principles Survey Outcomes

Thanks to all who completed Social Principles Survey. Our purpose for it was multiple:

1. Providing you and me with exposure and consideration of these “clearly marked signposts... toward living fully into God’s gracious love for the world” (per Social Principles of the UMC 2025-2028)
2. Our German guests from Zwickau completed the survey too, indicating which social principles were A-Urgent, B-Important or C-less of a priority, and we compared results with the MLUMC congregation at the 10/14 Terrific Tuesday dinner. Both groups agreed that issues of Poverty and Income Inequality, along with Global Warming & Climate Change and are Urgent! Food Insecurity is of great concern to our congregation.
3. Following identification of Urgent Issues is “What does or can the church do” in response! Consider how you might help or work to mitigate a social issue that is important to you. For example, the Food Lift welcomes new drivers; the Mission and Outreach Committee prepares and serves Thanksgiving meals; our Sunday evenings welcome Hispanic friends with worship and dinner. Contact the church office for these or new opportunities of service.

Continuing our 12 Months of Social Principles: Education, Contemplation and Action

<u>Month</u>	<u>Social Principle</u>	<u>MLUMC Activities</u>
November	Colonialism, Neocolonialism, and their Consequences Globalization	Book study on <u>The Poisonwood Bible</u> by Barbara Kingsolver; Guest speaker Grace Killian at Terrific Tuesday November 18; Land Acknowledgment Statement
December	Poverty and Income Inequality	Angel tree & Thought Tree bulletin board; WPAUMC Poverty Team to speak at Terrific Tuesday Dec. 2
January	Health Care Reproductive Health and Abortion	Speaker on disparities of healthcare in Pittsburgh (date TBD); Book discussion of <u>Rough Sleepers</u> by Tracy Kidder
February	Church and Governments Civil Disobedience Restorative Justice Graft, Bribery & Corruption	What do the Scriptures say about Church and Government? Discussion at Terrific Tuesday; Book groups to discuss <u>The Watsons Go to Birmingham</u> by Christopher Paul Curtis and <u>While the World Watched</u> by Carolyn McKinstry
March	Human Trafficking and Slavery	Book study <u>SOLD</u> by Patricia McCormick; Unity Lunch Speaker from Assure
April	Global Warming and Climate Change, Affirming Science and Traditional Wisdom	Earth day activities at Mt. Lebanon Park; Book discussion of <u>Serviceberry: Abundance and Reciprocity in the Natural World</u> by Robin Wall Kimmerer
May	Media and Communication Technologies	Media validity activity for all ages
June	Human Sexuality	Pride day participation; Book discussion of <u>Tomorrow Will be Different</u> by Rep. Sarah McBride
July	Sexual Orientations and Gender Identities Gender Equality & Diversity	Faith For Today family story time
August	Food Justice	Snack drive for MLUMC’s food pantry in coordination with Outreach Committee backpack drive

Church Financial Information

Rob Spicher, Finance Committee Chair

Summarized below are the Church's 2024 actual, 2025 budgeted, and 2025 nine month actual financial results.

The 2025 budget projects a deficit of over \$100,000, assuming payment in full of the Connectional Contribution (aka Apportionment). A budget with a \$100,000+ deficit was also approved in 2024. Fortunately, numerous unbudgeted and special gifts resulted in a bottom line positive for the year. Throughout the first 6 months of 2025, bottom line performance was well on track to exceed budgeted projections. However, a precipitous drop in stewardship during the 3rd quarter has now put anticipated full year performance in line with budgeted projections. Although the 3rd quarter has traditionally been a slow time for giving, this year's 3rd quarter was exceptionally slow and strained cash flow.

The Finance Committee would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to all whose pledges, non-pledged gifts, and other financial contributions ensure that our staff is paid, our buildings are maintained, and our ministries continue to flourish. As noted above, a challenging 3rd quarter has strained cash flow, making it even more important to remain current with your giving. Please keep that financial support coming!

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.

	2024	% Of	2025	% Of	9 Month 2025	% Of
Church Budget	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expenses</u>	<u>Actuals</u>	<u>Expenses</u>
Revenue:	\$814,416	103.2%	\$766,356	86.7%	\$600,346	88.1%
Expenses:						
Personnel	\$394,214	50.0%	\$422,528	47.4%	\$310,170	45.6%
Programs & Facilities	167,926	21.3%	207,960	23.4%	196,497	28.8%
Utilities & Taxes	101,233	12.8%	106,490	12.0%	90,576	13.3%
Insurance	64,893	8.2%	70,800	8.0%	53,108	7.8%
Connectional Contribution to WPA UM Conference*	49,923	6.3%	70,023	7.9%	22,800	3.3%
Loan Payments	11,251	1.4%	11,251	1.3%	8,438	1.2%
Total Expenses	\$789,440	100.0%	\$889,052	100%	\$681,589	100%
Total Net Income (Loss)	\$24,976		(\$122,696)		(\$81,243)	

* Payments in 2024 approximated 72% of the requested amount.

Net losses are covered by cash on hand, special gifts, and reserves.

Mt. Lebanon United Methodist Church

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