



The Messenger

A publication of the Effort United Methodist Church

February 2026

Our Mission

“The purpose of the Effort United Methodist Church is to know, love and serve God and one another in Christian Community, welcoming all to grow as followers of Jesus Christ.

Ways to Connect:

Address: 178 Merwinsburg Rd. (PO Box 545), Effort, PA 18330

Office phone: 570-629-1890 (Jan Decker, Administrative Assistant)

(Hours: 8:30am – 2:30pm Mon-Fri)

Email: eumc103@ptd.net

Website: www.effortumc.org

Facebook: Effort United Methodist Church

Instagram: effortunitedmethodist

Youth Group Instagram: e.u.m.c.wavewalkers

Help Us to Connect with You:

Should you want to get on our contact list for email, or have a change in your email address (or home address, phone number), please contact Jan at the church office (570-629-1890; eumc103@ptd.net).

Newsletter distributed generally monthly via email, at church or via mail. Information for the March 2026 Messenger is due to Roxane Martin by **Wednesday, February 25, 2026**. Email Roxane at martgr@ptd.net or place in Newsletter mailbox across from the church office.

REMINDERS:

Ash Wednesday—February 18

Palm Sunday—March 29

Maundy Thursday—April 2

Good Friday—April 3

Easter Sunday—April 5

Pastor's Corner

Sunday February 8th – Celebration Sunday.

Friends, we have a lot to celebrate! God has been working in powerful ways through you, and through His church here in Effort, Pennsylvania. Before moving on to the ministry we have planned for 2026, I think it is important to pause, reflect, and GIVE THANKS TO GOD for the ways He has blessed us in 2025.

For that reason, ***Sunday February 8th will be Celebration Sunday***, here at Effort UMC. We will be highlighting the ways in which God has been working, sharing success stories from this past year, and giving praise to God for all He has done. In addition, February 8th, is also Scout Recognition Sunday and a breakfast Sunday. If there was ever a day to invite someone to join you – February 8th is the day!

Now, as we look forward to this day of celebration, let me ask you: ***Do you have something to celebrate?*** I want to encourage you to think about the ways God has been working in your life; think about the ways you have seen God working in the life of this church; and then consider sharing those stories with me. ***If you have a celebration to share – please contact me (skuhnle10@gmail.com) to share your story!***

May God continue to bless you as we seek to glorify God and invite people to come and know Him through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Pastor Scott Kuhnle

Lenten Schedule

Lenten Bible Study: On Wednesday, ***February 11th*** (week before Ash Wednesday) a Lenten Study on Season One of the “*The Chosen*” will commence. There will be soup & salad at 5:30 pm with the study starting at 6:00 pm and running to 7:00 pm. All are invited to come. A sign up sheet is on the Welcome Center.

Schedule:

<u>Date</u>	<u>Episode #/Title</u>	<u>Bible Study Lesson #/Title</u>
<u>Feb 11:</u>	#1: “I Have Called You by Name”.	#1: “You Are Called”.
<u>Feb 18:</u>	#2: “Shabbat” #3: “Jesus Loves the Little Children”	#2: “You Rest” #3: “You are Cherished”
<u>Feb 25:</u>	#4: “The Rock on Which It is Built”	#4: “You Change Course”
<u>Mar 4:</u>	#5: “The Wedding Gift”	#5: “You Are a Witness”
<u>Mar 11:</u>	#6: “Indescribable Compassion”	#6: “You Are Made New”
<u>Mar 18:</u>	#7: “Invitations”	#7: “You Are Established”
<u>Mar 25:</u>	#8: “I am He”	#8: “You Are Carried”

Lenten Evening Services: There will be Lenten services on **Wednesday evenings** start at 7:15pm starting on **Ash Wednesday, February 18th through March 25th** in the sanctuary.

Special Notices

Church weather closings: As the “cooler” weather and the white stuff has arrived, please note that information on church closings during inclement weather, can be found on: Church webpage (www.effortumc.org), church Facebook page, or listen on WSBG radio 93.5.

2026 Offering Envelopes: The 2026 Offering Envelopes are available for you to pick up in the Narthex. If you do not have an envelope and would like one, please see Jan in the office. Likewise, if you have been assigned an envelope number and wish to go to EFT, contact Jan so that the number can be reissued. We are trying to be good stewards of our finances.

2026 Altar Flowers & Bulletin Sponsors: The sign up sheets for 2026 Altar Flowers and Bulletin Sponsors are now posted on the bulletin board next to the Library. Altar Flowers are \$30.00 per vase and the Bulletin sponsorship is \$15.00. Hurry on over to sign up for those special dates you want as they go pretty fast.

Upcoming Happenings

Fellowship Breakfast: will be held on **February 8th , 2026** from 9:30 to 10:30 am in Wesley Hall. Bring the family, a few friends and your appetite for a delicious meal. This is a free will offering event that is open to all. See you there! This is Youth Group fundraiser and also Boy Scout Sunday.

Souper Bowl Sunday—February 8th

Each year our Missions Team and Supplemental Food Resource Center (food pantry) sponsors our appropriately named "Souper Bowl." We will have soup pots in the Narthex for donations of canned goods such as canned fruit, canned pasta, canned vegetables, canned sauces, etc. and non-perishables. Back by popular demand, we will also have a little competition involving the teams who will be playing in this year's Super Bowl (New England Patriots and the Seattle Seahawks). Each soup pot will have a team name so you can vote for your favorite by placing your donation in that particular pot. There will be a third pot for the donations if your team didn't make it into the Super Bowl and you wish to donate—you can still back a winner! Please bring your donations in by Sunday, February 8th. Let the games begin!

New Members Classes: Thinking about joining us? New Membership Classes (3 in total) commenced on January 11th, 2026 right after the 11:00 am service. The next class is scheduled for **Sunday, February 22nd**. Those completing the classes will be taken into Membership on **April 5th (Easter Sunday)**. A sign-up sheet can be found on the Welcome Center.

Lasagna Dinner: This fundraiser will be held in March so be on the lookout for more information!

Opportunities to Serve

Nursery Volunteers: The Nursery is normally open only during the 11:00 am service. If you love children and are willing to volunteer one hour of your time to tend for and to care for those little ones in our church. Background checks and clearances are required. If you need background checks, please contact Jan in the office. Thanking you in advance for your support of this ministry.

Ushers and Greeters: We have reconvened the use of Ushers and Greeters at our services! This means we will be in need of a few people who would like to participate in accepting the offerings and greet people as they enter the church. If you are interested, please contact Michelle Wichman who will be coordinating this opportunity for service. You can reach Michelle at: mlwich@ptd.net.

Liturgist, Scripture Readers,& Communion Stewards: We are in the process of updating our various lists of volunteers who serve in one or several of the aforementioned areas. Should you be interested in continuing to serve or would like to be added to specific area of serving, please contact the church office and we will get you on the schedule. The schedule will be on a rotational basis. Great opportunity for our young people as well to get involved with service.

Opportunities for Children and Families

Christian Education

Any questions or concerns, please see Brenda Mitchell, Christian Education Director (eumchrist@ptd.net)

Nursery: available at the 11:00am service for ages Newborn to 3 years old.

Sunday School: Classes are held during the 11:00 am services (September through May).

Classes are grouped as follows:

Body Building—3 years of age through 2nd grade

Intermediate—3rd, 4th, 5th grade

Middle School—6th, 7th, 8th grade

High School—9th – 12th grade, meeting 2x/month

Children's Choir— We have reconvened our Children's Choir! Practices are being held on **Sunday mornings at 10am** in the Youth Room. All ages are welcome to join us. We have some new instruments (that are easy to play) and a renewed interest in singing for our church family. Contact Miss Brenda for more information and we hope to see you there!

Young Adult Group: Is a self-run group meeting monthly or as scheduled for ages 18-26. Interested persons can contact Deb Audett, daudett@ptd.net, for additional information.

Preschool at Effort UMC

Do you know of anyone looking for a wonderful Pre-school program or if you have any questions about either the 3 year old or Pre-K programs, please call the church office or speak with Miss Gail by calling 570-629-1890 ext. 201.

WaveWalkers Youth Group

Hello to everyone! The Wavewalkers hope everyone enjoyed their Christmas, New Year's, and all the snow that came along with the holidays.

For the Wavewalkers, the New Year brings new adventures. We have new ideas how to have fun and new ideas on how to share the Gospel. We are still finalizing all of those events and will announce them as soon as we make those decisions.

We are adding some new touches to the Teen Room. We have a TV in now and we are close to setting up a snack bar for the Wavewalkers to enjoy time with one another. This space is very important for the teens. They really feel like they have their own space within the church. A space that they can share stories and talk among each other and goof around without older people and younger children. Being a teenager these days has got to be difficult. And it is such a blessing for our church to be able to have such a space for this group. They are no longer children and not yet adults. Feel free to come and see this space. Especially if you have a teen that may want to try the youth group out.

In February we have 2 meetings: one on the 1st and the other on the 15th. We would love to see everyone there!

We hope everyone has a wonderful February and stay tuned for our March Newsletter article for updates to our schedule. God Bless.

As always, thank you for your prayers and support.

Our meetings are on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month.

February 1st and February 18th 12:30 to 2:30 pm

Contact Alison Laxton, alaxton@ptd.net, Deb Audett, daudett@ptd.net, Theresa Mayo, mayo43093@aol.com or Melissa Roberti, mlenjr@frontier.com for additional information.

Youth Mission Trip-2026

Wallingford, Connecticut, here we come! At the moment, there are 10 youth and 6 adults interested in serving but we still have room for more! This Youth Mission Trip will be held the week of June 28th to July 4th, 2026. The trip is open to youth going into 7th grade and up in September 2026. **Call Jan Decker at 570-629-1890 or email eumc103@ptd.net for additional information or to reserve your spot.**

Stromboli Fundraiser: They're back by popular demand (and as a fundraiser for Youth Mission Trip in June). The YOUTH Missions team is once again hosting a fundraiser for our upcoming mission trip to Wallingsford, Connecticut. We are taking orders for our famous handmade strombolies **through February 1st**. Pick up will be on **Sunday, February 15th**. The Broccoli & Cheese is \$17, the Pepperoni & Cheese is \$17 and the Cheese Steak is \$20. Please have your **order and payments in by February 1st**. Call Jan Decker for additional information. Thank you for your support.

Continuing Fellowship/Bible Study Opportunities

RightNow Media: Did you know that we have a place that you can go to on line and seek out a multitude of Bible studies and information? If not, why not check it out. All you have to do is provide the office (or Pastor Scott) with your email address and an invitation to join in and peruse the many studies and information available.

Lenten Evening Bible Study: A 7 week Bible Study on **Wednesday evenings** from 5:30 to 7:00 pm focusing on Season One of The Chosen will begin. Meeting dates are: **February 11th thru March 25th**. Sign up at Welcome Center. More details elsewhere in newsletter.

Basement Bunch: Basement Bunch Bible Study/Sunday School class meets from 9:45 until 10:30 am in the former Day Care Kitchen area from September until May. Coffee, tea and some sort of goodies are always available. We would love to see a few more people join us. There is a book that we follow that you can read ahead or just look at it once we are in class. Come on out and learn a little bit more about the Bible. Hope to see you there! Please contact Steve Johnson at sjsa@ptd.net to register and/or if you have any questions.

Christian Connection: A group designed specifically for fellowship and sharing. This group welcomes all to share and to let you know you're not alone. Meetings are on Mondays from 12:00pm to 1:00pm and will be held in the Library. Bring a lunch and join them in a relaxed atmosphere of sharing God's love. If you are interested in participating, please contact Betsi Bradrick at: duckharbor21@gmail.com
(Christian Connection is on break until March)

Financially Speaking:

We would like to thank each and every one of you for your continued financial support of your church whether it was through the US Mail, EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer), in person, by giving through or Pay Pal.

Extra Mile--

Reminder that Extra Mile Giving (either through your envelopes or EFT) are greatly appreciated. All Extra Mile Giving goes directly to the General Fund for general operating expenses (electric, oil, office supplies, youth education and youth group, etc.) and is in addition to your weekly tithes and offerings. An extra few dollars goes a long way! Please consider going that “extra mile”. Contact Finance Chair for any questions—Bob Decker, bdecker@schiffs.com

Finance Committee Update—

Taking a break from clearing SNOW to share the financial state of the church with everyone. As you can imagine the snow removal from this intense and quick starting winter is well on its way to meeting or exceeding the budgeted forecast, however it is a much-needed expense to ensure everyone’s safety. I am ready to see that first spring crocus pop out of the ground, how about you?

For fiscal 2025 we did end up in the red mainly because we fell short of our income projections as most of the expenses came in under budget. Thanks to our Trustees and other volunteers who donate time and product to help keep the expenses down. Thanks also to our staff for keeping the heat not too high and keeping an eye out for unnecessary lights left on.

For the 6th straight year, we paid our apportionments to the conference in full. We have begun some flooring projects with funds through the generosity of George T. Walker via the Lehigh Valley Foundation. This grant is given to us annually with the funds geared towards physical upkeep of the church and projects are determined by the Trustees with the idea of keeping the church in good condition for future generations.

Please, besides your weekly giving to the church General Fund (which covers ministries/operating expenses/payroll/pastoral care/outreach...just to name a few), please help support our additional fundraisers. We have the 6 soup sales over the autumn and winter. We have the lasagna dinner in March/ Chicken BBQ in April/ Pork dinner in November. These dinners can be supported by donating towards supplies, attending or serving, (clean-up too!) Let’s hope for great weather in the last full week of August as we will be having our food stand at the West End Fair for the 4th year. Lots of ways to help with that fundraiser.

All gifts come from God. Whatever gifts we have, don’t hide them under a basket but share them and see what a difference we each can make.

Blessed 2026 Bob Decker Finance chairman and his committee.

Food Pantry (SFRC): Member of Feeding America through Second Harvest Food Bank

The Lord inspired us to help feed families who have need, that are not eligible for local, county or state programs. The program serves the communities of Albrightsville, Blakeslee, Brodheadsville, Effort, Gilbert, Kunkletown, Kresgeville, Saylorburg and Sciota on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of each month, from 10:00 am to noon.

The pantry will be open as follows for the month of February 2026: **February 14th and 28th from 10 am to noon.**

Volunteers:

Youth: Must be in high school. If 16-17, must complete volunteer paperwork, but background checks are not required.

Adults: Must complete volunteer paperwork. Must complete state background checks (and Federal checks if not in Pennsylvania for 10 years). Must complete youth protection training. Contact Jan Decker for all volunteer paperwork at: eumc103@ptd.net or 570-629-1890 ext. 103.

Our biggest volunteer need continues to be associated with picking up items from our suppliers. These are often mid-day/mid-week activities and require flexibility with time.

SFRC is seeking donations for the month of **February**: Canned goods and/or any non perishable item

Ladies Retreat--- Ladies Retreat 2026: Reservations for the 2026 Ladies Retreat are in process. There has been a change in how Pocono Plateau are requesting deposits and payments so it is important that deadline dates are met. The first deposit has already been made to Pocono Plateau. **An additional \$25 will be due by** April 10th. Final payment will be due just prior to the retreat dates of September 18th-20th A registration/sign up sheet

can be found on the Welcome Center. Any questions, please contact Janet Pierson at: janetp@ptd.net
Please note: should we not have enough of an interest we may not be able to have the accommodations we normally do and/or the retreat may have to be cancelled.

Men's Group: The next meeting is scheduled for **Saturday, February 21st** at 9:00 am in the former Day Care Kitchen area. (There are always snacks and coffee available). Our meetings are normally held on the third Saturday morning of each month. For more information contact Steve Johnson at sisa@ptd.net

Missions:

Joyful Noise Offering during worship services for February 2026

February 8 Souper Bowl Sunday (SFRC)

February 22 Youth Mission Trip (Connecticut)

Pastoral Care:

If you know of someone from our congregation that would like a visit from the Pastoral Care team or Pastor Scott, please contact Dee Juris and she will make arrangements for those who may need a cheerful visit. Dee can be reached at: deedoloresj24@gmail.com

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The Prayer Shawl Ministry group meets on the first and third Tuesday of each month from 10:30 am to 1:00 pm. If you knit or crochet or would like to learn, please join the ladies they would love to welcome you and have you join the group. Contact Joyce Aylsworth 570-643-3334 for more information.

Our next meetings are scheduled for: **Tuesday, February 3rd and 17th, 2026.**

The ladies of the Prayer Shawl Ministry would like to extend a gracious and heartfelt “thank you” to all who have donated yarn and/or monetary donations in support of this ministry. We couldn’t do this without you and God’s grace.

Seekers: Just come on out and join them on Monday mornings at 10:00 am in Friendship Hall. Current study is “Ten Men of the Bible”.

Women’s Group of Effort: The next meeting will be held on **Monday, February 9th at 6:00 pm.**

Devotions will be provided by: Alma Middleton

We are always looking for others to join in on the fun with us and to serve as part of a group that supports the church and various mission projects! Our meetings are generally held the second Monday of each month at 7:00pm.....come on out... there's always terrific food!

Miscellaneous

Space available for rent: Looking for a comfortable and friendly place to hold your next party, family gathering or meeting? Look no further! EUMC has the perfect areas for such events. Wesley Hall (seats 125) and an outdoor Pavilion available to rent to non-profit organizations. Fees are: \$75 for Church members and \$100 for non-members with an additional \$50 for the Custodian. Contact the church office at 570-629-1890 for availability and additional information.

Shop Rite and Weis Market Register Tapes: The church is still collecting the register tapes from Shop Rite (Brodheadsville store only) and Weis Market (from any store). The church receives 1% of each qualified amount. As with all things, there are some guidelines and restrictions. One of which is that ***we cannot submit a tape that is more than one (1) year old.*** So, if you would, please bring your tapes in on a timely basis, that way we won’t lose out on benefits associated with these programs. Also, please note that these are the only register tapes/receipts we are able to apply to these programs. The Shop Rite and Weis register tapes may be dropped off in the box in the Narthex, on the Welcome Center.

Upper Room Devotionals: Just a reminder that the Upper Room Devotionals are located in the back of the Narthex. To help offset some of the costs, a donation of \$1.50 for the smaller books and \$1.75 for the large print is requested. Thank you.

Recycling: Please be mindful when attending church and church events that we do recycle plastics (including bottles), glass and cardboard and to use the appropriate recycling bins located in both Wesley and Friendship alls. Please *DO NOT* throw in the regular trash or garbage cans. Thank you.

Church Volleyball League: We've started planning for the 2026 Coed church volleyball league, ages 16 thru 96. Games are Wednesday and Thursday nights at 7 and 8:15pm mid-May through mid-August. We have 9 teams representing 6 local churches and have been playing for approximately 30 years. If anyone would like to play and be on a team, or better yet, if they would like to start a new team, please contact Paul DeBarry at pdaz@ptd.net or 717-414-6165. There have been many lasting friendships made. Come join us for some sporting comradery and fellowship.



2026 February Birthdays

- 02/01 Connor Beam, Ellie Scheller
- 02/03 Lindsey Possinger, Linda Riddell
- 02/05 Ann Sanders, Benjamin Gower
- 02/06 Sarah Brecht
- 02/07 Cristina Turell
- 02/09 Kiaya Daube, Bob Catina
- 02/10 Joshua Gerhart, Jr., Tyler Laxton, Nita Nydam
- 02/11 Roxane Martin
- 02/13 Shanna Smith
- 02/14 Rose Hoover, Nancy White
- 02/15 Danica Meade
- 02/23 Mark Wells
- 02/24 Scarlett Burns
- 02/25 David Meade, Evelyn Miller
- 02/27 Nathaniel Snyder

Early March

- 03/01 Brennan Burns, Bill George, Janet Pierson
- 03/03 Steve Johnson
- 03/06 Janet Bilecki
- 03/08 Krista Gouger, Cheryl Lash

Card Showers: (send cards and shower them with love)—

Phyllis Conklin, c/o Mrs. Bush's Personal Care Home, 302 Kunkletown Road, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Lucille Smith, 1308 Brian Lane, Effort, PA 18330

Mert & John Wolfe, 3215 Cherry Road, Kunkletown, PA 18058

Sarah Brecht, 800 Houseman Road, Apt. 387, Allentown, PA 18104

Tammy Graeber, 2556 Rising Hill Drive, Saylorsburg, PA 18353

Ann Sanders, 223 Briarwood Drive, Effort, PA 18330

Dolores (Dee) Juris, PO Box 132, Effort, PA 18330

In Memoriam



Marv went home to be with his Lord on Friday, January 2, 2026. A very active member of this church since 2003, Marv served as a member the Trustees for many years, some as the Chairperson. He had a passion for Missions and participated in the Volunteers In Missions Program in helping to rebuild homes in various part of the country stricken by hurricanes and other natural disasters. Marv also served as a "Trouble Shooter" on many Youth Mission Trips. Sharing his knowledge, skills and abilities with many young people helping to make impoverished communities a better place to live. A man of many talents who never stopped sharing them and teaching others along the way. A gentle giant who will be remembered for his kind and giving heart.

Marvin E. Aylsworth

Edward Brecht: Ed went home to be with the Lord on Tuesday, January 6th, 2026 after battling health issues over the past year. You may remember Ed, who along with his wife Sarah, attended primarily the 8:30 am service. After a move to Allentown, he transferred his membership to another Methodist Church. A few short years later, he and Sarah returned to Effort saying they missed the people here too much and made the decision to drive from Allentown to Effort on Sunday mornings. Ed was an avid Penn State and Phillies fan and was proud to share his enthusiasm for "his" teams.
