

JANUARY, 2025

MOUNT NITTANY NEWS

The Newsletter of Mount Nittany Church

Pastor's Ramblin's

BY PASTOR MIKE



In every season of life, whether an individual's or a congregation's, there are opportunities to demonstrate faithfulness to and love for our Lord, Jesus. Each new year I read again the words of Jesus found in the gospels as part of my spiritual rhythm.

It is my sincere prayer that these are the words that will ground my life, private, public, and professional. From the beginning of my ministry in 2001 at the Ramey Charge to now at Mt. Nittany UMC, I have tried to exemplify and live out Jesus' call to love. I am not perfect at it, but I continually strive for perfection. So, annually I return to reading Jesus' words in the gospels.

As we enter into 2025, it is necessary to acknowledge that there are many, many deep divisions still within the Church as a whole, within our nation, and within the world. Jesus' call for us as his followers to demonstrate love not just in word but in deed/action cannot be ignored or set aside. As followers of Jesus, we are called to love God with every aspect of our being (Matthew 22:37), love our enemy (Matthew 5:44), love our neighbor (Matthew 5:43), love/care for the poor, hungry, sick, imprisoned, oppressed, and foreigner (Matthew 25:31-46).

We are told that we would be recognized as followers of Jesus because of our love (John 13:35). In every way that we demonstrate love, we need to remember what our spirit (I read attitude) should be what Matthew 5 reminds us:

3 "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

4 "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

5 "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

6 "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

7 "Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

8 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

9 "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

AT MT. NITTANY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH, WE BELIEVE IT IS OUR MISSION TO...

NURTURE ALL IN THE JOURNEY TO BE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

TO FULFILL OUR MISSION, IT IS OUR VISION...

TO BE A WELCOMING AND INCLUSIVE FAMILY MEETING SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL NEEDS FOR ALL THROUGH TEACHING, WITNESSING, SERVICE AND MISSIONS.

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10 "Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

11 "Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely[b] on my account. 12 Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

I don't know what this new year will bring, I expect celebration and challenge will be a part of this year. My prayer is that we all strive to be perfected in our love as followers of Jesus AND when we fall short; we repent, ask for forgiveness, and get back to loving (Mark 1:15, Matthew 4:17, Luke 5:32; 13:5) so that we can proclaim Jesus' message (Luke 24:47, Matthew 28:18-20). Thanks for taking the ramblin' journey with me.

In Christ's service,
Rev. Michael S. Swimley

Children's Ministry

by Patty Decapria

Sunday Education

As the children begin the New Year we will continue their lessons learning how followers of Jesus continued to make disciples all over the world. The children meet in the Education Room after children's time with the pastor during worship. Children 5 to 12 years of age are welcome as we share the good news of Jesus Christ with videos, lessons, and games.

The nursery is staffed with loving caregivers for children from infants to 5 years old; we welcome and look forward to seeing them learn about Jesus with videos, songs, and games.

Parents Night Out

Our first gathering for the new year will be Friday, January 3, 2025. We will play lots of games (these children have lots of energy!), enjoy a snack, and just have fun with our Friday friends. Children are encourage to bring friends and is open to all children ages 4-12. We gather on the first Friday of every month for fellowship with our friends.

Youth

We are excited to have James Roden leading our youth both in the here at Mount Nittany and as a cluster youth group. He is joined by Drew Evanko from Park Forest Village UMC to lead cluster youth in games and discipleship. James is a Scout Leader and works with children and youth regularly. James and Drew hope to gather youth 2 times per month. James and Drew will be joined by other adults in this ministry. Please pray for this ministry to thrive and lead other youth to Christ and stay tuned for upcoming events.



January Happy Birthday

Cindy Bathurst	January 01	Greta Meyer	January 15
Randy Hipp	January 01	Megan Yoder	January 15
Courtney Mullins	January 01	James Roden	January 16
Ryan Mullins	January 01	Flora Green	January 18
Jason Simcisko	January 01	Kathy Baron	January 19
Molly Tressler	January 01	Kristina Dile	January 19
Noah Boliek	January 04	Jasmine Santos	January 19
Barb Gotwalt	January 05	Ronald Knepp	January 21
Jeremy Svitana	January 06	Michelle Thompson	January 21
Sheri Tressler	January 06	Vernon Crawford	January 22
BJ Wurst	January 08	Kendale Knepp	January 22
Jesse Simpson	January 10	Emily Kelly	January 24
Buffy Bickle-Bookamire	January 11	Christine McCann	January 26
Scott Spear	January 11	Karen Burke	January 29
Emily Miller	January 12	John Olsen	January 20
Charlie Jones	January 14		

January AV schedule

January 5

Sound Attendant - Buffy Bookamire
Slide Attendant - Kevin Bookamire
Livestream Operator - Emily Gregory
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

January 12

Sound Attendant - William Mai
Slide Attendant - Bonnie Spotts
Livestream Operator - Dave Spotts
Slide Creator - Emily Gregory

January 19

Sound Attendant - Leonard Tressler
Slide Attendant - Karen Bryan
Livestream Operator - Dave Monsell
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

January 26

Sound Attendant -Rick Edmiston
Slide Attendant - Dawn Edmiston
Livestream Operator - Emily Gregory
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

Liturgists

January 05: Judy Smith
January 12: Chris McCann
January 19: Bob Kidder
January 26: Brenda Peters

Money Counters

January 05: Lee/Ellen Copper	Tom/Ginny Kline
January 12: Cathy/John Rideout	Chris McCann
January 19: John/Louisa Shawver	Lem/Marty Warner
January 26: Lee/Ellen Copper	Tom/Ginny Kline





Focus on Missions | January

JANUARY 5: INTERFAITH HUMAN SERVICES FUEL FUND

IHS provides a wide range of services, including a heating assistance, serving as representative payees for community members who are not able to manage their own money, redistributing furniture and appliances, and providing funds to meet basic financial needs after an unavoidable circumstance creates a financial crisis for a family. IHS works with hundreds of families each year, hoping to build a community where everyone has a safe place to live, food to eat, and clothes to wear. facebook.com/InterfaithHumanServices/

JANUARY 12: HUMAN RELATIONS DAY SPECIAL ENVELOPE

The United Methodist Church celebrates Human relations Day to further the development of better human relations by involving congregations in community and youth outreach through Community Developers Programs, United Methodist Voluntary Services Programs, and Youth Offender Rehabilitation Programs. Specific ministries include the Community Developers Program, United Methodist Voluntary Services Program and the Youth Offender Rehabilitation Program. The fund is administered by the General Board of Global Ministry and the General Board of Church and Society.

JANUARY 19: CONFERENCE BENEVOLENT SHARES

Our benevolent shares help support the entire mission of the Susquehanna Conference UMC. Shares are used for administrative needs and the numerous ministries that the Conference oversees. Camp Penn, Green Hills, Mount Ashbury and Wesley Forest are the camp retreats that the Conference maintains. The Conference is also directly involved with numerous other ministries such as Mission Central, The Neighborhood Center, Walk to Emmaus, Mission U and The Center. You can learn more about the Susquehanna Conference UMC at <https://susumc.org>

JANUARY 26: CENTRE HELPS

Centre Helps navigates the local resources for our friends and neighbors in need. Whether in active crisis or struggling to make ends meet, our community can always find assistance through the dedicated staff and volunteers at Centre Helps. We connect with our community through our 24/7 hotline, text, chat, and community collaborations. Many among us suffer silently, but our well-trained, compassionate team helps stabilize crises, offering help and hope. The work of Centre Helps benefits us all, directly or indirectly, by enhancing the quality of life in our community.



Happenings January

2025 OFFERING ENVELOPES

Tithing envelopes, located on the credenza, are ready for you to pick up. The envelope numbers have been changed and envelopes are in order. Any envelopes not picked up by the end of December will be placed in Jodie's office. Anyone who doesn't pick up their envelopes will not receive a box next year.

Community Dinners

Happy New Year and the start of our 2025 Community Dinners. Drive Thru turkey dinner from 4-6 on January 25. Sign up with Wendy Sunday mornings if you are able to help.

Recommendations to SPRC

As many of you know, we had two "Town Hall" meetings in November 2024. During those gatherings, information was shared about the three questions that all local churches are being asked by the Bishop and the Conference Cabinet. These questions are used to help our Bishop ensure healthy, productive, and working relationships between congregations and the pastors who are appointed to lead them

Currently the SPRC has answered all three questions as Discerning/Undecided, to give us time to have these discussions and receive feedback from the congregation. Questions about the meaning of the letters in LGBTQ+, as well as those who are NOT included within this community were answered. Questions about the likelihood of appointments that are in conflict with local values in the congregation happening were also addressed. Overall, our discussions were productive.

At the end of the Town Hall meetings, members of the congregation were invited to anonymously fill out a paper with their recommendations, so that our SPRC could accurately answer these questions in the future AND give direction for the trustees as they create various policies for Mt. Nittany UMC.

If you are a member who was unable to attend either of these Town Halls or did attend but forgot to put your recommendations into the box, we invite you to come to the pastor's office to pick up a form and fill it out and put it in the box. The SPRC is accepting your recommendations through the end of business hours on January 30th. We will then go through the recommendations, let the congregation know the results, and then move forward with the work that needs to be done with these questions and policies. Thank you.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Michael S. Swimley

Financial Reports

CHURCH BUDGET | NOVEMBER

General Fund Income 2024	\$334,389.08
General Fund Expenses 2024	\$333,511.48
Mission Fund Income 2024	\$50,148.00
Mission Fund Expenses 2024	\$50,148.00
Children's Playground Ministry Project Ending Balance 2023	\$4,018.40
	\$12,525.00
Children's Playground Ministry Income 2024	
Children's Playground Ministry Expenses 2024	\$16,493.03

MISSION GIVING

Mission Fund Income	Monthly Total	Yearly Total
January 2024	\$3,199.00	\$3,199.00
February 2024	\$6,431.00	\$9,630.00
March 2024	\$3,811.00	\$13,441.00
April 2024	\$2,953.00	\$16,394.00
May 2024	\$3,138.00	\$19,532.00
June 2024	\$2,211.00	\$21,743.00
July 2024	\$8,796.00	\$30,539.00
August 2024	\$1,631.00	\$32,170.00
September 2024	\$3,096.00	\$35,266.00
October 2024	\$17,501.00	\$47,106.00
November 2024		
Angel Tree	\$4,551.60	
Center for Alternatives in Community Justice	\$630.00	
Caring for People in Need	\$135.00	
UMCOR Hurricane Relief	\$880.00	
GYTTE	\$100.00	
UM Student Day	\$ 433.00	
Veterans Assistance Fund	\$ 605.00	
World Hunger/Harvest Home	\$340.00	
World Wide Communion	\$54.00	
Total	\$7,728.60	\$50,148.00



Notes from the Trustees

I want to thank Lee Copper, Rick Edmiston, Joyce Kerr, Lisa Weaver, John Williams, Mary Jane Johnson, Patty DeCapria, Lem Warner, Gerry Dunn and Pastor Mike for their time and dedication while serving as a Trustee for our Church. In 2024, we coordinated and/or conducted the following projects: stripped and waxed the tile floors within the Education

Building/FLC/kitchen/lobby areas; professionally cleaned the rugs within the Education Building; removed the whole house fan and made improvements to the foyer walls within the Parsonage; replaced the dishwasher within the Parsonage; replaced the artificial grass and some of the equipment within the playground; replaced the heat pump dedicated for the Spring Creek Room; restored the outside basketball hoop/pole and painted high school specified shooting lines; replaced the primary entrance door to the FLC; replaced the two water fountains within the Education Building; tested our water backflow; tested our AED; tested the fire alarm system; maintained the campus landscape and mowed the lawn as needed.

Dave Spotts, Chair
Board of Trustees

Missions

by Patty Decapria

Souper Bowl of Caring

Our first big kick-off in missions will be our Souper Bowl of Caring. This is an annual food drive

for the State College Food Bank that coincides with the Super Bowl. Look for our displays and collection area in mid January and help take a bite out of hunger with food and monetary donations.

Angel Tree - Caring for People in Need

Thanks to your generosity, we were able to provide 52 gift cards to families in Spring Creek and Easterly Parkway Elementary Schools. Staff from the 2 schools were so very grateful for your generous donations. Thank you for providing these gift cards to help families who may be struggling during the holiday season.

Ushers and Greeters

As we enter the New Year, please consider volunteering to serve as an usher or greeter during worship services. Ushers advance the offering during worship and greeters hand out bulletins, open doors, and direct people to the different areas of our church. Please see Patty DeCapria.

Coffee/Donut Fellowship

We continue to seek those who are willing to make coffee and set up creamers, juice boxes, and donuts. Sign up sheets are placed on the table with the donuts each Sunday. Directions for making coffee and set up are provided. Supplies are in cabinets under coffee area marked as Sunday Fellowship time. Please consider volunteering for this ministry; if we do not have volunteers, this ministry will fall by the wayside. See Patty DeCapria for more information.

