

MARCH, 2025

MOUNT NITTANY NEWS

The Newsletter of Mount Nittany Church

Pastor's Ramblin's

BY PASTOR MIKE



I have rewritten my Ramblin's multiple times. None have felt sufficient for the miasma of anger and hatred that is permeating our society and societies around the world. Those who see their base of power slowly becoming irrelevant are taking harsh and harmful strides to slow such

change. Those who see humanity working more together for the betterment of all people and the world are, unfortunately, beginning to use the same hateful rhetoric and actions to keep their momentum going in the face of resistance. It feels that the world is in a never ending cycle of hurt, anger, and hatred for anyone who is not "just like me".

This is being played out in the world arena of nations attacking nations (or people groups attacking people groups). In our own nation, we have policies being made that go against our Constitution, laws, and the welfare of our citizens. Locally, we have the continued tension between permanent residents and the student body of the university.

On a personal level, I am tired of the rhetoric and actions that are meant to elicit as much anger and hatred as possible against others. My ministry has always been based on, "Love God, love neighbor, and love yourself". To watch as the idea of loving being thrown away for the surge of power hatred enables people to feel is ... disheartening. Yet, as we have been going through the Gospel of Luke this year, I see parallels.

Jesus's message of love put him in direct conflict with religious leaders, political leaders, community leaders, and even his own disciples. They too relied on position and fear tactics to maintain power over the wider community and to determine who was and who was not allowed to be "in". Each miracle, each teaching moment, each action that Jesus took, put him in direct conflict with those who wanted to maintain what had "always been", "the way it used to be", or "the good old days".

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.

This issue:

PASTOR'S RAMBLIN'S

MISSIONS

PAGE 2

MARCH BIRTHDAYS
VOLUNTEERS IN MINISTRY

PAGE 3

FOCUS ON MISSIONS

PAGE 4

MARCH HAPPENINGS

PAGE 5

FINANCIAL REPORT

PAGE 6

LETTER FROM FINANCE

PAGE 7

MESSAGE FROM SPRC

PAGE 8

CHILDREN & YOUTH

MINISTRY

PAGE 9

NOTES FROM THE TRUSTEES

PAGE 10

NEWS FROM THE GIVING

GARDEN

PAGE 11

MARCH CALENDAR

PAGE 12

Mount Nittany UMC
1500 E. Branch Rd
State College, PA 16801
mnumcoffice@gmail.com
814 237 - 3549

PAGE 1



Many want to believe that it was the heathens or Jews that killed Jesus. The truth? It was the unifying of the religious leaders and political powers of the time "needing" to maintain their position and power over the wider community that killed Jesus. Why? Because Jesus' message of love for everyone struck at the heart of their model for maintaining control; ensure there are outsiders to blame and direct people's dissatisfaction toward those people so that the rulers and leaders do not have to take accountability for their actions or inactions.

In 2000 years this has not changed. The powerful, upon realizing that the way they maintain power is losing relevance and that society is changing to a point that old hatreds and positions of distrust are disappearing, will do anything to maintain control. Their reactions are often harmful and downright draconian in their violence. In Jesus's time it resulted in his crucifixion. In the Christian reformation it resulted in being burned at the stake, in the American Revolution it resulted in war, at the turn of the 20th century it resulted in two world wars. Today???

Today, I lean into my faith. I look toward my Savior, Jesus. How did Jesus respond to such anger and hatred? I want to set aside the anger and hatred that can rise in my heart. I want to instead use Jesus' response as my response to the turmoil in the world and country today. Stand up in the face of the powerful with demonstrations of love for the very people they seek to destroy. This kind of response fulfills our Social Principles as United Methodists. Finally, for those who are most harmed by the world today, it demonstrates that they too are seen as children of God.

Here are passages that remind me to love God, Love neighbor as myself: Leviticus 19:17-18, Deuteronomy 6:5, Matthew 22:34-40, Mark 12:28-34, Luke 10:25-37, John 3:16-21. May we take them to heart in these days. Thanks for joining me in my ramblin today.

In Christ's service
Rev. Michael S. Swimley

Missions

by Patty Decapria

Souper Bowl of Caring

Many thanks to those who donated food and/or money to the Souper Bowl of Caring this year. All food and donations were collected four weeks before the Super Bowl on February 9 and sent to the State College Food Bank. Mount Nittany collected 236 pounds of food and collected \$2,862.00. Since 1990, the Souper Bowl of Caring has raised **over \$210 million** and donated to local food charities across all fifty states with over **306,000 unique groups** participating. Every **\$25** donated to Souper Bowl of Caring creates **\$450** for food charities. We unite all communities to Tackle Hunger.

Thank you to those from Mount Nittany who volunteer their time to the Food Bank regularly. Food Bank bins are located in the FLC for food collection all year. Thank you to Tom Kline for picking up the food and delivering it to the Food Bank.
Patty DeCapria



March Happy Birthday

Lance Wilkinson	March 03
Julie Edmiston	March 06
William Santos	March 06
Emmelina McClenahan	March 07
Richard Hillard	March 08
Dawn Edmiston	March 09
Lisa Glantz	March 10
Mary Heltman	March 10
Bob Franks	March 11
Callum Fellows	March 12
Janet Hoover	March 14
Chuck Klinger	March 14
Nick Boucher	March 15
Jason Jones	March 15



Stacey Mullins	March 15
Henry Wolfgang	March 15
Sara Claypoole	March 16
Juliet Pope	March 19
Courtney McChesney	March 20
Brett Stover	March 20
Dave Spotts	March 25
Rick Edmiston	March 26
Ron Strapel	March 26
Sara DeCapria - Kopp	March 27
Shirley Reichard	March 27
Ron Brown	March 28
Heather Zalno	March 29
Kristin Ekdahl	March 30
Kylee McClenahan	March 30

March AV Schedule

March 02

Sound Attendant - Jim Beebe
Slide Attendant - Karen Bryan
Livestream Operator - David Monsel
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

March 05

Sound Attendant - Leonard Tressler
Slide Attendant - Karen Bryan
Livestream Operator - Christopher Knepp
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

March 9

Sound Attendant - Jim Beebe
Slide Attendant - Kevin Bookamere
Livestream Operator - David Monsel
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

March 16

Sound Attendant - Shawn Kopp
Slide Attendant - Karen Bryan
Livestream Operator - Amberlee Knepp
Slide Creator - Dawn Edmiston

March 23

Sound Attendant - Buffy Bookamere
Slide Attendant - Kevin Bookamere
Livestream Operator - Emily Gregory
Slide Creator - Emily Gregory

March 30

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

Liturgists

March 02: Judy Smith

Ash Wednesday: James Beatty

March 09: Chris McCann

March 16: James Beatty

March 23: Brenda Peters

March 30: Patty DeCapria

Money Counters

March 02:	Cathy/John Rideout	Chris McCann
March 09:	Lee/Ellen Copper	Tom/Ginny Kline
March 16:	John/Louisa Shawver	Lem/Marty Warner
March 23:	Lee/Ellen Copper	Tom/Ginny Kline
March 30:	Pat Weaver	Patty DeCapria Joann Voigt





Focus on Missions | March

MARCH 2: CONFERENCE CAMPS

The Susquehanna Conference Camp & Retreat Ministry Board has been working diligently for the past two years studying, assessing, prayerfully discerning, and developing strategic direction. The goal of this in-depth process is to provide the best way forward for the future of the overall ministry, its growth, and its missional impact among a widening circle of people in our congregations and communities. Central to it all has been a deep cherishing and valuing of the importance of camp and retreat experiences and the unique benefits and life transforming opportunities they provide.

MARCH 9: EVERSTAND FORMALLY KNOWN AS UNITED METHODIST HOME FOR CHILDREN

We stand as a beacon for youth and families, equipping them with vital tools that build resiliency for life's greatest challenges. Our partnerships with state and local entities, community connections, and our unique Mid-Atlantic residential program footprint, mean that Everstand can often keep a child more local to their family and other support systems. Through our many programs we offer Residential, Mental & Behavioral Health, Education, Trauma Recovery & Case Management to allow youth and their families to make an informed decision about the tools and resources they need. We help navigate complex care systems and provide guidance on how to access vital resources for success.

MARCH 16: MOSHANNON VALLEY BACKPACK PROGRAM

The Backpack Program distributes backpacks full of food each Friday to ensure students have enough food to eat over the weekend. Each child participating will receive breakfast, lunch, dinner, and a snack for both Saturday and Sunday.

MARCH 23: BURROWES STREET YOUTH HAVEN/CCYBS

The Burrowes Street Youth Haven ensures youth experiencing family conflict, abuse, neglect, homelessness, or other crisis have a safe and supportive environment in which to live, grow, and develop. Through residential and counseling services, we hope to provide youth and their families with the opportunity to effectively address critical issues, and also provide them with the support that is necessary to reach their full potential. Youth are welcome to access the shelter whenever they need a safe place to stay, day or night. Caring, professional counselors are at the shelter 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, to provide assistance for both residential or drop-in care. Young adults can drop by for a snack, a meal, a shower, or to talk to staff. The Haven is at 334 S. Burrowes Street, State College. Call 814-234-2100 or visit a Safe Place business.

MARCH 30: UMCOR SUNDAY (ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING)

As the humanitarian relief and development arm of The United Methodist Church, the United Methodist Committee on Relief assists United Methodists and churches to become involved globally in direct ministry to persons in need. UMCOR comes alongside those who suffer from natural or human-caused disasters – famine, hurricane, war, flood, fire or other events—to alleviate suffering and serve as a source of help and hope for the vulnerable. This year, the list of projects is long, including support for those affected by the war in Ukraine, recovery from wildfires in New Mexico, and hurricane relief in Florida. Follow UMCOR on Facebook to be aware of communities in need of prayer and support around the world: facebook.com/UMCOR



Happenings March

Community Dinners

We are ready for our third community dinner of 2025 on March 29 from 4-6 for our Drive Thru Turkey Dinner. Many hands are needed to make this a success. Sign up with Wendy Sunday mornings where you are able to lend a hand.

Upcoming Banquets

Banquet help needed for March 4 (dinner) and March 20 (lunch) Please see Wendy if you are able to help.

Iron Man 2025

Iron Man 2025

Pastor Mike is looking for help to organize a special worship and community event for the Sunday of Ironman 2025. He is seeking help in planning games, food, etc. for our community who will be watching and for those who live around us that will not be able to "get out" during the Ironman event. If interested in helping, there will be a meeting March 11 at 7p.m.

Mountain Valley District Lent Worship Service

Clergy and Laity invited

Tuesday, March 18, 2025

6:30 pm

Greater Buffalo Run Valley UMC

112 Trinity Court, Bellefonte, Pa.

Special offering will be received for the Sierra Leone Initiative

Ash Wednesday Service Times

7 am to 9:30 am ashes to go at front entrance of Mt Nittany UMC.

10 am to 3 pm ashes to go on College Ave. Near St. Paul's UMC.

7 pm traditional ash Wednesday service



Study/Mission Opportunity in Mexico

Study/Mission Opportunity in Mexico –

Dates: Nov 7-16, 2025

Join us in South central Mexico for a 10 day Study Mission trip with "Give Ye Them To Eat" – a rural development mission. Teams from Central PA /Susquehanna Conference have been making a difference in the rural sector of Mexico for more than 30 years. We will experience the culture and the working lives of our Mexican brothers and sisters. We visit the city of Puebla, then spend most of our time near the small town of Tlancualpican where the Tree of Life Training Center is located. The areas we travel to are safe, the food is great, and the water is bottled. The accommodations are comfortable with a hotel in Puebla and dormitories at the training center, hot showers and Wi-Fi.

Cost: \$1,150 plus roundtrip airfare to Mexico City (Get a group together and do some fundraising!)

Qualifications: No age limit, Good health, ability to walk two miles (high altitude, hot climate, lots of walking); ages 12-17 with a parent; no special skills needed

Contact Rev. Marian Hartman, mhartman@susumc.org for more information and an application.





Financial Reports

CHURCH BUDGET | JANUARY

General Fund Income 2025	\$19,296.68
General Fund Expenses 2025	\$27,111.44
Mission Fund Income 2025	\$4,761.00
Mission Fund Expenses 2025	\$4,761.00
Children's Playground Ministry Project Ending 2024	\$7,986.43
Children's Playground Ministry Income 2025	
Children's Playground Ministry Expenses 2025	\$5,780.00

MISSION GIVING

Mission Fund Income	Monthly Total	Yearly Total
January 2025	\$4,761.00	\$4,761.00
Caring for People in Need	\$25.00	
Centre Helps	\$475.00	
Conference Benevolent Shares	\$355.00	
Food Bank	\$270.00	
Human Relations Sunday	\$288.00	
Interfaith Human Services - Fuel	\$ 640.00	
Moshannon Valley Backpack	\$ 40.00	
UMCOR	\$ 2,693.00	
	\$ 4,761.00	





FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

We are regularly in amazement of how God moves this congregation to share so generously in our many mission outreaches. In the last year we have poured out blessings on those who have been devastated by hurricanes, floods, and fires through our support of UMCOR/Mission Central. We have fed families and individuals who face food insecurity through Souper Bowl of Caring, Angel Tree, and our local food bank. We have provided resources to assist with housing, heating, and transportation to begin new jobs. We have supported local, national, and international needs with great joy and abundance. As the Finance Committee, we want to say, "thank you". Your generosity is greatly appreciated and humbling.

As the Finance Committee we want to remind you of our greatest and more regularly used Mission Fund, the General Fund. The General Fund cares for the majority of our congregation's mission work. This fund provides pastoral care, children's ministry, music ministry, and enables our building and grounds to be ready to join in ministry with Scouting America, Girl Scouts, Karate, Self-Defense Classes, Knitting/Crocheting, Quilting, VBS, Food Ministry such as football dinners, community dinners, Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Breakfast, and so much more.

The General fund IS our primary source of funding our congregational and community mission work. As you consider how to support ministry in and through Mount Nittany UMC, please do not forget the General Fund. On your tithing envelopes, if you mark mission, your donation will go to the mission featured that Sunday. If you mark a specified mission, your donation will be sent to your requested mission. Mission donations do not go into the General Fund. Without it, none of our other mission work would be able to happen. Thank you!

In Christ's service,

Rev. Michael S. Swimley



FROM THE SPRC

Back in November and December, you may recall we had a couple of Town Hall meetings to share information about the three questions the Susquehanna Conference Cabinet and Bishop asked the SPRC to answer. At that time, we stated that once we had responses in, we would let the congregation know the results. We had about 50% of the worshipping congregation give their suggestions about these three questions. This is a very good response rate.

The results are as follows:

Do you believe our congregation should permit same-gendered weddings? 85% of respondents answered "Yes"

Would you be willing to receive a pastor who would officiate a same-gendered wedding? 87% of respondents answered "Yes"

Are you willing to receive a pastoral leader who identifies as Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning + (LGBTQ+)? 60% answered "Yes, 17% answered "No", and 23% answered "Undecided"

With this information, the SPRC spent time in discussion about updating the Church/Congregation Profile with the Cabinet and Bishop with these responses. We have updated our profile to reflect the "Yes" to the first two questions. The third question concerning receiving an LGBTQ+ clergyperson we felt needed more time for people to be as sure as they were with the other two questions and have updated our profile to say "Undecided". As such, we will look into the statements left on the questionnaires to gather information to share so that we can have a more definitive answer to the third question. We will be asked to update our Congregational Profile each Fall, so this gives us time to answer questions before we need to answer/update again. Please do not hesitate to reach out to the SPRC and Pastor Mike with questions.

In Christ's service,

Rev. Michael S. Swimley



CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

BY PATTY DECAPRIA

Christian Education

Our Christian Education nursery and elementary children have been learning how Jesus always knows what's best for us. Jesus taught with parables showing that when we follow him "we build on a solid foundation", "grow in our faith", "forgive others", and "be happy for others".

We will continue to study how Jesus does the impossible through his miracles of turning water into wine, healing a man with leprosy, and walking on water.

Our nursery children gather in the nursery with our caring staff of Darria Dixon and Jessica Bickle where they watch "Buzzly Bee" introduce the teaching of the week. Our nursery children created these "Valentine Snowmen" that we displayed in the nursery.

Our elementary children gather with Heather Zalno and Patty DeCapria after the children's message in worship and share a video previewing the lesson of the week through an animal friend before diving into the lesson through games, study, and music. Our nursery children created these "Valentine Snowmen" that we displayed in the nursery.



Parents Night Out

Children met on Friday, February 7 to learn sometimes we can see God's love even in candy messages!! We can share our love for people every day and not just on Valentine's Day. We played a game with candy (of course), had a tasty snack, and made a craft with puzzle pieces.

We will meet on Friday, March 7, from 6 - 7:30 pm and ease into Spring Break with pizza and a movie. All children ages 4 -12 are welcome to join us. Friends are encouraged!!



Youth Ministry

The weather has impacted our youth gatherings during February. The youth share lessons on topics like prayer, Christian music, and gifts and talents as well as play games. Youth will gather at Park Forest Village UMC on Sunday, March 2, and again on Sunday, March 16 from 5:30 - 7:00 pm. We will switch back to Mount Nittany in April to Mount Nittany. All middle and high school youth are invited to come and bring a friend. James Roden from Mount Nittany and Drew Evanko from Park Forest lead the combined youth ministry gatherings.

Patty DeCapria

Children and Youth Ministry Coordinator



NOTES FROM THE TRUSTEES'

Notes From the Trustees'

The Art Alliance of Central Pennsylvania signed a one-year lease agreement with Mt Nittany UMC to rent the second floor of our Education Building. The Art Alliance will be using the space for adult and children's art classes and also for summer camps.

A big thank you to Paul Gregory for volunteering to mow the church's grass this season. He will be working with his two grandsons and their father to keep the grassy areas neat.

The board of trustees signed a contract with Solid State Masonry to replace the egress stairwell from the basement floor of our parsonage. The current concrete structure is approximate 60 years of age and badly deteriorated.

Dave Spotts & Lee Copper

Bible Word Search

Name: _____



Love Thy Neighbor

T	P	Q	R	U	D	O	W	X	P	S	B	R	Z	I
C	O	M	P	A	S	S	I	O	N	A	T	E	O	H
E	C	W	T	T	E	F	I	H	E	C	B	Q	V	
O	L	K	H	A	M	N	O	D	E	L	I	T	I	E
V	Y	W	E	S	H	Y	R	D	L	B	B	U	V	N
E	P	R	Y	R	D	B	G	W	P	M	R	O	I	C
N	T	N	F	O	O	H	I	X	O	U	L	R	C	M
C	J	M	U	B	G	N	V	J	R	H	N	P	K	A
O	S	E	C	H	D	C	E	Q	W	P	M	T	M	J
U	U	R	A	G	L	O	H	J	M	Y	R	Q	E	J
R	D	A	R	I	I	D	T	E	Y	I	P	A	A	I
A	B	H	E	E	U	N	Q	D	A	W	N	W	Y	P
G	S	S	W	N	B	I	A	D	S	R	Q	D	F	B
E	E	Q	I	I	J	K	R	U	U	N	T	P	U	X
D	Q	K	G	D	W	B	L	O	H	O	F	I	C	V

Word list:

BUILD
CARE
COMPASSIONATE
ENCOURAGE
FORGIVE
GOD
HEART
HELP

HUMBLE
KIND
LOVE
MIND
NEIGHBOR
PRAY
SHARE
TREAT



SunCatcherStudio.com



News from the Giving Garden

By Joanna Jones

The Giving Garden will begin another season in April, and we could realllllly use some help in the Garden itself. We will be prepping and planting, and installing some more fences. When we first began more than 10 years ago, we had simple chicken wire fences which did not discourage all the deer, at all.

So we added much taller fences, but then the rabbits took over. Last season was particularly awful, and we are sad to say that the chicken wire is coming back. It does make planting, weeding, and harvesting a bit more difficult, but it does seem to keep the rabbits away.

If you'd like to help, we'd love to add you! It's okay if you can only come for opening day in April. It's okay if you need your "own" task to take care of on your own schedule. We garden as a group on Wednesday evenings and Saturday mornings, starting after Memorial Day. Before then, we communicate via email and our Facebook group ("The Giving Garden at Mt Nittany UMC"). Give your email to one of the gardeners so we can include you in our plans. Children are most welcome, new gardeners are very welcome, people who aren't members are very welcome.

If you aren't physically able to garden, we are looking for tomato cages, fabric ties, and chalk! Let Joanna know if you have any of those for our use, and thank you.

In a world that seems determined to exclude and isolate, we are just trying to give vegetables out to everyone who needs or wants them. Please join us this April as we begin again our faithful journey of service and community.





03 MARCH 2025

Sunday	Monday	Tue.Sday	Wedne.Sday	Thurs.Sday	Friday	Saturday
						1 Soccer 9-11:30am
2	3 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	4 Pastor Hours 9-11am Scout Leader 7-10 Banquet 6-9pm	5 Ash Wednesday Knitters 9am Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	6 Karate 5:30-6:30	7 Parents Night Out 6-7:30pm	8 Soccer 9-11:30am
9 District Lay Ministry 1:30-5pm	10 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	11 Pastor Hours 9-11pm Scouts 5-8:30pm Finance 7pm	12 Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	13 Karate 5:30-6:30	14 Family Fun Night 6:30-8:30pm	15 Soccer 9-11:30am
16	17 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	18 Pastor Hours 9-11pm Scouts 5-8:30pm	19 Knitters 9am Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	20 Karate 5:30-6:30	21	22 Soccer 9-11:30am
23	24 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	25 Pastor Hours 9-11am Scouts 5-8:30pm Trustees 6pm Admin. Council 7pm	26 Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	27 Karate 5:30-6:30	28	29 Soccer 9-11:30am Community Dinner 4-6pm
30	31 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am					