

FEBRUARY 2026

# MOUNT NITTANY NEWS

The Newsletter of Mount Nittany Church

## Pastor's Ramblin's

BY PASTOR MIKE



Living out our faith authentically is fraught with challenges. There will be persons who will disagree, persons who will rally, and persons who will seek to destroy. The challenge is that you do not always know who will do what. The challenge is that you do not know what will set off a negative response.

In 25 years of ministry, I have discovered that reading the words of Jesus in a worship service can make people angry, prayer requests people have submitted result in suggested sanctions, upholding denominational standards create threats of bodily harm, and saying (or not saying) "hello" at the right time or to the right persons demands ostracization. These issues always seem to rise up in a congregation, denomination, or nation when tensions between groups rise and no actual willingness for dialogue exists. Questions like, "Are there actions and stances that are unequivocally in opposition to teachings of Jesus?" "Can we actually agree to disagree on some subjects without destroying relationships?" "Is there such a thing as too accepting, too accommodating, too loving?" "Is there a time when ending a relationship is necessary for wholeness?"

These are all great questions to help grow faith, relationships, and understanding. We have examples in the New Testament of the early church leaders disagreeing with a number of results: insults, public arguments, and even separation from working together (Acts 10, 11, 15, Galatians 2, and I Corinthians 1, 2, 3, 4). As followers of Jesus, we have always had to wrestle with how our faith should impact the greater world around us. The arguments are rarely about should we love our neighbor, but rather how we love our neighbor.

The United Methodist Church has not been immune to such challenges. In fact we recently broke apart because of these challenges. Clergy and local congregations are not immune to these challenges. **Con't on page 3**

MNUMC 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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# CHILDREN AND YOUTH MINISTRY

by Patty Decapria

## Parents Night Out

The children met on Friday, January 9. We painted snowflakes for our bulletin board in the Education Wing. We then had a lesson on King Josiah who became King at age 8 after his father was killed. Josiah's father had been an evil king, but Josiah learned how his people had turned their back on God. This made him sad and decided to follow and worship only God. Josiah had a change of heart. The children found chocolate "change". Sometimes change can be yummy!! We will meet again on Friday, February 6 from 6-7:30 pm to have some games and Valentine goodies!! Parents Night Out is open to all children ages 4-12. Children are encouraged to bring a friend.

## Sunday Elementary Education

We have traveled back to the Old Testament as Moses received the Ten Commandments. The children learned that God gave these commandments to the people because he loved them and wanted to keep them safe. We will continue with our theme of Trusting God when we are scared or lost. Thank you to Heather Zalno for her innovative lessons leading our children.

## Nursery

Our nursery is staffed with loving adults to care for our children during worship services. Thank you to Darria Dixon and Jessica Bickle for their kind care of our children. Thanks also to Heather Swimley for stepping in from time to time.

## Youth

Youth gathered on January 18 with youth from Park Forest Village and Grays for a fun afternoon of games, food, and fellowship. Mike Dunham, a youth leader (and a former State College resident), brings his experience in youth leadership again on Sunday, February 1 at Park Forest Village from 3-5 for lots of goofy games and ways to connect with other youth and adults. All middle and high youth are encouraged to come. Bring a friend too!

## Christian Education Meeting

The Christian Education Ministry team will meet on Wednesday, March 17 to decide our Vacation Bible School program and dates. We will meet in the Boardroom at 7:00 pm. Please check your calendar for available dates this summer, as well as share your ideas on how we can make this summer a great one for our children.

## Missions

### Souper Bowl of Caring

The playoffs are done, and the Big Game is all set. The big game means folks will gather for parties and lots of food. Help us do our part to "Tackle Hunger" by donating food or money to the Souper Bowl of Caring. All donations benefit the State College Food Bank. We will continue to collect donations through Sunday, February 8, which is also Super Bowl Sunday. Please place donations in the offering plate or at our display in the lobby. Thank you for sharing your love and resources with our neighbors.

## Senior Adults

Valentine Games February 14 is Valentine's Day. What better day to share in food and fellowship and a few games? This event is geared toward our "mature" friends. Wendy will have yummy food to begin the afternoon at 12:00, noon, with lots of laughs and games to follow. A signup sheet is located on the bulletin board, so we have an idea of the number of people to prepare for. We ask that you bring a dessert to share that day, also. Join us for a fun afternoon. Contact Patty DeCapria with any questions.

## FEBRUARY HAPPY BIRTHDAY

Rustin Dixon	Feb. 01	William Mai	Feb. 16
Kooper Knepp	Feb. 01	Heather Swimley	Feb. 16
Vinny Hodges	Feb. 02	Maya Foster	Feb. 19
Bill Kelly	Feb. 02	Michael DeHoff	Feb. 20
Dick Dunkle	Feb. 04	Susan Hipp	Feb. 20
Bob Kidder	Feb. 05	Kileen Stahl	Feb. 20
Skyler Gregory	Feb. 06	Mary Lou Duck	Feb. 21
Jim Beebe	Feb. 09	Erin Foster	Feb. 24
Jim Eberly	Feb. 10	Kurtis Brown	Feb. 25
Cathy Rideout	Feb. 11	Bob Mai	Feb. 25
Mary Ishler	Feb. 14	Steve Clemons	Feb. 26
Chloe Klinger	Feb. 14	Kari Corbett	Feb. 28

### Continued from page 1

So, how do we deal with the challenge of living out our faith authentically without demonizing those we disagree with?

The New Testament has stories about how the early church handled this. We can start with a teaching from Jesus found in Matthew 18 dealing with having private conversation first and working from there. Other examples can be found in Acts 6, 15, I Corinthians 6, Ephesians 4, I Peter 4, Philipians 4. Finally, we have a story of reconciliation after conflict between parties found in II Timothy 4, where Paul commends and invites John Mark (whom he fought about with Barnabas) to work with him in ministry.

Why is this important? In the current miasma of tensions in the world, the church is struggling with how to be united in fulfilling Jesus's mandates to care for others, love others, and make disciples. Being willing to dialogue with one another without retaliation allows doors to relationships to continue to be able to open or shut. Without dialogue, doors slam shut, lock, and become barred; no reopening exists. Dialogue keeps opportunity for unity open, the other doesn't. The church can be an example of how to work through challenges in a good and healthy way that the rest of the world benefits from; or the church can be an example of continued conflict without resolution and reconciliation.

In conclusion, read these words from Jesus found in John 17:20-26 . "I ask not only on behalf of these but also on behalf of those who believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us,[f] so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you, and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them."

Thanks for joining me in this Ramble.

## Liturgists

**February 1:** Judy Smith  
**February 8:** Chris McCann  
**February 15:** Cathy Rideout  
**February 22:** Kooper Knepp

## Money Counters

**February 1:** Lee/Ellen Copper  
Tom/Ginny Kline  
**February 8:** Cathy/John Rideout  
Chris McCann  
**February 15:** John/Louisa Shawver  
Patty DeCapria  
**February 22:** Lee/Ellen Copper  
Joann Voigt

## FOCUS ON MISSION FEBRUARY

### FEBRUARY 1: YOUTH/CHILDREN OFFERING

The Youth Service Fund was established by the United Methodist Church to support youth and youth ministries in their endeavors to live and grow as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. where funds stay in the Susquehanna Conference and to national and global projects. An interesting feature of the national and global administration of projects is that youth decide what projects receive the money and the projects that apply for grants are youth-designed, youth-led, and youth benefited. The variety of projects is huge, from a therapeutic fine arts program in Houston to supporting the discipleship of young Christians in Pakistan. Within the conference, the funds are distributed by the Young People's Ministry Council. Learn more about the Youth Service Fund at <https://www.umc.org/en/content/youth-service-fund-ministryarticle>.



### FEBRUARY 8: FOOD BANK - SOUPER BOWL OF CARING

The State College Food Bank has a mission to provide food security, directly or indirectly, to people in Centre County, thus ensuring that no one in Centre County goes hungry regardless of age, race, color, ancestry, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, creed, or ability. We are committed to making our community a better place through our mission and programs, and our primary focus is to ensure access to healthy and nutritious food for anyone who is in need of our support and assistance.



### FEBRUARY 15: OUT OF THE COLD CENTRE COUNTY INC.

Out of the Cold is a community supported organization that answers the call to serve those experiencing homelessness in our community by providing shelter, food, and support services during the transition to permanent housing.



### FEBRUARY 22: 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>



## HAPPENINGS FEBRUARY

### 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



### Souper Bowl of Caring

The playoffs are done, and the Big Game is all set. The big game means folks will gather for parties and lots of food. Help us do our part to "Tackle Hunger" by donating food or money to the Souper Bowl of Caring. All donations benefit the State College Food Bank. We will continue to collect donations through Sunday, February 8, which is also Super Bowl Sunday. Please place donations in the offering plate or at our display in the lobby. Thank you for sharing your love and resources with our neighbors.

Patty DeCapria

### Advent Special Collections

Many of you may recall the Christmas Tree outline on the wall above the credenza in the main hallway. On the credenza and around it were placed the collection of items we were giving to the Mommy Shoppe, St. Paul's UMC Shoe Bank, and the Schlow Library.

Here is what we as a congregation collected for the Mommy Shoppe: 17 packages/boxes of diapers, 4 baby blankets, 4 baby onesies, 3 baby jackets, and 4 pairs of women's socks. The Mommy Shoppe was grateful, especially since the amount of diapers collected meant they did not have to go purchase any for the families coming in that week.

For the St. Paul's UMC Shoe Bank, we collected 9 pairs of brand new sneakers of various sizes ranging from small children to adult sizes. Because they were new, they were able to be put out for person's in need immediately.

For Schlow Library, your generosity looked like this: 5 sets of (scarf, mittens/gloves, hat), 5 sets (scarf, hat), 18 sets (hat, gloves/mittens), 66 hats, 7 ear warmers, 48 pairs of gloves/mittens, and 29 scarves. For all of you who purchased or put your fabric art abilities into practice, thank you. This gift we offered was much more than they anticipated and put their baskets overflowing.

Thank you all for your deep care and concern for others.

### The Community Dinner

One Community dinner down and our next one is scheduled for Saturday, February 28 with Turkey on the menu serving from 4:00 - 6:00 at \$13/dinner. We need your help for these to be a success. Sign up with Wendy on Sunday mornings where you are able to help.

### Thank you

Heather and I would like to thank each and everyone one of you here at Mt. Nittany UMC for your love and support. We greatly appreciate the many gifts, cards, and words of encouragement we received from you during the Advent and Christmas season. We look forward to some date nights, home cooked meals, and walls decorated with framed words of inspiration in 2026! Again thank you!

### Valentine Games

February 14 is Valentine's Day. What better day to share in food and fellowship and a few games? This event is geared toward our "mature" friends. Wendy will have yummy food to begin the afternoon at 12:00, noon, with lots of laughs and games to follow. A signup sheet is located on the bulletin board, so we have an idea of the number of people to prepare for. We ask that you bring a dessert to share that day, also. Join us for a fun afternoon. Contact Patty DeCapria with any questions.



# Financial Reports

## CHURCH BUDGET | DECEMBER

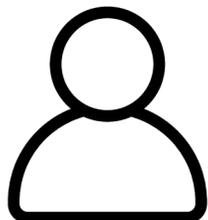
General Fund Income 2025	\$402,083.76
General Fund Expenses 2025	\$373,186.69
Mission Fund Income 2025	\$43,530.43
Mission Fund Expenses 2025	\$43,530.43

## MISSION GIVING

Mission Fund Income	Monthly Total	Yearly Total
September 2025	\$ 1,601.00	\$37,898.43
October 2025	\$1,391.00	\$39,289.43
November 2025	\$1,628.00	\$40,917.43
December 2025		
Angel Tree	\$ 6,333.20	
Caring for People in Need	\$ 25.00	
Christmas Eve Miracle Offering	\$1,067.00	
GYTTE	\$440.00	
Out of the Cold Ctr. County, INC	\$285.00	
Salt N Light Youth Ministries	\$441.00	
UM Student Day Offering	\$150.00	
UMCOR	<u>\$230.00</u>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$2613.00</b>	<b>\$43,530.43</b>
2025 Angel Tree Total	\$11,126.20	
2025 Caring for People in Need Total	\$1,280.00	
2025 Giving Garden Total	\$870.00	

## FROM THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

We understand that everyone faces their own financial challenges so any contribution would be greatly appreciated. We have many ways to give:



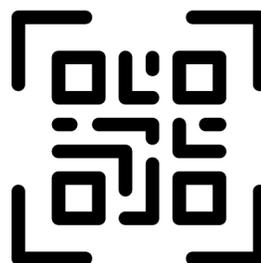
**In Person**  
Whether it's cash or check, we appreciate your kindness. Please place your offering in an offering envelope and drop it in the offering plate.



**Online Visit**  
[www.mtnittanyumc.org](http://www.mtnittanyumc.org)  
and click GIVE to set up a one-time or recurring offering.



Download the Vanco Mobile App from the app store to set up a one- time or recurring offering. Search State College and then choose Mt Nittany United Methodist Church. Available on Apple and Android devices.



**QR Code**  
Scan the QR code to visit our online giving page.

We do ask that you keep Mt. Nittany UMC in your prayers. We believe that together, we can overcome these challenges so we can continue to be a beacon of hope in our community and in the world.

# 02 FEBRUARY 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	3 Pastor Hours 9-11am Scout Leader 7-9pm	4 Knitting 9am Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	5 Karate 5:30-6:30pm	6 Parents Night Out 6-7:30pm	7 Soccer Shots 10-11am
8	9 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	10 Pastor Hours 9-11am Scouts 5:30-8pm Finance 7pm	11 Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	12 Blood Drive 12-5pm	13 Family Fun Night 6:30-8:30pm	14 Soccer Shots 10-11am Patty 12-5
15	16 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	17 Pastor Hours 9-11am Scouts 5-8:30pm Christian Ed 12-5	18 Knitting 9am Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm Ash Wed. Service 7pm	19 Karate 5:30-6:30pm	20	21 Blue & gold Banquet 8am-12pm
22	23 Pastor Hours 9-11am Quilters 9:30am	24 Pastor Hours 9-11am Trustees 6pm Admin. Council 7pm	25 Knitting 9am Girl Scouts 6-7:30pm	26 Karate 5:30-6:30pm	27	28 Soccer Shots 10-11am Comm. Dinner 4-6pm

### 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

# PUZZLE PAGE

Happy Valentine's Day! Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

BE MINE  
 BOYFRIEND  
 CANDY  
 CARDS  
 CHOCOLATE

CUPID  
 DATE  
 FEBRUARY  
 FLOWERS  
 GIRLFRIEND

HEARTS  
 HUGS  
 KISSES  
 LOVE  
 PINK

POEM  
 RED  
 ROSES  
 SWEETHEART  
 VALENTINES

mpideas.com Page 1

HEART

START

FINISH

MAZE

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ 2



## Valentine Sudoku 6x6

Fill the puzzle with numbers 1 to 6.  
Make sure each row, column, and big box has all the numbers 1 to 6 — no repeats!

	4	4		5	1
3	1	5	4		2
5	4	2	1	3	
	3	1	5		
1		2		4	5
	5	6		1	

	2	6			5
3	5	1		6	2
1		5	2	4	
2	3	4	1		6
	4	2			6
6		3		2	4

4	2	3		5	6
	6	5			
5		3	5	6	1
		6	4	3	2
6	3	4		1	5
2	5	1			3

2	4	5	1		6
			5		4
5	2		6	6	1
		6	4	3	2
	3		3	4	4
		3			5