

Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

As we prepare to **celebrate** the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we anticipate moving from the solemn and penitent posture of Lent into the joy and hope of Easter. The liturgical color of Easter is white for purity. The symbols of Easter are lilies and butterflies representing new life. The liturgical color, the symbols, and the colors (pink, purple, yellow) of the season are filled with light, joy, and hope.

Consider the concept of Christian joy. Some people equate joy to happiness. But they are not the same thing. Joy is something that we experience as a sense of contentment even if we are also experiencing uncertainty, trials, and hardships. True Christian joy manifests itself with the aid of the Holy Spirit allowing us to rejoice even in suffering.

Now let us consider the concept of **Resurrection Joy**. This joy comes with the knowledge, assurance, and hope that through Jesus Christ and His victory over sin and death we have the hope of life eternal in the presence of God.

We ARE an Easter people! As we prepare to celebrate the resurrection, we remember that every Sunday is also a "little" Easter. So my question, my challenge to you is this: are you living your life (each hour, each day, each week, each month, each year) with **Resurrection Joy**? Do you have that Resurrection Joy in your heart that you celebrate, share, and invite others to be a part of?

When I was a little girl, my mom always got me a new Easter dress, hat, gloves, and shoes. I proudly wore my brand-new outfit, lots of pictures were taken, and I felt great pleasure in those moments. Through the events of Holy Week and the victory of Easter/Resurrection Sunday, we are given so much more than a new outfit. We are given the hope of new and eternal life in Christ. That is our **Resurrection Joy**!

May the blessings and **Resurrection Joy** be with each of you this Easter!

Pastor Sara

Worship Leader Schedule for March & April

Date	Name
*March 1, Second Sunday in Lent	Elaine Brenneman
March 8, Third Sunday in Lent	Gloria Womer
March 15, Fourth Sunday in Lent	Deb Loftus
March 22, Fifth Sunday in Lent	M.J. Cline
March 29, Palm Sunday	Don Sheaffer
*April 5, Easter Sunday	Elaine Brenneman
April 12, Second Sunday of Easter	Gloria Womer
April 19, Third Sunday of Easter	Deb Loftus
April 26, Fourth Sunday of Easter	M.J. Cline

Greeter & Usher Schedule for March & April

Date	Greeter	Ushers
*March 1, Second Sunday in Lent	Dianne LeSueur	Don & Brentta Sheaffer
March 8, Third Sunday in Lent	Pam McGranor	Chris VanDervort & Leslie Buckingham
March 15, Fourth Sunday in Lent	Sandy Ashbaugh	Russ Lamison & Alana Gipson
March 22, Fifth Sunday in Lent	Alana Gipson	Paul Wrona & Gloria Womer
March 29, Palm Sunday	Brentta Sheaffer	Pat Daugherty & Janel Cibik
*April 5, Easter Sunday	Pam McGranor	Don & Brentta Sheaffer
April 12, Second Sunday of Easter	Dianne LeSueur	Chris VanDervort & Leslie Buckingham
April 19, Third Sunday of Easter	Sandy Ashbaugh	Russ Lamison & Alana Gipson
April 26, Forth Sunday of Easter	Alana Gipson	Paul Wrona & Gloria Womer



MARCH & APRIL
birthdays & anniversaries

MARCH BIRTHDAYS	
Terry Morrill	3/2
Ron Stewart	3/6
Brentta Sheaffer	3/19
APRIL BIRTHDAYS	
Chuck Sarver	4/10
Jean Camp	4/14
Linda Taylor	4/16
Cheryl Gidos	4/17
Kristy Helsel	4/19
M.J. Cline	4/21
Lisa Klingensmith	4/27
Bob Ashbaugh	4/27
Lynn Sibley	4/30
APRIL ANNIVERSARIES	
Bob & Sandy Ashbaugh	4/4
Brian & Kristy Helsel	4/11
Josh & Kelly Hobbins	4/21
Chris & Kay VanDervort	4/26

If you would like to tell us when your birthday or anniversary is please let us know and we will put you in a future newsletter!



Turn clocks ahead 1 hour on Saturday,
March 7th before going to bed!

Finance Committee

Following is a condensed version of the Treasurer's Report prepared for the Finance Committee and Church Council meetings. The most recent report is for the month ending January 31, 2026.

Beginning Balance	\$26,783.86
Deposits	\$ 9,419.12
Expenditures	-\$12,121.27
Transfers	-\$ 7,500.00
Balance	\$16,581.71
Designated Funds	-\$14,653.65
Working Balance	\$1,928.06

Every January and February we are required to complete annual reports relating to the finances of the church. That work is now completed, reports filed and the books closed on 2025. With those numbers in hand, rather than provide just a summary of monthly expenses, following are some of the major expenses where General Fund dollars were used in 2025:

- Costs for the church and education buildings totaled just over \$27,000.00
- Electricity, natural gas, water, sewage, trash removal and lawn care accounted for over half of the total at \$18,080.00
- Internet, E-File storage, copier/printer costs, licenses, office supplies, postage, worship materials and supplies, and kitchen supplies totaled \$9,223.00
- Parsonage utilities totaled \$7,894.00
- Payroll, payroll services and taxes totaled just over \$63,000.00

Although this is not a complete listing of expenses, you can see that the basics to keep the church operating totaled just over \$98,000.00. To meet just these expenses required average total weekly giving of \$1,885.00. I know....., I write and speak a lot about the importance of the General Fund and how your donations to this fund are vital for us to keep our doors open, bills and staff paid as well as support programs, missions and ministries. Your support allowed us to meet expenses for those things, making 2025 a good year and we Thank you! BUT I have to warn you, I will probably continue to write and speak about the importance of the General Fund donations as costs for those things mentioned above will likely increase as we move into 2026.

Connectional Apportionment:

Our apportionment for 2026 is \$18,573.00. This would require a monthly payment of \$1,547.75. Our payment in January was only 40% of the required amount of \$625.00. To meet the total by year end will now require a monthly payment of \$1,631.64. This is a sizable payment for sure, but we must continue working toward meeting our obligation. Please remember your connectional contributions not only help fund our Conference and local churches but missions and ministries worldwide.

Pizza Hut Fundraiser:

Our Pizza Hut fundraiser is ongoing and benefits the General Fund. Just visit the Lower Burrell Pizza Hut any time during the last Tuesday of the month and present a "Fundraiser

Ticket” to your cashier to ensure the church receives 20% of net sales. There is a supply of tickets in the vestibule.

Please keep the General Fund and Connectional Apportionment as priorities in your giving. With your support our work for God’s Kingdom can continue not only locally but in many other areas as well. Remember too that e-giving is available when you cannot be in church. Simply visit our website: LFUMC.org or LFUMC251@comcast.net and click on the Donation button.

*Blessings,
Don Sheaffer
Stewardship & Finance*



Nurture Committee

A committee meeting will be scheduled for early March to finalize plans for our fundraiser and to discuss other events throughout the year. If you would like to join the committee or help in any way, we would love to have you join us. Watch for meeting announcements in the weekly bulletin.

Our annual church picnic will be held on Sunday, August 2 at Leechburg-Gilpin Park, pavilion #5. More details and reminders will be coming as we get closer to that date but it’s never too early to mark your calendar!

Please remember the Nurture Committee sends Birthday and Anniversary cards as well as a get-well card when needed to our church family. To be sure no one is missed, please be sure we have your special days on file. If you are not sure you can check with Pam in the office or a member of the committee.

Brentta Sheaffer
Nurture Committee

I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another.”

John 13:34

**Mondays at 6:45 p.m. in the
Fellowship Hall**



Choir Practice

Outreach Committee



The Caring Crockpot Ministry resumes on Wednesdays starting in March.

March dates: 11, 18, 25

April dates: 8, 15, 22

Please see Carla Shaffer if you would like to help or sign up in the vestibule!

Schedule for March

Monday, March 9 Pack lunch bags at 5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, March 10 Make sandwiches & deliver at 9:30 a.m.

Schedule for April

Monday, April 13 Pack lunch bags at 5:45 p.m.

Tuesday, April 14 Make sandwiches & deliver at 9:30 a.m.



**Feeding
Our
Neighbors**



On the last Tuesday of each month, we are asking that you help support us by either dining in or doing carry-out at the Lower Burrell Pizza Hut. We receive 20% of the net sales for everyone that presents a *coupon or let the server know that you are from LFUMC that night. Everyone has to eat supper so why not support your church while feeding your family.

This fundraiser does not require the church to front any money or require manpower to prepare and serve the food. This will also give us an opportunity to share in a time of fellowship for those that choose to dine in.

***Coupons are available in the vestibule!**

If you have comments, questions or ideas of what you would like to see in upcoming newsletters, please reach out to Pastor Sara or Pam. We would love to hear from you!



Witness Committee

Our ongoing fundraiser, which includes various Mary Kay products as well as several handmade items, all donated by Deb, are available for purchase and are located in the Fellowship Hall. When you have a minute or two, stop by and take a look. There is a variety of items and purchases support our efforts through the year.

If you have greeting cards, birthday, anniversary, thinking of you, etc. that you no longer need and would like to donate them to the card ministry, we are always happy to accept and use them. Each month our committee sends a card to our shut-ins with each receiving at least one per quarter. Your continued support of this ministry is appreciated. We are happy to have volunteers help mailing cards, too. If you would like to join our mailing team, please see either of us.

We have a supply of “Visitor Bags” ready and available for visitors who attend Sunday services. If you bring or notice someone new to our church, please see a member of our committee for a visitor bag.

If you would like to join our committee, participate in any of our projects or just help in any way, please see either of us. The next meeting date is Thursday, March 5th at 1:30 p.m.

Blessings,

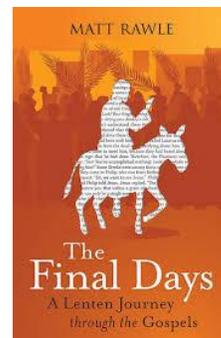
Deb Loftus & Don Sheaffer

Witness Committee Co-Chairs

Lenten Study 2026
The Final Days
A Lenten Journey through the Gospels
By Matt Rawle

Join us for this special Lenten study that will walk us through the 4 Gospels as we ponder the themes of justice, poverty, freedom, and love. This will be a six-week study meeting on Tuesdays at 6:00 P.M.

The dates for March: 3, 10, 17, 24, 31



This year we have Lenten coin boxes for collecting your Lenten offering. Your donations help fund our campership program to send children and youth to one of our church camps. We will be collecting these until Palm Sunday.

Food Bank News



Packing & Distribution Dates for March

Packing – Tuesday, March 31 – 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Distribution – Wednesday, April 1

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Packing & Distribution Dates for April

Packing – Tuesday, April 28 – 8 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Distribution – Wednesday, April 29

9:30 – 11:30 a.m. & 6:00 – 6:30 p.m.

COMMUNITY P.A.T.H.

PROVIDING ALTERNATIVES TO HUNGER

How Can You Help A Child In Need?

Donate Money – Make checks to *Leechburg Food Bank*. Please note on check "Community P.A.T.H." Mail donations to: Leechburg Food Bank Treasurer, PO Box 127, Leechburg, PA 15656.

Sponsor a Child – If you'd like to sponsor a child, send a note with your check to above address. Please include name(s) & address(es) of the sponsor(s).

Each child's P.A.T.H. bag costs \$3/week. Each child gets 1 bag/week, 50 weeks/year. Cost is \$150/year, about \$12/month

Our Mission and Vision



The mission of Communities of Transformation is to move families from surviving to thriving by developing personal leadership skills and building authentic relationships.

The vision of Communities of Transformation is to take the church into the community, to invite the community into the church, and to build relationships that elevate families in the name of Christ.

Alle-Kiski Valley Site
Thursdays from 5:30 - 7:30 P.M.
Central Presbyterian Church
305 Allegheny Street, Tarentum

A Multi-Generational Worship Experience



Third Wednesday of Every Month

Wednesday, March 18

Wednesday, April 15

(Dinner Included)

5:30 – 7:30 P.M.

An interactive learning and worship experience that includes a Bible story, crafts, a meal, and fun activities for all ages. Please call 724-845-8761 or email lfumc251@comcast.net to register.



The 2026 Bulletin and Altar Flower sign-up sheets are now available in the vestibule. Lots of available dates!



March

Messy Church from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Pizza Hut Fundraiser – All day

Wednesday, March 18
Tuesday, March 31

April

Messy Church from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Pizza Hut Fundraiser – All day

Wednesday, April 15
Tuesday, April 28

May

Women's Banquet
Mission Barn Trip

Saturday, May 9
Saturday, May 16

Lent and Easter Happenings



This is a summary of the Lent and Easter activities that will be taking place within our congregation and community.

The Leechburg Ministerial Association is once again sponsoring the Lenten Lunches on Fridays during Lent at Crossroads Presbyterian Church at 11:45 a.m. A brief devotion will be shared, and lunch will be provided by various churches in our community.



March 6th, Hebron Lutheran, Deacon Amy Santoriello
March 13th, Leechburg First UMC, Dr. Sandra McKee
March 20th, First Lutheran Church, Rev. James Arter
March 27th, Forks-Zion, Pastor Wayne Gillespie

Palm Sunday, March 29th - We will have palms (both commodore and cross palms) as we celebrate Christ's Triumphal entry into Jerusalem.

Maundy Thursday, April 2nd - We will celebrate Christ's last night with his disciples as we share in the sacrament of Holy Communion.



Good Friday, April 3rd - The Leechburg Ministerial Association will sponsor the Good Friday Cross Walk at noon. Beginning in front of our church and moving throughout the community as we pray and place crosses at various places in town. **At 7:30 P.M.**, we will have our **Tenebrae Service of Darkness** as we remember the Passion of Christ.

Community Easter Egg Hunt, Saturday, April 4th at 1:00 P.M. at Leechburg-Gilpin Park sponsored by LACA and the Ministerial Association.



Easter Sunday, April 5th, 6:30 A.M. - Our sunrise service will be held at Leechburg/Gilpin Park.

10 am Service
with Communion
here at the church



With the upcoming visit from the Bishop on Sunday, March 15, here is a short bio.



Bishop Steiner Ball was elected to the episcopacy by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2012 and was assigned to the West Virginia Area. She began her assignment to lead United Methodists in Western Pennsylvania on September 1, 2024.

Sandra L. Steiner Ball, the daughter of Edward J. and the late Marjorie W. Steiner, was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts and raised in Milford, Delaware. She is a graduate of Dickinson College, (B.A. in Religion, 1984), Duke Divinity School (M.Div., 1987), and Wesley Theological Seminary (D.Min., 2003).

Sandra was ordained Deacon and Elder by Bishop Joseph H. Yeakel in the Peninsula-Delaware Conference. She has served as an associate pastor, lead pastor, District Superintendent, and Director of Connectional Ministries (DCM). During her last year as a DCM, she also served as interim pastor of a new church start. Sandra was in this position when elected to the episcopacy by the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conference in 2012 and was assigned to the West Virginia Area.

Bishop Steiner Ball was a first elected delegate to the 2008 and 2012 General Conferences of The United Methodist Church and to the Northeastern Jurisdictional Conferences (NEJ). Prior to election, Sandra served the General Church in a variety of areas, including the Interjurisdictional Episcopacy Committee, the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, the United Methodist Endorsing Agency, and the Jurisdictional Committee on Episcopacy.

For the 2016 – 2020 quadrennium, Bishop Steiner Ball was re-assigned as the episcopal leader of the West Virginia area and served as one of three moderators on the Commission on the Way Forward. Additionally, she served as the President of the West Virginia Council of Churches and co-chaired a task force that worked to address substance use disorder in the West Virginia area.

Bishop Steiner Ball currently serves as the President of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry and chairs the design team for the annual U. S. DS/DCM training.

In 2024, Bishop Steiner Ball was assigned to the Western Pennsylvania episcopal area.

Bishop Steiner Ball and her husband, The Rev. Dr. Barry D. Steiner Ball, have two daughters, two sons-in-law, and two granddaughters: Sarah Elizabeth is married to Cale. Sarah and Cale are the parents of 2-year-old Sloane. Sandra Rebekah is married to Justice. Becky and Justice are the parents of 2-month-old Lily.

Remember to sign up for the luncheon after worship!

MISSION BARN TRIP

We are planning a trip to the Mission Barn in New Castle for our church folks. This will take place on Saturday, May 16th. While there, we will be working on UMCOR Cleaning Buckets, Hygiene and Menstrual Kits if needed, and will have opportunity to help build handicapped access ramp sections or load a ramp build trailer if it's needed. You will be able to select which activity you prefer to work in, ramp or kit work. I will also add that sometimes yard work on the grounds of the Mission Barn is needed, so if that's your thing, you may have an opportunity to do it!

Katie Peterson, the director at the Barn, has found that she will need to leave there by 12:00 on the 16th. Therefore, we will work from 9:00-12:00 instead of the usual 10-2. We will meet at the church at 7:30 so that we will be at the Barn in time to begin working at 9:00. We will work until 12:00, and lunch will be somewhere on the way home. Any suggestions you have for a place to eat will be welcome! Because ramp work will be available, we can have up to 20 people in our group and I'm hoping we'll have that many. Some of us have been on this trip before and I hope you and others are willing to come again! The need is great and the work isn't difficult, so I'm looking forward to a good and productive time for all. There will be a sign-up sheet on the front table on Sunday, April 5th. Sign as soon as you know you can come, even if there are already 20 names on it. I like to have extra names as so far, each time we've gone, some folks have found they've needed to cancel going. Please bring your own labeled reusable water bottles (they prefer no plastic throw-aways) and a willingness to work and have fun!

In our bulletins, you will also find a description of the Cleaning Kits. The Barn is ALWAYS accepting donations for these. If you would be so moved to purchase any of the items and bring them to church, we will gladly take them with us to the Barn. Even if you want to put together an entire bucket, we'll take it! Just please be sure you follow the directions EXACTLY, as contents of all kits MUST be the same. If it says 4-8 oz, don't put in 10; if it says 18 of something, don't make it 20! And...if you are not able to or interested in purchasing items, monetary donations are also welcomed! Checks may be made out to the Mission Barn. If you have questions about any of this, see Lynn Sibley.

Thank you!!

<https://wpa-email.brtaapp.com/!G40-HOKVboOZofOHpn7SWkZVD5XbgwTlkAuKGmPeyoud-+ugQsf67ML0T4thKcP6g>

UMCOR CLEANING KIT

Enabling those affected by floods, hurricanes and tornadoes to begin the overwhelming job of cleaning up. (Kit approximate cost: \$75 per bucket)

Cleaning Kit Materials

- One five-gallon round bucket with re-sealable lid (14.35" h x 12.19" w x 12.19" d)
 - No screw lids
 - May be used, but must be free from all residual product
 - Advertisements on the outside acceptable
- One 32-64 oz. bottle liquid laundry detergent
- One 16-40 oz. bottle liquid concentrate household cleaner
 - No spray cleaners
- One 16-34 oz. bottle dish soap
- One 4-8 oz. pump spray air freshener (liquid, not gel)
- One 6-14 oz. pump spray insect repellent (pack of 10-20 wipes also acceptable)
 - Pump spray bottles must have protective covers
- One scrub brush
 - With or without handle
- 18 re-useable cleaning wipes
 - No terrycloth, microfiber or paper towels
 - Remove from packaging
- Five scouring pads
 - No stainless-steel pads with soap in them
 - Remove from packaging
- 36-50 clothespins
- One 50-100 ft. clothesline (cotton or plastic line)
- 24 roll of heavy-duty trash bags (33-45-gallon sizes)
 - Remove from packaging
- Five N95 particulate respirator dust masks (1-3 mm thickness)
 - No surgical masks
- Two pairs kitchen gloves
 - Durable for multiple uses
 - Remove from packaging
- One pair work gloves
 - Cotton with leather palm or all leather

Assembly Directions

- All items must be new with the exception of the bucket and lid which may be recycled but must be clean and free of debris.
- All cleaning agents must be liquid form. No powders are accepted.
- If items have been omitted, label bucket. Please indicate which items are missing.

Important Notes

- Sponges have been removed from the list of supplies due to the challenge of locating the non-cellulose sponges that prevent mildew. Non-cellulose sponges will be added to each bucket upon arrival at the affiliate warehouse.
- Do not include any personal notes, money or additional material in the kits.
- Contents of kits or the containers of kits should not be imprinted with cartoon characters, advertisements, religious, patriotic, military or camouflage symbols.

First United Methodist Church

251 Main Street

Leechburg, Pennsylvania 15656-1394



The Stepping Stone

“Growing, Loving & Serving in
Christ’s Name.”

March/April 2026

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Prepared especially for...



March/April 2026

Livestreaming on YouTube

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