



# MERIDIAN

## Presbyterian Church

### *The Light of Meridian*

### *May 2024*

***He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. – Psalm 23***

In the summer of 2022, as the COVID pandemic was winding down and we were starting to return to normal in our church, two elders approached me with sincere concern. They were worried about me and the potential for burn out. I had two thoughts. The first was how awesome it is to be a part of a church whose elders take their role seriously. They showed deep care for me and my soul, something I have become accustomed to in this congregation and I am incredibly grateful for. The second thought, which I voiced to them, was that I'm great. The church was flourishing. We're growing. Everything was going so well, and they had no reason to worry.

Looking back, those elders were full of wisdom and clearly had followed the prompting of the Holy Spirit. Not long after that conversation I began to crash. As church life was returning to normal, and the adrenaline of the season started to wear off, I started to feel like my soul had just finished a marathon. As I shared this with multiple mentors and friends, in early 2023, each came back with the same answer, "Steve, after all these years it's about time for you to take a sabbatical. If you're going to keep thriving in ministry, you need to rest."

Over the last 18 months the session and I have been planning and working toward a sabbatical. Psalm 23 seems like the perfect text to explain what will be happening during my time away, at least it's what we hope for. It feels like Jesus is making me lie down and take a rest. This goes against my nature, but I know it is what I now need in order to fulfill my role as your pastor. Over my three months away I plan to walk with Jesus, to dwell with him, so that He can restore my soul. I'm grateful for an amazing session of elders who have granted me and my family this gift. I'm grateful for a wonderful church that has cared for us so well. I promise this sabbatical has one purpose, which will be the theme for the entire church, "He Restores My Soul." I pray that I will return to you renewed, restored, and reenergized for the ministry of the kingdom that is happening at Meridian. I hope you will join me in that prayer.

***In Christ,  
Pastor Steve***

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Debbe Picerno**

**Custodian  
Tom Perschke**

**Nursery Coordinator  
Sarah Murtha**



# Sunday Morning Services

## **Pillars: What the Church is Built On (Continued)**

### **May 5th**

Title- **“Generosity”**

Focus Passage– Matthew 6:19-24

Secondary Passage– Proverbs 11:24-25

Synopsis– One of the marks of the church, a pillar from the very beginning, was the generosity that flowed through the followers of Jesus. They sold their property and possessions, gave to anyone who had need, and they shared everything in common. In our consumeristic culture, the generous life has the potential to be a great witness to the kingdom of God. As Jesus teaches us, where your treasure is there your heart will be.

### **May 12th**

Title- **“Worshipping”**

Focus Passage– 1 Chronicles 16:23-34

Secondary Passage– Romans 12:1-2

Synopsis– Worship is at the heart of faith and a pillar of the church. Our Christian culture today convinces us that worship is about you, your preferences, and your growth. However, worship is not about what you get, it is about what you give. It’s how you come before God in adoration and praise for who he is. Worship is not what you experience, rather it is what you offer.

### **May 19th**

Title- **“Mission”**

Focus Passage– Matthew 28:16-20

Secondary Passage– Isaiah 60:1-3

Synopsis– When we build the church on these pillars, mission is the only possible outcome. As the disciples and the early church lived out these values “the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.” Mission is not a committee or program, but the outcome of a life lived in Christ

that is committed to the apostles teaching, community, generosity, and worship. Mission is not something you do, it is who we are.

## **New Sermon Series**

### **Philemon: Forged in Forgiveness**

His name means affectionate in Greek. He was a slave owner in the city of Colossae and had been converted to faith by Paul. From prison Paul writes a letter to his brother and friend. Onesimus is a runaway slave, who also comes to faith in Rome. He belonged to Philemon and Paul tells him to go back with this letter. We learn that they are no longer slave and free, but brothers in Christ. We often need these gentle reminders of grace in our lives.

### **May 26th**

Title- **“On the Basis of Love”**

Focus Passage– Philemon 1:1-11

Secondary Passage– Nehemiah 9:16-18

Synopsis– Philemon is Paul’s friend and brother in Christ. As his slave returns, Paul appeals to him on the basis of love, and not the law, to let Onesimus walk free. Our partnership in the gospel is not rooted in the law, but on the basis of love. When we love our neighbor as ourselves, we cannot help but extend grace. It’s how we are forged in forgiveness.





## Notes from Session

- Approved the baptism for Brianna Barker.
- Elected Mark Jordan as our elder representative for the Rivers of Life Presbytery Meeting on April 20th.
- Reviewed plans for our upcoming capital campaign and sabbatical.

### **HELP NEEDED**

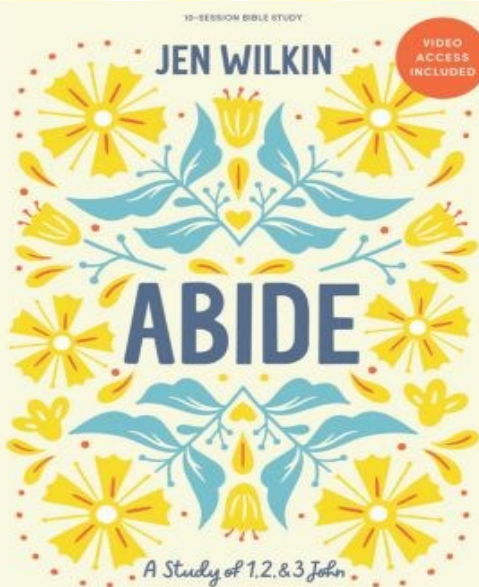
We are looking for nursery volunteers. Nursery coverage begins 15 minutes before church until the end of worship. Please contact Sarah Murtha if you are interested in helping.

**SAVE THE DATE  
NOV 15TH-17TH  
All Church Retreat @  
Crestfield Camp &  
Conference Center**

### **Missions Committee,**

**Thank you so much for buying puzzle pieces to contribute to our family's mission trip to Thailand. Your contribution means the world to us and truly made an impact as our children's eyes were opened to the importance of missions and the going forth of the Gospel all over the world! We are grateful to partner with and fellowship with you all!**

**In Christ,  
The Freeman Family**



This study is available on Amazon if you would like to participate on your own or from afar.

## Women's Ministry

Join us for our new Women's Bible Study starting in May. In this 10-session, verse-by-verse study of 1, 2, and 3 John, Jen Wilkin will challenge us to recall our great salvation and abide in the truth. There are two class options: Friday mornings at 10 AM or Sunday evening at 6:30 PM. We will meet in Parker Hall for class on the 1st and 3rd Friday's of each month, followed by the Sunday evening class. You can choose one, or float between both classes, as we will be doing the same lesson each meeting.

For any questions, please see Laura Franklin (724) 312-4647 ~ [kidsmin@meridianpres.org](mailto:kidsmin@meridianpres.org)

# Sabbatical Team Update

As we announced last month, Pastor Steve and the session are preparing for a sabbatical from July 1<sup>st</sup> through September 30<sup>th</sup>. We know there are many questions and as we promised, we will be using the newsletter and announcements in worship to explain the details of our plans.

One of the most asked questions so far is how much this will cost and what exactly will the church be covering for Pastor Steve? First, the church will not be covering any personal vacations or expenses for Steve during the sabbatical. Second, we believe the sabbatical should be a time of rest and renewal for Steve. We have agreed to cover any professional and spiritual enrichment plans for the three-month period.

As many of you know, Pastor Steve already has a professional reimbursement account specifically for continuing education and professional development. According to the original terms of call from 2010, unused money in that account accumulates up to \$3,600. We have rolled that money over through the years. Due to grants and financial diligence, the total cost to the church for Pastor Steve's four spiritual and professional development opportunities is estimated to cost about \$4,200. With the rolled over account and this year's professional reimbursement account already budgeted, the sabbatical will not cost the church any extra funds outside of already budgeted expenses.

The session has set aside some extra funds for the staff who will be picking up some of the slack while Pastor Steve is away as a way to thank them for their work. We already have a pulpit supply budget line and will be using all of that for some of the guest preachers who will visit us during the sabbatical period. At this point, we are projecting minimal extra expenses for the church during this time.

Finally, Pastor Steve had accumulated rolled over study leave over the last several years. He will be using four weeks of study leave time and two weeks of his vacation time for the sabbatical. This means the session is granting a six-week sabbatical on top of Pastor Steve's use of his personal study leave and vacation time.

As always, if you have concerns or questions, feel free to reach out to one of our team members.

Your Partners in the Gospel,

*Don Smith*

*Mark Jordan*

*Peg Morrison*



*Finding the Courage to  
Rest in God*

# MERIDIAN MISSION PARTNERS!

## This month's featured partner: Hosanna Industries!



*Hosanna Industries continues to make a difference in the community on a daily basis! This ministry just two weeks ago traveled out to rural Pennsylvania to answer the cries of a family in need. Below is the story of what was done and the impact that was made.*

*“Projects of this size require more resources, more materials and more willing and able hands to join us on the journey. God has graciously provided us with everything we need to make this journey possible, and we feel blessed beyond measure. Thank you to everyone who has helped us to bring this project to life, our community, our supporters, our donors and our volunteers. This will surely be a week that will find a special place within all of our hearts, and will restore peace and hope to the family we serve.”*

*“Because of our dedicated mission team and incredible volunteers, the amount of work we have been able to accomplish is nothing short of amazing. Witnessing days like these and miracles like this show us that God truly has His hands working there alongside us. And in every sheet of drywall we place and every piece of lumber we secure....there is God's love. Even when our trucks head back home, it is the love that we leave behind.”*



### *Other Hosanna Industry Ministries are also busy at work!*

- *TEA TIME - The enchanting Moth's Day Market & Tea - May 4th at 10:00 AM at the First Congregational Church of Etna.*
- *20th Annual Sporting Clays Fundraiser - April 27th, Rochester Sportsmen's Club head to the website to register.*
- *Help Needed - We are looking for some extra hands to help with the Hosanna Campus with a clean up day on Friday, May 17th and again on June 7th. Please contact Becky for more information: [rjhetzer@gmail.com](mailto:rjhetzer@gmail.com)*





# MERIDIAN YOUTH GROUP!

*<sup>6</sup> So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live your lives in him, <sup>7</sup> rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.*

*Colossians 2:6-7*

## SPRING RETREAT 2024!



*The youth group went on the SPRING RETREAT in APRIL! We had so much fun on a high ropes course, bonfires with s'mores, great food, games, and enjoying God's creation each day! The youth group heard lesson's from the book of Jonah! We learned about how God pursues us, his mercy, and how each of us can serve him as he spreads his message of forgiveness. We also did a mission project and removed all of the camps mattresses for cleaning!*

### *Youth Group Fundraiser Update!*

*THANK YOU TO THE CONGREGATION, FRIENDS, and FAMILY! We have raised the full amount of \$8,000 for our trip! We look forward to serving the Cleveland Community.*

## YOUTH & CLUB 35 CALENDAR

May 2024:

5/5: Youth Group

5/10: Youth Family Pirate Game Night

5/12: No Youth Group Mothers Day

5/19: No Youth Group

5/26: No Youth Group Memorial Day Weekend

Club 35: 5/19 SCHOOLS OUT PARTY!

### *CLUB 35 UPDATE!*

CLUB 35, ENJOYED THE LEGO EVENT! LAURA FRANKLIN DID A LESSON WITH THE GIRLS FROM PAUL'S WRITING ON DO NOT WORRY. CHECK OUT THE CHILDREN'S MINISTRY PAGE FOR PICTURES!

SUMMERBLAST REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

WE ARE ALWAYS LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS FOR OUR SUMMERBLAST CAMP AND IF YOU THINK YOU COULD COME HELP FOR A DAY OR THE WHOLE WEEK FEEL FREE TO TALK TO MIKE BARTON!



# Meridian Kids



## Monthly Bible Verse:

**Your word is a lamp  
to my feet and a  
light to my path.**

**Psalm 119:105**



## Reminder:

During the summer months we take a break from Sunday School hour after church.

Our last class will be on May 19th. If you see one of our awesome teachers, please thank them for giving their time to enrich and encourage our children. If you would like to be involved, please reach out to Laura Franklin.

Junior Church (which takes place during worship) will continue throughout summer and we're always looking for new helpers. We can't do it without you!

## LEGO MADNESS

Our Club 35 kids recently joined for a fun afternoon of building blocks and relationships.

We ate, we laughed, we learned, we tackled hard topics, and we got our brick on!

Special shoutout to Lori Smith for her assistance!

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes?...Can any one of you by worrying add a single our to your life?"

Matthew 6:25

## VICTORY VBS

Dates:

Sunday, July 28th  
thru  
Thursday, August  
1st

Times:

5:30pm-7:30pm



# May Celebrations Birthdays

<b>05/01</b>	<b>Gladys Martin</b>	<b>05/13</b>	<b>Todd Schultz</b>
<b>05/02</b>	<b>Jerry Dambaugh</b>	<b>05/14</b>	<b>Shirley Minich</b>
	<b>Larry Miller</b>	<b>05/15</b>	<b>Kevin Minich</b>
	<b>Dan Rearick</b>	<b>05/17</b>	<b>Dave Hilliard</b>
<b>05/03</b>	<b>Terry Whitesell</b>	<b>05/18</b>	<b>Bill Mueller</b>
<b>05/05</b>	<b>Tina Cygan</b>	<b>05/19</b>	<b>Bob Cordray</b>
	<b>Ed Monnie</b>		<b>Richard Boettner</b>
<b>05/07</b>	<b>Jack Hitchcock</b>	<b>05/20</b>	<b>Marion Eckstein</b>
	<b>Haley Holtgraver</b>		<b>Jody Ola</b>
<b>05/09</b>	<b>Sally Baker</b>	<b>05/21</b>	<b>Ellie Palmiero</b>
<b>05/11</b>	<b>Joshua Karner</b>	<b>05/22</b>	<b>Jared Schneider</b>
	<b>Don Gamble</b>	<b>05/24</b>	<b>Kala Siefker</b>
<b>05/12</b>	<b>Sadie Tarr</b>	<b>05/27</b>	<b>Carol McClean</b>
	<b>Kris Wickline</b>	<b>05/29</b>	<b>Vicki Georgic</b>
	<b>John Sproule</b>		

# Anniversaries

<b>05/01</b>	<b>Tim &amp; Cherie McNulty</b>	<b>05/16</b>	<b>Mike &amp; Harriet Sanderson</b>
<b>05/06</b>	<b>Zach &amp; Alyssa Smith</b>	<b>05/20</b>	<b>Barry &amp; Maria Coley</b>
<b>05/10</b>	<b>Ken &amp; Sue Mossgrove</b>	<b>05/21</b>	<b>Ed &amp; Ruth Monnie</b>
<b>05/11</b>	<b>Jeff &amp; Elizabeth Orsborn</b>	<b>05/24</b>	<b>Larry &amp; Paula Miller</b>
<b>05/14</b>	<b>Bill &amp; Donna Esper</b>	<b>05/28</b>	<b>Scott &amp; Lori Henderson</b>
<b>05/15</b>	<b>Thomas &amp; Linda Smith</b>		<b>John &amp; Stephanie Toniolo</b>
<b>05/15</b>	<b>Ken &amp; Chery Wehr</b>		



# May 2024

Sun

Mon


Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

			1	2	3 10 AM Women's Bible Study	4
5 10 Worship & Communion 11 Sunday School 6-8 Youth Grp 6:30-8:30 Women's Bible	6	7 1 PM Quilt 6:30 PM Trustee Meeting	8 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 7 PM Choir	9	10 Pirate Youth Family Night	11 9 AM Men's Breakfast
12 10 Worship 11 Sunday School	13 6:30 Men's Bible Study	14 1 PM Quilt 6:30 PM Session Meeting	15 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 7 PM Choir	16	17 10 AM Women's Bible Study	18
						
19 10 Worship 11 Sunday School 6:30-7:30 PM Women's Bible	20	21	22 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 7 PM Choir	23	24	25
26 10 Worship 11 Sunday School	27 	28	29 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 7 PM Choir	30	31	

Meridian Presbyterian Church  
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# SAVE THE DATE



**SATURDAY, JUNE 1st 4-7 PM—COMMUNITY BLOCK PARTY**