

JANUARY 2026

The Light of Meridian

Meridian Presbyterian Church

4150 Highland Avenue
Butler, PA 16001
www.meridianpres.org
724-482-2630

The Lens & Mirror

²³ *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" which means "God with us".* *Matthew 1:23*

Christmas is over—at least the version our culture calls Christmas. Trees come down, gifts are put away, lights disappear, carols fade, and the commercials finally stop. If you're reading this, congratulations—you've made it through another Christmas season.

But here's the good news: Christmas is really just beginning. Every Christmas Eve, I sense a collective sign of relief from the congregation, as if we've finally reached the end of a long and busy season. Yet for Christians, the true meaning of Christmas—*God with us*— is not something that ends on December 25th. Once the noise and distraction of the secular celebration fade, we are invited to focus more deeply on what God has done and what lies ahead.

The child born in a manger is not merely a memory we celebrate once a year. He is the fulfillment of God's promise to dwell among us. Christmas reminds us that God has drawn near, and that those who follow Jesus are called to live as light in a dark world.

Christmas isn't over. God has arrived. This is not a truth to pack away with the decorations, but one to proclaim boldly. The light has pierced the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it. As you store away your Christmas décor, consider leaving a manger scene somewhere in your home—a simple, visible reminder of this enduring promise: *"They will call him Immanuel...God with us."* As we step into a new year, we do so with confidence and hope, knowing that Christ has come and God is in our midst.

In Christ,
Pastor Steve

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Stephen Franklin
pastorsteve@meridianpres.org

Assistant Pastor

Mike Barton
mbarton@meridianpres.org

Children's Discipleship Dir.

Laura Franklin
kidsmin@meridianpres.org

Director of Care

Tim Rausch
care@meridianpres.org

Secretary

Kala Siefker
secretary@meridianpres.org

Treasurer

Honey Royer
treasurer@meridianpres.org

Choir Director & Musician

Debbe Picerno

Custodian

Tom Perschke

Nursery Coordinator

Sarah Murtha

SERMON SERIES

Hebrews Continued

January 4th

Title – “**Endure in Peace**”

Focus Passage – Hebrews 12:8-17

Secondary Passage – Proverbs 3:11-12

Synopsis – Children need discipline. Sometimes we misinterpret that to mean punishment or abuse. True discipline is rooted in love and it guides the child on to the right path. Part of perseverance is enduring hardships trusting that the Lord is putting us on the right path. In this way we should spur one another on toward peace, striving for holiness and God’s grace.

January 18th

Title – “**Keep on Loving**”

Focus Passage – Hebrews 13:1-8

Secondary Passage – Malachi 3:6-12

Synopsis – The Lord is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow. The rules of the game do not change, we are to love one another, show hospitality, live generously, and remember those who suffer. This is the call of the Christian life and when we live it, the world can witness the kingdom of God.

January 11th

Title – “**The Mountain of Joy**”

Focus Passage – Hebrews 12:18-29

Secondary Passage – Exodus 19:16-23

Synopsis – In Christ, the limits around the mountain have been removed. This text is a clear comparison between Moses at Mt. Sinai and the people of God as they come to Mt. Zion. Sinai was filled with fear and trembling, but Zion is filled with the choir of angels and those that lived by faith. Come to the mountain of joy.

January 25th

Title – “**A Sacrifice of Praise**”

Focus Passage – Hebrews 13:9-19

Secondary Passage – Psalm 150

Synopsis – Instead of bringing a sacrificed animal for our sins, we now bring a sacrifice of praise. Jesus has broken the bonds of the old covenant. Instead of looking at the holy city, Jerusalem, we should be looking forward to the new city that is to come, that is the kingdom of God. The world will try to blow us off track, but he is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.



As we approach the end of our study time in the book of Habakkuk, I am filled with gratitude. We’ve really experienced growth as we wrestled with hard topics. I hope this holiday break has been a time of rest and renewal for you and your families. This month our meeting days are:

January 15th & 16th discussing Weeks 8 & 9
and finally, Week 10 on **January 29th & 30th.**

We will meet in the library at the following times:

Thursdays at 6:00pm and Fridays at 10:00am.

Be on the lookout for information about our new study!

Notes from the Session

- Motion of thanks was approved for those completing their terms of service: Sue Mutz, Bill Raley, and Peg Morrison (Clerk of Session)
- Approved a new Sunday morning worship schedule starting February 15th (See page 4 for more information)
- Elected Chris McKain as the next clerk of session, starting January 1st.
- Set our annual retreat for January 24th.



As we enter a new year we take a moment to honor those who have entered the church triumphant in 2025.



Marie Baseshore

Lousie Bush

Norma Cuffman

Bonnie Morris

Ken Wehr



faith and finance

November 2025

Giving \$42,850.65

YTD Actual \$450,177.50

YTD Budget \$360,882.50

Over (Under) \$89,295.00

Dear Meridian Presbyterian Church,

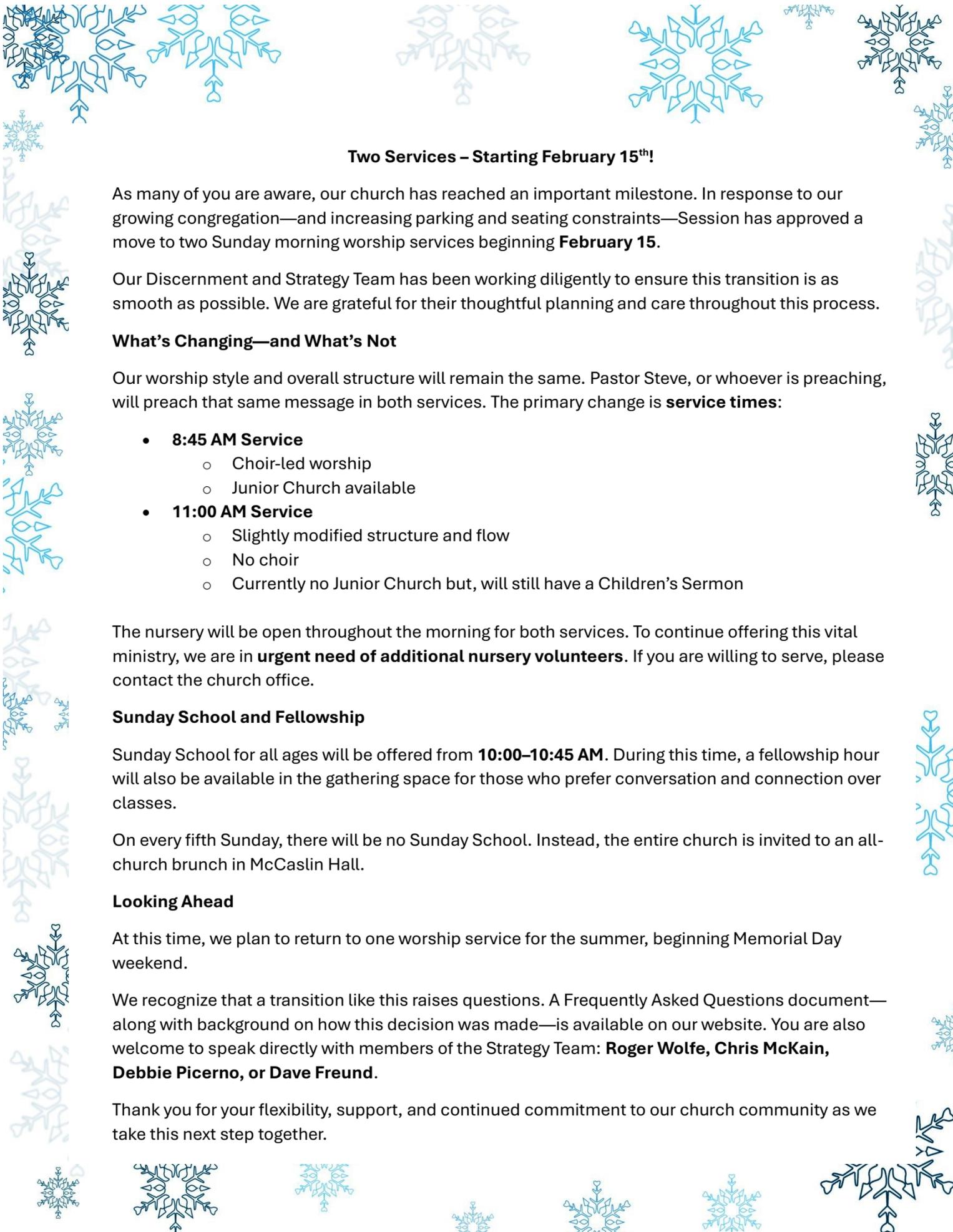
Thank you so much for your donation to Meals on Wheels. It is greatly appreciated. With donations we are able to prepare and deliver hot, nutritious meals to the homebound of Butler. We are extremely grateful for that!

Sincerely,
Terri Tirk, Program Director



Thank you so much for your continued financial and prayer support of Young Life ministry here in Butler County! The staff and volunteer leaders appreciate all the ways you support us, and we look forward to continuing to connect with you in the future.

-North Butler County Young Life Ministries



Two Services – Starting February 15th!

As many of you are aware, our church has reached an important milestone. In response to our growing congregation—and increasing parking and seating constraints—Session has approved a move to two Sunday morning worship services beginning **February 15**.

Our Discernment and Strategy Team has been working diligently to ensure this transition is as smooth as possible. We are grateful for their thoughtful planning and care throughout this process.

What's Changing—and What's Not

Our worship style and overall structure will remain the same. Pastor Steve, or whoever is preaching, will preach that same message in both services. The primary change is **service times**:

- **8:45 AM Service**
 - Choir-led worship
 - Junior Church available
- **11:00 AM Service**
 - Slightly modified structure and flow
 - No choir
 - Currently no Junior Church but, will still have a Children's Sermon

The nursery will be open throughout the morning for both services. To continue offering this vital ministry, we are in **urgent need of additional nursery volunteers**. If you are willing to serve, please contact the church office.

Sunday School and Fellowship

Sunday School for all ages will be offered from **10:00–10:45 AM**. During this time, a fellowship hour will also be available in the gathering space for those who prefer conversation and connection over classes.

On every fifth Sunday, there will be no Sunday School. Instead, the entire church is invited to an all-church brunch in McCaslin Hall.

Looking Ahead

At this time, we plan to return to one worship service for the summer, beginning Memorial Day weekend.

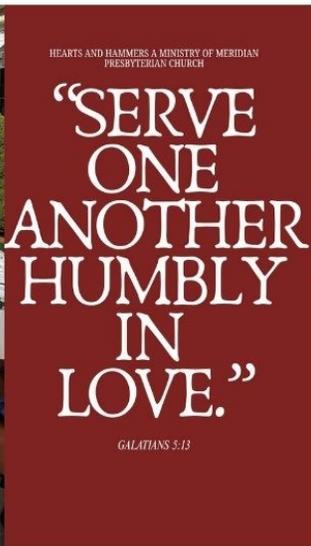
We recognize that a transition like this raises questions. A Frequently Asked Questions document—along with background on how this decision was made—is available on our website. You are also welcome to speak directly with members of the Strategy Team: **Roger Wolfe, Chris McKain, Debbie Picerno, or Dave Freund**.

Thank you for your flexibility, support, and continued commitment to our church community as we take this next step together.



A DECEMBER PAINTING WALLS AND FULFILLING WISHES!

Hearts and Hammers had its inaugural project! Several volunteers took the trailer and served our local family. We completed painting of their dining room, and family room walls, replaced twelve outlets, replaced a ceiling fixture, and repaired several walls with damage. The family is extremely grateful for our service and our group is grateful to have the opportunity to share God's love and light. We have added some photos of the work that was done below. Special thanks to our volunteers who served for three days!



FISHBONE: After our Annual Christmas Dinner we found that we had enough extra baked ziti, ham, beef roast, and mashed potatoes that we could share with Fishbone and provide them with another Sunday evening dinner. We also helped Fishbone provide 25 children with gifts for Christmas through our Angel Tree program! Thanks to all who filled a child's wish this Christmas!





MERIDIAN YOUTH MINISTRIES

Christmas Carols & Parties

December in our youth ministry is always a month centered on family. Whether it's spending an evening at the Meridian Family Christmas Dinner or enjoying the small break between Christmas and New Year's, this season naturally invites us to slow down. As the saying goes, "less is more," and in December that often proves true. Of course, doing less doesn't mean we miss out on the joy and wonder of God's glory at Christmas! On December 14th, our youth gathered for the annual Christmas Party. We enjoyed a bunch of fun Christmas activities, great food, and a lively White Elephant gift exchange. We are grateful for another wonderful year in youth ministry at Meridian Presbyterian Church. God has richly blessed our group with deepening relationships, meaningful service, and continued growth in His Word.



Congratulations to Molly, Vincent, Sutton, Ben, Brielle, Lucy, Adam, JD, David, and Aaron!

January

- Sunday - No Youth Group (Come to Mike's Ordination Service)
- Sunday - Youth Group 6 - 8 pm
- Fri - Sat. Youth Lock-in 5:45 PM - 9 AM
- Sunday- Youth Group 6 - 8 PM

Meridian Kids

What's Been Happening?



Congratulations to our ten Confirmands for completing their work and officially joining the church. We are so proud of you!



Thanks for sharing your beautiful voices with our church!



Monthly Bible Verse

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name.

John 20:31



Upcoming Events

Club 35 Bowling Party

Sunday, January 18th

12:30-2:30 @ Family Bowlaway



Sunday School

Join us for Sunday School every week from 11:15-Noon following worship. If you'd like to know how to help, see Laura for more information.



Sign up to be a teacher or helper today! We need YOU!

Contact Info

Email: kidsmin@meridianpres.org

Phone: (724) 312-4647



Birthdays!

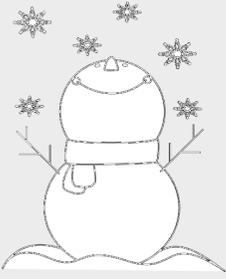
01/01	Sheila Grieb	01/14	Jake Longdon
01/02	Luke Barton	01/15	Missy Shiever
	Loraine Bowser	01/17	Sue Boettner
	Richard McClean	01/20	Doug McCann
	Matt Wickline		Lori McCann
	Cadence Patrick	01/22	Michael Hibbs
01/03	Christina Monnie		Mary Jane McDowell
01/04	Tarrah Freund		Sutton Patrick
	Zoe Woller	01/23	Andrew Tarr
	Adam Schettler	01/24	Autumn Moore
01/05	Barbara Swidzinski	01/25	William Esper
01/06	Alyssa Weitzel	01/27	Jason Cihonski
	Aurelia Raley	01/28	Leanne Cygan
01/08	Richard Bowser	01/29	Janie Myers
01/09	Beverly Dambaugh	01/30	Ryan McGeeney
	Tim Raley	01/31	Ronan Kwiatkowski
01/12	Keith Rossman		John Hoehn
	Andrew Shiever		Tim Johnston
01/13	Jessica Grieb		

Anniversaries!

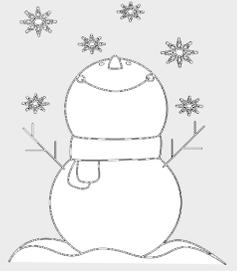
01/05 Tim & Barbra Karner
01/08 Jeff & Melissa Olen
01/21 Wayne & Janie Myers
01/22 Keith & Sue Rossman



If your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please call the office (724-482-2630) or email Kala at secretary@meridianpres.org so it can be corrected.
Thank you!



January 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Happy New Year!</i>	2	3 <i>10 AM Grief Fellowship Hour</i>
4 <i>10 AM Worship & Communion 11 AM Sunday School 4 PM Mike's Ordination Service 5 PM Dinner</i>	5	6 <i>1 PM Quilting 6:30 PM Trustees Meeting</i>	7 <i>9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir</i>	8	9	10 <i>9 AM Men's Breakfast @ Mac's Cafe</i>
11 <i>10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School 12 PM Deacon Retreat</i>	12 <i>6:30 PM Men's Bible Study</i>	13 <i>1 PM Quilting</i>	14 <i>9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir</i>	15 <i>6 PM Women's Bible Study</i>	16 <i>10 AM Women's Bible Study 5:45 PM Youth Group Lock In</i>	17 <i>10 AM Grief Fellowship Hour</i>
18 <i>10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School 12 PM Community Lunch @ St Andrews</i>	19	20 <i>1 PM Quilting 12-1 PM</i>	21 <i>9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir</i>	22	23	24 <i>9 AM-3 PM Session Retreat</i>
25 <i>10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School</i>	26 <i>6:30 PM Men's Bible Study</i>	27 <i>1 PM Quilting</i>	28 <i>9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir</i>	29 <i>6 PM Women's Bible Study</i>	30 <i>10 AM Women's Bible Study</i>	31

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JOIN US FOR SUNDAY SERVICES
WORSHIP 10:00 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL 11:00AM