

JULY 2026

# Meridian Presbyterian Church

LIGHT OF MERIDIAN

**“You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.<sup>14</sup> For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:13-14 (NIV)**

As our nation celebrates its 250th year, festivities and commemorations are already underway across the country. When we reflect on American history, one word often comes to mind: **freedom**.

Freedom has been a frequent topic of conversation in the Franklin household since school let out for the summer. Our children seem convinced that summer break means complete freedom, and the current state of our house provides plenty of evidence! When we're young, we often assume freedom means being able to do whatever we want, whenever we want.

I remember feeling that way as a child. Like many kids, I thought adulthood would bring ultimate freedom. Yet as adults, we've discovered something surprising: we may never be freer than we were in childhood. As we grow older, freedom becomes inseparable from responsibility. True freedom requires hard work, discipline, dedication, and focus. It often demands sacrifice. It is a gift that should never be taken for granted and one that is worth protecting.

This month, as we celebrate the birth of our nation and the freedoms secured through the sacrifice of others, we are also reminded of a far greater freedom—one secured nearly 2,000 years ago through the cross of Jesus Christ.

Scripture tells us that Christ has set us free. He frees us from the power of sin, from our selfish desires, and from the brokenness of this world. Yet Christian freedom also comes with responsibility. It is not freedom to serve ourselves, but freedom to serve God and others. As Paul writes, “Do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love.” How are you using the freedom Christ has given you? May we use our freedom not for our own advantage, but to love our neighbors as ourselves and to serve faithfully in God's kingdom.

In Christ,  
Pastor Steve

## Staff:

**Pastor: Rev. Dr. Stephen Franklin** [pastorsteve@meridianpres.org](mailto:pastorsteve@meridianpres.org)

**Associate Pastor: Rev. Mike Barton** [mbarton@meridianpres.org](mailto:mbarton@meridianpres.org)

**Children's Discipleship Director: Laura Franklin** [kidsmin@meridianpres.org](mailto:kidsmin@meridianpres.org)

**Director of Care: Tim Rausch** [care@meridianpres.org](mailto:care@meridianpres.org)

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**Treasurer: Honey Royer** [treasurer@meridianpres.org](mailto:treasurer@meridianpres.org)

**Choir Director & Musician: Debbe Picerno**

**Custodian: Tom Perschke**

**Nursery Coordinator: Jordan Longdon**

## Contact Us:

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[www.MeridianPres.org](http://www.MeridianPres.org)

*Sermon Series:*  
Songs for the Journey Continued

July 5<sup>th</sup>

Title - Our Helper

Focus Passage - Psalm 124

Secondary Passage - Romans 8:31-39

**Synopsis - Our survival is a testimony to the power and presence of God, our helper. We know that if God is for us, no one can stand against us. May we strive to on the side of the Lord and know that he is our helper.**

July 12<sup>th</sup>

Title - Unshakeable Trust

Focus Passage - Psalm 125

Secondary Passage - Philippians 4:6-7

**Synopsis - When we trust in the Lord, we stand on ground that cannot be moved. His protection surrounds us, both now, and into the future. It is a present reality and a future promise. May we have the peace of God, which surpassing all understanding.**

July 19<sup>th</sup>

Title - Joy and Sorrow

Focus Passage - Psalm 126

Secondary Passage - John 16:20-24

**Synopsis - We know that God restores what is lost and that he is faithful to those he has called. Through our sorrows we sow with hope, trusting that we will someday reap with songs of joy. Jesus promises us that our grief will turn to joy.**

July 26<sup>th</sup>

Title - Built By God

Focus Passage - Psalm 127

Secondary Passage - John 15:4-9

**Synopsis - We strive and work in vain, unless the Lord is our builder and foundation. Building something that last means trusting in God to do the work. He builds and blesses. All lasting joy is found in him. May we remain in him, so that we may bear much fruit.**

**20 BUT OUR CITIZENSHIP IS IN HEAVEN. AND WE EAGERLY AWAIT A SAVIOR FROM THERE,  
THE LORD JESUS CHRIST. PHILIPPIANS 3:20**

# Manse Match

THE TRUSTEES, IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE SESSION, ANNOUNCED IN MAY PLANS TO EXPAND THE MANSE AFTER CAREFULLY EVALUATING SEVERAL HOUSING OPTIONS TO MEET BOTH OUR CURRENT PASTOR'S NEEDS AND THE LONG-TERM NEEDS OF OUR MINISTRY. CONSTRUCTION IS SCHEDULED TO BEGIN IN AUGUST AND IS EXPECTED TO TAKE APPROXIMATELY THREE MONTHS. THE PROJECT WILL ADD A GREAT ROOM AND A PRIMARY BEDROOM SUITE, TWO FEATURES THE HOME CURRENTLY LACKS.

THANKS TO THE INCREDIBLE GENEROSITY OF OUR COVENANT PARTNERS, MERIDIAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH REMAINS IN A STRONG FINANCIAL POSITION. AT THE RECENT ALL-CHURCH BRUNCH, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT MOST OF THE FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT HAS ALREADY BEEN SECURED. TWO GENEROUS FAMILIES HAVE PROVIDED INTEREST-FREE LOANS TOTALING UP TO \$120,000 FOR A FIVE-YEAR PERIOD. THESE FUNDS WILL BE REPAID THROUGH DESIGNATED CAPITAL FUNDS. OUR GOAL IS TO BORROW ONLY WHAT IS NECESSARY, AND WE ARE HOPEFUL THAT WE WILL NOT NEED TO UTILIZE THE FULL AMOUNT.

IN ADDITION, A GENEROUS DONOR HAS OFFERED A MATCHING GIFT CHALLENGE TO HELP COMPLETE THE FINANCING OF THE PROJECT. THE DONOR HAS COMMITTED \$25,000 AND WILL MATCH, DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR, EVERY GIFT DESIGNATED TOWARD THE MANSE PROJECT.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUPPORT THIS EFFORT, PLEASE MARK YOUR CHECK OR OFFERING ENVELOPE WITH THE DESIGNATION "MANSE." WE ARE DEEPLY GRATEFUL FOR YOUR CONTINUED GENEROSITY, FAITHFULNESS, AND SUPPORT OF THE MINISTRY OF MERIDIAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

IN CHRIST,  
STEVE

# Thank You!



Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is *freedom*.

2 Corinthians 3:17



Manse Matching Gifts  
Goal: \$25,000



## Care Team Update:

The Meridian Care Team remains an integral part of the Meridian Church family. Thanks to the dedication and commitment of members of the care team, those members who reside in nursing facilities receive frequent visits. These occur as often as weekly and really keep those members involved in the church. Other members of the team send cards to members on holidays and other special events. Still others visit shut-ins regularly. The care team, along with the hospitality team, assist in many of the ancillary functions of the church such as the welcome desk, greeters, collection of tithes, and a variety of other services that help make the Sunday service run smoothly.

As you may be aware, we provide chaplaincy rounds at Butler Hospital 1-day per week.

During these visits, we provide spiritual care to patients who identify as having no religious affiliation. We introduce or reacquaint Jesus to about 45 patients each month. One part of the visit that is especially meaningful are the cards we give to patients that are made by some of the children of Meridian Church. They are often overwhelmed by the compassion of the youth of our church. Not infrequently, these cards bring tears of joy to these patients.

If you are interested in becoming involved in visiting or providing outreach to our shut-ins, we would welcome your specific gifts to integrate into the team.

In Christ  
Tim



**ALL CHURCH RETREAT  
SEPT 25TH-27TH  
@ CRESTFIELD CAMP &  
CONFERENCE CENTER**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**ALL CHURCH PICNIC  
SUNDAY AUG 23RD  
AT NOON  
@ THE SLEARS**



### Faith & Finances

May 2026

Giving \$44,354.47

YTD Actual \$234,031.86

YTD Budget \$183,085.40

Over (Under) \$50,946.46

**THANK YOU**

Dear MPC,

On behalf of the Flourish Institute of Theology board I want to thank you for your generosity toward FIT. Your contribution is transformative as we continue to establish the seminary. Because of partners like you we're forming pastors and leaders who will shepherd the church for decades to come.

With gratitude,  
FIT Board Members

# Mission & Outreach

## Loving God and Others



Kevin Hilliard and Mike Barton have met with two more homeowners the last few weeks. One of our potential homes needs a deck repair with rotten old deck boards. The other project is a big project. We are hoping to team up with Hosanna Industries on a roof replacement and then cleaning up from a leaking roof on the interior.

Lastly, we are meeting with Fishbone this month to plan out our August 10<sup>th</sup> -13<sup>th</sup> project that we will do on their location. Please continue to pray for these projects as they are planned out. Scan the QR code to the right to either sign up as a volunteer or if you know someone in need!



**We are so grateful for Jared Lenhart and his family for joining us in worship on Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup> ! He did a great job telling us about sharing the gospel with the unreached people of southeast Asia! Jared and Mike met nad we will be using our SummerBlast day camp to help raise money towards a chicken coop for a family in Vietnam! This is a great income for local evangelists to provide for their family while they spread the gospel!**



### **EDINBURGH SCOTLAND UPDATE:**

**August 11<sup>th</sup> (Tuesday) at 6:00 PM There will be an information meeting that will describe the trip itinerary, the projected cost, and more!**

Dates being considered: April 18–24, 2027, September 12–19, 2027

Prayerfully consider where God may be leading you.



**Safe Families  
for Children**

**new mission partner: safe families**

**we are grateful to partner with safe families, a ministry that comes alongside parents facing difficult circumstances, providing support and practical care so families can stay together whenever possible. by offering help during times of crisis, they work to prevent unnecessary family separation and reduce the need for foster care placements.**

**safe families is currently seeking volunteers to serve on a leadership council to help guide and support this important ministry. if you are interested in learning more, please speak with mike barton or tim mcnulty.**

We are excited to welcome Dream Big Honduras as one of our newest mission partners. Through Christ-centered education, this ministry gives children in Honduras opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and build a brighter future.

As we look ahead, Dream Big Honduras will be included in our 2027 International Mission Budget. This year, Laura Franklin has also chosen the ministry as the focus of our Vacation Bible School mission project, with VBS children collecting school supplies to bless students in Honduras.

We look forward to seeing how God uses this partnership to bring hope and opportunity to children and families for years to come.



# meridian youth ministries

## READY FOR SUMMER!

Summer for youth ministry is CRAZY but thankfully my family and I got away for a break and took a vacation to Indian Shores Florida for a week. As I stared out into the Gulf of Mexico and walked along the beach, I am always amazed at the vastness and beauty of God's creation. It is this kind of reminder that lights the passion I have for youth, mission, and spreading the Word of God.

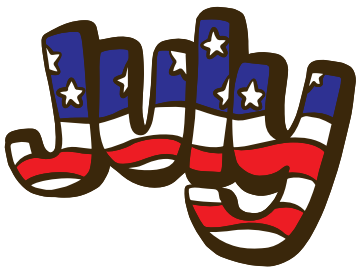
We kick things off this year with a Pirates Game on May 31<sup>st</sup> for our youth, Club 35 and our church family. We had 63 of our church family show up to watch the Pittsburgh Pirates bring home a victory against the Minnesota Twins.

Our next big event happened on Thursday, June 18<sup>th</sup> where we had 13 youth go to Preston Park for an afternoon of fishing. We had a great time together catching fish and enjoying a summer afternoon together.



## PRAY FOR OUR MISSION TRIP!

Our Youth will be heading out on June 21<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 PM to Altoona PA! 9 youth and 3 adults will serve in a variety of ways for a week. This is a vital way in which our youth not only serve but get a chance to see faith in action as well as grow in their own faith. Please pray for our safety in travel and for open hearts and minds of those we serve as well as our the hearts of our youth.



- monday - friday july 6<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> summerblast volunteering
- july 13<sup>th</sup> - youth kennedywood day
- july 19<sup>th</sup> - youth community night at heathers!
- july 31<sup>st</sup> - youth lake day! (9 am - 3 pm)





# MERIDIAN KIDS



I can share my gifts!

## \* JUNE -VBS EDITION \*

### THANK YOU

We had a totally TUBULAR time this year facing the mountains of life with God's word. I am so grateful for all of the help so many of you have offered and provided throughout the last few months. An event like this can't happen without our volunteers and helpers. From the crafters to the snackers, I'm overwhelmed by our church's generous service. THANK YOU ALL!

### FUN AT VBS



I can hope!

### LEARNING FOCUS

Throughout the week, we learned about Joseph, Esther, the Widow's offering, Peter, John, and of course JESUS! Our kids enjoyed yummy snacks, fun games, awesome crafts and most importantly grew in their faith. We are so proud of them!



I can pray!

**I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH HIM WHO STRENGTHENS ME.**  
PHILIPPIANS 4:13, NRSV

**EVEN IN TORNADO WARNINGS!**



I can give my all!

### MISSION

## Dream BIG Honduras

This year we collected donations for Dream Big Honduras, one of our Mission partners that serves kids in Pinalejo, Honduras. With your generosity we will provide important resources that help at risk kids stay in school, learn about Jesus, and live a better life. If you feel called to give, you can make a financial donation or pick up the following items:

- **School supplies** – pencils, crayons, markers, glue
- **Hygiene products** – Vitamins, soap, toothpaste, toothbrushes, shampoo, and deodorant
- **Clothing** – underwear, socks, and crocs

See Laura for more details or visit their website: [www.dreambighonduras.org](http://www.dreambighonduras.org)

I can be brave!

### CONTACT

**Please reach out if you have any questions or would like to meet during the summer season!**

- Laura Franklin - Children's Discipleship & Women's Ministry
- [kidsmin@meridianpres.org](mailto:kidsmin@meridianpres.org)
- mobile: 724-312-4647

# \*July Celebrations\*

## Birthdays!

7/2 Julie Freehling  
Jessie Hitchcock  
7/3 Valerie Mueller  
Nancy Kummer  
7/4 Josie Mackrell  
7/5 J. D. Franklin  
7/6 Adam Longdon  
7/7 Katie Schultz  
Ruth Spack  
07/8 Max Palmiero  
7/9 Gary Cygan  
7/11 Jeff Olen  
7/10 Lauren Schettler  
7/11 Maxine Boarts  
7/12 Nova Freund  
Susan Johnston  
7/14 Tim Rausch  
Heather Zeigler

7/15 Grace Barton  
Molly Tarr  
7/17 Jennifer Longdon  
7/19 Barbara Double  
Gale Fair  
7/20 Karolina Karner  
7/24 Rhonda Hough  
Megan Mackrell  
7/28 Arthur Eckstein  
Cathy Woller  
Lydia Kwiatkowski  
Jim Ola  
7/29 Mike Sanderson  
Cayce Bowser  
7/30 Nancy Rettig  
Sandy Henry  
7/31 Les Freehling  
Charlotte Smedley  
Laura Mason  
Lincoln Fair

## Anniversaires!

7/2 Bob & Krista Wickline  
Randy & Vicki Georgic  
7/4 Paul & Tammy Patten  
7/10 Jon & Alicia Palmiero  
7/17 Mike & Julie Barton  
7/19 Josh & Alyssa Weitzel

7/22 Brittany & Issac Osborne  
7/23 Gary & Sharon Schneider  
Jim & Sarah Preston  
7/25 John & Nicole Sproule  
7/26 Greg & Emily Wickline  
John & Lisa Hoehn

# JULY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> 9 AM Coffee & Conversation	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> 10 AM Unraveling Grief Group 
<b>5</b> 10 AM Worship & Communion	<b>6</b> 	<b>7</b> 1 PM Quilting 	<b>8</b> 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 	<b>9</b> 	<b>10</b> 	<b>11</b> 9 AM Men's Breakfast @ Mac's Café
<b>12</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>13</b> 6:30 PM Men's Bible Study  Youth Group Kennywood Day!	<b>14</b> 1 PM Quilting	<b>15</b> 9 AM Coffee & Conversation	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> 10 AM Unraveling Grief Group
<b>19</b> 10 AM Worship 12 PM Community Lunch @ St. Andrews 6PM Youth Group at Heather Zeiglers	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> 1 PM Quilting	<b>22</b> 9 AM Coffee & Conversation	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> 10 AM Worship	<b>27</b> 6:30 PM Men's Bible Study	<b>28</b> 1 PM Quilting	<b>29</b> 9 AM Coffee & Conversation	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b> 9 AM-3 PM Youth Group Lake Day 	

Meridian Presbyterian Church  
4150 Highland Avenue  
Butler, PA 16001

# **SAVE THE DATE**

**Sunday, August 23rd**

