

JANUARY 2025

The Light of Meridian

Meridian Presbyterian Church

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

The Lens & Mirror

Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord rises upon you. ² See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the Lord rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Isaiah 60:1-2 (NIV)

The temptation in our lives, post-Christmas, is to just go back to normal. The presents have been given, the parties have ceased, and the long-cold winter lies ahead. The kids go back to school, we settle back into our routines and go about our lives almost like nothing really happened. However, something has happened, something has changed, God is in the manger.

CS Lewis wrote, "Once in our world, a stable had something in it that was bigger than our whole world." When we think of the magnitude of who was wrapped and laid in a manger, it's staggering that God would come to us this way. Christmas for many is about celebrating Jesus' birthday, that's what we tell our kids at least. It's far easier to celebrate a birthday than it is to surrender our lives to this Jesus.

The world can often be a dark and painful place. The real meaning of Christmas is knowing that the light of Christ has come in order for us to navigate this world. At Christmas we are once again reminded of the God who is with us and the light that rises upon us. All of this is for the glory of the Father. May we not just celebrate a holiday, but live a life surrendered to Jesus that gives all the glory to God. May we not just receive the light of Christ but share it.

In Christ,
Pastor Steve

Pastor

Rev. Dr. Stephen Franklin
pastorsteve@meridianpres.org

Dir. of Youth & Family Min.
Mike Barton
mbarton@meridianpres.org

Children's Discipleship Dir.
Laura Franklin

Secretary
Kala Siefker
secretary@meridianpres.org

Treasurer
Honey Royer
treasurer@meridianpres.org

Choir Director & Musician
Debbe Picerno

Custodian
Tom Perschke

Nursery Coordinator
Sarah Murtha

January 5th-

Title– **The Birthright**

Focus Passage– Genesis 25:21-34

Secondary Passage– Matthew 3:13-17

Synopsis– Isaac’s wife, Rebekah, has twin boys. Their names are Essau and Jacob. The birthright belongs to Essau, but he sells his birthright for a bowl of soup. The Lord chose Jacob and it is through him he will bring about redemption. God has chosen you, claimed you, and marked you as his own. You don’t have to fight your way to the top.

January 12th

Title – **Who is It?**

Focus Passage – Genesis 27:18-34

Secondary Passage – James 1:16-18

Synopsis – Rebekah knows that the Lord has chosen Jacob, but Isaac loved Essau. She devises a plan to make sure that Jacob receives the blessing of his father. Through scheming and deceit Isaac will bless Jacob. In the Old Testament blessings aren’t just nice things, they shape and form our lives. We all want to be blessed and sometimes we deceive others into giving it to us.

SERMON SERIES

Jacob-Wrestling with God

Jacob’s name means striver, schemer, or hustler. Born to Isaac, the grandson of Abraham, his story is one of a constant battle with God. Like Jacob, we wrestle with God. We don’t have to hustle God to get a better life. Here’s the thing, God doesn’t need our striving to climb the ladder. He comes to us and lifts us up to a place we belong.

January 19th

Title – **“The House of the Lord”**

Focus Passage – Genesis 28:10-22

Secondary Passage – Luke 19:41-48

Synopsis – In a dream Jacob experiencing the presence of God. There he receives the promise, “I am the Lord, the God of your father Abraham and Isaac. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” It was the same promise given to Abraham. Though there is no temple, Jacob names that place Bethel, which means the House of the Lord. It’s not about where or what we worship, but who we worship.

January 26th

Title- **“Love and Deceit”**

Focus Passage – Genesis 29:15-35

Secondary Passage – Romans 5:1-8

Synopsis – Jacob wants to marry Rachel, but Laben deceives him and gives him his oldest daughter, Leah, instead. After 7 years of labor, the deceiver has been deceived. God will bring good from Laben’s deceit and Leah’s longing for love. Though Jacob loved another, God will bring forth a king and a savior from Leah. Our deepest longings can only be satisfied by the love of Jesus.

Notes from the Session...

- Thank you to our partners who are finishing their terms of service; Eric Shiever, Charlotte Smedley, & Bonnie Fiel.
- Approved our new covenant partners who were welcomed into the church on December 15th.
- Approved Zoey Scott for baptism on January 5th.

faith and finance

November 2024

Giving \$45,509.00

YTD Actual \$447,887.77

YTD Budget \$328,150.00

Over (Under) \$119,737.77



GRIEF FELLOWSHIP HOUR

We will be hosting an informal gathering for those who need encouragement facing a future of unexpected challenges. Scripture instructs us to care for and support anyone grieving the loss of a loved one. Whatever part of the journey you are on, we invite you to attend for a time of sharing, memories, prayers, and friendship. Saturday, Jan. 4th at 10 AM in Room #15.

Dear Meridian Church,
Thanks for thinking of me and bringing me a nice Christmas bag gift. So nice of all of you to do this. Merry Christmas to all and God Bless You!

**Your Friend,
Norma Cuffman**



Dear Meridian Presbyterian Church,
Thank you so much for your donation to Meals on Wheels. We wish all of you a Merry Christmas!
Sincerely,
Butler & Connoquenessing Meals on Wheels

MISSION UPDATE

FINDING WAYS TO LOVE GOD AND LOVE OTHERS



2025 MISSION PARTNERS

FISHBONE: We will continue to serve dinner on the fifth Sunday of each month this year. We will also be covering February 16th! We are on a list to serve on months we do not have a fifth week. We also are looking to help out

SHOCKLIES & Martia Bennet: We will continue to support the Shocklies as missionaries in Scotland and Martia in Kenya Africa.

HOSANNA INDUSTRIES: This year we continue to help support Hosanna Industries who continue to do home projects for those in need all over the Pittsburgh and Butler area.

YOUNG LIFE: Young Life is another way in which we can help out our local community. Young Life is a middle and high school ministry that serves many youth, who are not connected to a church.

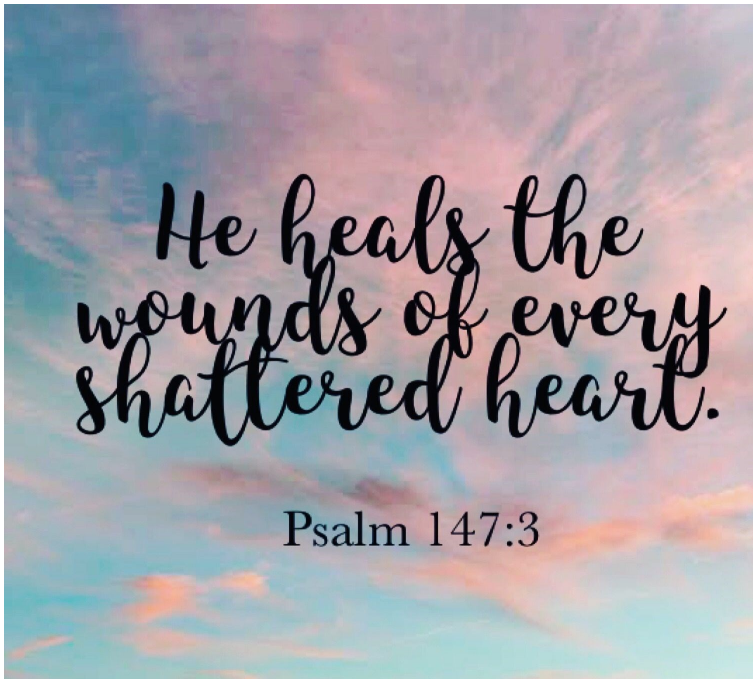
ADULT MISSION TRIP: For the first time since COVID our adults are headed on a mission trip in February to Whitesville NC to Facts of Life Church. We have been asked to help their church with their food ministry as well as some possible home projects.

BUTLER MEALS ON WHEELS and FOOD DRIVES: We continue to support the food ministry that feeds many of our locals who cannot cook meals for themselves.



**THERE IS ALWAYS
WAYS TO GET
INVOLVED IN OUR
MISSION PROJECTS!
CHECK OUR SIGN
UP TABLE OR
CONTACT THE
CHURCH OFFICE!**

As we enter a new year we take a moment to honor those who have entered the church triumphant in 2024.



Josh Boettner
Nancy McCombs
JoAnn McElhaney
Bob Minich
Dan Musko
Don Park
Roger Rettig
Dorothy Tack



Storyteller
JAMES
THE LIFE OF FAITH

Women's Ministry

NEW STUDY INFO

After the holiday chaos has settled, mark your calendars for our new Women's Bible Study exploring the book of James.

Beginning on January 9th, we will meet on Thursday evenings at 6:00 pm and Friday mornings at 10:00 am on the first and third weeks of the month. Sign up at church or please see Laura Franklin (724) 312-4647 ~ kidsmin@meridianpres.org

Meridian Kids

HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED?

Junior Church Helper

During worship, you'll lead the kids (prek-2nd graders) in a prepared lesson with a video and activity sheet and then return before the end of worship.

Sunday School Teacher

We need helpers to invest in our kids after worship. We have different age groups and we need YOU!

All curriculum is provided. See Laura if you are able and willing to disciple our kids in their faith.

Nursery Volunteers

If you want to spend an hour playing with our smallest members please reach out to Sarah Murtha at 724-355-4315. We need helpers during worship, Sunday School and for Women's Bible Study. We can find a space for you!

Note: These positions require state clearances to be on file. If you need assistance we can help!

We are SO proud of all of the kids who participated in our Christmas Dinner Program. Thank you for sharing your

Monthly Bible Verse:

In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 5:16



PARTY TIME

Our Club 35 Christmas party was a fun time filled with good food, games and glitter! What a gift it is to celebrate Christ's coming together.



Club 35

Bowling

January 12th

1:00-2:30pm

Do you have a burning question and can't find me after church on Sunday?

Come VISIT me!

My office is located in the basement, next to the new bathroom.

**Updated Office Hours:
Tuesday-Thursday
10:00-3:30**

I'd love to meet with you, call or email me:





YOUTH GROUP 2025!

December was a fast month this year. The youth group celebrated Christmas at our annual Christmas party. We enjoyed some fun and goofy games and some awesome appetizers and Christmas cookies.

We are very much looking forward to a new year of ministry together. Our youth are looking forward to our Lock-in in January, a youth conference in March, and a spring retreat in April. We have a busy couple of months coming and will be learning a lot about Jesus and deepening our faith.

Our Club 35 kids also enjoyed a Christmas party where they learned about how Jesus came down as God incarnate and what that means to us as believers in Him!

We hope that your family had a wonderful time reflecting on 2024 and have a 2025 filled with God's blessings.



JANUARY CALENDAR:

CLUB 35: January 12th: 12 PM - 2 PM
Playing Bingo at a local nursing home!

YOUTH GROUP:

1/5 (Sun): 6 - 8 PM Youth Group
1/12 (Sun): 6 - 8 PM Youth Group
1/17-18 (Fri - Sat.) LOCK - IN
1/26 (Sun) - No Youth Group Mike @
National Gathering in Texas!



JANUARY CELEBRATIONS!

Birthdays!

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

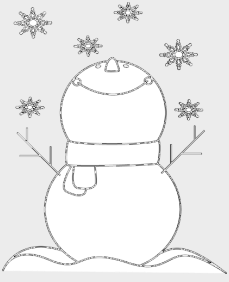
Anniversaries!

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

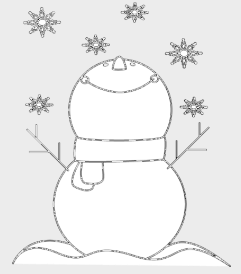


If your birthday or anniversary is missing or incorrect, please call the office (724-482-2630) or email Kala at secretary@meridianpres.org so it can be corrected.

Thank you!



January 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
					12-5 PM Blood Drive @Meridian Firehall	10 AM Grief Fellowship Hour Room #15
5 10 AM Worship & Communion 11 AM Sunday School & Deacon Meeting 6-8 PM Youth Grp	6	7 1 PM Quilt 6:30 PM Trustees Meeting	8 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir	9 6 PM Women's Bible Study	10 10 AM Wom- en's Bible Study	11 9 AM Men's Breakfast @ Mac's Cafe
12 10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School 12:45 PM Club 35 6-8 PM Youth Grp	13 6:30 PM Men's Bible	14 1 PM Quilt	15 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir	16	17 Youth Group Lock In	18
19 10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School	20	21 1 PM Quilt	22 9 AM Coffee & Conversation 6:30 PM Choir	23 6 PM Women's Bible Study	24 10 AM Wom- en's Bible Study	25 9-3 Session Retreat
26 10 AM Worship 11 AM Sunday School	27 6:30 PM Men's Bible	28	29	30	31	

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JANUARY
WORSHIP SERVICES
10:00 AM
SUNDAY SCHOOL
11:00 AM