BEN SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHERE TO REACH US: MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211

One

STREET ADDRESS:

1965 Church Hill Road Lehighton, PA 18235 In

Christ

Church Phone: 570-386-3870
Social Hall Phone: 570-386-4990
E-mail: bensalemucc@ptd.net
Website: www.bensalemucc.com

Fax: 570-386-3870 [call, speak to secretary, then call back]

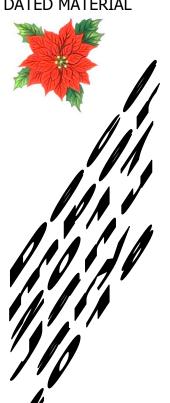
Pastor Michael McGowan: Home - 610-759-9126

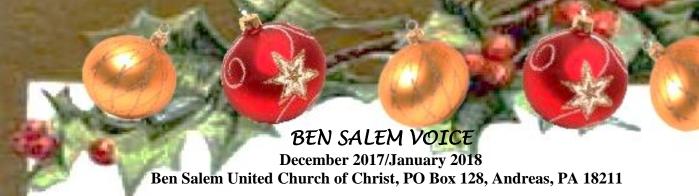
Office e-mail: pstrbens@ptd.net

BEN SALEM UCC PO 128 ANDREAS PA 18211-0218

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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

A great, big, joyful Merry Christmas to all. Once again we find ourselves at the end of the year during the month that has been set aside by our society as the 'Holiday Season.' This season has many meanings to many people but the one overwhelming focus of the holiday season for most people would certainly be 'the family.' The idea of gathering together with family for a time of joyful celebration, especially if your family tree has branches that have grown and reached around the country, is the perfect yearning for this time of year.

We yearn of having a house full of family as the aromas of the season waft through the air. In our minds we envision the people laughing and smiling, enjoying each other's company as the decorations of the season enhances the background with their pleasant colors and contrasts of green and red and silver and gold. Somewhere in our minds picture is a tree decorated with items from years of Christmas's past. While for some there may be an image of folks holding a small glass of egg nog or a fire blazing in a distant fireplace – or – maybe both. But the most important part of this picture is of course, the people - those who have gathered in joyous celebration.

That is what makes this holiday so special, the people. While the Norman Rockwell picture I tried to create for you above may be the image you hold dear, for some, this picture is no longer a possibility. As we know because of the terrible tragedies that occur in our world many folks will not be able to have their Norman Rockwell Christmas celebration. Their families are no longer whole, just as others have lost much of their families to attrition and death. But as I said, this holiday is special. That is because we have faith in a God who came to us to join us together as a family unlike any family before. We have been joined as a family by a babe birthed as any other baby but who came through God's power to share a word and to show us a light that makes us whole. We are made whole as believers in this Holy Child because we have been brought into the family of God, a family that even Norman Rockwell with all of his wonderful talent couldn't justifiably capture on canvas. We are part of a family that no man can take away, no tragedy can end, and no death can bring to an end.

A theologian and Pastor who lived from the early to mid-20th century named Peter Marshall stated in a prayer how as part of this marvelous family - Christmas needs to be kept in our heart. In his words — "May we not spend Christmas, but keep it, that we may be kept in its hope, through Him who emptied Himself in coming to us that we might be filled with peace and joy in returning to God." While our picture of the perfect Christmas celebration may give us a sense of the peace and joy we yearn for, being part of the family of God and keeping the Christmas Spirit alive in our hearts is what allows us to experience everlasting peace and joy. As part of God's family we never have to worry about being lonely or afraid, because Jesus has come to live in our heart.

My prayer for everyone is that Jesus is first in your heart this holiday season — as you celebrate with those who you still have --- and as you remember those loved ones you have lost --- may you realize as a part of

God's family - the warm loving embrace of God as the Baby Jesus comes fresh into your heart once again this holiday season. May the peace of Christ, the love of God and the hope found in the Holy Spirit bring you true joy this Christmas

and always.

Peace and Blessings, Pastor Mike

Worship Services: 10:30 Service Only (Advent I/Communion/Congregational Mtg.) December 8 AM & 10:30 AM (Advent II/Hand Bell Choir) 3 PM Lights of Remembrance Service 10 17 8 AM & 10:30 AM (Advent III) Sunday School Program 9:15 AM (Advent IV) 2 PM, 7:30 PM Services (Advent IV/Communion/Candlelight) 24 8 AM & 10:30 AM 31 **January** 8 AM & 10:30 AM (Communion) 7 14 8 AM & 10:30 AM 8 AM & 10:30 AM 21 8 AM & 10:30 AM 28

Communion

December 3: 10:30 AM December 24: 2 PM, 7:30 PM January 7, 8AM & 10:30 AM



COFFEE HOUR

has resumed....Volunteers needed!

Call to a

Congregational Meeting
December 3, 2017 10:30 AM
(There will be no 8AM Service this Day)

Purpose: To vote on the proposed 2018 Budget To elect Church Board Officers To appoint Church Auditor

It is very important that everyone attends the meeting on

Sunday, December 17 at 10:30 AM



Thursday Mornings

10AM – 12 Noon

Fellowship Hall Board Room

Please join our group as we continue studying "Be Authentic" (Genesis 25-50)



be

Christmas Eve Services

9:15AM: Worship (Advent IV)
2:00PM: Christmas Communion &

Candlelight Service featuring Daybreak

7:00PM: Christmas Prelude

featuring Ben Salem

vocalists & musicians

7:30PM: Christmas Eve Communion &

Candlelight Service



Come and Join Us!

<u>Christmas Eve</u>

December 24, 2017

7:30 PM

"Christmas through the Carols"

by Christine Trevino

featuring...the Senior Choir, Hand Bell Choir & Junior Choir



Church Business

How to Contribute to Our Operating Budget: to pay Ben Salem's bills] Use your weekly envelope [in your envelope packet]

Designate "Current Expenses":

[Benevolence is only for Missions - OCWM] Place in offering plate or send to the Church: Ben Salem UCC, P.O. Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211

2017 Church Board Members:

Elders: Sharon Elder, Barry Fink, Walter Keeck, Terry Lusch Terry Blair, Shirley Kline, Doris Lusch, Kenneth Oswald, Deacons:

Robert Pope, Barry Reed, Carly Smith, Ron Steigerwalt

Pastor: Rev. Michael McGowan Church Secretary: Dollie Behr Treasurer: Dawne Beidleman

Financial Secretary's Address: Susan Messina, 66 River Road,

Tamagua, PA 18252

Upcoming Church Board Meetings:

December 18th and January 15th at 7PM

Ben Salem History Books – Very limited # available \$60 – Contact the Church Office 570-386-3870

eetings

Cemetery Association: Dec 7 & Jan 4, 7 PM

Cemetery Association of Fare: no meeting date set

Next Meetings: December of the Minimum of the Cemetery Lot Priggs as \$300 [mitting or peation can spek prior)

Mission Committee: online meetings at cti2@ptd.net

Note from Church Office & **Financial Secretary:**

Remember, it is important to keep us informed of any address changes. Please give changes of address to either Dollie Behr or Sue Messina. Have you moved recently? Members

can help by updating the church office with their new address prior to moving. It is also helpful to provide the church office with your home phone numbers, cell phone numbers and e-mail addresses if you wish. By doing this we can keep in touch with you and also provide you with important information regarding the church. Thank you in advance for your help.

Have you remembered the church in your will?

Scheduling Events at Ben Salem Church:

To prevent scheduling problems...prior to calling meetings or events, please check with the Church Secretary at 570-386-3870 to make sure that the date you have planned is available.

<u>Hospitalization</u>? If you or someone you know is going to be in the hospital for surgery, please let the church office know a day or two before the surgery. This way the Pastor will make every effort to be there to visit and pray with the patient before the surgery.

Recycle...Save your soda cans...

Aluminum cans will be taken to Zaprazny's. Remember aluminum cans and clean aluminum only and should be placed in bags.. There is a fenced in area to the rear of the old social hall for aluminum cans. Please do not place any of the following items in this area: garbage, wood, plastic, or other metals.

Do not place aluminum cans in garbage shed.

Note new email address for Church & Pastor McGowan

bensalemucc@ptd.net - Church Office pstrbens@ptd.net - Pastor McGowan



Altar Flower Sponsors: [Checks payable to Ben Salem UCC]

A sign up sheet is located in the narthex. The cost of flower sponsorship is \$20.00. If you would like to sponsor flowers, please call Cindy Smith at 570-386-4248. ***Payment should be sent directly to: Cindy Smith, 707 Hoffman Rd., Lehighton, PA 18235.

Note: All bulletin and flower sponsorship should be paid in advance.

Bulletin Sponsorship: [Checks payable to Ben Salem UCC] Please call Sue Messina at 570-386-2880 with your sponsorship information or e-mail her at suemess@ptd.net. The cost of Bulletin Sponsorship is \$7 per week. *** Payment should be sent directly to: Susan Messina, 66 River Road, Tamaqua, PA 18252.

Please do not call the church office with sponsorships!

Pastor's Office Hours:

Monday – work from home **Tuesday – 10 AM to 2 PM [visits in the afternoon]** Wednesday – 9 AM to 1 PM [visits in the afternoon] Thursday – 10 AM to 5 PM Friday & Saturday [by appointment]

Financial Report October 2017



Philippians 4:13 - "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Thank you for your continue support in fulfilling our commitment!!!

→ 2018 Offering Envelopes are available in the narthex. Please pick them up as soon as possible.

→ Please have all bills and donations for 2017 to our treasurer by December 31.

Do you like the convenience of scheduling bills through Internet Banking?

Not having to worry about writing those checks each month is nice. Well if your bank offers free internet banking why not schedule your giving to the church on a bi-monthly or monthly basis. The bank could send the check every other week or every month and you wouldn't have to worry about having cash on a Sunday. If this sounds good then simply schedule your offering like you do your other bills and have it sent to: Ben Salem UCC, P.O. Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211-0128 If there is a place for a note about the payment you can even fill in how much you would like to go to the church and how much should go to OCWM. It's that simple – really! Our treasurer receives the check and your account is credited the same as if you utilized an envelope. And if you are uncomfortable not having an envelope to put in the plate – don't forget there are other envelopes to utilize in the box you receive at the start of each year. If this sounds good to you – please consider signing up with your bank. Thank You.

The Stewardship and Finance Committee



Thank you for all of your support in 2017! We look forward to helping even more families in the New Year! Our next hosting week is March 25-31, 2018.

Additional volunteers are needed!

Contact: Karen Hayman at 570-241-7842 khayman@ptd.net

<u>Christmas Fund Offering – December 17, 2017</u>

For 116 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's love and light in the world. One of the four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, the Christmas Fund provides UCC congregations and members an opportunity to reach out in kindheartedness to those who have faithfully shepherded our Church and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs.

In 2016, UCC congregations and members generously contributed \$1,562,260 to the Offering. This enabled the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards, to provide, on behalf of the whole Church, Supplementation of Small Annuities, Retiree Health Premium Supplementation, Emergency Grants, and Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to individuals and families in need.

The theme of the 2017 Christmas Fund Offering is **Shepherding the Light**, and our goal is to raise \$1.7 million to help support these ministries of light and love. The recipients of these gifts have faithfully served the church and now, in their time of need, we can be the church to them. We invite and encourage you to shepherd God's light and support this year's appeal. More information can be found at www.christmasfund.org.

On behalf of the hundreds of clergy and lay employees and their families whose lives were touched by your support of last year's Christmas Fund Offering, we offer our sincere thanks for your generosity!



Congratulations to Connor Frey 2017 Richard and Cynthia Smith Schlolarship Winner! Connor is attending Old Dominion University in Virginia. St. Mathew's UCC presents

"A Cramer Brothers Christmas" Country Christmas Concert

Sunday, December 3, 2017 3 PM 102 Church Road, Kunkletown, PA 18058



Saturday, December 16th Beginning at 3 PM

There will be a brief meeting and a youth group party to follow.

Bring a snack to share!

Older Youth Group Movie & Pizza Night

Friday, January 5th 6:00 PM

Fellowship Hall

Showing... War Room (PG)

Prayer is a Powerful Weapon
From the Creators of
FIREPROOF and COURAGEOUS

Homemade Christmas Cookie & Candy Sale



Saturday, December 9th 9AM – Noon (or until sold out)

Ben Salem UCC – Fellowship Hall Quilt Raffle Tickets Available





HOMEMADE STICKY BUNS

Price \$6.00 for pack of 6 buns Deadline for orders – January 28 Pick-up - Saturday, February 10, 1:00 - 2:00 P.M. at



the fellowship hall.

pa	acks @ \$6.00 = \$
NAME	PHONE NO.
Place order form in box	in narthex or call Sue at 570-386-2880.

Beginners Country Line Dancing -

No experience necessary!

If you are interested in this activity,
please contact

Dot Eberts at 570-386-2149 for more
information.

Classes will meet Wednesdays from
9:30-11:30AM. Free will offering.

GAME DAY INFORMATION

Wednesday, December 27 & Wednesday, January 24 Weather permitting - Fellowship Hall 12 Noon Bring a snack to share!

Thank You Note

Dear Prayer Shawl Makers,

Many thanks for the beautiful prayer shawl. I was so surprised and very touched by your thoughtfulness and kindness. I will cherish the shawl and prayer always. I am finally finished my ten weeks of physical therapy. It really helped. I have an appointment with an orthopedic doctor in November. Hoping for good news. I miss all of you girls and our dance class. Looking forward to see all of you in a few weeks. God Bless You. Alberta Sfarra



Beginners Knitting/Crocheting Group:

The knitting and crocheting group will stop meeting for the season...

Classes will be held upon request. Please contact Barbara Snowberger.

570-386-2112 if you need help with a knitting or crocheting project.





Blanket Makers / Quilters: The Blanket Makers and Quilters meet on Thursday mornings starting at 9 AM at the Social Hall. Anyone is welcome to come and join them. The 1st prize quilt for 2017 will be a 76 inch x 92 inch Sampler (squares made by members of the church) and the 2nd place prize will be a hand-knotted quilt.

(Both made by the Ben Salem quilters & blanket makers group.)

Tickets will be available throughout the year at church dinners & functions.

Tickets will be available throughout the year at church dinners & functions. See Dollie Frantz, Betty Nothstein or Linda Stoss to purchase tickets. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. Money raised through ticket sales & sales of knotted blankets goes directly to Phase II Fund.

NOTE: An ongoing project of this group is to make hand-knotted blankets for the needy.

Thrivent Choice®: Strengthening communities. Changing lives.

Thrivent Choice, the member-advised charitable grant program from Thrivent Financial, continues to be a welcome funding source for congregations and nonprofit organizations nationwide. If you are an eligible Thrivent member, you likely are aware of this easy, convenient way to help make a difference for organizations you care about. The Thrivent Choice program offers a way for eligible members to recommend where Thrivent Financial distributes some of its charitable grant funds each year. Eligible benefit members are designated Choice Dollars® that they can direct, thereby recommending charitable grant funding for their choice among thousands of enrolled congregations and nonprofit organizations, including **Ben Salem United Church of Christ.** If you are eligible to participate in Choice Dollars, or are uncertain about your eligibility, visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice. Or contact your local Thrivent Financial

representative. Directing Choice Dollars® is subject to the Terms and Conditions of the Thrivent Choice® program. Visit Thrivent.com/thriventchoice for complete Terms and Conditions.

LOOKING FOR A PICTURE....The Church Leaders are looking for an old picture of our Church as a "Log Cabin". If you can help us, please contact Sharon Elder or the Church Office.



The Confirmation Class is collecting items to assemble Hygiene Kits to send to areas devastated by the hurricanes. Donations of the following new items are appreciated and can be placed in the bin in the Narthex.

- 1 Hand Towel 15"x28" up to 16"x32" (no larger) no fingertip, bath, dish, or microfiber
- 1 Washcloth 1 Wide Tooth Comb 1 Fingernail/Toenail Clipper
- 1 Bar of Soap (original packaging)
- 1 Toothbrush (original packaging)





A red clothing bin is in place by the old Social Hall. Please feel free to donate clothing or shoes that you no longer need. The church can Special Prayers 10 cents/lb.

Our Members and Friends with Special Needs: astor Mike – Ex Officio. In Institutions:

Safety Committee:

If someone in the congregation is aware of a safety issue, it should be reported to one of the safety committee members listed below or to someone on the Church Board. The purpose of the committee is twofold. Ben Salem will get a discount on the insurance bill and the same time enhance the Risk Management of the Ben Salem properties. Members of the Safety committee include: Ron Steigerwalt, Rodger Diehl, Barry Reed, Tom Kupres,

10 Standard Band Aids

Keep in Your Prayers:

Prayer Chain: The Prayer Chain is a way for anyone to request prayer for a specific need.... [or thanksgiving or joy]. To have our Prayer Chain pray for you: Contact Betty Nothstein at 570-386-5644. Please call Betty if you would like to be called with others' prayer requests as part of the Prayer Chain.

Meals Ministry: Do you know someone who is shut-in or recovering from a hospitalization, serious injury or illness, or mourning the loss of a loved one that could benefit from a hot or a frozen meal? Ben Salem has a Meals Ministry Team that can help ease the daily burdens of families or individuals within our church and community by providing ready-to-eat meals. If you would like to volunteer with this ministry or know of someone in need, please contact Karen Hayman at 570-241-7842 or the Church Office.

Called to Care: Trained volunteers from our church are available to assist the Pastor in visiting shut-in or hospitalized church members who are no longer able to attend regular worship services or participate in church functions. If you would like a "Called to Care" volunteer to visit you, please contact the Pastor at the Church Office (570) 386-3870. We are looking for more volunteers for this Committee! If you are interested in sharing God's love with shut-in members of our congregation, please contact Pastor McGowan.

Prayer Shawl Ministry: The Prayer Shawl Committee is in need of helpers to make prayer shawls. If you can knit or crochet and would like to help, please contact coordinators Betty Nothstein at 570-386-5644 or Barbara Snowberger at 570-386-2112 for more information. If a prayer shawl is needed, please contact Betty or Barbara.

Support Our Troops - All military personnel



Jessica A. Bealer: FC2# Bealer, Jessica, A USS Paul Hamilton [DDG-60] CS/CF, FPO AP 96667-1278

→ Jessica is now back on base in the USA

Jeremy Zellers, Norfolk, VA – on Submarine Newport News

*Please notify us if you know of anyone who is serving at this time or if names are missed or status changes.



Our Sympathy is extended to:

The Family of Norman Ellis who passed away on November 7, 2017. The Family of Katheen Wentz who passed away on Nov. 11, 2017

December 2017						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2 Hand Bell Choir Decorate church Hall Reserved / A. Paul
3 Advent I Communion 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	4 8 AM Christmas Candy	5 8 AM Christmas Candy	6 9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir	7 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Cemetery Association	8	9 Christmas Cookie & Candy Sale 9 AM to Noon
Advent II 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Hand Bells 3 PM Lights of Remembrance Service Fellowship Hall Reserved/Hunsicker	11 6:30 PM Membership & Growth Committee	12	9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir	14 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells	15	16 3 PM Christmas Caroling
Advent III 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship SS Program	18 7 PM Church Board Meeting	19	9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir	21 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Property Committee	22	23 10:30 AM Food Bank

			December	2017		
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Advent IV Communion 9:15 AM Worship 2 PM Christmas Eve Service/Daybreak 7 PM Christmas Eve Prelude 7:30 PM Christmas Eve Service	25	26	27 No Line Dancing Noon – Game Day	28	29	30
31 8 AM Worship 9 AM Acolyte Training 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship						









January 2018

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 New Year's Day	2	3 9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Junior Choirs 7 PM Senior Choir	4 9AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Cemetery Assn.	5 6 PM Movie & Pizza (Older Youth Group)	6
7 Communion 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	8	9	9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Junior Choirs 7 PM Senior Choir	9AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells	12	13
14 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	15 7 PM Church Board Mtg.	16	9:30 AM Line Dancing 6:30 PM Cherub & Junior Choirs 7 PM Senior Choir	18 9AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Property Comm.	19	20 Fellowship Hall Reserved
21 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship	22	23	9:30 AM Line Dancing 12 Noon Game Day 6:30 PM Cherub & Junior Choirs 7 PM Senior Choir	25 9AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells	26	27 Fellowship Hall Reserved
28 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Deadline for Sticky Bun Orders	29 6:30 PM Worship Committee	30	9:30 AM Line Dancing 6 PM Newsletter 6:30 PM Cherub & Junior Choirs 7 PM Senior Choir			