

BEN SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

WHERE TO REACH US:

MAILING ADDRESS:

PO Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211

STREET ADDRESS:

1965 Church Hill Road
Lehighton, PA 18235

One in Christ

Church Phone: 570-386-3870

Social Hall Phone: 570-386-4990

E-mail: bensalemucc@verizon.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@verizon.net

BEN SALEM UCC
PO 128
ANDREAS PA 18211-0218

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Lehighton, PA
Permit #4

DECEMBER

AND



BEN SALEM VOICE

December 2016 & January 2017

**Ben Salem United Church of Christ
PO Box 128, Andreas, PA 18211**

**What do I want for Christmas? I want to kneel in Bethlehem, the air thick with
alleluias, the angels singing that God is born among us. In the light of the star,
I want to see them come, the wise ones and the humble. I want to see them come
bearing whatever they treasure to lay at the feet of him who gives life. What do
I want for Christmas? To see in the stable the whole world kneeling in thanks
for a promise kept: new life. For in His nativity we find ours.**

(From Kneeling in Bethlehem ©1987 Ann Weems. Used by permission of Westminster John Knox Press.)

**We all want something for Christmas. This could include any number of material things or it could
be something much less tangible and unquantifiable. My wish for Christmas would fall nearer to the
latter. All I want for Christmas is for each of you along with your loved ones and everyone you know
to feel the presence of the little child who came to give new life to all.**

**The world today not unlike the world so many years ago is a place of mysterious confusion. This
confusion can lead us down different paths that take us on journeys we are unprepared to travel. It
can cause us to feel anxious and restless all the while leaving us questioning deep within our being
what truly makes sense. Add to this the stress of such an eventful holiday season and we all at one
point or another simply want it too just stop. But this time of year can be so much more than the fuss
and fret of holiday shopping and preparations. Because during Christmas we find the imagery of
what the new life is like that Christ came to give to all who kneel before Him.**

**In the imagery of the star we find a bright and guiding light that illuminates our life where we no
longer are engulfed by the mystery. We are able to see things in a new light; in a new way, a way that
has meaning and purpose. No longer will there be bewilderment and confusion because as we kneel
at the nativity we too are born to this wonderful life that the Babe in the stable has come to give to all
who kneel before Him. This new life is filled with hope because as we accept this new life we find we
are not wandering alone aimlessly in this world of mystery. The Babe has filled our life with optimism
and anticipation. Our anxiousness and restlessness become transformed into courage and hopefulness.
We no longer have to fear in the way the world fears because we no longer fear death. In the Christ
Child we have been given the gift of eternal life with all the saints who have gone before us. All the
while the angels are singing their alleluias as the kingdom of God continues to swell and grow. The**

**joy this signifies can only come from knowing God and God's love. Through this joy our whole being
is made well as we experience the fullness and richness of God's peace.**

**What a wonderfully encouraging time of the year we are moving towards. What a gift we can have
if we simply kneel at the manger in the presence of Emmanuel. God is truly with us and comes to
confirm the love we are searching for. May your hearts be filled with hope, may you find peace as you
experience the joy of knowing you are known by God and may the God of love bless you and yours
this holiday season.**

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to you all.

Pastor Mike

Worship Services for December and January

December 4th 10:30AM only (Congregational Mtg)
 December 11th & 18th 8AM & 10:30AM
 December 25th 9:15AM only (Hymn Sing)
 January 1, 8, 15, 22 & 29..... 8AM & 10:30AM



Communion:

December 24th at 2PM & 7:30 PM
 January 1st at 8AM & 10:30AM

Worship Schedule for February 2017

February 5 8AM and 10:30AM Worship/Communion
 February 12 8AM and 10:30AM Worship
 February 19 8AM and 10:30AM Worship
 February 26 8AM and 10:30AM Worship

Concert featuring...
"The Hawks" and "Lost & Found"
(Gospel, Country & Christmas)

Sunday, December 4th
2PM

Ben Salem UCC

Open to the Public

A free will offering will be taken.



Hand Bell Choir
 Sunday, December 11th
 10:30AM Service

Christmas Cantata

December 24, 2016

7:30 PM

featuring

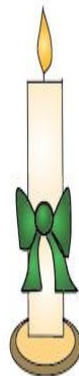
the Senior Choir,

Hand Bell Choir, & Jr. Choir

"A Celebration of Carols"

by Joseph M. Martin

All are welcome!



7:00 PM Christmas Prelude featuring Ben Salem vocalists & musicians
7:30 PM Christmas Eve Communion and Cantata / Candlelight Service

Christmas Day
Worship Service

9:15 AM (Hymn Sing)



Note from Church Office & Financial Secretary:

Remember, it is important to keep us informed of any address changes.

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

2016 Church Board Members:

Officers: Sharon Elder, President
Barry Fink, Vice President
Robert Pope, Church Board Secretary

Elders: Sharon Elder, Walter Keeck, Terry Lusch, Dayle Smith

Deacons: Terry Blair, Barry Fink, Doris Lusch, Kevin Lusch,
Kenneth Oswald, Robert Pope, Barry Reed, David Rex, Jr.

Pastor: Rev. Michael McGowan

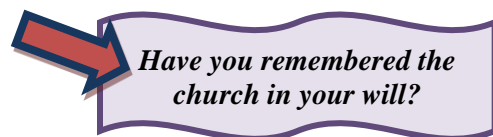
Church Secretary: Dollie Behr

Treasurer: Dawne Beidleman

Financial Secretary's Address: Susan Messina, 66 River Road, Tamaqua, PA 18252

Upcoming Church Board Meetings: Dec. 19 & Jan. 16 at 7 PM

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



Cemetery Association Officers:

Next Meeting: December 1 at 7 PM
President: Bernice Steigerwalt Vice President: Evan Beblavy
Caretaker: David Fritz Secretary: Walter Keeck
Treasurer: Doris Lusch Trustee: Richard Bealer

Cemetery Lot Prices: \$300 [with perpetual care]

Upcoming Committee Meetings

Property Committee: December 15 at 7PM
Church Board: December 19 at 7PM
Called to Care: January 10 at 10AM
Newsletter Assembly: January 25 at 6PM
Fundraisers: March 14, 2017 at 6:30 PM
(please submit information 1 week prior)
Mission Committee: online meetings at cti2@ptd.net

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.

Hospitalization ? 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.

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!



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.

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]

→ **2017 Offering Envelopes** are available in the narthex.
Please pick them up as soon as possible.

→ **Please have all bills and donations to our treasurer by December 27.**

Call to a Congregational Meeting

December 4, 2016 10:30 AM

(There will be no 8AM Service this Day)

Purpose: To vote on proposed 2017 Budget; elect Church Board Officers and appoint Church Auditor

It is very important that everyone attends the meeting on December 4th!

If you are interested in serving on Church Board, please see an Elder.

Constitution & By-Laws: Earlier in 2016, the Church Board suggested changes to the Constitution and By-Laws. These changes were made by the Church Board and will now be available to view during the first two months of 2017. Copies of the Constitution and By-Laws will be available on the counter in the narthex beginning in January. If you would like to see what has been changed, please pick up a copy, read it and return it to the counter for others to view. These changes will be voted on at the Annual Congregational Meeting on March 5, 2017.

MISSION MINDERS-DECEMBER, 2016

December culminates our year-long efforts to help others in need through our donations and time. Listed below are some ways that you can still participate in helping others and bringing joy and happiness to those who need it most.

Lutheran World Relief, runs through the end of the year, and addresses issues of world hunger by assisting with the needs of people in third-world countries who need farm animals to become more self-sustaining. Use your mission envelopes marked "LUTHERAN" to support this mission.

The **Bethany Bow** tree will grace our narthex during advent. Donations are \$5 per bow. Last year, we sponsored a cottage of children to spend a day at Knoebel's. Hopefully, we can do the same this year.

A **Family Promise** gift tree is located on the mission table in the narthex, with suggestions of gifts for children and their parents who are presently enrolled in the Family Promise program. By donating gifts, you ensure that these families will have a merrier Christmas.

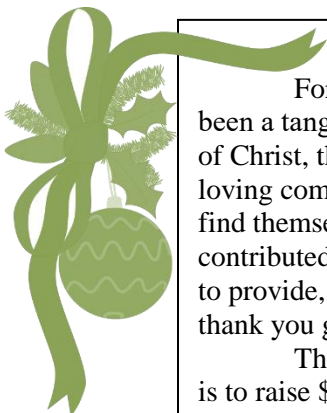
A box is located next to the mission table in the narthex for donations of toys and other items for children afflicted with **childhood leukemia**. Suggestion sheets that list which toys and items are needed are located on the mission table.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Family Promise will host again the week of December 18th. Please call Karen Hayman if you can help.

Food Bank will distribute on December 17th. A box for food donations is in the narthex. Call LaVaun Shanton or Sandy Bealer if you know of families who might be served by the Food Bank. Those receiving food need not be members of our congregation.

May you have joy and happiness during the holiday season, and we thank you again for your continued support of Ben Salem's missions.



Christmas Fund Offering

For 115 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a tangible expression of God's Love. 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 loving compassion, providing assistance to those who have so faithfully served our Church and who now find themselves facing unexpected financial needs. In 2015, UCC congregations and members generously contributed \$1,528,481 to the offering. This enabled the Pension Boards Ministerial Assistance program to provide, on behalf of the whole church, pension supplementation, emergency grants, and Christmas thank you gift checks to individuals and families in need.

The theme of the 2016 Christmas Fund offering is "God's Love Colors Everything!" and our goal is to raise \$1.7 million to help support these ministries.

Please be generous in your offering to Christmas Fund!

**Ben Salem UCC Financial Report
Ben Salem UCC
Financial Report
October 2016**



*

*

*

*

*

*

*



The deadline for contributions to be credited to 2016 is December 27, 2016.

BEN SALEM UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – PROPOSED BUDGET

2016

2017



Family Promise Hosting Dates (December 18-25)

Donations and volunteers are needed.

There is a Gift Tree in the Narthex if you would like to purchase a gift for a Family Promise family. Gifts should be returned UNWRAPPED by December 11th at the latest.



If you are able to help or need more information:
 Karen Hayman at 570-241-7842 or khayman@ptd.net



Luncheon for Widows/Widowers
Wednesday, December 21
11:30 AM

GAME DAY INFORMATION
Wednesday, December 28, 2016
Wednesday, January 25, 2017
Fellowship Hall
12 Noon



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.

**paper,
time,
money**

**WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN HELPING BEN SALEM CHURCH
 SAVE PAPER, MONEY AND TIME?
 WOULD YOU LIKE TO RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER VIA E-MAIL?**
 If so, please fill out the following form and place it in the box located in the narthex or mail it to Ben Salem UCC, PO 128, Andreas, PA 18211.

Name/s _____ e-mail: _____

Homemade Candy and Cookie Sale



Saturday, December 10
9 AM to Noon

Donations of homebaked cookies will be appreciated....please bring your cookies to the Fellowship Hall between 8 and 9 AM. Blanket Makers & Quilters will also be selling items along with their quilt raffle tickets.

Used Clothing Bins have been placed below the old dining hall. Items that can be placed inside are as follows: wearable clothing [men's women's children's], household items made of fabric, shoes [must be in separate bags], handbags & belts, fashion accessories, stuffed animals, small hard toys, bicycles. We cannot accept: books, furniture, cookware, baby gear, outdoor toys. If you have questions, please call the church office. Money raised through this project goes to the General Fund of Ben Salem.



Coffee Hour

has resumed!

We need volunteers to help! *If you enjoy coffee hour and wish to see it continue, please volunteer.*

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 quilt for this year is a 60 X 60 size, multi-colored patchwork Quilt. Tickets will be available through the year at church dinners & functions. See Dollie Frantz or Linda Stoss to purchase tickets. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The quilt raffle will be held following the Cookie/Candy Sale on December 10. Money raised through ticket sales & sales of knotted blankets goes directly to the General Fund to help with the mortgage.



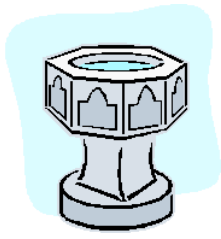
Caroling

The Difference Youth Group Info...

Upcoming Events:

- Sunday, December 11
4 PM, Christmas

Any questions, please ask Terry Lusch or Karen Hayman



Baptisms:

November

27,

2016

Ash

Ashton Martin Geiger, son of Daniel and Nadean (McGowan) Geiger
Aubrey Vera Burg, daughter of Brent and Brooke (Andreas) Burg

Special Prayers

**Our Members and Friends with Special Needs:
In Institutions:**



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. The next Called to Care meeting will be held on January 10 at 10 AM.

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 any names are missed or if status changes.



Our Sympathy is extended:

to the Family of James Kramer -
(the father of Josh and Marie Kramer)

to the Family of Norma Barndt -
Norma passed away on November 28.



| ~ December 2016 ~ | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--|--|----------|---|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| | | | | 1 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Cemetery Association | 2 | 3 |
| 4 Advent II NO 8 AM Service 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Congregational Meeting 2 PM Concert – Hawks and Lost & Found | 5 Making Candy | 6 Making Candy | 7 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir & Hand Bells | 8 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study Noon – Pastor/Elders Mtg. 7 PM Hand Bells | 9 | 10 9 AM to Noon Homemade Cookie & Candy Sale |

| ~ December 2016 ~ | | | | | | |
|---|--|-----------|--|---|-----------|---|
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 11 Advent III 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship/Hand Bells 2 PM Lights of Remembrance Service 4 PM Youth Christmas Caroling | 12 | 13 | 14 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir | 15 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Property Committee | 16 | 17 Food Bank |
| 18 Advent IV 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship & Sunday School Program | 19 7 PM Church Board Meeting | 20 | 21 11:30 AM Widows/Widowers Luncheon 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir / Hand Bells | 22 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study | 23 | 24 Communion 2 PM Christmas Eve Service 7 PM Christmas Eve Prelude 7:30 PM Christmas Eve Service & Cantata |
| 25 9:15 AM Unity Worship Service | 26 | 27 | 28 Noon – Game Day | 29 | 30 | 31 |

Hosting Family Promise



| January 2017 | | | | | | |
|--|----------|----------|---|--|-----------------------------|------------|
| ◀ December | | | | | | February ▶ |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 1 Communion 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship Smith Scholarship Presentation | 2 | 3 | 4 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir | 5 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Cemetery Association | 6 Epiphany | 7 |

| January 2017 | | | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|-----------|------------|
| ◀ December | | | | | | February ▶ |
| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
| 8 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship | 9 | 10 10 AM Called to Care Meeting | 11 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir | 12 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells | 13 | 14 |
| 15 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship | 16 7 PM Church Board Meeting | 17 | 18 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir | 19 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells 7 PM Youth Group – Winter Jam (Reading) | 20 | 21 |
| 22 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship | 23 | 24 | 25 Noon – Game Day 6 PM Newsletter Assembly 6:30 PM Cherub & Jr. Choir 7 PM Senior Choir | 26 9 AM Blanket Makers & Quilters 10 AM Bible Study 6:30 PM Hand Bells | 27 | 28 |
| 29 8 AM Worship 9:15 AM Sunday School 10:30 AM Worship | 30 | 31 | | | | |