



**McDONALD
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

February 2026

McPresby News



ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICES – FEBRUARY 18

The beginning of the season of Lent is a meaningful day in the life of the church. We will hold two services this day. The first service will be held at 10:00am in Trinity Center Fellowship Hall as it has been for over fifty years. There will be refreshments following a service of communion and the imposition of ashes. We use ashes as an ancient tradition of the church to remind us of our frailty in the world and our dependence upon God.

A second Ash Wednesday service will be held in Calvary Center Sanctuary at 7:00pm. This service will be much the same as the morning service. Our youth group will be attending with us and has enjoyed the service in the past. Both services will feature communion and ashes along with the breaking of the dry and brittle palms saved from last year's celebration of Palm Sunday. Please join us for a meaningful beginning of the season of Lent.

NEW CAFÉ ON THE WAY!

We have been working towards a new café space on the sanctuary level of Calvary for over a year and it is finally time for the project to begin. We are excited to be launching a renewed focus on hospitality both through our facilities and through our actions. The café will be a wonderful place to fellowship during the week but particularly on Sunday mornings. Coffee will be available for Sunday School hour and throughout the morning as well as refreshments (think bagels!) ready to be made. We look forward to seeing many people enjoy the space while everyone pitches in to practice hospitality. If all goes well, we should have project photos in our next newsletter. Simply put, we will be reducing the size of the New Beginnings Room and creating the new space in the mostly unused back half of the room.



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And so we know and rely on the
love God has for us.
God is love. Whoever lives in love
lives in God, and God in them.

~ 1 John 4:16



Pastor's Page - Annual Report Letter

Dear McDonald Presbyterian Church Family,

Greetings in the name of our Lord Jesus! It is good when brothers and sisters gather together in unity. This is what we have been experiencing and living out over the past year. Our church has been gathering together in a beautiful way and building upon our great past as a congregation that loves and serves others according to the Scriptures. From my perspective, nearly every area of the church has experienced growth in 2025, and we are becoming a congregation that treasures God's Word and is intent on learning his ways at a deeper level.

One of the sure signs of this intentionality is the strength of our Life Groups. We currently have seven active life groups that study God's Word very intently. These are not social clubs but groups of believers who are truly seeking God together. As you will see later in the report, we were blessed to welcome a significant number of wonderful people into our formal membership and we were also privileged to present nine individuals for baptism. God has given us some momentum, and we are looking forward to continuing to be available for him to use us powerfully in 2026.

Personally, 2025 was an important year because the Lord graciously allowed me to graduate in May. It is very good to have that project behind us all. The leadership course I developed as my Doctor of Ministry project is being offered again this winter. We had the first session in January, and we're off to a great start! Training and equipping will be an important part of how we move forward as a congregation.

I will never be able to express enough appreciation for all your support for Sarah and me through each and every season of our lives. Your support through my most recent seminary journey was truly a blessing, and I look forward to utilizing some of those discoveries to help lead our congregation into our next season of flourishing.

We have not had a new vision for our congregation since 2017. Much has changed since then. In 2026 we will be working together through a few strategic sessions to set a vision that will utilize all of our gifts, individuals, and resources for God's glory. This new vision will flow out of our present and set us on the path that God has in mind for us.

May each of our families be blessed and may the Lord Jesus always go before you in strength and power.

With an abundance of faith and love,

Dr. Justin Amsler



Announcements



DEACON NEWS

On Sunday, February 8th we will be hosting a “Souper Bowl Luncheon” right after church. Come and enjoy a bowl of soup before going home to watch the big game. We will be featuring the soups that we will be selling for our soup sale in March. Order forms will be available for you to purchase your favorites, which will be available for pick-up on March 8th.

Our upcoming meetings will be after church on Sunday, February 1st and Sunday, March 1st.

Hearts and Hands Fellowship



Our Hearts and Hands group is going well and doing great things! We have been meeting once a month in Trinity Parlor to work on a craft, eat snacks, and enjoy fellowship with one another. Our next meeting date will be Tuesday, February 3rd at 6:00pm. We would love to have you join us as we make a Valentine craft for our Rose Manor friends.

If you have any questions, please contact Dana Motte or Kerry Schmitt

ROSE MANOR OUTREACH

Save the Dates for February:

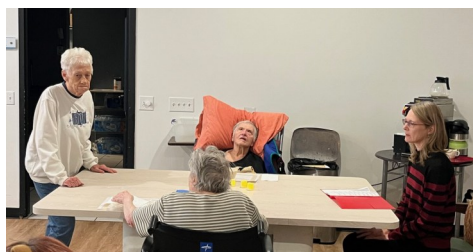
Monday, February 16th, 2026 - 5:30-6:30 PM
- Worship at Rose Manor

Wednesday, February 18th, 2026 - BINGO at
Rose Manor 1:30 PM



Rose Manor Christmas Party

On December 15th, a group from our Church celebrated the Christmas season with our beloved Rose Manor residents. Dana Motte led everyone in worship, and then Syndria Lowe led everyone in carol singing while the residents enjoyed cookies and gift bags that were put together by our Hearts & Hands group. A fun and festive time was enjoyed by all!



Announcements



OPERATION CHRISTMAS CHILD

MPC was blessed to share **1,013** shoebox gifts in 2025.

Our boxes shipped to **South Africa and Tanzania** last December.

We trust and pray that those who receive our gifts will also receive Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

FEBRUARY ITEM OF THE MONTH: WASHCLOTHS

Please place donations in the green bin in Calvary Parlor or call Michelle to arrange for pickup.

If you have any questions about OCC or would like to be more involved with the project at MPC, please contact Michelle Unruh (412-720-8232).

**** PLEASE NOTE**
SOAP is NO longer included in shoebox gifts.**

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN ~ ANNUAL LENT FUNDRAISER



As we enter the season of Lent, we are reminded of the spiritual practice of giving to those in need. *Feed My Starving Children (FMSC)* is a Christian nonprofit organization that is dedicated to seeing every child whole in body and spirit. *FMSC* uses our monetary donations to fund meal ingredients, which are then hand-packed by volunteers and dispersed to needy children

around the world. As is our Lenten tradition, we will be offering a giving opportunity beginning February 22 and lasting through Easter Sunday. We will have mini M&M tubes available for the easy collection of donations. Enjoy the M&Ms, fill the tubes with quarters and return the filled tubes to Michelle Unruh,

Patty Doane, or the offering plate. Note that supplies of the M&M tubes are limited; however, you can still donate without a mini tube. Cash or checks earmarked "FMSC" can be placed in the offering plate or mailed to the church office. Please join us in this worthwhile fundraising mission to feed the hungry children of the world. Thank you in advance for your generosity. *"And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased."* ~ Hebrews 13:16

20 YEAR ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

In 2026 we will mark the 20th year that we have been a merged church known as McDonald Presbyterian Church. So much has been accomplished in that time and we are going to celebrate our union! Various activities will take place throughout the year, including a new church directory, an update of the church history, a collection of gullet recipes and their family traditions, a new Advent booklet and a community celebration with food trucks, singers, bounce house and other activities planned for May. Watch the bulletins and newsletters for meetings to organize committees so that, as a church, we can prepare for this major milestone.



Pine Springs Camp

MCDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH YOUTH SUMMER CAMPING PROGRAM 2026

PINE SPRINGS CAMP, JENNERSTOWN PA
WWW.PINESPRINGS.ORG

McDonald Presbyterian Church is committed to sending all our young people to summer camp that would like to attend. Church camp is not something that only “outdoorsy” kids do. It is something that we believe is a powerful spiritual formation experience. A week of spiritual formation could be life-changing for any student, especially in these times. At camp our students experience a full week of worship, study, play, and relationship-building that leads to a great week of spiritual growth that is fun and energizing. Every student that attends from McDonald Presbyterian Church and registers by the deadline will receive a \$300.00 scholarship towards the cost of camp. While the cost of camp could be more than \$600.00 this scholarship program will bring the costs down to below \$300.00 for those who register before the early bird deadline.

McDonald Presbyterian will be attending Pine Springs Camp Week 6: July 19-24

We have chosen a week where all our students who have completed the third grade or higher will be able to attend camp together. This week of the summer there are traditional camps offered for students who have completed the third grade to the completion of their senior year. Pastor Justin will be able to serve as a Volunteer Director for the exploration camp. Adventure Exploration is open to all students who have completed grades 3-5. Students who have finished grades 6-8 will attend the Adventure Journey Camp and students who have completed grades 9-12 will attend the Adventure Expedition Camp. All Classic camps run from Sunday afternoon through Friday evening.

MPC Registration Deadline: Pine Springs does not have a registration deadline date, but our church has a scholarship deadline of **Sunday, June 1**. We recommend registering your camper(s) as soon as possible due to limited cabin availability. Pine Springs offers an early bird discount of \$25 if your registration is completed or postmarked by **March 23rd**. Other discounts are also offered.

Registration Procedure: Registration for camp is something that happens directly between the student’s parent or guardian and Pine Springs. Registration forms and initial payment should be completed online or mailed directly to the camp. When this happens, contact the church office (kerry@mcdonaldpres.org) and notify us of the details: child’s name, child’s grade completed and week of camp attending. Most of our parents register their children online and forward us their confirmation email, which works very well. In early June a check will be sent out from our church to pay for the MPC Scholarship portion of all those students who have registered.

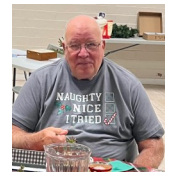
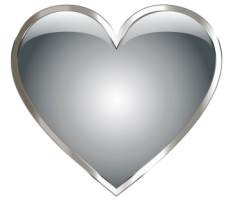
Other Weeks at Pine Springs: Can’t attend our week? Have a brave young camper who wants to attend a different week? PSC offers camps all summer long. The same scholarship guidelines apply for students attending from our congregation. Students attending one of the short weeks (3 days) will receive a prorated scholarship of \$200. The same registration procedure applies.

Additional Scholarships: Pine Springs Camp also has a scholarship fund that is available for additional support.

Thank you for your interest and support!

SILVER SOULS UPDATE

What a great gathering we shared in December to celebrate Christmas together and what creative takes on the Ugly Sweater Contest were on display. They were all awesome but Jim Schafer's sweater was over the top and took the prize! Our next gathering is planned for Wednesday, March 18th at Trinity Fellowship Hall starting at 11:30am. The theme is "Aren't We All a Wee-bit Irish?". We will celebrate St. Patrick's Day and you can "wear your green". Our meal will feature some Irish favorites including homemade Creamy Potato Soup and Irish Soda Bread. And we will share in devotions, music, games and laughter! Watch your mail for your invite/RSVP coming soon. See all you leprechauns soon!



Community Life Groups

Yahweh

YAHWEH WEDNESDAY: Our group meets once a month, and each session, we are studying a different minor prophet. We will meet next on February 11th and study the book of Habakkuk. If you have questions or are interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Justin.

LUNCH LADIES: Lunch ladies will meet Feb. 2 and Feb. 16. The study *Twelve Daring Women of the Bible* will continue. New members are welcome to join us! Please see Peggy Samarin or Linda Matchett if you have any questions.



LAMPLIGHTERS: The Lamplighters have started a new study called "Listening to God." We will be meeting on Monday evenings at 7:00pm in the Trinity parlor. For any lady that is interested in finding out more or potentially joining our women's group, please feel free to contact Patty Doane or Syndria Lowe for more information.

SHE SOARS: This year She Soars Life Group will be reading the Bible in a year with the self guided book called *A Beautiful Year in the Bible: The 52 Week Bible Study for Women*. This book includes weekly Biblical reflection questions and guided prayer. Come join us moms and women every Sunday during the Sunday school hour!



MIGHTY MEN'S BIBLE STUDY: It is still the perfect time to join us for our new series about the attributes of God. To be a mighty man of God, we need to learn about the God who is, rather than the God we imagine. Join us every Sunday at 9:30 upstairs in the Calvary "pastor's study" as we try to wrap our finite minds around our infinite God.

READY, SET, GROW: Our class meets on Sundays at 9:30 am in the Tower Room of Calvary. Each session, we meet to pray and then we review and discuss the previous week's Scripture lesson and sermon. We have found it to be an excellent opportunity to connect with others as we delve more deeply into the Bible. Please contact the church office or Dana Motte with any questions, or just pop in on a Sunday morning. You are welcome!!!



QUARTER-LIFE CRISIS: Introducing our newest Life Group! Quarter-Life Crisis is a group of young adults who meet on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 to study the Bible, eat food, and encourage one another. The group is for young adults from 10th grade and through their 20s. Talk to Kylie Bowland or Julia Amsler to get involved in this new and dynamic group.



Lunch Ladies
December 2025

Youth



RENEW YOUTH GROUP

ReNew Youth is for students in grades 5-12 and meets on Wednesdays at 6:00pm.

Every Wednesday includes dinner, rec time, and a lesson.

CLUB 724

724

Club 724 is our fellowship group for youth group aged students who attend worship on Sundays. Access Teamreach for more details. Save the date: February 28th, 5pm for WinterJam 2026 at Peterson Events Center. Tickets are \$15 at the door.

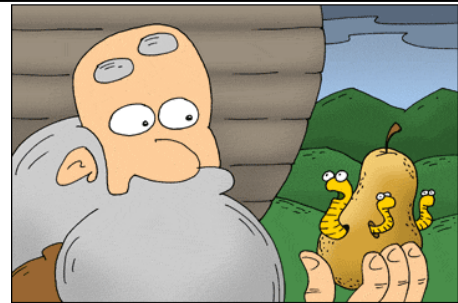
TEAMREACH

Be on the know. Renew and Club 724 will be connecting to students through the Teamreach app to keep our students updated on the happenings for this season! Download the app on google play or the Apple app store and use the following code to join the conversation! RENEWyouth code: MPCeco0613 ; CLUB724 code: MPC724eco

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL

Children's Sunday School is available for students in PreK through 12th grade. We meet on Sunday mornings at 9:30am in Trinity Fellowship Hall and then disperse to their classrooms after opening worship time together.

And don't forget: *A continental breakfast is provided every Sunday, starting at 9:20am!*

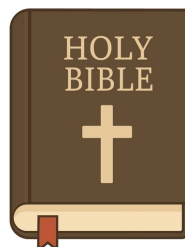


Thanks to Stephen Hiech (See Genesis 6-8) 05-19-2021

**WE WERE TOLD YOU WERE TAKING CREATURES
THAT CAME TO YOU IN PEARS**

ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Adult Sunday School meets weekly in the New Beginnings Room at 9:30am. Anyone is welcome to join us! See Peggy Samarin or Lin Nalesnick for more info.



FEBRUARY ACOLYTE SCHEDULE

February 1= Jeana Manses & Alyssa Wasco

February 8= Selah Amsler & Ella Puhlman

February 15= Julia Amsler & Della Endy

February 22= Jonah Amsler & Asher Martin



CHILDREN'S CHURCH *WE NEED YOU!*

Our church is blessed with having so many young people in our congregation, and because of this, we have a wonderful children's church program offered during worship. We are in need of some new helpers to help out with this on the occasional Sunday. The lessons are already done for you, so there is no need to worry about planning. If you are interested in helping out with this very important ministry, please see Dana Puhlman.

Music

AMPLIFY



Do you play an instrument or like to sing? Would you like to learn something new? Come and join us!

Our next rehearsal is on February 10th at 6:30pm. If you're interested in being part of Amplify, please speak with, call, or text Jeff or Heidi Betschart for more details. Come be part of the music and the joy — we'd love to have you!

JUBILANT RINGERS

BELL CHOIR SCHEDULE

All rehearsals begin at 6:00pm

Thursday, February 5 - 6pm

Thursday, February 19 - 6pm



CHOIR SCHEDULE

Thursday, Feb. 5, 2026

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Thursday, Feb. 12, 2026

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Thursday, Feb. 19, 2026

Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30

Thursday, Feb. 26, 2026

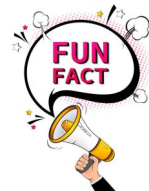
Praise 7:00

Sacred Sounds 7:30



MUSIC FUN FACT!

Did you know that the first flutes were originally made out of bones? Archaeologists discovered the oldest flute, dating to between 50,000 and 60,000 years, in the Divje Babe Cave in Slovenia. Since then, the flute has evolved into two distinct instruments: the recorder, which is held vertically, and the transverse flute, which is what we simply call the flute. The modern flute as we know it today was premiered by Theobald Boehm, a wind instrument maker, at the Paris Exhibition of 1847. This design made the flute a more reliable instrument as well as much more playable than previous designs/builds.



(Sources: https://www.yamaha.com/en/musical_instrument_guide/flute/structure/ and <https://www.nms.si/en/collections/highlights/343-Neanderthal-flute>)

FOOD BANK



For the month of February, the Food Bank is requesting *soup* that can be dropped off in Calvary Parlor. They are also accepting cash and check donations. Please make checks payable to McDonald Presbyterian Church and indicate "Food Bank" on the memo line. Please contact Ed Nalesnick with any questions.

BLESSING BOX

Our Blessing Box, located outside the church office, is still thriving and blessing many community members.

We are always accepting donations of nonperishable food items. If you would like to contribute to this cause, food donations may be dropped off in the church office.

Calendar

February 1	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men Deacon Meeting	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon
February 2	Lunch Ladies Lamplighters	Noon 7:00 p.m.
February 3	Hearts & Hands Fellowship	6:00 p.m.
February 4	ReNew Youth Group	6:00 p.m.
February 8	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men SOUPer Bowl Luncheon	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon
February 9	Session Meeting All-Leaders Meeting	6:30 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
February 10	Quarter-Life Crisis	6:30 p.m.
February 11	Yahweh Wednesday ReNew Youth Group	Noon 6:00 p.m.
February 15	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men VBS Planning Meeting	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m. Noon
February 16	Lunch Ladies Lamplighters	Noon 7:00 p.m.
February 17	Quarter-Life Crisis	6:30 p.m.
February 18	Ash Wednesday Service @ Trinity ReNew Youth Group Ash Wednesday Service @ Calvary	10:00 a.m. 6:00 p.m. 7:00 p.m.
February 22	Ready, Set, Grow Mighty Men	9:30 a.m. 9:30 a.m.
February 23	Lamplighters	7:00 p.m.
February 25	ReNew Youth Group	6:00 p.m.

ECO NATIONAL GATHERING TEAM

Please be in prayer for our ECO National Gathering Team. Pastor Justin along with five others are traveling to Atlanta Georgia, February 2-5 to be a part of the Bi-Annual Synod Meeting and to be equipped and encouraged for our mission and ministry. Dana and Erich Puhlman are doing a great job working with our youth and are traveling with us to learn more about our denomination. Kylie Bowland, Sasha Morales and Julia Amsler are traveling to the gathering as the leadership team for our new Young Adult Life Group, Quarter-Life Crisis. Young adults are open to the Gospel, and we have a core team eager to do evangelism and ministry. Thank you for your support. The team is looking forward to reporting back to the congregation.

Birthdays, Anniversaries, Love & Prayers

Asher Martin	2/1
Olivia Frazier	2/2
Katie Nation-Cirocco	2/7
Matt Frazier	2/10
Betty Ryan	2/11
Zoe Unruh	2/12
Christina Samstag	2/13
Hailey Bair	2/14
Brandon Bennett	2/15
Debby Penberthy	2/15
Mark Slack	2/22



Christopher Gladden	2/27
Justin Amsler	2/28
Samantha Baldigowski	2/28
Ethan Goodwin	2/29



Tammy & Robert McDowell	2/6
Peggy & Frank Samarin	2/11
Debbie & Rex Keslar	2/17
Katie & Nic Speer	2/27

SAVE THE DATES!

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL: JUNE 22-26, 2026

SUMMER SERVICE WEEK: JULY 27-31, 2026

WORSHIP IN THE PARK: AUGUST 2, 2026

FEED MY STARVING CHILDREN: SEPTEMBER 12, 2026

MC FALL FEST: OCTOBER 10, 2026

Our Love & Prayers Go Out To...

Ida Galicic
Strabane Woods- Room 116
319 Wellness Way
Washington, PA 15301

Jon & Patty Sember
Strabane Woods, Room 314
319 Wellness Way
Washington, PA 15301

Laurain Lacotte
Middy Ecker
Elsie Kovach
Cloe Barricklow
Rose Manor
100 Rose Court
Oakdale, PA 15071

Chuck "Tootie" Smith
Genesis, Room 109
3590 Washington Pike
Bridgeville, PA 15017

Larry Doak
H. John Heinz III Progressive Ctr
First Floor South Hall
1010 Delafield Road
Pittsburgh, PA 15215

AT HOME:
Mary Catherine Garrett
Julie Hanczar
Marlene Shupe
Bob & Vicki Zyra

McDONALD PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

Non Profit Org.
US POSTAGE PAID
MCDONALD, PA
PERMIT NO. 9

Worship Site:
202 West Lincoln Avenue
McDonald, PA 15057

Office Location:
119 Station Street
McDonald, PA 15057

Phone: (724) 926-8561

Office Hours:
Monday - Thursday

McDonald Presbyterian Church is a mid-sized congregation located in McDonald, PA that exists to honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ. Our worship, service and outreach are all focused on helping others experience the love of God and the joy that comes from knowing Him. We love what we do and who we are when we come together as a community of God's people. Our door is always open, and we look forward to meeting you and welcoming you into our fellowship.

RETURN SERVICE
REQUESTED



Visit our website:
mcdonaldpres.org

Pastor

Dr. Justin Amsler
justin@mcdonaldpres.org
(724) 699-0157

Children's Ministries

Coordinators

Erich & Dana Puhlman

Choir Director: *Heidi Betschart*

Assistant Director of Music Ministry

Jeff Betschart

Administrative Assistant

Kerry Schmitt
kerry@mcdonaldpres.org

Bookkeeper:

Dana Myers
bookkeeper@mcdonaldpres.org

Operations Officer:

Tom Maxwell

Custodial Staff

Bob McDowell
Kerry Schmitt

Newsletter Editor: *Kerry Schmitt*

GET CONNECTED ... BE ENGAGED

WORSHIP

Sundays @ 10:45 a.m. Calvary Center or
live on Facebook

DISCOVER

Join a committee, group, or outreach.

FELLOWSHIP

Check out a Bible study or Sunday School class

ACT

Sign up to help with one of our upcoming
events.

