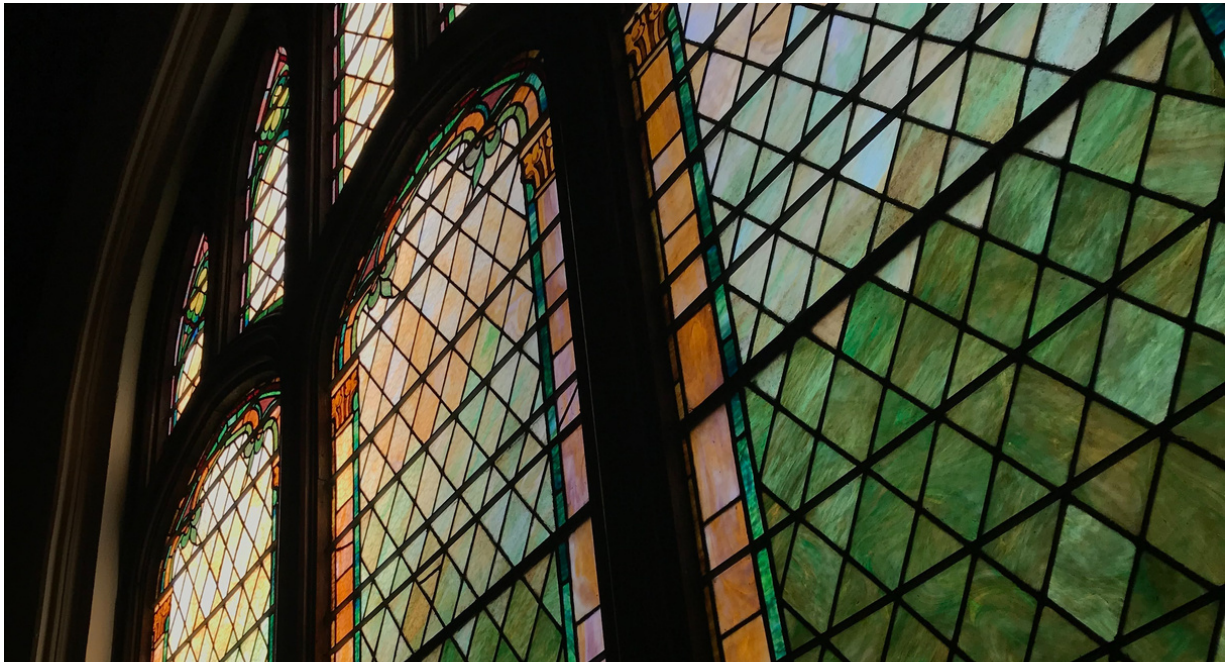


FEBRUARY 2024

The Stone Church Newsletter

The monthly publication of the Stone Church of the Brethren



Our Welcome Statement

ADOPTED BY OUR CONGREGATION JANUARY 2012

Stone Church of the Brethren is a Christ-centered community, which celebrates every individual as a unique and beloved child of God.

We welcome all regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, race, ethnicity, physical or mental ability, economic circumstance, or current relationship with God.

We invite your active participation in the life of this congregation, as together we continue to grow in grace and seek justice for God's creation.

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From the Pastors' Desk

Who is your favorite disciple?

I suspect that many of you said Peter. I could be wrong - there are likely some Thomas fans out there. John certainly thinks he *ought* to be everyone's favorite (and claims to be Jesus' favorite!) I hope we have some Mary Magdalene fans - or maybe Martha is more like you. But I have a sneaking suspicion that many of us feel drawn to Peter. And if you don't yet, I hope that by Easter you might.

This Lent we are going to follow Peter through the gospels - from Jesus calling him to follow all the way to Peter's encounter with the risen Christ on the beach. It is a gripping story. The writers at Sanctified Art conclude, "In Peter, we see a person who is both steadfast and unsteady, a dear friend and a betrayer, a follower and a wanderer. In Peter, we often see ourselves. By following Peter's journey, we watch the story of Jesus unfold through the eyes of a very normal human trying to figure it all out—just like us...Like many of us, Peter has a wandering heart. His journey is not polished, or linear, or perfect, but he is always tethered to the love of God."



The worship series is called *Wandering Heart: Figuring out Faith with Peter*. It is an invitation to faith as a journey that ebbs and flows, where exploration is necessary, and we are called to keep going. The familiar hymn, *Come thou Fount* will root us - tuning our hearts to God's grace.

There are many ways for you to travel well through this Lenten season - opportunities for connection, reflection, and growth. There are devotional journals for you to use, devotional cards to prompt your thinking in a less time consuming way, we will look at art together in Visio Divina, gather during

Holy Week for a Maundy Thursday service, a faith map activity (that is similar to an advent calendar). Your engagement can make your life - and the lives of those around you richer in this season. Now is the time to begin thinking about how you might wander along Peter and each other so that your intentions can become a reality. We trust that no matter how we meander, Jesus will be with us each and every step of the way, just like he was for Peter.

Alignment by Sarah Are Speed

I have never tuned a piano, but I understand it takes hours. Small notes plucked repeatedly, like rain on a tin roof. Some things cannot be rushed. Some things require a steady hand, a listening ear, the intimacy of familiarity. Tuning an instrument and falling in love are both like that. Maybe that is why we pray to God, "Tune my heart," because we are desperate to be pulled into alignment. We are desperate to add our voice to the song, to get lost in a dance, to be in harmony with the melody of the universe. I've never tuned a piano before, but still I pray: *Pull me into alignment. Show me the notes to sing.*

Upcoming Events

Stone Church Winter Retreat - you're invited!

Held in-person on Saturday, February 10, 9 AM to 1 PM, in the Fellowship Hall.

Good food, spending time with your Stone family, and doing productive work for the church - what could be a better way to spend a Saturday morning? Did we mention the coffee? We'll gather in community to plan the season ahead, practice reading budget reports, and reflect on the restructuring of the church leadership organization. Hope to see you there!

21st Century Faith: Experts Among Us

Our next installment in our non-consecutive worship series, *21st Century Faith: Experts Among Us* will be February 11! In this series we are exploring issues of faith within our 21st Century context and then hearing from "experts" from within our own community about those topics.

On February 11 we will wrestle with what it means to be a follower of Christ in a world where more than **1 in 5 adults are living with mental illness** - and as many as 20% of children age 3-17 are living with mental illness. These numbers are staggering - how can we support one another, our broader community, and ourselves? After worship, we will gather for a light meal as Abby Morgan leads a presentation and discussion on Mental Health. We know it is a busy weekend in the church - but we hope you'll make time to join us!

Older Adult Luncheon

Held in-person on Wednesday, February 14th at 11 am, in the Fellowship Hall.

The Older Adults were unfortunately unable to meet this January due to the weather, but our next meeting will be in the Fellowship Hall for a Valentine's brunch on **Wednesday, February 14th, at 11 am**, generously prepared by Rick Laabs. We will be back to Donna's for our March meeting.

Ash Wednesday Service

Held in-person on Wednesday, February 14th at 7 pm, in the Sanctuary.

Join us on February 14 at 7pm for our Ash Wednesday Service. This worship is a time to prepare for the sacred season of Lent. Taking the time to prepare can enhance your experience of worship and the many other opportunities for engagement during this special time leading up to Easter. We will partner with Juniata College Campus Ministry in the service and utilize several Taize-style songs. And we will of course acknowledge our human nature - remembering that we are dust and even still God tenderly cares for us.



Monthly Men's Breakfast

Held in-person on Saturday, February 17th at 8 am, at Donna's Restaurant.

Our gathering is very informal and is a great opportunity to get to know other Stone Church men. If you have visitors, bring them along too. We share life stories, corny jokes and enjoy a delicious made to order breakfast. Rick also shares a light reflection. If you haven't attended in the past or haven't attended in a while, please consider joining us. We guarantee you will leave with a smile on your face and a full stomach.

February Food Pantry Collection

Our monthly collection for the Food Pantry will take place on Sunday, February 18th. We will be collecting **TOILET PAPER** this month. Additionally, any monetary donations will benefit the food pantry.

News from Leadership Team

FINANCIAL FOLLOW-UP AND PASTORAL SABBATICAL

I am deeply grateful for all of you who participated in the January 7 congregational meeting about our church family's financial future. By now you will have received and read the updates on the 2024 budget, but I want to share some additional information.

- Belle Tuten and Emily Elder have taken the lead in the grocery card initiative. Remember - if you buy a \$100 grocery card for Giant or Weis from us, you get \$100 worth of groceries, and the church gets \$5. If 50 families spent \$100/week on groceries, Stone Church would earn \$13,000! You can always buy cards at the church office, but Belle and Emily are working to make it even easier. Watch for news!
- Alisha Boerstler made the excellent suggestion that we use a credit card that has cash benefits. This led to some digging, and it turns out the church credit card does have a cash back rewards program, and there was over \$1000 waiting to be redeemed! All possible payments to non-charitable organizations will now be made on that card.
- Finance Team will consider how to share and promote ways to support Stone Church in your will, tax beneficial ways to donate, and how to avoid having fees taken out of donations (PayPal takes 3% of any transaction!).
- Leadership Team will discuss how to move forward on other ideas such as a capital campaign for growing the endowment, fundraising, facility rental, growing the congregation, and our relationship with Juniata. All of these are significant topics and we can't do all of this alone - if you'd be willing to help explore one of these ideas, please let us know!

I'm optimistic about the future, but there is much work to be done in considering our financial sustainability!

With much regret, the Leadership Team, in consultation with the pastors, asked Pastors Cindy and Ben to delay their planned summer of 2025 sabbatical. Sabbaticals are recommended every seven years for pastors to have time to rest and renew and are a critical part of the mental health of our pastors. Pastors Cindy and Ben were applying for a grant to make the sabbatical budget neutral for the church. The planning process would also challenge the congregation to think creatively about using that time for our own sabbatical growth. The application, however, is due this March. Our regretful conclusion is that we do not have the capacity for the creative thinking needed as we consider our financial future. The Leadership Team is encouraging the pastors to work closely with the Pastoral Relations Team to make sure they are taking the self-care that they both need and deserve.

Grocery Gift Card Subscription Program



Did you know that if 50 families purchased just \$100 in grocery cards each week, Stone Church would give \$13,000 to support our ministries? Just by getting the groceries you normally buy! Here's how to start:



1. **Determine** how much money you spend for groceries in a given month. The amount must be in increments of \$25.
2. **Log into** the Google form [here](#) or use the QR code below. Fill it out with your preferences for pick up and amount needed.
3. **Pay** for your cards prior to pick up using one of the following methods: personal check or electronic bank transfer (preferred methods) or Paypal
4. **Pick up** cards after church on the first Sunday of each month. Yay!
5. **For help**, contact the Grocery Geek Squad at: stonechurchofthebrethren@gmail.com or call [814-643-3390](tel:814-643-3390)
6. **Yippee!** Stone Church can earn up to 5% in rewards for your faithful giving!



Grocery Form

Christian Ed Spotlight

- **NEW! - YOUNG Children's Sunday School Class (age 2 - 1st Grade):** Pastor Ben will be teaching this new class, engaging the YOUNGER younger among us in the stories of Jesus through crafts and games. We'll meet each week downstairs in the nursery. Join this group of kids, growing up together as a family of faith!
- **OLDER Children's Sunday School Class (2nd Grade and up):** Our Christian Ed Intern Sydney Garner teaches this Sunday School class for kids that meets in the Llamacats Room, down the hall from the office. It's a chance to learn Bible Stories and build friendships through crafts and games!
- **Biblical Leftovers Bible Study:** Rick Laabs leads this Bible Study for teens and adults - taking us on a deeper dive into the Bible Stories we read each Sunday morning in worship. It's a chance to really explore and digest the scriptures together. This gathering is open to anyone. You don't need to be a Biblical Scholar in order to notice and explore connections you hadn't seen before! Join in person or over Zoom!
- **Sojourners Book Study:** Be a part of this group of thoughtful people reflecting together on the intersections between faith and society. More information can be found below!

Sojourner's Next Study Book

WRITTEN BY CAROLYN LIDSTON

The Sojourners' study of Donna Hick's book *Dignity: Its Essential Role in Resolving Conflict* will begin on **February 11th**. This will give participants a chance to purchase the book and read the introduction.

She will introduce participants to a "Dignity Model" she has created to help people establish "this internal state of peace that is obtained by recognizing and accepting the value and vulnerability of all living things". In sharing her ideas on the subject, she will demonstrate proven ways to come to value our own wellbeing so that we can more effectively relate to our fellow human beings most importantly, those with whom we are struggling with frayed or broken relationships.

Her credentials and experience in the field of conflict resolution seem impeccable. She is internationally revered. She is currently an associate at the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs at Harvard University.

Reverend Desmond TuTu said "This book is a must read for those who want to experience peace in their everyday lives and peace in the world around them".

What's more, our own Randy Yoder has already studied this one of Hick's books and strongly encouraged us to do so as well.

Please consider joining us for this special opportunity to learn a valuable new skill set together.

The book is readily available in most bookstores and online booksellers for \$18 or less.

A Zoom option can easily be arranged for you by contacting Karon Tome.

Visio Divina - Sacred Seeing

WRITTEN BY DONNA RHODES

Come and practice visio divina (sacred seeing) during the Lenten season! We will use our Lenten theme created by Sanctified Art of *Wandering Heart* which focuses on figuring out faith with Peter and rediscovering Jesus. Original pieces of artwork, which emerged through scriptural study on the theme, will be displayed. You don't need to be a professional artist to join this practice. We spend some time in prayerful silence looking at the art while guiding questions are offered. We then share what we perceive from the art and often our sharing leads others to see something new. If you don't want to share, just come, listen, and look! See what emerges for you. This is a no pressure opportunity to join with others as we deepen our faith and understanding of *Wandering Heart*.

We meet via Zoom on the Wednesdays of Lent at 7:00 p.m. for one hour. Dates are Feb. 21, 28, March 13, 20, 27, April 3. (Please note there is no gathering on March 6.)

Paypal Cost

WRITTEN BY SHARON YOHN

They do what?!

Did you know that every time you give to Stone Church using PayPal, three percent of the donation goes to PayPal instead of Stone Church? Okay – that's understandable – after all, a business model with no profit won't last long. However, we'd rather have your entire donation come to Stone!

How can we best donate to Stone?

- 1. Cash or check** – you can drop it in the box at the back of the church anytime. There are even envelopes for your convenience. Or bring or mail your donation to the church office.
- 2. Directly from your bank** – many banks have a bill pay benefit where, *for no cost*, you can set up one time or regular payments. We know you can do this through First National Bank, and we're checking on others. Watch for help sessions on how to set this up in the future!
- 3. However you will remember** – choose the method that works for you. Although we want you to know about the fees from PayPal, we will still have that option available, and if that works best for you, we are still so very grateful.

A Reflection by Nina Meadows, Shared in worship on December 31st:

"Rituals" hold a lot of weight for many people; however, they haven't always for me. Ever since I can remember, my family has been big on traditions: annual holiday gatherings, shared birthday celebrations, or receiving the same gift as each of my cousins and I turn a certain age. All of these family traditions are similar to "rituals" in the sense that these things are passed on through generation after generation—handed down, sometimes without explanation or a reason "why." The "why" is implied, and often not spoken. My family gathers together because we love each other and the time spent with one another. I didn't have to be told "why" we gathered. I could feel it with every holiday and birthday get-together.

In regards to "rituals," I was a regular here at church for the greater part of my life. Taking part in rituals here at Stone was something that my parents passed down to me. They inspired, and began, my faith journey. When I was 11, I felt compelled by the Holy Spirit to be baptized and join as a member of this church. It felt right to me, and I knew that no matter what happened as I got older, I would always want to be a part of this congregation, worshiping here in this space. However, as I got older, with COVID-19 hitting the world with full force when I was 13, I lost touch with that part of myself. Even when we finally came back together for in-person church services, I had forgotten why it was important to me that I attended Stone. Dozens of Sundays passed by, and eventually my parents rarely asked if I wanted to attend the services. I occasionally attended a service to read scripture or play my flute, but I was still lost on the "why." Why are our rituals important? Why do we come here each Sunday joining together in a call to worship, taking part in these rituals? And why did I feel so disconnected from them? It is not always easy to be fully in touch with our faith. And for me, hardship and struggle test my faith. We must remember: rather than pulling back in times of disconnect, lean into the Holy Spirit, lean into the "rituals." Find joy and hope in the comforts of your faith, and in the comforts of this congregation.

When I've been away, neglecting attending church, I have to think back and remind myself of that "why." Why, when I was 11 years old, did I decide to become an official part of this church family? Why is my immediate thought to call it a "church family?" And once again: why are rituals so important? When I am able to lean into my faith and remember, coming to church after a hiatus, I can see that "why" so clearly. For me, it's the community and the warmth I find in the people, in all of you. I find my "why" in the comfort of worshiping together.

So, why do you come to gather in this space each Sunday? Perhaps, like me, because of the community that welcomes you with open arms? Maybe the friends you've made through this "church family?" Or maybe it's the importance of the "rituals" we do here? Think on the "why." Challenge yourself to name it, to give it significance, and in doing so, strengthen your relationship with God. Find not just the importance of rituals and worship but why they are important to you. Find your "why."

Thank You to Our Bell Ringers

Thanks to Pam Grugan, Henry Elder, CC Elder, Emily Elder, Sally Stewart, Bruce Liston, Carolyn Lidston, Pastor Ben Lattimer, Everett Lattimer, Cyrus Lattimer, Ezra Lattimer and Jeannie Lashlee for representing Stone Church while ringing the bell for the Salvation Army Kettle in December!

Denominational Connections

The Stone Church family is actively contributing to the denomination at the district and national level. Below is a list of those involved just in 2023!

- Tara Yorke - District Program and Arrangements
- Amanda Helfrich - District Youth Ministry Coordinator, Camp Blue Diamond Office Administrator
- Randy Yoder - District Executive Minister - Western Plains District
- Bob McMinn - Denominational Pastoral Compensation and Benefits Committee, Chair
- Carolyn Lidston - District Women's Ministry Committee
- David Meadows - Vice-chair of Camp Blue Diamond Board of Directors
- Jeannie Lashlee - Camp Blue Diamond Board of Directors (chair of program committee)
- Donna Rhodes - Executive Director of Susquehanna Valley Ministries, District Ministers' Education and Support Team, Board Chair for Eder Financial
- Loren Rhodes - Denominational Standing Committee and Nominating Committee Chair
- Marty Keeney - Annual Conference Choir Director
- Daisy Decker - Administrative Assistant for Hollidaysburg Church of the Brethren
- Cindy Lattimer - Called to be a preacher at Annual Conference in 2024
- Ben Lattimer - Ministers' Association Treasurer, Part Time Pastor/Full time Church Committee
- Delegate for Annual Conference: Jim Tuten
- Delegates for District Conference: Jeff Decker, Sharon Yohn
- National Junior High Conference - support and program delivery - many!
- Attendees and supporters of Camp Blue Diamond - many!
- Morgan Knepp - District Moderator
- Mary Garvey - District Ministers' Education and Support Team, pastor at Stonerstown
- Dawn Ottoni-Wilhelm - Professor at Bethany Seminary

A Note From Property Team

WRITTEN BY PHIL PATERSON

The building committee is working on one project at this time. We are replacing all of the light bulbs in the sanctuary with LED bulbs. As of this printing, the project is almost complete!

Your building committee

Gene's Jottings - JC & Stone

WRITTEN BY GENE GOSHORN

I recently had the pleasure of a twenty minute conversation with a very busy college president as he was returning to Huntingdon from a Florida business trip. It was James Anthony Troha, president of Juniata College next to Stone Church. The college was formed in 1876 as an extension of the Church of the Brethren, with Stone Church officially being formed (by the same brothers) two years later in 1878. Since arriving in 2013 from Ohio, Dr. Troha has worked on building and renovation projects: Nathan Hall, Gibble Field, Raffensperger Tennis Campus, Good Hall, Brumbaugh Academic Center, Ellis Hall, and Kepple Hall. There was no access to the second and third floors of Good Hall and no elevator to the dining hall, so handicap accessible entrances were added. My chat with Dr. Troha mostly touched on some details of a recent publication from Juniata, "Profiles in Leadership." It detailed progress by departments and staff in the last decade.

Juniata welcomed its third-largest freshman class ever last August, 420 students, within 100 of the largest ever. Dr. Troha was pleased with the success amid the steady decline of college-age students, inflation, and COVID-19.

Forty percent of students at Juniata are athletes. They participate in programs supervised by the well-known Scott McKenzie. The women's volleyball team won the Division III national championship the last two years in a row.

Juniata College campus began construction in Huntingdon in 1894 with Founders Hall. The college and the Huntingdon Brethren congregation (later Stone Church) were closely entwined from their beginnings. The congregation worshiped in the chapel of Founder's Hall, but by 1905 some wanted a "real church building" in the words of Henry B. Brumbaugh. So a church building committee was formed with I. Harvey Brumbaugh, acting president of the college, as chairman. Harvey's wife, Amelia Johnson, patterned the chapel after one she had seen in England, 45 x 93 feet. The architect chosen for the Stone Church was Edward Tipton, who also designed J.C. Blair Hospital and the original Juniata library. A lot next to the college was leased to the congregation for 99 years. The church was built for \$19,312.75 and dedicated on December 11, 1910. The dedication day speaker was Dr. Martin G. Brumbaugh, president of the college. John B. Brumbaugh, one of the founders of the college, was appointed pastor.

The Brumbaugh family has had a large impact on both Juniata and Stone Church, but not to be forgotten is Jacob Zuck, who in 1876 founded the Brethren Normal School (later named Juniata College) and served as its first teacher. The Brumbaughs included Dr. Andrew B. Brumbaugh, Henry B. Brumbaugh, John B. Brumbaugh, Amelia Johnson, the wife of I. Harvey Brumbaugh, and Martin G. Brumbaugh who would later go on to serve as Governor of Pennsylvania.

President James Troha and his wife Jennifer have 3 children and 2 dogs.

News From CAMP

WRITTEN BY DAVID MEADOWS

Junior High Retreat – February 23-25

Youth in Grades 6-8 are invited to join us for a weekend of fun and fellowship! The Jr. High retreat will be full of classic camp activities, outdoor exploration, hopefully some snow, and more! There will be singing, games, a campfire, outside fun, arts and crafts, and your favorite camp counselors!

Cost for the weekend is \$75, but only \$70 if you register by February 9th! Registration is at 7pm on Friday, Feb. 23 and the retreat will end around 1:30pm on Sunday. Bring warm clothes (we will sled if there's snow), a Bible, flashlight, and sleeping bag and pillow.

Junior Retreat – March 1-3

The Jr. retreat is now a weekend long and is open to 3rd through 5th graders. It will be full of classic camp activities and some winter fun ones as well! There will be singing, games, a campfire, outside fun, arts and crafts, and your favorite camp counselors! Summer 2023 taught campers at Blue Diamond a lot about sharing the Fruit of the Spirit, and Summer 2024 aims to show us how we Linked By Love. Both of these summer themes are connected, and we'll be searching for those connections with this Junior Retreat! Didn't attend camp in Summer 2023? That's okay, we'll catch you up!

Cost for the weekend is \$70, but only \$65 if you register by February 16th! Registration is at 7pm on Friday, March 1st and the retreat will end around 1:30pm on Sunday. Bring warm clothes for playing outside, a Bible, flashlight, and sleeping bag and pillow.

Summer Camp 2024

Online registration is open! Summer Camp brochures have been mailed to past campers. If you would like one, contact Camp or David Meadows. There are also copies in the back of the sanctuary. Take advantage of the Early-Bird Discount before March 1, and don't forget the Sibling Discount!

Summer Camp Staff, Counselors In Training (CITs), and Volunteer Nurses Needed!

If you (or someone you know!) love Camp Blue Diamond and enjoy working with children and youth, nothing is better than working at Camp and getting paid too. Counselors, lifeguard, climbing tower director, naturalist, arts and crafts director, kitchen, and maintenance staff are hired each summer.

Program Staff must be at least 18 years old. Kitchen and maintenance workers must be at least 16 years old. CITs must have finished 9th, 10th, or 11th grade. Nurses (PAs and doctors too!) must be certified at the RN level or higher. All must be committed Christians, enjoy children and youth, and must be able to live in harmony with others. Staff applications are available. To volunteer, contact Camp.

Upcoming Events

- Jr. High Retreat (Grades 6-8) - Feb 23 - 25
- Junior Retreat (Grades 3-5)- Mar 1 - 3
- Annual Dinners - Mar 15 & 16
- Quilt & Craft Camp - Apr 19-21
- Breakfast with the Birds - May 10 & 11
- Hoss's Fundraiser - June 16
- Brethren Open Golf Tournament - August 13
- Heritage Fair - September 21

Questions? Contact your
Camp Representative,
David Meadows.

Staying in Community

FIND WAYS TO CELEBRATE YOUR COMMUNITY MEMBERS BELOW!

February Birthdays

3rd - Doris Comerford
3rd - Brooke Shuck
5th - Paul Keeney
6th - Benjamin Gibboney
7th - Pam Kavanaugh
7th - Anne Rice
7th - Cheryl Ritchey
7th - Greg Stein
7th - Joanne Thurston-Griswold
8th - Bob Oldring
14th - Zachary Closz
14th - Meta Meckstroth
14th - Karen Morgan
15th - Monte Furry
15th - Laura White
16th - Sylvia McDowell
17th - Jason Cohen
17th - Sophie Fisher-Sneath
18th - Phil Paterson
19th - Donna Evans
21st - Daniel Santos
26th - Darlene Chivers

February Anniversaries

3rd - Bill & Lori Fagan
4th - Bob & Virginia Biber
19th - Ron & Barbara Detwiler



Homebound Members

*USE THE ADDRESSES BELOW TO REACH OUT TO THOSE IN OUR
COMMUNITY THAT ARE UNABLE TO JOIN US IN-PERSON*

DeLois Fluke
11325 Raystown Rd.
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Gene Goshorn
14155 Hill Valley Rd.
Mt. Union PA 17066

Louise Smith
11642 Station Road
Huntingdon, PA 16652

Westminster Woods
Sue Martin