

ST. JAMES UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

LIMERICK, PA

FEBRUARY 2026 NEWSLETTER

St. James United Church of Christ in Limerick, PA is called to be disciples of Christ providing a caring, supportive, welcoming and inclusive community. We seek to faithfully spread the good news of Jesus Christ through generous mission, loving fellowship and curiosity about the Bible and our faith, with the help of God.

³“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴“Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. ⁷“Blessed are the merciful, for they shall receive mercy. ⁸“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God. ⁹“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. *Matthew 5: 3-19*

In February, we are going to be talking about how we embody the Beatitudes. Sometimes we are the poor in spirit, the meek, the hungry and thirsty for righteousness – the ones who need help. And sometimes we are also the merciful, the pure in heart, the peacemakers – the ones who help others. Sometimes, though, we don't like to ask for help.

As an example, I recall watching an episode of *The Chosen* featuring two characters named Barnaby and Shula. Barnaby and Shula are not in the Bible, but their story is still very instructive for our purposes. So Barnaby walks with a cane and Shula is blind. Jesus, Peter, James and John are outside talking when Barnaby and Shula approach. Barnaby asks Jesus to heal Shula. Shula is shushing him, claiming she's fine. Jesus asks her if she is afraid to ask for healing. Shula says yes, because she knows how busy Jesus is. In other words, she doesn't feel worthy or important enough for him to bother. Of course, Jesus heals Shula and then turns to Barnaby and says, “How about you?” and Barnaby is like, “Nah, I'm good. This is about her today. Maybe another time.” But before they walk ten feet away, Barnaby is healed. In a sense, Shula and Barnaby are the poor in spirit, the meek, the mourners, and those seeking righteousness, and Jesus is the merciful, the peacemaker, the pure in heart, and he would be persecuted for righteousness sake. Barnaby and Shula could be poor in spirit due to their conditions; the meek, because it is hard for both of them to get around; the mourners, because they grieve over their conditions, that they aren't like everyone else, that they don't get to do what others can do; and in Barnaby's case, he seeks righteousness for Shula. He seeks for her to be made well, and as a result, for her faith in Jesus to be even stronger than it already was, for she had no doubt that Jesus could heal her. She just didn't feel worthy of his time. And Jesus shows them mercy, he creates peace in their hearts as he heals them of their conditions, he gives them the pureness of heart that he already has, and he creates righteousness, or right relationship between himself and Barnaby and Shula.

Jesus can heal us, too. As we pray and listen and act on what we hear, it can happen. But we have to make that first step – to actually want to be healed. May it be so. Amen.

With Love in Christ,
Pastor Beth

PERMISSION TO FEEL STUDY STARTING FEBRUARY 4!

In our midweek study, **starting Wednesday, February 4 at 1:00** in person and via Zoom, we will be reading *Permission to Feel* by Marc Brackett, who is an emotion scientist who works at Yale University. *Permission to Feel* is part Brackett's story about how he came to be an emotion scientist, and part how we can be emotion scientists. Emotional intelligence has only started to become prominent in the last 30 years, and is a very important part of being human. Come and see why our emotions are important, how we recognize them and how they can work to our benefit. Any questions, please see Pastor Beth.

**WATCHING SEASON FOUR OF THE CHOSEN STARTING FEBRUARY 5!**

Starting Thursday, February 5 at 1:00, we will be gathering to discuss season four of *The Chosen*, the TV series about Jesus and his disciples. We will meet in person and via Zoom. If you have not joined us yet, please do! It would be best to try to watch seasons 1-3 if you're new to the show. You can watch it for free on their website, thechosen.tv. As usual, I will send a link to everyone on Sunday or Monday each week, and the questions we will discuss will be sent no later than Wednesday. Any questions, please see Pastor Beth.

PASTOR BETH TAKING OFF FEBRUARY 8

Pastor Beth will have the day off of worship on **February 8**, but she will be working her normal schedule during the week. The supply pastor will be Rev. Ann Few.

POTLUCK DINNER FEBRUARY 14

We will be resuming our potluck dinner on **February 14 at 5:00**. We hope to see everyone there to join in our fellowship and fun.

**SERMON CHAT FEBRUARY 15**

Everyone is welcome to join us after worship on **Sunday, February 15** for our monthly sermon chat. Everyone will receive paper and pencil to write down notes from the scripture and sermon to discuss afterwards. Past sermon chats have been conversations that are really lively and meaningful. Please join us!

ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE 7:00

Please join us for our Ash Wednesday service on **February 18 at 7:00**. This service will feature a Release Ceremony, where we will have the opportunity to release what we want to let go of this year, some silent time to contemplate what to fast from for Lent, as well as receiving of ashes. This will be a service of comfort and reflection. We look forward to seeing you on Ash Wednesday. All are welcome!



WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP FEBRUARY 21

On Saturday, February 21st Mary Anne Owen will be the storyteller at 10am. All are welcome!

**SHAWN MCLEOD PRESENTS ON FEBRUARY 22**

Following the worship service, St. James UCC will host a unique and uplifting experience designed especially for those seeking clarity, encouragement, and spiritual renewal. This special event will be led by author, speaker, and purpose coach Ms. Shawn R. McLeod, creator of the devotional coloring books *Called To His Purpose* and the transformative guide *The Ultimate Guide to Living Your Purpose: 7 Steps to Creating the Life You Crave*. Each attendee will receive a beautifully designed adult devotional coloring book for a **\$15 registration fee**. Shawn accepts cash or you can pay on Cash App. We will need a minimum of ten people to **sign up by February 15**. Invite your friends - all are welcome! This experience is designed not only to calm the mind and uplift the spirit, but also to awaken creativity, spark insight, and shift focus from life's challenges to God's promises.

CHURCH DIRECTORY 2026 UPDATE

The church's directory is going to be updated in the near future. If you are a new member or you have had a phone number, email, or home address change, please leave your updated info in Hannah Iannozzi's office mailbox or email her at: office@stjames-ucc.org

**PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

Your Pastoral Relations Committee serves as a liaison between Pastor Beth and the congregation. Good communication in a congregation is VERY important. You are encouraged to speak to Pastor Beth directly with any concerns. However, if you would prefer, please approach a member of the committee - Sue Myers, Hannah Iannozzi, Ken Raspen, Donna Earnshaw and Kevin Brightbill.

**I Heard Him**

By Eleanor Lyons Culver

I heard the great Creator's voice speak softly in the breeze.
 I heard Him when He rustled all the branches in the trees.
 I heard Him in the patter of a cool, refreshing shower,
 And in the mighty river's boom I heard Him speak with power.
 I heard Him in the chatter of a squirrel all dressed in fur,
 And in the sweet contentment of a fuzzy kitten's purr.
 I heard Him in the cricket's chirp one starry summer night.
 And when the saucy rooster crowed announcing morning's light.
 I heard Him in a waterfall and in a singing creek,
 And in the whisper of the pines, I'm sure I heard Him speak.
 I felt the great Creator near in all His wondrous ways
 And then I paused to bow my heard in gratitude and praise.

Submitted by Charlotte Feidler



James 1:19

¹⁹My dear brothers and sisters, take not of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry...

Origin of Separation of Church and State

For centuries, medieval Europe was ruled by monarchs who believed they had the divine right from God to rule both their kingdoms and the Church. This led to conflict and persecution of people and religious groups who did not agree. In early 1600 through 1700, many fled Europe to America to escape religious persecution. In 1644, Roger Williams, a Baptist minister in a colony in Rhode Island, published a book called The Bloody Tenet of Persecution. In his book, he was the first to put forth the idea that there should be a "wall or hedge of separation "between" the wilderness of the world" and "the garden of the Church".

In 1801, the Baptist Association of Danbury Connecticut, wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson expressing their concerns regarding state sponsored religion. At that time, the Congregational Church was the official tax -supported religion in Connecticut. Established in 1662, it was a remnant of Connecticut's puritan colonial founding and ended in 1818. The letter was a plea for complete religious freedom. In response, Jefferson wrote the Danbury Letter, dated January 1, 1802. In it, he said "...legislature should 'make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof, thus building a wall of separation between church and state".

These two letters are considered to have been most influential in the forming of the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment. It was created and ratified in 1791, prohibiting Congress from establishing a religion. This was extended to the states in 1947 in the Supreme Court case of Everson vs. Board of Education. The Establishment Clause does not contain the phrase separation of church and state; it has always been inferred.

Jefferson wanted a republic where religious freedom could flourish with no interference from government, ensuring everyone, even those in government, could exercise their faith privately. He did not intend to say that religion should not influence opinions on government issues or that people should keep their personal religious values separate from who they vote for or what issues they stand for or against. Faith was not to be used to control public policy.

There have been many challenges and interpretations to the idea and meaning of separation of church and state. In the next newsletter I'll write about another aspect of separation of church and state.

Submitted by Sue Myers

**If you would like to ask any questions or discuss this topic, please reach out to the Pastoral Relations Committee—see page 3*

For our friends Rugene Caldwell, Heather Yates, Melissa Moore, Sang Hi Crater *and others who are in long term care or unable to leave their homes. We pray for comfort, peace, healing, and companionship for each of them.*

For our friends Steve, Kile, Millie A, Steve R, Kile S, John R, Rob W, Michael, Scott, Judy R, Bonnie, Ruth Ann W, Vickie K, Debarah B, Daran B, Barb G, Shirley, Van S, Ken M, Cheryl, Jim S, Alison L, Jackie, Dee L, Betsy R, Ginny T, JC, Paul M, Barb M, Christine J, Barb G, Jean S, Paul M, Bonnie, BJ, Linda S, John K, Karen, Phil, Dodie S, Carol T, Kork M, Don G, *and all cancer survivors, we pray for treatment where it is possible and release from suffering where it is needed.*

For our friends Franklin R, Sherry K, Laura M, Dianne S, Wendel K, Marion H, Mary Lou B, *and others with ongoing health concerns and challenging life circumstances. May they be reassured of God's presence through the support of our congregation.*

Prayers for all veterans that are still suffering from PTSD and all other side effects from their service in the military.

Condolences to the family and friends of Ruth Borneman.

Lord, we thank you for the healing you have given many, not only on our prayer list but beyond. We ask that you continue to heal those that are still struggling with health issues, concerns and fears. Continue to be with those that have lost loved ones, comfort them and give them peace. We ask healing for our country as well as those who are enduring wars. Lord, we give you thanksgiving for all your many blessings, many we take for granted. Continue to walk and guide us through our greatest needs. We pray for wholeness and healing of mind, body and spirit upon us all. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen

Please note that we will remove names on the prayer list after one month, except for homebound and hospitalized members. Let us know if you would like to add or renew a request by contacting Sandy Koenig or Charlotte Fiedler by phone or email.

PRAYING FOR OUR FELLOW MEMBERS OF ST. JAMES

Initiated by St. James Prayer Team, each Sunday two church families are being included in the Sunday worship prayer time. You are invited to include these members and their families in your prayers throughout that week.

February 1—Melissa Broughton & Rugene Caldwell

February 8—Ted Conner & Sang Hi Crater

February 15—Patricia Dalina & Nancy Dunning

February 22—Donna Earnshaw and Bill Rippert & Heena Esmail

CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Worship with Rev. Beth Eustis 10:15 Followed by Congregational Meeting	2	3 Girl Scouts 5:30 Scouts 7:00	4 Midweek Study 1:00	5 <i>Chosen</i> 1:00	6	7
8 Worship with Rev. Ann Few 10:15	9	10 Consistory Meeting 7:00 Scouts 7:00	11 Midweek Study 1:00	12 <i>Chosen</i> 1:00	13 Set up for Pot- luck	14 HAPPY VALENTINES DAY! Potluck 5:00
15 Worship with Rev. Beth Eustis 10:15 Followed by Sermon Chat	16	17 Girl Scouts 5:30 Scouts 7:00	18 Ash Wednesday 7:00 Midweek Study 1:00	19 <i>Chosen</i> 1:00 *Newsletter Sub- missions Due	20	21
22 Worship with Rev. Beth Eustis 10:15 Followed by Ms. Shawn McLeod Presents	23	24 Scouts 7:00	25 Midweek Study 1:00	26 <i>Chosen</i> 1:00	27	28



February Birthdays

5 - Donald Grisdale
8 - Marion Hentz
20 - Edward Myers &
Joy Rubeo
26 - Phillip Levering
28 - Sandy Koenig



February Anniversaries

None this month

2026 CONSISTORY

Laura Walters, President
Sue Meyers, Vice. President
Kristen Serina, Secretary
Jay Smith
Marilyn Jorgensen
Bob Walters
Susan Myers
Paul Meyers
Donna Serina

Officers:

Lisa Kahudic, Financial Sec.
Jay Smith, Treasurer
Tom Mogel, Sexton

CONTACT THE CHURCH

321 S. Limerick Rd. Limerick, PA 19468
www.stjames-ucc.org

Rev. Beth Eustis (610) 457-3603 or pastor@stjames-ucc.org

Pastor Beth would love to hear your questions and comments. Please email to make an appointment.

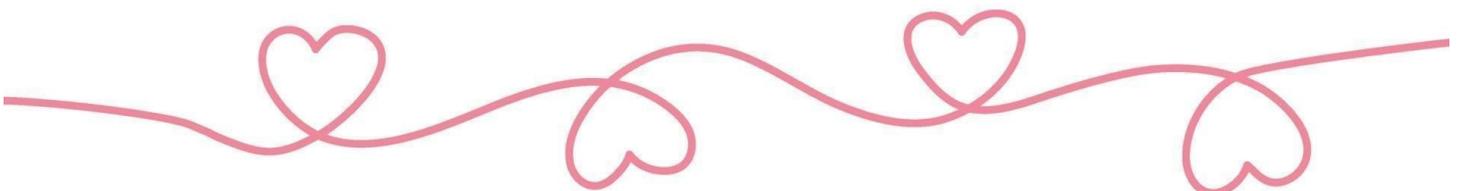
Sabbath will be observed on Tuesdays and Saturdays.

Donna Pinto, Minister of Music (610) 792-1679 music@stjames-ucc.org

Hannah Iannozzi, Church Administrator, Communications, and Events
(610) 489-0990 office@stjames-ucc.org *Office hours by appointment*

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www.facebook.com/stjamesucc

****Materials for the March 2026 Newsletter are due to the office on February 19th, 2026.****



LOVE FOR ALL

“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of man.”

-Charles Darwin

“Love recognizes no barriers. It jumps hurdles, leaps fences, penetrates walls to arrive at its destination full of hope.” -Maya Angelou

“This is what my soul is telling me, be peaceful and love everyone.”

-Malala Yousafzai

“Let us learn to live with kindness, to love everyone, even when they do not love us.”

-Pope Francis

Submitted with love
by Hannah Iannozzi



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