

February 2025



THE MUSTARD SEED



“God of steadfast love, you sent your Son to be the light of the world, saving people everywhere from sin and death. As Anna gave thanks for the freedom he would bring, and Simeon saw in him the dawn of redemption, complete your purpose once made known in him. Make us the vessels of his light, that all the world may glory in the splendor of your peace. Amen.”

-- Prayer for the Presentation of the Lord from <http://lectionary.library.vanderbilt.edu/>

In the Protestant Church we sometimes gloss over those liturgical and scriptural celebrations that occur outside of the usual Sunday morning. If we expand our perspective, we may find that the liturgical calendar can offer us an unexpected spiritual gift through holy days and observances not always noticed or celebrated within our Protestant Tradition. These sacred days and the scripture stories behind them can offer blessings and challenges in our life of discipleship. One of my favorite little known holidays occurs on February 2nd each year. On that day the Church celebrates the Presentation of Jesus at the Temple 40 days after he was born. Drawing from Luke 2:22-40, the Christian liturgical tradition commemorates the time when Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus enter the Temple to fulfill the commandment to offer a purification offering for Mary. While there, the Holy Family encounters the elder prophets Simeon and Anna, who see in the baby the fulfillment of their lifetime of waiting. They understand that Jesus is the redemption of Israel and the world; they understand that Jesus will upset many with his uncompromising commitment to the kingdom of God; they understand the pain and the joy that he will bring in his death and resurrection.

On this day, besides recounting this skimmed over biblical story, the Church also celebrates Candlemas. Candlemas is the liturgical blessing of candles for the church services and for people's homes for the upcoming year. After the service, parishioners are invited to take small candles home and light them as a symbol of Christ's light for their homes and for the world.

In honor of Candlemas and Christ's presentation, I wonder what symbols we might adopt to show Christ's light in our homes and in the world for the next year? It could be a candle, or perhaps something else. What is it that symbolizes God's presence to you? What symbols have done that in the past for you? Perhaps an old family Bible we can dust off and prominently display. Maybe a necklace we received from a beloved fellow Christian or something else big or small. Often these symbols of Christ's light and God's blessing are hidden or put aside in our lives. I encourage us to bring them out and prominently let that symbol of Christ's light “shine” for us and for others.

In this continued season of light for the Church, may God bless each of us and reveal yet even more insight and love for us.

Peace,

Pastor Matt

CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL



Children's Sunday School Hiatus – Our Christian Education Team values our youngest learners and continues to seek the best way to help them learn about God and our favorite Bible stories. During January and February, we will be taking a brief break from the model of offering Sunday School twice a month in order to focus on having conversations with our families about what the best time and frequency is for offering faith formation opportunities. **Please note**, the Teen Class will continue to meet throughout February every other Sunday .



The Caring Cupboard would like to thank you for your gift of \$274 received on 1/15/25. Last year, more than 625 tons of donations from individual and more than 25 retail partners enabled the Caring Cupboard to provide nutritious food for more than 16,412 family visits by 3843 unique individuals in our community. It's worth noting that nearly one third of those individuals were children.

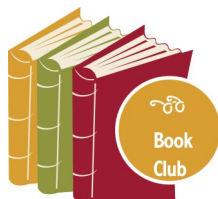
The Lebanon Rescue Mission thanks you for blessing them with your gift of \$169 to support their ministries.



Volunteers are needed on **Sunday 3/16/25** to help prepare, serve, and clean up at the free meal for the public which is being served by the **Lebanon Rescue Mission**. We will meet in the church parking lot at 1:30 P.M. to carpool as we are scheduled to volunteer **from 2:00 P.M. to approximately 6:00 P.M.** (If you can help for only part of the time, that is fine.) In addition, there are items that are needed to make the meal extra special. Please watch for more information about how to sign up to volunteer and/or to donate items for the meal. If you have any questions, please contact Kristin Vines.



Souper Bowl of Caring – **On Sun, Feb. 9**, Salem UCC will again participate in this nationwide focus to tackle hunger and food insecurities. Please plan to bring to Salem your monetary donations or donations of non-perishable food items for the Caring Cupboard. Current items needed are: Tuna (canned or pouch), Rice (brown & white), Spam, Pasta, Spaghetti, all types; Meal Soups (Progresso, Chunky, etc.), Canned Fruit (Peaches, Pears, Cocktail), Ketchup, Vegetable Oil, Jars of Pasta Sauce.



The Book Club will meet Monday, February 24 at 7 p.m. to discuss "Tastes Like War" by Grace M. Cho. This is Hershey's author visit book for 2025. Tickets go on sale Feb. 1. If you have any questions, please contact Carin Kaag. Her e-mail is cas207@yahoo.com



Try to be a rainbow in someone's cloud."

—Maya Angelou



Sunday	Feb. 2	Sip & Chat 10:00 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday	Feb. 5	Choir Rehearsal 7:15 p.m.
Thursday	Feb. 6	Moyer Fund 7:30 a.m.
Saturday	Feb. 8	Youth Group Kitchen & Downstairs 12-6 p.m.
Sunday	Feb. 9	Sip & Chat 10 a.m. Souper Bowl Sunday - Family Worship 10:30 a.m.
Monday	Feb. 10	Council with Profile Team 7 p.m.
Tuesday	Feb. 11	Profile Team 6 p.m.
Sunday	Feb. 16	Sip & Chat 10:00 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m.
Wednesday	Feb. 19	Londonderry Village Service with Choir 7 p.m.
Saturday	Feb. 22	Private Party Set-up Basement Area
Sunday	Feb. 23	Sip & Chat 10:00 a.m. Family Worship 10:30 a.m. Private Party Basement Area 12 noon—4 p.m.

All Worship Services will also be livestreamed on YouTube.



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Published By:

Salem United Church of Christ
2761 Horseshoe Pike

P.O. Box 7

Campbelltown, PA 17010-0007

Reverend Matt Hoover, Interim Pastor

Pat Young, *Administrative Assistant*

Phone: 717-838-4236

Web Site:

www.salemucccampbelltown.org



WORSHIP SCRIPTURES

February 2, 2025

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jerimiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
I Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30

February 9, 2025

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8
Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

February 16, 2025

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Jerimiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
I Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 6:17-26

February 23, 2025

Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

Genesis 45:3-11
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

March 2, 2025

Transfiguration Sunday

Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12-42
Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)

March 9, 2025

First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1-11
Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16
Romans 10:8b-13
Luke 4:1-13

March 16, 2025

Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18
Psalm 27
Philippians 3:17-4:1
Luke 13:31-25

March 23, 2025

Third Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9
Psalm 63:1-8
1 Corinthians 10:1-13
Luke 13:1-9

March 30, 2025

Fourth Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12
Psalm 32
2 Corinthian 5:16-21
Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32



Kindness kickbacks

Random Acts of Kindness Day, observed each year on February 17, is a reminder of the power of altruism. Followers of Jesus express kindness selflessly, out of love for God and our neighbors. Yet in return, we reap emotional — and even physical — benefits.

Researchers have identified a “helper’s high” that can ease anxiety and depression. Spontaneous or planned acts of “pro-social spending” have been shown to reduce blood pressure, improve heart health, reduce pain and even extend longevity.

For maximum impact, experts recommend getting creative with random acts of kindness and mixing them up. But no matter how you spread kindness, you’re bound to experience blessings in return!



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

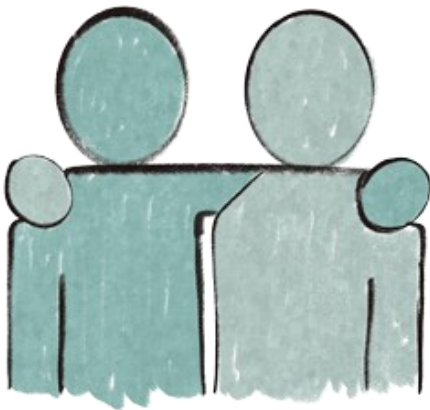
4 Tyler Comarnitsky
 9 William McNamara
 18 Judy Doll
 22 John Moyer
 23 Michelle Alger
 23 Ashley Gottier
 24 Steven Garrett
 25 Wally Shepler
 25 Linda Patrick

MARCH



3 David Mease
 4 Tiffany Aungst
 6 Kay Flory
 6 Isabelle Ott
 7 Kelly Angelo
 7 Christopher Moyer
 8 Karley Smith
 9 Alicia Grimes
 11 Margaret Smith
 11 Landon Weldon
 14 Louise Adams
 16 Lee Ann Ream
 16 R. Isaac Weidler
 20 Anthony Davis
 23 Renee Bordlemay
 23 Alexander Gingrich
 25 Audrey Schaeffer
 26 Richard Yeckley
 27 Faith Bicksler
 28 Susan Aungst
 30 Tyler Binkley
 31 Jeannie Berlin

I am here”



In *Bread for the Journey*, theologian Henri J.M. Nouwen calls consolation — from “to be with” (con-) “the lonely one” (solus) — “one of the most important ways to care.” He writes, “Life is so full of pain, sadness and loneliness that we often wonder what we can do to alleviate the immense suffering we see.”

Although consoling doesn’t necessarily remove someone’s pain, Nouwen notes that it serves a deeper purpose: To console means “to be there and say, ‘You are not alone, I am with you. Together we can carry the burden. Don’t be afraid. I am here.’ That is consolation. We all need to give it as well as to receive it.”

SALEM COLLECTIONS -

The Caring Cupboard is a community food pantry, that has grown into a community necessity, that currently serves over 350 families living primarily in the Palmyra and Annville-Cleona School Districts. Products to be given to the Caring Cupboard may be placed on the designated shelves found at the end of the northwest hallway of Salem Church.

Pop Tab Collection Program (Matt Waller) Ronald McDonald House. The collection of aluminum beverage tabs began in 1996. The aluminum tabs are sold to a local recycling company and their proceeds help with daily operating expenses at the Ronald McDonald House. The generous amount from the tabs collected has been very beneficial to the House and the families they serve. They are averaging \$1,000 monthly just from these tiny tabs. You can help raise money by pulling tabs from any aluminum container. Pop Tabs may be placed in the designated box on the shelf above the coat rack in the bell tower entrance.

Redner's Cash Register Receipts (Cindy Steger) By using the Save-A-Tape card you picked up at Customer Service Desk each time you purchase merchandise at Redner's Warehouse Markets, your receipt will be designated as a Save-A-Tape customer receipt. When you come to Salem Church, place your **entire register/sales receipt (DO NOT CUT!)** in the designated box on the shelf above the coat rack in the bell tower entrance. Salem Church will receive a check for 1% of the total amount of tapes submitted, excluding items controlled by the government, such as tax, milk and tobacco products.

Clothing Recycling Old clothing and material that are too worn to use can be recycled. If possible, take to an H&M Store (they give you a coupon for each bag!), otherwise put it in the box in the west narthex and we'll take it for you. Thank you!

Writing Tool Recycling You can recycle old writing tools – crayons, markers, pens, and pencils. Staples Store will recycle these items as well as many other items (check their website!). Feel free to take to a Staples or place in the "Crayola marker" collection tube on the windowsill in the west narthex. Thank you!



All the ways God helps us

When young adults land in difficult situations and desperately call home, parents respond in various ways. They might remind their son or daughter of guidelines learned years back — behavior and problem-solving skills to get back on track. Or maybe parents direct their kids to a mentor, expert or resource for assistance. But if the crisis is severe, no doubt these loving parents hop in the car, or even on a plane, and go to their child. They embrace and support them, perhaps even taking initial steps to bring them through the chaos to a new beginning.

When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, exile and countless difficulties in between, God lovingly used each of these strategies. God reminded Israel of the Ten Commandments and other laws he gave to guide their life together. Sometimes he sent prophets and other leaders to direct the people into better ways and times. God does the same today, reminding us of Scripture's guidance and sending us prophetic voices and wise leaders. Above all, when nothing less would save people, ancient and modern, from the dangers of sin and death, God came to us as Jesus. God's only Son walked with us, lived through our troubles alongside us, taught us new ways directly and brought us out of the problematic place where we were trapped and into a new beginning.

—Heidi Hyland Mann,
based on a sermon by Pastor Dave Sonnenber