

Serving the Lancaster Community Since 1884

Covenant



ECHOES Newsletter

United Methodist Church

June-July, 2025



From the Pastor's Desk...

By Pastor Derrick Gutierrez

Here Comes Summer!

Summer will soon be here in full force—the days will be long, the sun will be bright, and many of us are planning time to rest, travel, and be with family. It's a season when the pace of life changes just enough to invite us to look around, take a deep breath, and notice God's presence in new and refreshing ways.

On June 8th, we celebrate the Day of Pentecost—the day the Holy Spirit was poured out on the disciples, empowering them to speak with boldness, love with courage, and proclaim the Good News to the world. Pentecost reminds us that the Church was born not in quiet comfort, but in vibrant, Spirit-filled mission. That same Spirit still moves today—calling, guiding, and sustaining us in ministry.

This summer, as we embrace rest and renewal, we also remain attentive to how the Spirit might be leading us. In the slower rhythm of summer, we might hear God's voice a little more clearly—calling us to grow deeper in faith, to reach out to our neighbors, or simply to rest in His peace.

Here at Covenant, one of the most exciting ways we see the Spirit at work is through our upcoming Vacation Bible School, June 23–27. VBS is one of the most vibrant ministries of the summer—where children laugh, sing, learn, and experience the love of Jesus in ways they will carry with them for years to come. Please be in prayer for our volunteers, our leaders, and most of all, the children who will walk through our doors that week. Whether you're able to help in person or support us in prayer, your presence matters.

Of course, summer also brings its share of cherished holidays—times when we gather with friends and family to celebrate freedom, remember our shared history, and enjoy the beauty of God's creation. Whether you find yourself by the shore, at a backyard barbecue, or simply resting on the porch with a good book, let these moments also be reminders of God's abundant grace.

Continued on next page...

Sidelights

COVENANT'S VISION AND MISSION STATEMENTS

Our Vision Statement: **Bringing Christ's Light into the Community and Beyond.**

Our Mission Statement: **We Invite, We Welcome, We Nurture, We Serve.**

WAYS TO CONTINUE GIVING

Thank you to our faithful members who continue to support Covenant Church. Here are options for you to give your personal tithes and offerings:

- Mail checks to 110 N. Mulberry St., Lancaster, PA, 17603
- Give online. Go to our website www.covenant-umc.com and click on the GIVING link and follow the directions.
- Text 717-769-1063. After the initial setup, giving is easy.

Please call the church office with questions.

Sidelights

PRAYER CHAIN

Covenant is a praying church. There are times when an urgent or emergency concern may arise in your life. Covenant has a Prayer Chain ready to jump into immediate action to notify our Prayer Warriors to lift that concern up to God.

This phone call system is managed by Patti Willard, 717-872-7561, who will reach out to our “callers” who will then call our Prayer Warriors to stop and pray. If you are available to pray for these urgent concerns & would like to be added to our prayer chain, please contact Patti. If you need to activate our Prayer Chain, please contact Patti or the church office. Indicate the urgent/emergency need when calling.

LOBBY GREETERS

1st Sunday of the Month
Bob & Cindy Hean

2nd Sunday of the Month
Carole Horn

3rd Sunday of the Month
Linda Henning

4th Sunday of the Month
Bonnie & Barry Miller

5th Sunday of the Month
Janice McElroy

We Worship Together

Sunday Worship

In-person worship will be held each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. The service will also be livestreamed on Facebook for those who wish to worship at home.

Additional Online Opportunities During the Week

- Wednesday at 10 a.m. join our prayer group in the church library.

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I invite you to carve out some quiet time this summer: start a devotional, read a passage of Scripture you've never explored, or simply sit in silence and ask the Spirit to speak. God is not bound by season—His voice is steady and sure, even in the heat of summer.

May this season be one of reflection, joy, and a renewed sense of purpose. And may the Spirit that lit the Church ablaze at Pentecost burn brightly in each of us as we continue to walk the path of discipleship.

Child Care Center Update

What's been happening at Covenant Child Care...

The child care center assisted the nurture team with their Spring Parking Lot event to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Covenant Child Care. It was so great to see so many families from our center and our community!

Our Preschool and Pre-K classes sang at the worship service on Sunday, May 18th. The joy and enthusiasm radiating from our little performers was contagious!

Covenant Child Care received a grant to expand our enrollment! We are hoping to open our new 3 year old room for the fall. Our playground project, also supported by grant money, is on the home stretch! Children are looking forward to testing out our new playground surface and equipment soon!

Thank you to everyone who ordered eggrolls from our spring fundraiser. It was a huge success!

What's coming up...

Pre-K graduation will be held on Friday, June 6th. This class sets the center's record for number of children graduating – 18! We thank all the graduates and their families for the years of laughs and memories as they move on to the next step.

The center is always in need of and appreciative of donations. If you are interested, we are continually in need of the following items: Lysol or Clorox wipes, Lysol aerosol disinfecting spray, art supplies such as crayons, colored pencils, markers, coloring books, construction paper, etc. Thank you for your continued support!

Here's to Good Health!

Summer is almost here. Let me share some reminders of how to stay safe and healthy in the months ahead.

Sun Safety

1. Wear sunscreen
2. Wear a hat and sunglasses
3. Stay in the shade if you get too hot
4. Drink plenty of water

Insect Safety

1. Use bug spray
2. Wear clothes that cover arms and legs
3. Shower and check your whole body for ticks

Water Safety

1. Swim with a buddy
2. Try not to swallow water
3. Only dive off pool diving board
4. Swim where you can be seen by life-guard
5. Face waves instead of turning back to them

Food Safety

1. Wash hands before and after eating
2. Eat lots of fruits and veggies
3. Keep cold food cold and hot food hot

Grilling Safety

1. Always grill outside in a well-ventilated area
2. Keep grill stable to avoid tipping
3. Use long handled utensils
4. Wear safe clothing, no loose hanging shirt tails
5. Be ready to extinguish flames, baking soda to control a grease fire
6. Never move a hot grill

Driving Safety

1. Always buckle up
2. Don't drive distracted, stay focused
3. Don't drink and drive
4. Never leave children or pets in a hot car

Membership Anniversaries



Church membership is an important expression of commitment to a community of faith. It signifies a mutual covenant between the individual and the congregation—a promise to grow together in discipleship, serve together in ministry, and support one another in love. Membership offers a sense of belonging, shared purpose, and accountability, grounding each person's faith journey

within the larger mission of the Church to proclaim the gospel and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Through membership, we affirm that the Christian life is not meant to be lived alone, but in fellowship with others.

During our Heritage Sunday celebration on May 18th, we celebrated the membership anniversaries of Sylvia Frey (50 yrs.), Michelle Sultan and Steve Sultan (25 yrs.).

Sidelights

COVENANT MEMBERS IN BUSINESS

Aunt Sandy's Attic

Sandy Leonard—Antiques, Collectibles, Books, Art, etc.
545 W. Market Street, Marietta, PA 17547, 717-426-5091

Dale Building Designs

www.DonDaleDesigns.com

Groff Family Funeral & Cremation Services, Inc.

Thomas S. Buter, 394.5300
528 W. Orange St.

Miller Optical

Glenn & Maryanne Miller, 393.2020
Glasses, Contacts, and Exams
Lancaster & Willow Street

Willard Hypnosis Center

Roger J. Willard
3304 Main Street, Conestoga PA 17516, 717.872.7561 or willardhypnosis.com

SPECIAL SUMMER EVENTS

Care & Share Luncheons, 6/7, 7/5

Food Box Distribution, 6/14, 7/12

IMPACT! Missions, 6/21, 7/19

VBS, 6/23-6/27

Community Table, 6/16, 7/21

Words of Wisdom Bible Study
Every Monday
9:00 a.m.

Sidelights

THE WOW FELLOWSHIP

The women and men's group that has been meeting once a month after church for lunch and Bible study is now called The WOW Fellowship, which means **W**orship God, **O**bey His Word, and **W**itness to others. The group will be meeting the second Sunday of every month in Bethany Hall following the Worship Service. Lunch is provided.

GROCERY CARDS

Giant (\$25 and \$50) and Stauffer (\$50) grocery cards are available for purchase. Five percent of the proceeds goes to support the Mission Outreach of Covenant Church.

Please make out checks to Covenant UMC, and put "grocery cards" on the memo line. You can also see Carole Horn on Sunday mornings, or contact the church office (717-393-1561) Monday-Friday mornings if you want to make a purchase.

A/V HELP NEEDED

There is room for you on the sanctuary sound board. Interested? Training will be provided. Please see Darwin Tyson for more information.

Sunday School this Summer

This summer consider coming to one of the two adult Sunday School Classes: The Faith Walk Class in the Chapel Library and the Sonshine Class in the Crosby Classroom, B1 downstairs.

With the guidance of *The Essential 100 Challenge*, written by Whitney T. Kuniholm, the Sonshine Class is studying the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. During the summer months they will explore Judges, Ruth, I Samuel and II Samuel. Scripture passages are listed for reading ahead of time if desired, and then the Scriptures are read and discussed during class time under the leadership of teachers Ginny Brown and Patti Willard.

The Faith Walk Class is currently examining the Lord's Prayer with insights from Pastor Tyler Staton and his book *Praying Like Monks, Living Like Fools*. With reference to Bible passages and Staton's DVD presentations, the class is focusing on how to pray as Jesus taught. Later in June and July, the class will explore Max Lucado's book *What Happens Next: A Traveler's Guide Through the End of This Age*. The DVD presentations will provide a guide to what the Bible says about heaven's timeline that will empower us to face the future with faith. Be prepared, not scared, as we ask "Are we living in the end times?" Carole Horn, Chris Kimmich, Lois Neidermyer, and Cindy Smith serve as teachers on a rotating basis for this class.

Both classes meet from 9:00 to 10:00 A.M. every Sunday morning and are open to all who want to grow in understanding the Bible and living a Christian life. Each lesson has merit in itself and does not depend upon knowing all the information presented before. So consider making Sunday School part of your summer Sundays.

Update from the Lead Team

May 2025

A quick reminder, Covenant has adopted a new, streamlined model for church leadership, known as the Lead Team for 2025. The Lead Team consists of church members who represent various ministries and committees. Additionally, the Lead Team itself serves as the Trustees, Finance Committee, and SPRC Committee. We combined all the administrative committees into one committee to minimize meetings and support our focus on ministry.

The committee meets every two months, beginning in January on the 3rd Tuesday at 7pm. Here is an update from the May meeting:

- As the Summer begins, the church is preparing for Vacation Bible School. The theme this year is *Weird Animals*. The dates are June 23 through June 27 from 6 pm to 8 pm. We need volunteers to be present to engage with the children. We are also looking for donations of refreshments.

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June 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Holy Communion 9a Adult, Children & Youth 10:30a Worship & Fellowship	2 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bible 7p Narcotics Anonymous	3 7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	4 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Prayer 10:15a Prayer Group	5 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehearsal	6 7a MOOS 6p Chocolate Chip Cookies	7 12p Care and Share Luncheon
8 9a Adult, Children & Youth 10:30a Worship & Fellowship	9 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bible 7p Narcotics Anonymous	10 7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	11 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Prayer 10:15a Prayer Group	12 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehearsal	13 7a MOOS	14 9:30a Food Box Distribution
15 9a Adult, Children & Youth 10:30a Worship & Fellowship	16 7a MOOS 8a Community Table 9a Words of Wisdom Bible 7p Narcotics Anonymous	17 7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	18 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Prayer 10:15a Prayer Group	19 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehearsal	20 7a MOOS	21 9a IMPACT! Missions Workshop
22 9a Adult, Children & Youth 10:30a Worship & Fellowship	23 Vacation Bible School 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bible 7p Narcotics Anonymous	24 7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	25 7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Prayer 10:15a Prayer Group	26 7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehearsal	27 7a MOOS	28
29 9a Adult, Children & Youth 10:30a Worship & Fellowship	30 7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bible 7p Narcotics Anonymous	1 7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	2	3	4	5

July 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
		7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group	7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears;	7a MOOS 6p Chocolate Chip Cooki	12p Care and Share Lun
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Holy Communion 9a Adult, Children & You 10:30a Worship & FaceE	7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymou	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group 7p Chancel Choir Rehea	7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears;	7a MOOS	9:30a Food Box Distribu
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9a Adult, Children & You 10:30a Worship & FaceE	7a MOOS 9a Words of Wisdom Bib 7p Narcotics Anonymou	7a MOOS 1p Staff Meeting 6:30p Bible Study	7a MOOS 10a Conference Call Pra 10:15a Prayer Group	7a MOOS 7p Praise Team Rehears;	7a MOOS 6p Chocolate Chip Cooki	

FROM LAMENTATION TO PRAISE

2025 EPA Annual Conference Summary

"Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise." This verse from Jeremiah 17:14 set the tone for the 2025 Eastern Pennsylvania Annual Conference from May 20 to 22 at the Wildwood Convention Center in New Jersey. The Rev. Derrick Gutierrez as Senior Pastor, the Rev. Sally Ott as Pastor of Visitation and Outreach, and Lois Neidermyer as Lay Member represented Covenant Church. Bishop Cynthia Moore-Koikoi, serving both Eastern Pennsylvania and Greater New Jersey Conferences, led the over 425 clergy and laity delegates in worship and in holy conferencing. Tuesday afternoon, the clergy and laity met separately to deal with their own business and prepare for the conference work and worship.

Then in the evening all joined together for a joyful worship service and celebratory recognition of baptism, retirement, commissioning, and ordination. The conference commissioned Rev. Robert Garvey and Rev. Elizabeth Hickok as provisional elders, recognized the orders of Rev. Stacey Jones-Anderson, and ordained Rev. Correen Russo as a deacon and Rev. Kathryn Dinkelacker as an elder.

In her message, Bishop Moore-Koikoi invited each newly commissioned or ordained person to consider where they will live—not the location of their parsonage or the community they serve, but rather where they will choose to live in their emotional landscape. She urged each one to boldly proclaim, "I'm going to live in joy, because I am on my way to praise." The bishop further clarified, "Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy, and we have to choose it every day. Don't live and dwell in pain or brokenness, but live in joy."

District Superintendents anointed those who were retiring, who in turn anointed those who were newly commissioned and ordained, who then anointed newly licensed local pastors and certified lay ministers. The mantle of leadership was passed from one generation of servant leaders to the next. The service concluded with an altar call, where several people came forward, sensing that the Spirit of God was calling them to consider ministry.

The following two days of conferencing began with praise music and Bible study led by Bishop Moore-Koikoi. She focused on Jeremiah 17:14-18 and the journey from lament to praise, recognizing that God is still in the business of working miracles. She urged people to seriously consider the places of pain in their lives and to call out to God for healing. Sharing seven steps toward healing, the bishop emphasized that healing comes not just for our own sake, but "so that the love of God can be shared and so that justice can be spread."

In her State of the Church Address, the bishop described the state of the larger United Methodist Church and reported that following a season of pruning, God is doing something new. One of the signs of newness is the new vision statement of The United Methodist Church: "The United Methodist Church forms disciples of Jesus Christ who, empowered by the Holy Spirit, love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously in local communities and worldwide connections."

In reference to EPA specifically, the bishop described her initial process of collaborative

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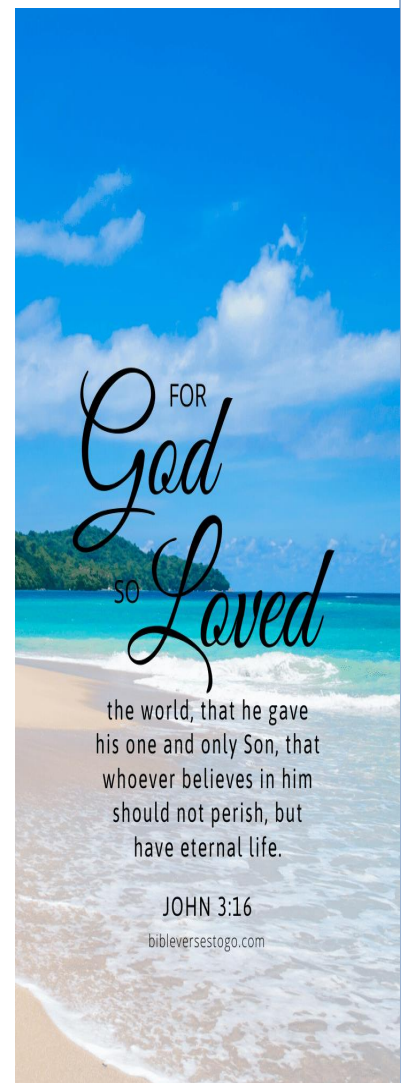
Sidelights

90+ JUNE-JULY BIRTHDAYS

Betty Greider, 6/7
Doris Hiepler, 6/26
Elsie Lorenz, 6/27
Andrew Loechner, 7/24

UPPER ROOM

You can purchase the Upper Room daily devotional for only \$2. We have regular and large print in the office.



Continued from previous page...

listening as she met with the associate superintendents and district superintendents and listened for the needs from the local churches. From those conversations she discerned a new staff structure that would provide more simplicity and transparency. She reminded the conference of the Journey of Healing we had undertaken together with hundreds naming their wounds and participating in healing services and the Lenten Journey of Healing. She concluded her address, "Because of that I know that God will be faithful to heal. Because of that, I know that we will be saved, because God is our praise!"

Bishop Moore-Koikoi gave some of the time from her address so that EPA's cabinet could share about their own journey of healing. Rev. Freymoyer, DS for the West District, offered an apology on behalf of the cabinet, "Superintendency is a sacred trust, and we have broken that trust, and we are sorry." Together the Cabinet confessed the ways they have fallen short through a litany of repentance. Rev. Kent-Clark preached a powerful sermon on forgiveness, and the conference secretary, the Rev. Joong Hyuck Kim, prayed for the cabinet. Following the presentation, the District Superintendents invited everyone to turn to a neighbor and say "If I have done anything to harm you, please forgive me."

Later during the Memorial Service of Remembrance, the Rev. Dr. Andrew Foster III brought a powerful message on Psalm 27, "When the Faithful Feel like Fainting." He traced the trust that saved David from desperate straits and related David's belief to us today: "We can have hope even in pain, because we too know that we will see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living."

During the business sessions known as holy conferencing, EPA considered and voted on the four constitutional amendments passed at General Conference 2020/2024: regional conferences, church membership inclusiveness, racial justice, and election process for clergy delegates to General Conference. The results of the ballots were not announced, so as not to affect the voting of other Annual Conferences. The results will be announced in November.

The delegates also considered, discussed, and passed twelve resolutions: Truth and Healing Commission, LGBTQIA+ Inclusion, Arena Charge Conference Form Submissions, Federated Closure Legislation, Church Closures, Nominations and Leadership Report, Welltower Inc. and Carson Simpson Farm, Equitable Compensation, Adoption Agreement of the 2026 Clergy Retirement Security Program, Ministerial Pension Rate for Pre-82, Rental Housing Allowances, and Advanced Special Applications.

The Rev. Steven Cherry, Chair of the Conference Council on Finance and Administration, presented a report on the status of EPA finances as the search for a new CFO/Treasurer for the Conference is underway. He named the challenges that EPA has overcome over the last few years as well as the ones currently being addressed. He assured the body that they will receive a "de-comprehensified budget" that will be easy to understand at the announced adjourned session in September. Rev. Cherry also named the steps that the CF&A is undertaking to address the long-term challenges, including consultation with an auditing firm and dedication of one staff person to the audit work and put together a budget team for 2026.

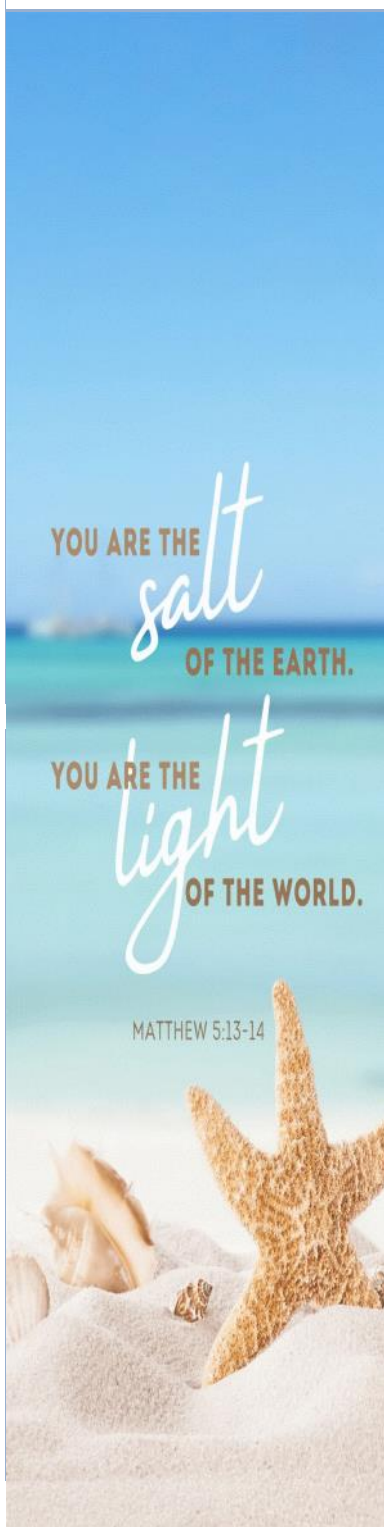
The Annual Conference closed with stirring praise music and a meaningful communion service. All were reminded to love boldly, serve joyfully, and lead courageously through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Submitted and adapted from the online EPA Conference Summary by Lois Neidermyer, Covenant's Lay Member to Annual Conference

Sidelights

HOSPITAL VISITATION

Don't forget to notify the church office when you or a loved one is in the hospital. Our Care Team is available to visit and share prayer.



Update from the Lead Team, continued..

Continued from page 4...

- Covenant is partnering with members from Lampeter UMC, known as the “Soup Angels”, to provide a brown bag lunch for children over the Summer. The lunches will be prepared at Lampeter UMC and delivered to Covenant for pick up on June 12th, July 10th and August 14th. If successful, we hope to continue this ministry in the future.
- The Child Care Center has successfully prepared a new room to increase capacity for Pre-Toddlers. We are still in the process of hiring staff for the room. Please share this information with anyone who may be qualified.
- Benjamin Wesley has announced his resignation. We are beginning the process to find another pianist/accompanist. We are reevaluating the job description to add responsibilities that meet the current and future needs of our Worship experience.
- The pastor will be working with the Vision team to develop a process for the whole church to engage in developing a new vision statement for Covenant.
- The church has received a request from members of another church to use space on Sunday afternoons. We are working through the details.



Lancaster Flute Ensemble

COVENANT UMC PRESENTS 2025 CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIE CONCERT SERIES

**FIRST FRIDAYS AT 6:00 p.m. 110 North Mulberry Street
Free Church Parking Lot Entrance on 300 block of West Orange St.**

Friday, June 6 Lancaster Flute Ensemble - First Friday Flute “Pop.” Group of Central Pennsylvania flutists bringing music and joy.

Friday, July 4 Amy Yovanovich and Christian Seay- Mezzo soprano and tenor share their love of music in song.

Friday, August 1 Benjamin Wesley and Friends -Evening of music with piano, brass and voice.

Friday, Sept 5 4 Strings 4 Him – A ukulele group strumming tunes for all to enjoy.

Friday, Oct. 3 Laus Deo Chorale Concert – Teen and young adult voice and instruments. Guest soloist Brenten McGee

Friday, Nov. 7 Midst the Noise - Five-member band playing pop songs from the 70's.

Friday, Dec. 5 Music For Everyone Community Chorus – Chorus and audience participate in the Sounds of the Season.

Local artists will display artwork before and after the concerts.

COVENANT

United Methodist Church

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