

SCRANTON WILKES-BARRE DISTRICT EXPRESS

February 2020

Monday through Thursday 8:00 AM to 1:00 PM

(Please note that our office operates on the Dallas School District snow delay and Susquehanna Conference Holiday closing schedule)

Office will be closed President's Day, Monday, February 17

District Superintendent: Rev. Judy Walker

Cell Phone: 570-550-5049 jwalker@susumc.org

Assisting Elder: Rev. Doug Sivers

dsivers@susumc.org

Administrative Assistant: Krissie McDermott

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Praise and Prayer Concerns

Praise for the many ministries taking place throughout the SWB District and the many ways we are making disciples of Jesus Christ!

Praise for pastors who completed EZRA reports on time! 😊

Our continuing prayers for:

Pastor Jose Rodriguez - family in Puerto Rico recovering from natural disasters and his upcoming surgery on March 11

Beth Doughton, CLM at Huntsville, suffered a stroke and blood clot on brain; currently in rehab at Wilkes-Barre General

Rev. Miguel Arenas (tests) and Pam (recent car accident)

Our pastors and families who are facing challenges of many kinds

Our Bishop and Cabinet

Pastors and congregations in transition

The United Methodist Church

General Conference 2020 and our Delegates

The Power of Prayer is amazing and we know in truth we all are in need of prayer; however, we would like to make our prayer list more intentional and focused, so please help us fulfill this need by providing for us those currently in need of prayer. Please email scrantonwilkesbarre@susumc.org or call 570-901-1569 to add or remove any prayer requests and/or praises in the SWB District Newsletter. Thank you!

District Information

Appointment Changes in SWB District

Pastor Marge Allegiers retired December 31, 2019 from White Mills UMC.

Welcome to Allison Francesco who is serving as Lay Supply at White Mills from January 1 to June 30, 2020.

Pastor Eugene Sperraza retired from Wilkes-Barre Albright and Wilkes-Barre Central on December 31, 2019; and was appointed in retirement to Extension Ministry as Chaplain at Wesley Village, Pittston.

Welcome to Pastor David Walker who is serving as interim at WB Albright and WB Central from January 1 to June 30, 2020.

Rev. Andy Weidner is retiring from Clarks Summit on June 30, 2020.

Welcome to Rev. John Mackey, his wife Alison and daughter, Millie who will be serving Clarks Summit UMC beginning July 1. John currently serves the Claysburg Charge in the Altoona District.

Rev. Val Rommel is retiring from Alderson/Noxen/Kunkle on June 30, 2020.

Welcome to Rev. Ken Brown and his wife, Kathy, who will be serving Alderson/Noxen/Kunkle beginning July 1. Ken currently serves Richfield UMC in the Lewisburg District.

Pastor Taylor Pfaff will be moving to Lancaster, PA after serving at Lehman-Idetown for the past year.

Welcome Rev. Laura Kyler and her husband, Bryan, who will begin serving at Lehman-Idetown on July 1. Laura currently serves Tri-County Parish in the Williamsport District.

Rev. Mark Terwilliger, Countryside Community Church, will be moving to York District to serve Asbury UMC beginning July 1.

Welcome to Rev. Jim Hollister, his wife, Sondra, and son, Peter, who will begin serving Countryside Community Church on July 1. Jim currently serves Gethsemane UMC in the State College District.

SWB District Lay Speaker/Lay Servant Classes

The District Lay Servants Team and our Cluster Leaders have met and are planning some new and different ways to hold classes for those new to Lay Speaking/Lay Servant ministries and for those who need classes to remain in compliance with requirements. Plans include expanded classes, locations, time frames More opportunities so more people can participate! Watch your e-mail for further details in the very near future.

District Lenten Worship and Prayer Breakfast Gatherings

We all need to feed our bodies and our souls. During the time of Lent, it easy to become “undernourished” because of the busyness this season of the church year brings. Join with District Clergy (Elders, Local Pastors, CLMs, DS Hires, Lay Supply and Lay Servants/Speakers) each Wednesday morning during Lent to be renewed and refreshed by fellowship, worship and prayer together. Locations are throughout the District. Breakfast provided by the folks at each church location. We’ll begin to gather at 8:30 AM; breakfast, worship and prayer will begin at 8:45 AM; we’ll be finished no later than 10:00 AM. Sign up at the link below to attend when you are available:

March 4 – Dorranceton UMC
March 11 – Wilkes-Barre Central UMC
March 18 – Court Street UMC
March 25 – Factoryville UMC
April 1 – Maple Lake UMC
April 8 – Eatonville UMC

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/lentenbreakfast>

Mission Central Gala Scranton/Wilkes-Barre Table



Connecting God's Resources
with Human Need

Join Rev. Judy and Dave Walker at the Mission Central Gala on Saturday, March 28 at 5:00 PM at Camp Hill United Methodist Church, Camp Hill, PA. We will be hosting a table for 8. The night will feature live and silent auctions, recognition of the Volunteer of the Year will be announced, along with a new award, HUB Person of the Year. If you’d like to join us, please contact Judy at jwalker@susumc.org. First six responses will be our guests and enjoy an evening of good food, fellowship and celebrate of the work of Mission Central. Please also let me know of any dietary restrictions you may have.

District Meetings and Events To Get on Your Calendar

Pre-General Conference Informational Meeting, Sunday, March 22, 3:00 PM, Clarks Summit

Chi-Rho Concert, Thursday, April 23, 7:00 PM, Gouldsboro UMC

District Celebration of Ministry (Celebrating the Ministries of those retiring and/or moving from the SWB District), Sunday, May 17, 4:00 PM, Location TBA

District Welcome Picnics, Tuesday, August 25 (North); Friday, August 28 (South), Locations TBA

[More information and registration for these events coming soon!](#)

86% of SWB Church completed the EZRA (End of Year) Statistical Reports by the Deadline!!

All reports should have been completed by the deadline of **February 15, 2020**. If you were not able to meet this deadline, please contact your District Superintendent as soon as possible. By direction of the Conference Cabinet, failure to submit your report by the deadline could result in an additional increase to your church's shares of ministry for the following year.

Congratulations to Back Mountain Cluster -- the 2nd cluster to have all churches submitted!

Alderson	Dallas	Maple Grove
Noxen	Lehman-Idetown	Mt. Zion/Orange
Kunkle	Loyalville	Trucksville
Courtdale/Larksville	Shavertown	Huntsville

Carbondale Area Cluster

Carbondale	Jermyn/Montdale
Clifford/Lennoxville	Tompkinsville
East Benton	

Central District Cluster – All churches submitted

Bethel	Countryside Community
Chinchilla	Dalton/Factoryville
Clarks Green	Nicholson
Clarks Summit	Waverly
Lake Winola/Falls	

Endless Mountains Cluster

Center Moreland	Meshoppen/Lemon/Russell Hill
Eatonville/Evans Falls	Skinner's Eddy/South Auburn
East Lemon	Springville/Dimock
Mehoopany/Jenningsville/Forkston	Tunkhannock

Honesdale Area Cluster

Abrahamsville	Damascus Manor	Smith Hill
Beach Lake	Prompton Community	White Mills

Congratulations Montrose Area Cluster -- First Cluster to have ALL churches submitted!!

Fairdale Community/East Rush	Hop Bottom/Kingsley
Gibson/South Gibson	Montrose
Great Bend/Franklin Forks	New Milford/S. Montrose

Congratulations to the Northern Pocono Area - 3rd Cluster to have all churches submitted!!

Salem Community	LaAnna
Cortez	Lake Ariel
Daleville/Maple Lake	Lakeville
Hemlock Grove/Sterling	Paupack
Moscow/Gouldsboro	Thornhurst
Hawley	

Northeast Cluster

Hancock Emory
Lake Como/Shehawken
Susquehanna/N. Jackson

Pleasant Mount
Thompson

Scranton Cluster

Asbury
Bethel Avoca/Brick
Court Street/Embury
Elm Park

Old Forge/Pittston
Peckville/Bradley Memorial
Taylor
Stewart Memorial/Moosic

Wilkes-Barre Area Cluster – All churches completed!!

Bennett-Derr
Church of Christ Uniting
Dorranceton/Luzerne

Firwood
Forty-Fort
Plains/West Pittston

Wilkes-Barre Albright
Wilkes-Barre Central
Wyoming

Due Dates for Church Conference Forms and Church Conference Minutes

Church Conferences were completed in December. Please remember to have all forms that may be outstanding into the District Office ASAP.

Please note the due dates for the following forms:

Now:

Minutes from 2019 Church Conference
Form 9 Church Trustees Report
Form 9(a) Weekday Children's Ministry
Form 10 Charge Trustees Report
Form 11 Pastor's Continuing Education

March 15, 2020:

Form 12 Local Church Audit
Form 13 Charge Church Audit

Safe Sanctuary Clearances Due

Many of our District clergy are at the five year mark when Child Abuse, PA State Police and fingerprinting clearances are due. Please check your clearances and complete them within the appropriate time frame. It is imperative that the clearances be completed on time. Most of you were reminded at your one on one's this year; however if you need to know if you're clearances are up-to-date, please contact Krissie in the District Office. Procedures for Pastor clearances can be found here: <https://www.susumc.org/safe-sanctuaries/>

Pastors Seeking Retirement 2020

Active Pastors under appointment (Local Church and Extension Ministry) who are considering requesting the Retired Relationship at the 2020 session of annual conference are urged to check paragraph no 357, page 304 in the 2016 Book of Discipline. I call your attention to the second sentence of the opening statement. "Requests for retirement shall be stated in writing to the Bishop, Cabinet, and the Board of Ordained Ministry at least one hundred twenty days prior to the date on which retirement is to be effective unless waived by the Bishop and Cabinet."

If you are intending to retire as of June 30, 2020, your request needs to be sent no later than **March 1, 2020**. If you are considering retirement at the 2020 session of annual conference, please be sure to honor the time restriction. Your request should be sent to the Bishop. Copy your request for retirement letter and send it to your District Superintendent; the Rev Suzanna Elliott, chairperson of the Conference Board of Ordained Ministry; and the Rev. Dr. Dennis Keller, chairperson of the Board's Conference Relations Committee. If you have any additional questions, please be sure to contact your District Superintendent and/or the Episcopal Office.

2020 Mileage Reimbursement Rate

The Internal Revenue Service issued the [2020 optional standard mileage rates \(PDF\)](#) used to calculate the deductible costs of operating an automobile for business, charitable, medical or moving purposes. Beginning on January 1, 2020, the standard mileage rates for the use of a car (also vans, pickups or panel trucks) will be:

- 57.5 cents per mile driven for business use, down one half of a cent from the rate for 2019

Important Property and Casualty Insurance Information

The Property and Casualty Insurance premiums for 2020 are now available on the Conference web site:

<https://susumc.org/property-and-casualty/>

<https://susumc.org/automobile-insurance-billing/>

<https://susumc.org/parsonage-insurance/>

Important PA Sales Tax Exemption Information

Sales Tax Umbrella Reminder/Clarification

As a reminder if you are currently enrolled under the Conferences Umbrella Sales Tax exemption please enter your church name, address, PA sales tax account number and district in the form at the following link ASAP:

<https://c0cqk127.caspio.com/dp/41b12000a4af201772364bc29ee5>

There are only 300 churches registered at this point and these records are being submitted to the Department of Revenue on Tuesday, February 4, 2020, to ensure we have new exemption letters in time.

If your church has its own Sales Tax number and you are sure you are not currently under the Conference's umbrella you do not have to join the umbrella. However, if your exemption expires on March 31, 2020, you are probably part of the Conference's umbrella based on my conversation with the Department of Revenue.

Sincerely,
Mark Knecht

MinistrySafe Online Safe Sanctuaries Training

On Tuesday, October 1st the new MinistrySafe platform was rolled out. If you need your GCFA number, please email safesanctuaries@susumc.org or call 717-766-7441.

If you are having trouble logging in and your number does not appear to be working, please email us your church's information so that we can relay it to MinistrySafe. We have a dedicated tech support who is working to resolve the issues. Thank you for your patience and thank you for putting kids first! Please contact safesanctuaries@susumc.org with any questions

Our staff is ready to answer your questions.

Please use this link for more information <https://www.susumc.org/safe-sanctuaries>

Toothbrushes, Toothbrushes Everywhere!

Thank you to all of our churches who contributed toothbrushes to be included in health kits that will be put together at this year's Annual Conference. We are well over our goal and will have a final count in the near future! But, we need your help! If you (laity especially) like to count and sort, call Krissie in the District Office (570-901-1569) to schedule a time (when the office is open) to help count and sort the boxes, bags, totes, and buckets of toothbrushes we have received!

Pastoral Leadership Development 2020

Quietly Courageous: Leading the Church in a Changing World, Gil Rendle

Session 6 – Thursday, March 26 at Springville UMC

Communicating for a Change, Andy Stanley and Lane Jones

Session 7 – Thursday, April 23

Session 8 – Thursday, May 14

VIM Training 2020

Open to all: those who have lead teams, those who have never been on a team. We can all learn to become better missionaries and servants. **Taking this training does not require you to lead a trip but equips you for service.** We learn from the course materials and from one another. It prepares you to lead an UMVIM Team locally, nationally, or globally. Topics covered include: Best Practices, Cultural Awareness, Health & Safety, Team Orientations, Useful Forms, and Fundraising. Learn more about the connectional system of United Methodist Volunteers In Mission.

9:00 am-4:00 pm

March 14, 2020

Beach Lake UMC

7 Milanville Rd, Beach Lake, PA 1840

Light breakfast and materials provided.

Please bring a bagged lunch.

RSVP to Michelle Schwartzman, Director Volunteers in Mission

2 weeks prior to the training.

vim@susumc.org or 717-766-7441 ext.3105

The Greenhouse Project – District Advanced Special #7310

The Greenhouse Project is growing a sustainable community through education, wholesome food and healthy living through programs such as edible gardening, healthy cooking, and nutrition education, focusing on a healthy community and disease prevention through diet and exercise.

It originated as a United Methodist Shalom Zone in 2002 by Rev. J-P Duncan. The Greenhouse is located at 200 Arthur Avenue in Scranton, Adjacent to Nay Aug Park and Geisinger CMC Hospital. The Greenhouse is one of our Scranton/Wilkes-Barre District Advance Specials (#7310). Please take the opportunity to learn more about the Greenhouse by “liking” them on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/NayAugParkScranton/>) and visiting their website (<https://scrantongreenhouse.org/>). Throughout the year there are opportunities to volunteer (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/297343900444503/>).

Churches and individuals are invited to consider partnering with the Greenhouse and supporting them financially. For more information please feel free to contact Board member Mark Terwilliger at mterwilliger@susumc.org and 570-587-3206. You can also contact Executive Director Jane Risse at jane@scrantongreenhouse.org or 570-344-9186.

Conference Information and Events

Attention All Local Pastors

If you have completed the Course of Study program (20 classes) since last Annual Conference (2019) ... OR ... will complete the Course of Study program (20 classes) before our next Annual Conference (2020) ... please contact me (dwalker@susumc.org) by March 15, 2020 so that I can confirm our records. Thank you!

Please see links or attachments to this newsletter:

- God's Calling Event for those discerning a Call to Ministry – March 21, 2020
- Preaching with Vulnerability – Lewisburg District Event – March 23, 2020
- CAMPS AND RETREATS—Dates Announced: link on the Conference website or: <http://www.susumcamps.org/>

2019 Conference Journal and Pictorial Directory Available Now Online

The 2019 Susquehanna Conference Journal is now available in online PDF format and is available in printed form. Please go to: <https://www.susumc.org/forms-reports-journals/> to download your copy or to order a printed copy.

The 2019 Clergy Pictorial Directory is available for PDF download at <https://susumc.org/pictorial-directory/>

'FLPAM' Newsletter – Sign Up Now!

Sign up to receive **The Vine** - a quarterly e-newsletter from the FLPAM (Fellowship of Local Pastors and Associate Members). This newsletter will provide important information on issues that affect local pastors and associate members—including news concerning Course of Study, trainings, scholarships, as well as the issues that FLPAM is working on to support us all. Anyone interested (not just local pastors and associate members) is welcome to receive the newsletter. The first issue was sent September 30. If you have questions concerning **The Vine**, please contact Calvin Miller at FLPAM@susumc.org.

Local Church Events and Information

Please see the following attachments included in this newsletter:

- SusUMC Next Gathering – Church of Christ Uniting, Kingston - March 1, 2020
- Roast Beef Dinner – February 20 – Wilkes-Barre Albright UMC
- Pancake Breakfast – February 22 – Wilkes-Barre Central UMC

GriefShare is a recovery seminar and support group that will meet at Church of Christ Uniting beginning **Monday, March 2nd at 7:00 p.m.** GriefShare features nationally recognized experts on grief recovery topics. Seminar sessions include “Is This Normal?” “The Challenges of Grief,” “Grief and Your Relationships,” “Why?” and “Guilt and Anger.”

Church of Christ Uniting is located at 190 South Sprague Avenue, Kingston.
For more information and to register, call the church at 570-288-8434.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any questions or would like more information.

Loyaville UMC will be hosting the **World Day of Prayer Service** in our area
at 1 pm **on March 6.**

Lasagna Take-out Dinner *Mehoopany UM Church*

February 22, 2020 (Saturday)

Pre-order only! Cost: \$11.00

MENU – Lasagna, Salad, Bread and Brownie -

Pick-up – 3:00 – 4:00 pm

Interested in purchasing tickets call Penny Farr – 570-833-2859.

First United Methodist Church of New Milford has **12 different Christmas cantatas** available for free. If you are interested, please contact our office at 570.465.3500 or via email at nmumc1@gmail.com.

Personal Home Health Care & Hospice (PHHC) located in **Dunmore, PA** is currently looking for **volunteers** willing to spend quality time with hospice patients.

It is the goal of PHHC to “help make this time as meaningful and comforting as possible for our patients and their families”. As such, we are looking for people willing to provide companionship to our patients during this difficult time.

Training and resources will be provided and the ability to pass a background check is a must. You can find out more about us at www.personalhhc.com or by contacting chaplain Scott Miller at PHCC.volunteers@gmail.com or by calling 570-342-3314.

In 1999, in Noxen, PA, “**The Helping Hearts and Hands Mission Camp**” began as a mission aimed at offering opportunities for spiritual growth to young people as they served those in need in the rural communities of Northeast PA. Participants helped with projects that included painting, repairing roofs & porches, and yard work. In 2008, the camp relocated to Damascus and was there until 2018 when it moved to Countryside Community Church and then on to Fishburn UMC in Hershey, PA. in 2019.

Looking ahead to 2020, the question is, would your congregation be interested in organizing and hosting Helping Hearts and Hands Mission Camp? On average, the camp draws about 20 young people and chaperones. As the host church you would need to provide accommodations, meals, lesson plans, devotions, and work site assignments. Other host churches have been able to meet the cost with the \$75.00 per child registration fee and the generosity of their congregations.

If you would like more information about hosting Helping Hearts and Hands, please contact the Youth Coordinators from Countryside Community Church.

Countryside Community Church 570.587.3206
Debra Doran 570.780.4035
Sal Sollami 570.586.0594

The Greenhouse Project

We are excited to have Bonnie Urzen present an informative and entertaining program about a nutritious staple in people's diets around the world. Bonnie will present the benefits of beans, share ideas on how to prepare delicious and healthy meals with them, and even demonstrate one of her favorite recipes. Food samples will be served.

Bonnie has a background in health and physical education and is currently a school nurse. She tries to eat whole foods as much as possible and not watch too much TV. Her love affair with beans started while living in Costa Rica.

Pulses, legumes, and beans are an inexpensive source of protein, vitamins, complex carbohydrates, and fiber and are a relatively sustainable crop, releasing less greenhouse gases than other crops, and enriching the soil with nitrogen. As part of a plant rich diet, they can even help to reduce chronic disease.

Come and learn more on **Thursday, March 19th at 6:00 p.m.**

Suggested donation is \$5.00.

The Greenhouse Project is located in the James Barrett McNulty Greenhouse, 200 Arthur Ave.,
Scranton, PA in Nay Aug Park.

Please meter park on street or park adjacent to greenhouse or in parking lots at Nay Aug Park.
(Greenhouse is located southwest end of park across street and down from Geisinger CMC.

Please RSVP by replying to this email or responding on the Facebook event
at: <https://www.facebook.com/events/318336799145866/>