



*Connect with God.
Connect with each other.
Connect with the community.*



Happy New Year! Mifflin Community Food Ministry is sending you the history of Souper Bowl of Caring and asking if you/your youth would participate on February 8, 2026, Super Bowl Sunday (or another day in February) by asking the members of your congregation or organization or school to bring in a canned food item that Sunday with a \$1 bill rubber-banded around it and donate the food and money to the Mifflin Community Food Ministry, 57 N. Church Street, Mohnton, PA. You may respond to us by email. Thank you for your help. See below. Janet Reese janet.reese484@gmail.com

A simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" is inspiring a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world. This prayer, delivered by Brad Smith, then a seminary intern serving at Spring Valley Presbyterian Church in Columbia, SC, gave birth to an idea. Why not use Super Bowl weekend, a time when people come together for football and fun, to also unify the nation for a higher good: collecting dollars and canned food for the needy? Youth could collect donations at their schools and churches in soup pots, and then send every dollar and food item directly to a local charity of their choice. That was 1990. Since then, SouperBowl of Caring as part of Tackle Hunger, has generated an extraordinary \$220 million for soup kitchens, food banks and other charities in communities across the country. In addition, hundreds of thousands of youth have experienced for themselves the joy and satisfaction of giving and serving, inspiring people of all ages to follow their generous example. (See souperbowl.org). Please be a part of helping the millions of households in America without enough food by starting with the Mifflin area.

Members may place your canned soup donations in the pots on the counters above the MCFM collection cupboards at the end of the main hallway into the sanctuary anytime between now and Sunday, February 8.

Let's FILL UP THE COUNTER to overflowing!

UMC Choir Rehearsals
Wednesdays at 7:00PM
All are Welcome!

January 14, 21 and 28
February 4, 11, 25



Pastor Nova will be on
Vacation - January 17-
February 3, 2026.
For Pastor needs please call
Assistant Pastor Bob Wagner,
610-406-7038

Scott Piergrossi will be on
vacation February 8-15, 2026

From Holly Wolf, Opportunity House

Thanks for inviting me to attend your worship service today. It was a wonderful experience.

Here are a few things you may want to consider...
Prepare and serve a meal. I know you've done it in the past. We'd love to get your group on the calendar once a quarter. We need breakfast, lunch and dinner—you pick the meal and the date. It's one of the most rewarding things you can do at Opportunity House.

Noisy collection. I loved that. If you want to get your kids involved in a mission focused project, we can help.

Fill The Truck. If the church has a community event (or not) we put our Opportunity House truck on your parking lot and collect gently used clothing, furniture or other household items. It's great community outreach and helps you attract folks to the church. (206 in 2026!)

Kris will contact you mid/late February to talk about how we can expand our involvement with Calvary. We would love to work with you congregation.

JANUARY Birthdays

16 – Cheryl Neal

16 – Amelia Fortunato

18 – Karyn Spengler

In case of inclement weather, please tune into Channel 69 News and watch the lower scroll, and/or check our website for any worship service or meeting cancellations/delays. They will be posted on the **ORANGE** banner at the top of the home page.

The church office will follow the Governor Mifflin schedule for delays, early dismissals and cancellations.

YOUTH GROUP NEWS



BLESSED BONDS

Next Lunch Dates
Wednesday, January
14th 11:30 AM at Sam's
Wyomissing Bistro

Reach out to Linda Chandler
with any questions.

ALL ARE INVITED!

Sunday January 11, 2026 – Kids Club 4:00pm

Sunday, January 18, 2026- Youth (Grades 6-12)
Independent trip on
your own to Greta Glen for Winter Blast.
Please contact Gretna Glenn for details.
No regular Youth Group

Sunday, January 25, 2026- Kids Club 4:00pm

Sunday, February 1, 2026- Youth Group 4:00pm

Sunday February 8, 2026- Kids Club 4:00pm

Sunday, February 13 -15 2026 - “New Date” Pocono
Winter Retreat for older Youth. Cost is TBA. Please let me
know by February 1st if you plan on coming. We would
like to leave around 3:30pm.

Sunday, February 22, 2026- Kids Club 4:00pm

Thursday, February 26, 2026 – Winter Jam at Santander
for older youth. More details soon.

Family Promise of Berks County
Celebration & Fundraiser
20th
Anniversary
Breakfast
Save the Date!
Saturday, April 25, 2026
Join us as we celebrate 20 years of
serving Berks County families in need!
Breakfast Event & Program
Saturday, April 25, 2026
8:30 AM
Venue Atonement Lutheran
We look forward to celebrating with you!



January 18th, 2026

9:15AM ~ Sunday school

10:30AM ~ Traditional Service

Pastor Lyle Neal, preaching

Mifflin Community Food Ministry needs volunteers to help with food distribution on Saturday, January 17, 2026 at the church 8:30AM. All help is greatly appreciated. Help is needed to clean up at the end of distribution

Items needed for January:

INSTANT MASHED POTATOES,
100% JUICE IN 64 OZ CONTAINER,
KIDNEY BEANS IN CAN,
PEANUT BUTTER

Items needed for February:

PEANUT BUTTER,
JUICE IN 64 OZ CONTAINER,
BROWNIE MIX,
PAPER TOWELS,
PUDDING MIX IN A BOX,
YAMS
INSTANT POTATOES

The 2026 Altar Flower chart is available for sponsors to sign up. Check your calendar to see which special occasion/person you'd like to honor or remember by sponsoring flowers to adorn the altar for Sunday worship.



As we move deeper into the season after Epiphany, we continue to explore the glory God reveals among us. While we often emphasize Jesus as the revelation of God's glory, this week's Old Testament reading from Isaiah 49 invites us to consider how God reveals glory through us, God's servants. We are also now firmly in that small corridor of Ordinary Time that bridges between Christmas and Lent. The beauty of Ordinary Time, whether the few weeks at the beginning of the calendar year or the long months through the summer and fall, is that it opens space for us to focus on how to live the substance of our faith in the day-to-day moments and happenings of our lives.

MY PRAYER JOURNAL

TODAYS DATE _____

MONTH: J F M A M J J A S O N D

DAY OF THE WEEK: S M T W T H F S

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

GOD, I ASK YOU FOR:



SOMETHING GOOD THAT HAPPENED TODAY WAS:

I'M THANKFUL FOR:

I'M SORRY FOR:

SOMETHING NOT SO GREAT HAPPENED TODAY, AND I NEED PRAYERS:



A SPECIAL NOTE OR PICTURE FOR GOD:

I AM PRAYING FOR:

Nova Vitug- Thomas 10:30 AM January 11, 2026 Calvary UMC

Sermon: “Power of Presence” *Matthew 3:13-17 Acts 10:34-43*

Baptism of the Lord

After the beauty and wonder of Christmas, the Church brings us to the Jordan River. Not to angels. Not to shepherds. Not to a manger. But to water. To the Jordan River. The Baptism of the Lord invites us into questions that aren't meant to be rushed, questions of identity, faithfulness, and what it truly means for God not to remain distant, but to step fully into human life. Today, we will linger at the water and reflect on why that moment matters—not only for Jesus, but for how we understand who we are.

Baptism Across Christian Traditions

As Christians, we share **one baptism** in Christ, even as we practice it in different ways. In the **Catholic Church**, baptism is also a sacrament of grace and incorporation into the Church. It is usually practiced with infants, emphasizing baptism as the beginning of a lifelong journey of faith within the sacramental life of the Church. In **Baptist churches**, baptism is practiced after a person makes a personal profession of faith. It is understood as a powerful witness—an outward sign of an inward commitment—and is typically done by full immersion, symbolizing dying and rising with Christ. In the **United Methodist Church**, baptism is understood as a **sacrament of God's grace**. It is a sign of what God does for us before we can do anything for God. We baptize infants, children, and adults, trusting that God's grace comes first, and that faith grows over time within the community of the church. Because baptism is God's action, we practice baptism **once**, and later reaffirm it as we continue to live into its meaning. Different practices. Shared faith. One Lord. One calling.

Why Is Jesus Here

All four Gospels (Mt, Mk, Lk Jn) tell the story of Jesus' baptism. Before his public ministry began, Jesus went into the water. Matthew tells us that Jesus comes to John to be baptized—and John is immediately uncomfortable. “*I need to be baptized by you,*” John says. John knows what kind of baptism this is. His baptism is a baptism of repentance. It is about confession, turning, preparation.

And Jesus does not need repentance, (embarrassing moment)

So why does Jesus insist? Because Jesus is not coming to the water to be cleansed. He is coming to the water to **stand with us**. This is the power of presence.

Jesus does not begin his ministry from above, removed from human need. He begins it by stepping into the same water as sinners, seekers, and the broken. He does not save from a distance. He saves by drawing near

John the Baptist and the Temple Connection

To understand what is happening here, we need to remember something about worship in Jesus' time. Before anyone could bring an offering to the Temple, they had to wash. Ritual cleansing in water—often in a mikveh—was required before approaching the altar. Water prepared the worshiper to stand before God and to offer sacrifice. The pattern was clear: **Water** → **Preparation** → **Sacrifice** → **Forgiveness** John the Baptist is not inventing something new out of thin air. He is standing *outside* the Temple, but he is speaking the Temple's language. Only now, the preparation does not lead people toward stone walls and animal sacrifice. It leads them to the Jordan River. John is saying, *God is doing something new*. Repent. Turn. Prepare. Not because you are bringing a lamb, but because **the Lamb is coming. Jesus Enters the Water as the Lamb of God** When Jesus steps into the Jordan, the meaning deepens. Jesus is not one more worshiper preparing to bring a sacrifice. **He is the sacrifice.** Later, John will name him plainly: **“Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.”** In the Temple system, lambs were examined, washed, and prepared before being offered. At the Jordan, Jesus enters the water as the Lamb—willing, obedient, humble. This is not accidental. This is obedience. Jesus aligns himself fully with the Father's will. He chooses the path that will lead not away from suffering, but through it, for the sake of the world. The Jordan becomes a place of preparation—not for a sacrifice we bring to God, but for the sacrifice God brings to us. **Heaven Opens** When Jesus comes up out of the water, heaven opens. The Spirit descends. And the voice speaks: “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.” Before Jesus heals anyone. Before he preaches a sermon. Before he performs a miracle. He is named. He is claimed. He is loved. **This is crucial. Jesus is affirmed not for what he has done, but for who he is.** And this, too, is the **power of presence.**

What Does This Mean for Us? Our baptism is not simply about washing away sin. It is about being claimed—about belonging to God and to one another. Just as Jesus stepped into the water to stand with humanity, we are baptized to stand with the world to live lives shaped by presence rather than distance. And if we are baptized into Christ, then we are sent to do the same. **Remembering Our Baptism** Friends, today we have stood with Jesus at the Jordan watching him step into the water in obedience, in humility, and in love. He did not come to offer something to God. He came to **offer himself.** So I invite you, as you feel led, to come forward, to touch the water, to remember the grace that claimed you, and to offer yourself again to God as a living sign of Jesus' presence in the world. Come, not to be re-baptized, but to be renewed. Not because you are perfect, but because you are beloved. As you come, remember: **Christ lives in you.** And through you, Christ continues to be present loving, serving, and giving himself for the life of the world. **Come, and remember your baptism in the Lord.**

Remember your baptism and be thankful