



Stroudsburg UMC

547 Main Street, Stroudsburg Pa

www.stroudsburgumc.com

sumc@stroudsburgumc.com

570-421-6020

Worship Sundays at 8:30 and 11:00 am

Weekly eNews

*The Reverend Monica B. Guepet, M. Div.,
Lead Pastor*

Gather, Grow, Make a Difference!

Our Mission: Share the love of Jesus in welcoming and compassionate ways.

A note from the Pastor - December 19, 2025

"When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him" Matthew 1:24

Often, the difficult parts are edited out. If a friend asks how you are doing, we tend to say, I'm fine. Unless we sense they are interested in the whole story, we tend not to tell the storied challenges. It has always amazed me that the scripture include not only the miraculous works of God and the admirable lives of humans, but also the messy lives of humans in many of their complications and difficulties. In the story of Mary and Joseph, we tend to focus on the miraculous and the wondrous. We tell of the coming of the Savior, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the presence of angels, the immediacy of the shepherds, and the travel and worship of the Magi. But there is even more recorded in the word of God.



I would like to take a moment to consider Joseph and the impossibility of his situation. Joseph was descended from the house and line of David. The preceding verses in Matthew 1 draw from generation to generation the incredible works that God has been doing in Joseph's family. We do not have any details about the courtship or betrothal of Mary and Joseph. From custom, we imagine her to be young and he to be more aged, without any definite numbers for their ages. We do know that Joseph was a respectable and respected man, who sought to live out his faith. In this inspiring story of Joseph, his life situation looks bleak. He is engaged to be married, and his fiancée is pregnant with a child, that he has not fathered. His instinct is to quietly handle the dissolution of contract and intent, to bring the least amount of shame and attention to both of them.

However, God has something different in store. God's way right-side-ups the situation. Mary's pregnancy is not the result of some out of relationship liaison, but rather the work of the Holy Spirit. As Joseph dreams, the Holy Spirit shares vision and prophecy. Joseph, like anyone who has had a compelling dream, reorients his understanding and moves in the direction of following after God. When Joseph found himself in an impossible situation, an angel of the Lord arrived with hope, making room for a new God-given possibility! The inclusion of the hard times remind us that we have hope, not just when everything is going our way, but hope that allows us to anchor ourselves in God in the face of a storm.

So, whether you are in a season of tranquility or choppy water, consider how sharing your challenges with a few people might actually give God more fodder for the Holy Spirit. The inclusion of this story reminds us the relationship uncertainties and challenges are not

beyond the work of God, rather they are a central part of the story of the birth of our Savior. Joseph's quiet support of Mary is a pillar of the whole Nativity story in which the unexpected becomes possible. Compassion and God's inbreaking take precedence over expected order of life circumstance. Where are you being called to take a nap, listen for the Holy Spirit, and make space for the Hope of God?

In God's Love,
Pastor Monica

GATHER!

Coming up this Sunday, December 21st -

It's the Fourth Sunday in Advent

Our worship leaders are Jenny and Jeanette

The praise song is "Soon and Very Soon"

The Choral Anthem is "Glory Will Arise"

The New Testament Lesson is Hebrews 6:16-20

The Gospel Lesson is Matthew 1:18-25

Pastor Monica's sermon is "Room for Hope" (I want my listeners to make room for hope.)



Hope is our anchor when all else seems to be moving around us. Where are you making room for hope in your life? Join us on Sunday as we make room together.

Join us in person at 8:30 or 11:00 am or

Join us live at 8:30 -

<https://youtube.com/live/SaJCnUeQqxE>

Join us live at 11:00 -

<https://youtube.com/live/FHE1yJvxtVE>

The bulletin is available on the church website: stroudsburgumc.com

Stay up to date on church events - click the link below for our Google calendar:

[SUMC Calendar](#)

Wondering about winter weather and snow? How will you know if the worship service is canceled? Announcements will be posted by 7am on the Sunday morning regarding worship. You can check your emails for cancellation or the church Facebook page. Feel free to share the news with others as well. Our congregation comes from a large geographic area. The weather in town might be different from the accumulation or the road conditions in



Tobyhanna, Analomink or even East Stroudsburg. Please use your best discretion for travel. If there is a service, you can worship online.

We are so thankful for our staff. Over this holiday season, our church office will be closed on December 24th, starting at noon, and on December 26th. The office will be open on December 29th and December 30th. The office will be closed on December 31st - January 1st and reopen on January 2nd—regular hours resume on Monday, January 5th. Pastor Monica will be on vacation from December 25th to January 2nd. If you have pastoral care needs during that time, please contact Pastor Margie.

Stroudsburg United Methodist Church
547 Main Street Stroudsburg PA 18360

Sundays 8:30 and 11:00 Worship
Christmas Eve: December 24
2:30 pm
7:30 pm
11:00 pm
Sunday, December 28 10:00 am

*Join us as we gather, grow,
and make a difference
together*

www.stroudsburgume.com

Please plan to join us for Christmas Eve with family and friends.

Come to the 2:30 pm service for lessons and carols, and be home before dark.

Join us at 7:30 pm as our choirs offer beautiful music, a play is planned, and we end with Silent Night candlelight.

Looking for Holy Communion, worship with us at 11:00 pm as we offer carols, candles, and communion.

Once more our Nativity is on the move. Follow it as it moves from window to window on its way to the manger for Christmas Eve. First into the manger are Mary and Joseph. Second come the sheep outside the manger. Then on Christmas Eve baby Jesus arrives. Later on Epiphany the wise men arrive to the manger. Our pieces were handcrafted by Joni Singer in 1963. They were given to the church in 1993.

Save the Date for Women's Epiphany by Pastor Margie

Last year, some of the women, in our church family, attended the Women's Epiphany at the East Stroudsburg Presbyterian Church. It characterized the time

when it is a type of women's sanctuary where ladies take some time away to rest after the busy Advent and Christmas season. We had some inspirational speakers, had some workshops to choose among for us and made some pertinent crafts. We had lunch together and it was inspirationally wonderful. This year's date is Saturday, January 10. We are planning on going again and would like you to mark your calendar to join us.

Combined Worship Service and Light Lunch December 28

By Pastor Margie

On Sunday, December 28, we will have a one service, at 10:00 A.M. and I will be preaching it. As is the tradition in most churches, the lead pastor is off the Sunday after Christmas. My sermon will continue with our Sanctuary theme focusing on offering refuge and sanctuary for others. Last year, our after church fellowship was so special for both services combined into one. We had a wonderful time chatting together.

The M and E committee will be serving sandwiches and other items; please join us for it. My Aunt Mildred used to call these meals "light lunches;" I am sure we will enjoy some time together and have had our lunches giving us time for an afternoon walk or a chance to use our Christmas gift cards for the after Christmas sales. We hope to see you there!

Just Social Christmas Luncheon

By Pastor Margie

The Just Social group enjoyed a great lunch at the Red Lobster on December 9. We had fourteen people and it was great; the separate checks made it so convenient to pay our bills. We appreciated receiving candy favors for the event. My grace was centered with our theme of finding sanctuary and refuge for others and ourselves. Diane and Brenda lead the group and they are hoping to have even more members in 2026. They meet the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month, at 1:30 P.M. in the lounge.

Pocono Plateau Winter Retreats

We are excited to send out some information regarding the annual Winter Retreats! The dates this year for the Winter Jamboree (Led by Melissa Werner and Sarah Kuhn) and Winter Blast (Led by Liz and Rev. Jared Stoltzfus) have shifted slightly. This year the retreats will be held over the weekend of **February 27th-March 1st**.

You can find more information [here](http://www.pocconoplateau.org/event).



The Longest Night Service is an opportunity for us to unite as a community and seek peace amidst the storms. Join us on Sunday, December 21st, 7pm at St. John's Lutheran Church. All are welcome. We will be

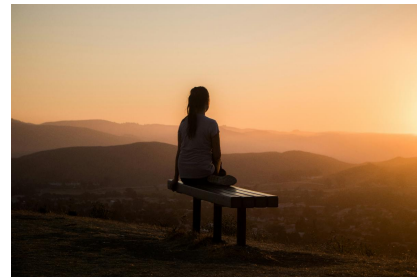
taking a free will offering to benefit our Housing Families Grant with Habitat for Humanity.



Living a Contemplative Life in a World That Isn't

By Sarah Borgstrom Lee

In April 2026, a dream seven years in the making will come to life. A five-day Academy for Spiritual Formation, titled “Living a Contemplative Life in a World That Isn’t,” will be held in the Northeastern Jurisdiction. This experience is designed to help participants deepen their faith and become rooted and grounded in the love of God—a love that never lets them go. **Go deeper (2 min read)**



Save the dates for 2026 VBS here at
SUMC!
June 22nd through June 26th
5:30pm-8:00pm



Save the dates for 2026 VBS at Zion UCC
July 27th through July 31st
Morning session time TBD

December Birthdays

Carol Romansky - December 5
Debra Kirkland - December 12
Sheronica Stirton - December 16
Alex Herrero- December 18
Laurie Washburn - December 19



Happy
**BIRTHDAY
WISHES**

Scott Sebring - December 20
Peter Guepet -December 28
Buddy Rambo - December 28
Crista Kopec - December 31
Sam Gaston - December 31

JUST SOCIAL

2ND AND 4TH TUESDAYS FROM 1:30-3:00PM

THE NEXT MEETING IS OCTOBER 14TH.

**COME JOIN US! PLAY CARDS, BOARD GAMES OR JUST
CHAT. DO YOU HAVE A HOBBY INTEREST YOU'D LIKE
TO SHARE? HAVE YOU READ A BOOK THAT WAS SO
GOOD YOU JUST HAVE TO TELL SOMEONE ABOUT IT? IF
THIS IS YOU, OR SOMEONE YOU KNOW, WE WOULD
LOVE FOR YOU TO JOIN US!
USE THE ANN STREET ENTRANCE**



The 2026 Altar Flower chart is up in the Fellowship Room

Please consider putting flowers on the
altar in memory of or in honor of a
special person or event. Two vases cost
\$37.50

Special Person of the Week:

Kathy Blackburne

537 Barry Street

Stroudsburg, PA 18360

**Please remember her in prayer and if
possible, please send a card.**

SAVE THE DATES
JANUARY 23, 2026 - JANUARY 24, 2026

Vision Retreat
at Pocono Plateau

JOIN US
LIVE

SUNDAYS AT 8:30 AND 11:00 AM

LIVE STREAM



STROUDSBURGUMC.COM

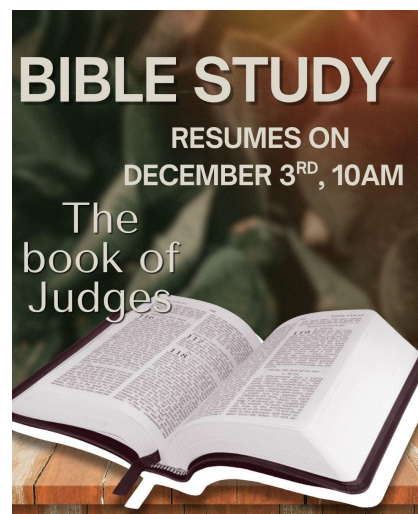
YouTube: @stroudsburgumc3087

GROW!

Bible Study

In this busy season, our Bible Study will resume meeting on January 7th with the ebook of Judges and the story of Gideon, who had lots of questions. Join us online or in person on Wednesday at 10 a.m. in the lounge. No preparation required.

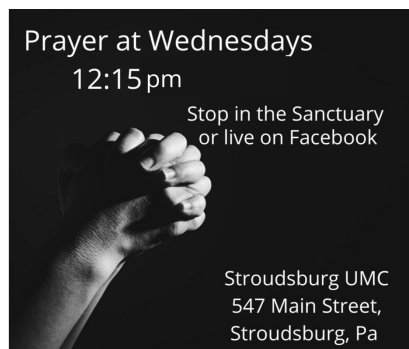
Judges Spiral



COUNTERS NEEDED Our church is in need of additional counters of Sunday collections. If you have a couple of hours free on Monday mornings, please let the office know or call C.J. Penwell at 570-656-3993. You will work with a head counter who will train you on the procedures used. It is not difficult and is a casual atmosphere. Counters are scheduled for each Monday for a month and then rotate to another month throughout the year. Please consider volunteering to help the church in this way.



There is still time to return your 2026 estimate of giving card. These help us plan well for the coming year. Copies of giving estimate cards and service surveys are available in the back of the church.



OPEN SANCTUARY Every Wednesday, our church is open from noon to 1pm for prayer. We have a devotion and live prayer at 12:15. You can join us live in person, online or view it later on Facebook. You do not need a Facebook account to participate. Join us for Open Sanctuary.



COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER REVITALIZATION PROJECT

Did you know that our church is a resource for our community? In addition to our weekly Soup Kitchen, Boy Scout Troop and Cub Pack, we partner with community organizations like Red Cross blood drives and emergency shelter, and others to make a difference in our community. Our building and property team has been working on revitalization plans for our downstairs to reflect our needs and growth. Updates and alignments to the kitchen,

improvements, and accessibility to the bathrooms and refreshing to the dining room are included. Plans will be available for viewing after each service in the Fellowship Room. Ask our building and property team for more information.

UPDATE: As we are pondering donations to the Community Resource Center Revitalization Project keep this in your thoughts: Donations of \$10,000 or more will be recognized on a bronze plaque which will be unveiled at a dedication ceremony. Families might consider joining together to memorialize

or honor a loved one.


Learn more about the 2026 Wesleyan Pilgrimage to England with Bishop Moore-Koikoi

The pilgrimage will take place from April 8-16, 2026 departing from Newark or Philadelphia. Pilgrims will see Coventry Cathedral, Epworth, Memorial Church, St. Andrews Church, Cotswolds, Stratford, Oxford, Bristol, Bath, City Road Chapel, Aldersgate Street, Buckingham Palace, and much more! Educational Opportunities will lead a Zoom information session on Oct. 21 at 6:30pm. Join [here](#) or with Meeting ID: 843 3773 4363 Password: 314210

MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Give to a Mission

A variety of missions are supported by our church. You can make a difference both locally and around the world by giving to these missions. If there is a particular mission that interests you, please provide the information to the office. Thank you for your continued support! If you have questions, please contact the office.



DID YOU KNOW?

The IRA Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) allows you, once you have reached the age of 70½, to donate up to \$100,000 within each tax year directly from your IRA without treating the distribution as taxable income. The contribution can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.

Give to the church and care for your financial health.

Community Resource Center Revitalization Celebration

Mark your calendars for May 30th as we raise final funds for the Community Resource Center Revitalization. Are you interested in helping coordinate the event, raise donations, or be part of the planning? Join us on January 16th at 6:00 pm on Zoom. Let the office know if

you are interested.

 save the date!

STROUDSBURG COMMUNITY
RESOURCE CENTER
FUNDRAISER DINNER & TRICKY TRAY

We invite our community partners - and all who share our passion for serving those in need - to join us for an evening of connection, compassion, and giving back.



When: Saturday May 30th
Time: 4:00pm - 7:00pm
Where: Pocono Plateau Camp & Retreat Center (Cresco)

Stay tuned for more details!



Stroudsburg UMC breaks ground on new community resource center

By Sarah Borgstrom Lee

Stroudsburg UMC is deeply committed to serving the community that surrounds the church. For more than 24 years, they've been welcoming people through their doors for a Sunday afternoon meal, community, and connection. Now the church is preparing to take that collaboration to the next level as they break ground on a new community resource center. [Go deeper \(4 min read\).](#)



Staff Christmas Gift

We give thanks for our pastors and staff all year around. At Christmas, we bless them with a love offering. In the rear of the sanctuary, you will find a gift wrapped box for your gift. In order for us to share those gifts by Christmas, please offer your gift by December 21st. Thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Paint the Town Red is a wonderful collaboration between some of the downtown churches to both beautify our town and raise funds for the food ministries. From donations received last year, we received \$586.62 for our soup kitchen. If you are interested in helping this year, we will begin this work in November, preparing ribbons, placing ribbons,

resourcing tables at the Christmas tree lighting, and other holiday events. You can purchase a bow [here](#) or contact the office if you are interested.



Advent Bags

This week, we begin Advent. Advent bags will be available Sunday for our congregation, shut-ins, and community. Join us as we seek sanctuary that God offers to us, make room in our hearts for the Christ child and those invited in by God.

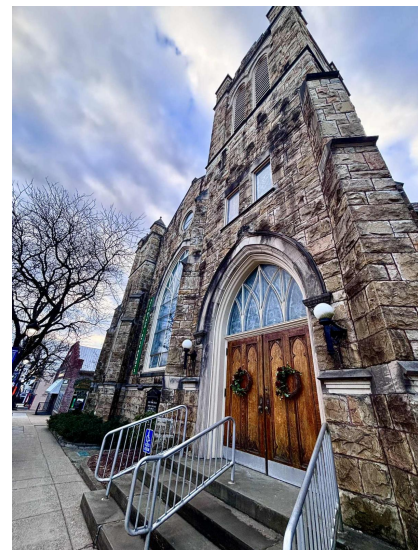


Advent is HERE!

One of our traditions is the lighting of the Advent Wreath for the four weeks before Christmas and Christmas Eve. We have families, friends, and church family groups light the candle and lead the liturgy. Consider signing up in the Fellowship room. We are still in need of people to light the candle and lead the liturgy on December 24th 2:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

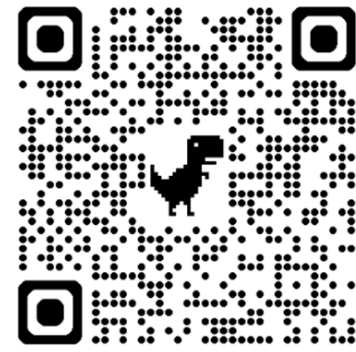
Calendar Fundraiser

Trying to get your Christmas shopping done before Christmas? Looking for a gift for someone who already has everything? Purchase a calendar with breathtaking images of our church and stained glass windows. A portion of your gift covers the expense of the calendar, and the rest benefits our Community Resource Center. Calendars are \$35.95. There are only 3 left!



As a result of your generosity, we are originating a grant for families seeking basic necessities at the Re-Store. We have established a partnership with Habitat for Humanity, Family Promise, and Safe

Monroe, so that all families under case management seeking necessities (beds, tables, chairs) will receive them free of cost. The purchase will be funded from the Housing Families Grant. We are working with other faith organizations to support this effort. Thank you for caring for others. If at any point you would like to contribute to this grant, please mark your donation, Housing Families Grant, and we will be sure to administer the funds.



Giving is easier than ever. Use this QR code to give to the general fund or special ministry. Contact the office for more information.



Pastor's Discretionary Fund

Thanks to your generosity, we have already assisted dozens of families with rental assistance, utilities, food, and other essential needs. With changes to federal, state, and county funding, we are seeing an increase in the number of those coming for assistance. While we work with other agencies, the impact of funding shortages is affecting a lot of organizations. If you are able to contribute to our pastor's discretionary fund at any point and any amount, please place your contribution in the offering plate with the designation. You can also give on our website stroudsburgumc.com/donate
Thank you for helping us care for others.



We are still collecting Weis receipts. Weis Markets gives back 1% of the total of each receipt submitted. It all adds up! Please continue to bring your Weis receipts to church and place them in the large canister in the Fellowship Room.

Please note: the entire receipt needs to be submitted. Please do not cut the bottom of the receipt off. If the bottom portion of the receipt is cut off, we cannot submit it to Weis.

Receipts for prescriptions and gift cards can also be submitted.

Thank you for helping to make a difference!

The most recent check we received was in the amount of \$151.78!

SUMC's Amazon Wish Lists

Soup Kitchen Needs

[Amazon Wish List - Soup Kitchen](#)



Soup Kitchen

Our Soup Kitchen is a vital ministry feeding our neighbors every Sunday. We continue to serve take-out meals as well as offer our guests the option to sit down in the dining room and eat. Food stability remains a vital part of our community. Meals are served every Sunday from 2-3pm. We are always looking for additional volunteers to prepare and serve the meals.

Are you looking for how you can help the Soup Kitchen if you are unable to prepare and serve meals? When you are shopping, we need the following: Cases of water and Styrofoam take out containers. Check out our Amazon Wish List for Soup Kitchen and have items sent directly to the church! [Amazon Wish List - Soup Kitchen](#)
Thanks for serving our neighbors.



SOUP KITCHEN UPDATE - NOVEMBER 2025

As of December 14 we have served over 4,450 meals. We have started to fill in the calendar for 2026. If you're interested in serving on a particular Sunday, please let the office know. If you have questions, please contact the office.

