



Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top, PA
Mission Study Statement
*May 2019**

Striving to Center Our Lives on God's Will



Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top Mission Statement

The Presbyterian Church of Mountain top strives to center our lives on God's will using our hands and hearts to serve the body of Christ and reach out to all in love.

Introduction

The term mission has many definitions, from a military action to a group sent to a foreign country with political or religious intent. Among the many definitions there is one common thread in each, that being, a person or persons with an objective. We at the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top have a mission. That is to find a pastor to lead our flock and to provide us with the nurturing for our souls. How do we do this? How do we convince a candidate that the move to Northeastern Pennsylvania is a move worth making?

Our church, though small by comparison to others, is healthy and dedicated to continuing our commitment to God, to our community and to each other. We are looking for a pastor who will lead us in our mission. One who will help us continue to strive to center our lives on God's will by using our hands and hearts to serve our Lord Jesus Christ.

Table of contents

Scriptural Guidance —	4 -5
Our history —	6
Our Transition Team activities —	7 - 9
Our Church Organization —	10
Pastor—	10
Elders & Session —	11
Deacons —	12
Trustees —	13
Our Congregation Demographics —	14
Our Sanctuary —	15 - 16
Our Church Groups & Events —	17 -21
Our Financial Status —	22 - 23
Our Community & Region —	24 - 29
Looking Ahead—	30

Respectfully Submitted by The Transition Team, Presbyterian Church Mountain Top

Scriptural Guidance

“Scripture tells us that if we seek the Kingdom of God first, then all the things we need will be given to us. When we place God first in life, we see him working through all circumstances and events for our good. Whether you are just beginning to seek out God or you have been a Christian for years, we should never stop seeking to know God better!” Note from biblestudytools.com

We must take heart and have faith that the pastor we seek is out there, also, looking for us. We will find each other when the time is right. We are average people living every day lives. We believe in the Lord God, but without nurturing that belief could wane just like without nutrition we would waste away. We pray that our pastor will find us soon so that we aren't to be tested for too long.

1 Chronicles 22:19 *“Now devote your heart and soul to seeking the Lord your God. Begin to build the sanctuary of the Lord God.”*

Romans 10:10-15 **10** *“For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. 11 As Scripture says, Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame. 12 For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, 13 for, Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. 14 How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them? 15 And how can anyone preach unless they are sent? As it is written: How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!”*

Acts of the Apostles Throughout Acts time and time again we see how the Word of God was spread by those He has chosen to take on this task **1:2** *...“until the day he was taken up to heaven, after giving instructions through the Holy Spirit to the apostles he had chosen.”*

We also must have faith that the Leadership of our Faith, the Presbytery of Lackawanna will send us a candidate who will be able to fulfill our needs as a pastor. **6:3** *“Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them 6:5 ...They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also, Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them.”*

Scriptural Guidance

As a congregation we need to believe that our new pastor is already chosen. He/she may be an unexpected choice one which we must approach with discernment and prayer. **Acts 9:15** *“But the Lord said to Ananias, Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel.”* Prayer and scripture is the cornerstone of our Mission to find a new pastor for our soon empty pulpit.

We want to know as much about him/her as we can and at the same time it is important that he/she knows about us. That is the purpose of this narrative.



We pray that the right person will open the door from within to lead us in the way of God.

Our History

Humble Beginnings

This is a brief record of the tremendous effort of the Reverend W. J. Day and the group of dedicated Christians who together organized our church and shepherded it through the early years of our existence.

The modest beginning of our congregation began in May of 1876 when the committee representing surrounding communities approached the Reverend William J. Day, pastor of the Coalville (Ashley) Presbyterian Church to assist them in organizing a Presbyterian Sunday School in the Mountain Top area.

In June of 1879, the trustees resolved to purchase land for a church structure. The Lehigh Coal and Navigation Company donated a lot 100' X 190' on the Penobscot, White Haven Road. The deed was dated August 26, 1879. A building committee hired a contractor, Samuel Dutt and ground was broken in September 1879. The building was completed in early 1880. The building was dedicated on February 20, 1880.

The church remained a branch of the Ashley Presbyterian Church until 1887, with Rev. Day providing the pastoral care for both churches until 1887. In April of that year, Rev. Day, at a meeting of the Lackawanna Presbytery, presented a request that the Mountain Top Church be separated from the Ashley Church and be reorganized as The Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top. The request to separate the Ashley Church and the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top was granted and the decision was entered in the Session minutes of May 22, 1887.

By 1926 the church had outgrown the original location. Under the direction of the Reverend Andrew Scott, a plan was presented to and approved by the Presbytery to secure a location for a new and larger building. In 1927 the present land was purchased. Early in May of 1928, ground was broken and on July 15, 1928, at 3:00 P.M. Mrs. Emma Johnson was given the honor of laying the Corner Stone. Work on erecting the building started immediately with masonry contractor H. O. Roth under the supervision of D. R. Koons, general contractor.

On November 11, 1928, at the 11:00 AM service our present brick building was dedicated.

The Transition Team

Dr. Susan Malkemes, Clerk of Session

Steve Bachman

Nancy Badal

Bob Brittain

Anne Cleaver

Dr. Seth Fisher and Carolyn Fisher

Audrey Frankenfield

Dr. Greg Koons

Dr. Wes Mullen

Cheryl and John Pekar

Amy Randall

Shirley Spaide

Peggy Spaide

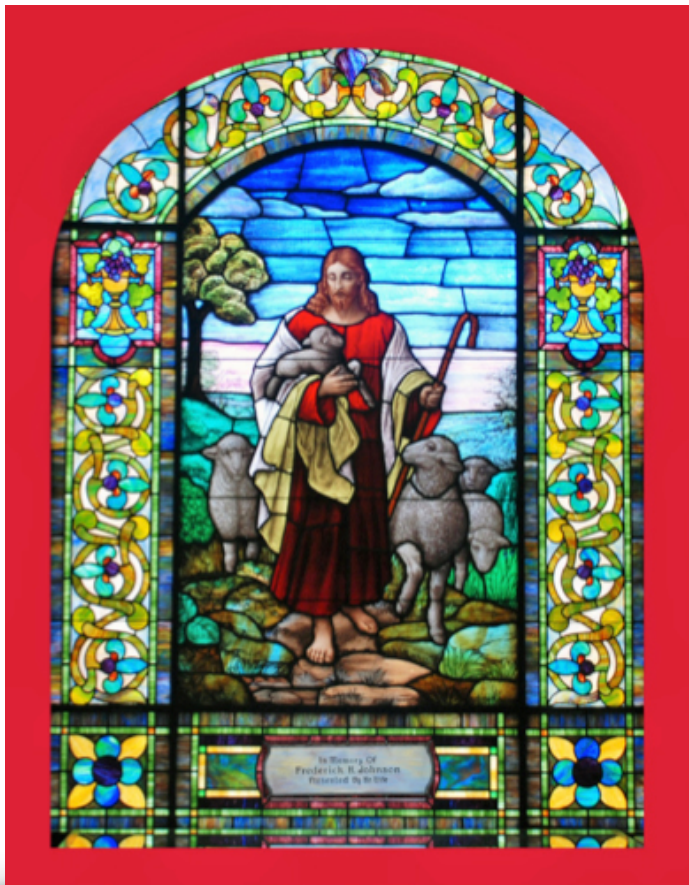
Trish Tredway

Linda Weaver

Pam and Dave Zaprazny

Barbara and Rich Zeglin

Our Transition Team first met on 09/11/2018. Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top Transition Team is made up of new and old church members, men and women, young and seniors. The Session, Deacons, Trustees and congregation are represented on this team. On average 13-15 people attend the meetings since we began the process of transition.

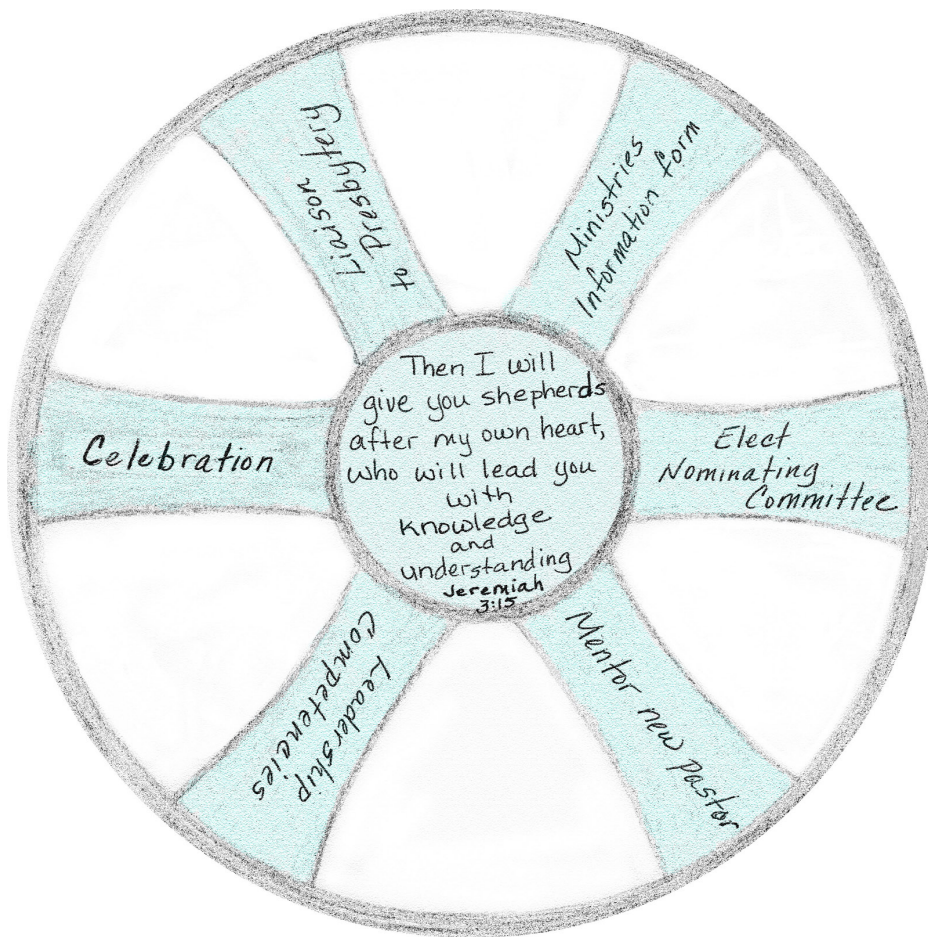


Our pastor has been with us for 32 years, so we are faced with the challenge without much prior experience. We discussed the many aspects of our newest mission. The first order of business was to get organized. We agreed that scriptural guidance and prayer will be our center of focus.

“Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.” Jeremiah 3:15

The Transition Team

The group decided upon a symbolic icon, a wheel, to represent our mission and the progress we will make. At the center of our wheel is the scripture message Jeremiah 3:15. The spokes of the wheel are the committees and tasks to be accomplished over the several months of transition that we will face.



The Transition Team

Spokes of the Wheel

- Celebration-Anne Cleaver, Audrey Frankenfield, Amy Randall, Pam Zaprazny, Carolyn Fisher
- Leadership Competencies – Peggy Spaide
- Liaison to Presbytery – Bob Britain, Dr. Greg Koons, Dave Zaprazny
- Ministries Information Form –
 - Ministry Study Narrative-Nancy Badal
- Elect Nominating Committee – Anne Cleaver
- Welcoming Committee – Pam Zaprazny, Barb & Rich Zeglin, Amy Randall

Now we venture on, one step at a time, to meet the goals and requirements needed to call a new pastor and at the same time plan for the future after our pastor leaves.



The Celebration Committee has prepared for the Farewell Celebration for Rev. Shanley. Dates are set invitations are still circulating but for the most part RSVPs have been steadily come in. The expectation is about 200 people attending.

In the months following our first meeting our journey has taken us down a few different pathways. Our pastor will be retiring, leaving our pulpit open soon. We are discussing all of our options during this time of transition including calling an interim pastor, asking local available retired pastors to provide for our pastoral needs, and utilizing Session members to provide Sunday sermons. Most recently we began exploring the new Residency Program recently instituted by the Presbytery of Lackawanna as an option to fill our pulpit need.

With each step we take we are making decisions, having discussions, but most of all praying for the guidance needed to get to the end of the journey and the mission.

Our Church Organization



Our church organization is like other congregations of the Presbyterian Church, USA.

The Pastor

We will be searching for the right person who can fill our pulpit vacancy.

We are looking the right person who will lead us, but also partner with us in faith. A pastor who will see our church as a *“Temple of God”* (I Corinthians 3:9-17). In fact, we believe that the Church is actually more than a building but rather the people who pass through those doors each Sunday to worship, pray and enjoy fellowship with one another. Indeed, the church is made up of many people who bring their gifts to bear in the name of God. As we begin our search for a pastor we recall this simple truth as stated by Paul in I Corinthians 12:27 *“Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”* We will *“All rejoice together”* (Corinthians 12:26) when the pulpit is once again occupied by our new pastor.

Our Church Organization

The Elders and Session

Clerk of Session: Dr. Susan Malkemes

“Ruling elders, along with teaching elders, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregations, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session.” (as stated in The Book of Order 2015-2017)

Ruling elders Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

Nancy Badal

John Pekar

Bob Brittain

Shirley Spaide

Steve Koons

Arla Tomasko

Dr. Wes Mullen

Session meetings are held on the fourth Tuesday of the month. After review and acceptance of minutes from the prior month. Reports from each committee are presented for approval by each committee chair person. Once reports discussed and are approved we move on to new business.

- Christian Education and Youth Ministry: Shirley Spaide
- Worship and Evangelism: Arla Tomasko
- Stewardship/Mission: Nancy Badal
- Trustee: Bob Brittain
- Evangelism: Steve Koons
- Nominating Committee

Our Church Organization

Deacons

“The ministry of deacon as set for the in Scripture is one of compassion, witness, and service, sharing in the redeeming love of Jesus Christ for the poor, the hungry, the sick, the lost, the friendless, the oppressed those burdened by unjust policies or structures or anyone in distress. Persons of spiritual character, honest repute, exemplary lives, brotherly and sisterly love, sinner compassion and sound judgement should be chosen for this ministry.” (as stated in The Book of Order 2015-2017)

Deacons Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

Lisa Bachman

Nancy Smith

Beth Ellis

Kim Yurkanin

Carolyn Fisher

Pam Zaprazny

Linda Mullen

Our Deacons possess all the qualities as described in *The Book of Order*. It is evident by all the good works that they do throughout the year. They sponsor, organize and otherwise take ownership of events that make our Church healthy. They are a very busy group of dedicated people. Deacons meet on the second Wednesday of the month.

- Carry in lunches every other month (because Presbyterians like to eat)
- Graduation Luncheons in June for the graduates of that year
- Honorary receptions
- Organize and sponsor at least one Blood Drive per year
- Organized support for a local Soup Kitchen four times a year
- Provided meals to local families in need and send cards
- Order flowers for special occasions, such as Easter, Christmas, Mother’s Day and gifts to Dad’s on Father’s Day
- Sponsor a Harvest Table for Thanksgiving and provided meals to five families in 2018
- Deacons serve as greeters
- Started a program of recording our sermons and distributing CDs of the sermons to any one who needs or wants them
- In 2018 our Deacons gave over \$12,500.00 to 23 different families in need

Our Church Organization

The Trustees

“Where permitted by civil law, each congregation shall cause a cooperation to be formed and maintained. If incorporation is not permitted, individual trustees shall be elected by the congregation. ... The corporation formed, or the individual trustees shall have the following powers; to receive, hold, encumber, manage, and transfer property, real or personal for the congregation...the trustees shall act only after the approval of the congregation, granted in a duly constituted meeting;” (as stated in The Book of Order 2015-2017 G-4.0101)

Board of Trustees Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top

Steve Bachman

Mike Malkemes

Sal Cappa

Peggy Jean Spaide

April Generose

Barb Zeglin

John Klimek

Church Treasurer

Linda Weaver

Major 2019 Projects

Replace roof over the addition

Paint the classrooms and office

Repair/replace ceiling in classrooms and office

Repair exterior walls

Major 2020 Projects

Raise funds for the purchase of AVI equipment

Implement online meetings and bible studies

Installation of AVI Equipment

Upgrade our office computer

Implement of recording/streaming Worship services

Upgrade our network and service provider

2021 Projects accomplished:

All stained glass windows re-caned and protected

Contract established for piano tuning

Continued worshipping with in COVID guidelines

Upper parking lot re-paved and marked

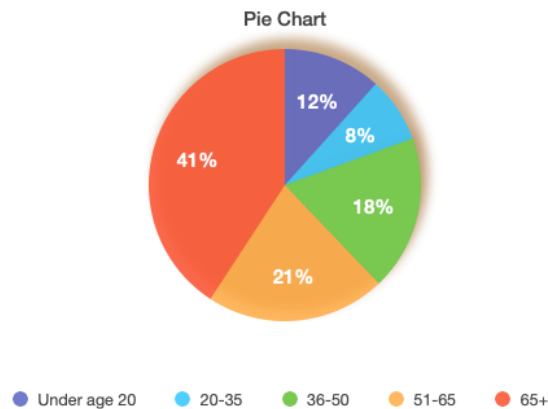
Summer youth program in lieu of VBS (within COVID guidelines)

Our Church Organization

The Congregation

Our active member count is 104¹, which includes our newly confirmed youth. The overall church family includes Active Members, the Spouses and Children of Active Members, the Grandchildren of Active Members and Regular Attenders. Our in-person worship during the COVID pandemic our attendance was restricted to no more than 50 people. On a typical Sunday during this time we had 40-50 people in attendance. Our online presence includes “live worship” and “recorded worship” on Facebook. This effort draws upwards of 100 people who log in to watch both the “live worship” or the “recorded worship”. We have upgraded our technology to be able to provide this service after restrictions are no longer necessary.

We include a wide spread of ages which reflects the age makeup of the community as a whole. Though our congregation is considered to be rather homogeneous in ethnicity the greater area that we live in is somewhat more diverse with the ethnicity spread predominately White being about 73%. Black and Hispanic/Latino population is about equal at about 13% and 11% respectively



Congregation

ASSOCIATION	NUMBER
Under age 20	12
20-35	8
36-50	19
51-65	22
65+	42

¹ Roll Call

Our Church

The Sanctuary

A view into the sanctuary and chancel displays prominently The Cross. The chancel here is set up for the Lenten season. The choir sits to the left of the pulpit in this view and our music director sits at the organ to the right near the pulpit.

Our Sanctuary is set up with a sound system and head sets for the hearing impaired. All sermons are recorded. Anyone who wishes to obtain a sermon on occasion or on a weekly basis need only let a Deacon or Elder know. Members of our CD Ministry will be sure that a CD is made and distributed to the person or people in need. Moving into a more technological world we have members who have taken on the task of keep our church up to date. We are thankful for their ministry.



Our Church

The Sanctuary

Every Sunday our pastor has a view of this magnificent work of stained glass. This work of art is an inspiration to all who look upon it. Down either side of the sanctuary stained glass windows allow daylight to brighten our place of worship. All of our stained glass windows are scheduled for service and repair over the next year.



The Pulpit View

Our Church Organization

Groups and Events

Sunday School: Sunday School is held every Sunday from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. for all ages from autumn to spring. Adult Sunday School is held in the sanctuary and Children's Sunday School is held in the classrooms downstairs. Sunday School classes are led by our dedicated Sunday School teachers. The curriculum, kidssundayschoolplace.com is an excellent resource for all our different age groups, and includes music, craft ideas, games, and Bible object lessons for children's talks.



Sunday School Classroom Hallway

Children's Message: I think it is safe to say that most of the adults in the congregation gain as much from the Children's Message as the children do. The Children's Message is delivered by any one who volunteers to perform this service to the children. The message is tightly tied to the scripture and the sermon of that Sunday. The teachers must be creative to not only grab the attention of the children but keep it during the Children's Message. Since our children remain in worship for the duration of the sermon, the Children's Message helps them to understand more of what worship is all about.

Youth Group: The Youth Group meets once or twice a month on Sunday evening throughout the winter months. During these meetings they discuss plans for events that come up throughout the year, such as **Christmas Caroling at Senior Centers, Souper Bowl Sunday** where money is collected for those in need in the community, and a **Rock-a-thon** where participants gather to spend hours rocking (on rocking chairs) to raise money to donate to the Mountain Top Food Bank. Our young people provide significant help with Vacation Bible School every summer. They help the Worship Committee by gathering Communion cups for count on Communion Sundays. They are active participants in the worship service and serve as greeters and ushers throughout the year. These youngsters are actively teaching the youngest children how to assist in worship. We at the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top believe that our youth are the life of our church.

Our Church Organization

Groups and Events



2019 Rock-a-thon Presbyterian Church Mountain Top

Confirmation Classes:

Pastor led classes to prepare our older youth in confirming their commitment to the church and to God. The youths that take the class begin their journey by committing to attend worship and classes. Their participation in both is expected and required. Parents are generally expected to support their children by attending worship, as well. Session members individually volunteer to support a student during their classes.

This year classes were accelerated so that our out going Pastor can perform this special service to these children that he has observed, nurtured and cared for since their infancy. This will be his last duty for the nurturing of our church. Our last Confirmation Sunday was designated for April 28, 2019.



2019 CONFIRMATION CLASS AT CAMP LACKAWANNA
CONFIRMATION SUNDAY WAS APRIL 28, 2019

Our Church Organization

Groups and Events

Children's Choir:

Throughout the year the children will sing as a choir or perform a presentation depicting the sermon. Typically, this happens at Christmas and Easter or on other significant Christian events. Our Christian Education Staff work with these beautiful little souls to bring us the word of God.



Children's Choir and Sunday School Class

Our Church Organization

Groups and Events



Vacation Bible School

Vacation Bible School: Thanks to the dedication of a few wonderful folks in our congregation we conduct Vacation Bible School each year. Each year we have a theme. In 2019 the theme will be **“Fall into Jesus”**. VBS will be held on June 24-28, 2019, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. The event is open to the community and we have a great turn out for our community of about 30-40 children attending.

Choir:

For being a small church, we have an amazing choir. Led by an amazing musician, William Blannett. There are approximately, 16 members both men and women, who sing anthems and lead us in hymns. Typically, they bring the joy of music to us from September to June.



Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top Choir led by William Blannett

Our Church Organization

Groups and Events

Adult Bible Study: Bible studies led by the pastor are held on Wednesday evening during the month. Women's Bible Study, which is led by a member of the group meet on the first Monday of the month. The meeting rotates through the homes of the women who participate. Our church offer special opportunities for Bible study are during the Lenten Season and Advent.



Presbyterian Women, Christmon Tree

Presbyterian Women: The **Presbyterian Women** support the church especially during the holidays. They meet on the first Wednesday of the month. This is a time for the women to get together to pray, study, and discover new ways that they can support the church and the community at large. Some organizations that the Women's Group supports are Ruth's Place/VOA, the American Legion, and Brandon's Forever Home. The Presbyterian Women, also, support our own church through donations to the Trustees. In 2018 they donated \$1000 to the Trustees.

Other events:

The Presbyterian Church has a full calendar throughout the year with events such as the

- Church Picnic
- Pancake Breakfast
- Deacons' Carry in Luncheons
- Spring Cleaning Rummage Sale
- Neighborhood Car Wash
- Mountain Top 4th of July Parade
- Pumpkin Patch and Hay Ride at Burger's Farm
- Star of Hope Ministry
- Presbyterian Women Christmon Tree decorating and luncheon
- Mountain Top Walk to 116,470.00

Flower purchases in honor of or memory of loved ones occur at Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day. Father's Day gifts to the Dad's in the congregation. Our children have been participants in the events at Camp Lackawanna.

Our Financial Status

Over the years our financial status has been consistent and stable. Certainly, we have had our ups and downs, but always the Lord has provided us with exactly what we needed when we needed it. The following chart and graph give a general idea of what our financial situation has been over the last five years.

Fluctuations in income are a result of the world in which we live in the 21 Century. People come and go. Folks are more likely to move from one location to another today than 20 or 30 years ago. Job opportunities, family obligations, and just the desire to go to a different location because of climate or economy are the motivating reasons that people move on, this in turn affects our financial picture.

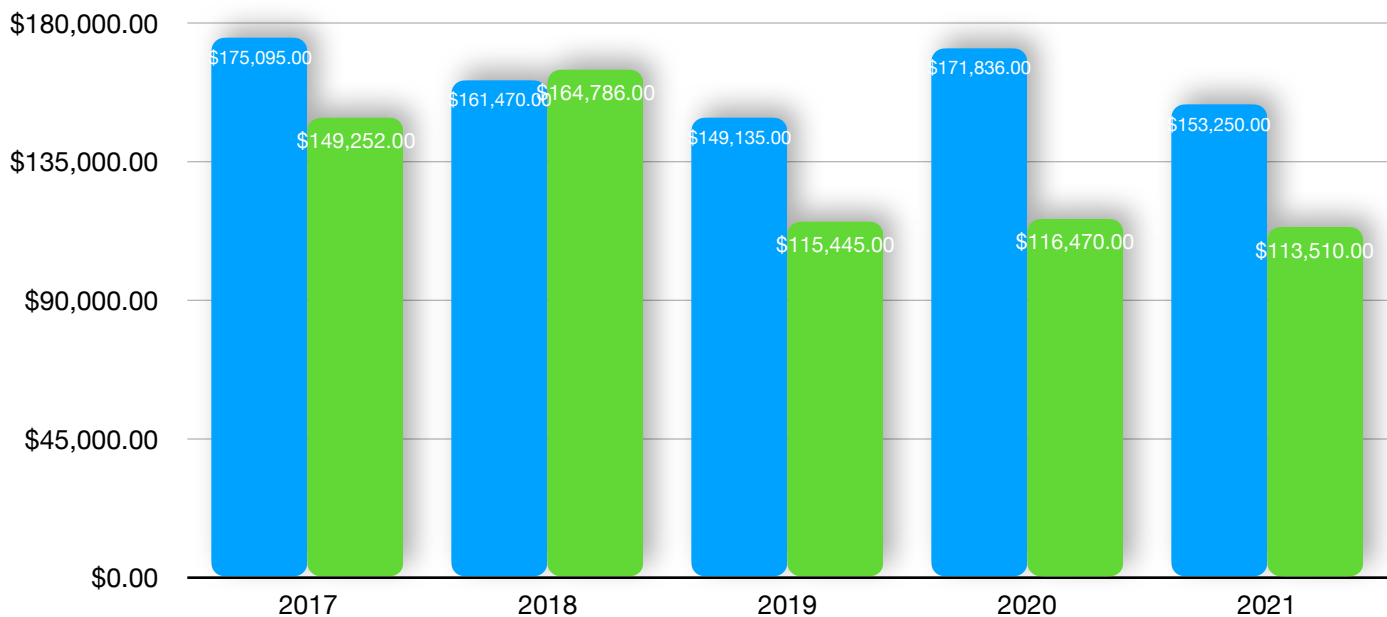
As rising costs in basic utilities increases and our other financial obligations continue to rise, we feel the strain as most other churches do. Though these increases in cost are always considered during our budget planning there are always the unexpected occurrences that will happen. Through this diligent planning we work hard to remain solvent. In addition to our monthly income there are other financial accounts to consider.

PCMT Income/Expense

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total Income	\$175,095.00	\$161,470.00	\$149,135.00	\$171,836.00	\$153,250.00
Total Expense	\$149,252.00	\$164,786.00	\$115,445.00	\$116,470.00	\$113,510.00

■ Total Income

■ Total Expense



Our Financial Status

Memorial Fund: The Memorial Funds are designated contributions given in memory of a church member who has gone to be with the Lord. Some of the money is designated for a specific purpose which must be spent for that purpose, such as, for education or music. The rest of the money is undesignated and can be used for a legitimate purpose for the benefit of the church such as having a new Church Directory printed. Of course, any use of undesignated or designated funds must be approved by Session. Currently, the Memorial Fund is balanced at \$14,084.84.

Benevolence Fund: Outreach into community and globally is our strongest point. Our charitable work is due to a sense of contribution by the congregation and managed by the Deacons and the Benevolence Fund.

Benevolence Fund is money that is set aside from our weekly collection based upon a formula that provides us with a minimum balance each year. Throughout 2018 the Benevolence Fund disbursed money in the amount of \$14,831.00 to a variety of organizations, some of which are:

Deacon's Fund

Operation Honduras

Deacons' Home Fund (4x\$600.00)

Presbyterian Mission

St. Vincent DePaul Kitchen

PA Wounded Warriors

VolunteersAmerica/Ruth's Place

Word of Life

Mountain Top Food Bank

Star of Hope at Christmas

USO

Salvation Army

Department of Veterans Affairs

Presbytery Lackawanna

Ripe for Harvest World Outreach

Providing Hope Ministries...and many more

Sponsorship of Individual Ministry to Bolivia

We are blessed to be able to work for God's purpose in helping those that need our help in our church, community and beyond. We began 2018 with a balance of \$901.00 with a balance of \$14084.84 by the end of 2018. By the end of the year we were able to do all this good work through the generosity of our church members.

One Great Hour of Sharing

Each year we participate as a congregation in the One Great Hour of Sharing program to provide for those in need. Our goal typically is representative to the year in dollars. This year our goal is \$2019.00. We usually meet our goal and are still getting offerings toward this end for 2019.

Our Community/Region

NEPA, as we locals affectionally refer to our region, is an area of beautiful mountains, rivers and streams, clean air and four seasons. There is something nurturing about living in the mountains and the valleys of the area. Driving along Interstate 81 you can see far and wide the landscape that is open to all types of wildlife. There are numerous hiking opportunities that will take you to mountaintops to have a peek at God's wonderful work in this area.

Mountain Top is a community of 11,001² people. It is an unincorporated community know as a GDP or Census Designated Place. Nearby townships are Fairview, Wright, Dorrance and Rice³. There is no "downtown," per se, but along the main road, route 309, you will encounter businesses that have everything a person or family might need. Carone's is a family owned food market that has been something of an anchor store for 25 years. Along the way, driving north on 309 one will see a collection of small businesses both privately owned, like the Carone's and The Chalet Restaurant, and chain stores such as Weis Super Market and Rite Aid. One might think that there is nothing much more to this town but venturing off the main road will take you to the homes where the population of Mountain Top live in newer sub divisions. Also, off of route 309 you will find the founding community of homes and our church. According to Zillow the Mountain Top housing market is healthy. Home pricing in 18707 zip code is \$100,000 to \$500,000 with an average price range of about \$180,000. There are about 60 on the market⁴.

Mountain Top, PA is expected to see a population growth of about 4.5% over the next 10 years⁵.

Population	2018	2023	2028
Population	16,292	16,720	17,013
Percent Change		2.63%	1.75%
Households	6,093	6,257	6,367
Percent Change		2.69%	1.76%

² missioninsite.com

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Top%2C_Pennsylvania#Geography

⁴ [zillow.com](https://www.zillow.com)

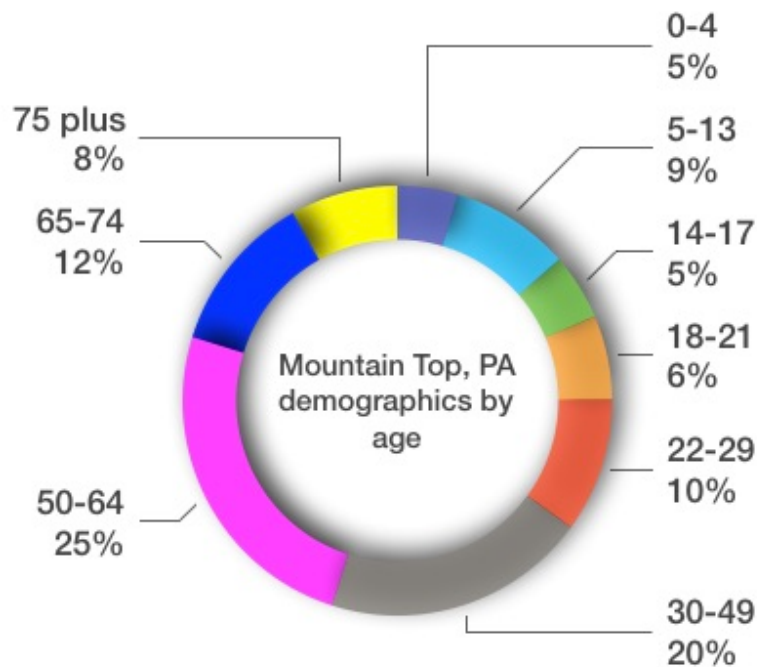
⁵ missioninsite.com

Our Community/Region

Mountain Top is located in the Crestwood Area School District, which covers over 110 square miles (280 km²). This area includes [Dennison Township](#), [Dorrance Township](#), [Fairview Township](#), [Nuangola Borough](#), [Rice Township](#), [Slocum Township](#), [White Haven Borough](#), [Wright Township](#), and [Penn Lake Borough](#). The Crestwood School District has four schools, Crestwood High School, Crestwood Middle School, Fairview Elementary School and Rice Elementary School. There are two private schools as well, St Jude's and Wyoming Valley SDA Elementary School. All our schools boast a low student to teacher ration of less that 20:1. Crestwood School district supports schools that rank well above the mean for Pennsylvania and the country. It is ranked at 218 out of 586 schools in Pennsylvania with a graduation rate of 96%. Crestwood High School offers a wide array of extra curricular activities. Find more details at Crestwood School District (Pennsylvania) on Wikipedia.com

Locally, we can offer a small town life style with urban amenities within a 15 minute drive to Wilkes Barre or 30 minutes to Scranton PA.

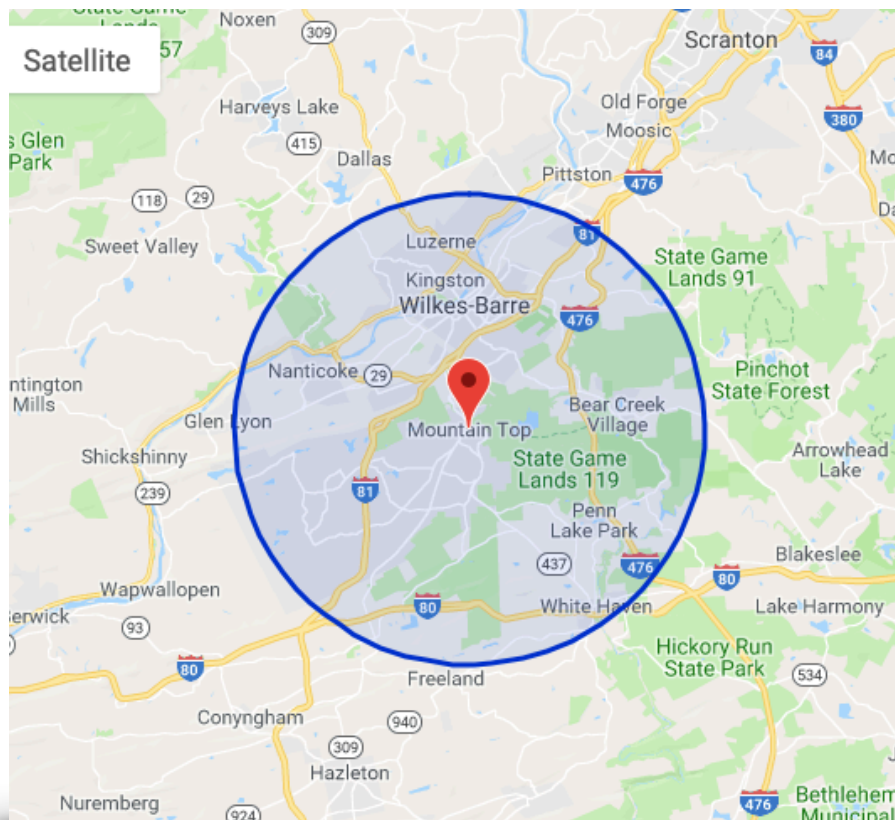
Wilkes Barre, the county seat of Luzerne County, being our closest urban neighbor has a population of 41,782. The age mix is virtually the same as Mountain Top. While Mountain Top is considered a statistically very homogeneous population, Wilkes Barre is, statistically, a moderately diverse community.



Our Community/Region

Wilkes Barre is the home of Wilkes University, Kings College, and a Penn State Wilkes Barre campus. Within a 15 mile radius you will find Luzerne Community College, Misericordia University, the Fortis Institute Forty Fort, and Marywood University.

Healthcare in the area is well provided. Mountain Top is facilitated by an urgent care location for the Geisinger Health Network and a similar facility for supporting Wilkes Barre General Hospital an affiliate of the Commonwealth Health Network. Both networks have main hospital campuses in the near by city of Wilkes Barre. You will also find a VA hospital in Wilkes Barre. The Lehigh Valley Health Network is represented in Hazleton, another larger community nearby.



Mountain Top is situated at the intersection of two major Interstate Freeways, I 80 and I 81. Nearby we find access to the Northeast Extension of the Pennsylvania Turnpike I 476. This strategic location gives us access to the amenities and metropolitan benefits of New York City, and Philadelphia. The state capital, Harrisburg, is an easy 1.5 hours away off of I 81. The cities of Allentown, and Bethlehem are within an hour's drive providing with additional shopping, entertainment and healthcare services.

Our Community/Region

Both Wilkes Barre and Scranton boast many year round activities and attractions of the region such as the St. Patrick's Day celebration annually held in nearby Scranton, and The Mohegan Sun Arena hosting concerts or other events all year long. In Wilkes Barre a person will find extensive shopping opportunities, a mall, restaurant chains and private enterprises.

The Susquehanna River defines the northwestern border of Wilkes Barre. The Susquehanna is a source of recreation, fishing and boating. Kingston and Edwardsville lie to the north of the river.



The Market Street Bridge was built in 1926-1929 as part of the New Deal project during the Great Depression. The bridge spans the Susquehanna River and connects Wilkes Barre and Kingston, PA. It was intended as a Memorial to WWI. In 1988 the bridge was listed on the National Register of Historic Places

Our Community/Region

Romans 1:20 NLT

“For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.”

No discussion about the Mountain Top area would be complete without mentioning weather. As earlier mentioned, we are a land of four seasons.

Summers are hot but not excessively so with temperature highs in the mid 80s. While we can experience periods of high humidity, over 90%, humidity is on average about 75%⁶.

Spring and fall are mild with warm temperatures and gradually dropping or increasing depending on the season. These are the seasons when you take a light jacket with you. In spring you might like to, also, have an umbrella handy. While we do experience a fair amount rainfall it will often come in the form of thunder showers that come and go. Usually, thunder storms happen in the evening or overnight. That said, spring brings the budding of the tress in our extensive forests. Those buds turn to leaves which adorn the trees. In autumn those leaves turn to an array of color.



The Susquehanna River from Council Cup lookout

⁶<https://www.timeanddate.com/weather/@z-us-18707/climate>

Our Community/Region

The end of the year is a time of cooling temperatures ranging from the 30°s to up into the 60°s. We may see snow and we may not. One thing is for certain, after the Christmas holiday celebrations the new year brings Old Man Winter. January and February are certainly the coldest and the snowiest. Some people like this time of introspection. Otherwise, for excitement skiing and snowboarding are popular sports in the nearby Pocono Mountains.

Another thing is for certain, March will come, the days will get longer, and the temperatures will get warmer. March, being the crazy month will have you wondering if we will see a foot of snow over night and have it all but gone two days later.

Weather is weather. It is all part of God's work in NEPA

Scripture so well describes this change of season, in NEPA. *“For Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the season of singing has come, and the cooing of doves is heard in our land.” Song of Solomon 2:11-12 NIV*



Blue Giant Meadow Lake

(https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mountain_Top,_Pennsylvania)

Looking Forward

We asked the congregation to express their personal thoughts on what is important to them in a pastor. With that information in mind we will try to express those skills and competencies that we are looking for in our pastor.

Our pastor should be a spiritual leader who knows the Word of God and can teach us through worship, preaching and one-on-one guidance. He/she should, also be eager to continue learning in order to pass that wisdom on to us. When conflicts arise or counseling is needed the pastor should be willing to help find solutions to the situation with compassion and maturity. He/She should strive to bring people together in a unified church.

Our prospective pastor is someone who can provide leadership through communication, decision making, motivation and collaboration with the Session and the congregation. We need a preacher who has a positive outlook and that is focused on the needs of this congregation as a whole, and at the same time the needs of individuals. We seek an advisor, a teacher and preacher that can reach out to the congregation with discernment.

While we are very good at reaching out to the community to provide aid and assistance, we also need help letting the community know we are open for the business of God. Someone who can reach out to the community to draw people into the church through technology, initiative, imagination and communication is of great importance to the life of our church.

It is no secret that we are in a transitional period that will be difficult for us, but through this trying time we hope to emerge stronger as a congregation. It is a scary thing to lose your leader. Someone who has been with us through thick and thin. Who has taught us and loved us. Who has said good-bye to those who have moved on and welcomed new members, from the tiniest of infants in baptism to the new adults that walk through the door looking for a church home. He has sent our loved ones on to be with the Lord and united couples in marriage. Anyone can see the love this congregation feels for this pastor.

While we will miss our pastor of the past 32 years we know that God has a plan for us. It is a sad thing to say so long to a dear friend and leader, but at the same time it is exciting to envision where this quest will lead us. We know that our search for a new pastor will bring us together in many new and exciting ways. We expect that our search for a pastor will be a work of love, passion, and determination. We are about to open the book of the Presbyterian Church of Mountain Top to a new chapter in the life of our congregation. We know that Jesus is here with us. We have the knowledge that the Holy Spirit will guide us and will light the way.

Respectfully Submitted by The Transition Team, Presbyterian Church Mountain Top
Dr. Susan Melkemes, Clerk of Session

Steve Bachman

Nancy Badal

Bob Brittain

Anne Cleaver

Audrey Frankenfield

Dr. Seth Fisher and Carolyn Fisher

Dr. Greg Koons

Dr. Wes Mullin

Cheryl and John Pekar

Amy Randall

Shirley Spaide

Peggy Spaide

Trish Tredway

Linda Weaver

Barbara & Rich Zeglin

Pam and Dave Zaprazny

