

Valley Views



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Pastor Mike Hill

10 Things About the Christmas Story You May Have Missed

Dr. Joe McKeever

They were not "kings" from the east and there weren't three of them. And when they arrived in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary and Baby Jesus were not still in the stable, but in a house, contrary to half the Christmas cards that will be arriving at your house.

And there's no indication there were cattle in that stable or anywhere nearby. In fact, the only thing that leads us to believe Jesus was born in a stable is that Luke 2:7 tells us Mary laid the Baby in a manger, a feeding trough.

But you knew all this.

And you knew that all of this was predicted through the centuries by God's prophets. We particularly treasure the promises of Isaiah 7:14 ("Behold a virgin shall conceive....") and 9:6-7 ("For unto us a child is born...."), as well as Micah 5:2 ("Bethlehem...out of you shall come forth One to be Ruler over Israel...").

And you knew that, contrary to the Christmas hymn "The First Noel," the shepherds in Bethlehem's fields did not "looked up and saw a star shining in the East beyond them far" (modern hymnals have revised that line to read "For all to see there was a star....").

But, allow me to point out some aspects of this wonderful story it's possible you might have missed. There is no particular order intended.

1. Joseph has no speaking lines.

This man who was to become the earthly father of our Lord Jesus was a man of action. He heard and he obeyed.

I recall hearing of a mother calling the school to inform the teacher that her son had a bad cold and would be unable to play Joseph in the Nativity play later that morning. It was too late to replace him, so they did the play without Joseph. No one missed him.

2. Mary is a deep thinker.

Twice we read that she "pondered" these things. Once when Gabriel made the original announcement to her ([Luke 1:29](#)) and then when the shepherds entered the birth chamber (whatever it was, stable, etc.) to tell of the visitation of the angels ([Luke 2:19](#)). The contrast between Mary and Joseph is fairly strong. He seems never to question a word from the Lord, but goes immediately to obey. Mary thinks it through, and even deigns to ask the angel of God how such a thing could be.

3. After the angels made their announcement to the shepherds, they did not command them to do anything.

Since the shepherds dropped everything and ran into Bethlehem to "see this thing which has come to pass," we might have expected the angels to have instructed them to go. Instead, the angel of God did something far superior: He informed them how to recognize the Christ-child once they found Him. "This shall be a sign to you: you will find the Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths." God knew those He had chosen as the welcoming committee for His Son. He knew, that even though they were lowly shepherds--a category we would call unskilled labor--they were wise enough to come to Him as soon as they knew how.

4. There is great intrigue in this story.

A great cosmic drama is taking place here. On the one hand, we see Heaven opened and angels heralding the arrival of God's Son on earth. And on the other, hell's forces marshal to oppose Him and if possible, to kill Him and put an early end to this redemptive mission from Heaven.

Angels in the outdoors and Herod's soldiers entering homes to crush the skulls of infants.

The battle was joined and has raged ever since.

Readers wishing to explore this further should Google "How God Fooled Satan at Christmas," my article on this subject.

5. Head knowledge is not sufficient.

In Matthew 2:3, all Jerusalem was abuzz with talk about the foreign visitors who had arrived in town, naively inquiring at every service station and convenience store, "Well? Where is He? Where is the One born King of the Jews?"

They figured that this wonderful news would be the talk of the city. Instead, no one else seemed to know anything about it.

Then, when Herod called the religious leaders to ask where the Messiah was to be born (Matthew 2:4), these doctors of theology informed him that the Old Testament prophet Micah had said Bethlehem was the place.

What we wonder is why they didn't go to Bethlehem. It's not like it was in the next hemisphere. Bethlehem lies some 5 miles south of Jerusalem, an easy walk for a healthy person.

The clear conclusion is that these religious leaders had the Bible knowledge but no real interest in God or the promise of Scripture.

6. The prosperity gospel stumbles at this story.

Mary and Joseph are poor. There is not a word in the text to indicate otherwise.

When they presented their Baby in the temple for the prescribed dedication of the first-born, unable to afford a lamb for an offering, the young parents gave a couple of birds (Luke 2:24; based on Leviticus 12:2).

7. The gold from the Magi had a very practical purpose.

Immediately after Matthew tells of the visit of the visitors from the East and their wonderful gifts, he tells how the Lord's angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, informing him that Herod was on a killing jag and he should take the family to Egypt. Doubtless, the gold was provided by the Lord to finance this unexpected trip.

8. Notice the crossing of human lines and barriers in this story.

We have the young and the old (Mary, Joseph, the Baby, and Simeon and Anna in the temple. Luke 2).

We have the rich and the poor (the Magi and the young family. Matthew 2).

We have the Jews and the Gentiles (the Magi were the non-Jews).

We have the highest (angels) and the lowest (shepherds).

This wonderful story is clearly for "whosoever" and "all the world," as John 3:16 informs us.

9. Telling the story is a privilege.

It would appear that Mary and Joseph's account of the angels' appearances were so personal--and so unbelievable--that they either told no one at first or very few people.

The shepherds heard the message from the angels, left those miserable sheep to fend for themselves and raced into Bethlehem to see the Christ-child, then went out and told everyone what they had heard and seen.

Poor Zacharias. After questioning the angel inside the Temple (Luke 1), he was not allowed to tell what he had heard and seen until his son John was born. Telling others of Jesus is a privilege many of us take for granted. I think of the leper in Mark 1 whom Jesus healed. Then, the Lord instructed him to show himself to the priest and do what Moses commanded, but to otherwise keep the news to himself. However, he was just not able to do that. He went out and began to "blaze abroad" the matter. Jesus tells you and me to tell everyone and we go home and sit down. Something is way wrong here.

10. Jesus did no miracles in His boyhood.

By all reports from Luke 2, Jesus had a normal childhood in Nazareth. In fact, John 2:1 informs us that the turning of water to wine at the wedding in Cana of Galilee was His first miracle.

Lest we are tempted to temper that by saying, "It was the first miracle of His ministry, but not the first one He had done," I submit the following.

Had the boy Jesus been doing miracles in Nazareth like an early "Superboy of Smallville," the world would have taken note of Him and beaten a path to His door. Satan would have noticed also and come running, ready to abort God's plans for His Son.

That did not happen because Jesus was not doing miracles, was not teaching, and was not distinguishing Himself in any way during his youth. That's why, when He did start to preach and heal and work wonders, His neighbors were astonished. *Where did this man get these things? And what wisdom is this which is given to him, that such mighty works are performed by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? Are not his sisters here with us?* (Matthew 13:54).

Dr. Joe McKeever is a Preacher, Cartoonist, and the Director of Missions for the Baptist Association of Greater New Orleans. Visit him at joemckeever.com/mt. Used with permission.



The annual Hanging of the Greens service for the Elimsport Church is scheduled for Sunday, December 2nd during the worship service at 9am.

Please bring a treat to share for fellowship time following the conclusion of the program. We will be asking for volunteers to help decorate the church during the program. If we miss you, please let us know, there's always plenty to do!

The Elimsport UMC will have their Christmas pageant on Sunday, December 23rd.



Please join us for the Hanging of the Greens service for St. John's on December 2nd during the church service at 10:30am. This is a beautiful service that is a highlight of the Advent season. We love to have our youth help decorate!



Christmas Eve Services are as follows: Elimsport @ 6:30 pm, St. John's @ 8:00 pm.



St John's Christmas play will be Sunday, December 16th during the morning worship service at 10:30am. Please come and support our youth as they tell the Christmas Story. Please stay for some cookies afterwards!



Thank you so much for the awesome college care package! It was very much appreciated. I'm so glad I belong to such a caring church family!

Thanks again,
Ben Klopp



Dear Helping Hands,

Jim & I want to thank you so much for the beautiful card and gift of money you gave us. We are very grateful for this gift and are paying some bills and getting Jim some jeans that are much needed. Thank you all.

Love,

Jim & Sonia

THANKS!



We have 2 missions for the Advent season: the first one is for the Christmas committee. They have asked that we collect cans of soup to help out the needy families. The Christmas committee hands out

over 220 boxes of food to needy families in the Montgomery School district and also supplies a Christmas meal for each family and gives out toys for around 300 kids. So please help this important mission by bringing cans of soup into the churches by December 16th.

No tricks, only treats from six Holy Ghosts and one little urchin. They treated us with candy and also songs and prayer. We thank you for including us in your day of fellowship and fun.



LaRue, Bev & Roxey Berger

Our second mission is making Christmas special for some kids from the Montgomery School. We will be buying toys and clothes for these kids. There will be items at each church on a Christmas tree that the kids want or need. Pick one or two items, buy it and put the unwrapped item under the tree with the tag attached. Any questions see Deana Drick or Sharon Heintzelman. Thanks in advance for helping with this wonderful mission. If you are unable to shop for items from the tree, or just don't like doing the whole retail thing, monetary donations will be gladly accepted. Please see Sharon Heintzelman or Deanna Drick. As always, support from the EVUM parish is phenomenal and truly appreciated.





If you would like to order a poinsettia for the Elimsport UMC, they come in red, pink or white. The cost is \$9.00. Please see Donna Taylor if interested.



Dear Church Family,
Thank you for the care package that was full of snacks and goodies! I am very thankful that I have a church family who cares about and supports its members.

Amy Drick

Community Breakfast is held Wednesday mornings from 7:00 - 9:00 am at the Elimsport Church.



There will be a Blood drive on Tuesday, December 4th from 2-7 at the Elimsport Fellowship Hall.



Parish Bible Study will be starting up on Tuesday, January 8th at 6:00 at the Elimsport church. All are welcome.



- Items for January's newsletter are due December **20th**.
- Items for the weekly bulletin's need to be to the church office by **Wednesday** morning each week.

(Items received after these dates are not guaranteed to be printed.)

Elimsport Volunteers

Greeters for December

December 2	Bob & Hilda Sampsell
December 9	Frank Clever
December 16	Jennifer Springman & Family
December 23	Joann Stainbrook
December 30	Jeremy & Joann Kennedy & Family



Acolyte Schedule

December

12/2 Elizabeth and Mallorie
12/9 Mitchell and Garrett
12/16 Jackson and Samuel
12/23 Elizabeth and Mitchell
12/24 Mallorie and Mitchell
12/30 Mallorie and Garrett

January

1/6 Jackson and Mitchell
1/13 Samuel and Elizabeth
1/20 Mallorie and Garrett
1/27 Jackson and Samuel

February

2/3 Elizabeth and Garrett
2/10 Samuel and Mallorie
2/17 Mitchell and Jackson
2/24 Garrett and Samuel



God's Blessings

October 31, 2018 While most people were celebrating Halloween going for treats or playing a trick on someone, God sent out his "Halo Singers".

Being All Saints Day Eve, these singers visited senior residents of the Elimsport Area. When entering a home, each person in the home was given a bag of candy and an apple for a treat. The trick was they had to listen to the halo singers sing "Jesus Loves Me/You" and "If You are Happy and Know it, Clap."

You are invited to join the Christmas Carolers in December. The bus is free.





The "Gift Tree" will be decorated with tags for Christmas gifts for children in the Montgomery Schools again this year. The tags will be available to pull off the tree beginning Sunday, November 18th, just in time for Black Friday shopping. The gifts should be NEW & UNWRAPPED WITH THE TAG ATTACHED when placed under the tree. Any questions can be directed to Sharon Heintzelman or Deanna Drick (570-419-1730)

Friends and members of our parish will be helping at the Susquehanna Valley Toys for Tots warehouse (Lewisburg) on two separate dates this year. Sign-up sheets will be available in each church beginning on October 21st. The sign up dates are Sunday, November 11th and Sunday, December 2nd from 1pm-5pm. Sign up soon because there is a limit of 12 people per date. You can contact Deanna Drick (570-419-1730) with any questions or to sign up.



Attention fitness enthusiasts! All who are interested in free workouts can show up on Tuesdays and Thursdays (except when the FH is already booked) from 6:30-7:30 starting on November 8th. We will have a variety of workout DVD's we'll be showing on the TV in the fellowship hall. You may want to bring a mat and/or towel for floor work. We can develop a schedule of the type of workouts for each date as we become more organized. Any questions can be directed to Sharon Heintzelman or Christa McCormick.

WHO ARE WE?

UMHC was founded in 1917 by the Central Pennsylvania Conference of the Methodist Church as an orphanage. Childcare services have evolved, and UMHC has adapted its delivery model to meet the needs of kids ages 12-20 using a collaborative, trauma-informed approach to care.

Youth living at the Home receive safe housing, emotional and educational support, food, clothing, medical and behavioral healthcare, counseling, and more in a family-like atmosphere that inspires them to hope, heal, recover, and grow as they develop the skills and tools they need to succeed in today's world.

HOW DO I GIVE?

Please mail or deliver your gifts to our address with your name, address and email or make a secure gift at www.umhcservices.org.

Thank you!



Reimbursements cover about 70% of operating costs. We rely on friends and donors, like you, to fill the hope gap. Can we count you among our Community of Champions?

United Methodist
Home for Children, Inc.

5120 Simpson Ferry Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050-3627

Phone 717.766.7652

Ask for Development Office.



www.umhcservices.org

Email questions to:
info@umhcservices.com.

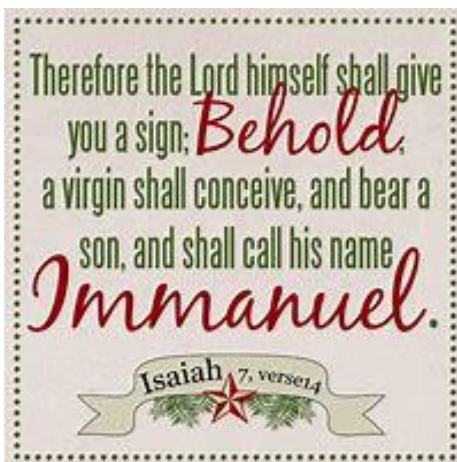
The United Methodist Home for Children, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization founded in 1917. Contributions are tax deductible to the fullest extent of IRS tax laws. The official registration and financial information of UMHC may be obtained from the PA Department of State by calling toll free, within Pennsylvania, 1-800-732-0999. Registration does not imply endorsement. UMHC provides its services and offers its programs to children, youth, and families without regard to race, religion, sex, color, national origin or income levels.



Christmas at UMHC
begins and ends
with Christian love.

Sometimes young people are unable to live with their parents through their growing-up years. Many of the kids who come to the United Methodist Home for Children (UMHC) were abandoned or abused. Most were removed from homes by county youth agencies or the court system. Some tried foster care and were unable to thrive.

When they can't go home,
they come to our Home.



WHY HELP THESE KIDS?

Many kids arrive at the Home lacking hope. They long to celebrate holidays, birthdays, proms and graduations. Some need medical care, therapeutic treatments, and educational coaching. Few of their families have the resources to meet their needs. Many kids have never known the simple joys of being in healthy relationships.

Your gifts afford them a full-range of care and support—far beyond food, clothes and a bed to sleep in. Gift cards give staff the flexibility to show the true meaning of Christmas to the Home's residents.



"Growing up, I never had a Christmas like the ones we had at the Home. The staff made sure we knew the holidays were really about love and caring, but they also helped us feel the joy. It was wonderful."

Former Resident Comment

WHAT DO THE KIDS NEED MOST?

Please remember the average age of the youth is 14-18.

Personal Care

Men's/Women's Deodorant
(NO aerosols)
Loofahs
Men's Body Wash
Women's Body Wash
(Dove brand preferred)
Men's/Women's
Shaving Cream
Men's/Women's Razors
Men's/Women's Shampoo
(Dove brand preferred)
Men's/Women's Conditioner
(Dove brand preferred)
Hair gel
Hand Lotion
Body Lotion
Sunscreen
Hand Soap
Maxi pads
Plastic Applicator Tampons
Makeup Wipes
Stridex Face Wipes
Toothpaste
Combs/Brushes

Clothing

No Show Socks -
White or Black
Men's/Women's Sizes
Boxers - Men's Size Small,
Medium, Large, XLarge

Household Items

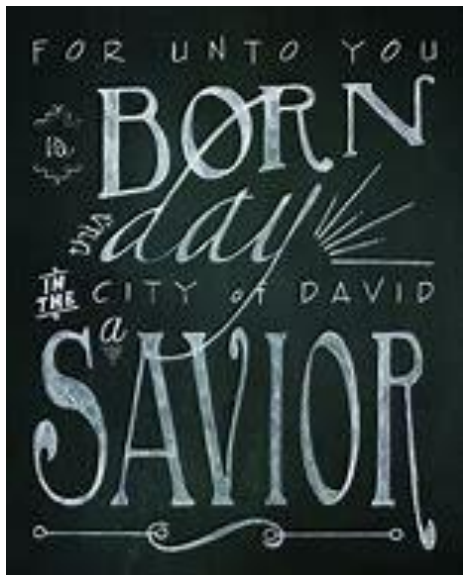
Sheet sets (Twin, Solid Color)
Comforters (Twin, Solid Color)
Bed Pillows
Bath Towels
Hand Towels
Washcloths
Kitchen Towels
Dishcloths/Dish Sponges
Beach Towels
Drinking Cups (Dishwasher Safe)
Kitchen Utensils - Spatulas,
Slotted Spoons, Serving
Spoons
Sauce Pans with Lids
Toasters
Alarm Clocks
Silverware
Plates (Dishwasher Safe)
Vacuum Cleaners
Large Stock Pots with Lids
Non-Stick Frying Pans with Lids
Hot Pads
Salt & Pepper Shakers
Napkin Holders
Pitchers
Ice Cube Trays
Sturdy Laundry Baskets
Gain or Tide Unscented
Laundry Detergent (NO PODS)
Fabric Softener
Dryer Sheets
Dish Soap

Gift Cards

McDonald's
Walmart
Visa
Applebee's
Chick-fil-A
Dick's Sporting Goods
Dollar General
Giant
Weis
Rite Aid
Payless Shoes
Staples
Office Max

PLEASE

- No Aerosols
- No Trial or Sample Sizes



*Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth
peace among those
with whom he is
pleased!*

Luke 2:14

† SON LIGHT HOUSE **REFLECTIONS**

Son Light House – 130 Carpenter Street, Muncy, PA 17756 – Phone: 546-3585 November 2018

Son Light House, established in 1982, is a non-profit, ecumenical, and community-supported resource that distributes food, clothing, and limited furniture to individuals and families in need and that qualify on family income guidelines set up by state and federal policies. Son Light House serves individuals and families in eastern Lycoming County. Son Light House is an equal opportunity provider.

Would that all the people of the Lord were prophets! Would that the Lord might bestow his spirit on them all! (Numbers 11:29) Imagine if we all realized we were called to be prophets in the sense of speaking truth to power. What would we say to economic and political leaders regarding the needs of those experiencing hunger and poverty?

Households and Individuals Served

	Households	Individuals	New Hlds.
June	445	1,010	5
July	210	454	4
Aug	445	1,033	11
Sept	459	1,121	10
Oct	607	1,458	14

Son Light House – for All Ages

	Children	Adults	Seniors
June	266	467	277
July	115	190	149
Aug	291	447	295
Sept	341	494	286
Oct	449	617	392

Water and mud – a major challenge this summer –

The historic level of rain this area experienced this summer had a dramatic and adverse impact on Son Light House. Water and mud seeped into the building. Although some areas were a mess, fortunately the food was untouched owing to being raised from the floor by pallets. Pastor Steven Smith, Chet Jacobs, and Ken and Delores Fry were the key resources for clean-up. Additional help was received from the Muncy Area

Volunteer Fire Company and Ron Gingerey's General Cleaning.

Barbara Sear: Long-time volunteer and Board member

– Barb passed away in October. She was a founding member of Son Light House. She always served with a smile on her face while distributing compassion and wisdom to all.

Thanksgiving and Christmas Donations – Son Light House will be accepting turkeys for Thanksgiving and roasting chickens for Christmas distributions. Donations of these items can be made every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday between 7:00 am – 10:00 am. Thanks for your generosity.

Touch-A-Heart at Christmas – The locally supported Touch-A-Heart program will continue to supply Christmas gifts for children up to age 17. Registration is already underway.

"Thank You" to These Recent Supporters

In Memory of Barbara Sear – Andritz Inc., Muncy; James Brown and Kathleen Blaker, Jeffrey and Debbie Brown, Mrs. Gene Cahn, Dan and Mary Doyle, Pat and Barbara Emery, Ken and Delores Frey, Alan and Bonnie Foust, Wayne and Martha Gordner, Zach Guinter, Robert Hager, Thomas and Sharon Holmes, John and Luane Libbey, John and Maryann Mcilvaine, Vivian Mills and Diane Gamble, James and Susan Murray & family, the Rager Family, Kay Stahley, Shirley Van Buskirk, Edward and Renee Vergari & Family, Eric and Michelle Walthall, and Barb's card-playing friends: Rachel, Judy, Angie, Donna, Shirley, Mary, Mariam and Ellie.

Individuals and Families who have recently supported Son Light House include: Dick and Alice Arthur, LizAnn Barlett, Mary Ann Breon, Lou and Joanne Cromley, Rev. Mike and Sally Gardy, Beverly Hall, Cleason and Joanne

Hall, Ed and Sylvia Herman, Jeff and Helen Hiserman, Darlene James, Gene and Carol McCarty, John and Pat Merrifield, Shari Michael, John and Barb Miller, Jim and Betsy Mothersbaugh, David Moyer, Anita Nagpal, Arlene Opp, Robert and Carol Perry, Mona Pettenger, Rosemary Rohrbach, Paul Rovinski, Jacki Sheets, Phil and Betty Soohy, Edward and Deborah Steinbacher, Dave and Kathryn Taggart, Rev. Max and Diann Walters; Pete and Delores Wolf.

Churches and Church Organizations for their recent support: Beacon United Methodist Church (UMC), Hughesville; Catholic Diocese of Scranton's Social Justice Fund; Church of the Resurrection, Muncy; Ecroyd Missionary Circle, Muncy; Elmsport UMC; Faith Church, Lairdsville; First UMC, Muncy; Franklin Fairview UMC, Unityville; Hughesville Baptist Church; Lungerville Christian Church, Unityville; Messiah Lutheran Church, Muncy; Moreland Baptist Church, Muncy; Muncy Baptist Church; New Life Church, Pennsdale; Pennsdale Trinity and Huntersville UMC; Picture Rocks Baptist Church; Picture Rocks UMC; Point Bethel and Kedron UMC, Hughesville; St. Andrew Lutheran Church, Muncy; St. James Episcopal Church, Exchange and Muncy; St. James Lutheran Church, Muncy; St. John Lutheran Church, Montgomery; St. Marks Church, Lairdsville; Trinity Lutheran Church, Hughesville; Trinity UMC, Pennsdale; Twin Hills Church of the Nazarene, Muncy.

Community Businesses and Organizations that recently made generous donations of money, food, or services include: Employees of Muncy Bank and Trust; Muncy Valley Moose Family Center #866, Hughesville; Spring Window Fashions, Montgomery; Williamsport District UMW Executive Committee.

Schools and Youth Groups for their recent support: George Ferrell Elementary School, Hughesville; Ward L Myers Elementary School, Muncy.

Son Light House Hours of Operation:

Donations:

Every Monday, Thursday, and Saturday 7:00 am – 10:00 am

Food, clean, usable, seasonable clothing, toys, and furniture may be donated only at this time.

Distributions:

Every other week on Wednesday from 8:30 am – noon and Thursday 4:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Distribution Dates:

November 1+, 14*-15* - *Thanksgiving

December 5+-6+, 19*-20* - *Christmas

January 9+-10+, 23-24

February 6+-7+, 20-21

+ Senior Boxes for eligible seniors

How Can I/We Help?

Prayers, volunteers, money, and food donations – **especially cereal** -- are always needed. For more information or to get involved, contact **Son Light House** by calling Ken and Delores Frey at 546-3585.

St John's Methodist Church
715 Pikes Peak Rd
Allenwood PA 17810

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Son Light House
130 Carpenter Street
Muncy, PA 17756

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #162
Williamsport, PA

Kid's Corner



ELIMSPORT VALLEY UNITED METHODIST PARISH

Worship Schedule:

Elimsport UMC

Worship 9:00 am
Sunday School 10:30 am

St. John's UMC

Sunday School 9:15 am
Worship 10:30 am

Parish Youth Group

Check weekly Bulletin for current schedule and events
(at Elimsport)

Parish Bible Study

Varies according to the season.

Parish Office:

16145S. RT 44 HWY
Allenwood, PA 17810

Parsonage Phone:

(570) 547-1386

Pastor Mike's Cell:

(570) 974-8590

Parish Website:

www.evpumc.org

Parish email:

elimsportumc@gmail.com

www.evpumc.org



Our Mission Statement at Elimsport UMC



We gather together as a community of Christian believers to worship, fellowship, and to learn more about God. By the unity of the Spirit and the support of each other, we are able to reach out to the community and the world.

Our Mission Statement at St. John's UMC



The purpose of St. John's is to both evangelize and nurture. We are called to show God's love in our world by giving aid and by spreading the Good News of Christ. We in turn provide an atmosphere for nurturing where Biblical truths are shared enabling people to become spiritually enriched. By providing this, people will learn and through learning, become more effective witnesses.