



The Church Mouse

Bixlers and Millers United Methodist Churches March/April/May 2020



"Open hearts. Open Doors. Open minds. The people of The United Methodist Church."

Words From Our Pastor

Greetings friends,

As I'm sure most of you have heard, our Bishop and Conference have canceled worship services and meetings in churches until **March 30 (or later until determined safe)**. This means that we are not able to convene at our normal times on Sunday morning and all other meetings (i.e. Church Council, fellowship events, etc.) until that point are canceled. Unfortunately, that means we won't be seeing each other in person for the immediate future. The Conference will continue to update us and I'll ensure to keep you all updated as more details continue to emerge. I encourage all of you to take measures that you deem necessary to keep yourself clean and safe.

While we will not be having our services, I plan to do something in conjunction with our Facebook group while we are on this hiatus and I will keep you all posted about that. I will miss our time together and I am praying for all of you during this time. I think we all are called to be in a time of prayer for our healthcare professionals, our leaders, and those who are sick. Also, I think that during this time it would be good to remind ourselves as followers of Jesus Christ where we receive comfort from. It is easy to be fearful at this time. We know that Jesus walks with us in our journey of life, through the ups and the downs. We know that God loves us always. I hope that you are able to keep that in mind as we traverse this storm together.

Blessings,
Pastor Blake

**All Church Services and Meetings
On-Hold Until Further Notice Due to
Coronavirus Closings**

Stay Connected With Church Family on Facebook !!

Pastor Blake is having a series of evening chats every night at 6 pm on the church Facebook page. Each chat lasts around ten minutes and he is hoping this is one way he can continue to keep connected with each other.

Pastor Blake will share his thoughts and he is hoping each of us will share how we are coping with the changes taking place around us due to the corona virus. His first chat was on March 15th, and all the chats thus far can be viewed anytime by going to the church facebook page.



A Lenten Message from our Pastor

Dear Friends,

As I write this, the sunshine is shining and the warmth of Spring seems to be approaching. Life is eager to emerge from its winter hibernation. Although it seems to be coming soon, we still have some time until Spring *really* emerges.

The same is true for us in our Christian season. We are in the season of Lent as we prepare for the crucifixion and resurrection of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. What does that mean for us? Why do we begin Lent by putting ashes on our forehead? Why do we fast in some sort of fashion for Lent?

Well, for one, we begin Lent with ashes to mark our mortality. "For you are dust and to dust you shall return," are the words spoken to signal our observance of this important. It is important for us to claim who we are before we can fully and accurately proclaim who Jesus Christ is for us. Therefore, we must be humble about our existence. Furthermore, because we know that Jesus will rise on the third day, we must ask ourselves...so what? Jesus came to our world and lived our life to redeem us and to forgive us. All of this because of God's love for us all. So...what does that mean for you? How you respond to that question and go about Lent is of the upmost importance for us as Christians.

My hope and my prayer for you in this Lenten season, is that you are able to wrestle with your mortality in light of the hope of Easter that is approaching. Hope to see you all around!

Blessings,
Pastor Blake

Bixlers News



Mothers Day

Bixlers Mothers Day Dinner will be held on Saturday May 2nd (date subject to change due to coronavirus closings) at 4:00 p.m. at the Bixlers Fellowship Hall. We will be serving turkey, pot roast, bread stuffing, mashed potatoes, green beans, mac and cheese, corn, tossed salad, rolls, desserts, iced tea, water, and lemonade. The cost is \$15.

There is a Children's Menu of dinosaur chicken nuggets, and mac and cheese, dessert, and juice box option. Cost is \$5.

RSVP by Sunday April 19, 2020. Everyone is welcome

Bixlers Ladies Aide Yard Sale



Saturday, April 25th

8AM-2PM

(date may change due to coronavirus closings)

Donations accepted the week of April 23rd. Also, you may rent a space for \$10.

Food will be available for purchase. Hot Dogs, Bar-B-Que, Vegetable Soup, desserts, and drinks.

Fellowship Sundays

Bixler's will be having Fellowship Sunday on the last Sunday of each month. We hope you can join us for fellowship and food after worship service: Sunday, April 26th and May 31st.

Bixlers Ladies Aide

Bixler's Ladies Aide will be meeting on the first Monday of each month at 1:00 p.m. Everyone is welcome. Meeting Dates (subject to change due to coronavirus closings): Monday April 6th, May 4th, June 2nd.

Honoring Our Veterans

On Sunday December 15th the members of Bixlers Church held a short service honoring the military and then placed wreaths on all the graves of the veterans buried in the cemetery. There were 13 wreaths placed.

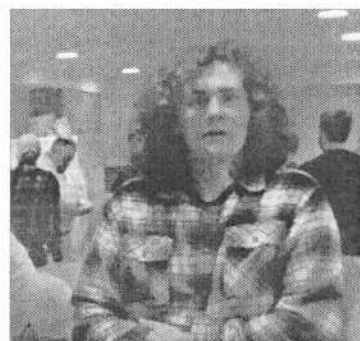
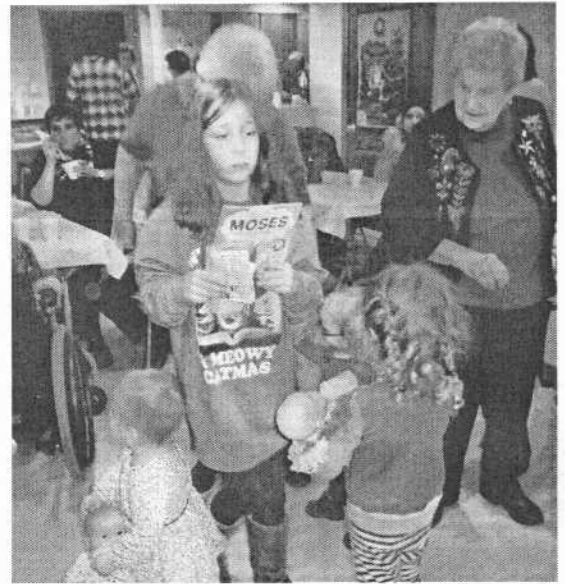
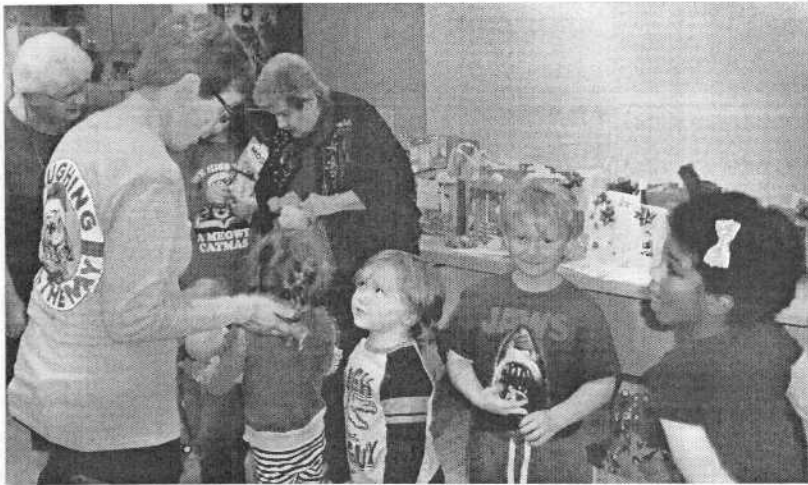


Bixlers Christmas Eve



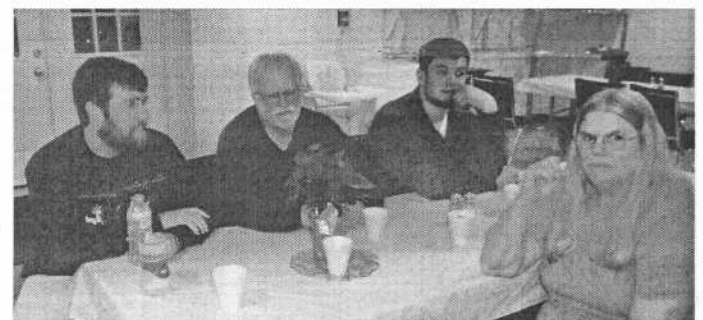
Poinsettias, candles, and lights created a beautiful altar setting for the Bixlers Christmas Eve service.

Bixlers Christmas Party

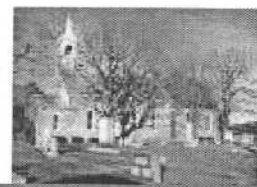


On December 13th the Bixlers Church congregation had their family Christmas Party. A fabulous dinner with delicious desserts was served. There was lots of fellowship and visiting with friends. Everyone enjoyed a great time. Santa had a problem at the North Pole so he wasn't able to attend but he sent gifts for all the children.

Larrie Buckler



Millers News



Ladies Aid Spring Yard Sale

May 16th Picnic Woods

(subject to change due to coronavirus closings)

Additional information to follow. Please do not bring items to the woods before drop off nights, we are not able to store items before the yard sale. Please do not put items in the back rooms. Thank You.

Book Fair Help Needed !!

We are currently looking for someone to take over the coordination of the Book Fair for 2021. I will be happy to meet with the new volunteer to discuss duties. We could use fresh ideas going forward. Thank you.

Laura Geiwitz

Operation Christmas Child Collection Box

When Operation Christmas Child rolls around at the end of each year, sometimes it is difficult and expensive to gather the necessary supplies quickly during the busy holiday season. A box has been set up in the narthex of Millers Church to start gathering items for Operation Christmas Child now. If you are at the store, try to remember to buy an item or two to place in the box when you come to church. By the end of the year, hopefully we will have plenty of things to fill the shoeboxes to send to children around the world.

Christmas Eve at Millers



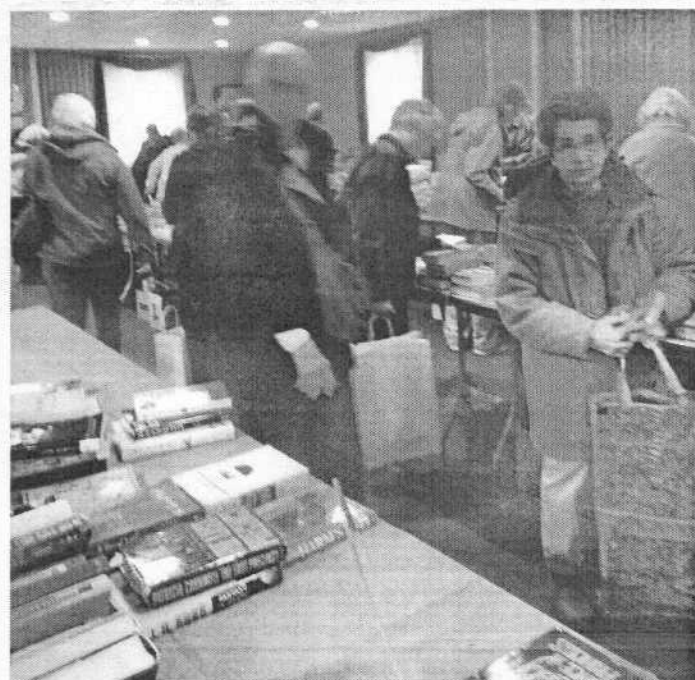
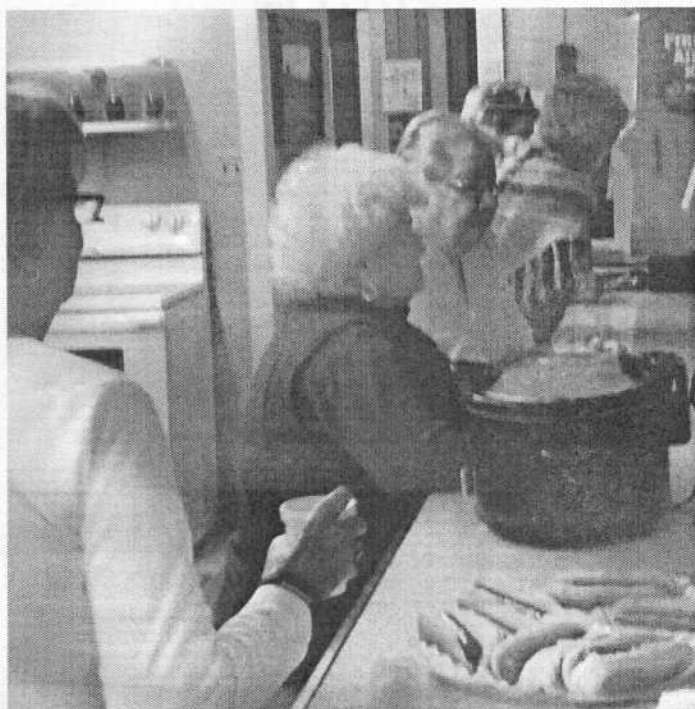
Jenna Holloway and Korin Ray read a passage during the Christmas Eve worship service at Millers Church.

Packing Christmas Cookies



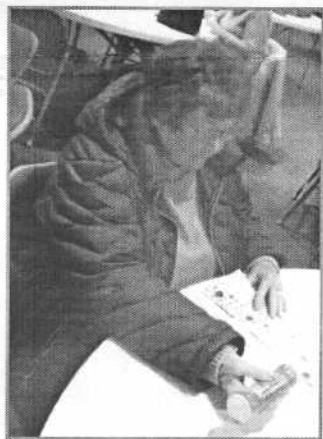
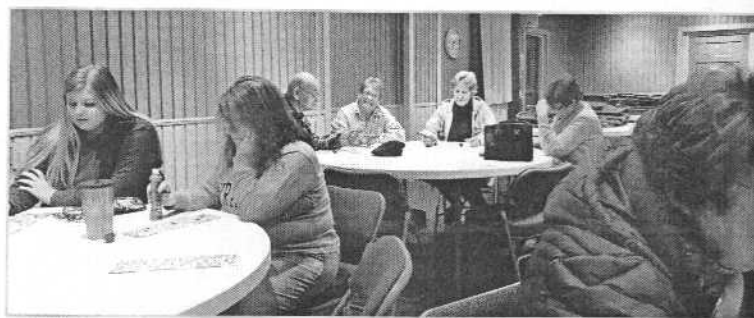
The youth Christmas Cookie Fundraiser was a big success again this year. The Miller, Schuller, and Sheffler families spent an evening at the Picnic Woods packaging and preparing the cookies for delivery. Proceeds from the sale helped to send the youth to River Valley Ranch Winter Meltdown in January. Thank you to all who supported this fundraiser!

Millers Ladies Aid Book Fair



The annual Day of Knowledge Book Fair, sponsored by the Millers Ladies Aid, was held at the Picnic Woods on January 18th and was a big success. All guests were given a shopping bag to fill with free books, and local authors were on hand with books for sale and opportunities to chat. Thanks to the many volunteers who made this day possible. (Thank you also to R.M. Peterson for taking pictures of the event)

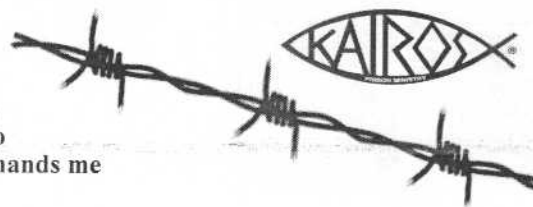
BINGO NIGHT



Millers youth and adults gathered for fellowship and Bingo at the Picnic Woods on January 23. As always, everyone had a wonderful time.

More Love to Thee

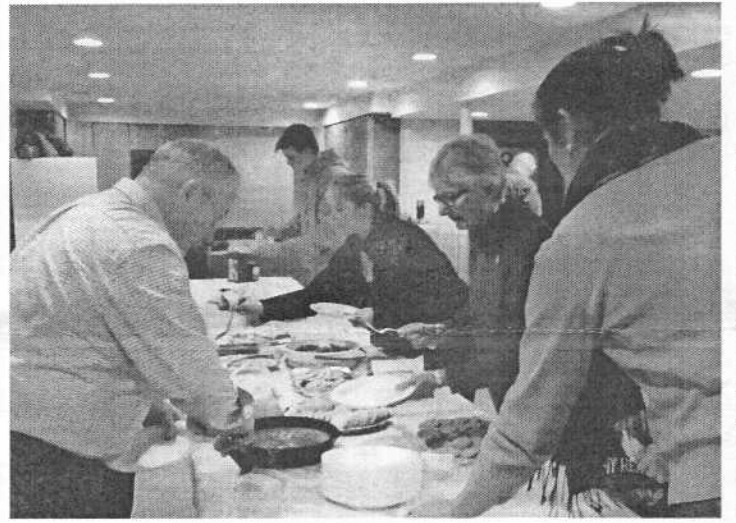
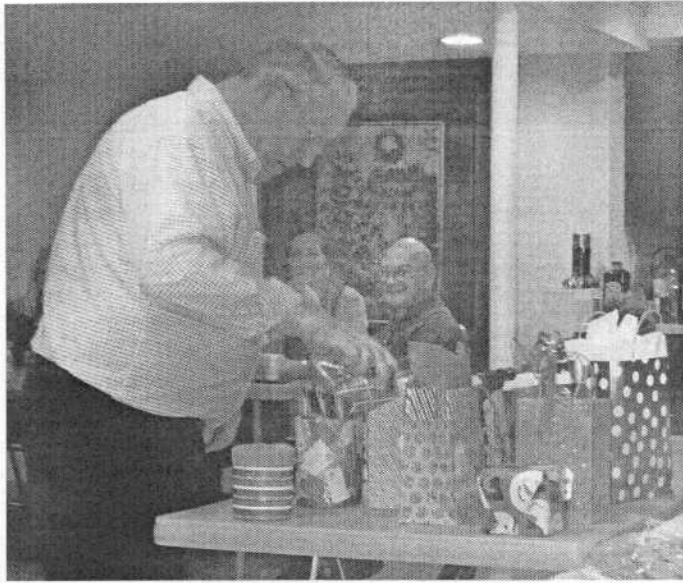
It's personal, a relationship with the only one who loves you and me sacrificially and unconditionally *More* than we can ever imagine. Yes, it is an individual decision to love back the one who loves you so much. I go into prisons to be with the incarcerated, not because our Savior and King commands me to do so, it is more simple, I go because of Love.



I recently, started serving Holy Communion in the Carroll County Jail to all who wants to receive Jesus. What a joy, I started to write what a delight, it's much *More*. The joy started much earlier, it started when I attended my first daily Catholic Mass. The Priest knew I was not a confirmed Catholic but he served me Holy Communion anyway. I came to search, you see I wanted *More* Jesus and I was determined to receive Him perfectly. Now as a Catholic Eucharistic Minister I can serve Jesus in the *More* perfect way to all who want *More* Christ. "How is Your Prayer Life?"

Love,
Phil

Ornament Exchange



About 30 people from Bixlers and Millers churches gathered at Bixlers Church for the second Annual Ornament Exchange on December 15th. Everyone had fun and there was a lot of laughter. A break was taken for yummy snacks. The must have ornament of the night was a Charlie Brown on a seesaw.

Larie Buck-

CHURCH FAMILY NEWS

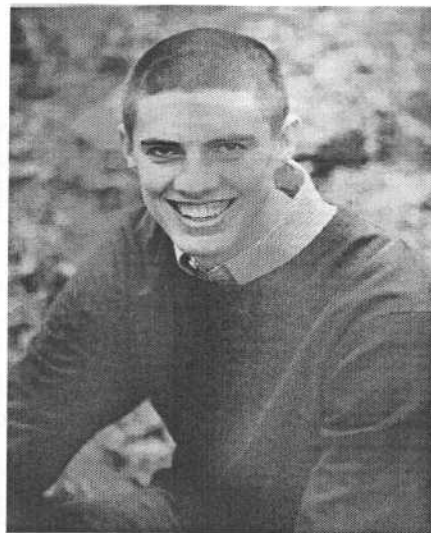
Way to Go, Drew!!!!



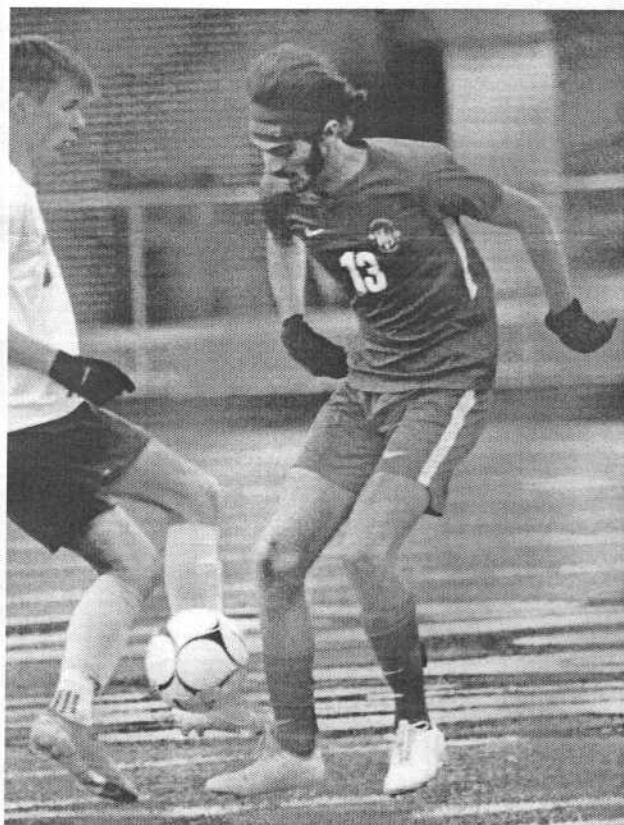
On January 9th through 12th, Drew ran 4 races at Disney World in Orlando, Florida. The first being a 5k, then a 10k, then a Half Marathon, then a Full Marathon. This challenge was called the Dopey Challenge; a total cumulative distance of 48.6 miles! On his journey he took 164,176 steps, burned 25,465 calories, and only slept 14 hours and 45 minutes over the four days! We are very proud of Drew and all of his accomplishments.

Submitted by Judy Pascoe

Graduations of Jenna's Brothers



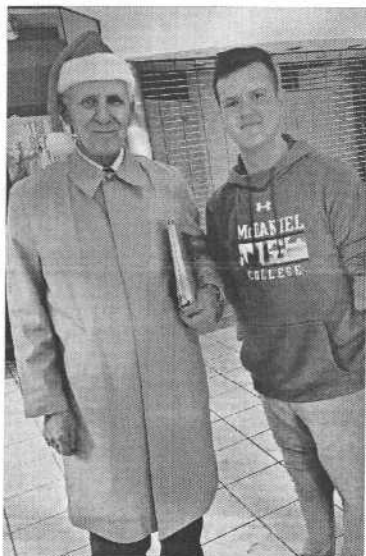
Eli Holloway has earned his Bachelors Degree from Loyola University in 3 ½ semesters, graduating Magna Cum Laude. He is currently working for a NSA Defense Contractor. In the fall, Eli is planning to attend an Ivy League school to study law.



Nolan Holloway will graduate from Susquehannock High School in Pennsylvania this spring, where he played basketball and soccer. He was a four year varsity soccer player, earning honors as All County player of the year, Division player of the year, and was selected as All State player in Pennsylvania. Nolan has been pursued by several colleges, and he has selected a Christian College in Pennsylvania, where he hopes to continue playing soccer.

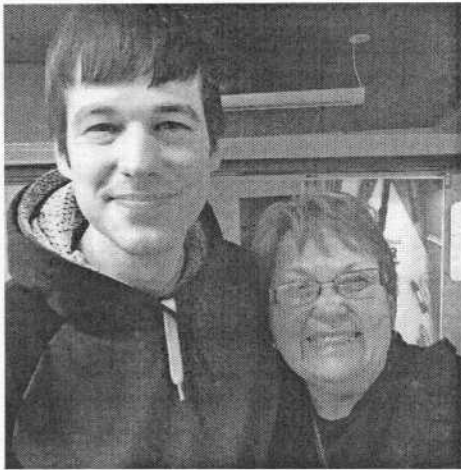
Submitted by George and Maryellen Miller

R.M. in Christmas Concert at Mall



R.M. Peterson was very busy during December singing in many holiday concerts with his Old Line Statesmen Barbershop group, including performances at the mall and several nursing homes. Pictured at left is R.M. with Nicky Halberstam after singing at the Towne Mall in Westminster. The Old Line Statesmen are currently rehearsing for a spring concert featuring hits from the 50s and 60s.

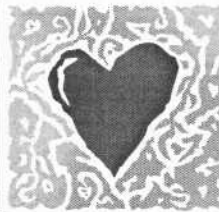
Jonathan in Play at Arts Center



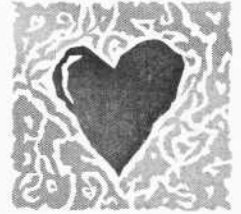
Jonathan Halberstam (Millers) played the role of Jerry in the play "Nine to Five" at the Chesapeake Arts Center. The play was produced by the "Stand Up for...." theatre group and had eight performances in January and February. Above, Judy Broadwater greets Jonathan after the performance on January 31st.

With Sadness

We have learned that Roberta Mattfeld passed away on March 9th after a short illness. Roberta and her late husband Ron were long-time members and neighbors of Millers Church. Please keep her daughters Jamie and Kelly and the entire Mattfeld family in your prayers during this difficult time.



Remember Our TLC Members



Please take time to call, visit, or send a card to those who are in nursing homes, hospitals, or are homebound due to medical issues; and to support their families.

Joann Forstner (Bixlers)
713 Maiden Choice Lane
Apt. 1302
Catonsville, MD 21228

Florence Bailey (Millers)
50 Timber Ridge
Westminster, MD 21157
410-840-9063

Lois Neuman (Millers)
Columbia Cottage
2288 Grandview Rd
Hanover, Pa. 17331

Janet Kohls (Bixlers)
425 Westminster Ave.
Care Central 238
Hanover, PA 17331

Catherine Strevig (Millers)
Golden Crest Assisted Living
1811 Albert Rill Road
Hampstead, MD 21074

Mabel Hare (Bixlers)
224 Quaker Run Rd.
Biglersville, PA 17307

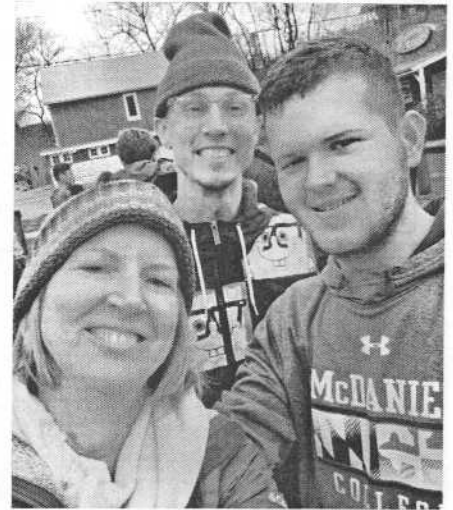
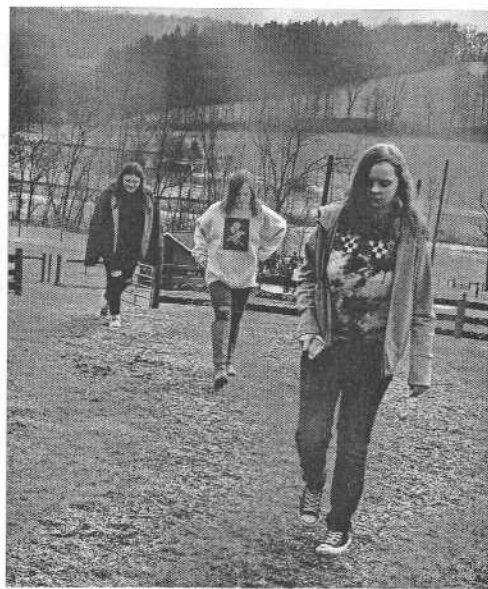
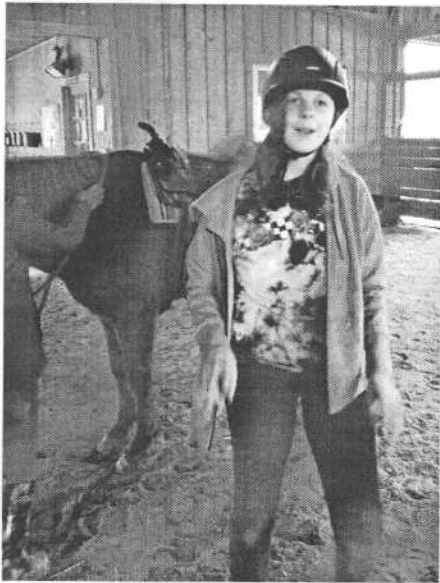
Dorothy Trone (Bixlers)
Long View Healthcare
3332 Main St., Room 115
Manchester, MD 21102

Baptism of Annabeth



Annabeth Hoff was baptized in Millers Church on February 23rd. She is the daughter of Denise and Brian Hoff, and the granddaughter of Karen and Donnie Nott. As you can see, Annabeth is well-loved by many adoring members of the Nott and Hoff families!

Winter Meltdown

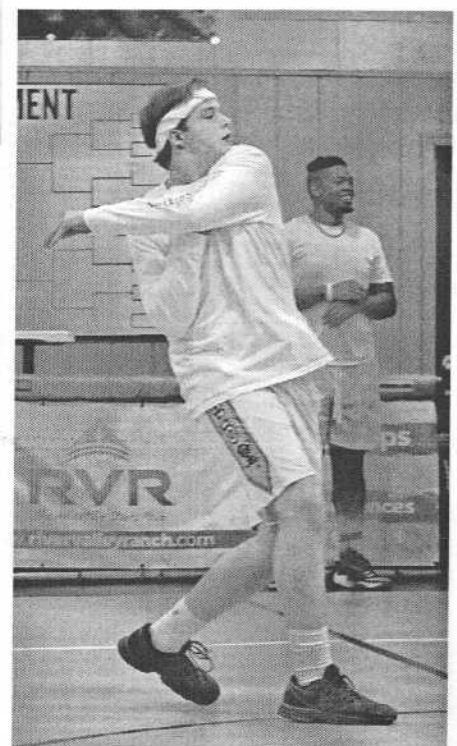


Church youth and friends attended Winter Meltdown at RVR in January for a fun-filled and inspirational weekend.

This year's theme centered around being part of the Family of Christ, in which we find what true belonging means. We find belonging, not by who we are or what we do, but because we were bought with a beautiful price – the sacrifice of Christ to offer forgiveness to all. However, just because something is beautiful doesn't mean it's easy. The same forgiveness Christ gave us, we are expected to give to everyone, because everyone is welcome to the Family of Christ. This means those who are broken and those who have broken you are welcome – victims, perpetrators, addicts, sufferers, terrorists, murderers and rapists. If the God of all, who is holy and without blemish, offers forgiveness freely, who are we to withhold forgiveness from each other. All who run to the Lord for forgiveness belong in the Family of Christ. Therefore, all deserve our forgiveness.



Thank you to chaperones Brigitte Miller, Theresa Whalen, Pastor Blake and Alexa, and Nicky Halberstam for giving their time and support to our youth. Thanks also to the congregation members who planned and supported fund-raisers throughout the year to make this weekend possible.



Youth Sunday



On Youth Sunday, the kids were challenged to demonstrate what they learned at Winter Meltdown through a trivia game. If the youth answered questions correctly, they were rewarded through a penalty for the youth leaders. If the youth answered questions incorrectly, the youth received the penalty. Penalties included wearing costumes, singing songs and completing challenges. We also kept score and the youth did an outstanding job coming out on top as the trivia game winners, showing the congregation that they do actually pay attention to the lessons at Winter Meltdown. The youth and the leaders had a wonderful time during the retreat and while sharing the experience with the congregation on youth Sunday.

Brigitte Miller



Newsletter Submissions

Please send submissions to:

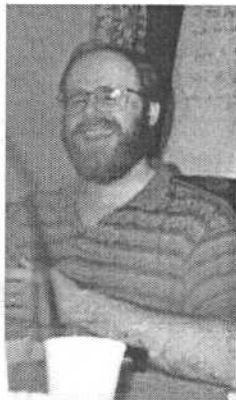
Bonnie Halberstam

Phone: 443-375-0544

email: bhalberstam@att.net

Special thanks this month to Les and Jeane Debelius, Larie and Bob Buckler, Brigitte Miller, Nicky Halberstam, Pastor Blake, Carol Hose, Amanda Schuller, Phil and Judy Pascoe, R.M. Peterson, Laura and Ells Geiwitz, Judy Broadwater, George and Maryellen Miller, the Hoff and Nott families, and Theresa Whalen or your submissions and help. Thank you for your continued support!

Glimpses from the Past



First Discipleship Class at Millers Church, held 1995-1996



Bonnie Towner photos

Blue and Gold

Cub Scout Pack 499, sponsored by Millers United Methodist Church, had its Blue and Gold party on Sunday afternoon. Before the awards ceremony, some of the pack members took a moment to strike a pose with their leaders. Pictured above, with leader Bob Buckler, are: Keenan Ports, first-year Webelo; Chris Buckler, Tiger; Terry Grove and Paul Hare, first-year Webelos; Robbie Kelley, Wolf; and Joey Holbrook, first-year Webelo. Below, pictured with leader Ken Miller, are: Cliff Miller and Scott Barr, first-year Webelos; Kenny Halberstam, Wolf; and John Reaver, Bear.



Millers Church had very active Boy Scout and Cub Scout troops in the 1990s. Above, leaders Bob Buckler and Ken Miller are pictured with some of the Cub Scouts at their annual Blue and Gold Awards ceremony.



Several Millers Church members participated in a clown ministry program in the 1990's.



Ira Barr visits with Helen Bollinger (1990s?)

Glimpses from the Past (continued)



Ells Geiwitz submitted this picture of a men's breakfast from 2004. It was taken at a restaurant near the airport in Westminster that is no longer in business.

Do you have pictures from past events of Millers and Bixlers that you would like to share?



Birthdays and Anniversaries



MARCH

1 Kyle Smith	M	14 Michelle Miller	B	24 Larie Buckler	B
3 Ian Seletzky	M	Mabel Hare	B	25 Joyce and Darrell Jones	B♥
5 Judy Holloway	M	16 Ken & Donna Wright	M♥	27 Stefanie & Phil Goldsmith	M♥
6 Jeane Debelius	M	Mike Schuller	M	28 Roland Wilson	B
Bonnie Halberstam	M	22 Victoria Double	M	30 Serena Hare	M
7 Sean Hare	M	23 Brenna Jones	B	Jonathan Halberstam	M

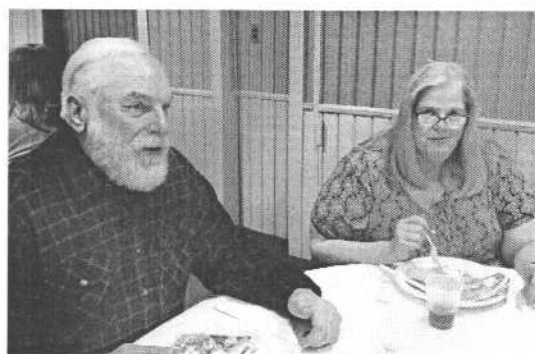
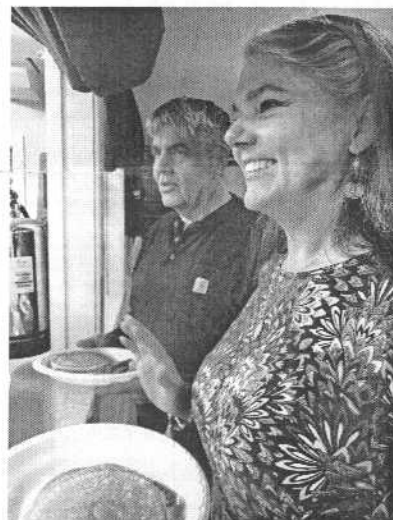
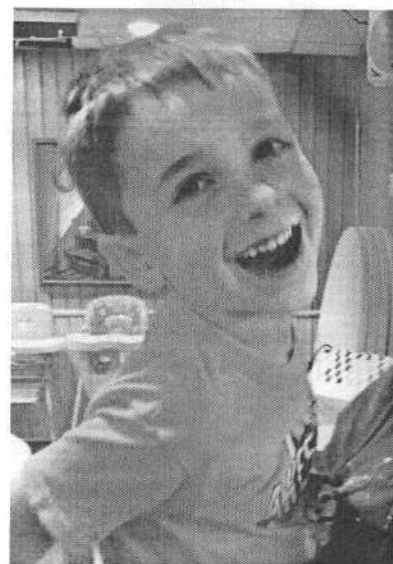
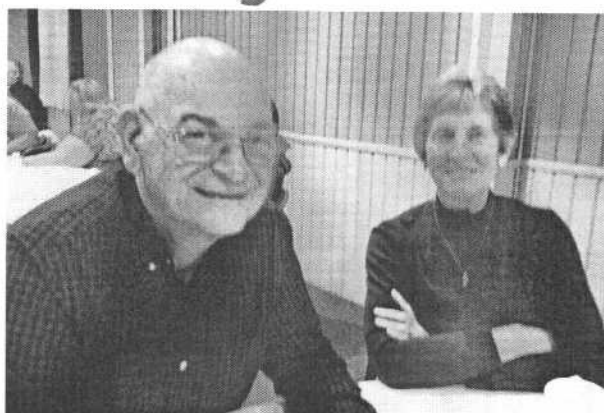
APRIL

2 Heather Wilson	B	13 Zachary Pascoe	M	23 Chris Seletzky, Jr.	M
4 Mary Ann Spangler	B	16 Kristie Wright	M	24 Diane & Chris Phillips	M♥
Craig Seletzky	M	Duane Kelly	M	Pat Berry	M
5 Gabrielle Miller	M	17 Ed and Barb Stanton	M♥	25 Wanda Dixon	M
McKenna Double	M	18 Kris Buckler	M	Zachary Blye	M
Kenny Halberstam	M	19 Don Dixon	M	27 Art and JoAnn Hobbs	M♥
10 Roland & Tina Wilson	B♥	21 Eddy Baker	M	30 Duane & Mary Kelly	M♥
11 Harry Yargar	M	22 Stef Buckler-Goldsmith	M	♥ anniversary	

MAY

3 Gloria and Frank Schoepf	M♥	12 May Garey	M	23 Janey Miller	M
5 George & Mary Ellen Miller	M♥	Jaci Arnold Daly	M	27 Alice May Hoff	B
Pat Double	M	14 Art Thomas		28 Ken Wright	M
6 Alexa Smarr	MB	15 Laura and Ells Geiwitz	M♥	30 George Miller, Jr.	M
7 Dave and Carol Sheffler	M♥	16 Julia Halberstam	M	31 Mike & Theresa Whalen	M♥
9 Melissa Green	B	19 David Jones	B	Russell Miller	M
Cindy Hare	M	22 Hailey Miller	M	♥ anniversary	

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper



The annual Pancake Supper was a great time. We counted forty-three attendees. This was an increased number from last year! Good food and great fellowship!

Laura Geiwitz

Random Acts of Kindness

Congregation members were asked to share an act of kindness that they have done for someone, or that someone has done for them or others.

Kelly Baker recently posted a message on the Prayer Chain that said if anyone needs groceries or anything from the store, she would be more than happy to get those things for them and porch deliver them. 410-861-3596 or mamakelz10210@gmail.com. Thank you Kelly for your kind offer in these very difficult times.!



In 2018, I had a smoked-up kitchen and flames caught my curtains on fire. I could not reach them. I called 911 and before the fire department could get here, a man in a grey car stopped and asked if I was alright.

The same thing happened again when my husband called 911 in February this year. I tried to get up out of bed and fell backwards. Before the ambulance got here, the man in the grey car stopped and helped me out to the stretcher for the ambulance.

Both times, this man was on his way to his job in Howard County. I would like to thank him, whoever he is for being a Good Samaritan. I call him one of God's angels.

Evelyn Carol Hose

MaryAnn gave her quilting frame that she no longer uses to the ladies of a Mennonite Church in Hagerstown, Maryland so they could make so more quilts.

The Bixler's choir had a Valentine's Day Tea without Tea. They served chicken salad sandwiches, vegetable soup, water, and coffee. They just enjoy having fun and laughing together. Being kind.

A lady in line ahead of him had more groceries for her young family than she had money. Kris Buckler gave the cashier the money she needed to finishing paying for her groceries.

I heard a story about a funeral home that had no hand sanitizer and could not let anyone in to visit until they got some. I had gotten a big bottle of it and donated it to the owners wife. She was very appreciative for it and made her happy. I felt so great after being able to do that for them during this crazy time.

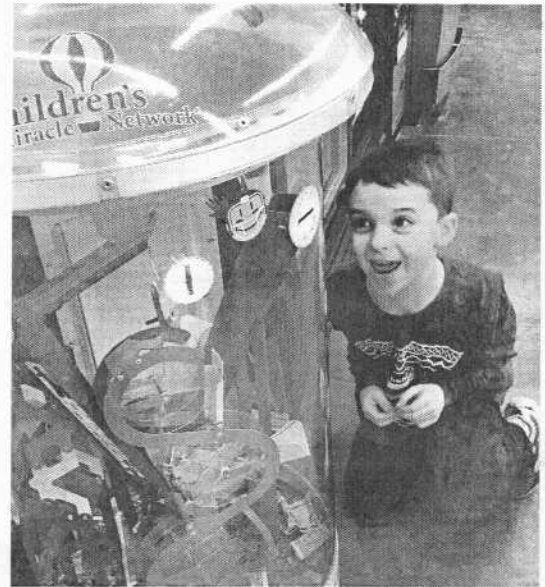
Amanda Schuller

I have been touched by so many people who have shown kindness to me and my family over the years. One special memory from several years ago was when son Nicky told RM Peterson he liked to go fishing. After that, sweet RM arranged to pick up Nicky at 6 a.m. to go fishing with him. Now, Nicky was diagnosed with attention deficit/hyperactivity and struggled to pay attention and sit still and was a non-stop chatterbox. So, not exactly an ideal fishing partner for an early morning quiet peaceful fishing trip. But RM made it a very special morning for him, and returned my son with a beaming smile and about a dozen filleted fish for me to cook for our dinner. That fishing trip meant so much to Nicky, and I've never forgotten RM's kindness.

Bonnie Halberstam

Briley Jones is volunteering at a food pantry twice a month on Saturdays.

Linda Steger sends encouragement, get well, and sympathy cards to everyone in need. It is a great feeling to open the mailbox and find one.



Every time we are shopping at Walmart, Lucas looks for loose change anywhere in the store, so that he can put it in the Children's Miracle Network money collection. He has done this for years at this point. He even asked if the tooth fairy would give extra money so that he could add it to that too. Love my kind hearted little guy!

Amanda Schuller

Peggy suffered a stroke and could not remember numbers and she loved to bake. The number issue made baking hard because she could not figure out like 1/2 and 1/2 equals a cup so her sister when through Peggy's whole recipe book and taped paper strips next to the measurements if she doubled or tripled the recipe how much she needed of each ingredient.

Bob Steger meets Sam Feeser and pushes Sam's wheelchair into church every Sunday.

A woman attending the Book Fair at the Picnic Woods in January wanted to buy a book from one of the authors but did not have quite enough money. A member of Millers (who wishes to remain anonymous) gave her the money she needed to purchase the book.

Thank you to Larie Buckler for this wonderful idea for a newsletter feature. If you have an idea for a future newsletter, please let Bonnie know.



Bixlers and Millers United Methodist Church

3282 Charmil Drive (Parsonage)
Manchester, Maryland 21102



USA

NON-MACHINEABLE SURCHARGE

Pastor Blake Smarr

Phone: 704-860-7851

E-mail: pastorblakesmarr@gmail.com

www.millersumc.com

www.bixlersumc.com

March-April -May 2020



He is
RISEN

Easter Sunday

**Tentative schedule depending on
coronavirus closing restrictions;
Check with your church!**

April 12 at the Picnic Woods

Sunrise Service at 6:30 am

Followed by breakfast at 7 am

Worship at Bixlers 8:45 am

Worship at Millers 10:30 am

Phil's Corner

"It's Personal"

Jesus was led into the desert for forty days and forty nights, to pray and to fast. If praying and fasting wasn't enough, the devil was tempting Jesus the whole time. Jesus was preparing himself to begin his three year ministry or just maybe he was preparing you and me for our journey into the desert. This Lenten season, let us follow the Lord into the desert of praying and fasting and don't let the evil one with all his scheming and lies pull you from the truth. Just a reminder, call on the Holy Spirit if you need help. "The Lord, your God, shall you worship and him alone shall you serve."

Happy Easter,
Phil

