



## Special Edition – McMechen First Church of God Fire

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### Author

The weekly eNews is provided  
by CGGC Executive Director  
Lance Finley



I know that many of you became aware via social media of what happened in McMechen, WV last weekend: the McMechen First Church of God (ARC) building burned to the ground late Friday evening/early Saturday morning.

While the building was destroyed and is considered a total loss, there is good news to report: the McMechen Church of God is going to be just fine. The church is God's people, not a building.

While our brothers and sisters at McMechen First Church of God are mourning the loss of their long held building and the many, many cherished memories from years of fruitful ministry there, the McMechen First Church of God is alive and well and is going to continue to move forward in pursuing God's mission in the greater Ohio Valley area. Praise the Lord!

I wanted to share an update and let you know of different ways in which you can support our brothers and sisters in McMechen during their time of need.

Christ's Peace,

**Lance**

**The following is from Pastor Phil Scott, Director of the Allegheny Regional Conference:**

The story is not complete. God is still writing it, and He has the last word. The McMechen United Methodist Church immediately opened their doors to their McMechen family to come and worship this past Sunday. In their service they thanked God for our birthday, Pentecost; and asked God to bless the

McMeechen Church of God family in the loss of their facility. During the communion time, the congregation laid hands on prayer shawls filling the sanctuary and prayed for the person who will receive it. They walked through the pews praying that the people, soon to arrive, would feel God's grace, love and presence. It was a beautiful expression of the Kingdom breaking out.

The McMeechen First Church of God family arrived with Pastor Mitch carrying two items that survived the fire: a bent brass cross that adorned the communion table and the Christian Flag. In a fire so hot that the windows melted, the nylon flag that was at the center of the fire, as now understood, survived unscathed but for smoke stains. A miracle anyway you explain it. The McMeechen First Church of God family gathered and launched into a time of worship. They sang and worshiped with abandon! This might have been the kind of setting that led King David to dance, because the McMeechen First Church of God family poured out their love, joined their hearts and resolve, that God is worthy of praise. Pastor Mitch led the message of the day by sharing from the prayers of God's people. He shared reports of prayer coming from churches in Sweden, Bangladesh, Kenya, all of the CGGC, and multiple denominations. He shared words from people of the community who poured out their love. The congregation then shared memories of life changing moments that happened in the building. The gathered heard stories of salvation, weddings, child dedications, and special moments: so many life changing moments, so many memories, and so many times that God showed up in a personal way. All the testimonies seemed to end with the same theme. God is good. The church is not gone, the building is. The service concluded with the prayer shawls being shared and the entire church laying on hands and praying for Pastors Mitch and Catherine Johnston and the elders as all look forward with great hope and anticipation of what God will be doing next



In this all we are reminded of several things. God is a good, good father. He is a master of raising the dead and rebuilding the broken. He is blessing His children, even when we don't yet understand. God is writing His story, and that we ought not to hold so tightly to the tools He loans us. Don't lament the score in the middle of the game because God always bats last.

*Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.*  
*Hebrews 4:14-16 KJV*

Pastors Mitch and Catherine and the congregation wish to express the overwhelming outpouring of love and support they have received.

The next steps include meeting with insurance adjusters, fire inspectors, and the church leadership praying and seeking God's direction for their next season of ministry. They will be meeting for the foreseeable future in the McMeechen Junior High School.

If you wish to help the McMechen Church financially with the current and future ministry needs, the ARC has established a fund. Please direct your donations to:

ARC (Allegheny Regional Conference)  
c/o Gladys Grimm  
338 Grimm Lane  
Scottdale PA 15683

**Check Memo: McMechen COG**

If you wish to express your support outside of social media through a card, the address is changed:

McMechen First Church of God  
PO Box 102  
McMechen, WV 26040

If you wish to express your support and love on social media: [Pastor Mitch Johnston](#)

You can watch the local news coverage from last weekend: [News Cast Link](#)