



2026 Annual Pastor Report – Steve Karabatos, Youth Pastor

My name is Steve Karabatos, and I'm the youth pastor here at Mountain View Chapel. I am beginning my 27th year in youth ministry.

Youth Group

Our main group is the 7th–12th grade youth group, which met 51 times in 2025: 47 Sundays, two Thursdays, one Wednesday, and one Friday. Weekday meetings occurred when Sunday holidays prevented regular gatherings. We focused on three major themes:

- January–May: The Gospel of Mark
- June–August: Holy Sexuality (our triennial series)
- September–December: Financial series

By my count, 85 teens consider Mountain View their primary youth group, and 57 attend consistently. Of those 57, 30 are homeschooled, 18 attend public school, and nine attend private school.

Events and Service

In 2025, we returned to the Philadelphia Project week-long service camp with 13 students participating. We are scheduled to return in summer 2026. We also continued our local week of service at Mountain View after school ends, with as many as 35 teens attending in one day and 40 different teens participating throughout the week.

Once a month, we volunteer at the Upper Perkiomen Community Thrift Store in Pennsburg for five hours during “Whopper of a Wednesday.”

Our annual beach retreat was held in Ocean City, Maryland, with the theme of prayer. For summer 2026, we have a place reserved in Seaside Heights. We also completed our winter retreat at Spruce Lake between Christmas and New Year's, focusing on cultural relativism and its dangers to Christianity. We plan to return to Spruce Lake at the end of 2026.

Activities and Sports

We incorporate small group activities such as concerts, games, and lunches with teens of specific interests. Parent-teen games include Spike (volleyball in January), Super Bowling (February), Whoops (basketball in March), and softball games in April and May.

FIFA Friday, a summer soccer activity, remains popular. After soccer, we go to the Bally pool for fellowship and invite neighborhood kids to join us for games like Nine Square and KanJam. Nearly the entire pool staff now attends Mountain View Youth Group, which is great for ministry but occasionally challenging for scheduling lifeguards.

We also offer pre-youth group sports: flag football in fall, volleyball and basketball in winter, and softball in spring. On weeks without sports, we hold student-led Bible studies. Teens often arrive as early as 3:30 p.m., so we provide dinner before youth group.

Additional Ministry

In 2025, I attended over 40 school-sponsored events involving 26 different teens. We continued “Taste of Youth Group,” three Wednesday nights after AWANA ends, for grades 3–6, plus a fourth week for a youth group sneak peek.

Our incoming 7th-grade orientation included a pool party and Reading Phillies game to help new teens connect. Attendance was small this year with only five teens, reflecting a smaller incoming class. I also volunteer with AWANA and remain on the teaching rotation.

Pathfinders Young Adults Group

Pathfinders, for high school seniors through age 29, met 49 times on Mondays and twice on Tuesdays due to holidays. Attendance averages in the low to mid-20s. We meet in the upstairs barn on the adjacent property. The first Monday of each month is for fellowship activities like roller skating, snow tubing, or a Reading Phillies game. The second Monday is self-directed discussion, and the remaining Mondays are lesson nights. Pastor Chris Hamilton assists when I am unavailable and will help with youth group a few times in 2026.

Other Roles and Acknowledgments

I performed three weddings and no funerals in 2025. I preached once at Mountain View. Thank you to the Ladies Bible Study that meets every other Sunday night and prays for the youth ministry. Thank you to the board for your generous support, vans, and the freedom to write curriculum. Thank you to Pastor Chris Eshelman for his support, and to parents for partnering with our vision and ensuring teens attend regularly.

Special thanks to Jocelyn Spieth for keeping the MVC app updated, handling registrations promptly, and managing building schedules to avoid conflicts.

Finally, thank you to our devoted volunteers:

- **John Murphy**, who retired after 10 years of service. His final event was cooking at the beach retreat, and he will be missed.
- **Tina Zelesnicki**, returning to youth ministry after years away.
- **Janet Cicciione, George and Pam Trimble, Nicole Orehotsky**, and my wife **Becky Karabatos**, whose support makes this ministry possible.

We look forward to a wonderful 2026 and appreciate your continued support.