

the Voice parish newsletter

Thanks be to God for our 100th Year!



The Lord sets the prisoner free; the Lord opens the eyes of the blind. The Lord lifts up those who are bowed down; the Lord loves the righteous. –Psalm 147:7-8

This edition of the newsletter includes the Christmas letter of Craig Elias, whose grandfather was our pastor for nearly two decades. Craig is currently serving a life sentence at the State Correctional Institution in Fayette County. Our congregation has an ongoing ministry with Craig, which includes my monthly visits, visits from church members, and letter writing. Craig's Christmas letter covers a range of topics, including references to fellow inmates, humorous stories, but also the important news that a Philadelphia law firm has gained a new hearing for Craig. His appeal has been assigned to the Honorable Thomas Flaherty. Please pray for Craig, for our ministry with him, and review the ways you can support him listed at the end of the letter. Contact information for his attorneys is provided.

On another matter, Barbara and I would like to thank the congregation for the prayers, love, and support extended to us following the death of her father on December 13. Her dad, George Bashore, was a pastor and bishop in the United Methodist Church. He was a blessing to our church, serving here when I was recovering from surgeries. He had a heart for Christ, for people, and was always pleased to hear about Craig Elias and our social ministry work. Thanks for your cards, prayers, kind words; and thanks to those who attended his funeral.

Barbara's company sent her wind chimes a few days after her father died for which to remember him. The chimes hang on our patio below our bedroom window. We can hear its gentle sounds at night, which brings us comfort in these days of mourning. The wind chime includes the engraving of a poem, *A Father's Goodbye. May strength surround you when I'm gone / With steady warmth to carry on / In every sunrise, find your way / My spirit's light will guide each day / In tough times, find courage deep and true / In moments of joy, feel my pride in you / With each step you take, know I'm still near, whispering wisdom, easing each fear.*

When we hear the chimes, day and night, we remember the abiding love of Bishop George Bashore and, most of all, the abiding love of Jesus Christ. The risen Christ is with us always. Thanks be to God! Happy New Year to everyone! 2025 is the 100th year of our congregation. More news to come!

In Christ.

Pastor Doug Heagy



January, 2025

Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church
975 Washington Road Mt. Lebanon, Pennsylvania 15228



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To Whom I May Return:

Shark's an aging albino from Allentown I've known for nearly a decade. D-Bob's almost thirty, rocks the kind of beard that'd excite a female yak, and is a more recent acquaintance. Both men profess to follow Jesus of Nazareth. Neither's been near enough to touch his tunic lately.

There's a thing we Christians do when we want to have story time but we don't want to seem like backbiters; we group up and lay out people's shortcomings like back page gossip columnists on our way to praying about them. One evening in early October a buddy of mine used that move to put Shark and D-Bob on Front Street. I fed right in. Dayroom ended before we even got to the prayer part. As my buddy and I strolled towards our respective cells we agreed to intercede for Shark and D-Bob on our own time. I locked in and watched football.

The next morning, my celly, Oi, went to the license plate factory, giving me some cell time. While I was on my knees calling down power from heaven on behalf of those I love, I thought of those I'm supposed to love and tacked on an obligatory rider. "Lord, please be with Shark and D-Bob as they..." Even as the words were sliding from my lips I knew I didn't mean them. Shark's a fiend. D-Bob's a mooch. They're not serious about their faith. And by "serious" I don't mean they're not like me. I mean they're nowhere close. They're not reading their Bibles, organizing ministries, and meeting real needs. They're selfish. They run up debts they can't pay. They make commitments they don't honor. They don't deserve the blessing of God.

...

New Guy's not new. That's just the name I gave him when we met coming out of the pandemic. He's been with us for awhile and has become a key gardener in our growing house church. He attends studies faithfully; he's facilitated a Kairos Prayer & Share group; and he's always first with an encouraging word. This is a man upon whom I've come to depend.

Towards the end of September, as our study group was winding down our two-month journey in Paul's letter to the Romans, New Guy tossed out an interesting proposal. Instead of each member of our crew taking turns leading us through a chapter, he suggested we challenge the guys to prepare and lead a study through an entire New Testament epistle. This would oblige them to find themes, develop main ideas, and think more broadly about how their chosen book fits into the overarching Biblical narrative. New Guy volunteered to show the guys how it's done by walking us through the book of James.

I was amped to see New Guy stepping up and made it my business to back him. First, I excavated some historical background commentary. Next, I shared with him copies of the sermon notes on James from the South Hills Bible Chapel I'd received from Roger, one of my mentors. Then I spent a two-hour dayroom showing him how I'd break down the first chapter and turn it into a lesson.

It was mid-October when New Guy launched his James series. He discussed the historical context and themes of the letter for the first fifteen minutes of lesson one... then never mentioned them again. Over the course of a week his messages devolved into a disjointed collection of scripture readings from all over the Bible that had the students yawning and me fuming. This wasn't the effort I'd come to expect from New Guy. I sat him down and told him so. I thought we'd come to an understanding. But the next time we gathered for study New Guy announced he wasn't ready to move into chapter two and suggested we have an "open night" in lieu

of a lesson. I chewed my cheek raw. Maybe I'd overestimated him. Maybe he wasn't the kind of guy I could count on. New Guy had let Jesus down. Even worse, he'd let me down.

...

Contempt. That toxic brew of disgust and superiority was gushing from my heart like a busted sewer pipe. *Shark. D-Bob. New Guy. I'm done with these clowns. They're not worth my time. They don't want to get better. None of them could hold my jock when it comes to teaching people, serving people, and loving people. I always put ministry first. No matter what.* These were the kinds of thoughts I used to drive a wedge between me and them; the gap steadily widening as I persuaded myself more and more of their utter uselessness. Every time I saw one of them in passing or heard their names mentioned I crucified them in my mind. This continued for the better part of a fortnight.

...

I was reviewing the Sermon on the Mount in early November, thinking about slapping the section about good-for-nothing-salt right in my failing friends' faces, when Holy Spirit directed my attention to a neighboring segment of Jesus' speech: "Do not judge so that you will not be judged. For by the standard you judge you will be judged, and the measure you use will be the measure you receive," (Matthew 7:1-2, NET). I didn't love that.

My concordance said the word for "judge" in Greek is *krino*. It literally means to "assume the office." It carries the connotation of separating, selecting, and choosing. *Krino* made me imagine myself scaling King Jesus's sacred throne, shoving him to the side, grabbing his scepter and pointing out who's worth loving, forgiving, and redeeming and who isn't. How quickly I'd become the Pharisee standing in the Temple, beating my chest and bellowing, "God, I thank you that I'm not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector." My defiance was unsettling. I wondered how I'd gotten here.

...

A surprising sun rose on my prospects for release this year. Back in July, the Wrongful Conviction Unit from a non-profit public interest law firm called Phillips Black, LLC offered to investigate my case. Their team included Stephen Lazar (my faithful friend and former co-worker in SCI Fayette's law library), Jennifer Merrigan and Elie Kirshner, a pair of litigators whose acumen and experience are only surpassed by the depth of their compassion. Throughout the summer, Jennie, Elie, Steve and a dedicated team of interns digested thousands of pages of transcripts, sifted through piles of exhibits, and read all of my previous pleadings. In September, they dispatched an investigator from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh to interview the key players from my 2002 trial and do some detective work down at the courthouse. Our sleuth struck gold, uncovering detailed psychiatric diagnoses about the Commonwealth's star witness that hadn't been disclosed prior to trial. Armed with this proof of a constitutional violation, the Phillips Black squad drafted a compelling petition for post-conviction relief and submitted it on October 22nd. A week later, while we were conferring over Zoom about the new appeal, more good news arrived. Elie pulled up the docket on his laptop and announced that my case had been assigned to the Honorable Thomas Flaherty, a judge reputed for his fairness and attention to detail. After two decades of Life Without Parole, a door had been cracked and freedom's light was leaking in.

...

From the moment the jury judged me guilty half a lifetime ago, returning home has felt both inevitable and impossible. I've known it would take time. I've known it would require me to change. I've known deliverance would come from a Power far beyond me. I've also known that life means life, that appeals don't get granted, and that good people die here. I've known these things at the same time, sometimes in the same prayer. Knowing them's buoyed my spirit. Knowing them's made my soul bleed. To cope with the tension of such certain uncertainty I've tried to practice gratitude. I can tally the sum of the past twenty-two years and thank the Lord for the life I've been given. Whether it's been on the block, at the library, in the classroom, or in

the chapel, I've answered God's call to abundant life in Christ. In turn, he's blessed me with rich relationships, impossible opportunities, and support more than I've ever deserved. And that's the key word – **deserved**.

Theologian A.W. Tozer calls “grace” God's goodness directed toward human rebellion and moral debt. By grace God imputes merit where it didn't exist before and wipes clean the debt that we owe. Grace inclines God to show favor on the **undeserving**. Because God is full of grace he lifts up our heads from the prison house, changes our browns for royal robes, and makes us a part of his family. Grace flows to mankind through Jesus the Messiah, crucified and risen. The Apostle Paul says it this way: “He did this by predestining us to adoption as his legal heirs through Jesus Christ, according to the pleasure of his will – to the praise of the glory of his grace that he has freely bestowed on us in his dearly loved Son. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our offenses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight,” (Ephesians 1:5-8, NET).

There's no such thing as grace deserved. Favor earned may be justice or righteousness, but it's not grace. The lowly don't deserve his pity. The guilty don't deserve a reprieve. The outcasts don't deserve his friendship. The condemned don't deserve his honor. The fact that grace isn't rooted in merit is what makes it so remarkable. God's grace sets captives free to show the world how exceedingly kind he is to us in Christ Jesus. Received or rejected, grace is a gift and can never be anything but. This truth about God comes straight from the scriptures. I've experienced it and taught it for years. Yet something was keeping me from believing God would apply grace to my temporal imprisonment.

...

An un-talked-about fear resides in the shadowy recesses of my subconscious, waiting to emerge. The fear is fine with me being a successful law librarian; it's fine with me being a church leader here; and it's fine with me getting letters and visits. It's not fine with me going home - ever. When it hears rumors about amazing attorneys and constitutional violations and favorable judges it whispers reminders that I don't deserve any of this. When supporters rally behind me, advocating for my release the whispers turn into shouts. *You were what you were and you did what you done and the only outcome you should expect is more put downs, shakedowns, and lockdowns!* The fear says all the prayers, all the money, all the time, and all the efforts people are investing to get me out will be for nothing. God may bless me with an eternal home in the new creation but while I'm on this earth it's a cement box 'til my casket drops.

Self-righteousness's siblings – doing and comparing – vow to help me subdue the fear. They tell me to preach more, teach more, and reach more and I'll be worthy of going home. And as my doing surges I sneak little peeks at those around me, keeping tabs on those who aren't measuring up to the standard I'm setting. The further short they fall, the better about winning God's lottery I feel. This isn't a story I tell myself deliberately. It's stirred in like arsenic in my tea.

...

My question has never been about whether God *can* deliver me, but *will* he? And how I answer it at any given time depends on how I feel about my performance. It took me unplugging and reflecting in the dark to realize that my fear of enduring an eleventh appellate-loss-death had subtly pushed me into overdrive. I'd begun serving God and others not from a place of self-giving love but from a place of self-earning-grace. The reason I was so harsh in my judgments of New Guy, Shark, and D-Bob was because I was unconsciously trying to convince myself that by out-Jesus-ing my peers I would show God how worthy I am of his blessing. That's a cold, transactional place to be.

...

Not long after Jesus warns against harboring the kind of contempt in which I'd found myself mired, he tells his disciples about the response to their felt needs that they should expect from God: “Or which one of

you, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a serpent? If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more* will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him!” (Matthew 7:9-11, ESV). In this passage I rediscovered God’s antifreeze – the truth of who he is.

The Father described by the Son is a Father of inevitable grace. He meets our needs in the relational spirit of “how much more,” not with the closed hand of a stingy businessman withholding wealth for himself. Jesus’s words made me think of my dad. He’s spent half my life doing everything in his power to bring me home; the embodiment of generosity rooted in love. *Why would my Heavenly Father want less for me? Why would my Heavenly Father be doing less for me?* He wouldn’t and he isn’t. And the proof is in the gospel. “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?” (Romans 8:32, ESV).

The gospel itself is a story of a rescue mission; the Father sends his only unique Son to bring back the rest of his children. And what is he bringing us into? Forever freedom. Through Christ I’ve already escaped an eternity of restriction and punishment. I’ve been called into a wide open world of empowering grace. The generous actions of God are what define my life now, not my competitive, self-styled performance chart. Remembering and reordering my hope around this truth is a process I have to engage in frequently. I call it “re-gospel-ing” myself. It’s where Jesus invites me to open the cell door we’re hiding behind and step back into his world of matchless grace. I do this whenever I recognize and name my pain, fear, and in some cases sin, turn from it, and relocate myself within the plan and purposes of the God of “how much more.”

...

The stories about New Guy, D-Bob, and Shark that fear insisted upon were lies. The truth about Shark and D-Bob is they’re struggling to overcome deep hurts and shame that’ve been compounded by years of substance abuse. They’re doing the best they can with the tools they’ve got and as long as they’re breathing it’s too early to give up on them. Grace pursues.

The truth about New Guy is that we’re approaching the one-year anniversary of his mom’s death and grief’s been squeezing him hard. Further, he’s trying to hold his marriage together from prison with little more than gorilla snot and paperclips. The fact that he’s prepping and bringing lessons for our studies at all is a testament to his loyal love of God and us. Grace sustains.

The truth about me is that I’m in a better place with all this now. My sense of worthiness has once again been pried apart from my performance. That’s freed me up to hope again and to enjoy by faith the rich life Jesus has won for me. Whether that includes a successful appeal and the chance to be reunited with you remains to be seen. Currently, we’re waiting on the Court to decide how it will proceed with our PCRA. In the meantime, my legal team is organizing a coalition of supporters who’d be willing to write letters, send e-mails, sign a petition or speak on my behalf. They’re also looking for folks who’d attend the hearing we’re hoping will be granted in 2025. If you’d like to participate in any or all of the above (or if you have other ideas for how you can help) please call, text, or e-mail the team:

Stephen Lazar	Tel: (215) 528-0523	E-mail: s.lazar@phillipsblack.org
Jennifer Merrigan	Tel: (888) 532-0897	E-mail: j.merrigan@phillipsblack.org
Elie Kirshner	Tel: (888) 532-0897	E-mail: e.kirshner@phillipsblack.org

Thank you much for your love and prayers. Grace be with you all.

MONDAY NIGHT BIBLE STUDY

JEREMIAH

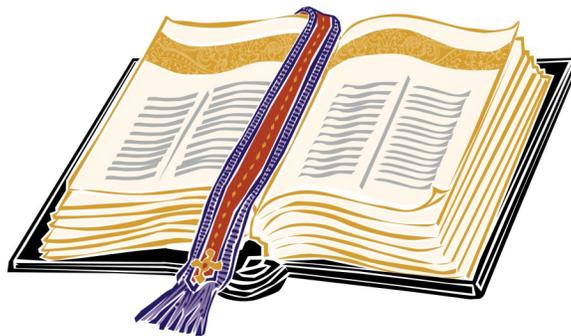
7:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This **8-session** course explores selected passages from Jeremiah and one from the book of Lamentations.

Sessions 1 & 2 were held in December. We resume the study in January.

3. Where Is the Disconnect? (Jeremiah 7:1-8:3) / January 6
4. What Makes God Cry? (Jeremiah 8:14-9:1) / January 13
5. Can God Love Rags? (Jeremiah 13: 1-14) / January 20
6. How Certain Is Our Future? (Jeremiah 31: 27-40) / January 27
7. Can You Imagine a Different World? (Jeremiah 31:27-40) / February 3
8. Will God Turn to Save Us? (Lamentations 3:1-39) / February 10

Each participant will receive a learner's guidebook for personal use. Bibles will be provided or bring your own. Led by Pastor Heagy, we will discuss key passages from the books of Jeremiah and Lamentations. All are welcome. This study group continues through January.



THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

THE BOOK OF ACTS

10:00 am- 11:00 am

This 8-session course explores selected passages from Acts.

Sessions 1 and 2 were held in December. We resume the study this month.

- 3. The Spirit on the Margins (Acts 8:1-40) / January 9**
- 4. The Conversion of Peter (Acts 10:1-48) / January 16**
- 5. World Upside Down (Acts 17:1-34) / January 23**
- 6. A Riot in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-41) / January 30**
- 7. On Trial for the Resurrection (Acts 24:1-27) / February 6**
- 8. And So We Came to Rome (Acts 28:1-31) / February 13**

Each participant will receive a learner's guidebook for personal use. Bibles will be provided or bring your own. Led by Pastor Heagy, we will discuss key passages from the book of Acts. All are welcome. This study group continue through January.



From the Stewardship Committee

Commit to a Tithe in 2025

“Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and thus put me to the test, says the Lord of hosts; see if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you an overflowing blessing.” -Malachi 3:10

Not everybody can tithe, and not everybody necessarily should tithe – that is, to give 10 percent of their income to God. But there are many who could and probably should. It would benefit them and God’s work.

For centuries, tithing has been a biblical benchmark for faithful giving. Through the prophet Malachi, God goes so far as to challenge faithful people to “put me to the test” by tithing, to then receive overflowing blessings.

Though any suggestion is to be avoided that tithing is a way to get rich, as the “prosperity gospel” preachers assert, longtime tithers say they have experienced God’s blessings as contentment, joy-in-giving, and sufficiency. For most people, tithing represents an impossible sudden jump in giving. If that’s your situation, you could commit to a tithe in 2025, then work up to it over the years. How? Here are some steps:

Calculate the percentage of your income that you gave to the church in 2024. (Start with after-tax income. Down the road you can always jump to tithing gross income.)

For 2025, increase giving by 1 percent, 2 percent ... or whatever you’re comfortable with.

Then, every year increase by another 1 percent. Eventually, you’ll be at a tithe for your after-tax income. If it is a good experience, continue until you have tithed your gross income.

But the important step is the first one: Commit to tithing. You and your congregation will be blessed.

--Robert Blezard

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Angel Tree

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our congregation, 75 gifts were delivered to Glade Run Lutheran Services in December. Also, we once again applied and received a \$250 Thrivent grant.

Thank you to Liliana and Samantha Croom for using this grant money to shop and purchase \$250 of amazing gifts for the kids! They did an amazing job buying some really special and heartfelt items 😊. All was greatly appreciated by our friends at Glade Run.

Global Links 2025

Thanks to all who volunteered numerous hours to make our Global Links ministry a success in 2024. Please see the upcoming bulletins for the 2025 dates, and hopefully we will see some new faces this year as we pack and prepare much-needed medical supplies for needy countries.

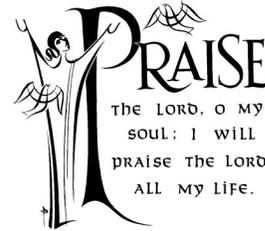
Blanket Tying event

Sunday, January 12—11:15 am

Please join us for the 8th annual Blanket-tying event after the late service Sunday, January 12! As always, there is a great need to keep our homeless neighbors warm this winter season and we hope to create 25 blankets with our Bhutanese friends to assist in this need for warmth. Join us in the social hall for coffee, treats and some serious blanket-tying.

Any question, contact Sara Dougherty at 412-523-1499 or tjdsjd@verizon.net.

**Remember, no experience
necessary!**



SUNDAY SERVER SCHEDULE: January, 2025

If you cannot serve as scheduled, please switch with another server. If you cannot get a substitute call the church office at 412-563-0300 or email the church at mteboluth@aol.com

	8:30	10:00
January 5 Crucifer	Henry Keplar	Finn Darcy
January 12 Crucifer	Quin O'Brien	Gabriel Provins
January 19 Crucifer	Ella Mayer	Luke Frankovitch
January 26 Crucifer	Ewan Keplar	Dylan Solomon





The worship links to Facebook & YouTube can be found on our website:



www.mtlebanonlutheran.org

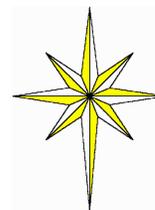
Sunday's
8:30 AM & 10:00 AM
Virtual Worship 8:30 AM Facebook LIVE
Posted later on our YouTube channel

THE WORD of the LORD

January 5	Epiphany of Our Lord
	Isaiah 60:1-6 Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14 Ephesians 3:1-12 Matthew 2:1-12
January 12	Baptism of Our Lord
	Isaiah 43:1-7 Psalm 29 Acts 8:14-17 Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
January 19	Epiphany 2
	Isaiah 62:1-5 Psalm 36:5-10 1 Corinthians 12:1-11 John 2:1-11
January 26	Epiphany 3
	Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 12:12-31a Luke 4:14-21



Images of Epiphany



Epiphany is a season *out of sorts*. To many Christians in the West, the feast from which the Epiphany weeks are named seems something like a misplaced Christmas. Popular piety and more than one Christmas Eve worship has placed the Magi at the manger beside the shepherds [and in many South Hills' front yards as well!]

The Season of Christmas lasts just two weeks! And when it ends, and like children who have opened all their presents, we're not sure what to do next! Is the excitement over? Do we go back to what we had been doing a few weeks ago?

The Season of Epiphany is a time for rejoicing in the light that shines in our darkness, the light that reveals both our sin and the One who has come to forgive it.

The major feature of the Christian Epiphany is that it provides an affirmation that whatever disclosures of the ultimate might come among us, the essence of God's disclosure in and through Jesus lays bare both the complexity of our own existence and the wonder of God's being.

As the Magi travel to Bethlehem, the proclamation is that the Christ child is born for the whole world. The identity of the travelers from the East remains a mystery, but they were Gentiles.

They found the one they sought not among the powerful or even comfortable. The one sent to reveal God to the nations came by means of an oppressed people and was greeted by foreigners.

The message of Epiphany is clear: Light shines not only in darkness, but God acts through the *unlikely* to touch the lives of the excluded.

And this theme continues throughout the Epiphany Season starting with Jesus' baptism at the River Jordan; God in man made manifest to all of creation. It continues until the final Sunday of the Epiphany Season, the Festival of the Transfiguration of our Lord [March 2], on which the revelation comes even to those who persistently misunderstood it.





ONLINE GIVING

Is now available in association with



myEoffering

www.mtlebanonlutheran.org

WHAT IS myEoffering?

myEoffering is a service we've teamed up with to give you the ability to send your offerings online in the same way that many of you already pay bills and purchase products. We chose to use myEoffering because they are part of a trusted, Christian family-owned company, who have been serving the needs of churches for nearly 100 years. Their product is solid, secure, easy, and convenient.

WHY SHOULD I USE myEoffering?

Many of you already pay for most of your purchases electronically, whether online or with a credit or debit card. So we have decided to offer this service as a convenience to you - you can stop writing checks or having to remember to bring cash every Sunday. Simply log in to our service and set up your offering. You can set the donations to match your pay periods, and even send your one-time donations to the special offerings we may have from time-to-time. This new service allows you to give any amount, at any time, from home or on the road, with your computer or even your mobile device. Now you can control how and when you give your tithes.

HOW DOES IT HELP?

Online giving is the future. In the lifetime of our young people, we will see electronic payments overshadow traditional methods of paper payments. In order to position ourselves to continue doing the work of God in the future and to make it as convenient as possible to be a cheerful giver to God's work, we have decided to offer online giving to you. In addition to easier access to giving and more engagement with young stewards, online offering has many benefits for the church. It allows us to more easily track contributions for budgeting. It saves us from manually tracking those contributions every week. It saves us from large fees on check processing and allows us to more accurately forecast expenditures and needs.

HOW DO I SIGN UP?

Signing up is as simple as going to our church website listed above and look for the green computer mouse icon. That button will take you to the myEoffering page for our church. Simply sign up and begin giving online today! Or scan the code to the right with your mobile device to get started now.



SCAN THIS
CODE WITH
YOUR MOBILE
DEVICE NOW





WE REMEMBER in our prayers:

O God, you are the hope of every generation. We give you thanks for the elderly, frail, or those in need of care in our midst, who point us to your faithfulness. With your healing presence touch the lives of all who are sick or sorrowful, that they may know the comfort and consolation of your Holy Spirit. Especially we pray for:

Craig Elias; Andy Kelemen; Linda Larkin; Bill Young;

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES for the February issue of the *Voice* are to be submitted by Sunday, January 12th. Articles may be left in the church office or email:

The 2025 Altar Flower and Worship Bulletin Donation Charts



We still have open Sundays for those who wish to sign up for altar flowers or worship bulletins for the 2025 season. [Please, if the date wanted is taken, select another date!] Some dates have evening liturgies and some dates are for midweek liturgies. The cost of donation is \$30.00 per vase for flowers and \$25.00 per Sunday or Holy Day for bulletins. Please submit to the Church Office **one week before** any acknowledgement you would like printed. No reminders are sent for payment; we count on



Dormont Pantry News

The Holiday Baking Donation Drive for Dormont Pantry was a big success! Our Congregation provided a trunk full of flour, sugar, baking mixes, pie filling, etc. to families in need. Thanks to everyone for your generosity!

A Note from the Treasurer:

For many members, the e-offering platform has been a useful tool and we thank you for using it. This is a reminder that if you use your bank account directly, the fee is 30 cents. If you use a credit card, the fee is 3.25%. Please use the bank account direct debit if at all possible.

You're Invited...To the Sunday Morning Fellowship

Each Sunday worshippers have the opportunity to greet one another and welcome visitors at our: **Sunday Morning Fellowship** in the Foyer. Join us in between the early and late Liturgies to share greetings and conversations with friends and visitors. Refreshments are available for all.

The Sunday Morning Fellowship also provides opportunities to volunteer:

- *Sponsor the Coffee Project of Lutheran World Relief, helping small growers, their families and communities through the fair trade of coffee.
- *Volunteer to set up and clean the Fellowship refreshments table. It's easy to do and a member of the Hospitality Committee will show you how. Also, written instructions are available.
- *Provide sweet (or healthy) treats for all to enjoy. (Gluten free and nut free treats are also welcomed)

If you'd like to help you can sign up in the foyer or contact the church office to reserve a day.

Annual Stewardship... There is still time to review and return your Time and Talent sheets. Let 2025 be a time of new beginnings while you volunteer for the many committees in the Church. Thank you for your support ♥

JUBILATE DEO
Shout joyfully to God,
all the earth, sing a psalm
to the glory of his name
ALLELUJA

2025 Congregational Council Officers Elected at October 20th

Annual Meeting



Our 2025 Congregational Council begins its year of service this month. They are: They are: Ryan Solomon (Youth); Rick Spickard (Finance); and Tom Ultsch & Patrick Snyder (Property); Cindy Brown (Worship), Jim Needles (Stewardship), Alan Trivilino (Evangelism), Don Snyder (Social Ministries), Jody Lutz (President), David Hale (Vice President), Carole Vogeley (Educational Ministries), Karen Pfeil (Congregational Life), and Amy Stabenow (Secretary).

Thanks our outgoing council members, Jeff McGraw, Melodie Frankovitch, and Julia Nelson for sharing their time and talents. We offer heartfelt thanks for their leadership.

The Congregational Council is constituted in order to provide a partnership with the pastor in the ministry of the Gospel. This Congregational Council will be installed in January. Council members who do not serve as officers will serve as liaisons for the Standing Committees of council.



A Prayer for New Days Ahead

Heavenly Father, thank You for making all things new! As another new year begins, help us live each day for You. May we continually have a new song in our hearts to sing to You, no matter what comes our way. We trust in You because we know Your mercies are new every morning, and your blessings are plentiful. Thank you for everything. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

DAILY BREAD MEAL...



Our next meal at the Daily Bread Ministries is Sunday, January 26, 2025. We will be serving approximately 150 individuals Turkey Tetrazzini, vegetable, fruit, roll and a dessert.

Sign up sheets in the Narthex for both serving the meal on 1/26 at 2:00 pm. and for Prepping the meal on Friday, 1/24 at 9:00 am.

MONETARY DONATIONS ARE BEING ACCEPTED.

Thank you in advance for your support of this mission of our congregation. The individuals who receive these meals truly appreciate this care.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS



- 1 You shall have no other gods.
- 2 You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the Lord your God.
- 3 Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.
- 4 Honor your father and your mother.
- 5 You shall not murder.
- 6 You shall not commit adultery.
- 7 You shall not steal..
- 8 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
- 9 You shall not covet your neighbor's house.
- 10 You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or don key, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Advent Pageant Thanks

Congrats to the cast and crew of our wonderful Advent Pageant! The children did a great job as they portrayed the various journeys of the Nativity story in *Destination Bethlehem*. Nineteen kids and teens participated; and 96 people attended the performance and Luncheon!

Congrats to our talented **Cast of Actors and Singers**: Liliana, Samantha & Walter Croom; Leo & Milo Bucher, Annabelle & Grant Kegel, Cole Porter, Edith Koval, Kyle Timmons, Sterling & Scarlett McCombs, Tatum Tomnay, Ellie Solomon, and Claire Bruno; to our teens serving as Lectors and portraying Magi: Adam Timmons and Gabriel, Nico and Madalena Provins; and to our special guest, Grace Reiner who journeyed a great distance to portray “Grandma.”

Many thanks to our **Crew**: Director & Set Designer Julia Nelson; Music Directors: Carol Vogeley & Barb Heagy; Casting/Script Adapter/Production Assistant Mary Beth Trivilino; Stagehands Luke Frankovitch & Calvin Koval; Prelude Musicians Ewan and Henry Keplar; and to our Educational Ministries Chairperson Melodie Frankovitch, who also organized and publicized the Pageant and cleverly decorated the Social Hall in the road trip/journey theme.

Many thanks to all the parents and volunteers for their support and assistance with rehearsals and production. Thanks also to Jim Needles for microphones; Tom Ultsch for custodial support; Pastor Heagy for spiritual guidance; Kris Malia for office support; the Nelson family for behind the scenes work; and Matt, Melodie & Luke Frankovitch for setup/cleanup.

A **delicious Luncheon** was provided by Debbie Lutz and the Congregational Life volunteers Karen Pfeil, Rick & Laura Spickard, Vedette & Eric Keplar, Judy & Allan Copenheaver, and the Solomon family.

Special thanks to all our **Sunday School Teachers** for their continued dedication throughout the year: Lizzy Koval, Travis Timmons, Jessica Porter, Mary Beth Trivilino, Julie Nichols, Andrea Croom, Rylie Solomon, Milo Bucher, and Claire Bruno.



Sunday School Resumes January 5

Join us for Sunday School each week at 10:00 resuming January 5. On that day we will celebrate the Epiphany in Sunday School and in Worship. Be sure to join us for this festive Worship Liturgy and Lesson. We look forward to having your kids in Sunday School each week!

Please contact MBTrivilino@verizon.net if you would like to volunteer as a substitute teacher in our Sunday School program.

Christmas Tree Recycling

When it is sadly time to take down your tree, there are many options to find new life for this beautiful symbol of Christmas and keep it out of the landfill. Many municipalities in our area have a recycling plan for their communities' trees. The trees are either chipped into mulch by the municipalities and used to beautify community parks, or placed in natural areas to provide wildlife habitat.

Thank you for being good stewards of God's creation.

Please see below for recycling options in your area:

Mt. Lebanon

CHRISTMAS TREE PICKUP Mt. Lebanon will be collecting Christmas trees the weeks of January 6 and 13. Trees will be picked up on the day before scheduled trash collection. If your trash day is Monday, your tree will be collected at the end of the week on Friday, January 10 and 17. Have your tree at the curb the night before collection. Because the trees are going straight into the chipper, they need to be stripped of all lights, tinsel and other decorations, and cannot be in plastic bags. You can also put your tree out with your trash for regular pickup.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT RECYCLING Drop off your unwanted Christmas lights at the Mt. Lebanon Municipal Building, 710 Washington Road, between 8:30 and 5, through January 31. Michael Brothers will recycle the lights and donate the proceeds to Project Bundle Up.

Bethel Park

Looking to dispose of your Christmas Trees? If so, Waste Management will take them **the week of Jan. 6 ONLY during bulk week**. If your tree isn't on the curb during that week, you'll have to wait until the week of Feb. 3 for pickup.

Trees will be picked up on your designated pickup day and a Christmas Tree is considered one bulk item (*you can have two bulk items*). And remember that bulk items **MUST be on the curb no later than 6 a.m.** the morning of pick up

Upper Saint Clair

Drop undecorated Christmas trees off from Dec. 26, 2024, to Jan. 31, 2025, in the small parking lot across from the Public Works building on Truxton Drive.

Castle Shannon

No Christmas tree recycle program

Peters Township

Could not find information

City of Pittsburgh

Christmas tree recycling programs have begun in the [City of Pittsburgh](#) and in [Allegheny County](#).

The City has opened 11 collection locations for residents to deposit their trees so they're not taken to landfills. The collected trees will be chipped into pine mulch and made available to the public for free next spring. Residents must remove all ornaments, netting, tinsel, lights and tree stands before dropping off their trees. In 2023-24, the city recycled more than 2,300 trees.

Residents can drop off their trees through Jan. 26 at the following locations:

- Allegheny Center: Sue Murray Swimming Pool Parking Lot, #301 Stockton Avenue
- Brighton Heights: Jack Stack Swimming Pool, 600 Brighton Woods Road
- Brookline: Brookline Recreation Center, 1400 Oakridge St.
- Hazelwood: 40 Melancton St., 412-422-6545
- Highland Park: Highland Park Zoo, 7370 Baker St.
- Homewood North: 6814 Hamilton Ave., 412-665-3610
- Perry North: 300 Kilbuck Road, 412-323-7209
- South Side: South Side Riverfront Park Lower Parking Lot
- Squirrel Hill South: Prospect Drive Roundabout, Schenley Park
- Sheraden: Sheraden Park Parking Lot, Surban Street

West End: 1330 Hassler St., 412-937-305

In the spring, you can pick up the mulch from the Pittsburgh Zoo overflow parking lot, 7370 Baker St., Highland Park, 15206 from dawn to dusk on April 19 and April 26. Bring your own buckets, gloves and shovels.

If you're not able to deliver your trees, Girl Scout troops 52498, 16388 and 52482 and Boy Scouts of America troops 9945 and 3945 are offering a curbside pickup service in select East End neighborhoods. This is the 10th year for this service.

For a small donation, the Girl Scouts will pick up trees left outside in Morningside, Highland Park, Larimer, East Liberty, Friendship, Shadyside, Point Breeze, Point Breeze North, Squirrel Hill North, Squirrel Hill South and Greenfield. The Girl Scouts will then take the trees to city drop-off centers.

The Boy Scout troops will pick up from Stanton Heights, Garfield and Bloomfield and deliver trees to Garfield to be used for goat food.

All lights, decorations, tinsel and stands must be removed from trees prior to drop-off. Trees will be mulched and used in the county parks.

Allegheny County

Allegheny County has opened nine sites at park locations. These locations will collect trees daily until Jan. 19 from 8 a.m. to dusk. Like the city, all decorations, tinsel and tree stands must be removed. Each year, the county collects about 3,000 trees that also are chipped into mulch. Here are the locations with maps:

Boyce Park: [Soccer fields parking lot](#)

Deer Lakes Park: [Veterans shelter parking lot](#)

Harrison Hills Park: [Parking lot at Chipmunk and Cottontail Drives](#)

Hartwood Acres Park: [Middle Road parking lot](#)

North Park: [Swimming pool parking lot](#)

Round Hill Park: [Alfalfa shelter parking lot](#)

Settlers Cabin Park: [Park administration office](#)

South Park: [Brightstar shelter lot](#)

White Oak Park: [Chestnut Shelter parking lot](#)

During the 2022-2023 program, over 3,000 trees were received and recycled, with the resulting mulch used for various purposes throughout the park system's 12,000+ acres.

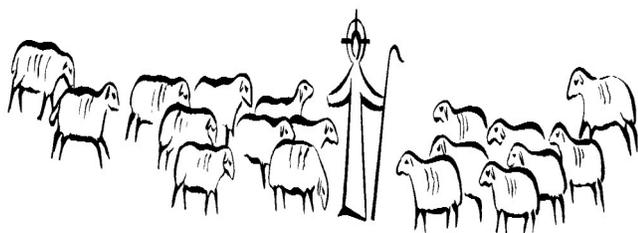


Christmas flowers will be removed from the Sanctuary on Saturday, January 11 at 10:00 am. All are welcome to assist. Help is appreciated! If you would to take home your ordered poinsettias , they may be removed from the Sanctuary starting December 29 through January 5 .

NEEDED: Please consider serving the Church as a Lector. Regular or occasional help will be appreciated. Please contact Cindy Brown at 412-779-2020 or email cindysgb@icloud.com. Thank you.

“Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching.”
2 Timothy 4:2

If you have not picked up your offering envelopes, please contact the church office. If you now do the E-Offering online giving, please also take your envelopes. Thank you.



While shopping....

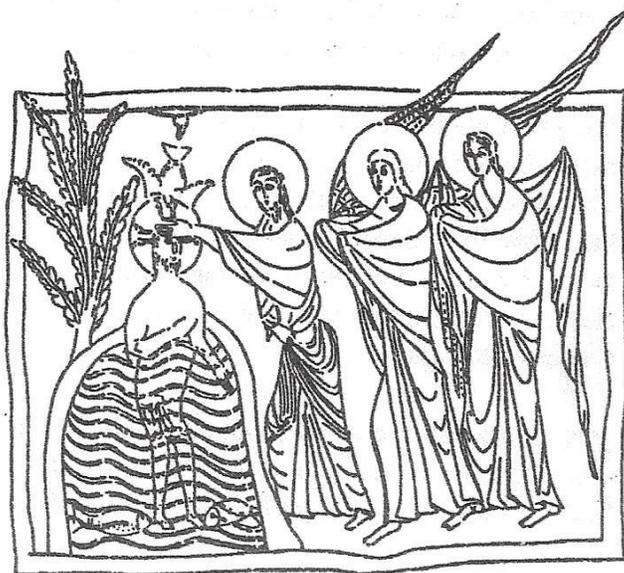
Please continue to remember the ministry of the Food Bank at both Dormont Free Pantry and St. Michael and All Angels' with your contributions of non-perishable food, cleaning and laundry products and monetary donations. When making monetary donations, please make your check payable to *Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church* and designate your donation for Food Pantry [Your donation will be recorded and then forwarded.] or to the ELCA World Hunger ministries using a *designated gift envelope* in your pew. Thank you.

The Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, January 12th

The teachers of the early church emphasized Jesus' baptism, seeing it as a revelation of Jesus' divine sonship, the anointing and appointment of Jesus to his messianic office at the beginning of his public ministry, a declaration of Jesus' solidarity with the sinful human race in undergoing baptism by John, and a baptism of the water to give the element power to cleanse from sin. [Philip Pfatteicher; *Commentary on the Lutheran Book of Worship*, Augsburg Fortress, p. 217.]

The Baptism of our Lord, always celebrated the First Sunday after the Epiphany, is an expression of the joy of the Epiphany of our Lord. In fact it serves as a further "manifestation" of the identity of Jesus.

Along with the Easter Vigil and Pentecost, this festival day is one of the traditional times of the church for baptism, because of its symbolic nature.



Looking ahead

Ash Wednesday - March 5

Easter - April 20

THE CALENDAR OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

January is the first month of the secular calendar. The rhythm of life for most is attuned to this calendar. For Christians, the church calendar is our beat. Our new year begins before January (typically in late November). What follows is a summary of the Christian calendar, the rhythm of our faith.

The Christian calendar is made up of six seasons: **Advent, Christmas, the Season after Epiphany, Lent, Easter, and the Season after Pentecost.** The seasons after Epiphany and Pentecost are known as 'Ordinary Time'. The number of Sundays in Advent, Lent, and Easter remain the same every year; the number of Sundays after Christmas (December 25), Epiphany (January 6), and Pentecost varies. The last Sunday of the Christian calendar year is called *Christ the King*, followed by *Advent*, always the first season of our new year. The Sunday called *Transfiguration of the Lord* ends the season after Epiphany and is followed by *Ash Wednesday*, the beginning of Lent. *Ascension* falls 40 days after Easter; *Pentecost*, 50. Learning the beat of Christian life comes in part by recognizing the special Sundays that mark the ending of one season, preparing us for the new.

A few dates on the church calendar deserve mention, though they're mainly known to worshippers who fully follow the sacred rhythm. *Baptism of the Lord* falls on the first Sunday after Epiphany, which means it takes place before mid-January. On this Sunday, we remember Jesus' baptism by John the Baptist. Our congregation now has a custom of receiving sea shells on this day for which to remember our baptism into Jesus Christ. *Palm/Passion Sunday* occurs a week before Easter and marks our entrance into Holy Week. On this Sunday, we celebrate Jesus' arrival into Jerusalem riding a donkey; then we hear the story of his brutal passion. In one liturgy, therefore, praise of Jesus turns into a call for his execution. We face up to our sin, which made necessary Jesus' atoning death. The *Easter Vigil*, the oldest liturgy of Christian faith, takes place on the Saturday night before Easter and, when properly celebrated, continues after midnight, serving as the first Easter worship.

Most are unaware that *Easter Vigil* and *Easter* itself are primarily about Holy Baptism, the time when newly professing Christians are baptized into the faith. Rounding out this summary, mention should be made of *All Saints*, celebrated on November 1 or the first Sunday of November. Departed loved ones in the faith are remembered on this day. Finally, there are other festival days, which are listed on pages 54-63 in our hymnals, including the option for *Name of Jesus* on January 1. Keeping these solemnities adds more rhythm to our life of faith.

The Christian calendar is the foundation of worship. The *Lectionary*, the appointed Bible readings heard in church, are often called the first floor. The *Lectionary* unites Christians throughout the world. Thanks for reading this article to the very end! --Pastor Heagy



Tax Reform Act May Make QCD's More Appealing

Several years ago, Qualified Charitable Distributions became an option for IRA holders, who are at least 70 ½, to donate directly to qualified charities. This has several possible good tax outcomes for the IRA holder. In cases where the taxpayer is taking the standard deduction, direct contribution will keep the IRA distribution out of taxable income, lowering taxes if you do not itemize. This also reduces Adjusted Gross Income that may reduce taxes on Social Security benefits and may reduce the taxpayer's Medicare premiums. Since this came from your IRA, you should not include this amount as a charitable on your tax return (if you itemize deductions, even if it appears on your year end giving statement.)

While nothing changed in 2023 as far as these rules, the near doubling of the standard deduction makes it more likely that taxpayer's will be taking the standard deduction. Taking an IRA distribution that goes into taxable income may not be offset by an itemized deduction for charitable contributions, increasing taxes if you do not itemize deductions. In short, contributions to MLULC (or other charities) may be more tax effective if donated directly from an IRA to the charity rather than being distributed to the taxpayer and then contributed to the charity. "Qualified charitable distributions count towards your required minimum distribution, if you have one this year."

If this is of possible interest to you, please contact me. I can explain further and give you account information for our brokerage account that can accept QCD's.



JANUARY 2025



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 Happy New Year! Office Closed	2	3	4 
5 Epiphany of Our Lord 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 10:00 Sunday School	6 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 pm Bible Studies	7 3:30 Catechetics 1	8 9:00-2:30 ESL 3:30 Catechetics 2 7:00 Choir	9 10:00 Bible Studies	10	11 10:00 Christmas Flowers Sanctuary Clean-up
12 Baptism of Our Lord 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 10:00 Sunday School 11:15 Blanket Tying Event <i>Voice Articles Due</i> 	13 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 pm Bible Studies	14 3:30 Catechetics 1	15 9:00-2:30 ESL 3:30 Catechetics 2 7:00 Choir	16 10:00 Bible Studies	17	18
19 Epiphany 2 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 1000 Sunday School	20 9:00-2:30 ESL 7:00 pm Bible Studies	21 3:30 Catechetics 1	22 9:00-2:30 ESL 3:30 Catechetics 2 7:00 Choir	23 10:00 Bible Studies	24	25
26 Epiphany 3 8:30 & 10:00 Worship 8:30 Live Virtual Worship 10:00 Sunday School 11:15 Council Meeting 2:00 Daily Bread Meal	27 9:30-2:30 ESL 7:00 pm Bible Studies	28 3:30 Catechetics 1	29 9:00-2:30 ESL 3:30 Catechetics 2 7:00 Choir	30 10:00 Bible Studies	31	





1 *New Year's Day* Ask God to grant us strength, wisdom and patience to accomplish new goals this year. Give thanks for God's forgiveness and for the support of others, which help us to continue when we fail, grow frustrated or are redirected in our pursuits.

2 "So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; look, new things have come into being!" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Our newness in Christ is realized in our present life and in the future, when we enter the kingdom of God. Pray for the Spirit to strengthen our faith and to help us embrace our new selves — every day.

3 Pray for the Spirit to stir our patience, understanding and respect for others when we find ourselves in conflict with our neighbors or siblings in Christ.

4 Pray for our synod bishops attending the Bishop's Academy in Puerto Rico as they study and reflect on the challenge and promise of Lutheran mission and theology in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean.

5 Give thanks to God that Jesus Christ lived among us, that we might believe in God's grace and truth and be filled with joy and relief as children of God who are set free to live as Jesus did in service to our neighbors.

6 *Epiphany* "This star, as bright as day, that will never lead astray with its message so appealing, is the word of God, revealing Christ, the way, the truth, the life" (ELW 301). Praise God for the gift of Jesus Christ, who reveals to us the way, truth and life of God's love, forgiveness and promises.

7 Pray for a peaceful transfer of presidential power in the United States and that the Spirit will influence and guide our leaders to serve all people with compassion, wisdom and concern for justice and unity.

8 "In [Christ] we have redemption through [Christ's] blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he lavished on us" (Ephesians 1:7-8). God's boundless love and forgiveness are lavish indeed. Give thanks and praise to God!

9 Remember in prayer college, university and seminary students taking part in winter J-term classes and service learning, that their experiences will deepen their faith, expand their knowledge and reveal how their gifts and passions can be used to do God's work in the world.

10 Thank God for the ELCA's special relationship with the United Methodist Church, a full communion partner since 2009. Pray for the church, its members and its leaders, that we will respect our differences but embrace our unity in Christ so we can spread the gospel, serve our neighbor, and share leadership and resources for doing God's work in the world — together.

11 Give thanks for God's grace and the work of the Spirit, which equip us with the tools, wisdom and courage needed to face the challenges of everyday life and to bear Christ's love and hope into the world.

12 Pray that we will affirm our baptism by telling others about the triune God, by loving and serving our neighbors, by encouraging the faith of our siblings in Christ and by seeking opportunities for spiritual growth.

13 Pray for those who respond to God's call by working hand in hand with our companion churches and other organizations around the world through ELCA Global Mission. Ask God to sustain and strengthen their faith, their commitment and their diverse gifts.

14 "Who hears the song our sorrows swallow and offers hope to calm our fears? When all our words seem frail and hollow, God heeds the prayers within our tears" (*All Creation Sings* 1050). Give thanks that God hears and responds to our grief and suffering, even when our words fall short of expressing the depth of our sorrow.

15 Pray for the outdoor ministries of our church that are busy recruiting and hiring young-adult staff to share their faith and serve campers of all ages, backgrounds and abilities in summer programs.

16 *National Religious Freedom Day* Give thanks that the U.S. Constitution supports the freedom to embrace religion, to worship and to share our faith according to our personal beliefs. Pray that we will respect the religious beliefs of our neighbors and support their right to practice their faith openly, without constraints or persecution.

17 "You who know our fears and sadness, grace us with your peace and gladness; Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts" (*WOV* 738). Lift up your worries, troubles, insecurities and grief to God, who understands us and grants comfort, strength and endurance in every circumstance of our life.

18 *Week of Prayer for Christian Unity* Today begins a week of prayer with our siblings in Christ around the world. Give thanks that we are one in Christ and that, together, we cast a brilliant light in the world.

19 Praise God for the inexhaustible grace shown to us throughout our lives and baptismal journeys.

20 *Martin Luther King Jr. Day* Remember and give thanks for the life, teaching and advocacy of Martin Luther King Jr. for the sake of justice, inclusion and the value of all people, especially those who suffer persecution, racism, disdain or oppression. Pray that we will be inspired by our neighbors and siblings in Christ who are fearless and persistent in their advocacy and compassion for others.

21 Thank God for the gifts given to us through the Spirit, and pray that others might recognize their own unique gifts and see where they are valued and needed.

22 Pray for ELCA directors for evangelical mission, who serve as resources to synods in mission development, congregational renewal and stewardship.

23 Pray for our church's grassroots Life of Faith initiative, meant to help us to live out our baptismal vocation in daily life, serve our neighbors and work for justice in the diverse contexts of family, workplace, school, community and the world.

24 Pray that we will open all our senses to God's glory, power and voice as revealed in nature — the awe-inspiring and dynamic handiwork of our Creator.

25 *Conversion of Paul* Give thanks that, for God, all things are possible, even when we do not envision the possibility of lives being changed, hearts softened or faith awakened.

26 Ask God to help us follow Christ's example, being humble, kind, loving, merciful, attentive to our neighbors and quick to respond to their needs.

27 Remember in prayer youth, adults and families involved in service learning and mission trips throughout the year. Pray that they might share the gospel, serve their neighbors in need, participate in the work of global companions and ecumenical partners, and respond to the unique contexts and needs of communities.

28 Remember in prayer neighbors and siblings in Christ who suffer poverty, homelessness and hunger, that their hope will be sustained, their daily needs met and their human dignity respected.

29 "The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart" (Psalm 19:7-8). Give thanks for the word of God, for it is trustworthy and restores us, imparts wisdom, and stirs joy and gratitude in our hearts.

30 Pray for an end to conflicts and violence in the world, including in our own communities. Ask the Spirit to inspire and equip us to be peacemakers and bearers of hope.

31 Give thanks for Women of the ELCA (WELCA) and its ministry with women to encourage bold and active faith in Jesus Christ, promote healing and wholeness, address injustices, discover spiritual gifts, and encourage and equip leaders.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
2025 !

The 100th Year
of our
Congregation.

Centennial events are
being planned for the
year. Stay tuned and
give thanks to God!

Mt. Lebanon United Lutheran Church

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The Reverend Elizabeth A. Eaton

Presiding Bishop
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

The Reverend Kurt Kusserow

Bishop
Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod

The Reverend Douglas M. Heagy

Senior Pastor

Dr. Christopher Keenan, DMA

Director of Music and Organist

Mr. Larry Allen

Director of Music and Organist Emeritus

Mrs. Kris Malia

Parish Secretary

**YOU CROWN THE YEAR WITH YOUR GOODNESS,
AND YOUR PATHS OVERFLOW WITH PLENTY.**

PSALM 65:11

**HAPPY NEW YEAR
2025**



Evangelical
Lutheran Church
in America

Baptism of our Lord

to be observed and celebrated

Sunday, January 12, 2025

All who attend church on this day will receive a seashell for which
to remember their baptism into Jesus Christ.

8:30 AM & 10:00 AM



In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And just as he was coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit descending like a dove on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Mark 1:9-11