



ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

201 E. JUNIATA STREET, ALLENTOWN, PA 18103

Phone: 610-797-6440 Fax: 610-351-6114

Email: office@saintmarkallentown.org www.saintmarkallentown.org

Hospital Code - #300 Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 9:00 a.m. - 12 noon

God's People: Believing, Caring, Loving, and Serving

FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER

Pastor's Corner --- WWJS? or WWJD?

Let's start with **WWJS?** What would Jesus say? We have multiple examples in our Bible that quote the words of Jesus. Some of us have what are called Red Letter Bibles. They have the words or quotes of Jesus printed in red, so they stand out. It certainly makes it easier for us to find and follow how Jesus spoke to those who were willing to listen.

The Sermon on the Mount is found at the beginning of Matthew 5:3 with the Beatitudes. Jesus speaks on Anger at 5:21, Swearing at 5:34 and Retaliation at 5:38. Chapter 5 ends with Loving your Enemies.

The beginning of Chapter 6 is about Giving and Praying. The Lord's Prayer starts at Matthew 6: 9. You will find an absolute statement about forgiveness at verse 14 and no wiggle room for any of us at verse 15. There is a section on worry at verse 6:25.

In Chapter 7:1 we are told not to judge others and Jesus explains how we will be judged by God his Father. The Golden Rule is found in 7:12. At the end of Chapter 7; 24 we are told to be Hearers AND Doers. The parable of building your house on a rock rather than the sand is what Jesus uses.

Now we know what Jesus said. (WWJS) And he said it so succinctly in the three chapters 5-7 of Matthew. Many of the same teachings are also found scattered throughout Luke as well. But Matthew has them neatly contained in these three chapters. It makes it so easy for us to study and reflect upon.

Be Hearers AND Doers. We cannot ignore WWJD. After we have studied and reflected upon what Jesus said we **MUST** become doers of the Word. We cannot be one without the other. We are to live out our FAITH. Jesus certainly was not only the speaker. He was the doer. His actions spoke louder than his words.

- Jesus healed the unclean. Lepers, Samaritans, the bleeding woman...
- Jesus ate with who were considered sinners. Tax collectors, etc.
- Jesus let the bullies speak for themselves. He did not argue back. (Are you a King? "You say I am.")
- Jesus would not be tricked by the Scribes or Pharisees.

It is not easy to walk in the same sandals Jesus wore. We are not Jesus. We are given the words of guidance to live our lives the best way we can, always striving to do better than we did yesterday. We know WWJS. We have it written down in Matthew chapter 5 – 7 to do a check on ourselves. Now we have to try to do - - WWJD.

There are only 109 verses in those three chapters. Some Bibles have them broken down into 24 segments.

- They cover our reactions to what is going on around us.
- They cover our moods.
- They cover how we are to treat others.

Remembering that it is a microcosm of how to live in the first century. Some of the absolutes are based on the cultures and others the way women were considered property and thus treated during that time. Nearly all other segments are as relevant today as they were then. There is not much wiggle room when we look closely at the teachings of Jesus.

So, what are we to do? We are to study these three chapters. Perhaps read one or two segments a day and reflect over them, perhaps with a family member or prayer partner. Build them into your daily lives of how we are to live and treat others. We are called upon as followers of Jesus to both SAY and DO as Jesus would have done in this time - in 2025.

Pastor Ginny

"I can do all things through Christ, who strengthens me." Philippians 4: 13 (NRSV)



A message from your
Council President

Wow! As we turn the page from one year to another, approach the end of January 2024, can you believe how fast time flies. It seems we were just in Advent, then Christmas celebrating the birth of Jesus. And now we have entered the season of Epiphany. I don't know about you; it just seems that the hustle and bustle of our days can cause each of us to lose sight of the important things in life.

The world seems turned upside down. Inflation is raging. The wildfires in California, Flooding in North Carolina, Snow in Texas and down to the Gulf of Mexico. Do I need to say anything more?

What keeps you up at night? Anxiety comes from a wide variety of situations. Anxiety can affect the way we go about our day, interact with another, as well as how we treat each other. How can we become centered in Christ? No one knows the burdens we carry but God. Keep your faith in God.

Let's treat everyone with respect, love and understanding. While we may have different views; we should all live by the golden rule. *"Do unto other others, as you would have them do unto you."*

Let's turn our burdens over to God. While we may sometimes think differently, God knows what we can handle. Find time early in the morning, at lunch, or in the afternoon or evening or before we turn in for the evening. Listen to God for he will guide us through these times.

The power of prayer is an awesome thing. Let's live by our faith. And God will see us through. Our future is bright. Let's live by Faith!

Blessings in Christ,
Thomas F. Rieger
Council President

In the event of cancellation of Sunday School and our worship service due to inclement weather, please tune into WFMZ TV Channel 69, visit wfmz.com, check the St. Mark Facebook page or website.



Council will be hosting the Coffee Hour, Saturday, February 9th

Parish Life decorated the Annual Lenten Giving Tree. This year we will be collecting for all disasters all over the world.

Segan Bloomin' Haus will no longer supply the Easter Flowers. We will have to look to purchase them somewhere else. Once we do the information will be shared with the congregation.

The Lehigh County Authority recently sent out notices to all residents regarding lead pipes. We do not have to test the pipes at the church because we mostly use bottled water and the spicket water is mostly used for cooking, cleaning dishes or cleaning.

The church received "Thank You" correspondence from Bright Hope for the baby items collected during Christmas.

Pressure Cuff Ministry is on hold for now while our nurse Elisabeth is away visiting with her Family. It will begin again when she returns.



The annual Congregational Meeting is scheduled for Sunday, February 16th immediately following the worship service.
CONGREGATIONAL MEETING **With a snow date of Sunday, February 23rd.**
Please all try to attend this important meeting.

Have some time to volunteer? Perhaps some time during the day? The St. Mark Cemetery Association has some opportunities that may be just the right fit for you and your schedule. Interested? Would you like to hear more? Please call the St. Mark Cemetery at 610-797-4221 or call the church office at 610-797-6440.



The Open Door Food Pantry

2025 has arrived and we would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year! We look forward to having another successful year for The Open Door.

In December 2024 we served 65 households (151 adults, 83 children and 33 elderly, patrons). 4 of these households were new participants. Our shelves, refrigerators and freezers have remained full thanks to Second Harvest and to all the donations we have received from our congregation and community. THANK YOU!!

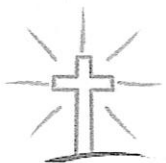
The Food Pantry is in need of volunteers for the 3rd Tuesday, each month from 10:00am-12:00pm if you can help, please see Sandy D., Terri or Linda G. We will also never turn anyone away who can help on the 4th Thursday of each month either.

Our suggested donations for the month of February are evaporated milk and hot chocolate packets. Again, we appreciate all donations and please continue to donate canned goods for the Sunday School students! We can't wait to see what they build for "Souper Bowl Sunday"!

Sandy



Let's keep Sandy Dillaway, Jennifer Poplawski and Anna Reinhard in our prayers while all 3 are going through treatment. Give them the continued strength to work through them and send them hugs so they know we care.



The St. Mark Community Closet

When donating items to the closet or asking others to donate please keep in mind **if it is not**

something you would wear or use, please don't bring it here, just dispose of the items yourself. It makes things much easier for us to display and hang items, if we don't have to look at each and every item given to us. Thank You!!

Sharing Life

Happenings From the Month of January...



The cold doesn't stop our friends from coming to enjoy the following we offered in January. Crafts were led by Charlie and Brenda, individuals decorated glass jars/vases to brighten their homes. Our luncheon activity to celebrate the new year was bingo. The luncheon meal was pork, mashed potatoes, hot dogs and Sauerkraut. We had over 75 in attendance come to enjoy lunch and join in the fun.

Looking ahead:

New Year/Best You returns, Special Thanks to the Lehigh Career and Technical Institute Cosmetology Program. They will be providing free haircuts and manicures to our participants. They will be returning to St Mark on Wednesday, February 5, 2025, from 9:30am-12:30pm *appointments must be made to reserve their spot. In February our knitting and crafts will be on the second Wednesday, February 12th from 1:00pm-3:00pm. They will be making various Valentine's decorations with Brenda and Charlie.

This past year we have had an increase in attendance and with the continued lack of RSVPs from attendees. The committee has voted to go RSVP ONLY to our scheduled events in order that we can plan for the events and make sure we are properly prepared to handle the number in attendance for the day.

Our funds are getting lower, so we will hold a pierogi sale (Fundraiser through B&M Provisions) in March/April and possibly a fund raiser at Red Robin in the near future. Individuals eating at a specific date/time and at a specific Red Robin can present a flyer and all monies during the place, date and time selected, we would get 20 percent of the total sales. We have many other special events and surprises in store for you in 2025. So be on the lookout for what lies ahead!

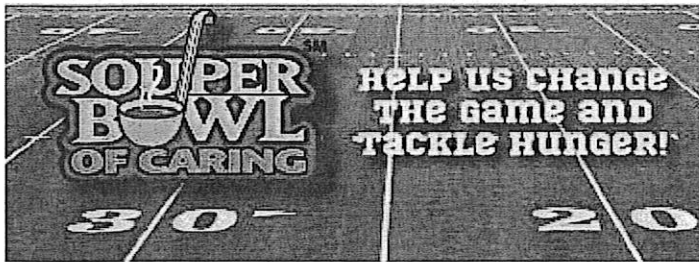
Many Blessings,
Sue Krasley and the Sharing Life committee.

The Youth:



**IF YOU BRING THEM, THEY WILL BUILD IT!! Cans that is!!
CANS, CANS AND MORE CANS!!**

Sunday, February 2nd is the last day the youth will be collecting canned food items of all kinds. All the cans collected will go to our very own food pantry. You will find a box in the coat room to collect the cans. Let the building begin!!



Sunday, February 9th

Show your support by wearing YOUR FAVORITE sport team apparel or colors to the 10:00am Worship Service. After the service the kids will be collecting for the Hungry.



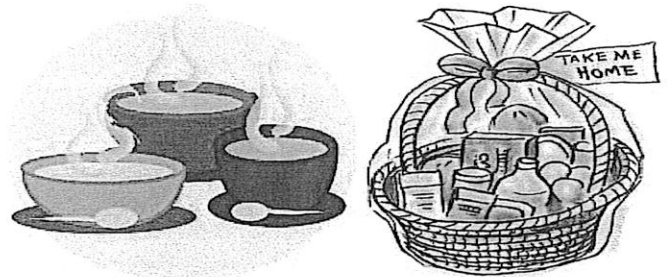
February

BIRTHDAYS!!!

We want to wish you a Very, Blessed Happy Birthday!!

Charlotte Lerch – February 3
Jeffrey Kuser – February 5
Paulette Lower – February 5
Lauren Hoch – February 16
Lois Kellar – February 17
Doris Glaessman – February 18
Daniel Sell – February 18

Share your birthday with us, please call the church office. We would love to see you on our birthday list.



The Youth are having a Soup and Chili Fundraiser with a Mini Basket Raffle!!

Sunday, February 23rd, 2025 11:15am – 1:30pm
Please see the enclosed Flyer. We hope you can attend all money collected will go to help in the cost of repairing the boiler.
Any questions, please call the office.



Disaster Relief Ministry Our Annual Lenten Tree

The Annual Lenten Tree will be on display in the Narthex from February thru April. In light of the many disasters happening in the United States and around the world the proceeds from the Annual Lenten tree will go to the ELCA - Lutheran Disaster Relief and Lutheran World Disaster programs. By providing food, shelter, or medical supplies during emergencies or supporting rebuilding efforts, after a crisis has passed, LDR & LWDR is committed to serving people impacted by disasters.

Our donations to the ELCA disaster program will be used where needed the most in the United States or abroad. Let's join together to make this another successful Lenten program and help individuals who have been devastated by a disaster.

Thank You,
Parish Life Ministry



Happy Valentine's Day
February 14th

Monday, February 17th, 2025
Happy President's Day!



*The Church Office will be closed.



NOAH SIGHT & SOUND BUS TRIP!

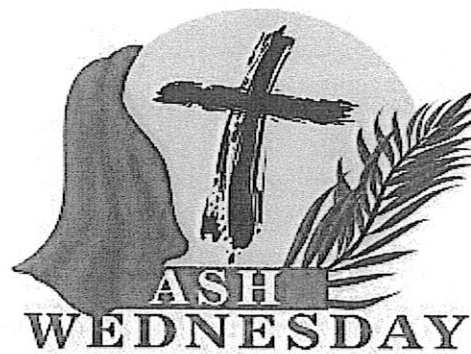
Saturday, August 2nd, 2025

St. Mark is going to see Noah!!

The bus will pick us up at the church, we will then proceed to lunch at Miller's Smorgasbord, and then onto the show at Sight and Sound Theater. All are welcome invited family, friends. And neighbors. We will play games on the bus, and snacks will be provided. We promise Fun!! We are very excited, we have over 20 reservations!! Get your name on the list before they are gone!! Any questions see Terri Harkins or Linda Gier.

Prayer in Preparation for Lent:

God of goodness and mercy, hear my prayer as we begin this Lenten journey with you. Let me be honest with myself as I look into my heart and soul, noticing the times I turn away from you. Guide me as I humbly seek to repent and return to your love.



March 5th, 2025

Worship Service 7:00pm

During the Worship service, you will receive the mark of the cross on your forehead with ashes at the rail. All are invited to commune at the rail as well. Ushers will assist you and help if needed.

**The Season of Lent is approaching
and we are in preparation!**

2025 Mid Week Lenten Services/Easter

Mark your calendars and save the dates, St. Mark will be holding the midweek Lenten services beginning:

- March 12th - 6:00pm Supper/7:00pm Service
- March 19th - 6:00pm Supper/7:00pm Service
- March 26th - 6:00pm Supper/7:00pm Service
- April 2nd - 6:00pm Supper/7:00pm Service
- April 9th - 6:00pm Supper/7:00pm Service
- April 13th - Palm Sunday 10:00am
- April 17th - Maundy Thursday 7:00pm
- April 18th - Good Friday 7:00pm
- April 20th - Easter Sunday 10:00am

SPONSORS are needed for Altar Flower and Bulletins for the following Sundays, February 16th, March 23rd, March 30th and April 27th. The cost is \$42. **Bulletins** for each and every Wednesday Lenten Service, including Ash Wednesday. March 5th, March 12th, March 19th, March 26th, April 2nd and April 9th. The cost is \$12, if interested please reach out to Terri or call the church office. Thank You!



Masks are optional while inside the building.
Masks are available at the entrance.

Altar Guild, Lectors, Ushers, Acolytes and videographers are asked to perform their duties each Sunday. Please find a replacement and notify the church office if you cannot join us on your scheduled Sunday.

February 2nd, 2025 – Presentation of Our Lord
Malachi 3:1-4
Psalm 84
Hebrews 2:14-18
Luke 2:22-40

February 9th, 2025– Fifth Sunday after Epiphany
Isaiah 6:1-8 [9-13]
Psalm 138
1 Corinthians 15:1-11
Luke 5:1-11

February 16th, 2025 – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany
Jeremiah 17:5-10
Psalm 1
1 Corinthians 15:12-20
Luke 6:17-26

February 23rd, 2025 – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany
Genesis 45:3-11, 15
Psalm 37:1-11, 39-40
1 Corinthians 15:35-38, 42-50
Luke 6:27-38

March 2nd, 2025 – Transfiguration of Our Lord
Exodus 34:29-35
Psalm 99
2 Corinthians 3:12—4:2
Luke 9:28-36 [37-43a]

Friday, February 21st is the deadline for the church office to receive all Newsletter Information for March.



We are streaming "LIVE" during the service via Facebook each Sunday.

You can access the service on Facebook, user or not, at the following web address:
www.facebook.com/stmarkallentown
Please be patient while the page loads.

Here are your 2025 Council Members Liaisons and Financial Officers

Council/Financial Officers:

Tom Rieger - President
Dan Christman - Vice President
Linda Raad - Secretary
Roxann Rieger - Treasurer
Anita Vandergrift - Financial Secretary

Council Members and liaisons to:

Cindy Arnold - Open Door Food Pantry
Sandy Biery - St Mark Adventurer's
Dan Christman - Property/Christian Ed
Pat Golley - Worship and Music/
Widow's Club/Adventurers
Carol Hartigan - Parish Life
Gloria Hottenstein - Worship and Music/
Widow's Club
Rick Krasley - Sharing Life
DJ Landis - Open Door Food Pantry
Linda Raad - Financial
Bill Walker - Property/Christian Ed
Josephine Wieder - Christian Ed

*Mutual Ministry to be reviewed and assigned at a later time

Above is the list of individuals to reach out to if you have any comments or concerns, for each committee or program here at St, Mark.

"God promises to make something good out of the storms that bring devastation to your life."

ROMANS 8:28

**ST MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALLEN TOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
TREASURER'S REPORT FOR DECEMBER 2024
(Subject to Audit)**

	MONTH OF DECEMBER	12TH MONTH BUDGET	12TH MONTH ACTUAL 2024	12TH MONTH ACTUAL 2023
BUDGETED CURRENT INCOME	\$14,274.90	\$74,100.00	\$106,946.27	\$101,684.94
BENEVOLENCE	\$96.00	\$3,240.00	\$3,023.80	\$2,270.00
TOTAL BUDGETED INCOME	<u>\$14,370.90</u>	<u>\$77,340.00</u>	<u>\$109,970.07</u>	<u>\$103,954.94</u>
NON-BUDGETED INCOME	\$12,382.50	\$0.00	\$54,314.89	\$64,541.78
TOTAL INCOME	<u>\$26,753.40</u>	<u>\$77,340.00</u>	<u>\$164,284.96</u>	<u>\$168,496.72</u>
BUDGETED CURRENT EXPENSES	\$18,167.14	\$223,670.83	\$144,542.29	\$146,776.93
BENEVOLENCE	\$467.50	\$3,240.00	\$5,500.80	\$4,185.00
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	<u>\$18,634.64</u>	<u>\$226,910.83</u>	<u>\$150,043.09</u>	<u>\$150,961.93</u>
NON-BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$2,853.00	\$0.00	\$18,201.76	\$14,313.76
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>\$21,487.64</u>	<u>\$226,910.83</u>	<u>\$168,244.85</u>	<u>\$165,275.69</u>
MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY	BALANCE	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE
	<u>12/1/2024</u>			<u>12/31/2024</u>
CURRENT OPERATING FUND - TRUIST	(\$985.61)	\$26,753.40	\$21,487.64	\$4,280.15 +
QUAINT OAK BANK	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL OPERATING FUND	<u>(\$985.61)</u>	<u>\$26,753.40</u>	<u>\$21,487.64</u>	<u>\$4,280.15</u>
NORTHEASTERN PA SYNOD	PROCEEDS	INTEREST	PAYMENTS	LOAN BALANCE
SYNOD LOAN	2% for 7 yrs	\$260.75 FINAL	(\$991.74)	(\$730.99)
				\$0.00

"Online Giving is Now Available!"

If you have been wanting to give online to St. Mark Lutheran Church, you now can!

Dear Members of Our Church Community,

We want to start by expressing gratitude for your unwavering support and generosity towards our church. Your contributions have been essential to our ability to continue carrying out our mission and serving the needs of our community.

We also want to take this opportunity to introduce our new e-giving platform, Vanco. This platform provides a secure and user-friendly way to give to our church online, and we are confident that it will make giving more convenient for many members of our congregation.

You can give now at this link: <https://secure.myvanco.com/L-ZP4A>

or Scan this QR code:



Whether you choose to give online or in person, your support is vital to the continued success of our church community. We are so grateful for your generosity and commitment to our shared mission.

Thank you again for all that you do.

Blessings,

Thomas Rieger
Council President

1 John 5:1 NIV

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well.



E V E R Y O N E I E
J B E L I E V E S L
V O X V C V E C B O
O R I T H E T H E V
B N N F R R H I I E
H J Z A I Y A L F S
X E Q T S O T D P M
D S U H T N F H Y V
A U G E W E L L P G
I S O R H H V G Q T
A N D H O L O V E S

February

2025

St. Mark Lutheran Church
 201 E Juniata St
 Allentown PA 18103
 610-797-6440 fax 610-351-6114

www.saintmarkallentown.org
 Watch us on Facebook user or not, at:
www.facebook.com/stmarkallentown
 Hospital Code: 300

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1						
2 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am *Parish Life Meeting after the service	3 Worship/Music Meeting 6:00pm	4 Sharing Life New Year Best You 9:30am-12:30pm	5 Sharing Life Craft/Knit Day 1:00pm - 3:00pm Widows Club Luncheon 1:00pm - Perkins Choir 6:00pm	6	7	8
9 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Coffee Hour sponsored by Council	10 Open Door 10:00am - 12:00pm	11 Sharing Life Craft/Knit Day 1:00pm - 3:00pm Widows Club Luncheon 1:00pm - Perkins Choir 6:00pm	12	13	14 	15
16 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Congregational Meeting	17 Office Closed 	18 Open Door Food Delivery 10:30am	19 Sharing Life Luncheon 12:00pm - 3:00pm Council 6:00pm Choir 6:00pm	20 Open Door 4:00pm - 6:00pm	21	22
23 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Snow date Congregational Meeting *Soup/Chili/Mini Raffle Fundraiser 11:15-1:30	24	25	26	27	28	1 March

Serving Our Church February 2025		
February 2 nd – Presentation of Our Lord 9:00am Sunday School/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Linda Kline Altar Guild: Terri Harkins and Linda Gier	Ushers: Doris Brezan Tammy Walbert Linda Gier Terri Harkins Sandy Biery	Council on Duty: Josephine Wieder Videographer: Tom Rieger Acolyte: DJ Landis
February 9 th – Fifth Sunday after Epiphany 9:00am Sunday School/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Brenda Mann-Orben Altar Guild: Terri Harkins and Linda Gier	Ushers: Doris Brezan Tammy Walbert Linda Gier Terri Harkins Sandy Biery	Council on Duty: Pat Golley Videographer: Terri Harkins Acolyte: Raiden Thakrar
February 16 th – Sixth Sunday after Epiphany 9:00am Sunday School/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Carol Hartigan Altar Guild: Linda Kline and Linda Raad	Ushers: Doris Brezan Tammy Walbert Linda Gier Terri Harkins Sandy Biery	Council on Duty: Carol Hartigan Videographer: Kathy Walker Acolyte: DJ Landis

February 23 rd – Seventh Sunday after Epiphany 9:00am Sunday School/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Tammy Walbert Altar Guild: Linda Kline and Linda Raad	Ushers: Tom Rieger Roxann Rieger Brenda Covely Kathy Walker Zachary Walker	Council on Duty: Gloria Hottenstein Videographer: Dan Christman Acolyte: Patrick Merkle
March 2 nd – Transfiguration of Our Lord 9:00am Sunday School/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Linda Kline Altar Guild: Roxann Rieger and Edie Lindenmuth	Ushers: Tom Rieger Roxann Rieger Brenda Covely Kathy Walker Zachary Walker	Council on Duty: Tom Rieger Videographer: Tom Rieger Acolyte: DJ Landis

Soup & Chili Fundraiser



Mini Basket Raffle

Sunday, February 23, 2023

11:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.



Luther Hall at St. Mark Lutheran Church
201 E. Juniata St, Allentown PA

Warm up with soups and chilis available for purchase in a bowl to enjoy in Luther Hall or pints and quarts to take home.

They freeze well too so you can stock up for the winter!

Soup / Chili Pricing:

Bowl-\$4

Pint-\$5

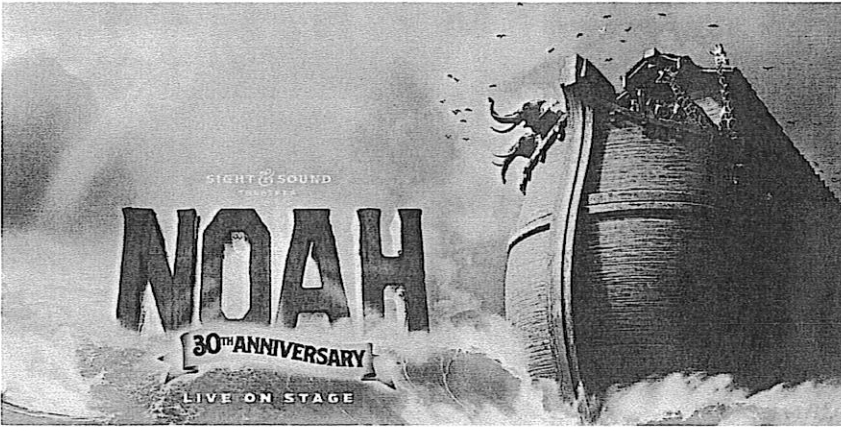
Quart-\$10

Bowls, pints and quarts will be available for purchase along with hot dogs, snack bags, beverages and baked goods!



All proceeds to benefit the recent boiler repairs.

If interested in contributing to this fundraiser (specially making soup/chili and/or baked goods) please contact Kathy Walker. Thank you!



JOIN ST. MARK FOR LUNCH AND A SHOW!

Miller's Smorgasbord and Noah at Sight and Sound Theater!!!

SATURDAY, AUGUST 2ND, 2025

Please arrive at St. Mark by 9:30am

Returning approximately by 8:00pm

Cost: Adults \$160 per person

Children (4-12) \$140 per child

The cost includes the bus ride, lunch and your show ticket.

There will be snacks and drinks for you on the bus.

There will be games and lots of surprises!!!

We hope you can join us!!!

ALL Payments due by Friday, July 18th

***All checks made out to St. Mark Lutheran Church**

Bus will be picking us up at and returning us to

St. Mark Lutheran Church

201 E Juniata St, Allentown PA 18103

Any questions call Church Office at (610)797-6440

or Terri Harkins at (610) 597-7760



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Engaging the Stranger Within: The Northeastern PA Synod's Racial Justice Work

Growing up in the American South, much of what was taught about racism dealt with history—slavery, annexation, Jim Crow, and integration. What (and how) we were taught in school, and the ways our community and churches remained unofficially segregated were “just the way things were.” There was a disconnect between the way things were and *why*. Racism was something that had happened, and we were living in the status quo of the Civil Rights Movement. And with that history focused so heavily in the South, it was like racism was somehow localized and intensified in that region, and we were more directly impacted by its legacy.

The privilege of my seminary formation and exposure to different contexts have shown just how limited my awareness of racism’s pervasiveness extends. Racism is a part of every community, congregation, home, and heart. It isn’t localized more intensely in one place or another. Our communities, workplaces, and churches in Northeastern Pennsylvania face the same legacy and challenges of confronting racist prejudices and practices, even if they expose themselves in different ways.



Cultural isolationism, unawareness of our past and current exploitation of the Lenni Lenape and Delaware peoples, emphasis on the immigrant heritage of our congregations while dismissing immigrant communities across the street, and an apathy to acts of violence against persons of color permeates our pews. Confronting personal, local, regional, and national instances of racial prejudice

is as important now as ever. The gospel gives us the assurance that the way things are is not how God calls us to be. To get from here to there, we need help learning what we don’t know, and hearing firsthand from our neighbors how we can work together to resist racism.

Through your Mission Support generosity, our Synod has the opportunity to walk together in more intentional ways as we learn about our communities’ and congregations’ complicity in racial prejudice and work for racial justice. Loving the land we steward in Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod and the people who occupy it, and healing the hurt of our ancestral and contemporary practices, begins with engaging the stranger we do not wish to see in ourselves so that we can better engage the stranger we do not currently see in our neighbors.



Pastor Jennifer Hall and Pastor Samantha Drennan at the 2024 youth pre-gathering event representing the Racial Justice Team

Racial Justice Boundary Training for rostered leaders, Synod Council and Staff, and congregational lay leaders has been an invaluable resource for beginning this work in our Synod. In January, we collaborated with Metropolitan Community Church of the Lehigh Valley and our own Synod's LGBTQ Task Force at the Lutheran Center for a day of worship and action called MLK Jr. Day of Prayer and Service. Partnership with Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania (LAMPa), Liberty Lutheran's MLK Day of Service, and local ecumenical and interfaith agencies committed to the course of justice in our neighborhood are but a few crucial ways we are already naming and confronting racism together as Christ's church, along with our

support of the ELCA's Truth and Healing Movement. All of these endeavors are bolstered by your Mission Support giving, and reflect our shared commitment to growing together as disciples of Jesus who are gospel filled and Spirit led.

Just as the Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed (Psalm 103:6), so too does God charge the people with upholding the cause of justice for those most vulnerable (Deuteronomy 16:19-20; 24:17). To get involved in our shared work of racial justice and reconciliation, reach out to a member of our Synod's Racial Justice Team, participate in local or regional educational opportunities with partnering colleges and universities, confront practices that reinforce barriers based on race and ethnicity, and have conversations with other disciples in your congregation about how your baptized community can work for justice and peace in in the world.

Submitted by: The Rev. Brandon M. Heavner, Weisenberg- New Tripoli, NEPA Synod Racial Justice Team

DID YOU KNOW that your Mission Support helps fund areas of the synod like this one and many other important initiatives? Your contributions are making a significant impact and helping others grow in faith, supporting the synod's directions of Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life, along with the values of Loving, Healing, and Engaging like Jesus. To learn more, visit godslove.org/missionsupport.

RACIAL JUSTICE TRAINING



FEBRUARY 8

All Northeastern PA Synod rostered leaders (pastors, deacons, and synodically-authorized lay leaders) are required to have **Anti-Racism at least once every three years.**

Training will be presented by The Rev. Carla Christopher.

9:30AM TO 3:00PM

LUTHERAN CENTER

2354 GROVE ROAD, ALLENTOWN

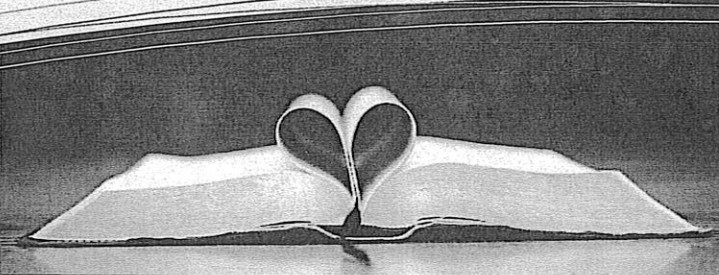
For more information & how to register, visit godslove.org/racial-justice-training

VOLUME 30
ISSUE 2
February
2025



Lehigh Mission District
NEWSLETTER

The Rev. Nelson Quiñones, Dean	610-653-5858
The Rev. Jean L. Huber, Assoc. of the Bishop	610-704-5133
Elizabeth Leibenguth, Mission District Chair	484-550-0057
Linda Gery, Newsletter Editor	610-395-5535



*March 2025 LMD NL news
will be due **February 10, 2025.***

Please email any information to
lmd-newslettereditor@gmail.com

Mid-Lent Guided Prayer Retreat

March 20, 2025
9:30 AM - 2:30 PM

Christ Lutheran, Allentown
(13th & Hamilton Streets)

Treat yourself to some guided
quiet time with God and other
spiritual seekers, apart from
your normal daily routine.

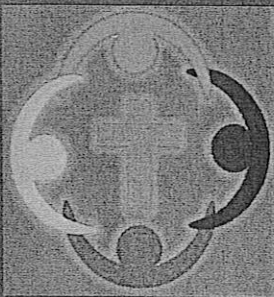
Led by Pastor Tom Lichner
and Louise Young.

\$15.00/person (payable upon
arrival to Christ Lutheran
Church, Allentown).

Phone Pastor Lichner to
register by March 17:
610-533-9362
(Room for 20 participants)

Bring your own bag lunch -
Coffee, tea, water provided.

PARKING LOT ACROSS
HAMILTON ST. FROM
CHURCH - Enter Christian
Education/Office Wing on
Hamilton.



Compassion

Dear Lehigh Mission District,

The book *Mortality* by the late Christopher Hitchens documents his battle with esophageal cancer.

A quote in the book expressed by a religious believer who mocked Hitchens' condition with the question, "Who else feels Christopher Hitchens getting terminal throat cancer [sic] was God's revenge for him using his voice to blaspheme him?" (Hitchens, 2012, p12).

As soon as I read the question, my immediate response was similar to Hitchens, "which mere primate is so damn sure that he can know the mind of god?" (Hitchens, 2012, p13).

Let's be clear, no one can know the mind of God.

Pastors are in the profession to interpret and translate ancient religious writings. This involves figuring out what the ancient writers' intentions were regarding their view about God and the community. Still, these ancient biblical authors didn't know the mind of God when they were writing.

So this idea that God was getting revenge on Hitchens for his atheistic views begs another question: What revenge was God after by inflicting cancer to those who already believe in God?

God or no God, believers and non-believers have been afflicted by this dreadful disease.

An interpretation based on one's feelings cannot justify God's intentions whether the person be an atheist or a theist. It would be cruel to choose one group as deserving of cancer.

The Gospel writers, however, describe Jesus as having compassion on the sick. "He had compassion for them." Or "He was moved with compassion for them." Over and over again, the gospels point to how Jesus showed compassion for the people afflicted by diseases.

Jesus's compassion expressed by the authors indicates how believers ought to live with one another especially towards the sick.

(continued on the next page ⇒)

**Trinity Memorial Church
invites you:**

(535 W. Emaus Ave, Allentown)

CLOTHING CLOSET

1st & 3rd Saturday
Hours: 11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

PANERA BREAD GIVE AWAY

Pick up on Mondays at 10 AM

Questions? Call the church
office at 610-797-4774 or email
tmcadm@gmail.com



**REMINDERS to the
Lehigh Mission District
Rostered Leaders**

*Please keep the following
dates on your calendars:*

**February 12, 2025 - State of
Lutheran Social Ministries**
The Rev. Dr. Woody Maxon

**March 12, 2025 - Topic:
Calls to Ministries**
The Rev. Jira Albers,
Licensed Lay Ministry
Director

**April 9, 2025 - State of
the Synod**
Bishop Christopher deForest

**May 4, 2025 - LMD Spring
Assembly at 4:00 P.M.**
Lutheran Center, Allentown

**May 30-31, 2025 - Synod
Assembly "Connect the
Dots!"**
Christ Hamilton United
Lutheran Church
(419 Bossardsville Road,
Stroudsburg, PA)

June, July, August - OFF

*Event updates will be made
available at meetings and
here, in the LMD Newsletter.*

(continued from previous page)

At some point or another, believers and non-believers have been moved to compassion. When we utter the popular phrase, "I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy", we understand the pain and sorrow that an illness can cast upon a person and their families. We have found compassion in ourselves and our enemy.

Encountered with Jesus's compassion, we find a reflection if not of God then of our bound humanity.

Hitchens, Christopher (2012). Mortality. Twelve Hachette Book Group.

Happy Saint Valentine,
The Rev. Nelson Quiñones, Lehigh Mission District Dean



OPERATION SUNSHINE

1933 Hanover Ave, Allentown, PA 18109

Phone: 610-435-9155

Open: Mon 11-3 and Wed. 11-3

Email: LMDopsunshine@aol.com

Website: www.LMDopsunshine.com

Paula & Dick Skelly, Co-Trip Coordinators

See attached newsletter or website for details.

*Operation Sunshine is a non-profit
fellowship opportunity within our Mission
District, run solely by volunteers.*

**All day trips for 2025 (except "Noah")
are currently SOLD OUT!!!**

If you are still interested, we encourage
you to put your name on a wait list
as we invariably have cancellations,
especially this far out.

**Thanks for Making a Difference for
Neighbors in Need!**

THANK YOU to all the faithful walkers, community
leaders, support crew, sponsors and other donors who
participated in the Sunday, October 13, 2024
45th Annual Greater Allentown CROP Hunger Walk!

You have raised **OVER \$30,000** to help our food-
insecure neighbors in the Allentown area and beyond!

As a result of your generosity, the **LEHIGH
CHURCHES' CONFERENCE KITCHEN** and the
ALLENTOWN AREA ECUMENICAL FOOD BANK
will be receiving more than \$3700 each for their vital
ministries with neighbors experiencing food insecurity
in our area. And **CHURCH WORLD SERVICE** will
be able to help many more of our neighbors who
are struggling in the aftermath of floods, fires,
droughts, and other disasters throughout the
United States and the world.

CONGREGATIONS/GROUPS: So that we can
celebrate more precise YTD totals, please send your
CROP gifts ASAP to Linda Held, Allentown CROP
Hunger Walk Treasurer, 3441 Devonshire Road,
Allentown, PA 18103.

If you or your congregation/group took any **CROP Hunger
Walk PHOTOS or VIDEOS**, please **POST THEM** on social
media and **SEND THEM** to karehad@gmail.com to include
in our follow-up emails to congregations and supporters!

CHRISTMAS, BIRTHDAY, or ANNIVERSARY GIFT IDEA:

In honor of loved ones, give the gift of life! **DONATE
ANYTIME** to the CROP Hunger Walk at

www.crophungerwalk.org/allentownpa

Alternatively, **CHECKS FOR "CWS/CROP"**
may be given through your congregation/group or sent
directly to Linda Held, Allentown CROP Hunger Walk
Treasurer, 3441 Devonshire Road, Allentown, PA 18103.

