



Milton Lutheran Church

NEWSLETTER

Fostering community through faith, love and service.

January 2022

[Pastor Gary's January Message](#)

Dear Friends of the Milton Lutheran Church,

Wow, I can't believe it is already 2022. It feels like I just blinked my eyes and another year has gone by! What an exciting year it has been.

This time last year we were still gathering as a community online. Our Christmas Eve worship was livestreamed and also done in the parking lot of 1125 Mahoning St.



In February we took the bold step of resuming in person worship at 100 Mahoning St. I still remember the first time we gathered in person in the sanctuary. It was a wonderful and joy filled experience.

In March we entered into a partnership with the people of Saint Paul's Church of Christ by offering them to use our church building at 1125 Mahoning St. We also began lent and looking forward to celebrating Easter together.

In April we celebrated Easter and began in person ministries. Our teams started to meet, and planning was underway for a fun and productive summer. We also signed a 1-year lease agreement with St. Paul's allowing them more time in the 1125 Mahoning St. building.

Over the summer we took the bold step in faith to consolidate our two congregations into the Milton Lutheran Church. We also resumed our community meals and worked in partnership with the people of St. Paul's. We had wonderful fellowship and time together as a community including our first annual pig roast.

In September we resumed Sunday School and Bible Study. We also continued our service to the community and found new ways to connect with the people around us. We served beignets to hundreds of people at the Milton Harvest festival. Our community meal ministry grew to serving

over 200 people and we started a more intentional partnership with the people of United in Christ by partnering to provide confirmation and youth group to our teens.

In October we continued our service and fellowship with one another. And in November we had our first annual Chili Cook-off which was a lot of fun. We also established our new Mission statement of fostering community through faith, love, and service.

In December we partnered with UIC and St. Paul's to provide a Blue Christmas worship to our community, we gathered for Christmas Eve worship, and we also gathered as a community to continue our discussion on how we can better come together as community.

As we enter 2022, we look forward to the continued ways in which God works through each of us, how we are called together to foster community through faith, love, and service, and find ways to be the light in the world. I hope you will join me in giving thanks to God for all that we have done, and all that God is calling us to do.

With everything we have to look forward to I am most excited to see how we do it together, as one community, as one people of God, as the Milton Lutheran Church.

Many Blessings,

Gary Schaeffer,

[News from the ELCA website:](#)

New Life Emerges

Congregation perseveres during the pandemic

By [Megan Brandsrud](#) December 15, 2021



Jared Stahler believes St. Peter Lutheran Church in New York City is having a resurrection moment. It's a poignant statement to make after everything the pastor and his parishioners have experienced over nearly two years—calendar pages marked by tragedy, grief, community and lessons learned.

Within the first 10 weeks of the pandemic, St. Peter lost more than 50 parishioners to COVID-19. Most of those deaths were among members of the former Iglesia de Sion, a Latino congregation that just weeks earlier had voted to merge with St. Peter after being ministry partners for seven years.

“The new St. Peter’s, right after it merged, experienced a massive loss of life, but we went through this crisis very much together as a community,” Stahler said.

Fabian Arias, who served Sion and is now a pastor of St. Peter, gathered with many of the families who lost loved ones, holding small funeral services in homes or on the street. He said many of the Latino parishioners are undocumented immigrants and often multiple families live together in one apartment, making it easier for the virus to spread quickly among people. One family lost multiple members across generations in 10 weeks’ time.



“It was a very dramatic situation,” he said, adding that every day for nearly two months he received calls from families asking him to pray with them for their sick loved ones or to hold funeral services.

In addition to the loss of life, Stahler said many parishioners lost jobs, making it difficult to pay rent or put food on the table. To help, St. Peter partnered with other city congregations to start a food and personal protective equipment (PPE) distribution program, which is ongoing.

“In the midst of all of this, we’re figuring out how to build a community that just merged together,” he said.

St. Peter has had an online presence for many years, so it started livestreaming liturgies from day one of the pandemic. Initially they had separate services for English and Spanish, the latter of which Arias broadcast from his home. But in June 2020 they recalibrated their approach.

“We understood it would not be safe for us to bring our community together because of the loss of life we’d experienced,” Stahler said. “We realized the pandemic isn’t something that is going away, so we needed to think creatively about how to approach being church and how to live more deeply into our merger using the digital tools at our disposal.”

Leaders spent a lot of time thinking about the dynamics of people worshiping from home and what it meant to present something powerful in a concentrated format. “That changed everything, from the way we preach to read to how music is done,” he said.

“In the midst of all of this, we’re figuring out how to build a community that just merged together.”

For example, during vespers they chose to not light a typical large candle that would be found in the church, but rather the kind of everyday candle people have in their homes.

They also created a bilingual Wednesday night service that takes place on Zoom rather than being broadcast. Stahler said this has presented many gifts, such as opening up space for leadership among the congregation's youth since many of them are bilingual. "This probably wouldn't have developed quite as fast had we not had to build a community in the midst of a pandemic," he said.

Last December they planned a bilingual Christmas Eve service that would bring the whole community together virtually. Every parishioner received a Christmas card from the congregation along with a linen cloth designed with St. Peter's logo. They collected video footage of people spreading out their cloth and lighting a candle, anticipating the ritual people would be doing in their homes on Christmas Eve. The video was shown at the beginning of the service, along with a video compilation of members singing "Silent Night" in their homes in English and Spanish.

"What resulted was this beautiful rendition that you couldn't do in person," Stahler said, adding that their whole mentality shifted about how to use technology and media in ways that fostered a sense of community.

"People were embodying what it means to be the body of Christ in their own homes," he said. "What we saw emerge in Zoom—with people in their homes where the dog is barking, or the fire engine is blaring by outside—is a kind of realness to humanity. I continue to marvel at that. In some ways, it has given us a better picture into each other's humanities."

Enduring witness of Christ

On the morning of Jan. 4, St. Peter endured yet another challenge as a city water main broke, flooding its building. Two-thirds of the building was massively damaged or destroyed, including the sanctuary and the entire lower level. But the congregation, as it had now many times before, persevered and came together.

In June, leaders started welcoming parishioners back to the church in small groups for worship with outdoor liturgy services held on St. Peter's plaza. And in September, they moved all services into what they refer to as the church's "living room," which with social distancing allows 40 people to gather, all with preregistration.

"It was very, very emotional," Arias said of returning to in-person services after everything the congregation had been through. "It was a very beautiful, spiritual and emotional time for us to slowly come back together."

The congregation is maintaining their digital services because they realize there is a large swath of people who only connected with them because they were able to do so virtually last year. Stahler said a special gift of this is that it allows families to worship together from different countries, as many of St. Peter's Latino parishioners have relatives living in Latin America.

"It was a very beautiful, spiritual and emotional time for us to slowly come back together."

Arias and Stahler have no false notions that there will be a return to normal. They know how much their congregation has been through during the pandemic—a merger, the destruction of two-thirds of its building and, most significantly, the loss of now more than 70 members. There are still a lot of new

things to be worked out, but they see it as a time to faithfully lean into the church's theme: "Together, being the Body of Christ." *"Juntos, formando el cuerpo de Cristo."*

"How do you offer thanksgiving in the midst of so much sorrow and death? That is what we're learning this year—how to pray and thank God for one another in this immensely challenging time," Stahler said.

"But we don't feel alone. Our God is one who went to the cross, who died and who rose to new life that was dramatically different from what was before, and I'm convinced that's what's going on in our midst. We are in fact being resurrected."



[Megan Brandsrud](#)

Brandsrud is a content editor of *Living Lutheran*.

Meetings & Events

Wednesdays, Bible Study 7:00 PM (resumes on Wed Jan 5th) in the library. Pastor Gary will be leading bible study each week. You can join us in person or online. If you want to join us online for Bible Study, please let the church office know so we can provide you with the Zoom link.

Saturday, January 8, 2022, Community Meal Preparation 9:30 AM to 11:30 AM at Milton Lutheran Church, 100 Mahoning St. Milton. ** Food donations are being accepted through Thursday, Jan 6th. Volunteers are needed for food preparation and food service.

Sunday, January 9, 2022, Community Meal at 4:00 PM In partnership with St Paul's AME, Milton Lutheran Church & Saint Paul's United Church of Christ. Served at 1125 Mahoning St, Milton. All meals will be provided as take out, either by drive up or walk up.

Menu: Chicken & Vegetable Soup, Ham and Cheese Sandwiches, Pound Cake and Mixed Fruit.

Sunday January 16, 2022, 8:00 AM Sunday Morning Bible Study with Kellie Brouse, resumes with a new worship series using the book "Bad Girls of the Bible" by Liz Curtis Higgs. If you would like to be a part of this bible study and need a book please contact the office.

Wednesday, February 2, 2022, Blood Drive 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM The blood mobile will be at 1125 Mahoning St. They will be there and ready to accept blood donations from 1:00 PM to 6:00 PM. Please stop by to give blood if you can. With so much going on in the world your donation is needed now more than ever. Next Blood drive will be March 3, 2022.

A FUN EVENING WITH OUR CHURCH FAMILY

GAME NIGHT & POT LUCK

Sunday, January 23rd at 6:00 P.M.
100 Mahoning St. in the fellowship hall

DRINKS AND SERVING ITEMS PROVIDED. BRING
FOOD, CARDS, BOARD GAMES, OR GROUP GAMES
TO SHARE!



MILTON
Lutheran Church



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Recipes Old & New

These recipes are out of the cookbooks that each church created; many of these recipes were shared by members. This is a “stick to your ribs” kind of soup great for a warming lunch on a “snowman building” sort of day. Warm fresh baked rolls would go wonderfully with this soup too! Might I add both of these would be wonderful additions to the potluck on January 23rd as well!

We'd love to feature recipes from the current church members as well. So if you have a recipe, you'd like to share please submit it to the church office. We look forward to seeing your new recipes!

Creamy Cheddar Soup

Shared by Janice Reaser

¼ Cup Butter (½ stick)
½ Cup Chopped Onion
2 TBSP Flour
2 Cups Milk
2 Cups Chicken Broth
2 Large Russet Potatoes, peeled & Diced
1 Cup Shredded Sharp Cheese (firmly packed)
*Optional - Chopped Chives or green

Instructions:

Melt butter in a heavy medium sauce pan over medium heat. Add onion & sauté until tender, about 5 minutes. Add flour and stir until just beginning to color, about 3 minutes. Gradually mix in milk and broth; then add potatoes. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer until potatoes are tender, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes. Add cheese and stir until cheese melts and soup is smooth. Season to taste with Salt and Pepper. Garnish with fresh herbs and serve immediately.

Parsnip & Dill Rolls

Shared by Nancy Watts

1 pkg Active Dry Yeast
1 Tsp Granulated Sugar
½ Cup Warm Mashed Parsnips
1 Large Egg (room temperature)
2 Tbsp Softened Butter
2 Tbsp Fresh Dill
2 Tbsp Sliced Scallions (green onions)
1 Tsp Dill Seeds
½ Tsp Crushed Dried Thyme Leaves
1/8 Tsp Freshly Ground Black Pepper
1 ½ Cups (less 2TBSP) Whole Wheat Flour
½ Cup All Purpose Flour
¾ Ounce Toasted Wheat Germ
1 TBSP milk

Instructions:

In A large bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in ½ cup warm water (105 – 115 degrees F) let site 5 minutes, you will see the yeast creating bubbles in the mixture as it wakes up. With a wooden spoon, beat the parsnips, eggs, butter, herbs and spices until smooth. Stir in the whole wheat flour (reserve 2 tablespoons to use to keep your hands from sticking to the dough) then the all-purpose flour and the wheat germ. Knead in the bowl about 1 minute until a smooth dough forms. Cover with plastic wrap, set in a warm area and let rise for 30-40 minutes until it has doubled in size. Spray a 10-inch cast iron pan with a non-stick spray – or spread it with oil. Punch down the dough, divide into 12 equal balls. Arrange in skillet. Cover and let rise another 20-30 minutes until nearly doubled again. Preheat oven to 400 Degree F, Before putting in oven evenly lightly brush tops of rolls with milk and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake 15 to 20 minutes or until golden.

Please Join Us in Prayer For...

Joanie Fisher	Patricia Muffly	Mary Billhime
Ken Gaugler	Patsy Aunkst	Kimberly Dill
Karen Smith	Jack Aunkst	Janet Smith
Mae Jones	Mary Lou Benshoff	Gerald Greenly
Terry Deaner	Julie Benshoff	Nancy Cochran & Family
Doris Heffelfinger	Jim Seidel & Family	
Chole Henderson		



Please let the office know of anyone who needs added or can be removed from the monthly prayer list.

Just a few more things....

Life After Loss - Thursdays, April 21 thru May 26, 2022 2-3:30 PM at 235 Hospital Dr. Lewisburg.

Fee \$20.00.

Coping with the loss of a loved one can be difficult, especially during these challenging times. So, we would like to let you know about a local program presented by Hospice of Evangelical and Community Health and Wellness. It is a 6-week bereavement class called "Life After Loss" Your program facilitator is Andrea Runkle MSW. Anyone over 18 or older who has experienced a loss is invited to attend. It is recommended that the loss be longer than 6 months ago. Pre-Registration is required, the cost is \$20.00, scholarships are available. Registration is limited so please contact the hospital at 570-522-2157



January Birthdays



1/2 Cynthia Brouse	1/7 Ruth Greenly	1/19 Andrew McNeil Jr
1/2 Shirley Robinson	1/7 Anne Kay	1/20 Doris Moore
1/3 Mary Billhime	1/8 Jack Aunkst	1/22 Linn Davis
1/3 Dave Robinson	1/12 Daniel Day	1/23 Helen Billhime
1/4 Lee Brandau	1/13 Laura Spangler	1/27 Bonnie Gaugler
1/4 Linda Trate	1/15 Alison Gardner	1/27 Dave Walize
1/7 Ruth Greenly	1/18 Kay Dunn	

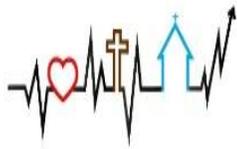
January Anniversaries

1/8 Leroy & Bonnie Hauck

Did we miss you on the birthday or anniversary list? Please let us know! Call the office, we will be happy to make any changes.



Online Worship and Resources



Have you checked out our Church website recently? If you haven't, we hope you will take some time to visit the site. You can find worship service links, weekly bible studies, the church calendar, pictures, and resources to deepen your spiritual life. Feel free to invite others to stop by the website as well! <http://miltonlutheranchurch.org>

Milton Lutheran Church Leadership Team	
Pastor	Gary Schaeffer
Organist & Music Director	John Warfel
Office Administrator	Robin A. McKean-Power
Digital Ministry Coordinator	Seth Reitz
Sexton/Custodian	Chuck Stahl
Treasurers	Rich Handy, Carol Yost, Craig Lawler, and Lorraine Lawler
Transitional Council	Kellie Brouse, Krista Yaiko, Don Fisher, Jeff Coup, Penny Ulmer, Crystal Gnidovec, Rose Deener, Seth Reitz
Worship Team	Jeff Coup, Kellie Brouse, Nancy Walters, Sue Warfel, John Warfel
Digital Ministry Team	Aaron Coup, Rick Coup, Seth Reitz, Donna Spear
Outreach Team	Connie Stover, Kay Dunn, Claire Weisner, Lynnette Weisner, Carol Yost, Linwood Hill, Krista Yaiko, Karen Martello, Peggy Fisher
Discipleship Team	Rose Handy, Ed Coup, Kate Budman, Kellie Brouse
Ministry Planning Team	Penny Ulmer, Rose Handy, Lynette Weisner, Ruth Scott, Joe Yaiko and Cindy Coup
Property Team	Don Fisher (point person for 1125 Mahoning St.) Chuck Stahl (point person for 100 Mahoning St.), Bob Greenly, Rusty Brouse, Helen Billhime, Bill Heimbach, Seth Reitz, Joe Yaiko

Office Hours

Monday – 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Tuesday - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Wednesday – Noon to 5 p.m.

Thursday - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Friday - Office Closed

Pastoral Office Hours

Mon, Tue, Wed & Thursday 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Please call the office to reserve time to speak with Pastor Gary.

Office Location:

Milton Lutheran Church, 100 Mahoning Street, Milton, PA 17847, 570-742-4601

Office Administrator email: info@miltonlutheranparish.faith – new e-mail to come shortly, it will be
info@miltonlutheranchurch.org

Website: <https://miltonlutheranchurch.org>

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram, and our YouTube Channel to connect with us online.

Email or drop off bulletin announcements or newsletter articles.



Inspirational Thoughts:

"Winter is on my head, but eternal spring is in my heart." – Victor Hugo

"Thank goodness for the first snow. It was a reminder–no matter how old you became and how much you'd seen, things could still be new if you were willing to believe they still mattered." - Candace Bushnell

*"I want it said of me by those who knew me best, that I always plucked the thistle and planted a flower where I thought a flower would grow."
-Abraham Lincoln*

*"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake it is necessary to stand out in the cold."
- Aristotle*

