

# Prints of Peace



September 2025

Volume 30 Issue 9



I wonder. I wonder what could happen if we dream big.

I recently led a devotion with Congregation Council where I invited them to imagine a future without fear – no fear of a lack of money, no fear of a lack of volunteers, no fear of conflict, and so on. I asked them to dream about what that future might look like here at Prince of Peace. I asked them to imagine Prince of Peace in five, ten, twenty years. What would it look like? They came up with some astounding ideas. Among them were these:

- Giving a free meal once a month.
- An addition to the building, which is used every day.
- Larger Sunday School class.
- A Youth Pastor with a lot of kids.
- An emergency shelter and community center.
- A paid parish nurse position, with a clinic and visitation.
- A senior center.
- A care for creation committee.
- An apartment building for the homeless.

And more... (Someone even said, “a petting zoo,” but that one was a joke...I think!)

Now, just because we dreamed about this stuff, does it mean it will happen? Of course not. And there's no way that ALL of these things will happen in ten years. But could one or two? Perhaps! God calls us to faith, to believe in impossible things, to see visions and dream dreams. God sometimes blesses big dreams and gives us the resources we need to make them happen. But one thing I know for sure: if we don't dream about things like this, they DEFINITELY won't happen.

We're going to talk about this more at future council meetings. Who knows? Maybe something will grow, maybe something will flourish, maybe something will appear. I invite you to join us in dreaming big like this. If money and volunteers and conflict weren't concerns, what do you dream that Prince of Peace might become? And through our dreaming, ponder this question as well: What might God be dreaming of for Prince of Peace? I wonder where that might lead us. I wonder...

In Christ,

Rev. Michael J. Scholtes



*Please keep these people in prayer on the anniversary of their birth!*

Christopher Confalone

Alani Blount

Douglas Hock

Micah Smith

Mary Jane Hower

Brittany Walters

Athena Holecz

Sheri Oessenick

Ronald Getz

Melissa Frack

Jessica Reinhart

Dominic Walters

Thomas Amy

Janessa Baker

Alyce Hower

Phyllis Bisher

Samuel Blakeslee

Wanda McCammon

Levi Ott

Dominic Holecz

Justin Ott

Kay Parsons

Patricia Duran

Arlene Miller

Mckenna Baker

Staci Hock

Jayden Garis

Bruce Antonioli

Matthew Schipps



**Worship On-site (9:45 on Sundays)**

**Online / Facebook**

our worship each week at our website (popbangor.org/video-worship). Or watch it on our Facebook page (facebook.com/popbangor).

### Faith by Firelight Dates:

Join us for Faith by Firelight at 7 p.m. on **Saturday, September 13** and **October 11**. Questions? See Connie Itterly and Scott Schipps.



### Social Ministry Project for September:

Several years ago, the Go-Wams (remember us?) put together personal care kits for Lutheran World Relief. We have the opportunity to do it again. The synod in Allentown is having an ingathering on Friday, October 10th from 9 a.m. - Noon, and Saturday, October 11th from 8 a.m. -10 a.m. What does that mean for us? We can bring the kits we assemble to the Synod and not have to pay postage. Each kit contains the following: 1 bath towel; 2 bars of soap; 1 toothbrush; 1 sturdy comb, and 1 metal nail clipper. These items can be purchased at Dollar Tree for a total of \$6.88 (includes tax). There will be a sign-up sheet on the counter for you to fill out. Don't want to shop? See a member of Social Ministry, we'll be happy to shop for you. Members: Mary O'Meally, Sherry Hock and Holly Blakeslee. Questions: see Mary "O"

### Recent Pastoral Acts

Funeral: James Boyer, July 26

Baptisms: Mason John Schaarschmidt, August 2  
Jackson John Gerlach, August 2  
Charles Augustus Comunale, August 17  
Athena Louise Holecz, August 17  
Dean Summy Holecz, August 17



Join us on **Saturday, October 4**, for a special Blessing of the Animals service. We will gather at 10:30 a.m. in the church grove. (Just off the back of the church parking lot.) All appropriately leashed animals are welcome with their owners. If you would like your pet's name to be mentioned, but cannot attend, please get names to Pastor Scholtes by October 1.

Would you like to join the volunteer team? Contact the church office at 610-588-2355.

If you are unable to fulfill your assignment, please find a replacement and let Pastor Scholtes know of the change.

	September 7	September 14	September 21	September 28	October 5
<b>Greeters</b>	Sherk and June Jones	Sara Godshalk, Sue Reinhart	Holly Blakeslee, Vivian Fahr	Lisa and Wayne Jones	Georgia and John Suranofsky
<b>Council Greeters</b>	Allison Manicke	Allison Manicke	April Miller	April Miller	Kerri Miller
<b>Lay Readers</b>	Connie Itterly	Tina Smith	Sherry Hock	Alex Scholtes	Quincy Miller
<b>Assisting Ministers</b>	April Miller	Kale Baker	Marlene Stana	Tina Johns	Laraine Brands
<b>Com. Assts.</b>	Diane Hahn, Tina Smith	Tina Johns, Laraine Brands	Jim Jennings, April Miller	Brooks Baker, Marlene Stana	Diane Hahn, Tina Smith
<b>Ushers</b>	Marlene and Butch Stana	Vivian Fahr, Traci Rumsey	Brenda Hughes Sara Godshalk	Georgia and John Suranofsky	Connie Itterly, Sue Reinhart
<b>Power Point Camera</b>	Cathy Mullen	Jim Jennings	Tara Flyte	Kim Jennings	Antonioli Family
<b>Acolytes</b>	Landon Horn	Aaron Smith	Taylor Baker	Fabian Vargas	Ben Scholtes
<b>Offering Counters</b>	Georgia Suranofsky	Chip Harrison	Connie Itterly	Scott Schipps	Tina Johns
<b>Pew Tenders</b>	Sara Godshalk	June Jones	Rhonda Montgomery	Traci Rumsey	Sherry and Maci Hock
<b>Bread Baker</b>	Connie Itterly				June Jones

**September Altar Guild:** Connie Itterly, Diane Searfass, **October Altar Guild:** Cathy Mullen, Phyllis Bisher

### Growing Young

We're about to start reading together the book ***Growing Young: 6 Essential Strategies to Help Young People Discover and Love Your Church!*** This book is the result of deep research and thoughtful prayer. It has provided many congregations with the tools to assess how they can make their church the most welcoming and loving congregation they can be.

It isn't a program to follow that solves everything. It isn't a silver bullet that brings all the kids running. Rather, it's a list of strategies and suggestions for ways we can subtly shift the *culture* of a congregation to be attractive and welcoming to young people.

If you still want to join us, let Pastor Scholtes know ASAP! There might still be time to get a copy of the book in time to prepare for the first session. See you at the first session, Saturday, September 6 from 9 – 10:30 a.m. --**Pastor Scholtes**

**Real Readers: Join Us! We meet at 2 p.m.**

**Real Readers Book List for the rest of 2025:**

**a little bit of everything for everyone. New members are always welcome!**

Questions? Please feel free to speak to Karen Karner, Janet Martocci or Sherry Hoch for information.

September 4 – “Demon Copperhead” by Barbara Kingsolver (Janet)

October 2 – “The Secret Life of Sunflowers” by Marta Molnar (Karen)

November 6 – “The Housemaid” by Freida McFadden (Mary)

December 4 – “All He Ever Wanted” by Anita Shreve (Maureen)



Social Ministry would like to thank the person who anonymously send us a \$50.00 Weis card for our projects. It is greatly appreciated. God bless you! —*Social Ministry Committee*



### August Council Meeting Highlights

- Council approved endowment projects of grove improvement and new firepit.
- Council approved endowment project for Playground repair & improvements
- Council approved endowment for the Lehigh Valley Foster Care match
- Watch for upcoming information for potluck lunch on harvest home November 9<sup>th</sup>



**September 14<sup>th</sup> is going to be a very exciting day:**

**Sunday School will resume at 8:30 a.m. on September 14<sup>th</sup>.** Watch for details!

### Art Show in the Narthex!

The artists participating in the Summer Art Group had a fun time sharing and making art for 6 weeks this summer. On Sunday morning, **September 14**, before and after church, we will display our works of art in the narthex by the coat rack. Come by and take a look!



**JOIN US: Sunday Coffee Hours will resume on Sunday September 14.**

The Hospitality Committee will always provide coffee and tea and will be providing "sweets and treats" the first Sunday of each month. Congregation members are invited to supply some treats the balance of each month. A signup sheet will be in the narthex for those who wish to participate. Coffee hours will continue **September 14 through December 14** and then will resume on January 11, 2026, through May 17, 2026. Thank you,

*--Hospitality Committee*

### God's Work Our Hands Project:

Last year for God's Work Our Hands Project we made 40 birthday kits for P.U.M.P. This year our goal is 50, and with the matching donation from the Helper's Helpers sub fund, we would like to make about 100. If you have an action team available from Thrivent would you consider applying for it so we could meet our goal. **The items that go into the birthday kit are:** cake mix and frosting; aluminum cake pan; balloons; birthday napkins and plates; happy birthday banner, and a can of soda (cola or sprite depending on the cake mix). We will also need gift bags from Dollar Tree, there are 2 in a package for \$1.25. The items in the kit can be purchased at Dollar Tree. Look for the sign-up sheet on the counter in the Narthex, if you prefer not to shop for items envelopes are provided for monetary donations, or see Mary O'Meally, Sherry Hock, or Holly Blakeslee. **Items need to be at church on September 7<sup>th</sup>. We will put the kits together on Sunday, September 14.** Thank you for always supporting our projects and ministries!



**God's work. Our hands.**



Join us for a  
day of service





### Rummage Sale Helpers Needed...

Our rummage sale will be on **Friday, September 26 and Saturday, September 27**. Your help would be greatly appreciated in moving items from the storage trailer out back and then inside to prepare for the sale. Look for details and sign-up sheets in the next few weeks. Questions? See April Miller.

### Caps for Sailors at Sea:

Every year a few members of our congregation knit or crochet winter caps for sailors on cargo ships that come into port in New York. The caps are given by an ELCA organization -Seafarer's International along with other items of warm clothing, candy and cookies. This event is called "Christmas at Sea". Last year we sent 80 handmade caps. Would you like to add to what we can send? Patterns are very easy and can be obtained by contacting Georgia Suranofsky. Caps need to be completed by **November 1st**.



### Salute to Veterans:



A Tribute to Brian Perin, Mike Kovalevitch and Edmund (Chip) Turtzo. The Swing Time Dolls will perform a 100-year trip of patriotic history through song! (You won't want to miss their show —Recent appearances included: Donald Trump Inaugural Ball, State Theater and Musicfest!) Brought to you by the Slate Belt Veterans Association on **Saturday, November 8**. Doors open at 6 p.m., **show: 7 – 10 p.m.** Advance tickets are \$30 (\$35 at the door). Tickets are available at local businesses and non-profits. For more information contact Toni Lynch at 610-509-4296.

### Reorganized Group!

You may start hearing a new name floating around ***Faith Exploration team*** (formally Christian Education). This is a newly reorganized group that focuses on the educational experience within our congregation, for the young to the mature. We meet on the first Tuesday of the month at 6:30 p.m. This is not just Sunday School but so much more! It's about enhancing the faith of everyone in various ways. If you are interested in checking it out, we would love for you to join a meeting and ignite the spark of faith.



### You Deserve a Great Marriage!



Enjoy the gift of a more joyful relationship with a Marriage Encounter experience! This special online format offered **November 14 - 16, 2025 (CST)** will give the two of you the opportunity to enjoy this relationship-building experience from the comfort and privacy of your home, apartment, or even a special destination – anywhere your privacy is assured and ample wifi is available. Learn more or apply at [GodLovesMarriage.org](http://GodLovesMarriage.org), or contact Randy & Jill Sigler at [randjsigler@allophone.com](mailto:randjsigler@allophone.com) or 402-560-3475 for more information. Pre-registration is required so we can send you materials in advance – don't miss out.

### Weis Receipts Update:

# THANK YOU

Thanks to all for participating in the **1% Weis Receipt Donation program**. We have received a check in the amount of **\$342.16** for our most recent group of receipts. Received to date: **\$1,556.85** for a total of receipts submitted of **\$155,685** in grocery receipts. Keep up the good work! --*Janet Martocci*





## Join Us for POPS (Prince of Peace Seekers)



Our gatherings begin on **Thursday, September 11**, from 10 a.m. – Noon in the conference room. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available. We meet for a time of spiritual growth, discussion, and fellowship. We have some topics planned to spark your spiritual imagination!

On September 11, 18 and 25, Georgia Suranofsky will lead sessions on a series called *Fierce Women of the Bible*. Learn from the fierce women of God who changed the world. We will look at lesser-known female characters in the Bible and the way they changed the world by living into God's calling. In this video series, we will watch, learn from scripture, and discuss the women characters and how it may apply to us today.

Pastor Scholtes will lead a book study during the month of October about how to tell your faith story. Stay tuned for more details.

If you have any questions, please contact Karen Karner or Janet Martocci.

### Greetings From POPS Treasures:

Our next sale days are **September 12 and 13**. We continue to have our monthly sales with great success. We have been receiving a lot of drop-offs. Drop-offs are on designated Mondays from 1 p.m. - 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. - 7 p.m. for gently used or new items. (Antiques and collectibles are also accepted, but no TVs or computers, stereos.) Please follow us on Facebook for up-to-date information, including drop-off dates and times if changes occur. **We do not accept items dropped off during our sale week.** We also would appreciate that if anyone from POP would like to donate items, to please give us a heads up. We would prefer to know when items are coming in and prefer to be here when they are as we want to ensure the exits are not blocked. If items are for the rummage sale, please bring them in September. Thank you! --*Jackie Horn*



### Endowment News

- Bequest from Marijane Getz, wife of Ron Getz.
- New Conferencing Equipment was purchased and installed in the conference room.
- Donation match of was given to Valley Youth House along with donations of and items from the congregation.
- Donation match was given to Lehigh Valley Foster Care along with donations of cash and items from the congregation.
- Registration paid for our parish administrator, Annette Buss to attend seminar in October.

### Stewardship News

Doors are used many times in the Bible as symbols to represent different spiritual concepts. For example, take the literal door of Noah's Ark. This could represent God's protection. When that huge door was closed Noah and his family, including the animals, were all protected against the raging waters and wind of the flood.

Doors were mentioned in Exodus when the Israelites used blood on their doorposts to protect them so the angel of death would pass over them during the last of the ten plagues.

There are temple doors, shepherd's gates, and tomb doors. Doors in the Bible could also be metaphorical doors, meaning that the door isn't really a physical door, but it means something important. Such as an opportunity for service to God, personal growth, open doors could mean all are welcome. Jesus even said that he was the "door", the only way to enter into a relationship with his Father and to gain everlasting life.

Doors are an interesting concept! They can be opened or closed. Narrow or wide. Jesus may come knocking at your door, will you answer?

Well, here at Prince of Peace we are going to take that door and "open" it to a new and exciting way to get closer to God. Starting in September we will be talking about doors, through Pastor's emails, through announcements during service, the newsletter, and many more creative ways. Then in the month of October, we will all find out what special door Prince of Peace has been blessed with.



**Doors in the Bible**

**DID YOU KNOW?...**  
**Through August 1st**  
**total releases from**  
**sub funds were:**  
**\$21,538.58**

Stay tuned for more!

**Joyful Noise Good News!**  
 Collection for July totaled \$60.00!  
 Year to date total is \$876.50!

# Delight in God's Word

The way to true happiness

Psalm 1

Monday, Sep. 01	Psalm 119:65-72; 2 Chronicles 12:1-12; Hebrews 13:7-21
Tuesday, Sep. 02	Psalm 119:65-72; Isaiah 2:12-17; Titus 1:1-9
Wednesday, Sep. 03	Psalm 119:65-72; Isaiah 57:14-21; Luke 14:15-24
Thursday, Sep. 04	Psalm 1; Genesis 39:1-23; Philippians 2:25-30
Friday, Sep. 05	Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 7:12-26; Colossians 4:7-17
Saturday, Sep. 06	Psalm 1; Deuteronomy 29:2-20; Matthew 10:34-42
<b>Sunday, Sep. 07</b>	<b>Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 1; Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33</b>
Monday, Sep. 08	Psalm 101; 2 Kings 17:24-41; 1 Timothy 3:14-4:5
Tuesday, Sep. 09	Psalm 101; 2 Kings 18:9-18; 1 Timothy 4:6-16
Wednesday, Sep. 10	Psalm 101; 2 Kings 18:19-25; 19:1-7; Luke 18:18-30
Thursday, Sep. 11	Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 6:1-6; 1 Timothy 1:1-11
Friday, Sep. 12	Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 7:6-10; 8:1-5; 2 Peter 2:1-10a
Saturday, Sep. 13	Psalm 51:1-10; Genesis 8:20-9:7; John 10:11-21
<b>Sunday, Sep. 14</b>	<b>Exodus 32:7-14; Psalm 51:1-10; 1 Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10</b>
Monday, Sep. 15	Psalm 73; Amos 7:1-6; 1 Timothy 1:18-20
Tuesday, Sep. 16	Psalm 73; Jonah 3:1-10; 2 Peter 3:8-13
Wednesday, Sep. 17	Psalm 73; Job 40:6-14; 42:1-6; Luke 22:31-33, 54-62
Thursday, Sep. 18	Psalm 113; Exodus 23:1-9; Romans 3:1-8
Friday, Sep. 19	Psalm 113; Ezekiel 22:17-31; Romans 8:31-39
Saturday, Sep. 20	Psalm 113; Isaiah 5:8-23; Mark 12:41-44
<b>Sunday, Sep. 21</b>	<b>Amos 8:4-7; Psalm 113; 1 Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13</b>
Monday, Sep. 22	Psalm 12; Proverbs 14:12-31; Acts 4:1-12
Tuesday, Sep. 23	Psalm 12; Proverbs 17:1-5; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23
Wednesday, Sep. 24	Psalm 12; Proverbs 21:10-16; Luke 20:45-21:4
Thursday, Sep. 25	Psalm 146; Proverbs 22:2-16; 2 Corinthians 8:8-15
Friday, Sep. 26	Psalm 146; Proverbs 28:3-10; Ephesians 2:1-10
Saturday, Sep. 27	Psalm 146; Proverbs 28:11-28; Luke 9:43b-48
<b>Sunday, Sep. 28</b>	<b>Amos 6:1a, 4-7; Psalm 146; 1 Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31</b>
Monday, Sep. 29	Psalm 62; Amos 6:8-14; Revelation 3:14-22
Tuesday, Sep. 30	Psalm 62; Hosea 10:9-15; James 5:1-6

*Read these on your computer or on your phone! Go to [DailyLectio.net](http://DailyLectio.net), where you can sign up for daily emails or download the app for iPhone or Android!*



# God Loves You And Cares For You!

**Prince of Peace Lutheran Church**  
2445 Lake Minsi Drive (Johnsonville)  
Bangor, Pennsylvania 18013  
Office Phone: 610-588-2355  
**Website: [www.popbangor.org](http://www.popbangor.org)**

**Online Coordinator: Heather Scholtes**

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**Worship and Holy Communion Schedule:**  
**Sundays at 9:45 a.m. – Join us!!**  
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- **Pastor: Rev. Michael J. Scholtes**
- **Volunteer Pastoral Assist. Larry Rissmiller**
- **Minister of Music: Martin Yazdzik**
- **Bookkeeper: Joyce Weishaupt**
- **Financial Secretary: Brenda Hughes**
- **Custodian: Brittnee Evans**
- **Parish Nurse: Justine Saviet RN**
- **Administrative Assistant: Annette Buss**

#### **Congregation Council Members**

Larry Rissmiller, President	Jackie Horn
Kale Baker, Vice President	April Miller
Tina Johns, Secretary	Brenda Hughes
Allison Manicke, Youth	Wayne Jones
Jean Janosa	Kerri Miller
Mary O'Meally	Holly Blakeslee
Rev. Michael J. Scholtes	Justine Saviet

Would you like to place an article in the monthly newsletter? Highlight your ministry? Post a Thank you? Make an announcement?

### **EARLY SUBMISSIONS ARE APPRECIATED!**

October 2025 Newsletter is:

**Tuesday,**  
**September 9 at Noon**

**\*\*Please submit items in a Word Document  
not PDF format, thank you!\*\***

**\*\*Items received  
after the deadline  
will go into next month's  
newsletter.\*\***

### **OUR PURPOSE STATEMENT**

***We, the people of Prince of  
Peace Evangelical  
Lutheran Church,  
will actively seek and serve  
Christ in all people.***



# Graceful Generosity

Published to help you grow as a steward of God's grace.

## The Deceitfulness of Money

From beginning to end, the Bible emphasizes God's ownership of all things. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth"* (Genesis 1:1). God is the creator and owner of the universe. He has created us and owns us. Not only has he created us, he has also redeemed us from our sins. Because of whom God is and what God has done and continues to do, he deserves to be honored and glorified. Even though he is almighty God, he seeks a loving relationship with each one of us.

That relationship is greatly jeopardized by a common attitude toward money: greed. Wanting more money and possessions and holding on to them tightly can become such an obsession that life exists only for the purpose of acquiring more and more. In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus described the various kinds of people who respond to the Gospel. Jesus stated that some *"seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants"* (Matthew 13:7). He explained, *"The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the Word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful"* (Matthew 13:22).



Money and possessions can deceive us into believing that nothing is more important than to

own things and to enjoy the things money can buy. Of all the things that Satan can use to separate us from our relationship with Jesus, money may be his most effective tool.

The fact that Jesus referred to money and possessions in more than 2,100 Bible verses indicates that he is very concerned about our attitudes toward and our relationships with money. Jesus spoke often about money and possessions because he knew the influence and power money can have over our lives. He was very interested in helping people understand that money can never provide us with real satisfaction in life. Richard Halverson wrote, "Jesus Christ said more about money than any other single thing because money is of first importance when it comes to a person's real nature. Money is an exact index to our true character. Throughout Scripture we find an intimate correlation between the development of a person's character and how he or she handles money."

**"Give me five minutes with a person's checkbook, and I will tell you where his heart is."**

Billy Graham

## The Joy of Contentment

In contrast to materialism, contentment is a state of mind that does not desire more than what one has. A contented person is satisfied with what he has. The goal of a Christian is to be content regardless of his financial condition. Discontentment is a spiritual problem. It affects rich and poor and everyone in between. Discontentment can eat away at our souls and rob us of the joy the Lord wants us to have in Christ. A contented person sees the world from



a different perspective than a materialistic person views it.

In the “have it now and enjoy life” society in which we live, contentment is no longer a goal. In this culture, the goal in life is self-gratification. Our society strives after material things that provide temporary happiness. Comfort is more of a goal than is contentment. Unfortunately, when all we care about is ourselves, we are never satisfied, because we keep telling ourselves we need and deserve more. We convince ourselves we should have more cars, bigger houses, better clothes, a classier neighborhood, a higher salary.

The writer of Hebrews wrote, “Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, ‘Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you’ ” (Hebrews 13:5). If we love money and the things of this world, we will never be content. Money and possessions can’t buy contentment. Only in Christ can we find lasting contentment. The Apostle Paul’s contentment came from knowing and trusting in Jesus. “I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do everything through him who gives me strength” (Philippians 4:12-13).

Paul had learned the secret of contentment. Paul was in prison when he wrote those words in Philippians, and he had been at the point of death several times. If anyone could have said he was in need or want, it was Paul. In fact, Paul’s message on contentment should make many of us uncomfortable.

How could our circumstances be as bleak as his? We know that Paul suffered from a physical problem, was stoned, beaten, and went without food. Yet he gave God thanks for everything. He was content whether he had abundance or nothing. Because Paul was content regardless of his circumstances, he is a magnificent example of contentment. Through Paul, we see that, when we depend on Christ for everything, we can accept any situation here on earth, knowing that God won’t abandon us.



What was Paul’s secret? How did he find contentment in all those circumstances? His contentment came from Christ Jesus himself. He found contentment in the fact that he was forgiven all of his sins and sinful behavior. He was assured that Christ was with him constantly. He knew that God was always there to see him through and that God would never give him more than he could handle. He knew that Christ Jesus died on the cross for him to give him life every day on earth and eternal life in heaven. He knew that Christ would rescue him from every trouble and sustain him in every trial along the way. He experienced Christ’s promise, “*My grace is sufficient for you!*” (2 Corinthians 12:9).

***Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!***





# NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

## Spirit-Led Summers at Bear Creek Camp

*Written by: Stacey Burke, Communications and BCC NEPA Synod Representative*

"I'm always struck by the simple but profound technologies that camp employs to build healthy, loving, Christ-centered community: silly songs and deep conversations, skits and games, shared meals and rituals." These words from Pastor Inge Williams of Friedens Lutheran in Shartlesville, a 2025 summer chaplain at Bear Creek Camp, reflect the deep joy and quiet transformation that unfold in the woods each season.

*All Together* was the theme this summer, focusing on growing stronger through love and service, grace-filled faith, and belonging and community. Pastor Inge witnessed this connection firsthand early in the summer



when she served as one of the camp chaplains during Family Camp. Pastor Inge shared, "On one of the first nights, I saw one of the former youth Synod Council representatives, now serving as a counselor this summer, give a high five to a toddler from Ireland who was running all over the field during a kickball game. The kindness and connection across ages, and even international borders, really exemplified what Family Camp is about."

While chapel time and worship services are typically led by the young adult summer staff, camp chaplains provide spiritual support throughout the week, leading devotions and Bible studies for campers and staff. They offer encouragement, listening ears, and join in the fun that camp has to offer. Throughout the summer, three Northeastern PA Synod pastors brought their time, energy, and Spirit-led presence to Bear Creek Camp as chaplains. Pastor Inge Williams and Pastor Jennifer Heavner of Star of Bethlehem Lutheran Church served during Family Camp, while Pastor Liz Koerner of St. John Lutheran in Stroudsburg closed out the season as chaplain during the final week.

The partnership with Bear Creek Camp, shared with the Southeastern PA Synod, is especially meaningful to our synod, as the values of camp and synod closely align. Both are deeply committed to building relationships and belonging across congregations, generations, and diverse communities. As synod, we continue to search for ways to raise leaders who serve with compassion, creativity, and courage in the church and the world, which is why our partnership with Bear Creek Camp is so important. It is prioritizing youth and allowing them space to search for ways to serve others as a natural response to God's love.



Serving others was the theme of one of Pastor Liz's Bible studies during her week as chaplain. When she met with the Junior campers (grades 2–4), she asked how they might take the ways they serve others at camp and apply them at home and in their school communities. Helping others at camp can seem second nature, especially after a full week of being together. However, campers are not only learning how to be kind to one another. They are learning life skills that will stay with them long after the week ends.

Throughout the week, they are learning how to be confident and independent through overnight tent camping experiences. They are learning about teamwork and communication as they encourage each other on high rope activities. They grow spiritually through the guidance of our chaplains, who are a daily presence within the camp schedule and help shape campers' understanding of faith and their connection to God.

We are extremely grateful for the passion and dedication of Pastor Inge, Pastor Jennifer, and Pastor Liz, who devoted their time this past summer, and for the ongoing work of Bear Creek Camp as it builds inclusive community, nurtures faith, and develops leaders who carry their experiences into the world with empathy, joy, and purpose. This certainly could not be accomplished without the hardworking, compassionate summer staff and the leadership of Executive Director Collin Grooms, Program Director Kallie Handlong, and all the other camp leaders who contribute and put youth first.



Camp doesn't end when the summer does. In addition to summer camp, Bear Creek Camp offers retreats and camps outside of the summer timeframe including the upcoming Labor Day Family Camp, Fall Women's Retreat, and Winter Camp. The camp is also open to hosting congregations, committees, or organizational retreats through their facility rentals. All this information and more can be found at [bearcreekcamp.org](https://bearcreekcamp.org). All together, Bear Creek Camp and our synod continue to walk hand in hand, creating space for love, service, and faith to flourish in every season.

**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 lanes of Growing Young, Gaining Strength, and Going Beyond Death to Life, along with the directions of loving like Jesus, healing like Jesus, and engaging like Jesus. To learn more, visit [godslove.org/missionsupport](https://godslove.org/missionsupport). Looking to give to Bear Creek Camp directly? Visit [bearcreekcamp.org](https://bearcreekcamp.org)

## REGISTRATION IS OPEN



THROUGH THE WOODS

**5K TRAIL RUN  
& WALK**  
@BEAR CREEK CAMP  
9/27/25

**BECOME A SPONSOR!**

[bearcreekcamp.org/5k](https://bearcreekcamp.org/5k)

This family-friendly BCC event is open to all ages, and every step you take helps support our amazing campers.

**Make an Even BIGGER Difference  
by Becoming a 5K Sponsor!**

Whether you're a business, family, or individual, your tax-exempt gift directly supports our camp programming and resources.