

# Prints of Peace



April 2026

Volume 31 Issue 4

Well, that was a heck of a winter. That winter reminded me how much I love Pennsylvania winters – because that was **not** a Pennsylvania winter! At least not a normal one. Daytime temperatures in the teens for weeks, nighttime wind chills below negative ten, and a snowstorm seemingly every Sunday. It was enough to make you want to move to Florida – or maybe to the surface of the sun.

I think the way that winter made me feel (and maybe you too) was a reminder of how we sometimes feel in our lives – cold and anxious, hunkered down and waiting nervously for the next storm to come. That’s a feeling we know – we all go through times like that, and some of us are in a time like that right now. We see news about wars and protests, inflation and controversy. And it seems like our political polarization is just getting worse and worse with each passing month. And that’s not to mention all the struggles we each have as individuals – family conflicts, health concerns, grief, and much more. “What’s next?” we wonder.

Well, I don’t know what’s next, but I do know one thing that’s coming – God’s kingdom. God’s kingdom is breaking into our world in new and hopeful ways all around us. Just as it has always been, and just as it always will. (And when I say “God’s kingdom,” I don’t mean the “second coming” or the “end of the world.” I mean the reign of Christ on earth, signs that God is still present in this world that God loves so much.) I see signs of that all around.

Here are some of the ways I see God’s kingdom breaking in:

I see the first purple crocus of the year in my lawn, and the daffodils that bloom each year in one spot in the woods behind my house.

I see people sharing their money generously, increasing their commitment, even in a time of inflation and worry.

I see people dreaming of new ways to use our church building for the sake of our community.

I see piles of snow, dirtied by salt and grime, transforming into running water.

I see people bringing their children for baptism.

I see people healing from grief, coming “back to life” after a time of desperation.

I see robins returning to the area and joyfully hopping through the grass.

I see people opening their hearts and minds to new ideas.

I see the new fire of the Easter Vigil, burning away the dust of our sin and brokenness.

I see new programs starting at our schools, to improve the lives of our children.

I see you. You are a great sign of hope for me! Because I see the light of the resurrected Christ within you, shining before others. I see your good works, and I glorify God for making that possible!

God is indeed breaking into our world, in amazing ways – through spring, through generosity and hope, and through you. Praise be to God!

In Christ,

*Pastor Mill J. Scholtes*

Pastor Scholtes





### From Social Ministry:

In an effort to get our youth more involved with our ministries, we will have 2 projects for April thru June. The first will be "Coin Challenge", each of the Sunday School groups: Loaves, Fishes and Youth Group will each get a jar, each week they will put coins in their group's jar. These jars will be placed in the Narthex, so if you the congregation also wish to add some coins you may do so. The group having the most "coins" (not the total dollar amount) in the jar will then pick a charity they wish to donate the proceeds of all three jars to. The second project will be for Slate Belt Advocacy Group; this is a non-profit group that helps foster dogs. As of March, they have 19 dogs in foster homes. Their current need is dog food, dry is preferable for puppy, adult and senior dogs. Please see a member of this committee if you would like us to shop for you. Members are Mary O'Meally, Sherry Hock, and Holly Blakeslee. Council liaisons are Kerri Miller and Brittany Walters. Questions: see a committee member.



### Stewardship News

Thank you for your commitments!



#### Campaign Commitment Summary

36 Commitment Cards returned representing  
52 members  
7 Cards = same giving amount  
26 Cards= increase in giving amount  
3 Cards= decrease in amount

Total annual increase from commitments= **\$6,736.08**

This year's request was for a 2.5% increase to support the 2026 approved budget. Your commitments help us reach this target amount. Your offering is one of the primary sources to help us grow and sustain our infrastructure. The other two sources are fundraising and Endowment fund disbursements. All three are needed as we continually strive to live out our purpose statement to actively seek and serve Christ in all people through our ministries of worship, learning and outreach. Continued and consistent giving, even if you did not return a commitment card it is very important. We provide a variety of ways to make your giving consistent and easy. Here are the options:

**In person:** Bring your offering to worship and place it in the offering plate when entering the sanctuary or when the plate is passed.

**By Mail:** Mail your offering or use your bank's online payment option. Mail to 2445 Lake Minsi Dr., Bangor, PA 18013

**Online Giving:** Go to our website, [popbangor.org](http://popbangor.org) and select "Giving" from the banner. Follow the directions to help you set up a new account and create your profile. Continue to follow the page-by-page directions to choose the contribution amount, frequency and payment method. You can also complete a paper form to start and give to Georgia.

**Mobile Giving:** Download the Vanco Mobile application from the App Store or Google Play. Follow the directions to find our church name and set up a new account. Continue to follow the page-by-page directions to choose the contribution amount, frequency and payment method.

**Giving by Text:** Send a text to 833-718-0258. Enter an amount of the contribution and hit enter. You will receive a link. Click on the link and follow the directions to enter your information and method of payment.

**\*\*\*See Georgia Suranofsky for more information or a demonstration\*\*\***

#### **Joyful Noise Good News!**

Collection for January totaled \$120.00!

Your giving in 2026 totaled \$207.00!

Thank you for your continued generosity!



## Happy Birthday

I pray that God blesses you with all the happiness in this universe.

May you prosper and shine everywhere you go.



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

- Justine Saviet, April 1
- Nelson Hill, April 2
- Tyler Hughes, April 2
- Sharon Yetter, April 2
- Gladys Halfpenny, April 2
- Lois Brozina, April 3
- Lillian Khan, April 3
- James Dotta, April 7
- Robert Schuette, April 7
- Janet Pearson, April 10
- Tyler Flyte, April 15
- Connie Itterly, April 15
- James Parsons, April 15
- Wayne Silvius, April 17
- Tyler Reinhart, April 18
- Jameson Hockenbury, April 21
- Phyllis Patterson, April 23
- Colleen Hall, April 24
- Diane Flynn, April 25
- Betty Devito, April 26
- Scott Manicke, April 28
- Mia Hock, April 28
- Cameron Mousley, April 29
- Jacklyn Artley, April 29
- Ronald Miller, April 30

## Join us for Holy Week...

- Sunday, March 29, 9:45 am:** Palm/Passion Sunday Worship with Palms
- Tuesday, March 31, 7 p.m.:** Healing Service with Taizé music
- Wednesday, April 1, 7 p.m.:** Stations of the Cross walk.
- Thursday, April 2, 7 p.m.:** Maundy Thursday, the first of the Great Three Days.
- Friday, April 3, 7 p.m.:** Good Friday, the second of the Great Three Days.
- Sunday, April 5, 6 a.m.:** Vigil of Easter, the third of the Great Three Days.
- (Easter Breakfast: April 5 between services from 7-9 a.m.)**
- Sunday April 5, 9:45 am:** Easter Worship

...and Worship with us on-site at 9:45 a.m. on Sundays

### Online / Facebook

Watch our worship each week at our website ([popbangor.org/video-worship](http://popbangor.org/video-worship)). Or watch it on our Facebook page ([facebook.com/popbangor](https://facebook.com/popbangor)).

### March 2026 Council Meeting Highlights

- The Stewardship Committee reported a total new annual increase from all sources is \$6,736.08 for the year as part of the commitment cards and that represents a 71% participation of committing from those in attendance that day.
- Your voices were heard and Worship & Music has recommended we have worship in the grove two (2) Sundays a month beginning on 5/31/26 thru 9/6/26.
- Council approved letter of transfer for Robert Schuette to a church in Bucks County.

### Recent Pastoral Acts

- Baptism: Cade Andrew Multisch, March 1  
Madison Paige Klinge, March 15
- Confirmation: Madison Klinge, Romeo Vargas, both March 15
- Funeral: Colleen Beers, March 5



# Thank You VOLUNTEERS



**April Altar Guild:** Kim Jennings, Sara Godshalk, **May Altar Guild:** Janet Martocci, Susan Reinhart

	<b>Resurrection Day April 5</b>	<b>April 12</b>	<b>April 19</b>	<b>April 26</b>	<b>May 3</b>
<b>Greeters</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Dave Karner, Tina Johns	Justine Saviet, Mary O'Meally	Holly Blakeslee, Brenda Hughes	Kale Baker, Brooks Baker
<b>Lay Readers</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Alex Scholtes	Mark Grusso	Traci Rumsey	Jim Jennings
<b>Assisting Ministers</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Tina Smith	Alex Scholtes	Marlene Stana	Marlene Stana
<b>Com. Assts.</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	April Miller, Tina Johns	Marlene Stana, Kale Baker	Alex Scholtes, Brooks Baker	Jim Jennings, Tina Smith
<b>Ushers</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Justine Saviet, Traci Rumsey	Georgia and John Suranofsky	Kale Baker, Sadie Baker	Connie Itterly, Tina Johns
<b>Power Point Camera</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Tara Flyte	Jim Jennings	Tina Johns	Kim Jennings
<b>Acolytes</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Ben Scholtes	Landon Horn	Fabian Vargas	Taylor Baker
<b>Offering Counters</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Mary O'Meally	Georgia Suranofsky	Connie Itterly	Tina Johns
<b>Pew Tenders</b>	<b>Sign-up</b>	Sara Godshalk	Traci Rumsey	Rhonda Montgomery	Sherry and Maci Hock
<b>Bread Baker</b>	Kim Jennings	June Jones		Nick Walters	Janet Martocci



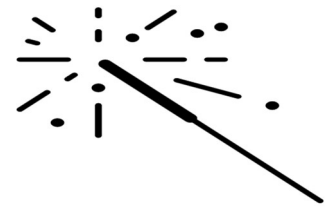
*I will sing to the Lord  
AS LONG AS I LIVE.  
I will praise my God  
TO MY LAST BREATH!*

Psalm:104:33

### **Real Readers: Join Us! We meet at 2 p.m. the 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of each month...**

- April 2 – “Only by Your Touch” by Catherine Anderson (Liz)
- May 7 – “The Women” by Kristen Hannah (Jean)
- June 4 – “Sandwich” by Catherine Newman (Sandy)
- July 2 – “Clear” by Carys Davies (Karen)
- August 6 – “My Friends” by Fredrik Backman (Cheryl)
- September 3 – “The Paper Palace” by Miranda Heller (Terry)
- October 1 – “Broken Country” by Clare Leslie Hall (Patti)
- November 5 – “The Secret of Secrets” by Dan Brown (Cindy)
- December 3 – “Atmosphere” by Taylor Reid (Janet)





### Prince of Peace Seekers (POPS)

Please come and ignite your spiritual imagination! We meet each week for a time of spiritual growth, discussion, and fellowship. We continue to meet from 10 a.m. - Noon on Thursdays, meeting in the Conference Room. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available.

There will be no gathering on April 2. On April 9 and 16, Pastor Scholtes will continue to lead a book study from Augsburg Fortress called "Together by Grace". There will be no cost for participants. He will have handouts each week, instead of using a student book. On April 23 and 30, we will complete The Cup of Life series, reflecting on Weeks V and VI. Please join us! If you have any questions, please contact Karen Karner or Janet Martocci.

### Join Us for Coffee Hour!



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 sign-up sheet will be in the Narthex for those who wish to participate. Coffee hours end on May 17<sup>th</sup>. Thank you, —*the Hospitality Committee*



Recently we had an emergency at church where we had a blockage with our sewage pipes which affected the men and women's rest rooms and the boiler room. Because of the blockage, the technician advised us that one of the worst things for a septic, especially one that has a cast iron pipe is the usage of flushable wipes. They apparently attach to the pipes and then when the other waste comes through it eventually starts to clog. Going forward, we advise the usage of a plastic bag that is available on the back of the toilet to dispose of the wipes and then throw away in the garbage can. We thank you for your understanding in this very sensitive situation.

**A quick note from property—Heat, Lights and Doors:** While we are now in the middle of winter, we would like to remind everyone about our heating system at church. We have a programmable system. It is currently programmed for our current usage and kept at a moderate temperature when not heavily used. We ask that you do not change or touch the system. If you need to use a room, please ask pastor, or a property member for assistance. Of course, the fellowship hall is electric, so you can turn on the heat and turn off units when finished. Also, after meetings and gatherings at POP, please make sure that all lights are turned off and all doors are closed and locked before you leave. Thank you. —*Dennis Horn, Property Committee*

### How can I make a difference at Prince of Peace?

There are so many ways you can volunteer here at Prince of Peace and support our ministries. If you missed it about a month ago Kermit and I discussed volunteering and from that discussion came the brightly colored index cards on the counter in the narthex for you to take and fill out. I realize that not every volunteer opportunity is listed on the front side of the card but feel free to turn the card over and add anything that may have been missed. Once completed, you can give to me on Sunday mornings.

Look for sign-up sheets in the coming weeks on the counter in the Narthex for the Jacktown event on May 16 & 17. Also, it's not too early to think about the other Jacktown events on July 17-19th and October 17 & 18. The Blue Valley Farm Show will be held on August 11-15th. Please prayerfully consider spending some time to help in this important ministry here at Prince of Peace.

As always please feel free to reach out to me with any questions you may have. —*April Miller, Volunteer Coordinator*

THE LORD DELIGHTS IN THOSE  
WHO FEAR HIM, WHO PUT THEIR  
HOPE IN HIS UNFAILING LOVE.  
PSALM 147:11



*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!*

Wednesday, April 1	Isaiah 50:4-9; Psalm 70; Hebrews 12:1-3; John 13:21-32
<b>Maundy Thursday (4/2)</b>	Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1-2,12-19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17,31-35
<b>Good Friday (4/3)</b>	Isaiah 52:13 – 53:12; Psalm 22; Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1 – 19:42
<b>Holy Saturday (4/4)</b>	Job 14:1-14; Psalm 31:1-4,15-16; 1 Peter 4:1-8; Matthew 27:57-66
<b>Resurrection of Our Lord (4/5)</b>	Jeremiah 31:1-6; Psalm 118:1-2,14-24; Colossians 3:1-4; John 20:1-18
Monday, April 06	Ps. 118:1-2, 14-24; Ex. 14:10-31; 15:20-21; Colossians 3:5-11;
Tuesday, April 07	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Exodus 15:1-18; Colossians 3:12-17;
Wednesday, April 08	Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24; Joshua 3:1-17; Matthew 28:1-10;
Thursday, April 09	Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 2:8-15; Colossians 4:2-5;
Friday, April 10	Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 5:9-6:3; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11;
Saturday, April 11	Psalm 16; Song of Solomon 8:6-7; John 20:11-20;
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sun. of Easter (4/12)</b>	Exodus 15:1-11; Psalm 111; 1 Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31
Monday, April 13	Psalm 114; Judges 6:36-40; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20;
Tuesday, April 14	Psalm 114; Jonah 1:1-17; 1 Corinthians 15:19-28;
Wednesday, April 15	Psalm 114; Jonah 2:1-10; Matthew 12:38-42;
Thursday, April 16	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; Isaiah 25:1-5; 1 Peter 1:8b-12;
Friday, April 17	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; Isaiah 26:1-4; 1 Peter 1:13-16;
Saturday, April 18	Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19; Isaiah 25:6-9; Luke 14:12-14;
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sun. of Easter (4/19)</b>	Isaiah 51:1-6; Psalm 34:1-10; 1 Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35
Monday, April 20	Psalm 134; Genesis 18:1-14; 1 Peter 1:23-25;
Tuesday, April 21	Psalm 134; Proverbs 8:32-9:6; 1 Peter 2:1-3;
Wednesday, April 22	Psalm 134; Exodus 24:1-11; John 21:1-14;
Thursday, April 23	Psalm 23; Exodus 2:15b-25; 1 Peter 2:9-12;
Friday, April 24	Psalm 23; Exodus 3:16-22, 4:18-20; 1 Peter 2:13-17;
Saturday, April 25	Psalm 23; Ezekiel 34:1-16; Luke 15:1-7;
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sun. of Easter (4/26)</b>	Ezekiel 34:7-15; Psalm 100; 1 Peter 2:19-25; John 10:1-10
Monday, April 27	Psalm 100; Ezekiel 34:17-23; 1 Peter 5:1-5;
Tuesday, April 28	Psalm 100; Ezekiel 34:23-31; Hebrews 13:20-21;
Wednesday, April 29	Psalm 100; Jeremiah 23:1-8; Matthew 20:17-28;
Thursday, April 30	Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; Genesis 12:1-3; Acts 6:8-15;



**The POP Scholarship Committee is pleased to announce that the Anthony D and Jeanne M Turtzo scholarship application form is now available for completion.**

All POP college students entering their second, third or fourth year of college/university for the 2026/2027 school year are eligible and encouraged to apply. The Scholarship will be awarded to the top three candidates who apply.

The 2026 Turtzo scholarship application form and instructions can be downloaded from the church website at [popbangor.org](http://popbangor.org). Look under the INFO drop down menu for Newsletters & Downloads. Alternatively, copies may be requested by sending an e-mail to [poplcbangor@gmail.com](mailto:poplcbangor@gmail.com). Your completed application is due by noon on **Monday, May 11th, 2026**. Wishing you all the best. —*Evelynn Diabo, POP Scholarship Committee*

**P.U.M.P Special Requests Update:**

P.U.M.P. requests canned vegetables, peanut butter, cereal and any kind of pasta. As always, staples are always appreciated too. Social Ministry wants to thank you for the items donated, and your continued and generous support of P.U.M.P!

**Easter Breakfast:**

Please join us for breakfast in the Fellowship Hall on **Sunday, April 5** between services from 7-9 a.m. **Donations are helpful and appreciated:** 15 dozen eggs, 30 lbs. of white potatoes, 1/2-gallon 2% milk, 1 Qt of 1/2 & 1/2, 1 container of creamer, 2 bottles of apple juice, 3 bottles of orange juice, 2 bowls of fresh fruit salad; or a monetary donation to purchase items not donated. Questions or concerns text or call Laraine Brands 908-310-1196. Please put any donations in kitchen on Palm Sunday marked for Easter. Thank you!

**Endowment News**

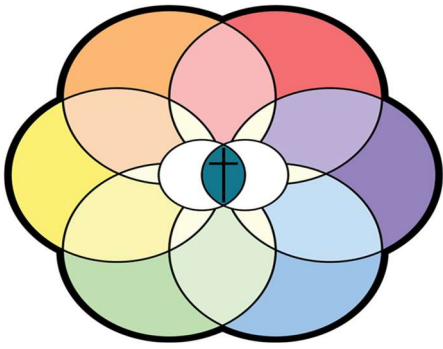


The ending balance as of 12-31-25 for the Endowment Funds totaled \$1,020,461.45.

Below is a chart that details the Sub Fund Name, the fund balance at year end, the disbursements approved at the annual meeting and the balance in each fund that is available for use.

Sub Fund Name	2025 Year End Balance	2026 Disbursements Available	2026 Starting Balance
#1 Helpers' Helpers	\$ 71.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,071.00
#2 Congregational Education	\$ 3,905.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 5,405.00
#3 Let's Try It	\$ -	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,000.00
#4 Outdoor Enhancement	\$ 1,548.88	\$ 11,816.00	\$ 13,364.88
#5 Technology	\$ 16,202.00	\$ 2,954.00	\$ 19,156.00
#6 Unbudgeted Property Expense	\$ 89,404.00	\$ 69,630.00	\$ 159,034.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 111,130.88</b>	<b>\$ 93,900.00</b>	<b>\$ 205,030.88</b>

Please remember that donations can be made to The Endowment Fund at any time. For your convenience, there is a box of envelopes labeled “Endowment Fund” on the counter in the Narthex. Contact one of the Trustees, Jim Jennings, Georgia Suranofsky or Rich Kessler with any questions you may have on how the fund operates.



**From Pastor:**

**6261** is a new model of ministry being explored throughout the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. It's a way for congregations to partner with each other in new ways, sharing resources and staff. Is this something that congregations in the Slate Belt might consider? Come out to an informational session and learn more. This session will be held at **Trinity Lutheran Church**, 404 Broadway, Bangor, on **Saturday, May 2 at 9:30 a.m.** You can also check out the synod's website for further information: [www.nepasynod.org/6261mc/](http://www.nepasynod.org/6261mc/)

**POP'S Treasures:**  
*Come, Shop, Donate*

Our next sale will be on April 10<sup>th</sup> (10 a.m. -2 p.m.) and the 11<sup>th</sup> (9 a.m. -Noon) with drops on April 13 and 20<sup>th</sup>, (1-2 p.m. and 6-7 p.m.) —**Jackie Horn**



**Outdoor Worship**

The Worship and Music Committee has scheduled worship in our grove every other week in the summer! Weather permitting, we will worship in the grove May 31; June 14 & 28; July 12 & 26; August 9 & 23; and September 6. In case of inclement weather, we will hold worship inside that day.




**Mother's Day is just around the corner: May 10th**

Would you like to remember/honor your Mother and/or Women who are special to you by listing their name in our announcement folder, on the bulletin board and in the Newsletter? A sign-up sheet is on the counter in the Narthex. Or use the form below (use additional paper if needed). Suggested donation: \$1 per name benefits the Sunday School. **Deadline is: Sunday, May 3rd.** Please PRINT:

**In Memory of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**In Honor of:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsored by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Amount Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Return this form to:**  
**Attn: Annette Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, 2445 Lake Minsi Drive, Bangor, PA 18013**



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

- |             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| BLESSINGS   | HOLY         |
| CHRIST      | JESUS        |
| CHURCH      | LENT         |
| CROSS       | RESURRECTION |
| EASTER      | RISEN        |
| FAITH       | SACRIFICE    |
| FATHER      | SAVIOR       |
| GOD         | SUNDAY       |
| GOOD FRIDAY | WORSHIP      |



Thank you to everyone who helped assemble layettes, made a monetary donation and/or donated items for the Layette Project this year! In addition, we received \$250 from the Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Thrivent Action Teams, Live Generously program and \$500 from the Prince of Peace Helpers Helper Fund. The donations were used to purchase items for the kits. We were able to assemble 39 layettes for those in need. And thank you to Nick Walters who will be delivering our kits to the Lutheran World Relief donation center in Mechanicsburg, PA.

This Social Ministry project started in 2006 at the suggestion of Sandy Butler. What a blessing to have been able to help so many families and babies over the last 20 years! Over the years our congregation was shopping for baby clothes, crocheting and knitting sweaters and hats, and sewing receiving blankets – evidence of God’s Work, Our Hands.

In total 705 baby care kits were donated to Lutheran World Relief. Thank you so much for your generous donations to this project!

Thank you, *Michele Harrison, Joanne Schipps and the Social Ministry Committee.*





**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: Evelyn Diabo**  
**Social Media Manager: Nick Walters**

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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**
- **Minister of Music: Martin Yazdzik**
- **Bookkeeper: Rev. Joyce Weishaupt**
- **Financial Secretary: Brenda Hughes**
- **Custodian: Brittnee Evans**
- **Parish Nurse: Justine Saviet, RN**
- **Administrative Assistant: Annette Buss**

**Congregation Council Members**

Kale Baker, President	Jackie Horn
April Miller, Secretary	Justine Saviet
Tina Johns, Vice President	Brenda Hughes
Alex Scholtes, Youth Rep.	Connie Itterly
Jean Janosa	Kerri Miller
Mary O'Meally	Brittany Walters
Rev. Michael J. Scholtes	Holly Blakeslee

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!**

May 2026 Newsletter is:

**Tuesday,**  
**April 14 10th 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.***



## Listening, Healing, and Engaging Through Podcast Ministry



Mission Support makes it possible for the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to support creative ministries that reach people in new ways and respond to real needs in our communities. One recent example is a podcast project developed by Pastor Kim Truebenbach called *Condemned Happy*, supported through a Witness & Service Grant.

The project began with conversations between Pastor Kim and young adults who were wrestling with difficult experiences related to faith and religious communities. Many of these individuals carried deep questions or painful memories connected to their spiritual upbringing. Recognizing a need for compassionate listening and honest conversation, Pastor Kim began exploring how a podcast could create space for people to share their stories and reflect on faith, healing, and hope.

Through recorded conversations and storytelling, the podcast offered listeners a place where experiences could be shared without judgment. Rather than providing quick answers or trying to “fix” complex situations, the project focused on something deeply pastoral: listening. In doing so, it embodied the synod’s commitment to love, heal, and engage like Jesus, offering a reminder that sometimes the most faithful response we can offer one another is presence, understanding, and compassion.

The project also reflects several of the synod’s ministry lanes. By engaging conversations that resonate with younger generations who often encounter faith discussions online, the podcast reflects the synod’s commitment to Growing Young, meeting people where they are and listening to the questions and experiences shaping their lives today. Using accessible digital tools and online platforms, the ministry also demonstrates Gaining Strength, experimenting with new forms of communication that allow the church to connect with people beyond traditional settings.

At the same time, the project reflects the spirit of Going Beyond Death to Life, walking alongside individuals who have experienced spiritual hurt or who feel disconnected from church communities. By creating space for reflection and conversation, the podcast invites listeners to rediscover hope, trust, and the possibility of healing in their relationship with faith.


Technology made it possible for the conversations to reach a wide audience. Episodes were recorded through simple online tools and shared across podcast platforms and YouTube, places where many younger adults already spend time learning and engaging with ideas. According to podcast analytics, the episodes were downloaded more than 260 times, with listeners across the United States and internationally, demonstrating how digital ministry can connect people in unexpected ways.

While the podcast created an online space for conversation, its impact was also personal and relational. Pastor Kim noted that several young adults in her extended family began reaching out more frequently for conversation and support, knowing they would be met with openness and compassion. These relationships became opportunities for deeper listening and pastoral care, strengthening trust and connection in meaningful ways.

For Pastor Kim, the work became a reminder that faith is often lived out through small but significant acts of presence. Listening carefully, honoring someone’s story, and creating space for honest conversation can become powerful expressions of God’s love at work in the world.

Projects like this are made possible through Mission Support, which allows the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod to encourage creative ministry, support leaders exploring new ways of sharing the Gospel, and walk alongside people seeking healing, hope, and community. Through ministries like this podcast, we continue to live out our calling to love, heal, and engage like Jesus, trusting that even simple conversations can open doors to deeper understanding and renewed faith. Those interested in exploring the conversations can find the *Condemned Happy* podcast on YouTube, where the episodes remain available to listen and share.

**DID YOU KNOW** that your Mission Support helps fund areas of the synod and ELCA 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).



**2026**  
**IMAGINE**  
Northeastern PA Synod Assembly

**June 4-6, 2026**  
Split Rock Resort • Lake Harmony, PA  
Registration Opens: April 7  
Registration Closes: May 11


**39<sup>th</sup> NEPA SYNOD ASSEMBLY**

Grounded in Ephesians 3:14–21, the 2026 Synod Assembly theme **IMAGINE** invites us to trust the God who can do far more than we can ask or imagine. As we gather in June, the synod will also prayerfully discern and elect a bishop for the next six-year term.

**How You Can Help**

Synod Assembly voting will be conducted by paper ballot this year, and volunteers are needed to help distribute and count ballots. To learn more or volunteer, visit the Assembly webpage.

[\*\*godslove.org/assembly2026\*\*](https://godslove.org/assembly2026)



**THE REV.**  
**CeCee Mills**  
ELCA Representative