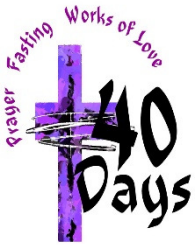


Prints of Peace



March 2025

Volume 30 Issue 3



Lent begins this year on Wednesday, March 5, and ends with the beginning of the Great Three Days on Maundy Thursday, April 17. Lent is a special time of the year, a forty-day journey in which we are reminded of our baptism, reminded that we are creatures of God. Throughout Lent it is good to ponder and honestly consider ourselves, our world, and our relationship with God. And through that pondering, we might just find a glimpse of God's amazing grace operating within and among us.

On the Sundays in Lent this year, we will be looking through the gospel of Luke at stories that connect with some of our experiences in life today. I plan to focus in sermons on what we are called to do in the face of the suffering in our world. We will be exploring questions like, "What do we do when others are violent?" "What do we do when good people die?" "What do we do when we are tempted while suffering?" Together, we'll explore what it means to be faithful in a world that knows pain.

There are a few other offerings for Lent this year. Some of you have joined in a book study I'm leading, entitled *By Heart: Conversations with Luther's Small Catechism*. Kim Jennings will be leading a discussion in the Thursday morning POP Seekers coffee hour, exploring Max Lucado's *In the Footsteps of the Savior*.

And of course, our Lenten journey in the church is always book-ended by special worship services, as follows:

- ❖ **Ash Wednesday**, March 5: Worship at 10:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. (morning worship followed by a luncheon)
- ❖ **Holy Tuesday**, April 15: Taize service, 7:00 p.m. (in the grove, weather permitting)
- ❖ **Holy Wednesday**, April 16: Stations of the Cross walk, 7:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Maundy Thursday**, April 17: Worship with Foot Washing and Confession of Sins, 7:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Good Friday**, April 18: Worship with Silence and the Procession of the Cross, 7:00 p.m.
- ❖ **Great Vigil of Easter**, April 20: "Sunrise service" at 6:00 a.m.
- ❖ **Resurrection of Our Lord**, April 20: Easter worship at 9:45 a.m.

I wish you a blessed Lenten journey this year. I hope to see you at one or many of these opportunities.

In Christ,

Pastor Scholtes





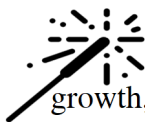
Join us for our Ash Wednesday Service on **Wednesday, March 5** at 10:30 a.m. A luncheon will follow the service, and all are welcome! There is a sign-up sheet on the Narthex counter, or you may call Carolyn Leidy to sign-up. (Or, call the church office at 610-588-2355 and we'll add your name to the list!) An Ash Wednesday evening service will be held at 7 p.m.

Please join us at our Sunday Coffee Hour and bring someone with you!



If you would like to bring something to share for coffee hour, please sign up on the sheet in the hallway, where you can also sign up to serve as a host. Coffee hours are hosted each week by two or more people. If you have any questions, please contact: Karen Karner, Janet Martocci, Cathy Mullen, Sue Reinhart, or Lynn Rideout.

Prince of Peace Seekers (POPS)



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 and are now meeting in the Conference Room. Coffee, tea, and snacks are available.



Beginning on March 6, Kim Jennings will facilitate a six-week study called In the Footsteps of the Savior, created by Max Lucado. Have you ever wondered what the Holy Land might have looked like through Jesus' eyes? Max Lucado will take us on a journey following Jesus through his life on earth, giving us a chance to see the Holy Land and guiding us through three distinct aspects of Jesus' life. The arrival of the Savior; Jesus' Ministry and The Crossroads and the Cross.

Please join us! If you have any questions, please contact Karen Karner or Janet Martocci.

Sunday School/Youth Group/Confirmation: 8:30 a.m.

Worship On-site (9:45 on Sundays)

Online / Facebook Watch our worship each week at our website

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



Health Aid Items for P.U.M.P.

We are going to be collecting health aid items for the next several weeks for P.U.M.P.

Some suggested items include:

- | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| toothpaste | toothbrushes | body wash | bars of soap | shampoo |
| conditioner | Q-tips | men's deodorant | woman's deodorant | hand soap |
| feminine hygiene products, all types | | mouthwash | dental floss | hand lotion |
| Vaseline | baby wipes | denture cleaner | band-aids | Neosporin, etc. |

Please place your donations in the P.U.M.P. drawer labeled "Health Aid Donations" not with the food donations. Thank you for your continued support!



Looking ahead: Donations of individually wrapped candy and small toys are greatly appreciated and will be received **until 3/30/2025** to fill eggs for our annual Easter Egg Hunt.

Save the date: Our Easter Egg Hunt will be held on Sunday, April 13th at 11 a.m. This is a free Event. Food, crafts and prizes are provided. Bring a basket and please wear appropriate footwear. Questions? See Tina Johns.

We Our Volunteers

Date:	Greeters	Lay Reader	Assisting Minister	Ushers	Power Point and Camera	Acolyte	Offering Counters	Pew Tenders
March 2	Wayne and Lisa Jones	Sherry Hock	Bob Schuette	Kale Baker, Brooks Baker	Tina Johns	Fabian Vargas	Georgia Suranofsky	Sherry and Maci Hock
March 9	Sara Godshalk, Sue Reinhart	Alex Scholtes	April Miller	Sherk and June Jones	Antonioli Family	Ben Scholtes	Chip Harrison	June Jones
March 16	Vivian Fahr, Traci Rumsey	Quincy Miller	Kale Baker	Marlene and Butch Stana	Cathy Mullen	Alex Scholtes	Connie Itterly	Sara Godshalk
March 23	Georgia and John Suranofsky	Sara Godshalk	Marlene Stana	Sue Reinhart, Sara Godshalk	Tara Flyte	Landon Horn	Brenda Hughes	Traci Rumsey
March 30	Connie Itterly, Brenda Hughes	April Miller	Tina Johns	Vivian Fahr, Traci Rumsey	Jim Jennings	Fabian Vargas	Tina Johns	Rhonda Montgomery
April 6	Kale Baker, Brooks Baker	Brooks Baker	Laraine Brands	Georgia and John Suranofsky	Kim Jennings	Ben Scholtes	John Suranofsky	Sherry and Maci Hock

Communion Assistants:

March 2 Marlene Stana, Diane Hahn
March 9 Tina Johns, Laraine Brands
March 16 April Miller, Brooks Baker
March 23 Jim Jennings, Tina Johns
March 30 Connie Itterly, Diane Hahn
April 6 Tina Johns, Marlene Stana

March Altar Guild: Tara Flyte, Ashley Flyte

April Altar Guild: Kim Jennings, Sara Godshalk

Bread Baker/Providers:

March 2: Janet Martocci
April 6: Pat Manicke

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.

Are you willing to help?? Helpers are Needed for the 10:30 a.m. and 7 p.m. services on Ash Wednesday, March 3. A sign-up is on the Narthex counter or call the church office to volunteer. THANK YOU!!



2025 Stewardship Campaign:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COMMITMENTS!

Our theme this year, “**The (Im)POSSIBLE Promise of Enough**” has been lived out by the sharing from our own “enough”. Our preliminary numbers reported by Mary O’Meally, our Financial Secretary, are: 36 commitments were made representing 52 members. 30 members committed to increases totaling \$108.75 per week, 1 person made a onetime contribution, and 22 members committed to keeping their commitments the same as 2024. If you have not completed a commitment card for your 2025 giving and would like to, please

contact Georgia at georgiasuranofsky@hotmail.com to receive one. You may return it by mail, place it in the offering plate or use online giving.

The committee would like to thank everyone who helped make the campaign engaging, welcoming and filled with good intentions for financial support to continue our ministry as we seek and serve Christ in all people. Let’s keep growing as we trust in God’s goodness. His promise of **Enough** is ours!

Joyful Noise Good News!

Collection for January totaled \$108.00! Thank you for your continued generosity!

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

Real Readers Releases Their Book List for 2025

Our 21st year as a book group begins in 2025, and this year's list has 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.

- March 6 – “By Any Other Name” by Jodi Picoult (Patti)
- April 3 – “The Teacher” by Freida McFadden (Cindy)
- May 1 – “The God of the Woods” by Liz Moore (Jean)
- June 5 – “Finding Dorothy” by Elizabeth Letts (Sherry)
- July 3 – “The Measure” by Nikki Erlick (Sandy)
- August 7 – “Tell Me Everything” by Elizabeth Strout (Terry)
- 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)



FEBRUARY COUNCIL MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

1. Council approved endowment money of \$13,250 from unbudgeted property expense Sub Fund for narthex / hall carpet replacement.
2. Council approved a request for endowment money of \$500 from Helper's Helpers Sub Fund for Lutheran Disaster Response.
3. Join us on Sunday 2/16/25 for a temple talk on POP's Treasures.

CAUTION

BE CAREFUL OF ONLINE SCAMS

You may have recently received an email or text that said it was from Pastor Scholtes, which asked you for help in getting a gift card. If you looked closely, however, these messages were not from Pastor's email or phone number, but from a scammer pretending to be him. We believe that these scammers have gotten information from our church website and have used it to try to defraud you. The church is doing what we can to reduce the likelihood of scams like these in the future, including removing all personal phone numbers and email addresses from newsletters on our website. There are some tips you can follow as well, to help prevent yourself from being the victim of such a “phishing” scam:

- 1. If there is a lot of misspelling in an email address, it might be phishing, or if there is wrong punctuation in the email address.**
- 2. If you don't recognize the email address then verify it before you reply.**
- 3. Don't give out any sensitive information (personal, financial, or security(passwords) to ANYONE unless you have verified their identity.**
- 4. Don't click on any suspicious link or attachment.**

Visit this page to learn more about phishing and how to protect yourself:
consumer.ftc.gov/articles/how-recognize-and-avoid-phishing-scams



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

- Stella Nelson, March 2
- Everett Reimer Jr., March 3
- Gladys Steinmetz, March 3
- Joe Scholtes, March 3
- William Heitzman, III, March 5
- Lori Kuhs, March 6
- Kody Garis, March 6
- Sadie Baker, March 7
- Grace Gardella, March 7
- Valerie Kessler, March 11
- Tylor Duffin, March 13
- James Jennings, March 14
- Aria Hughes, March 20
- Gillian Smith, March 21
- Brian Hower, March 25
- Allison Manicke, March 30
- Lois Neiley, March 31



Endowment Trustee Update

The Helper's Helpers Sub Fund of the Endowment Fund released \$500.00 in January for the Layette Shower. The co-chairs of this annual event, Michele Harrison and Joanne Schipps provided the total of all the items that are included in a layette kit.

Each kits costs approximately \$50.00 to prepare. This year a total of 53 layette kits were assembled by adults and the helping hands of the Sunday School children.

thank you

Thank you for your visits, calls, gifts, cards and prayers for Charmaine Collins. A special thank you to Pastor Scholtes, Larry Rissmiller and Jean Janosa for their visits and Holy Communion. She was very appreciative. She loved Prince of Peace. We will be celebrating her life on May 3, 2025, with a service and a luncheon to follow. All are invited and we will remind you of the date as it becomes closer.

A very heart felt thank you to Social Ministry for their generous donation to P.U.M.P. in memory of Charmaine Collins. —*Cathy Mullen and Donna Cortez*

Please note: our Parish Nurse, Justine Saviet has a new email address contact the church office for it.



WEIS GIFT CARDS– Just to let everyone know, we sold \$24,425 Weis gift cards in 2024, which gave the church a profit of \$4,522.50. These cards can be used to purchase ANYTHING at any Weis store. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.** We can continue to earn money for OUR church by simply continuing this convenient way to shop. So, continue buying these cards, and tell a friend. Let's see if we can beat the 2024 profit.

—*Kale Baker*

WEIS 1% DONATION PROGRAM UPDATE: In 2024 we received \$1, 355.55 from a total of \$133,550 of grocery receipts. I dropped off at Weis another \$55,380.00 of grocery receipts which will net another \$553.00 for the start of 2025. **THANKS FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!**

REMINDER: We can only use receipts for the Bangor Store....All tax, stamp purchases, gift card purchases, alcohol, prescriptions, tobacco and milk are deducted.

—*Janet Martocci*



VALOR
A HAND UP ON THE HOME FRONT

Social Ministry Project:

The VALOR Clinic Foundation provides veteran families in crisis with holiday meals at Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas. They provide a complete day's meal starting with breakfast and ending with dessert. This helps families from having to decide between paying the bills or having a holiday meal. In 2024 on Easter, they provided a complete meal for 125 veteran families, and the number increases each holiday. This committee decided we would help them by collecting 6 of the 21 items needed for a complete meal. The items are: 3 cans green beans; 3 cans of corn (if purchasing the green beans or corn please purchase 3 of each); 1 box stuffing; 1 box cake mix; 1 can frosting, and 1 can pie filling. There will be a basket in the Narthex to place your items in. "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." 1 Peter 4:10. Social Ministry thanks you for your continued and generous support of our projects.

The property committee would like to thank everyone for making the lock change and the distribution of keys easy. While we realize this transition was needed, it can be difficult for some. If it hasn't been announced before, and if you are not a key holder and you have programs throughout the church year where you need access, please see Annette in the office to have one signed out during your event. Also, we are collecting the old keys now that are not in use. Please see Denny, John or Jackie to turn yours in.

Thank You --*Dennis Horn*



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 2025/2026 school year are eligible and encouraged to apply. The scholarship will be awarded to up to three students.

The 2025 application form and instructions can be downloaded from the church website at popbangor.org, alternatively send a request by e-mail to poplcbangor@gmail.com. Completed applications are due by noon on Monday, May 5th, 2024.

--*The POP Scholarship Committee*



God's word is a lamp unto your feet and a light unto your path.

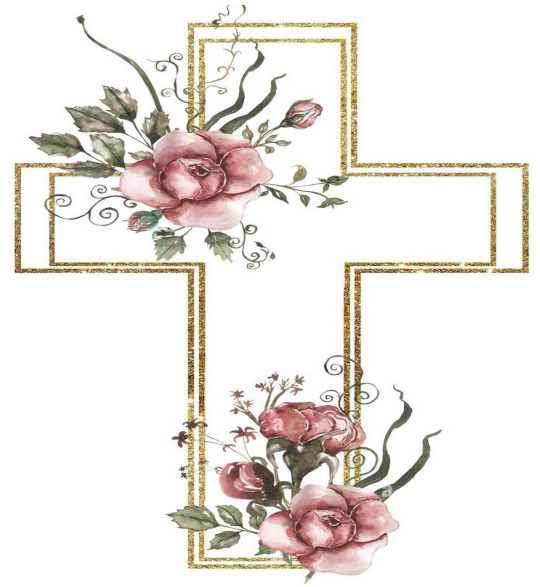
Psalm 119:105

Saturday, March 01	Psalm 99; Deuteronomy 9:15-24; Luke 10:21-24;
Transfiguration (3/2)	Exodus 34:29-35; Psalm 99; 2 Corin 3:12 – 4:2; Luke 9:28-36
Monday, March 03	Psalm 35:11-28; Exodus 35:1-29; Acts 10:9-23a;
Tuesday, March 04	Psalm 35:11-28; Ezekiel 1:1; 2:1; Acts 10:23b-33;
Ash Wednesday (3/5)	Joel 2:1-2,12-17; Ps 51:1-17; 2 Corin 5:20 – 6:10; Matt 6:1-21
Thursday, March 06	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Exodus 5:10-23; Acts 7:30-34;
Friday, March 07	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Exodus 6:1-13; Acts 7:35-42;
Saturday, March 08	Psalm 91:1-2, 9-16; Ecclesiastes 3:1-8; John 12:27-36;
1st Sunday in Lent (3/9)	Deut 26:1-11; Ps 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:8-13; Luke 4:1-13
Monday, March 10	Psalm 17; 1 Chronicles 21:1-17; 1 John 2:1-6;
Tuesday, March 11	Psalm 17; Zechariah 3:1-10; 2 Peter 2:4-21;
Wednesday, March 12	Psalm 17; Job 1:1-22; Luke 21:34-22:6;
Thursday, March 13	Psalm 27; Genesis 13:1-7, 14-18; Philippians 3:2-12;
Friday, March 14	Psalm 27; Genesis 14:17-24; Philippians 3:17-20;
Saturday, March 15	Psalm 27; Psalm 118:26-29; Matthew 23:37-39;
2nd Sun. in Lent (3/16)	Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Ps 27; Phil 3:17 – 4:1; Luke 13:31-35
Monday, March 17	Psalm 105:1-42; Exodus 33:1-6; Romans 4:1-12;
Tuesday, March 18	Psalm 105:1-42; Numbers 14:10b-24; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13;
Wednesday, March 19	Psalm 105:1-42; 2 Chronicles 20:1-22; Luke 13:22-31;
Thursday, March 20	Psalm 63:1-8; Daniel 3:19-30; Revelation 2:8-11;
Friday, March 21	Psalm 63:1-8; Daniel 12:1-4; Revelation 3:1-6;
Saturday, March 22	Psalm 63:1-8; Isaiah 5:1-7; Luke 6:43-45;
3rd Sunday in Lent (3/23)	Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalm 63:1-8; 1 Cor 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9
Monday, March 24	Psalm 39; Jeremiah 11:1-17; Romans 2:1-11;
Tuesday, March 25	Psalm 39; Ezekiel 17:1-10; Romans 2:12-16;
Wednesday, March 26	Psalm 39; Numbers 13:17-27; Luke 13:18-21;
Thursday, March 27	Psalm 32; Joshua 4:1-13; 2 Corinthians 4:16-5:5;
Friday, March 28	Psalm 32; Joshua 4:14-24; 2 Corinthians 5:6-15;
Saturday, March 29	Psalm 32; Exodus 32:7-14; Luke 15:1-10;
4th Sunday in Lent (3/30)	Joshua 5:9-12; Psalm 32; 2 Corin 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11-32
Monday, March 31	Psalm 53; Leviticus 23:26-41; Revelation 19:1-8;

Read these on your computer or on your phone! Go to DailyLectio.net, where you can sign up for daily emails or download the app for iPhone or Android!

Christ

The Way, the Truth,
and the Life.



JOHN 14:6

Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
2445 Lake Minsi Drive (Johnsonville)
Bangor, Pennsylvania 18013
Office Phone: 610-588-2355

Website: www.popbangor.org
Online Coordinator: Heather Scholtes

Worship and Holy Communion Schedule:
Sundays at 9:45 a.m. – Join us!!

-
- **Pastor: Rev. Michael J. Scholtes**
home: PastorMJS@gmail.com
 - **Volunteer Pastoral Assist. Larry Rissmiller**
 - **Minister of Music: Martin Yazdzik**
 - **Bookkeeper: Joyce Weishaupt**
 - **Financial Secretary: Mary O'Meally**
 - **Custodian: Brittnee Evans**
 - **Parish Nurse: Justine Saviet**
 - **Administrative Assistant: Annette Buss**
Admin. Asst's Office Hours: Monday, Tuesday,
Wednesday, Friday 9 a.m.–Noon
Thursday: 1 to 4 pm

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!

April 2025 Newsletter is:

Tuesday,

March 11th at Noon

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

You may email your submissions to

poplcbangor@gmail.com

Or give a handwritten items to

Annette Buss

****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.

Money Changers in the Temple

This phrase, taken from the act of our Lord recorded in Matthew 21:12, is usually taken to describe something deplorable, the sordid, the profaning of religion by commercialism. But in the highest sense, each Christian can be a "money changer." When a person brings money to be used in furthering the purposes of Christ, money becomes changed into life. Money can be changed into health and life in a hospital down the street or across the sea; it can be changed into a college where a young person finds what is needed for real living. It is changed into food as the church meets physical need in all parts of the earth. By its right use, money is the alchemy by which human life and energy are transported from one place to another.

By our money, we can talk in many languages to proclaim the Gospel; by our money, we can heal the sick, give sight to the blind, care for the fatherless, teach the ignorant and feed the hungry. Hence it becomes the "open sesame" to a glorious ministry.

You ... yes, you ... can be a money changer in the temple!

G. W. Mattace



Serve Where You Are

A policeman in Birmingham, England on becoming a Christian was so greatly troubled by the sights and sounds of sin among which he worked that for a long time he prayed, "Lord, take me out of the police service. Give me some other work."

No answer came and no other work was opened to him. At last he said to his wife: "I think we have been making a great mistake. We have been praying that I may be taken out of the force, and I begin to think that he

has put me there to work. Now I am going to pray that he will help me to serve where I am."

That was the beginning of a life of marvelous usefulness. His influence over the men was so great that he was promoted to be the head of the detectives. He was instrumental in the salvation of many criminals. The place where God has put you is the place where you do the best service for him.

M. Lunn

Thoughts to Ponder:

"If you think health care is expensive now, wait until you see what it costs when it's free."

P. J. O'Rourke

"No man's life, liberty, or property is safe while the legislature is in session."

Mark Twain

"I contend that for a nation to try to tax itself into prosperity is like a man standing in a bucket and trying to lift himself up by the handle."

Winston Churchill

Carrying Our Own Loads

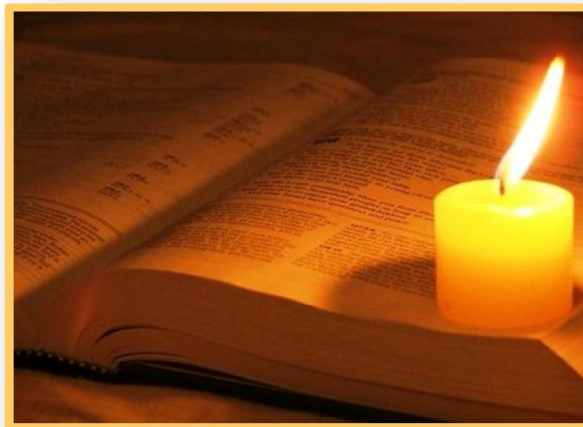
We all start at the same place: *“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23), and we are all rescued from this position in the same way: *“But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8). God sees us all the same – sinners saved by his grace. Since we are all equal in his sight, there is no need to measure ourselves by our neighbors. The Apostle Paul, in our text above, declares this a fruitless exercise.

What is helpful, though, is to test our own actions. Am I using the gifts and talents God has given me in a way that brings him honor and that benefits the Body of Christ? Am I spending time in reading his Word and in prayer to him? Am I joining in Christian fellowship as the Word of God is preached and the Sacraments are administered? Am I encouraging others to do good deeds? Am I giving sacrificially and humbly? How am I building up my pastor(s) so he can effectively preach the Word and care for the flock in his care?

As we examine our actions, we must also examine our motives. Do I do “good things” because I’m a prominent member of the congregation and it’s expected of me? Do I labor in the church so I’ll be noticed and commended? Do I serve others and give of my time in order to earn God’s favor? God forbid that those should be our motives! Rather, we say with Paul, *“Christ’s love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died. And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again”* (2 Corinthians 5:14-15).

Finding the Good Life

Most people believe that money brings happiness, so they always want more of it. But money does not bring happiness. Money and the things that money can buy do not produce the good life. The good life is taking *“hold of the life that is truly life”* (1 Timothy 6:19) and in using what God has given us to build his kingdom. Through the working of the Holy Spirit, we will hold the things of this world loosely and focus on things that are eternal.



Blessings on Your Stewardship Journey!



NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Building Connections, Strengthening Mission: The Impact of Staff Development

Since 2021, when I joined the synod staff, I have felt a deep passion and dedication for the work God is calling me to do. Over the past three years, the relationships I have built, both with synod staff and throughout the synod regions and beyond, have been some of the strongest of my career. I have been a Lutheran all my life, raised in a church and family of faith. So, when the job opened at the synod office, applying felt like a natural choice.



My time on synod staff has shaped my spiritual journey, revealing how God's presence is truly in everyone, including me, in both joyful and challenging times. I often find myself asking, "What is God calling us to do?" "What is God calling me to do?" It's funny how sometimes God's answers are loud and clear, while other times, there seems to be silence, much like a parent stepping back to let a child solve a puzzle or get dressed all on their own.

However, God is not silent in the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod. God is actively working through all of us to move mountains and embody the change Jesus modeled for us. The synod staff have been focusing more intentionally on communication and staff development. Over the past year, the full synod staff, including building staff and the Associates of the Bishop, have gathered for retreats to strengthen our communication. One of these retreats also included the Synod Council, the redesign team, and other key stakeholders around the synod, providing a space for collaboration. Pastor Doug Hill from Abiding Hope in Littleton, Colorado, has helped facilitate some of these retreats, incorporating insights from the Gaining Strength cohorts. Through this work, staff have explored their enneagram numbers, gaining a deeper understanding of how our personalities intertwine and complement one another.

Pastor Rachael Dietz, Associate to the Bishop, comments on the retreat by saying, "*Intentional investment*



in staff help us grow into the disciples God would have us be. We're not static blobs; we're human beings with hearts, hands, feet, and brains. When we practice and learn, we become more aligned and attuned to the Spirit's work in us and the synod. Your mission support then gets turned inside out as we support the mission of congregations: to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, to all."

This investment in staff development is not just about strengthening our internal team, it is about equipping us to better serve the entire synod. As we grow in communication, collaboration, and leadership, we become more responsive to the needs of the congregations, more effective in our ministries, and more connected as a community of faith. By modeling teamwork and intentional growth, we hope to inspire congregations and leaders to do the same in their own contexts. Ultimately, this work is about aligning ourselves more fully with God's call, ensuring that together, as one synod, we continue to move mountains and embody the change Christ has set before us.

We would like to extend our gratitude to Trinity Lutheran Church in Lehighton and St. John's Lutheran Church in Allentown for hosting staff retreats. Your hospitality is deeply appreciated and truly a blessing.

Submitted by: Stacey Burke (she/her) Communications & Growing Young Coordinator

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.



Christ Hamilton United Lutheran Church
Stroudsburg, PA

2025
**Connect
the Dots**
Northeastern PA Synod Assembly

godslove.org/assembly2025

May

30-31

Registration
opens April 1

