

ST. MARK LUTHERAN CHURCH

201 E. JUNIATA STREET, ALLENTOWN, PA 18103

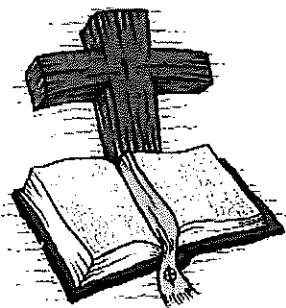
Phone: 610-797-6440 Fax: 610-351-6114

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

Hospital Code - #300 Office Hours: Monday - Thursday 10:00am – 1:00pm

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

OCTOBER 2026 NEWSLETTER



The Pastor's Corner...

Dear Friends,

Barbara Brown Taylor was once asked to speak at a church conference. "What topic would you like me to speak about?" The minister in charge said, "Come and speak about what is saving your life right now." It's an incredible topic. How would you answer it? What is saving your life right now?

On a personal level, my answer is often, family and friends. They are all incredible people. They are a saving presence for me every day. But when I think of the church, what is saving my life right now is the staff. We are blessed with an incredible staff. I look forward to coming to church because I know I will be met with the amazing talent, compassionate energy and smiles of our wonderful staff. They fill me with hope for our future, and it is truly humbling to serve alongside each of them. I don't use the word "blessed" lightly when I say I feel so deeply blessed by each one of them and by their synergy as a team.

And then there is you. According to Webster's, a minister is "a person or a thing through which something is accomplished." That means that YOU are also a minister.

Through you, God is accomplishing something. Through our church, God is accomplishing miracles. The real job of the church staff is to empower you to be ministers in this world of ours, where God's love is needed in every corner. And so, YOU are also what is saving my life right now. Thank you.

October is the month that was set aside to celebrate "ministry." It would be a mistake to see that as a celebration of the clergy only because your hands and feet are the instruments of God in this world. Your mind and heart are the vehicles for Christ's light to shine.

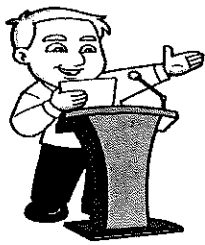
What is saving your life right now?

Grace and Peace,
Pastor Lynn



"Therefore, having this ministry
by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart."

2 Corinthians 4:1



A message from your Council President

Life can become busy very quickly. Between work, family, school, appointments, activities, and the many responsibilities of everyday life, it can be easy to put church and our faith on the sidelines. We tell ourselves, "I'll get back to church when things slow down." But the truth is, life rarely slows down on its own. That is why we need to make our relationship with God and our church family a priority.

Church should not simply be another activity on our calendar. It should be at the center of our lives. Sunday worship gives us an opportunity to stop, reflect, give thanks, hear God's Word, receive His grace, and be renewed for the week ahead. It is a time to remember that we do not walk through life alone. We have God, and we have one another.

Being part of a church family also means being active. There is so much more to church than simply attending worship. We are called to serve, encourage, pray, give, volunteer, and use the gifts God has given each of us. Every person has something valuable to offer. Whether it is helping at an event, serving on a committee, welcoming someone at the door, helping with worship, supporting a ministry, or simply reaching out to someone who needs encouragement, our involvement makes a difference.

It is easy to become complacent. We can become comfortable sitting on the sidelines, assuming that someone else will step forward or that our church will continue to thrive without our involvement. But a church is strongest when its members are willing to participate and work together. The future of our congregation depends on all of us.

As we enter this new season, let us ask ourselves: **Am I making church and my faith a priority? Am I actively involved, or have I become comfortable on the sidelines? What can I do to help strengthen our church family?**

Let us make Sunday worship a foundation of our week and make our church family an important part of our lives. Let us not simply attend church—let us **be the church** by serving, caring, encouraging, and sharing God's love with others.

There is a place for each of us at St. Mark. Let us step forward, get involved, and continue building a strong and faithful congregation together.

When we put God first and make church a priority, we discover that our faith grows, our relationships grow, and our church grows.



In Christian Service,
Thomas F Rieger
Council President



***Flat Roofs** – The congregation agreed along with council to move forward with the replacing of the flat roofs before winter hits us. A bridge loan will be taken through Embassy Bank until we can secure one with the Synod.

***Edie Stout** has volunteered to take over as the Financial Secretary and will begin in January of 2027. Thank You Edie!!

***Widows** – The Group has moved their luncheon to the Sunrise Diner. Due to Perkins on Lehigh St closing.

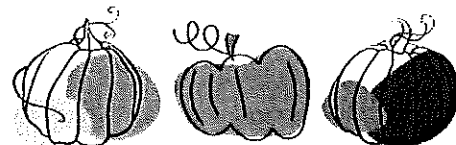
***Outside Doors** – Sandy asked for the Food Pantry Door to be repainted. Don will paint all the outside doors since, they all could be refreshed.

***Bingo** - Council received a proposal from Tammy Walbert, Terri Harkins and Linda Gier to hold a church Bingo game on November 1 and December 6, 2026. If the events are well received, the group plans to hold monthly games.

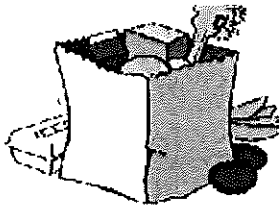
***Next Council meeting Wednesday,
October 21st 6:00pm**

H A P P Y AUTUMN

As the leaves change,
may you be reminded of
God's constant love



The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
Lamentations 3:22-23



The Open Door Food Pantry

By the time you are reading this it will be officially Autumn! Leaves will be falling, cooler nights and pumpkin spice everywhere! The seasons change but our need for food remains constant. Thank you to everyone who volunteers, donates or supports The Open Door in any way and in every season.

In the month of August, we served 78 households. These households consisted of 177 adults, 85 children and 58 seniors (60+). This is a total of 320 neighbors we are serving!

For the month of October, our suggested items for donations are pancake syrup (we have a lot of pancake mix) and evaporated milk (a popular item that we have not been able to order from Second Harvest).

As always, all items that are donated are greatly appreciated.

Wishing everyone a blessed Fall!

Sandy



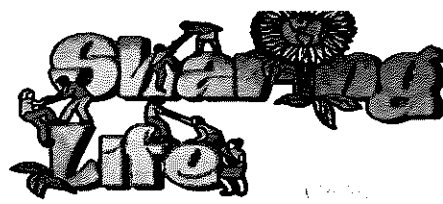
GOD'S WORK OUR HANDS



THANK-YOU TO EVERYONE THAT DONATED FRESH FRUITS AND VEGETABLES TO THE FOOD PANTRY ON SEPTEMBER 6TH AND SEPTEMBER 20TH. IT WAS A GOOD OPPORTUNITY FOR US TO PARTICIPATE WITH THE ELCA AND EGAGE IN A PROJECT THAT HELPED SERVE OUR COMMUNITY.



Linda Gier and Wendy Madera at Food Pantry



September:

This is our 16th year anniversary, hard to believe it's been 16 years since Pastor Brndjar sat down with the original committee and helped plan this amazing ministry. I still remember his words "just do it" and we did.

The first event we had 8 people show up. We now serve over 100 each month. To celebrate the event we served ziti along with salad, rolls, cake and live entertainment from Ken Pursell. All participants received a wristband with positive affirmations on it as a remembrance of the day.

Knitting and Crocheting - Continues with everyone working on individual projects and enjoying each other's company.

Crafts - Brenda and Charlie helped participants create wooden keepsakes with positive affirmations. Participants created additional ones to hand out at Harvest Full of Hope.

We are looking forward to Harvest Full of Hope on October 20, 2026 from 8:00am-3:30pm at the Artsquest Center, Steelstacks Bethlehem, Pa.

Looking forward to our t-shirt fundrasier, more information to come.

Many Blessings,
Sue Krasley and the Sharing Life committee.

SAINT MARK BLESSING BOX....

We are ALWAYS collecting items for our Blessing Box. You may place the items in the labeled box in the Narthex. Items are being taken from the box, we would like to always have items to replace the items taken. Through these small acts of generosity, we live our Christ's call to love our neighbors and serve those in need. We are in need of supplies for the box.

Sunday School is back!

Rally Day was a fun morning
filled with treats and crafts.



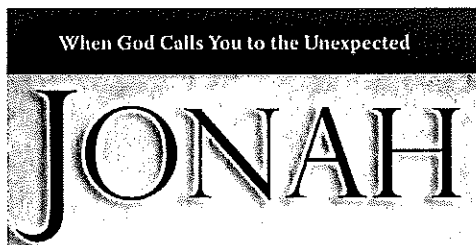
All children ages 3 and up are welcome
to attend Sunday School.



Blessing of the Animals

Sunday, October 4th
12:00pm Front Lawn
of St. Mark Church
Bring your animals
to be blessed.

You don't have any pets,
it's ok you can still come
and be a part of the blessing. All are Welcome.



- ◆ When God sends you a new direction
- ◆ Running from God — and what happens
- ◆ Knowing God's Mercy
- ◆ Key background information on the book of Jonah

Bible Study:

The Book of Jonah with Pastor Lynn

Every other Thursday in the month of October,
beginning on October 1st There are 2 sessions to
choose from, 10:00am or 5:00pm - held in Luther
Hall. Each session will be 1 hour long. Bring a bible,
pen/pencil and notebook along with you.

Join for great conversation and fun.

All are welcome.

*"But I will sacrifice to you with shouts of
gratitude. What I have vowed I will make good. I
will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'"*

Jonah 2:9



Celebrating Stewardship Sunday

October 11, 2026

When Gathered Here God is Near

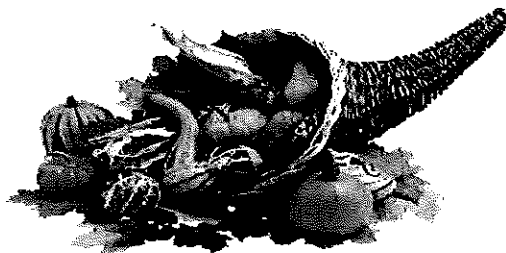
Through Your Faith and Generosity.
Your pledge makes a lasting impact.



2026 Lehigh Mission
District Congregations
Advent Christmas Ingathering

It is the time of year that St. Mark begins to plan
for Lehigh Mission District Christmas Ingathering.
We will begin collecting items on Sunday, October
25th through Sunday, November 29th.

The organization we will be collecting for this year
is Topton Home. More details and information will
be coming as we begin to make plans for this very
meaningful ministry.



Harvest Home - Sunday, October 11th through October 25th

Please bring non-perishable food items to be placed
at the altar. All food displayed will go to the Food
Pantry.

Sunday, October 25th

Reformation Sunday!

***Please wear RED this Sunday.**

Why wear RED?

Churches often hold a special service to honor this heritage, which may include wearing the color red, it symbolizes the gift of salvation by grace.

Why do we Celebrate?

The celebration commemorates the 1517 act by Martin Luther, a German monk, who posted 95 arguments protesting practices like the selling of indulgences by the Catholic Church.

Why is it Important?

A central tenet of the Reformation was the idea that salvation is a gift from God, received through faith in Jesus Christ, not through good works or purchased indulgences.

The Reformation emphasized that all believers may have a direct, personal relationship with God without the need for intermediaries.

The reformers promoted translating the Bible into common languages, making God's Word accessible to all believers.



TRUNK OR TREAT

**Friday,
October 30th**

6:00PM-8:00PM

**Want to join in the FUN!! Add to your calendar.
Surprises coming!! It was so much fun last year.
Not sure who had the most the fun - the
adults or the children??**

Green Recycle Clothing Bin

Don't forget to place all old recyclable clothing, bed sheets, purses, backpacks and shoes can be placed in the **Green Bin** in the Parking lot, we receive a donation for every pound they pick up.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS!!!

Set clocks back an hour Saturday,
October 31st before bed for
Sunday, November 1st



October BIRTHDAYS!!!

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

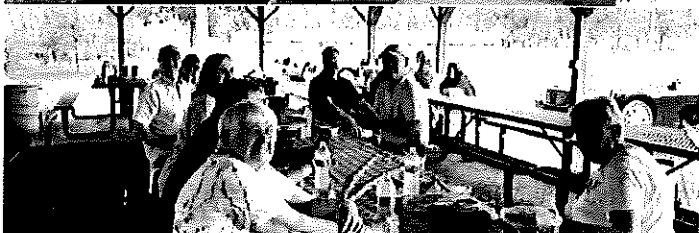
LuAnn Bresnak – October 1
Terri Harkins – October 7
Russell Reinhard – October 13
Gloria Hottenstein – October 19
Sandy Landis – October 19
Diane Walton – October 20

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



ST MARK ANNUAL CHURCH PICNIC and WORSHIP SERVICE

Thank You to everyone who attended the church picnic. Despite the rain and clouds the turnout was great with 64 people attending. It was fun to hold our service outside along with lots of food and fun!!



We also found out that Dan is the best picnic Bingo caller!!



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

Altar Guild, Lectors, Ushers, Acolytes and videographers are asked to perform their duties each Sunday. **PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT AND NOTIFY THE CHURCH OFFICE, IF YOU CANNOT JOIN US ON YOUR SCHEDULED SUNDAY.**

October 4th, 2026 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost
Isaiah 5:1-7
Psalm 80:7-15
Philippians 3:4b-14
Matthew 21:33-46

October 11th, 2026 – 20th Sunday after Pentecost
Harvest Home/Stewardship Sunday/New Members
Coffee Hour
Isaiah 25:1-9
Psalm 23
Philippians 4:1-9
Matthew 22:1-14

October 18th, 2026 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost
Harvest Home
Isaiah 45:1-7
Psalm 96:1-9 [10-13]
1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
Matthew 22:15-22

October 25th, 2026 – Reformation Sunday
Harvest Home
Jeremiah 31:31-34
Psalm 46
Romans 3:19-28
John 8:31-36

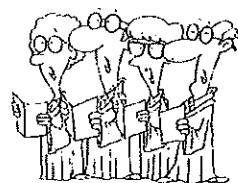
October 31st, 2026 – Daylight Savings
DON'T FORGET TO
TURN CLOCKS BACK 1 HOUR

November 1st, 2026 – All Saint Sunday
Revelation 7:9-17
Psalm 34:1-10, 22
1 John 3:1-3.
Matthew 5:1-12

Galatians 6:9: "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

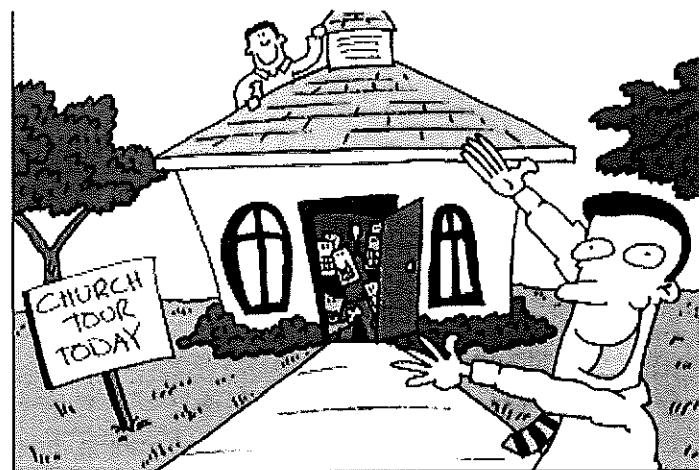


Monday, October 12th The Church office is CLOSED.



CHOIR rehearsal every Wednesday, 6:00pm

Please join us at rehearsal if you wish to share your voice with us.
All are welcome!!!



HERE IS THE CHURCH, HERE IS THE STEEPLE
... OPEN THE DOOR, AND THERE ARE THE PEOPLE

*Remember learning this with your hands as a child. How many of you can still do it? We should share with the Sunday School Children. Let's teach them. Or do they already know it?

Friday, October 23rd is the deadline for the church office to receive all Newsletter Information for November.

**ST MARK'S LUTHERAN CHURCH
ALLENTOWN, PENNSYLVANIA
TREASURER'S REPORT FOR AUGUST 2026
(Subject to Audit)**

	MONTH OF AUGUST	8TH MONTH BUDGET	8TH MONTH ACTUAL 2026	8TH MONTH ACTUAL 2025
BUDGETED CURRENT INCOME	\$8,435.60	\$51,037.00	\$68,883.92	\$65,837.03
BENEVOLENCE	\$155.00	\$1,083.00	\$1,083.00	\$1,144.29
TOTAL BUDGETED INCOME	\$8,590.60	\$52,120.00	\$69,966.92	\$66,981.32
NON-BUDGETED INCOME	\$871.75	\$0.00	\$88,325.90	\$38,896.82
TOTAL INCOME	\$9,462.35	\$52,120.00	\$158,292.82	\$105,878.14
BUDGETED CURRENT EXPENSES	\$7,392.53	\$118,891.00	\$146,889.39	\$89,830.64
BENEVOLENCE	\$81.25	\$1,094.00	\$1,810.00	\$3,188.26
TOTAL BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$7,473.78	\$119,985.00	\$148,699.39	\$93,018.90
NON-BUDGETED EXPENSES	\$915.78	\$0.00	\$13,287.57	\$16,912.54
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$8,389.56	\$119,985.00	\$161,986.96	\$109,931.44
MONTHLY ACTIVITY SUMMARY	BALANCE 8/1/2026	RECEIPTS	EXPENSES	BALANCE 8/31/2026
CURRENT OPERATING FUND - TRUIST	\$5,340.64	\$9,462.35	\$8,389.56	\$6,413.43 +
BUS MONEY MARKET - TRUIST	\$25,331.21	\$21.52	\$0.00	\$25,352.73 +
QUAINT OAK BANK	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
TOTAL OPERATING FUND	\$30,671.85	\$9,483.87	\$8,389.56	\$31,766.16
NORTHEASTERN PA SYNOD	PROCEEDS	INTEREST	PAYMENTS	LOAN BALANCE
SYNOD LOAN				\$0.00



Congratulations

Thomas and Lauren Rieger and Family!!

*Jaxson Thomas was born on
September 13th at 8:48pm
weighting 9lbs 9oz and 21.2" long*

*Mommy and baby are doing great!!!
They are home and getting settled in.*

*We Welcome Jaxson into this bright world.
May he grow up with a curious mind,
a courageous heart and
a deep capacity for happiness.*



St. Mark Lutheran Church

**201 E Juniata Street
Allentown, 18103
(610)797-6440**

**Sunday, November 1st
Doors Open at 12:30pm
Games Begin at 1:30 pm**

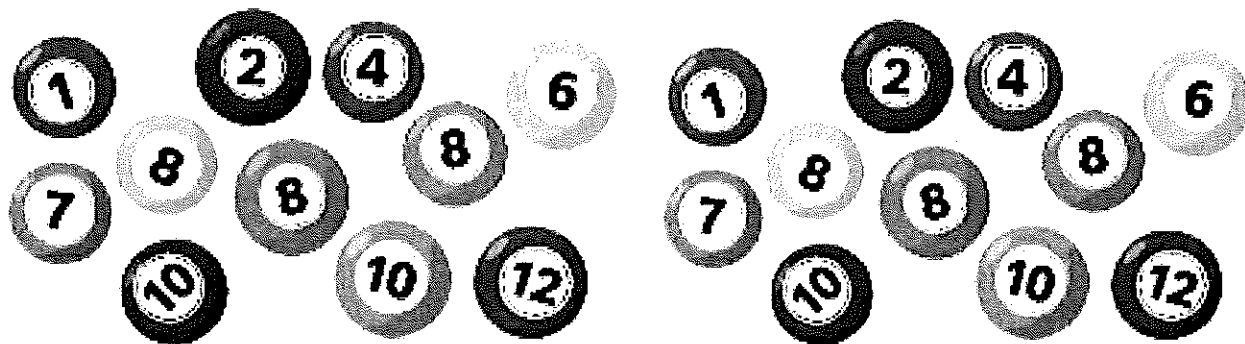
**Get ready to shout “BINGO”!
Cash prizes and 50/50 raffle.
Bring your friends and family.**

Game packages and dabbers for sale.

You must be 18 or older to play.

Food, snacks and drinks for sale before and during bingo.

Parties of 4 or more may reserve seats by calling ahead.



Join us again on Sunday, December 6th

October 2026

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

www.saintmarkallentown.org

Watch us on Facebook user or not, at:

www.facebook.com/stmarkallentown

Hospital Code: 300

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
3 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Parish Life meeting following the service	4 Worship/Music meeting 6:00pm	5	6 Sharing Life Craft/Knit Day 1:00pm - 3:00pm Choir 6:00pm	7	8	9
10 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Harvest Home/New Members Stewardship Sunday Coffee Hour Sponsored by Christian Ed	11 Office Closed 12  <i>Columbus Day</i>	12 Open Door Food Pantry 10:00am - 12:00pm	13 Widows Club Luncheon 1:00pm - Sunrise Diner Council Meeting 6:00pm Choir 6:00pm	14	15	16 
17 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Harvest Home	18	19 Open Door Food Delivery 10:30am	20 Sharing Life Halloween Party 12:00pm - 3:00pm Choir 6:00pm	21 Open Door Food Pantry 4:00pm - 6:00pm	22	23
24 Reformation Sunday 25 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am Harvest Home	25	26	27 Choir 6:00pm	28	29 Trunk or Treat 6:00pm 	30 
31 Sunday School 9:00am Worship 10:00am All Saints Sunday Day Light Savings Day Clocks Back Before Bed	1	2 	3 Sharing Life Craft/Knit Day 1:00pm - 3:00pm Choir 6:00pm	4	5	6

Serving Our Church October 2026		
October 4 th – 19 th Sunday after Pentecost Sunday School 9:00am/10:00am Worship Pressure Cuff Ministry		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Linda Kline Altar Guild: Sue Krasley, Makayla Krasley, and Josephine Wieder	Ushers: LuAnn Bresnak Carol Hartigan Linda Kline Sue Krasley Josephine Wieder	Council on Duty: Dan Christman Videographer: Tom Rieger Acolyte: Patrick Merkle
October 11 th – 20 th Sunday after Pentecost/Harvest Home Sunday School 9:00am/10:00am Worship Coffee Hour Sponsored by Christian Ed		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Brenda Mann- Orben Altar Guild: Terri Harkins and Linda Gier	Ushers: Doris Brezan Tammy Walbert Linda Gier Terri Harkins Sandy Biery	Council on Duty: Rick Krasley Videographer: Terri Harkins Acolyte: Zander Wragg
October 18 th – 21 st Sunday after Pentecost/Harvest Home Sunday School 9:00am/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Carol Hartigan Altar Guild: Terri Harkins and Linda Gier	Ushers: Doris Brezan Tammy Walbert Linda Gier Terri Harkins Sandy Biery	Council on Duty: Carol Hartigan Videographer: Kathy Walker Acolyte: Wyatt Trautman

October 25th – Reformation Sunday Confirmation/ Harvest Home Sunday School 9:00am/10:00am Worship Reception following the service		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Tammy Walbert Altar Guild: Linda Kline and Linda Raad	Ushers: Brenda Covely Tom Rieger Roxann Rieger Kathy Walker Zachary Walker	Council on Duty: Pat Golley Videographer: Dan Christman Acolyte: Aliyah Wragg
November 1 st – All Saints Sunday Sunday School 9:00am/10:00am Worship		
Lector/Communion Assistant: Linda Kline Altar Guild: Linda Kline and Linda Raad	Ushers: Brenda Covely Tom Rieger Roxann Rieger Kathy Walker Zachary Walker	Council on Duty: Bill Walker Videographer: Tom Rieger Acolyte: Patrick Merkle



Mission Support at Work: Bringing People Together

Ministry across the Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod is made possible through mission support, staff and volunteer leadership, ministry teams, congregational participation, and partnerships. This month's newsletter highlights several upcoming opportunities to worship, learn, serve, and connect.

OCT
14

Racial Justice Team Meeting

Wednesday, October 14, 2026, at 2:00 p.m.

Location: Zoom

Prayer, conversation, learning, resource sharing, and action centered on justice, equity, and reconciliation.

Learn more: godslove.org/racial-justice-team

OCT
17

Lutheran World Relief Ingathering

Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 9:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Location: The Lutheran Center, 2354 Grove Road, Allentown

Accepted items: Baby Care Kits, School Kits, Personal Care Kits, and quilts

Additional collection: Items may be brought to Christ Lutheran Church in Reading on Fridays in October from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. The Berks County collection is scheduled for Tuesday, October 20, at 9:30 a.m.

Learn more: godslove.org/26LWR-ingathering

OCT
17

Handling Conflict in the Congregation

Saturday, October 17, 2026, from 9:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Location: Trinity Lutheran Church, 175 S. Third Street, Lehighton

Continuing education for current licensed lay ministers focused on handling conflict within congregations.

Learn more: godslove.org/handling-conflict

**OCT
31****The Installation of Bishop Jennifer Dee****Saturday October 31, 2026, at 1:00 p.m.**

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Bethlehem, 2344 Center St, Bethlehem, PA 18017
Presiding Bishop Yehiel Curry will participate in the service, with hors d'oeuvres served following the installation.

Learn more: godslove.org/bishop-installation

**NOV
9-10****2026 Bishop's Conference – "Navigating Differences in a Polarized World"****November 9–10, 2026**

Location: Shawnee Inn and Resort, 100 Shawnee Inn Drive, Shawnee on Delaware

Presenter: Dr. Shirley Mullen

Registration deadline: October 8

A conference for pastors, deacons, and licensed lay ministers helping engage disagreement with courage, compassion, attentive listening, and hope.

Learn more: godslove.org/BC2026

**NOV
13-15****Come Away: Young Adult Retreat****November 13–15, 2026**

Time: Friday at 6:00 p.m. through Sunday at 11:00 a.m.

Location: Bear Creek Camp, 3601 Bear Creek Boulevard, Wilkes-Barre

Registration deadline: October 15

Organized by Gather Lehigh Valley for young adults ages 18–35. Full and partial scholarships are available.

Learn more: godslove.org/come-away

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2027**MAY
15
2027****Imagine More as a Synod****Saturday May 15, 2027**

Location: Union Evangelical Lutheran Church, 5500 Route 873 Schnecksville, PA 18078

An event for youth and adult leaders attending the 2027 ELCA Youth Gathering to help NEPA participants meet one another, build relationships, learn what to expect, and prepare through worship, activities, and conversation.

More details to come at godslove.org/imagine-more-as-synod

**Help Make Ministry Possible**

Mission Support strengthens congregations, supports leaders, and helps new ministries take root across our synod and the wider church. Thank you for being part of this shared ministry. Learn more about Mission Support and how your congregation can support at godslove.org/missionsupport.

VOLUME 31
ISSUE 9
October
2026

 Lehigh Mission District
NEWSLETTER

Lehigh Mission District
mailing address:
PO Box 10
Old Zionsville, PA 18068

The Rev. Thomas D. Busteed, Dean
The Rev. Jean L. Huber, Assoc. of the Bishop
Dcn. Kelly Brooks, Mission District Chair
Linda Gery, Newsletter Editor

610-966-3834
610-704-5133
484-264-3049
610-395-5535

Upcoming Rostered Ministers Gatherings:

Wednesday, October 14,
at 10:30am
at St. John's, Allentown
(37 South 5th Street)

Topic: "Mental Health in
the Lehigh Valley"
by Woody Maxon

Thursday, December 10,
at 8:00am
at Egner Chapel,
Muhlenberg College

Advent Service followed
by FREE breakfast in the
Hoffman House.

Bishop Installation:

Saturday, October 31,
at 1:00pm
at 1st Presbyterian (2344
Center St, Bethlehem).

Installation of The Rev.
Jennifer Dee as the 6th
Bishop of NEPA Synod.

See NEPA website and
communications for details.

Bishop's Conference:

November 9-10, 2026
at Shawnee Inn and
Resort

See NEPA website and
communications for details
and registration.



November 2026 LMD NL news
will be due October 12, 2026.

Please email any information to
lmdnewslettereditor@gmail.com

Comfort

At our May 2026 LMD Spring Assembly, we asked members of the mission district to submit their favorite scripture verses. These included: John 3:16, Isaiah 55:1-11, Psalm 121:1, John 15:12, Micah 6:8, Matthew 25, and Psalm 13.

At our September Rostered Ministers Gathering we read and analyzed these verses for common themes. The first theme we noticed was each of these verses points to God's steadfast love. Some of these verses ask and answer the question: "What does the Lord require of you?" As we continued talking about these verses we also noticed the theme of God's faithful presence. These verses also invite us to first turn to God, and we are assured of comfort and salvation.

The English word "comfort" is perhaps a bit problematic. We associate it with a feeling such as a comfortable chair or a comfortable pair of socks. However when scripture talks about comfort, usually there is more to it than the English word brings to mind. I find this most striking in the English translation of question 1 of the Heidelberg Catechism: "What is your only comfort?" The original German uses the word 'Trost.' There is an old tradition in which, when a child dies in childbirth, the next child to be born and live is named "Trost" which means comfort or consolation. This is the type of comfort that follows complete devastation. And so when our UCC/German Reformed friends had to memorize the answer to question 1, they said: "My only comfort in life, and in death, is that I am not my own, but belong—body and soul—to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ."

As Christians, we are often called to be uncomfortable for the sake of the gospel. We forsake lesser comforts for an ultimate comfort in Jesus. This doesn't mean we are uncomfortable for discomfort's sake. Instead, following Christ means we will often be invited to leave our comfort zones for the sake of serving our neighbor. Trusting in God's steadfast love and faithful presence makes this possible.

The Rev. Thomas D. Busteed,
Lehigh Mission District Dean



Lehigh Mission District Christmas Ingathering Reminder:

Wednesday, December 2, 2026

Location TBD

The Ingathering Board:

Shellie Fritchman, Faith Drescher, Alice Mudge and Pam Page