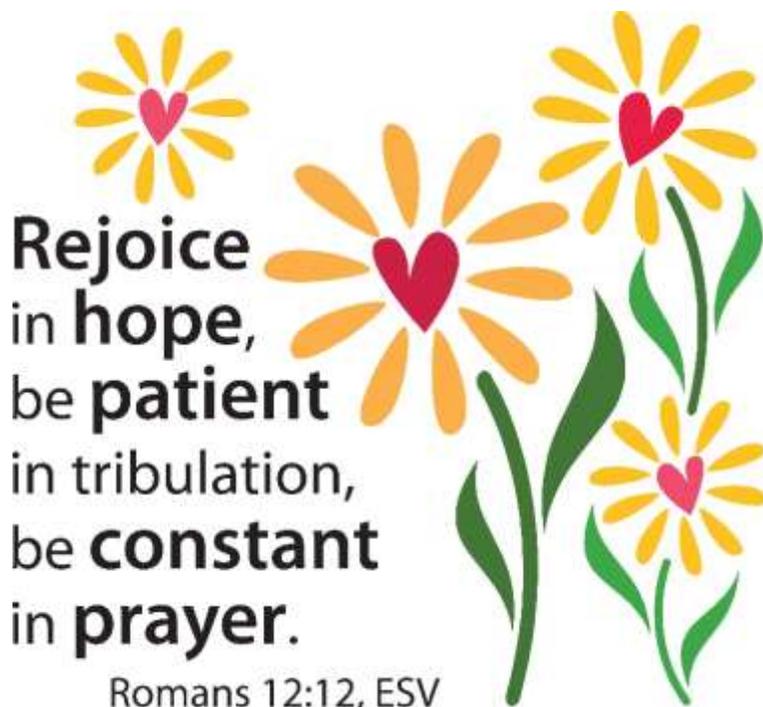


FAITH EVANGELICAL
LUTHERAN CHURCH

July/August - 2021



The Rev. Thomas Busted
570-856-2078
Susan Bellucci
Office Administrator
(610) 435-0451

Dan Herzog
President, Church Council
Zach Keenan
Vice President, Church Council

Judy Ehret
Secretary, Church Council
Margy Muthard
Treasurer

Roger Reichard
Financial Secretary

Joanne Gantz-Jalowiecki
Dir. Of Christian Ed
Jennifer Kishbaugh
Dir. Of Music
Linda Eberhart
Organist

Church Office Hours
8:00 am - 2:00 pm
Back to regular hours as of July 1st

3355 MacArthur Road
Whitehall, PA 18052

faithlutheranwhitehall@rcn.com
www.faihlutheranwhitehall.org

(610) 435-0451

Fax (610) 437-6591

Monday, August 16th at 7:00 pm

Church Council meeting
Please note: no meeting in July

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Vacation Bible School
August 12, 13 and 14th

Details Inside

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Church Picnic
September 19

11:15 AM – 3:00 PM

Details Inside

Please Note:

Council minutes are available in the Narthex
on the information rack.



Mustard Seed

“...yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade.”

Mark 4:32

Do you like gardening?

Today we have the parable of the mustard seed. This seed that is so tiny can in fact grow into a giant shrub that is anywhere between 6 and 20 feet tall, and in some instances 30 feet tall. There are several types of mustard seeds: white mustard, yellow mustard, black mustard, garlic mustard, and so on. These last two types of mustard have become problematic. Garlic mustard and black mustard are considered invasive here in the United States. These plants germinate before most native plants have a chance to get rooted. These mustard seeds use up all the nutrients in the soil and grow tall and produce leaves that prevent the smaller native plants from receiving sunlight. In California, black mustard plants dry out and become fuel for wildfires. The plants are so plentiful that there is no way to get rid of them completely.

As a gardener, you learn to identify plants. Some plants are more invasive than others. You will not want to mix up lamium and lamiastrum. Both of these plants are good ground covers that work well in shady areas, but one (lamiastrum) will completely take over and crowd out other plants. Some flowers are the same. For example, I love pink evening primrose and its fragrant blossoms, but if the plant is in the wrong location and I forget to pay attention to it, it will reseed and spread like crazy. A pretty little pink flower may soon become a weed.

So what does Christ mean when he compares the kingdom of God to a mustard seed? A small seed grows into a large plant. Many preachers use the Matthew 17:20 version of the mustard seed which compares “faith” to a mustard seed. If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can move mountains. However, we do not have that comparison here in Mark. Instead, here a mustard seed is an example of the kingdom of God. So what then does a mustard seed have to say about the kingdom of God?

Is the kingdom of God an invasive plant that takes over the habitat of native species? If we are honest with ourselves, this is the vision of the kingdom of God that we have operated with most of the last 1700 years. Christianity enters a territory like the Roman empire. We conquer the territory and expect the local people and culture to submit to our ways of doing things. We stamp out local customs, often as old as, if not older, than our customs and label them as “pagan” and “uncivilized.” Fast-forward a couple of centuries in our history and we succeeded in conquering and converting most of Europe and the New World. Just as European gardeners transplanted European plants to this continent, European citizens transplanted European culture, customs, traditions, and religion to this continent. As a society, we became more and more prosperous, often at the expense of those who were native to these lands. Soon divisions arose: Catholic vs Protestant, Lutheran vs Reformed, American vs British. Some of this division is only natural. In gardening it is sometimes necessary to dig up and divide plants so that they will have more room to grow. Perhaps that’s why God has planted so many varieties of Christian on this continent. The major success of the 20th century was that we had learned how to be in the same garden together. God’s watering can of baptism refreshes us and unites us despite our divisions into separate denominational identities. Even after 500 years of division, Lutherans and Catholics are learning how to live and grow together in the same garden. But then came the early 2000s and a downward trend already begun in the 20th century began to make itself more noticeable. Our flowerbeds are diminishing. Churches once filled to overflowing with children and families have begun to empty.

Church attendance is down. Our Sunday School is down to 20 participants. Some churches have no kids at all. It’s as though the church’s crop of seedlings failed to take off and fill the flower beds with new life and energy. Where have all the flowers gone?

This reminds me of a Peter, Paul, and Mary song:

*Where have all the flowers gone?
...the girls have picked them, every one.
...the young girls, they've taken husbands.
...the young men, they're all in uniform.
...the soldiers, they've gone to graveyards.
...the graveyards, they're covered with flowers.
...and the flowers?
...young girls have picked them.*

Hidden in this set of lyrics is a truth that is true of all notions of Empire: they rise, they fall, and they die. If the kingdom of God is an invasive plant taking over the habitat of native species, it is doomed to fall and eventually die. We see signs of this already in our present lived reality. The church once strong and dominating all aspects of culture and society is falling. We no longer have the power and influence that we once had. But there is another side to this story of the mustard seed:

"[The kingdom of God] is like a mustard seed, which when sown upon the ground is the smallest of all the seeds on earth; yet when it is sown it grows up and becomes the greatest of all shrubs, and puts forth large branches, so that the birds of the air can make nests in its shade." Mark 4:31-32

Our purpose was never: to grow big for the sake of growing big. Our purpose was: to grow large enough to serve the birds--to give them shelter in our branches, to give them a place to nest their young. The kingdom of God was never about growth or success, but instead: service. We were planted here to serve others. We have been watered with the waters of baptism so that we can provide shelter for the birds of the air and their young. We were built to love and serve the vulnerable, the outcast, the lost ones of this world flying from one place to another seeking a place to rest and find shelter from the rain. The kingdom of God was never meant to become invasive and conquer everything in its path, making all things submit to its power. Rather, the kingdom of God is a shelter, a refuge for the poor and suffering ones of this world. Its success in God's garden is not measured in how well it conquers and defeats all other plants, but rather its success is measured in how well it serves the poor and the lost ones--the "birds" of this world.

I would like to end with an example from our history. Before we became aligned with the powerful rulers and empires of this world, Christianity was a rather small religion. We lived in the midst of cultures and societies that worshiped other gods. Emperor Julian once tried to stamp out Christianity in the 4th century C.E. He tried using all of his power and might to crush out Christian religion and build a pagan religion that could rival it. His chief obstacle was Christian charity. You see, in ancient Greco-Roman culture people gave charity in order to boost their own reputation and to make others obligated to them. On the contrary, Christians gave charity to the poor and never expected anything in return. They loved people, no matter their race, religion, or national identity, and they did not ask for anything in return. They were like the mustard tree, providing shelter for the birds of the air and their young.

People of Faith, do not be discouraged that you are a smaller and less successful church than you once were. Instead, look around you and see where God has planted you. Growing big was never the point. You were called to love and serve your neighbor. God promises to water you through baptism and nourish you through Christ's presence in the Supper and the Word. May your life grow so that you may become a safe place and a refuge for those flying about this world without a place to build their nest and care for their young. May you grow into a beautiful mustard tree, that God's love, God's care, and God's charity may blossom and flower in you. May your shadow reflect the shadow of the cross: grace, mercy, and love poured out for all people.

The Rev. Thomas D. Busted, Pastor



ELW (Evangelical Lutheran Worship) Hymnal News

Have you noticed? Did you realize?

The ELW (the cranberry hymnal) was published in 2006. (The Lutheran Book of Worship-LBW, the green hymnal, was first published in 1978). We have been using components from the ELW hymnal in our service for the past few years. Enjoy singing the “Halle, Hallelujah?”...it comes from the ELW!! We are currently looking at using the ELW in church as a primary resource. So why use a new hymnal? – The Introduction in the ELW states it best, “The Christian assembly worships in the midst of an ever-changing world. And because the worship that constitutes the church is also a fundamental expression of the mission of God in the world, worship is regularly renewed in order to be both responsible and responsive to the world that the church is called to serve.”

In the ELW there are additional orders of service that we are able to use. Additionally, the ELW includes 650-700 hymns and songs—that’s over 200 new hymns and worship songs! About three-fourths of them have complete musical accompaniment, so that they can be sung in harmony. And a smaller number of the hymns have just the melody and text, which makes the melody easier to follow. All 150 psalms are included in this updated hymnal. The revised text version preserves the parts that are memorable from the green hymnal, while updating and clarifying texts, based on new insights from the Bible and language scholars. Also, prayer is an important part of the ELW. A new three-year cycle of Prayers of the Day offers a fresh way of connecting with the biblical and liturgical context of every [Sunday](#) and festival.

You may not even notice some of the changes, as we have already been using the ELW in the service through orders of service and hymns. We hope that you will be open to trying new parts of the service and music as you are introduced to them in the coming months.

Greeting Sisters and Brothers of Faith

Summer is into full swing, restrictions are being lifted. More people are going on trips to the beaches, going out to eat and having a couple of drinks at their favorite restaurants. Our church is no different! We are slowly opening the church up. This past Sunday we had our first soloist sing live in church. Kim Kneller sang Hallelujah from the balcony (wearing a mask). It sounded fantastic. The congregation also sang some parts of the service. Just being there and hearing everyone singing (even with masks on) made me feel good. More activity going on in the church is a good feeling!

Joanne Gantz-Jalowiecki handed out red, white and blue flowers and flags to everyone for Memorial Day. Joanne also handed out cupcakes, red, white and blue for Flag Day (cupcakes supplied by Wendy Hess) thank you Joanne and Wendy. Father's Day and Fourth of July are coming up enjoy and be safe.

From Congregational Council! Pastor Tom will be attending a Continuing Education seminar on June 7th and 8th. From Christian Ed, Joanne reported attendance is down. Only two in confirmation class for next year.

From Worship and Music more contemporary service is being discussed to be held on a Saturday night and other options. Ushers and Greeters are needed for Sunday services open up. Finance Committee is continuing to watch spending. Weekly giving is down. Property Committee is continuing the ongoing battle of weeding flower beds and adding mulch. Safety Committee allowing soloist to sing from balcony with mask. Congregation may sing Kyrie, Gospel Canticle and one and two verses of hymn.

Media and Communication, Ernie is training Jeff to take over when ever needed. Ernie has a well-deserved vacation planned. Jeff will fill in for him. Human Resources Committee have reviewed all job descriptions. By Laws Committee completing by laws, will be finished this month. Congregational Committee will take the month of July off for well-deserved rest. Enjoy the Fourth of July.

Who is wise man and endowed with knowledge among you? Let him show out of good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom. James 3:13

Dan Herzog
President Congregational Council



The 2021 Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod held their annual Assembly on Friday, June 4th and Saturday, June 5th.

The theme for this year's virtual assembly was Growing Young and Vital.

The assembly was held in four plenary sessions, each lasting about two hours. Each session started with either a brief worship service or opening prayers. During these sessions business of the synod was conducted. This included the approval of the Bishop's Report, Treasurer's Report, the President and Vice president's report, the budget for 2022, and compensation guidelines for 2022. Other business included the election of Pastors and Lay People who will serve on the Synod Council and representatives from the synod to the National assembly to be held in Chicago in August 2022.

Dove tailed around the business of the synod were the Introduction of new Candidates to the roster and recognition of those pastors celebrating a milestone anniversary of their ordination. There were numerous presentations focusing on the theme of Growing Young and Vital, as well as examples of various worthy programs that are sponsored by the churches throughout the synod.

A resolution was introduced to have our delegates to the national assembly propose a change in the ELCA bylaws that would make it more inclusive to all people. The purpose of this resolution would be to include Non-binary and Gender Fluid Persons in the Official Life of the Church. The resolution was passed.

The assembly came to a close with an address from our Presiding Bishop Elizabeth Eaton, and the installation of the NEP Synod Bishop the Rev. Christopher deForest, who was elected at the Synod Assembly last October.

Respectfully submitted by Bob and Karla Billig, Faith Lutheran's delegates to the assembly.

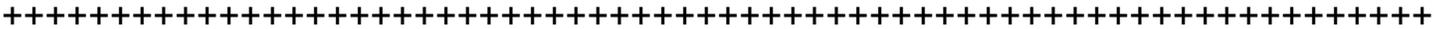


Sunday Worship Schedule 9:00 am

****Please note****

Summer worship now, up to and including September 5th (only one service - 9:00 am)

**September 12th, we will resume both worship services
8:00 AM & 10:30 AM**



Betty Nonnemacher
Donald Masonheimer
Grace Zellner
The Rev. Debra North

A good place
This country will not be a good place for any of us to live in unless we make it a good place for all of us to live in.
—Theodore Roosevelt



Happy 4th of July

In observance of July 4th the Church office will be closed Monday, July 5th.

Have a safe holiday!

CHURCH NEWS

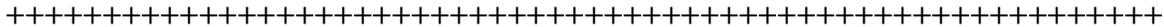
Church Council Meeting - August 16th at 7:00 pm



The Over 80s' Birthday Party
Is going to be taking place
in August, details to follow.



Please remember if you or a family member are in the hospital to give your church code 224 to the attendant. This will help us to continually be in touch. Thank you.



Miller/Keystone
Summer Blood Drive
Monday, August 16
3:00 pm to 7:00 pm

As always, this is a lifesaving mission and I need your help. To secure a reservation, please call Judy Ehret at (610) 767-5061. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.



2021 Softball League
Tournament August 21st
(Rain Date) August 22nd
Start time - 9:00 AM
(NOTE: (Kolapecka Park,
Ironton)

*Whitehall
Food Bank
needs*

tuna, pancake syrup, pancake mix, peanut butter, jelly, cereal, canned fruit, canned meats, soup, vegetables, coffee and tea. Many thanks for your continued support of this important ministry.



FINANCE REPORT

Since the initial closing of the church in the first quarter of 2020, we have updated the congregation on the on-going finances of Faith, Whitehall. We understand that individuals and families have been affected emotionally and financially as a by-product of the COVID-19 pandemic. The church leadership has instituted numerous actions to reduce or delay expenses until we return to normal operations at Faith. This would include a fully opened church for unrestricted worship, return of all church related and outside groups to church usage and the ability to conduct fund raisers (craft fairs, car show, and basket social).

As you know, **weekly giving** has not fully covered the operating expenses of the church. Fund raisers, rental income and several bequeathments have made up for the shortfalls. The inability to conduct fund raisers and significantly reduced rental income for over a year, have exacerbated the problem of giving shortfalls.

The following graph illustrates a disturbing trend of **weekly giving** at Faith, Whitehall.

\$81,230

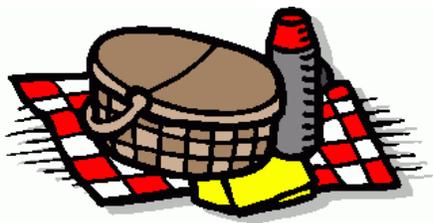
\$63,951

\$56,571

JANUARY TO MAY 2019 JANUARY TO MAY 2020 JANUARY TO MAY 2021

We recognize that this situation is not exclusively a Faith, Whitehall problem, but a widespread concern in many congregations across the Lehigh Valley and beyond. We are on the precipice of fully opening the church and returning to mostly “normal” operations and ask that all members of Faith, Whitehall consider their church’s needs and support requests.

*Mike Miller
For the Finance Committee*



Please note date change:

Church Picnic

This year's picnic will be held on **Sunday, September 19th, 11:15 am to 3:00 pm.** This decision to

change the date of the picnic this year was made to accommodate the Pioneer Band's schedule who will be performing at our Picnic.

In addition to all the good food, fellowship, games and fun, a concert will be performed by the Pioneer Band, directed by Robert Billig.

The band will offer a brass quartet at the 10:30 AM service and then continue with the concert after the picnic goodies have been served. Included in the concert will be a tribute to the 20th anniversary of 911.

If you would like to volunteer for the picnic, please contact: Tom Smykowski, Picnic Chairperson, (610) 570-5062

Volunteers!

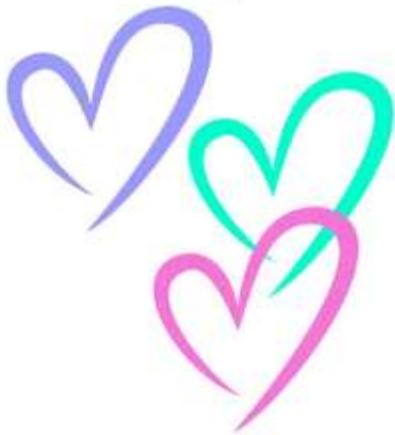


Special Music

Now is your chance to glorify God in song. Calling all vocalists and instrumentalists who would like to share their talents in church during a **Sunday** summer worship service. This is your personal invitation--anyone interested, please contact Jennifer Kishbaugh, Director of Music at 610-451-8660 or jenniferkishbaugh@gmail.com to reserve your date.

(Please note: special music will only occur if the church is in a phase where soloists are allowed to perform in church).

Volunteering is
a work of heart



"WE NEED A FEW GOOD PEOPLE"

Starting September 12th we will be starting up 8:00 am
and 10:30 am worship services.

No, we're not recruiting for the Marines, but we are recruiting for our church family! We are in need of volunteers. Below we have the names and numbers of the individuals you would need to contact if you're interested. We have lists from the past but are not sure who wishes to stay on those listings for the 8 and 10:30 services.

Please consider volunteering and confirm which service you might be attending.

Acolyte/Crucifer - Joanne Gantz-Jalowiecki (215) -880-1649
Altar Guild - Cathy Haller - (610) 266-8762
Communion Assistants - Sue Bellucci (610) 435-0451
Lectors - Sue Bellucci (610) 435-0451
Liturgists - Sue Bellucci (610) 435-0451
Narthex Greeters - Sue Bellucci (610) 435-0451
Ushers - Dan Herzog (610) 428-6142 or Barb Kotsch (610) 868-3546

Lectoring - You will be ask to read the first lesson, the Psalm lead the response reading, and the second lesson. Sue Bellucci at (610) 435-0451

Liturgists - You would be helping Pastor with worship. Sue Bellucci at (610) 435-0451

Communion Assistants: Cathy Haller at (610) 266-8762

Altar Guild: Cathy Haller at (610) 266-8762

Narthex Greeters: Sue Bellucci (610) 435-0451

Ushers: Dan Herzog (610) 428-6142



Vacation Bible School

Thursday, August 12, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, FELC

Friday, August 13, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM, FELC

Saturday, August 14, Noon, at Lehigh Valley Zoo

Theme: Noah's Ark

Registration for Ages Pre-K up to and including 6th grade

Child's Name _____ Age _____

Parents' Name _____

Address _____

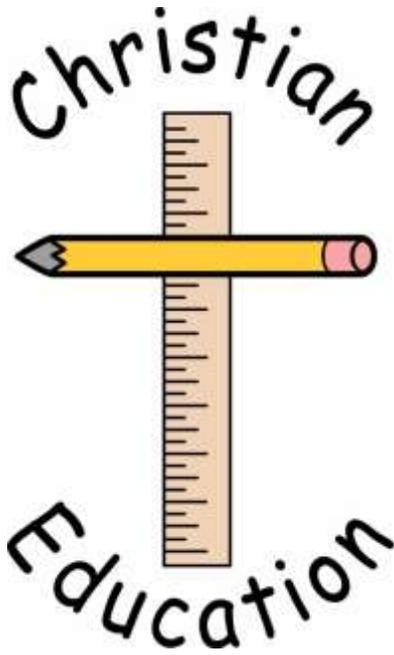
Phone _____ Email _____

Food Allergies _____

There will be no admission cost for Lehigh Valley Zoo for VBS participants.

Registration needs to be complete by August 5 and returned to

Joanne Gantz-Jalowiecki. Joannegj842@gmail.com



Welcome Back

Rally Day is
September 12th

Back to school blessings will be held at both worship services 8 & 10:30 am on September 12th.

Confirmation Class will be held at
9:15 am - 10:15 am

Confirmation  Class



Sunday School (all ages) and Bible Babies -
Adult Forum 9:15 - 10:15 am



Growing
Together
in Faith



Happy Birthday To anyone celebrating their
birthday in July/August!

BOWER, JAYCE	07/01	CAVE, STACEY	07/01
KNUTSEN, KARL	07/01	SNEDDON, DENISE	07/01
LANDIS, OWEN	07/02	BASHORE, KENDALL	07/03
STAHLER, ROBERT	07/03	BENNETT, HOPE	07/04
DAVID, PAULA	07/04	SMITH, HOLLY	07/04
KEMMERER, ALANAH	07/05	KING, BRYCE	07/05
LADD, PATRICK	07/05	FLORES, KYLER	07/06
HONTZ, MARYLOU	07/07	MEYER, CAREY	07/07
PONGRACZ, JAYDEN	07/07	REGITS, LOGAN	07/07
SNYDER, RICHARD	07/07	FEHER, SOPHIA	07/08
MARQUEZ, GIOVANNA	07/09	MOHR, DALE	07/09
RUCH JR, ED	07/09	WHITTAKER, SARAH	07/09
EICHELBERGER, KRISTINE	07/10	KOTSCH, ERNIE	07/10
NELSON, WENDY	07/10	HAWKEY, ROBERT	07/11
KUCSAN JR, MICHAEL	07/11	WALSCHBURGER, BRIAN	07/11
FLORES, KHYLA	07/13	HIMMELWRIGHT, PATRICIA	07/13
MILLER, CYNTHIA	07/14	REICHARD, ROGER	07/14
D'ZOMIC, MICHELE	07/15	KNELLER, KIM	07/15
WALSCHBURGER, PATSY	07/16	BACHMAN, KRISTIN	07/17
EUCULANO, JASON	07/17	VANDERSLICE, DIANE	07/17
WEHR JR, DENNIS	07/17	DRUCKENMILLER, HEATHER	07/18
MACKARAVITZ, TODD	07/18	WESLOSKY, BENJAMIN	07/19
BILOUS, ELAINE	07/20	MOLL, SOPHIA	07/20
PRINCE, JOSHUA	07/21	WARD, DEBORAH	07/21
HESS, KAIA	07/23	MORGAN JR, WILLIAM	07/23
PAINE, TIMOTHY	07/23	SILFIES, JULIA	07/23
GANTZ -JALOWIECKI, JOANNE	07/24	HARTMAN, TRACEY	07/24
LANCE, MICHAEL	07/24	MILLER, ADAM	07/24
OLEJNICK, DENISE	07/24	STEIDINGER, TAMMIE	07/24
BAUDER, JEFFREY	07/25	BRANDT, ELIZABETH	07/25
KIEFER, EMILY	07/26	MARQUEZ, GABRIEL	07/26
WHITTAKER, JONATHAN	07/26	JULIANO, MICHAEL	07/27

JULY BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED:

MILLER, JENA	07/27	MILLER, TARA	07/27
JULIANO, ERICA	07/28	KEMMERER, STACY	07/28
LANCE, JENNA	07/28	MARQUEZ, LUCAS	07/29
GERLACH, GREGORY	07/30	PONGRACZ, CHAD	07/30
BABB, ADELYN	07/31	HILLMAN, JANICE	07/31
PRINCE JR, DONALD	07/31	SCHAFFER, MARK	07/31

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS

MEYER, JUSTIN	08/01	MICKEY, CAROL	08/01
PEIRCE, AMBER	08/01	REINHART, KASON	08/01
ROBERTS, GREGG	08/01	BAILY, KEITH	08/02
BRADER, BARRY	08/02	BUSTEED, THOMAS	08/02
FINKE, ADRIANA	08/02	MILLER, DOREEN	08/02
SOTO, JULIANNA	08/02	CARROLL, JAYDEN	08/03
MOYER, KYLE	08/03	RINGENBERGER, SHANNON	08/03
DELP, NATALIE	08/04	HIPPERT, SANDRA	08/04
TOMAN, MACADE	08/04	BENNINGER, SHIRLEY	08/05
GRABERITZ JR, EDWARD	08/05	HONTZ, LORI	08/05
LADD, EMILY	08/05	SCHOPF, KAREN	08/05
SPERLBAUM, JERRY	08/05	ABRAHAM, XANDER	08/06
GEREN, WILLIAM	08/07	TOMCICS, HELEN	08/07
BLOOMFIELD, JAX	08/08	GRUVER, HOPE	08/08
KRICK, PATRICIA	08/08	PRINGLE, MICHAELA	08/08
GOLLEY, RONALD	08/09	MARAKOVITS, EMILY	08/09
ARMSTRONG SR, PHILLIPS	08/10	RIEGEL, MICHELE	08/10
ROTHROCK, EMILY	08/11	BRUNST, BARRY	08/12
KNECHEL, JACOB	08/12	PARSONS, ZACHARY	08/12
BASHORE, RILEY	08/13	SHOOP, SHANE	08/13
MINSHEW, SANDY	08/14	RINGENBERGER, TYLER	08/14
SHARRER, JULIA	08/14	SIEMS, NICOLE	08/14
EBERHART JR, WILLIAM	08/15	MELTON, HANNAH	08/15
YOUNGBLOOD, LINDA	08/15	HIMMELWRIGHT, PETER	08/16
JOHNSTON, LINDA	08/16	MOYER JR, CARSON	08/16
GEIGER, NANCY	08/17	WEIDNER, SCOTT	08/17
HEYDT, FLORENCE	08/18	MILLER, EMILIA	08/18
KNECHEL, LUCAS	08/19	MACARTHUR IV, STAFFORD	08/19
RINGENBERGER III, JAMES	08/19	SNYDER, GIZELLA	08/19

AUGUST BIRTHDAYS CONTINUED:

NEAMAND, CLAIR	08/21	REINHARD, ALEXANDRA	08/21
REINHARD, GABRIELLE	08/21	MUTHARD, MARGARET	08/22
SOLDRIDGE, MELISSA	08/22	HERZOG, DANIEL	08/23
KUTZURA, AMANDA	08/23	MORGAN, FRANCES	08/23
KEMMERER, LILLIAN	08/24	RIVERA, HEATHER	08/24
WARD, KAITLYN	08/24	WOTRING, DEAN	08/24
FALK, BEVERLY	08/25	GIOIELLI, KRYSTAL	08/25
TEDESCO, AMANDA	08/25	WEIDNER, DEREK	08/25
EDWARDS, JENNA	08/26	ROTH, DEVIN	08/27
BAILY, LINDA	08/28	YOUNGBLOOD JR, CARL	08/28
BISHER, ALEXANDER	08/29	BODNYK, SANDRA	08/29
WEHR, LINDA	08/29		



God Bless You on Your
Special Day!



+++++

We need friends. Friends guide us, care for us, confront us in love, and console us in times of pain. Although we speak of “making friends,” friends cannot be made. Friends are free gifts from God. But God gives us the friends we need when we need them if we fully trust in God’s love.

Friends cannot replace God. They have limitations and weaknesses like we have. Their love is never faultless, never complete. But in their limitations they can be signposts on our journey towards the unlimited and unconditional love of God.

Let’s enjoy the friends whom God has sent on our way.

Henri Nouwen, *Bread for the Journey*



Page for all ages



Granola

PUZZLE

As sweet as honey



Honey is both a sweetener and a medicine.
How can our words be used in the same ways?



Directions: Use the hexagon key to fill in the missing vowels and complete Proverbs 16:24, NIV.



Grocooos words

oro o honoocomb,

swoot to tho sool

ond hoolong 

to tho bonos.



PROVERBS 16:24, NIV

A SWEET TREAT



Make this refreshing treat on a hot summer day.



What you need:

- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt
- 2 Tbsp. honey
- ¼ cup granola or cereal

What you do:

1. On a baking sheet covered with parchment paper, spread yogurt in a thin layer, about ½-inch thick.
2. Drizzle honey evenly over yogurt. Sprinkle granola (or cereal) on top.
3. Freeze about 30 minutes, or until firm.
4. Crack frozen yogurt into pieces and peel away paper. Enjoy!

SYNOD NEWS

NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD, ELCA

MINLAB 21

How has your church been able to: Heal the Hurting, Love the Land, and Engage the Stranger?

Learn new ideas to take home and try. And show and tell others about the "vital signs" you've seen "growing" in your midst through God's grace, love and care in your community. On August 14th we will also go deeper into ways the "Growing Young" movement across our Synod is making a difference and changing the ways we are growing as a Jesus-centered community.

We hope every congregation will send at least two participants, to learn and share and grow. **Join us August 14, 2021**

Sign up online at Godslove.org



Christian Freedom vs. American Freedom

As we gather this month to celebrate July 4th and the **Freedom** ascribed to us as citizens of the United States of America, we often think of the individual freedoms that we 'hold dear.' Those "I" statements regardless of impact on another. We must understand these notions of what freedom means for us as **Lutheran Christians** and how we celebrate freedom *from* and *for*. We often see freedom as *from* something: oppression of speech, restriction of arms, etc. However, when God talks about freedom, God speaks of freedom *for* one

Meet Laurie Christman

Born and raised in Allentown, I now live with my husband of 31 years, two young adult sons, and one tortoiseshell cat in Lehigh Township, Northampton County. Hobbies flow with the seasons - gardening, reading, jigsaw puzzles and upcycling crafts.

During office hours, you'll find me at the front desk in the Lutheran Center. I enjoy answering the phone and greeting folks when they visit. If I don't have the information you need, I'll track it down or connect you with the right person. When you do your yearly congregational report, I'm the person that makes sure we have a copy in the synod's record. I keep the roster of people and congregations updated as well. My most challenging task is scheduling supply pastors for congregations in transition, as there seems to never be enough pastors.



July 2021

another. Jesus states the 'greatest commandment' is to *love one another as he (Jesus) loves us* (John 13:24-25). This biblical freedom, is one which Luther encouraged others to share. The promise that God engages us in freedom for one another. **To build up community** by strengthening relationships with one another and with God. The diversity by which we have been created is something that is meant to offer strength not divide. Luther spends a lot of time with Paul's letters, and the language of the **Body of Christ**. *We are all members of Christ's body, together, united, with differing views, even on the understanding of Freedom.* While we are different we are united. The same blood flows through us all." Luther quotes Romans 6:4 in the Small Catechism to support the above claim: "We were buried with Christ through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too, are to walk in new life."

Let us celebrate this nation's day of independence both from oppression, and for the love of one another: that we may see the unity in the diverse makeup of our nation, which strengthens our resolve as community, to live into the Body of Christ more fully every day.

Pastor Zach Labagh, Lead Pastor at Allegheny Evangelical Lutheran Church, Knauers, PA