



CHURCH KEY

A NEWSLETTER THAT OPENS PEOPLE
TO THE MINISTRIES OF



ZION'S UNION
CHURCH MAXATAWNY

**329 Church Road
Kutztown, Pennsylvania
610-683-7485**

a Federated Church of
The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
and
The United Church of Christ

December 2019

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REMINDERS

- ◆ The cost for a vase of flowers is \$18.00 and the cost to be a bulletin sponsor is \$8.00. Payment may be given to Jane Warmkessel or put the money in one of the flower/bulletin envelopes found in the Gathering Area and place in the offering plate.
- ◆ Any checks written out for the offering, altar flowers, or bulletins should be made payable to **Zion's Union Church Maxatawny**.
- ◆ **Any checks for the cemetery should be made out to Maxatawny Zion Cemetery Company, Inc. not to the church.**
- ◆ We have DVDs of the worship services available for use at home. Contact the church office if you would like to borrow one.
- ◆ Let the church office know if you have been admitted to the hospital. The hospitals **DO NOT** notify the church if members have been hospitalized.
- ◆ Zion's Union Church Maxatawny's website is www.zionsunion.org. Check out our website.
- ◆ Zion's has a prayer chain. If you would like to add a name to the Prayer Chain call Marion Angstadt at 610-683-3918.
- ◆ Sports cleats are not allowed in the church.
- ◆ After church refreshments should be kept on the first floor of the church.

THE PASTOR'S PAGE



CHRISTMAS IS COMING!!!!

When our two children were little, Kathy and I tried to shield them from the excess of the cultural, materialistic, and market-driven holiday that Christmas has become in our world today. We wanted them to understand that Christmas was about the birth of Jesus and God's love; it had nothing to do with Rudolph, Frosty, Charlie Brown, and Snoopy, and a Santa Claus who brings gifts and toys in direct correlation to a child's behavior throughout the year. Frankly, we failed miserably!

In a book called *Christmas: Festival of Incarnation*, author Donald Heinz notes that Christians have always lamented the "cultural captivity" of Christmas. From the beginning, Christians have tried to separate themselves from the more over-the-top secular celebration of Christmas. But, says Heinz, it's been a "spectacular failure of theological imagination." What he means is that the church's emphasis on observing the true meaning of Christmas has always lost out to the secular world's celebration of Christmas when it comes to capturing our children's imagination (and most adults as well!).

But, frankly, Christmas is a newcomer on the scene. Long before the beginning of Christianity, the winter solstice was an occasion of thanksgiving and celebration. The darkness and cold of the retreating sun inspired terror, and when the sun finally started its slow return, ancient peoples marked the event with feasting and fertility celebrations. And some of their symbols are still with us: boughs of evergreen, holly and ivy, and wreaths.

Later, the Romans would mark the year's end with a festival called Saturnalia, a raucous weeklong party. Christians decided to offer an alternative and began to celebrate the incarnation with a special service called "Christ's Mass." Their hope was that in time Christ's Mass would replace Saturnalia. That effort failed, Heinz notes, as has every effort of the church to banish the secular year-end solstice festival.

And nobody but nobody was as hard on Christmas as the Puritans when they came to the new world. Heinz says, "They argued that December 25th was not biblical but heathen, that Jesus would have disapproved of his birthday celebrations, and that Christmas was just an excuse for . . . gross behavior, social upheaval, and drunkenness, no doubt aided by the lull in agricultural life." The Puritans ordered shops to stay open, insisted that work go on as usual, and banned holiday celebrations. They also managed to have Christmas declared illegal by the Massachusetts legislature from 1659 to 1681. Heinz reports that the U.S. Congress even remained in session on Christmas Day from 1789 to 1851.

The Puritans did a lot of good things, but banning Christmas because of eating, drinking, and celebrating, was not one of their more memorable ideas. After all, the incarnation of God—which is the real meaning of Christmas—means that this world is God’s creation and that God loved it so much that God came here to be in it with us. The Christmas story could not be more this-worldly: a pregnant unwed teenager, a perplexed fiancé, an arduous journey, an inn full of raucous guests, a barn full of animals, labor pains, blood, birth, and umbilical cords.

The origin of Christmas could not be more human or more earthy; and that is the point. Incarnation means that God is with us in this world, the sacred in the secular, the holy in the profane. It is *this* world that God entered into on that first Christmas. And he has been here with us in the midst of all our earthly doings ever since. The fact is that Jesus partied and celebrated while he was on earth, so there is no reason that we shouldn’t celebrate his coming into the world with great good cheer.

Wishing all of you a very Merry Christmas!

Pastor Jeff

DECEMBER AND JANUARY WORSHIP

December 1	First Sunday of Advent	SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 8	Second Sunday of Advent	SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 15	Third Sunday of Advent	SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 22	Fourth Sunday of Advent	SS 9:00	church 10:15
December 24	Christmas Eve Family Service		6:00 P.M.
December 24	Christmas Eve Candlelight Service		9:00 P.M.
December 29	S.S. Christmas Pageant	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 5	Epiphany Sunday	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 12	Baptism of Christ	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 19	Second Sunday after Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15
January 26	Scout Sunday/Third Epiphany	SS 9:00	church 10:15

DECEMBER CHOIRS SCHEDULES

Kid’s Choir: December 8th and 22nd
Senior Choir: December 5th, 12th, and 19th

CHURCH DOORS

As part of our on-going commitment to providing a safe environment to joyfully worship the Lord, we will be keeping the front doors locked on Sunday mornings from 9:15 A.M. on. Greeters will be on duty to open the doors and welcome you to your morning worship. This recommendation came out of the intruder training by the Kutztown Police Department. Thank you, everyone, for your cooperation and understanding.

BETHANY'S BRIGHTER FUTURE FUND

On **November 24th** and **December 1st** baskets will be in the back of the church and the Gathering Area of the church for any monetary donations for the Bethany Children's Home Brighter Future Fund to purchase items for the residents for Christmas.



INCLEMENT WEATHER

Worship service/Sunday School/activities cancellation:
www.wfmz.com (click on "storm center update") (**please note:** worship delays or closings will be listed on WFMZ website and not on Channel 69 except for extreme weekend weather conditions) or call the church office (610-683-7485). A message will be on the answering machine.



INGATHERING

On the first Sunday of each month the Mission Outreach Committee will continue to collect items to fill bags with food staples for needy children and their families in the Kutztown, Brandywine, and Fleetwood School Districts. Please participate by dropping off non-perishable items from the list below in the container provided in the Gathering Area.



single serve size macaroni and cheese
single serve size applesauce
single serve cereal
oatmeal packets

peanut butter
canned tuna
granola bars

fruit cups
canned soup
fruit snacks

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC

If there is anyone who would like to do special music for the Christmas musicale on **December 22nd**, please let Theresa know by **December 1st**.

ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING

Our annual Congregational Meeting to elect Board Members and to approve the annual operating budget will be held **December 8th** immediately following the worship service. This year we have 4 Board Member openings. Please consider attending this important meeting.

ANGEL PROJECT

The Sunday School has begun their Angel Project. This program allows needy children in our community to receive Christmas gifts through Zion's generosity. Check the tree for an angel and shop for that perfect gift. **DO NOT WRAP GIFTS. Gifts can be put in a box or gift bag.** Gifts are due back by **December 8th**.



POINSETTIA DISPLAY

We will be decorating our church with poinsettias for Christmas. The cost will be \$10.00 per plant. A tear off sign-up sheet is below and may be placed in the offering plate during worship. Please see Karen Warmkessel to pay for your poinsettias. You may also mail the sign-up sheet and payment to the church. Any checks should be made out to Zion's Union Church Maxatawny. Deadline for orders is **December 8th**.



POINSETTIA SIGN UP

NAME

NUMBER OF POINSETTIAS: RED..... WHITE

IN HONOR OF or IN MEMORY OF (*circle one*)

.....

LIVE NATIVITY

The Sunday School's Live Nativity will be held **December 14th** from 5:00 to 7:30 P.M. Shows will be held every ½ hour. The final show will be at 7:00 P.M. Refreshments will be served.



Help is needed with set up, acting, parking, and serving refreshments. Anyone from 3rd grade through adult is welcome to help. You do not need to be a Sunday School member. Anyone interested in helping out, contact Sue Haas at 610-683-6099.

SIMPLY GIVING PROGRAM

To members currently enrolled: Any amount changes for 2020 need to be submitted by mid-December to go in effect in January. To prospective new members: If you are interested in joining others in this easy giving program for 2020, enrollment forms must be filled out and returned by mid-December as well. Forms are on the upstairs Bulletin Board and may be returned to Peggy Morgan. Reminder that amount changes as well as new member enrollment may be done any time throughout the year.

CHRISTMAS EVE WORSHIP 2019

FAMILY SERVICE AT 6:00 P.M. – This early service to celebrate the birth of Jesus will have a specific focus for families and children. The story of Jesus birth will be shared and Holy Communion will add to the joy of this wondrous celebration.



CANDLELIGHT SERVICE OF HOLY COMMUNION AT 9:00 P.M. – This traditional Christmas Eve worship will include the singing of familiar carols, the retelling of the story of our Lord's birth, the distribution of Holy Communion, and will end with all in attendance sharing a candlelight celebration of praise to our Lord and Savior Jesus.



UNWANTED ITEMS

There is a container marked "Opportunity House" at St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Mertztown (near Radcliffe's) where you can donate goods.

ANNUAL REPORTS

As the year comes to an end, so does the time for all organizations, groups, and committees to get their annual report information into the church office. All information for the annual report **MUST** be in the church office by **January 15th**.



REMINDER ABOUT OUR CARD MINISTRY

Cards are available in the Gathering Area for all occasions – thinking of you, birthday, etc. If you need help addressing, please see Grace Haas. Cards are \$1.00 with postage stamp included. **Why not make someone's day special?**

CHURCH BOARD MEETING

October 29, 2019

- Rev. Rachael Dietz from the NEPA Synod discussed the services provided by our Benevolence donations.
- The Congregational Meeting will be on December 8th.
- The budget for 2020 was approved for ratification by the Congregation on December 8th.
- Revised laws required revamping the Safe Kids policy and forms and was approved by the board.
- The Christmas Tour was cancelled due to distance from other participating churches.
- The Flickers created a shadow box commemorating the mortgage shedding ceremony.
- Strategic Plan updates will be included as part of the Congregational Meeting in December.
- There are still opportunities to serve as board members. Prayerfully consider your participation.

PRAYER SHAWL



Comforting wraps are still available to all who are in need. Please alert the church office or talk to Loretta Flicker or Karen Howard if you or someone you know would benefit from this ministry.

SENIOR FELLOWSHIP GROUP

The Senior Fellowship Group will meet **December 23rd and January 27th** at 12 noon. Persons attending should bring a bag lunch. Dessert and beverages will be provided. Games will provide entertainment for the afternoon. Guests are welcome.



YOUTH GROUP NEWS

*Youth Group meetings are open from age 10.
Schedules are on the upstairs bulletin board.*

Activity Schedule:

December 1	Youth practice for Advent Social at 5:00 P.M. Advent Social at 7:00 P.M.
December 7	Pack nuts at 9:00 A.M.
December 15	Caroling at 1:30 P.M. followed by ice cream sundaes.
December 19	Work at Friend, Inc. between 4:30 – 7:30 P.M.
January 5	Bowling or snow activity, depending on the weather at 1:30 P.M.
January 19	Square Dancing (everyone welcome) at 1:30 P.M.



Offering Schedule:

December 1	Jonathan Weidman and Katelyn DeLong
December 8	Ethan Weidman and Nick Perella
December 15	Caleb Krause and Cayden Ciccone-Haas
December 22	Kelly Leiby and Autumn Edelman
December 29	Emily Bortz and Lizzie Schell
January 5	Connor O'Neil and Sarah Grim
January 12	Carson Sheetz and Ashley DeLong
January 19	Maisy Kellum and Julia Perella
January 26	Andrew Haas and Archer Scaffidi

NUTS – The Youth Group is selling nuts for the holiday season. The prices are \$9.00 for a pound of cashews or mixed nuts, and \$4.00 for a pound of peanuts, salted or unsalted. See any Youth Group member to order nuts. Deadline for orders is **December 1st**. Orders will be ready for pick-up on **December 8th**.



ADVENT SOCIAL – The Youth Group will be having their Advent Social on **December 1st** at 7:00 P.M. The congregation is welcome to join them for some fun and fellowship during the Advent season.



YOUTH CAMP REPORT

Thanks to everyone who helped make our weekend Youth Camp a possibility. Including the three advisors, there were 18 campers coming and going throughout the weekend. Our theme was primarily related to the homeless with additional emphasis on how we discriminate toward people. Studies were done on the Book of Jonah and Peter's visit to Joppa, that illustrated how even back in Bible times, people were discriminated against. In addition to our sessions, we found time to make and tie 6 blankets that were taken to Mary's Shelter, make 8 gallons of veggie soup which were taken to the Reading Soup Kitchen, and work on a Lego project for the church. We are fortunate to have the church located where it is. As is usually the case, at camp this year we had young people from 4 different school districts. What a great learning and social event the weekend turned out to be. Again, many thanks for making it possible.

WOMEN IN ZION

*A group of Christian women in service, mission, and study for the benefit of all.
Meetings are open to all women of the congregation.*

December 9	Cookie Exchange and Christmas games at 1:00 P.M.
January 13	To Be Announced.



*For more information contact Linda Ballew-Johnson
(484-553-1981) or Loretta Flicker (610-683-3627).*

WALL CALENDARS – Women In Zion **WILL NOT BE COLLECTING** wall calendars for the year 2020. Please recycle them another way.

COOKIE SALE – A sign-up sheet for the WIZ's Cookie Sale is on the second floor bulletin board. The cost is \$6.50 for a box of at least a pound assortment delicious home-made cookies. The pick-up date is Sunday, **December 8th**. Sign-up soon because supplies are limited.

ATTENTION RECIPE TYPISTS

If you have not turned in your typed and original recipes to Nikki Phillips, please direct them to Linda Ballew-Johnson, Loretta Flicker, or Ellie Merkel. If you prefer to email the typed recipes, contact them for their email address.

CANCER SUPPORT GROUP

The Cancer Support Group will meet the second Monday of the month at 6:30 P.M. See Loretta Flicker for more information.

SCRABBLE

Scrabble will meet the third Monday of the month at 1:30 P.M. at the Lutheran Home in the social area near Sylvia's room. See Ellie Merkel if interested.

CALLING ALL GEEKS!

The Good News Committee needs help developing calendars that download to smartphones and tablets. If you are able and willing to take on a challenge like this, contact Linda Ballew-Johnson either at church or by phone 484-553-1981.

HONOR ROLL

If you would like a name included please email the church office or put a note in the secretary's mailbox in the Gathering Area of the church.

Archer Scaffidi

Mitchell Grim

Sarah Grim

DID YOU KNOW?

- Allen Leiby attended the Grand Opening on the newly built Hampton Inn and Suites on Kutztown Road, Kutztown.
- Elaine and Paul Heffner were seen on WFMZ news celebrating Mrs. Ely's 100th birthday.
- Archer and Arden Scaffidi are swimming for the Boyertown YMCA Navy Seals during the winter 2019-2020 season. While it is early in the season, they both have qualified for the Eastern PA District Competition in March 2020.
- Kaylen Leiby is the student director of "Matilda the Musical", the musical comedy being performed at Kutztown High School. Kaylen is a seasoned member of Kutztown's theater program and has participated one way or another since 5th grade.

FROM THE MAILBOX

Dear Congregation at Zion's Union Church,

I appreciate the invitation to the Golden Anniversary of my 1969 Confirmation celebration. I'm sorry I will not be able to attend, as I have another commitment. I have many good memories of growing up at Zion, the friends I found there and of Reverend Weida. I am grateful for the years of worship and Biblical instruction I received. The training I got at home from my parents, along with the Church, led me to accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. My husband and I are members of Fleetwood Bible Church where I am a Sunday School teacher. I pray the Lord will abundantly bless your worship service and fellowship time.



With love in Christ,
Debra (Potzman) Rhein

Hi Women In Zion!

Thanks so much for the delicious soup. It fed 197 people! We truly appreciate your kindness for our clients.

New Journey Community Outreach

Thank you for all the get well cards and well wishes for my recovery.

Arlene Oswald

Hi Zion's Youth Group!

Thanks so much for the delicious soup and for thinking of our clients. God bless each of you!

New Journey Community Outreach

Zion Union church – Maxatawny Youth Group

Thank you so much for your support of Mary's Shelter. We appreciate your donation of the 6 hand-made blankets. They are beautiful and will be a warm comfort this winter season. Thank you so much for your kindness.

Blessings!
Mary's Shelter

Dear Friends at Zion's Union Church,

We just received your 291.00 donation. Because of you, we can continue to serve at-risk families, parents, children, students, and seniors. Your support will provide them with nutritious food, emergency assistance, money management education, job placement assistance, winter coats, and so much more. Thanks again for your investment in Friend, Inc.

Sandra Wise, Executive Director

MYSTERY MEMBER

This month you will meet a couple who is well known to everyone in the congregation but I am sure you will still learn some facts about them that you did not know.

She was born in Reading and spent her early years in that area. She was a member of the Muhlenberg Swimming Pool swim team and also participated in a bowling team at Laurel Lanes. She attended football games with her family and watched her brother play for many years. Her education was at Muhlenberg High School with a year at Penn State. She met her husband while they were both working at Boscov's Department Store where she worked in the candy and bakery departments and he delivered the baked goods. They were married in 1973 in Temple, PA. Their honeymoon was to Disney World where he recalls their stay at the Polynesian Resort was \$28 a night. Amazing!

He was born in Allentown and spent his weekends at the Reading Stock Car Races and in various bowling leagues. He is a graduate of Brandywine High School and served for 2 years with the Army Signal Corps in Germany. Later he was employed by the Brandywine School District but his first job was at Dorney Park back when you could drive right through the park and there was no admission charge. He has also held various customer service jobs and is currently employed by Lehigh Valley Hospital.

She is multi-talented and has worked as a school bus driver, a cashier, a cake decorator, a candy maker, and a stamping demonstrator for the past 18 1/2 years.

She has a brother and a sister and he has a brother.

They have always had dogs and currently have a dog adopted from the Sanctuary at Haafsville.

They enjoy many hobbies. She is into crafting, reading, knitting, cross stitch, stamping, cake decorating, sewing, and playing the Celtic harp. He enjoys basket making, baking, crosswords, golf, cooking, and he has a huge collection of CDs. He also plays the piano and has volunteered at a pet sanctuary.

He was a member of the former Men's Group. She is a member of WIZ and sends the greeting cards for the Senior Ministry Committee. She is a former member of the Church Board.

Their favorite vacation spot is Cape May.

Have you guessed the identity of this couple—or at least have you learned any new facts about them? I have.

MEMBER UPDATES

610-432-4403 Costello, John – Marlene G.
3611 Sunset Ave., Allentown, PA 18103
610-682-7004 Ehrig, David A. – Bettina (Tina) F.
PO Box 66, 20 Boulder Ln., Mertztown, PA 19539
610-762-3876 Weller, Robert C. – Erdman, Lisette (Liz)
53 Klines Corner Rd., Kutztown, PA 19530
484-788-8054 Shorette, Amanda
Owen D.
Jonah A.
10538 Old 22, Kutztown, PA 19530
Loss: Heckler, Rev. Willis K.

NEW BILINGUAL PENNSYLVANIA GERMAN (DUTCH) AND ENGLISH PICTURE BOOK

Mary Laub has recently published Book 3 in a series of bilingual books. The title is "Uff der Bauerei: Wu iss der Spunky?" (On the Farm: Where is Spunky?). All the books in the series are uniquely different in that there is a phonetic spelling under each word to assist the reader in pronouncing the words. There is also an English translation under the phonetic spelling. A recording of the story is available as a free audio download or a CD can be purchased. Book 3 includes a picture glossary to help in learning PA German words. Books and CDs can be purchased directly from Mary. There is a sign-up sheet on the upstairs bulletin board. The books are also sold at local businesses including Wooden Bridge Fabrics, Leid's Saddlery, Dietrich's Meats, Burkholder Farm Market (Topton Road), and others. They can also be purchased online at Amazon.com or www.masthof.com. Mary will autograph books upon request.

THEOLOGY WITH A TWIST

Theology with a Twist will be held **December 10th** at 7:00 P.M. at the Kutztown Tavern, 272 W. Main St., Kutztown. Theology with a Twist is free. Food and drink are available for purchase. For information see facebook page Theology with a Twist; email theologywithatwist@outlook.com, or call 610-926-3907.

KUTZTOWN COMMUNITY CHOIR CHRISTMAS CHORAL CONCERT

The Kutztown Community Choir will present their annual Christmas concert on Sunday, **December 8th** at 3:00 P.M. at Trinity Lutheran Church, 357 W. Main St., Kutztown. The theme of this year's concert is bells—bells of joy, love, peace, and good will. Musical selections include festive, fun, and inspirational favorites such as *Carol of the Bells*, *Silver Bells*, and two unique arrangements of *I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day*. The concert will once again conclude with the Hallelujah Chorus, from Händel's *Messiah*, in which the audience is invited to join the choir. There will be a reception with light refreshments following the program and an art show featuring the local artists of Art in the Afternoon.



HANDEL'S MESSIAH

Reading Choral Society will present Handel's *Messiah* under the direction of Dr. Graham Bier on **December 1st** at 4 P.M. at Muhlenberg High School Auditorium. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 at door, and \$10 students. To purchase tickets contact Reading Choral Society at 610-898-1939 or www.readingchoral.org.

KUTZTOWN KITCHEN

Usually the third Sunday of the month from 4:00 to 6:00 P.M. a Community Meal is held at Trinity Lutheran Church, 357 W. Main St., Kutztown. There is no cost. All are invited. Parking is in the rear of the church on Sacony Alley. Menu: TBA.

QUIET DAYS

Quiet Days takes place **December 3rd** from 9:30 A.M. - 1:00 P.M. at New Goshenhoppen UCC, 1070 Church Road, East Greenville. There is no registration, but a minimum donation of \$5.00 is requested. Bring a Bible, journal, pen, and bag lunch. For more information contact Sue at sawmsw@dejazzd.com.

SYNOD NEWS

Northeastern Pennsylvania Synod, ELCA

We Love... 2019 A Day of Learning



We Love...because God first loves us. We Love...others because each person is a child of God. We Love...by expanding our understanding of others and allowing people to be truly who God made them to be. We Love...because God is love.

These were just a few of the takeaways from We Love... 2019, a day of learning to help congregations be more opening and welcoming to LGBTQIA+ individuals and their families. For many participants this was uncharted territory, as they are learning what all those letters actually do mean (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/ Questioning, Intersex, Asexual/Aromantic plus many more).

For others, there was still plenty to learn as we explored the intersection between sexuality/gender identity and faith and discussed how the church can be a place where people do not feel they have to hide their sexuality or gender identity in order to feel the love of God and others.



The keynote speaker was Jamie Bruesehoff, a writer and advocate in New Jersey. She is married to an ELCA pastor and is the mother of three children, the oldest of whom is transgender. Workshops included safety basics, welcoming language in worship, what scripture has to say about homosexuality, bisexuality visibility, and parents sharing stories of when their children came out and how the church was both helpful and hurtful.

We Love... is being planned again for the fall of 2020.

Bern, Leesport Supports World Hunger

Bern gets in the Farming Spirit to Raise Funds for ELCA World Hunger



Ministry often surprises us. Our congregations work hard to meet many needs across the United States and around the globe. Feeding the hungry is one of those needs. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus says, "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me" Matthew 25:35. When we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty and welcome the stranger, we are encountering and caring for Jesus.

This past September Bern Lutheran Church in Leesport set out to raise enough money to buy one farm from ELCA World Hunger (ELCA Good Gifts). Over the course of four weeks, hundreds of dollars began pouring in. The spirit of the project was

evident throughout. Jane Battaglieri, Bern's Music Director, even enjoyed adding some special music in the spirit of the project. During one service, the song sung before announcing the total was "The Farmer in the Dell" and the postlude was "Old MacDonald." The people of Bern came together during their God's Global Barnyard project and their generosity was overwhelming! By the end of the project in October, a total of \$3,000 was raised!

The Rev. Phyllis Wolkenhauer was especially overjoyed at the success of the whole project. She wrote, "I think \$3,000.00 was a complete surprise to all of us. The day the final total was calculated, we received a letter encouraging us to participate in the ELCA World Hunger appeal and take advantage of the matching funds currently available. In the blink of an eye, the Lord increased our offerings to total \$6,000. What a gift!"



***Never underestimate the power of prayerful giving
and of a congregation coming together
to make an impact upon a world in need!***

Learning Ministries Day 2020

Saturday, January 25, 2020 (snow date Saturday, February 1)
9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. @ Union Lutheran Church, Schnecksville
Theme: Vision 2020

Keynote Speaker: The Rev. Brenda Smith,
Program Director, ELCA Faith and Book of Faith
(Visit nepasynod.org for more information)

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View the full color edition online at <http://nepasynod.org>.

Breaking bread, eradicating hate



uch can happen when we gather for a meal — new understandings, new commitments, new friendships.

In May 2018, several ELCA congregations and worshipping communities discovered this when they joined their Muslim neighbors for interfaith iftars.

An iftar is the meal for which Muslims break their daily fast during the holy month of Ramadan.

Augustana Lutheran, Sioux Falls, S.D., and the mission congregation it shares building space with, *Pueblo de Dios*, hosted their first iftar. Almost 60 people attended, including members of Augustana Lutheran and *Pueblo de Dios* and Muslims from three mosques in town.

"There was a bit of discomfort on both sides — Christian and Muslim," said Amy Martinell, Augustana's pastor. But "when the food came out and we sat and ate together, the discomfort melted away and we became one community."

For two years the Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago (LSTC) hosted regular iftars with a nearby Turkish community. Sara Trumm, interim director of A Center of Christian-Muslim Engagement for Peace and Justice at LSTC, reported that 60 to 100 people attended. Trumm said they've found that sharing a meal helps people feel comfortable meeting others from different backgrounds.

"Right now, with Islamophobia as strong as it is, it's important for people to be informed about what

Islam is so they don't fall prey to some of the negative stereotyping and falsities being shared, especially with one of the Ten Commandments telling us to not bear false witness against our neighbors," she said.

To promote the interfaith iftars, Neighbors in Faith, a joint ministry of the Northwest Washington Synod of the ELCA, the Episcopal Diocese of Olympia and Washington's Muslim community, worked with Shoulder-to-Shoulder, an interreligious campaign dedicated to ending anti-Muslim sentiment. *The ELCA is a founding member of Shoulder-to-Shoulder, which receives Mission Support funding.*

"What actually changes for people who are rooted in fear is to meet a Muslim and realize they're just human too," said Terry Kylo, an ELCA pastor and the director of Neighbors in Faith. "The iftars are a beautiful way to begin to understand the basics of Islam and how many similarities we have. And they help our Muslim neighbors to see that they aren't alone, that we want to learn from them and are willing to stand in solidarity with them."



Lutherans and Muslims broke bread together at interfaith iftars in May 2018. Your Mission Support dollars boost the ministry of Shoulder-to-Shoulder, an interreligious campaign to end anti-Muslim sentiment founded by the ELCA and other ministry partners.



Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

CARD SHOWERS

We are listing those couples married 50 years or more and those people 70 years or older. If we are missing anyone, please call the church office.

December 2	Leon Neimeyer
December 3	Kenneth & Dianne Angstadt (59 wed)
December 12	Lucille Zettlemoyer
December 16	Diana Gehman
December 17	Elaine Silliman
December 17	Jane Warmkessel
December 18	Michael & Evelyn Dietz (54 wed)
December 25	Sylvia Heckler
December 26	Michael Dietz
January 2	Joan Stettler
January 4	Marian Stettler
January 14	Irene Isamoyer
January 17	Walter Dietrich, Jr.
January 20	Mary Haas
January 30	Roeller Dietrich
January 30	Elaine Heffner



FROM THE RECORD BOOK

FUNERAL: *Rev. Willis K. Heckler*, 86, died November 8, 2019. Services were November 16, 2019 in Zion's Union Church Maxatawny by Rev. Jeffrey J. Butz and Rev. Jimmy Lee Werley. Interment was in Zion Maxatawny Union Cemetery.

NEW MEMBERS: November 17, 2019

John and Marlene Costello

David A. and Bettina (Tina) Ehrig

Robert Weller and Lisette (Liz) Erdman

OUR SYMPATHIES TO

... the family of Bruce Peters.

... the family of Sue DeStacio.

... the family of Ron Fulton.

... the family of Lillian Diehl.

... the family of Rev. Willis Heckler.



MISSION STATEMENT

Energized by the Spirit! Humbled by Christ's Grace! Working for God's glory!

UPCOMING HOLY COMMUNIONS

You are invited by Jesus Christ to this awesome feast of the Children of God.

December 1	Altar Holy communion
December 24 (6 PM)	Pew Holy Communion
December 24 (9 PM)	Pew Holy Communion
January 5	Pew Holy Communion



JANUARY NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

The next issue of the newsletter will come out the beginning of January. If you have any information to be included in the January newsletter, please have it in the church office by **December 15th**.