

# *ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING*



*LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH  
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY  
(A Christian Day School)*

*225 WEST TENTH STREET  
ERIE, PENNSYLVANIA 16501  
(814-454-0106)*

*JANUARY 25, 2026*

***AGENDA***  
***ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING***  
***JANUARY 25, 2026***

**A. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER**

1. Discussion on the Process of Voting	Mr. Les Fobes
2. Adoption of the Agenda	Mr. Les Fobes

**B. PASTOR'S COMMENTS**

Pastor Jay Mitchell

**C. REPORT OF LMA ADMINISTRATOR**

Mrs. Michelle Thom

**D. ELECTION OF COUNCIL**

1. Nominating Committee Report	Mr. Greg Kern
2. Closing of the Nominations	Mr. Les Fobes
3. Election	Mr. Les Fobes

**E. REPORTS OF CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL, STAFF, COMMITTEES**

1. Reports	Mr. Les Fobes
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**F. FINANCIAL REPORT**

1. 2025 Financial Review	Mr. Greg Kern
2. 2026 Budget	Mr. Greg Kern

**G. PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS BY CONGREGATIONAL COUNCIL**

Mr. Les Fobes

Be it resolved:

1. That we express our thanks to Almighty God for the blessings we have received during the past year, and that we pledge ourselves anew to dedicated Christian living, worship, and service in this new year of grace, 2025.
2. We express our thanks to all members of the congregation who served so faithfully in our church during 2024, especially those members of Congregational Council completing terms of service; Eli Cooney, Gina Snider and Pat Young.
3. That we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our 2025 staff: Ciara Adams, Debbie Barger, Braxton Beaulieu, David Buerk, Norma Buerk, Ellen Cass, Caryn Chludzynski, Jody Donovan, Amanda Fried, Amy Gilewicz, Beth Keller, Ron King, Grace Lentz, Jan MacInnes, Rebecca McCormick, Pastor Jay Mitchell, Heidi Myer, AJ Noyes, Sarah Prylinski, Katie Romba, Miriam Scheid, Stephanie Sherwood, Karen Socash, Michelle Thom, Bryan Timm, Jenna Uhlig, Erin VanDyke, Meaghan Wood, Kevin Ziroli.
4. That the Council be authorized to act on the report of the auditor when completed.
5. That the minutes of this meeting be considered for adoption by the Church Council not later than the second regular meeting following this annual meeting.

**H. ADJOURNMENT**

1. Closing Hymn – “Go to the World”	ACS 991 / pg. 41
2. Blessing	Pastor Jay Mitchell
3. Dismissal	Pastor Jay Mitchell

*LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH STAFF*

PASTOR JAY MITCHELL	PASTOR
BRYAN TIMM	CANTOR
BETH KELLER	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
SARAH PRYLINSKI	CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY
JAN MACINNES	CARE MINISTRY
MIRIAM SCHEID	PARISH MANAGER
NORMA BUERK	SECRETARY
MICHELLE THOM	ADMINISTRATOR LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
AMANDA FRIED	SECRETARY LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY
DAVID BUERK	MAINTENANCE SUPERVISOR
RICH ROWLAND	SUNDAY MORNING / WEEKLY SECURITY

*LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH COUNCIL*

LES FOBES . . . PRESIDENT	TOM KLOMP . . . VICE-PRESIDENT
EMMA CHAFFEE . . . SECRETARY	GREG KERN . . . TREASURER
GINA SNIDER . . . ASSISTANT TREASURER	
ROB COONEY	PASTOR JAY MITCHELL
ELY COONEY	LIZ STROUP
JONATHAN GABER	JONATHAN ULRICH
MICHAEL HEDLUND	PATRICIA YOUNG
NICK LANG	

**MINUTES OF ANNUAL CONGREGATIONAL MEETING**  
**JANUARY 26, 2025**

1. Meeting Called to Order: at 11:33am by Les Fobes.
  - a. Declaration of a Quorum: Quorum was present.
  - b. Appointment of a Secretary: Emma Chaffee, Church Council secretary, will act as secretary.
  - c. Approval of Agenda: Agenda was motioned to be adopted by Sandy Barbaro and seconded by Mary Mumford. Motion unanimously accepted.
2. Pastor Jay's Report:
  - a. Draws attention to giving thanks to those we've seen into retirement and those new we have welcomed on board, staff, members and baptisms alike.
3. Report of LMA Administration:
  - a. School administrator Michelle Thom highlighted the school newsletter, little free library, keeping traditions and starting new ones (lunch with pastor and principal),
  - b. In addition, there have been multiple grants awarded to LMA this year that Michelle Thom had sought out.
  - c. Enrollment was consistent with the past few years but still historically lower (89 Students), but there is room to grow, share with others as we are open to do tours; expressed gratitude to the congregation.
4. Election of Council:
  - a. There have been 15 council members since Bethany Lutheran Church had merged with Luther Memorial. Electing 3 members from Bethany and repeating this when St. Matthews Lutheran Church merged with Luther Memorial. Prior to that, there were 12 council members.
    - i. We are going back to 12 council members as it is proving more and more difficult to fill 15 spots. (Voted on by church council)
  - b. The nominating committee recommends Liz Stroup (3 years), Ely Cooney (1 year), and Jonathan Ulrich (3 years) to be elected onto church council. The recommendation was seconded by Skip Meyn. Motion unanimously accepted.
    - i. Nominations are closed.
  - c. Pastor Jay makes a motion that we elect said nominations by slate; seconded Arlene Evans. Motion unanimously accepted.
5. Reports of the Congregational Council, Staff, and Committees:
  - a. No questions
  - b. Les Fobes highlights property committee actions this past year:
    - i. New dishwasher in Fellowship Hall for \$4,000 (repair) vs. \$35,000 (new).
    - ii. On-demand hot water heater also installed simultaneously as the new dishwasher.
    - iii. New carpeting and furniture in the parlor.
    - iv. This year there will be a new electronic sign in the green space, located at 10<sup>th</sup> and Sassafras Streets to advertise LMC & LMA.

*Annual Meeting Minutes, cont'd.:*

6. Treasurer's Report:

a. Luther Memorial Academy:

- i. 2023 losses were at \$44,481.14
- ii. 2024 losses were at \$55,677.21

b. Luther Memorial Church Foundation:

- i. Nothing available for 2025 as we took money for some bigger repairs, if we have another good year we should be able to get some for 2026.

c. St. Matthew's Endowment Fund:

- i. Money from Erie Community Foundation (ECF) will be merged with Luther Memorial's account at ECF.
- ii. ELCA account is being closed out and check has been sent out.
  - 1. Gina Snider will have meeting with committee to determine what will be done with money from ELCA check. It is discussed that it will probably go into the account at UBS (where Luther Memorial Church has investments).

d. Erie Community Foundation:

- i. Cannot produce Month or YTD report
  - 1. Greg Kern created excel spreadsheet for report (from most recent report available from October 2024)

e. Renew Erie Balance Sheet:

- i. \$33,219.32 in checking
- ii. \$29,833.11 in Mission Investment Fund
- iii. ~\$12,000 income per year into church budget

f. Capital Campaign:

- i. \$230,000 estimated cost of parking lot
- ii. ~\$164,000 pledges
- iii. \$26,964 in outstanding pledges
- iv. Able to pay back what we borrowed from Memorial Fund
- v. \$74,000 left in account, will be used towards new sign being put into green space

g. UBS:

- i. Money in savings account dumped into UBS from Northwest Savings account
  - 1. FMV is from September 2024

*Annual Meeting Minutes, cont'd.:*

h. Income and Expenses for 2024:

- i. Total Income 2024: \$483,465
  1. Giving: \$308,539
  2. Other Income: \$174,926 when we budgeted for \$169,754
- ii. Total Expenses 2024: \$547,754
  1. Budgeted was \$546,739

i. Budget for 2025:

- i. Budgeted Giving: \$309,446
- ii. Erie Community Foundation: \$138,600 (4% rule) ECF ran their own quarterly average and were a couple grand over that number)
- iii. Investment Income: \$23,000 (Renew Erie)
- iv. Total Income Budgeted: \$498,646
- v. Expenses Budgeted: \$560,801
  1. Salaries and Benefits: \$301,639
- vi. Expected Loss: \$62,155
- vii. Motion to accept the budget for 2025 as presented made by Rob Benacci and seconded by Sandy Barbaro. Motion unanimously accepted.

7. Proposed Resolutions By Congregational Council:

a. Be it resolved:

1. That we express our thanks to Almighty God for the blessings we have received during the past year, and that we pledge ourselves anew to dedicated Christian living, worship, and service in this new year of grace, 2025.
2. We express our thanks to all members of the congregation who served so faithfully in our church during 2024, especially those members of Congregational Council completing terms of service; Eli Cooney, Pat Young.
3. That we also express our sincere thanks and gratitude to our 2024 staff: Ciara Adams, David Buerk, Norma Buerk, Caryn Chludzynski, Jody Donovan, Kim Evans, Amanda Fried, Walt Gaber, Amy Gilewicz, Linda Graffius, Beth Keller, Ron King, Jan MacInnes, Rebecca McCormick, Pastor Jay Mitchell, Heidi Myer, AJ Noyes, Sarah Prylinski, Sutton Rowland, Katie Romba, Miriam Scheid, Stephanie Sherwood, Caiden Snider, Karen Socash, Michelle Thom, Bryan Timm, Jenna Uhlig, Erin VanDyke, Kevin Ziroli.
4. That the Council be authorized to act on the report of the auditor when completed.
5. That the minutes of this meeting be considered for adoption by the Church Council no later than the second regular meeting following this annual meeting.

b. Motion to accept the resolutions made by Skip Meyn and seconded by Rob Benacci. Motion unanimously approved.

Annual Meeting Minutes, cont'd.:

8. Adjournment:

- a. Motion to adjourn made by Ken Kraut and seconded by Eric Hedlund. Motion was unanimously approved
- b. Hymn
- c. Blessing by Pastor Jay Mitchell
- d. Dismissal by Pastor Jay Mitchell

Respectfully submitted,

*Emma Chaffee*

***NOMINATING COMMITTEE***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***



The Nominating Committee, formed ad-hoc at the September 2025 meeting of Church Council, was asked to seek church members willing to stand for election to Church Council at the annual meeting on January 25, 2026. The committee members were Les Fobes and Greg Kern with some help from Pastor Jay.

Pat Young and Gina Snider have finished their first 3-year terms and do not wish to run again. Eli Cooney has finished his second 1-yr term and will be unavailable to run again.

Mike Hedlund has finished his first 3-year term and will run again.

This means that there are four open positions.

The following three members have agreed to become nominees for the three available positions for Luther Memorial's Church Council:

**3-year terms**

Carol Davidson  
Barb Dennison  
Mike Hedlund

**1-year term**

Respectfully submitted,  
*Greg Kern*  
Nominating Chair



**REPORT OF THE  
CHURCH COUNCIL PRESIDENT  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

Luther Memorial is continuing to accomplish great things in our “faith lives” throughout the Erie community and the world. As a congregation we have helped financially and spiritually in the support of disaster relief, mission outreach, the ELCA, the NWPA Synod and many local outreach organizations. Our support for Luther Memorial Academy and Bethany Outreach is exemplary. As you read through the Annual Report you will see clearly the work and accomplishments of our congregation as we reach out into the Erie community and the world doing God’s work and spreading His light.

It has been three years since the Luther Memorial congregation called Pastor Jay Mitchell to serve as leader of ministries in our church community. We have been blessed by his leadership, devotion and innovative approaches to our spiritual growth. Pastor has introduced us to new ways to explore our faith experience with others in our daily lives. We share in these experiences by participating in Brown Bag Bible, Bible After Dark (BAD), Book Group, Adult Forum, Second Sunday Sorée, Lenten worship services and Study Series.

This year our cantor, Bryan Timm, has continued to enrich the Concert and Cultural Series at Luther Memorial Church. Luther hosted the Matthew Shepard is a Friend of Mine movie and discussion, the Western New York Chamber Orchestra, Mercyhurst University Choir, and Clarinet Adventures will complete the series on Sunday, January 25 at 4:00pm.

Bryan has also secured for the Cultural and Concert Series a grant from the Lutheran Foundation for Long Term Living in the amount of \$17,500.

Another generous donation was one from Dr. Dwight Jones who gifted Luther Memorial with an exceptional organ. A committee is exploring options for the future use and proper location for this organ which will enhance the musical program at Luther.

Some of the highlights of this year have been:

- Completion of the Luther Memorial Church and Academy electronic sign located in the greenspace;
- Replacement of all Academy classroom carpeting and church offices;

I would be remiss if I did not thank the entire Luther Memorial staff for the dedication to this ministry. I thank all of you who have served on committees, been council members, prepared food, performed music, visited the homebound, prayed for all of us, knitted, led prayer groups and Bible studies and all those other things you do to make the mission and ministry at Luther Memorial an important part of our lives and the Erie community.

*Les Fobes*  
Church Council President



## ***REPORT OF THE PASTOR*** ***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***

<sup>12</sup> *But we appeal to you, brothers and sisters, to respect those who labor among you and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; <sup>13</sup> esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. <sup>14</sup> And we urge you, brothers and sisters, to admonish the idlers, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. <sup>15</sup> See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. <sup>16</sup> Rejoice always, <sup>17</sup> pray without ceasing, <sup>18</sup> give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. <sup>19</sup> Do not quench the Spirit. <sup>20</sup> Do not despise prophecies, <sup>21</sup> but test everything; hold fast to what is good; <sup>22</sup> abstain from every form of evil.*

-I Thessalonians 5

Ah, the Annual Report. I'll be honest, siblings, every time I sit to write one I think back over the year and wonder where the year has gone and also marvel at all the joys we shared. I think of the times when we gathered for worship—the primary and most important way that we gather as people and the chief responsibility you have entrusted to me. I think of the study and learning we have shared, the celebrations and remembrances, the losses and the welcomes, and the immeasurable ways you and I have been together as God's people in more individual and personal ways.

When I look back over the year, I think of all these and then have to figure out how to explicate and order out the intangible and mystical ways we are the Body of Christ together. As always, I try to take the above quotation from Thessalonians as some form of order:

### *Rejoice Always*

In the past year, we have welcomed 4 children to the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, 3 young adults to full confirmed membership, and I look forward to 4 new members—three by Baptism!—in very short order after our Annual Meeting. This is such a reason to rejoice!

But if that wasn't enough, we should rejoice that we gathered for worship 78 times! Among these gatherings, we celebrated our second annual Luther Schools Week worship and welcomed our siblings from the Erie Conference for Ascension worship. We also added several new opportunities to worship in 2024 that will continue into 2025; among them: the Great Vigil of Easter and Holden Evening Prayer in the Epiphany season and the month of June.

Many thanks to Cantor Bryan for his leadership and partnership in these worship services. In particular, thanks should be offered for the monumental task of organizing the Requiem Mass on All Saints' Sunday—hicups and all! It was a lovely opportunity to remember our beloved dead.

It was also my privilege to preside over chapel for our students every Wednesday that LMA is in session, as well as LMA Commencement in June. I am always so excited by our school and marvel at the ministry this is to our community—all the more-so this year as we celebrate our 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year!

But, as always, those are just the statistics and do not include the meals we have shared, stories we've told, gatherings we've hosted, and other times of being together in joy. I am so grateful to those of you who have opened your homes and your lives to in my time here and remind you that I am always happy to meet!

### *Pray without Ceasing*

My daily prayers include not only thanksgiving for our ministry together but you—each of you and all of you, those on the prayer list and each of you in our directory. I ask you continue to keep me in your prayers as we work together in this part of Christ's church.

*Pastor's Report, cont'd.:*

Together, we have gathered around ten families in their grieving and offered them the hope of Christ's resurrection. It is a holy thing, this opportunity to gather around the bereaved. Perhaps chief among the calls of the Church—and of pastors—to stand at the grave and offer our loudest alleluias for the promise of resurrection.

I have also been able to extend the love of our community here at Luther to those who are homebound, bringing greetings, prayer, and often the Sacrament as an extension of our worship here together. As part of this, we also took some time to reorient our visitation program so you have seen some of our care ministers receive the Sacrament from the altar on Sunday to take with them on their visits. This new practice is incredibly important for us and for our homebound members to remember that it is not alone but as an extension of the community that our care ministers visit.

*Give Thanks in All Circumstances*

While Paul tells us to give thanks in all circumstances here in Thessalonians, in Philippians Paul specifically is thankful for the partnership of the Church *from the beginning until now*. I have to concur with Paul, my gratitude for those listed below is nothing compared to my gratitude for each of you as we have partnered to bring the Gospel of Jesus to our life here at Luther but also into each of our daily lives in Erie and beyond.

I would like to take the opportunity to share my gratitude for a few individuals who stand out in their service and partnership in the past year:

- + Pastors Siefert, Zackrison, Lundwall, and Moran for coverage during vacations and Continuing Education. It should be noted Pastor Lundwall's gracious support for a very last minute request for coverage after some light surgery I received in June.
- + Les Fobes, our Council President this year, and who has nobly steered our congregation toward the bright future God intends for us.
- + The members Council who has worked diligently to vision and dream big what God has in store for us at Luther.
- + The entire LMA community but in particular Mrs. Michelle Thom, our Principal, whose partnership in ministry in this place has been unparalleled.
- + Finally, while it would be an immense use of paper to name you all, I am so grateful to you and to God *for* each of you and our partnership here together in the many adventures God has in store for us.

I am ever grateful for each of your ministry in this place and in your daily life. I am grateful, too, for your graciousness and patience. No one is perfect and that certainly applies to me. And yet, you continue to be gracious in learning and growing and challenging and questioning and receiving me in partnership. There are not words enough to share my thankfulness for this.

*Do Not Quench the Spirit*

We have shared in some exploration of collaborative ministry within the Erie Conference. We are currently collaborating with Faith Luther in Harborcreek for our confirmation workshops. We have shared in worship and in retreats and in surveys (thank you to all who filled those out, by the way) as we have explored how mission, ministry, and Jesus can continue to be shared by our Luther witness in Erie County. We have tried new things among ourselves and explored how to be adaptive to an ever-changing world that is still desperate to hear the Good News of God come to us in Jesus. And we will continue both of these and more into the future as we are called to do by God.

And I am excited for this future! There will, as always, be new ways we seek to share the Gospel together and the return of some old favorites. We will continue to gather for worship and learning, for fellowship and fun, and I cannot wait! As we continue to encounter the Risen Christ in worship and in one another and our life together, I hope you can feel the Spirit ever active among us. May we continue to be open to the ways that the Spirit is guiding Luther Memorial into the future!

As I have said many times, I continue to keep you in my prayers and hope that you keep me in yours.

Always yours in Christ's service,

*Pastor Jay*

The Rev. Jay C. Mitchell, pastor





**CHRISTIAN EDUCATION AND FAMILY MINISTRY  
ANNUAL REPORT – 2025**

The following groups, programs, and special events are under the umbrella of Christian Education at Luther Memorial Church.

Sunday School	Wednesday Lenten Studies
L.I.A. (Lutherans In Action)	Adult Spiritual Growth
Third Grade Bibles	Baptism Celebration
First Communion and Bowling Celebration	Lenten Gathering Kick Off Dinner
Christmas Pageant	Care Squad
Confirmation Classes	Rally Day
Nursery	Bingo / Yard Sale
Camp Lutherlyn	LYO Service Sunday
Lutheran Youth Organization (LYO)	Gods Work, Our Hands
Acolyte Training	Soup Sales

The Cradle Roll is overseen by Jeanne Gaber.

Baby blankets are delivered to our newborn babies.

The following were new or occurred in 2025:

- Fundraising for the LYO will continue and planning has begun for the next National Youth Gathering which will be in Minneapolis, Minnesota summer 2027.
- No attendees for Winter Retreat at Lutherlyn for 2025.
- Trunk-or-Treat was well attended by LMC and LMA families.
- New in 2025 we had an Easter themed scavenger hunt for families throughout the building.
- The LYO (grades 6-12) and Sunday School PreK -5<sup>th</sup> grade meet the second Sunday of each month 9:30 – 10:15am.
- Confirmands attended 5 weeks of classes from 11:30am to 1:00pm with Pastor Jay leading up to Reformation Sunday in October. Lessons, topics, and lunch were enjoyed.
- We enjoyed many events out in the community this past year from The Glow Wild Chinese Lantern Festival at the Erie Zoo, Putt-Putt on Lake Pleasant Road, and an August Beach Night.
- Thank you to our church families for participating in the Family Christmas Program that shared the story of the Nativity.
- Our Sunday School grades PreK-5 have been meeting the second Sunday of the month in Fellowship Hall from 9:30 to 10:15am. LYO meets the third Sunday of the month 9:30 to 10:15am.

*Christian Education, cont'd.:*

- Thank you to Cathie Dugan and Keri Cooney for volunteering to teach and guide our young children in their Christian faith.
- Confirmation Camp in June 2025 at Lutherlyn attended by the LYO aged youth. Thank you to our dedicated and generous church members and church council for their continued support and financial donations for sponsorships.
- Fundraising for the youth has continued with the selling of ham loaves, greeting cards, seasonal basket raffles, BINGO, soup sales, bake sales, yard sale, car washes, flea market, and craft fair.
- The Care Squad continues to make cards for the V.A. Hospital and other small outreach projects.
- Volunteer opportunities were able to be done this past year from God's Work Our Hands, CROP Walk, and other service projects.
- Service Sundays with the LYO continue to look for opportunities to serve members of our congregation in 2026.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Scavenger Hunt was held September 2025 ending at the Wooden Nickel Buffalo Farm in Edinboro, Pa.
- LYO Christmas Extravaganza is held annually the first Friday in December. In partnership with First Church of the Covenant we hosted a Hot Cocoa station for the entire community at the Downtown D'lights and served over 1000 cups of Hot Cocoa. Thank you to Pastor Karen Lundwall for providing a Thrivent Action Team that helped purchase supplies for this event.
- Continued thanks to Lena Donnelly for her dedication in organizing, recruiting, practicing, and presenting the St. Lucia Program at Luther each December. Also many thanks to our cantor, Bryan Timm, our Luther Memorial choir, Emma Chaffee, the many hands in the kitchen, and those who helped set up and clean up Fellowship Hall.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the Body of Christ to raise a person of faith. Volunteers in Christian Education do important work and we are truly thankful for each and every person who has been a part of the team to help one another to know Jesus Christ. You are all so greatly needed. We continue to work, adapt as necessary, and thanks to your support of our Christian Education programming we continue to learn and come together as God's family.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Beth Keller and Sarah Prylinski*



**CANTOR'S REPORT**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

## “We proclaim the Word of God through Music”

I would first like to begin with a word of gratitude to all who participate in making music at Luther. Not only does this list include members of the adult choir and bell choir but certainly extends well into the congregation for those who jump in on special occasions, those who help organize, and those who come out to show their support. I have learned over the years that although I may be primary point of contact for music in the congregation, the overall success comes from the congregation in a variety of talents.

Over the past year we have accomplished a lot. The frequent question of “when do you find time to sleep?” is a good one, but it is easy when I have such strong support from the congregation and staff. This past year Pastor Jay and I have added additional opportunities for worship that have been well received. Holden Evening Prayer was utilized in January to tie the Christmas and Epiphany seasons together, and again it was used in June to promote the opening of the Concert and Cultural series. On Good Friday, we added a midday Stations of the Cross interspersed with meditative organ solos utilizing both instruments in the sanctuary.

Our choir programs in bells and adult choir continue to rehearse weekly in efforts to lead and add to the musical offerings within the context of our services. As we plan for the future of choral leadership, we will be taking a slight step back with the adult choir to refocus on supporting the congregation in our shared singing. This resetting of expectations will help to best align the talents of those participating in the program to a more meaningful and rewarding outcome.

At the current time, all instruments are consistent in their functionality. Institutional memory and experience tell us that the main organ in the sanctuary has exceeded its anticipated life cycle but still continues to serve. As in Matthew 24:36 “But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father”, probably best explains this situation. With that in mind, an organ committee has been assembled to gather information, explore the musical needs of the congregation, and how best to use a generous gift, detailed below, in a proactive rather than reactive manner.

In October of 2025, while attending the annual American Institute of Organbuilders Convention in Milwaukee, I had opportunity to talk with Dr. Dwight Jones about his home instrument. What began as a simple inquiry into his home instrument built by Organ Supply Industries in 1985, quickly turned into a generous donation a week later. His recent relocation from Georgia to Arkansas saw the three manual, thirty-one rank, organ in storage. His realization was that personal future plans were too ambitious at his age, and kindly offered the instrument to the congregation of Luther Memorial citing that there was no better place for it than where it came from. This gift, accepted by council, represents a donation of \$931,000.00 of equipment. Although it could simply be relocated and put right into service, the organ committee will consider the numerous possibilities of how this can best serve the needs of our church to bring to the congregation in the near future.

Luther Memorial Concert and Cultural Series began its full year of programming in September with a presentation of the film “Matt Shepard is a Friend of Mine” with producer Linda Karn, and Matthew’s parents Dennis and Judy Shepard. This presentation included numerous community equality groups, Erie Community Foundation, and the Jefferson Society. The series also hosted Western New York Chamber Orchestra and Mercyhurst Concert Choir, with its final “fall” engagement Clarinet Adventures to perform

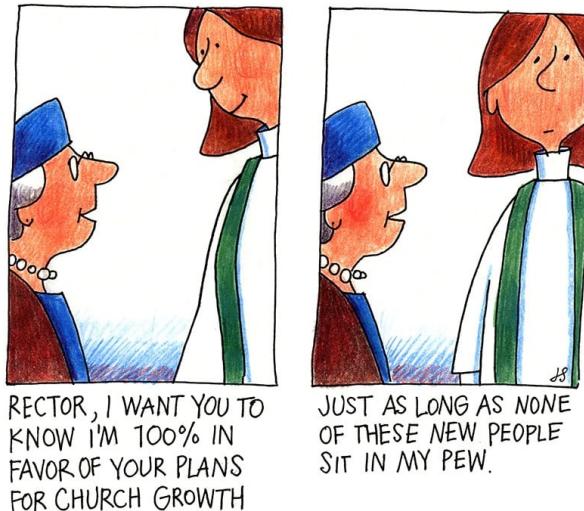
Cantor's Report, cont'd.:

January 25. The spring term will include Erie Contemporary Orchestra, Astralis Ensemble, a lecture: *Between the Motion and Music, the restoration of the Massey Memorial Organ, Chautauqua Institution*, Presque Isle Ringers, and an organ recital by, Dylan David Shaw, Wannamaker Grand Court Organist. Although there is room for more this spring, keep your eyes on the ever-evolving content. It is also worth noting that the concert series received a grant from the Lutheran Foundation for Long Term Living in the amount of \$17,500.00 for content and accessibility to the series.

We are told every week to give away our bulletins to share all the good things happening at Luther, and I am proud to be part of that. I would also be remiss without a plea to anyone interested in becoming part of the musical community at Luther to reach out to me. We can work with almost any schedule.

Respectfully Submitted  
*Bryan M. Timm, Cantor*

***"We believe art feeds the spirit."***





**CARE MINISTRY**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

The year 2025 was a busy year for the Magic Fingers Knitter Group, Quilters and the OWLS

**Knitting Group:**

We currently have 10 ladies in the group that knit and/or crochet doing wonderful work making prayer shawls, prayer crosses, baby blankets, baby hats and children's hats that are dispersed in our community to help others in need. We meet the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month.

**Quilting Group:**

We currently have 9 ladies in this group helping to make the quilts. We had 10 quilts made and asked the congregation to help with Tying of the Knots to finish the quilts on December 7 after both services. During worship on December 28 Pastor Jay blessed them to go to the Community Shelter Services at 655 W. 16<sup>th</sup> St. in Erie, bringing warmth and comfort to those they serve who are homeless and need a place to sleep and be fed. This group meets the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday of each month.

**OWLS Group (Older Wiser Lutherans):**

This group meets the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month after the Lenten Season so all may be able to participate in our Lenten Services and Lenten Lunches.

We had a lot of fun together in our activities. We had a wonderful program presented to us by Kacie McGregor from CHOSEN. She explained their purpose and all they do for those in the community in need of medical equipment, information for whatever one needs to take care of others or themselves that are needed. Many of us enjoyed the St. Valentine's Luncheon at the Ambassador which is always a nice treat. We gathered for a Picnic at the church which was to be enjoyed outside but the weather had us enjoy our hot dogs and hamburgers inside. Skip MacInnes did a great job cooking them up for us on our back patio and Cathy and Skip Meyn did a great job on our root beer floats, the sides, and the desserts were great too. We went on the Victorian Princess and enjoyed lunch and cruise on a beautiful day. We went to Penn State Behrend Planetarium for a wonderful program about the Christmas Sky and how the Magi traveled to get to Jesus with their gifts, and the stars that guided them to get there and enjoyed lunch at Ricardo's afterward for fellowship and lunch. We went to lunch at Ferrante's Winery in Geneva, OH for a great gathering and lunch. In the fall, we took a drive to Mandy's Dutch Treat Restaurant in Spartanburg, PA and enjoyed the beautiful fall ride with the trees in color to see God's beautiful art work that he creates. Had a fun great GAME Day playing games and cards and a lot of joy and laughter going on with pizza for lunch. In December we had our OWLS Christmas Party with Pastor Jay leading us in a Name that Tune game as Bryan Timm assisted Pastor and singing of the Christmas Carols. It was a great time enjoyed by all. We also were able to give out 12 Christmas Cheer Bags that were arranged by Carol Davidson and distributed by our Care Givers or picked up at church. A job well done and so happy to be received. It is so important to let those in need feel comfort and love and know we are there for them. Over the course of the year, I love sending out so many Thinking of You cards, note cards, Birthday Cards and making phone calls to connect with our parishioners. I enjoy doing it and it feels good to get cards and to be remembered for whatever is happening in one's life. It's God's work at Hand and brings God's love and a hug to those in need.

Care Ministry, cont'd.:

**Prayer Shawls:**

Prayer Shawls provide a sense of comfort and peace for many that are dealing with difficulty. Thank you to those that knit and crochet these beautiful shawls and give them to Luther Memorial. Everyone who is given a shawl is so appreciative. This year a total of nine (9) prayer shawls were given. If you would like a prayer shawl to give to someone please contact Jan MacInnes or the church office.

**Christmas Mailing:**

In December Christmas cards were sent to service men and women and their families serving our country and thanking them for their time and service.

**Bereavement:**

6 families lost loved ones in 2025.

Several Journeying through Grief Booklets were sent over the course of the year to those in our congregation who lost loved ones. Sent sympathy cards and attended visitation at the funeral home and attended funeral services. This is so important to let those in need feel comfort and know we are here for them and care about them.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Janice A. MacInnes*  
Care Ministry



***FEED MY SHEEP' FOOD MINISTRY PROGRAM***  
***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***

A decision was made in early 2025 to provide food on an 'as needed' basis as fewer visits to parishioners were being made and fewer requests for food needed. Please send any requests for food service to either Norma in the church office at (814) 454-0106 or by email: [nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org](mailto:nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org) or Elaine Kern at (814) 392-7189 or by email: [elainekern53@gmail.com](mailto:elainekern53@gmail.com)

We still always appreciate help for assisting at funeral luncheons.

In 2025 three funeral luncheons were held:

February 22 – Cathy MacGregor  
May 31 – Sharon Rositer  
November 1 – a catered luncheon for John Peterson

*Elaine Kern*  
*'Feed My Sheep' Food Ministry Coordinator*



## **PRAYER PARTNERS** **ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

The Prayer Partners of Luther Memorial Church has 11 members and has been active for quite a few years. These dedicated members are faithful in praying and keeping the reasons for prayers confidential. We meet every 6-8 weeks to update the lists.

We made some changes to the Bulletin list and the Long Term list in 2025. They now have 5 areas of need for the requests.

### **Bulletin list**

Names can be on this list for up to 9 months. If at that time, no contact has been made, their name will be removed.

1. Healing/Wholeness- i.e. accidents, medical illness or hospitalization,
2. Surgery/Tests- Add their name before the surgery date, if possible.
3. Hospice- Please let us know when the person dies.
4. Grief- Listed in the bulletin for 1 month.
5. Other- i.e Spiritual distress

When a request is made the details/reasons are not necessary for the list. God knows! The date of the request will be entered in the appropriate column. Under surgery please give that date. We are trying to maintain utmost confidentiality and respect the person's privacy.

### **Long term list**

The print out of this list of names can be found on the welcome table by the handicap entrance. Many congregation members join us in praying and this is appreciated.

If extended prayers are needed for an individual, i.e. cancer treatment, rehabilitation, their name can be initially put on this list or moved from the bulletin list. Please call Norma to move a name.

Names can be on the long list indefinitely BUT calls will no longer be made for updates of any lists or to see if the person can be removed. If we don't receive any updates for 9 months, the person's name will be removed from where they are listed.

The Military list will include the branch, rank and location. Only their names are in the bulletin. Please contact us with any changes.

### **Private list**

This list is only seen by the prayer group, Pastor Jay and Norma. If desired, you may give more information. The above time requests also pertain to this list.



When making a prayer request, please get permission from the person and ask which list they would like to be on.

The Bulletin, Long term and Military lists will be in the newsletter in March, June, September and December. It is YOUR responsibility to inform Linda, Norma or a group member of updates deaths or removal, preferably by email the first week of these months.

Please save these guidelines and write down the names and dates of your entries as a reminder.

The Prayer Partners are an integral part of Luther Memorial's ministry and we thank you for your confidence and support.

Thank You!

Prayer Partners, cont'd.:

Linda Graffius [swedemom@verizon.net](mailto:swedemom@verizon.net)  
Jane Kinzig [javajane57@verizon.net](mailto:javajane57@verizon.net)  
Mary Mumford [jdavemumf@hotmail.com](mailto:jdavemumf@hotmail.com)  
Pat Young [youngkat3@verizon.net](mailto:youngkat3@verizon.net)  
Mary Daniels [marydaniels43@yahoo.com](mailto:marydaniels43@yahoo.com)  
Jan MacInnes [jamacsl@verizon.net](mailto:jamacsl@verizon.net)

Christy Adams [christycceslp@gmail.com](mailto:christycceslp@gmail.com)  
Jeanne Gaber [jeannegaber@gmail.com](mailto:jeannegaber@gmail.com)  
Donna Sedelmyer [timmy0802@gmail.com](mailto:timmy0802@gmail.com)  
Lee Swenson [leeswenson@verizon.net](mailto:leeswenson@verizon.net)  
Emma Braine



***IN MEMORIAM***

**NOVEMBER 1, 2024– NOVEMBER 1, 2025**

JOANN GUILIANELLI  
TINA CLARK DINICOLA  
FRED KERN  
ELEANOR JASS  
ROBERT GIANNELLI  
NANCY DOWNEY  
JEFF KRAUS  
CATHY MACGREGOR  
DAVE COONEY  
PAUL BERGER  
LUCILLE KRAUT  
RON HENRY

ROGER STURTEVANT  
SHARON McGHEE  
IRENE MCCULLOUGH  
DEE LASHER  
KAITLIN WEBER  
LOIS FOBES  
MARILYN BOHN  
DAVE PARSH  
PATRICK LUPO  
JOHN PETERSEN  
PAMELA HAGLEE  
RAYMOND BOLASKY



***REPORT OF THE ADMINISTRATOR  
LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***

Luther Memorial Academy is celebrating 50 years as a school! LMA continues to provide high-quality education and foster a nurturing environment for our diverse student body. We are stronger than ever as we celebrate our GOLDEN year! Our theme is “Reflecting on 50 Golden Years, Shining Bright for the Future!”

For the beginning 2025-2026 school year, we welcomed four new staff members to the LMA team: Ms. Meaghan Wood, kindergarten; Mrs. Deborah Barger, third grade; Miss Grace Lentz, fifth grade; and Mr. Braxton Beaulieu, music. These staff members are great additions to the school!

Continuing traditions included the LMA Family Picnic, LMA Sunday, Cross-country, Children’s Grief Awareness Day partnered with The Caring Place, School Spirit Days to support Luther Lion at the Erie Zoo, the Thanksgiving Feast (led this year by PTL president, Leah King, and catered by Cali West), the Christmas Fair (led by Brooke McCall), the Christmas Carol Sing-along (joined this year by Forte Group from Northwestern High School), Caroling at Werner Books, Student-led school newspaper (led by Mrs. Thom), Middle School Dances, Read Across America Day (led by Kim Evans), Challenge 24, the National Geography Bee, 8<sup>th</sup> grade etiquette luncheon (led by Mrs. Noyes), LMA trivia night, Block Party fundraiser (complete with a cornhole tournament and carnival games), Crop Walk, Tea with Thom (community communication meeting), a PTL holiday cookie box sale, participation in the MathCounts (middle school math competition), walking in the St. Patrick's Day parade, participating in Lutheran Schools Week, and service hours for all grade levels.

New additions include a cheer team (led by Grace Lentz), basketball team (coached by Michael Anderson), Lego League (led by Matthew Boyd and Noel Torres), and Student Council (led by Pastor Jay). Ciara Adams, sixth grade teacher, is planning a production of "The Real Story of Alice in Wonderland" by Kristen Doherty in the spring. Lastly, our alumni wall is proudly displayed outside the office to showcase all of the graduating classes of LMA.

Stay up-to-date with all the things happening at Luther Memorial Academy! Follow LMA on social media:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/luthermemorialacademy>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/luthermemorialacademy>

Newsletter: <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/s/IFORHQj/enevssignup>

Recruitment efforts were successful this past year with 34 new students enrolled at LMA for the 25-26 school year! The current student population is 104 students. Luther Memorial Church has been a vital and valued supporter of Luther Memorial Academy, and we are grateful to all who have made this support possible.

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**  
MICHELLE THOM, Administrator  
AMANDA FRIED, Office Manager

**FACULTY 2025/2026 SCHOOL YEAR**

MEAGHAN WOOD – Kindergarten	DEBORAH BARGER – Grade 3
KATIE ROMBA – Grade 1	KAREN SOCASH – Grade 4
BETH KELLER – Grade 2	GRACE LENTZ – Grade 5
CIARA ADAMS – Grade 6 Homeroom, 6-8 English, 6-8 Reading	
AMY GILEWICZ – Grade 7 Homeroom, 6 & 7 Math, 6-8 Social Studies, K-8 Art	
CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI – Grade 8 Homeroom, 6-8 Science, 6-8 Spanish, 8 Math	
AJ NOYES – Specials K-8: PE, Health/Guidance, Community Outreach	
BRAXTON BEAULIEU - Music	
REBECCA MCCORMICK - Spanish	
KIM EVANS - Library	
STEPHANIE SHERWOOD – Act 89 Reading	
JODY DONOVAN – Act 89 Math (Kdg. – Grade 6)	
ELLEN CASS – Act 89 Math (Grades 6-8)	
HEIDI MYER - IU Speech	
MIRIAM SCHEID – Tech Support and Financial Support	

**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:**

MARIA GOELLNER – President	LES FOBES - Church Council
PREEYA MONTROY - Vice President	PASTOR JAY MITCHELL - Pastor
GREG KERN - Treasurer	ISELA ABREU-SMITH - Member
MIRIAM SCHEID - Assistant Treasurer	SUSAN FORSYTHE - Member
HEATHER BARTLETT - Secretary	JASON KING - Member
MICHELLE THOM - LMA Administrator	M J HOWELL - Emeritus
AJ NOYES - Teacher Representative	

**BEFORE SCHOOL PROGRAM:** CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

**AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM:** BETH KELLER – Coordinator  
CARYN CHLUDZYNSKI

**MEMBERSHIPS:**

Evangelical Lutheran Education Association (ELEA)  
Northwest Tri-County Intermediate Unit #5 (IU)

**PARENT/TEACHER LEAGUE:**

LEAH KING – President
MINDY BOYD – Vice-President
DANIELLE OSMAK – Secretary
PAULA NOBLE – Treasurer
CIARA ADAMS – Teacher Representative

*LMA Administrator's Report, page 3:*

**SPORTS/ACTIVITIES:**

Cross-Country, Swimming, Basketball, Cheer

**GRADUATION AWARDS:**

George E. Black Award for Most Outstanding Student  
J. David Mumford Award for Academic Excellence  
Helen Schade Award for Academics (A/Bs)  
Alice Engel Extraordinary Effort Award  
Susan M. Belott Christian Service Award  
Richard Strobel Award

**THRIVENT GIFTING PROGRAM:**

Thrivent Financial helps LMA through the "Thrivent Choice" program. This program allows members to direct funds to LMA. It is not a matching program, but rather a direct donation to our school. We count on members to keep us in mind and are very grateful for support.

**SCHOLARSHIPS/MEMORIALS:**

Library development, improved curriculum, and financial aid to students are dependent upon the generosity of others. LMA is indebted to the Women of the ELCA, Thrivent, and individuals and families who have been generous to us. The EITC and OSTC Programs, crucial to us, allows tax deductions for businesses that contribute to us solely for the purpose of financial aid for our families.

Yours in Education,  
*Mrs. Michelle Thom*





**BETHANY OUTREACH CENTER**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2025**

Life change happens here because  
of your ongoing support.

Our Mission: Bethany Outreach Center impacts Erie's lower eastside neighborhood by providing services and teaching skills to underserved families that will lead them to a path of positive life change.

**FOOD PANTRY**

**THERE WERE 7,830 VISITS TO OUR PANTRY IMPACTING 23,180 INDIVIDUAL PEOPLE.**

**CLOTHING CLOSET**

There were 2,421 visits made to our closet impacting 5,627 individual people.

**Nutrition Program in partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank**

14 households benefitted from our program this year

**Project Partners who've shared their Time, Talents, Ties and Treasures:** Second Harvest Food Bank, Build CDC~ HAMOT HEALTH FOUNDATION, Erie Insurance, The Erie Community Foundation, Cornerstone Construction, PathStone, The Erie Federal Credit Union, UE Local Union 506,

Mercyhurst University's Beyond The Gates Program, Luther Memorial Academy, UE Local Union 506, LCBA Branch 49, Crop Walk for Hunger, Northwest Savings, First National Bank, Inter-Church Ministries,

Faith Lutheran Church, Fulton Athletic Club,  
ECGRA, THOMAS B. HAGAN, Family Services  
Mother Theresa Academy (Student Government)  
National Honor Society at Collegiate High School

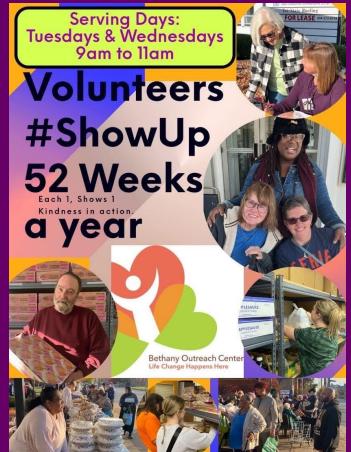
BREW HA HA, M.A.B.E.L. ~Mind And Body Education Link, Café 7-10, Women of ELCA, The Erie Community Foundation's Youth Philanthropists~ HEY! Hear Erie's Youth, Erie Crawford Central Labor, Sisters of St. Joseph, Delta Sigma Theta, AKA's, Emmaus Soup Kitchen, Various Churches,

United Way of SOUTHWESTERN, PA, MH Equipment, The Happy Knitters

**The Annual Turkey Man Drive:** Made possible by Second Harvest Food Bank, Erie Insurance, Cornerstone Construction, and a wealth of volunteers throughout the community who believe in the importance of helping those in need.

**Corporate Matches:** Erie Insurance, The Erie Community Foundation

**Highlighted Volunteer Moments**



Our Executive Director, Mabel Howard, is very thankful for opportunities to collaborate with so many amazing partners in the city of Erie.



The students of Mother Theresa Academy did a food drive for our pantry. We are thankful that youth are learning the importance of giving back to the community at a young age.



A very special thank you to our **HOPE TEAM:** Organizations, Businesses and Individuals contributing \$5000 or more in 2024: Luther Memorial Church, Luther Memorial Congregation, MORLIN, Inc., Cornerstone Construction. All of our donors, large and small as well as our volunteers, make it possible for Bethany Outreach Center to continue on with its good works, in efforts to create a better community for all.

**Executive Director:** Mabel Howard  
Location: 204 W. 11<sup>th</sup> Street, Erie, PA 16501  
Website: [www.bethanyoutreachcenter.org](http://www.bethanyoutreachcenter.org)

**Executive Assistant:** Luanne Churchill  
Office Phone: 814-456-6254  
Email: [mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org](mailto:mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org)

**LMC PROPERTY COMMITTEE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**



The Property Committee is pleased to report that the electronic digital sign for the greenspace area that is at the corner of West 10<sup>th</sup> and Sassafras Street is complete. This sign provides an opportunity to not only focus on Luther Memorial Church and Academy but also allows us to change messages, times of events, different activities, school announcements, etc. whenever necessary.

The Property and Arts Committee worked together to achieve another big change at our facilities. All of the classrooms and offices were carpeted with carpet tile that can easily be replaced if damaged.

General maintenance for the church year 2025 consisted of \$53,179.42 including:

Roof Repairs	Heating and ventilating repairs and maintenance
Plumbing	Repair of the main sanctuary boiler
Lighting updates	Repair of one heat exchange unit for the school

Cost of services were \$32,684.95. This includes:

Landscaping	Alarm monitoring and security camera monitoring
Snow removal	Trash services
Elevator service and repair	

Looking to spring of 2026 there will be plantings of redbud trees in the grass area between the parking lots. This plan has been approved by the Arts Committee, Property Committee and Church Council and will be in memory of Lois Fobes. In front of the green wall of the Renew Erie building a plan has been suggested by the city arborist that we plant a row of dogwood trees. These trees will be paid for by contributions to this project by the congregation and can be done in honor or in memory of a loved one. However, all trees will not individually be assigned with the use of plaques, etc.

A thank you to the Property Committee members for their continued dedication to the upkeep of our church facilities:

David Buerk	Dave Kinzig
John Evans	Tom Klomp
Les Fobes	Miriam Scheid
Jeanne Gaber	Jeff Swanson
Mark Howell	

Respectfully submitted,  
*Les Fobes*



## **WORSHIP AND MUSIC COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT – 2025**

The mission of the Worship and Music Committee is to “*plan the meaningful celebration of Word and Sacrament according to the Lutheran tradition.*”

Those who actively served on the committee during 2025 include:

Pr. Jay Mitchell  
Cantor Bryan Timm  
Cathie Dugan, Chair  
Jessica Copfer

Mary Daniels  
Les Fobes  
Walt Gaber  
Betty Pletz

While no longer an active part of the committee, we continue to count Joanne Dahlstrand as one of our members, as she served faithfully for many, many years. We give thanks to God for her long life, her love of worship, and her service to the church.

The Worship and Music committee met five times this past year, reviewing past practices and considering new ideas in order to enhance the worship experiences at Luther Memorial. The committee is also responsible for ensuring that needed resources are in place for the conduct of liturgy, and for coordinating the decorating of our worship spaces.

The biggest challenge that we have faced this past year has been the need for communion assistants and live stream camera operators for the late service. Communion assistants can sit in the congregation until the passing of the peace, and there is no need to robe. Camera operators need to be in the balcony during the service. The skill needed for this is to be able to click the keyboard to switch between camera views. There is an outline to follow. This is a vital ministry for our homebound and out of town members. Help is also needed to set up and clean up communion, especially for the early service. Congregational assistance for our worship services is essential, so please consider offering your time to help make this happen.

There are many people whose efforts make our worship life run smoothly. Thank you first to Pr. Jay, for all the thought you put into making out worship meaningful, and to Bryan, for the deep care you have for worship, and the fresh way you have of looking at our worship practices. A most well-deserved “thank you” also to Norma for all the work you put into coordinating many key components. In addition to producing our weekly bulletins, Norma coordinates the schedules for all worship related elements and personnel. Thank you to the assisting ministers, communion assistants, altar guild members, musicians, lectors, acolytes and online camera operators who offer their gifts to our worship life. Your contributions are greatly appreciated. Thank you also to Les Fobes, whose attention to the details of the aesthetics of the sanctuary are greatly appreciated. Thank you to Rich Rowland, who is always on the spot, taking care of all manner of things that need to be done. There are many others who carry on their own quiet work all around us, often without having to be asked, and just because they see a task needs to be done. To you we owe a word of gratitude as well.

Above all else, I am most grateful for the steadfast strength we have together as a church family. We care deeply for each other, and we care deeply for the ministry and traditions of Luther Memorial Church.

Respectfully submitted,

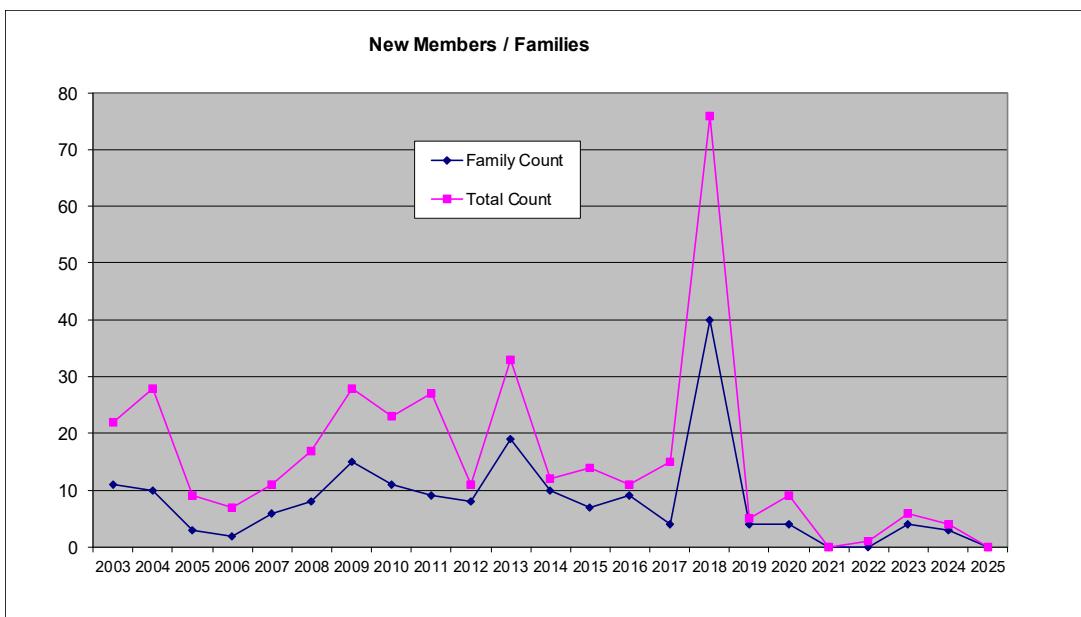
## EVANGELISM INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025



New Members received in 2025: None received

New Members / Families Through 2025

Year	Family Count	Total Count
2003	11	22
2004	10	28
2005	3	9
2006	2	7
2007	6	11
2008	8	17
2009	15	28
2010	11	23
2011	9	27
2012	8	11
2013	19	33
2014	10	12
2015	7	14
2016	9	11
2017	4	15
2018	40	76
2019	4	5
2020	4	9
2021	0	0
2022	0	1
2023	4	6
2024	3	4
2025	0	0
Totals:	187	369
Average:	8.1	16.0



### Attendance

Average attendance before Covid in 2019 was 165 / week. In 2025 if we include YouTube as well as in-person attenders, average attendance was 128 / week. Last year's average was 141 / week.

In 2025, we had 3 Confirmed Youth:

Evelynn Graffius  
Gabe Stroup  
Patrick Cimino

Thank You!

- To Greeters who warmly welcomed visitors and all who attended our services
- To Staff members and Congregation members who took the time to invite acquaintances from the school, their friends, and family members to join us – at church or on YouTube!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Eric Hedlund*



**LITURGICAL LIFE**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

Our 10:30 Sunday morning worship services continue to be live streamed and are available on our Luther Memorial website and YouTube. Operating the live stream connects those unable to attend Sunday services to Luther Memorial. Additional volunteers would be greatly appreciated and you are welcome to contact our church office for more information. Check with one of those who currently help; it's not hard and you'll pick it up in a snap.

The liturgical calendar continues to be followed throughout the year and paraments changed accordingly.

The Christmas trees in the main church, Faith Chapel, and throughout the building were set up. Decorations were ready to go for Hanging of the Greens. Thank you to those who helped this year in pulling out all the boxes and gave of their afternoon in preparing our church for the Christmas season.

Thank you to each and every one for their help this year. It was certainly needed!

**VIDEO OPERATORS – LIVE STREAMING**

Christy Adams  
Beth Keller

Nick Lang  
Sarah Prylinski

Gina Snider

Christy Adams  
Diane Banks  
Cathy Beck  
Pat Bellingham  
Karen Braendel  
Les Fobes  
Evelynn Graffius

Linda Graffius  
Lynnette Gustafson  
Eric Hedlund  
Bill Lasher  
Karen Lundwall  
Linda Melaragno  
Cathy Meyn

Jane Moran  
Mary Mumford  
C. Noelle Partusch  
Stan Rose  
Lois Smith  
Gabe Stroup  
Jonathan Ulrich

**LECTORS ~ 10:30AM**

Pat Bellingham  
Rob Benacci  
Emma Chaffee  
Barb Dennison  
Cathie Dugan

Ellen DiPlacido  
Julie Ditz  
Mark Howell  
Kate Martin  
Chloe Meucci

Noelle Partusch  
Stan Rose  
Liz Stroup  
Linda Swanson

**ASSISTANT MINISTERS**

Cathie Dugan  
Jeanne Gaber

Linda Graffius  
Elaine Kern

Martha & Tom Klomp  
Stan Rose

**COMMUNION ASSISTANTS**

Liturgical Life Committee, cont'd.:

**ACOLYTES**

Serving as an acolyte is an important part of our worship. We thank those that served during our services. A special thank you to Jessica Copfer for serving as our acolyte for many, many Sundays! If your son or daughter would like to serve as an acolyte, please see Beth Keller or contact Norma in the church office.

Jessica Copfer  
Tessa & Jack Bartlett

Delaney Marnen  
Cecilia & Noah Montroy

Matthew Snider  
Ellie & Madeleine Wertz

**ALTAR GUILD**

Altar Guild volunteers prepare for the celebration of communion. Adjustments to preparation have taken place over the past few months and we thank our altar guild for their continued patience and understanding. Communion by cup is done each Sunday.

Nancy Benacci  
Sharon Burke  
Jessica Copfer

Mary Daniels  
Cathie Dugan

Martha & Tom Klomp  
Donna Sedelmyer

**USHERS**

Four (4) ushers are needed for each 10:30 service which is quite a number of people asked to help usher each Sunday;  $52 \times 4 = 208$ . Many people are kind enough to usher numerous times, and it's easy to do. Volunteers are always very welcome and appreciate. Contacting the church office to volunteer would be most helpful.



Many thanks is extended to all the volunteers for their help; our church needs each of you. There are many components to our Sunday morning worship. Volunteers are always so needed and welcome. If you have questions about anything, I urge you to speak with someone who is helping in that area or call the church office. Your dedication always glorifies God and makes Luther Memorial Church a warm and beautiful setting for worship. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Norma Buerk*



**CONGREGATIONAL LIFE COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

The year 2025 got off to a great start with our ‘Souper Bowl’ Tasting Event in Fellowship Hall on February 2. We had a ‘souper’ turn-out and many delicious soups were sampled by all!

Our Annual Church Picnic was held at the Beach One Pavillion this year on June 22. We enjoyed a good turnout and great weather!

On October 5, we held our annual ‘Octoberfest’ Tureen in fellowship Hall. We had 50 plus participants and a wonderful assortment of foods!

This year our annual Christmas Coffee Hour took place without a hitch on Sunday, December 7. A wonderful assortment of holiday treats was presented.

A few special events where committee members helped out included:

May 29 – Ascension Service/reception  
September 19 – sponsor event for Matthew Shepherd  
September 20 – Matthew Shepherd Film/Reception  
October 26 – Western NY Chamber Orchestra Reception

Here is hoping for continuing times for fellowship in 2026!  
We welcome anyone to join our committee at any time.

Our first event of 2026 will be our ‘Souper Bowl’ Tasting in Fellowship Hall on Sunday, February 1. Please bring a soup to share and join us!

Respectfully submitted,  
*Elaine Kern*

2025 Committee Members included:

Sandy Barbaro	Kathie Kraut
Les & Lois Fobes	Jan & Skip MacInnes
Judy Johnson	Cathy & Skip Meyn
Elaine Kern	Lois Smith
Tom & Martha Klomp	Jane and Dave Kinzig



## ***ALTAR FLOWERS*** ***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***

Flowers add that touch of beauty to our worship, and thanks to many our weekly altar, front altar and columbarium flowers continue.

Anyone wishing to have flowers on the altar on Sunday is welcome to call the church office. Front altar and columbarium flowers are also available on any Sunday. If you would like flowers for a Sunday morning please contact our church secretary, Norma Buerk.

Flowers not taken by those who sponsor them are delivered to those in the hospital, homebound, to celebrate an upcoming birthday, or someone who could use a smile. A visit and a friendly face go a long way for those who are unable to get out, see their friends and attend church.

Altar flowers that are delivered:

- Betty Pletz delivers flowers on the second Sunday of each month.
- Diana Alvaro delivers flowers for the remaining Sundays.
  - If you would like to help with dropping off flowers to a friend following worship, please let us know. Your help would be appreciated.

Thank you to:

- Diana Alvaro for the preparation of containers for weekly deliveries.
- Carol Davidson for overseeing the preparation and delivery of cheer bags to our homebound this year. And thank you to those who helped with deliveries.

**Donations** of flower vases, juice containers and contact paper are always welcome for the weekly deliveries and may be dropped off in the church office.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Norma Buerk*

## ***SUNSHINE COMMITTEE*** ***ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025***



Thank you to the Sunshine Committee gals, for all the cards they signed and addressed to our church members/friends, which in 2025 was again composed of the following volunteers – Norma Buerk, Coleen DiCenzo, Jane Kinzig, Lois Smith and Pat Young.

The main purpose of the Sunshine Committee is to try to give a little “sunshine” to our homebound folks with a few cards sent to them during the year. Cards are sent to the hospitalized, to homebound folks and other members for different occasions and holidays (sometimes just to say we’re thinking of them), birthday cards to those celebrating their yearly milestones, and sympathy cards to those who have had a loss in their family.

We are always grateful for donations to our card supply, and if anyone feels so inclined, we will also take donations for mailing all those cards. Through the Sunshine Committee about 200 cards were sent out in 2025 – and that’s a LOTTA postage! Donations of cards and/or monetary gifts may be dropped off in the church office or given to Pat Young at any time throughout the year.

Respectfully submitted,  
*Patricia Young*  
Committee Chairperson



**WOMEN OF THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA  
OF THE LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH UNIT**  
**ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2025**

*Our motto: As a community of women created in the image of God, called to discipleship in Jesus Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to grow in faith, affirm our gifts, support one another in our callings, engage in ministry and action, and promote healing and wholeness in the church, our society, and the world!*

All Luther Memorial women are considered members of W/ELCA, and are encouraged to attend any of our monthly Circle meetings, and/or the two General Meetings held each year, usually in April and October.

Any profits from our usual small fundraisers are put to good use, assisting the work of the W/ELCA at Luther Memorial and on the Synod and National level. Yearly gifts have been given to City Mission, Bethesda/Holy Trinity Community Center, Bethany Outreach Center, confirmation retreats, and Luther Memorial Academy.

Since the pandemic we are back to holding Lenten lunches with Betty Pletz as the “general” in charge of the organization, for five (5) Wednesday lunches during Lent, and a lot of friends to help out each week with cooking, set-up and clean-up. We thank one and all for your assistance!

Our two (2) circles did again fill 40 Christmas stockings/gift bags for Warren State Hospital residents this past November. Tea Bag Invites continued to be given to any woman who joins the church during the year. This year our two circles joined together for the April and October General Meetings.

For **many** years we have supported the “Pennies for Poverty” project – having canisters at all church entrances for people to throw in their change or dollar bills. We have also supported for several years, mostly through Pat Bellingham’s many efforts, the Human Trafficking issue in the Erie area, and awareness of same, through outreach and education work locally and throughout our NW PA Synod Women’s Organization, and also the Lily Project. We will also be supporting Rachel’s Garden – more of that coming up in 2026.

Officers for 2025 were: Pat Young – President; Mary Mumford – Vice President; Pat Bellingham – Secretary; Betty Pletz – Treasurer. The leader for the Tuesday Afternoon Circle was Pat Young and for the Deborah Circle, Judy Johnson.

Thank you to all who support Women of the ELCA for your service and dedication. We invite any and all women, regardless of age, to join one of our active Circles. Both meet on the first Tuesday of the month. The Deborah Circle meets at 12:00 noon in the parlor and the Tuesday Afternoon Circle also meets in the parlor at 3:00pm, with the W/ELCA Board meeting in February to plan the year’s events.

God’s blessings,

*Patricia Young*

President, Luther Memorial Congregational Unit

## Go to the World!

1 Go to the world! Go in - to all the earth.  
 2 Go to the world! Go in - to ev - 'ry place.  
 3 Go to the world! Go strug - gle, bless, and pray;  
 4 "Go to the world! Go as the ones I send,

Go preach the cross where Christ re - news life's worth,  
 Go live the word of God's re - deem - ing grace.  
 the nights of tears give way to joy - ous day.  
 for I am with you till the age shall end,

bap - tiz - ing as the sign of our re - birth.  
 Go seek God's pres - ence in each time and space.  
 As ser - vant church, you fol - low Christ's own way.  
 when all the hosts of glo - ry cry, A - men!"

Al - le - lu - ia. Al - le - lu - ia.

Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan, 1955–1993

Music: SINE NOMINE, Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1872–1958

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## BLESSING

It is not only what you do,  
but how you connect and love  
that can transform a role or task  
into a gift from God.

God bless your showing up  
and the details of your doing.

God bless your willingness  
to fail and learn from the process.

God bless your humility and your humor  
in the heart of what you do best.

God bless your duty and joy  
for this community and impact

God bless your candor  
about what really matters to you.

God bless your flexibility  
about the details and outcomes alike.

God bless your observations  
about who else might be invited to help.

God bless your stepping back  
so another can participate more fully.

God bless your openness  
to a process of becoming together.

For these are gifts from God.  
And so are you.

**Amen.**

## DIMISSAL

Go in peace. Do justice. Love mercy. Walk humbly.  
**Thanks be to God!**