

LUTHER MEMORIAL C H U R C H



Luther Memorial Church • 225 West Tenth Street • Erie, PA 16501 • 454-0106
e-mail: info@luthermemorialonline.org website: www.luthermemorialonline.org
Luther Memorial Academy • 220 West Eleventh Street • Erie, PA 16501 • 454-0106

Volume 52, Issue 10

December 2025 / January 2026

SUNDAY WORSHIP

8:15 am Worship Faith Chapel
10:30 am Worship Main Church
10:30am service live streamed on YouTube.
Service available on LM website on Monday

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STAFF

Pastor ~ Jay C. Mitchell
jmitchell@luthermemorialonline.org

Cantor ~ Bryan Timm
btimm@luthermemorialonline.org

Christian Education ~ Beth Keller
bkeller@luthermemorialonline.org
Sarah Prylinski
sprylinski@luthermemorialonline.org

Care Ministry ~ Jan MacInnes
jmacinnes@luthermemorialonline.org

Parish Manager ~ Miriam Scheid
mscheid@luthermemorialonline.org

Secretary ~ Norma Buerk
nbuerk@luthermemorialonline.org

Luther Memorial Academy:
Administrator ~ Michelle Thom
mthom@lmaerie.org

Secretary ~ Amanda Fried
afried@lmaerie.org

Bethany Outreach Ctr. ~ Mabel Howard
mabel@bethanyoutreachcenter.org

Dear Luther Memorial,

O Child of Ecstasy and Sorrows,
O Prince of Peace and Pain,
brighten today's world by tomorrow's,
renew our lives again; Lord Jesus, come and reign!

This verse comes from one my favorite Advent carols: *Each Winter as the Year Grows Older*. The entire carol (it's five verses) lays out everything that can seem wrong in the world in which we live, some of which seems much more obvious when the days grow shorter and colder, when the world seems a little darker and limbs that much barer, and yet the world around us is singing of the Most Wonderful Time of the Year. And then it comes to this verse, ending the litany of seeming lament. And there is a fresh reminder of the beauty and mystery of this season: everything we are and will be, everything that swirls around us, everything but everything is held in Jesus.

So, as we come to the beginning of a new church year with Advent and a new year in society with the turning of the year, I am keeping this verse close to heart. In these seasons with which we begin the story again, we are reminded of our God who is with us, our God who loves us into the depths of our humanity, our God who journeys with us and calls us to shine amid the bleakness with the radiance of Jesus himself.

Because, you see, that's what it's all about. We have ended our year with the seasons of the Church when we hear of what it means to be followers of Jesus. We take our place in the story of Jesus. And the season is almost six months long! Just as we begin to wonder what it's all about we get this fresh start to hear the story again. To hear of the One who is come and has come and is now here! Yes, we take our place in sharing the story, in living its truths for the world that still yearns as desperately as it has since the very first coming of the Christ. We also, though, take some time to be reminded again of just what—and who!—we root ourselves in.

As we take these seasons to again root ourselves in the beginning of all things, let us find refreshment with the story again. Let us open our hearts to hear afresh the story of our salvation. Let us open our hearts to prepare a place for the One for whom we wait.

I look forward to worshiping and gathering with you in the coming days as we welcome the Christ and heed again his call to come not just to the cradle but to Life!

See you in Church,

Saints of the Season

THE ADVENT SAINTS

Conveniently spread a week apart, we encounter three beloved saints throughout the season of Advent.

On December 6, we celebrate St. Nicholas, bishop of Myra. The stories of St. Nicholas are varied and many of them quite ancient. Nicholas did live in the third century, after all. Surprisingly, until later in the 18th century, Nicholas was known for his protection over sailors and those who work on and travel over water. Why? Well, we are not quite sure. There are, of course, the apocryphal stories of Nicholas saving three young girls from (in various versions of the story) slavery, prostitution, or marriage by his generous gifts through their window (conveniently falling in their drying socks...at a time when socks were not really a part of everyday dress). Interestingly, the only verified story we have of Nicholas is that he was present at the Council of Nicaea (the one from which we get the Creed) and had a physical altercation with Arius and his followers.

On December 13, then, we encounter a saint well known here at Luther Memorial: Saint Lucy. Lucy was a wealthy Roman maiden who (again, in various versions of the story) was set to be married but had pledged her virginity to God. To keep her suitor from desiring to marry her she gouged out her own eyes—which is why in iconography, Lucy is seen carrying her own eyes. Another version would say that blinding was part of her martyrdom. Whatever the details of that part of the story, we know that she becomes a beloved saint of Scandinavian nations. Perhaps this is because her name (Lucia) has roots in the Latin *lux*. It should be noted that Lucy is one of the few women named in the Litany of the Saints among the virgin saints along with Agnes, another early virgin martyr.

Less well known and certainly less widely celebrated, **on December 20**, we come to the celebration of Katarina von Bora Luther. Often overshadowed by her husband, we should not sell Katarina (Luther called her Katie) short in her own Reforming work. Besides being a leader in her convent and her work to find suitable spouses for all her sisters before pursuing Luther herself, Katie ran quite the household. Luther often had visitors and students stay with them and Katie was in charge of the hospitality. Such hospitality included her own very well received brews of beer—some recipes of which are still being brewed today! Katie outlived Luther and sadly died relatively destitute, overlooked, and forgotten even though she put her whole self in reforming work with her husband.

THE CHRISTMAS MARTYRS

There are three saints whose feast days fall in quick succession right after our celebration of The Nativity of Our Lord: Stephen, John, and the Holy Innocents. Together, they are often known as The Christmas Martyrs. There's a reason for this:

December 26 is the feast of St. Stephen (*Good King Wenceslas* tells us as much as he goes out on the "Feast of Stephen"). Stephen was one of seven persons chosen by the apostles to serve as *diakonoi*, or servants. It was their charge to be the connection between the apostles and those in need. They served the poor, children, and widows. To this day, Deacons serve the connection between The Church and The World. Stephen was a deacon, yes, but he is remembered as the Proto-martyr, or first martyr of the Church. Stoned by Saul (later an apostle himself, ironically), Stephen cried out to a vision of Jesus as he died. His feast immediately after The Nativity of Our Lord reminds us that the way of discipleship requires both **will** and **deed** and Stephen was martyred for both.

The next day, **December 27**, we feast with St. John the Evangelist. Now, there is still some debate about the connection between the authors of five books of the Bible that bear the name John (The Gospel of John, I, II, and III John, and the book of Revelation). However, this day we celebrate John the Beloved Disciple, the one who "reclined in the bosom of Jesus" at the Last Supper, the author of the Gospel of John and believed to be the author of Revelation. Tradition tells us that John was the youngest of the disciples and the only disciple to die of natural causes in his old age. Indeed, sometimes his iconography includes a chalice with a serpent in it representing an apocryphal story about him being served a cup of wine with a poisonous snake in it and God spared him from

(cont'd. on page 3)

death. We also believe he was exiled to the island of Patmos where he wrote the book of Revelation to bolster the faith of a church under persecution (Revelation is not future telling, it is coded messages about keeping the faith and continuing to worship even in the worst of times). Having died a natural death, John comes after Stephen reminding us that while the way of discipleship is both will and deed, John was a martyr of will (being willing to die for his faith) but not of deed.

And then the tragedy of the Holy Innocents on **December 28**. These are the children of Bethlehem who were slaughtered by Herod when he realized he had been tricked by the magi. Few if any of their families would have known anything about Jesus (himself newly born and his family non-residents of Bethlehem). Their martyrdom is one of deed (they died for Jesus) but not of will.

THE PRINCES OF THE APOSTLES

Finally, this year we will encounter two feasts that rarely fall on a Sunday and we usually do not recognize them. However, they do fall on Sundays this year and we will keep the feast with them! They are important for several reasons:

January 18 is the feast of The Confession of St. Peter. This is the day we celebrate Peter's declaration to Jesus' question of "Who do you say that I am?" Peter boldly declares "You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!" Jesus recognizes Peter's right answer and, indeed, even gives him his new name of Petros, "Rock," declaring that on this one Jesus would build the Church.

A week later on **January 25** we celebrate The Conversion of St. Paul. We remember the story of Saul (the one who killed Stephen) and his vision of the Risen Christ on the road to Damascus. He is converted to Christianity and becomes perhaps the most remembered (and certainly most quoted) apostle even though he never had a physical experience of the historical Jesus.

While Peter and Paul share a feast day in June, these feasts are worthy of note. First, each is a celebration of how they took their places among the apostles. But also, because we know that they were not exactly friends (in fact, they fight quite a bit), the week between these two dates every year is The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. As we celebrate these pillars of the Church and princes among the apostles, we also remember the need for all of us to work together to advance the Gospel and share the good news of Jesus with a world where disagreement and conflict seem much easier.

So, there you have it. Perhaps more than you ever wanted to know about some of the people—besides Jesus and Mary and Joseph and the shepherds and the magi—that we celebrate in this season. And celebrate we shall!

Celebrate Christmas!

Christmas Coffee Hour

Congregational Life is brightening everyone's season with a festive coffee hour on Sunday, December 7. Join us in the parlor following each worship service for some scrumptious Christmas goodies and fellowship.



Mitten Tree



Our Mitten Tree is up and ready for decorations. Help cover the tree with warmth; mittens, gloves, scarves, and hats. These items will be donated to the Bethany Outreach Center and given to those who need that extra warmth during the coming winter months.

Donations may be placed on the Mitten Tree or dropped off in the church office.

Blankets are also welcomed items that are appreciated. Thank you.

Your Holiday Spread

The delicious hamloaf that makes your mouth water will be here on Friday, December 12. For those that ordered, please pick up your hamloaf Sunday morning or contact the church office to pick yours up on Friday. Thank you.



Christmas Concert

Light the Way: A Concert for Hope and Home
Wednesday, December 10
7:00pm
Luther Memorial Church
Tickets: \$10

Please join us for a joyous gathering to support Inter-Church Ministries' work in our community.

This joyful evening of music and community will feature choral, instrumental, and other performances that celebrate the season of giving and compassion. Every note you hear – and every dollar you share – will support ICM's mission to **lift neighbors in**

need through meals, housing assistance, and other vital services for families across Erie County.

As we enter this season of hope, we invite you to come together with friends from congregations across our community to help "light the way" for our neighbors who are facing hardship. Your presence, prayers, and generosity make a real difference.

For more information, please contact **Carol Davis** at **814-454-2411** or icm@icmeriecounty.org. You can also learn more about ICM's work at: <https://www.icmeriecounty.org/>

We hope you will join us for this uplifting evening of music, compassion, and community.



St. Lucia Festival



Sunday, December 14
4:00pm
Main Church

Santa Lucia's Day is celebrated on December 13 in Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland. It commemorates the life of Santa Lucia. It's the beginning of the Christmas season in those countries and is a celebration of light – at the time of year when the world is darker.

The tradition on Santa Lucia Day is for the oldest girl in the family to dress in a white robe with a red sash and wear a crown of candles and lingonberry leaves (lingonberries are popular berries in Sweden). Her attendants dress in white with silver crowns. Stjärngossar, Star Boy, helps light the way with his pointed hat and wand. On the morning of Santa Lucia, the children in the family will often wake their parents with a breakfast of Lussekatte (a special St. Lucia bun made with saffron), ginger cookies, coffee and glögg (hot spiced wine).

We are looking forward to our youth and young children participating in this traditional Swedish program:

Sunday, December 14 at 4:00pm at Luther Memorial Church.

Two rehearsals remain: Sunday, December 7 at 11:45am.

Brief final rehearsal on Sunday, December 14 at 11:45am.

Coffee and Swedish refreshments will be served following the program from a table of lighted candles and beautiful Swedish decorations.

Please contact Lena Donnelly at 814-403-7825 with any questions.

About Blue Christmas

Wednesday, December 17
6:00pm
Main Church

It has long been the practice of humans to gather during the coldest and darkest periods of time. Whether this is a metaphorical darkness or an astronomical one, the need to gather is the same. Cultures around the world and throughout recorded time have kept festivals around the Winter Solstice—the longest night of the year—to remind one another of the light and warmth that is coming in the returning sun; every day after the Solstice is longer than the one before it, and every night shorter.



It is no accident, then, that the festival the Church has kept from early days in this season is the anticipation and celebration of the very Light of God come into the world: the Incarnation. We share our anticipation in these days as the nights still grow longer and the days shorter until we celebrate the Nativity of Jesus, the Light of the World, and his birth in the world.

But we know that our anticipation in this season is for the *already but not yet* of Jesus' light. Certainly we keep watch for and then celebrate the birth of Jesus into the human story. But we also look with anticipation to Jesus' return when we will have "no need of sun or moon to shine on [us], for the glory of God [will be our] light, and [our] lamp [will be] the Lamb."

This season, though dark and cold in more ways than one, is also one when society tells us we should be the cheeriest. It is, after all, "the most wonderful time of the year." But when we are honest with ourselves, we know that is not always the case. For a myriad of reasons, this season can be difficult. The darkness and the cold seem overwhelming and interminable. Even the hope of the returning Sun cannot always rouse us.

This service is meant for us to keep watch together. To gather as generations upon generations of humans have done throughout time and place to remind one another that while it may seem overwhelming, dark and cold are not forever. Together tonight we keep watch with one another and sing our expectations into the night. We hold one another in prayer while also allowing ourselves to be held in the everlasting arms of the infant Savior.

Let this service wash over you. It is a simple service of readings, prayer, song, and silence. We will light candles against the gathering darkness defiantly proclaiming the Light that shines in the bleakness which cannot overcome it. And then we will leave in the peace of Jesus hopefully carrying the comfort and joy that comes from him into our lives.

-Pastor Jay

Family Christmas Extravaganza



What could be better than spending your Friday night at our **Family Christmas Extravaganza!** That's right, this very merry event is Santa approved! Friendships, laughter, games, food; you name it we've got it all here on Friday, December 5. Join us for lots of Christmas festivities and you'll feel jolly all through the season!

You've got to get this date on your calendars; sure don't want to miss it! **Family Christmas Extravaganza Night is Friday, December 5 from 5:30 - 9:30pm.** Be sure to **RSVP to Mrs. Keller, Mrs. Prylinski or the church office.**

OWLS

Christmas Party Time!
Wednesday, December 17
11:00am - 1:00pm

There will be no bah-humbugging at our annual Christmas party. A very merry agenda is planned with some favorite carols and a delicious lunch.. It will be an absolutely glittertastic afternoon of fun. The main dish will be provided; we are asking that everyone bring a side dish or



dessert to share. In lieu of a gift exchange, a collection will be taken towards the ELCA Good Gifts Program.

Please RSVP to the church office, 454-0106, ext. 221 or Jan MacInnes by Wednesday, December 10.

“Stocking the Streets”



“Stocking the Streets” is an effort by ELCA World Hunger and our community to care for all our neighbors, some of whom lack a roof over their heads. Join with our youth as we come together to assist those in our community that are unsheltered. Donations of needed items will be collected through Sunday, December 21. Sarah Prylinski will then gather these items and distribute them to those in need that she assists on a daily basis. A donation box is located near the Welcome Table or items may be dropped off in

the church office. Items needed include:

- First aid kits
- Hygiene wipes
- New socks
- Travel-sized ponchos

- Hand warmers
- Restaurant gift card
- Flashlight with batteries
- Preloaded transit card

- Presealable plastic bags
- Emergency blanket
- New underwear
- Homemade snacks

Thank you for your kindness.



Christmas Eve Services

The Nativity of Our Lord
Wednesday, December 24, 2025
Main Church

- 5:30 P.M. FESTIVAL PRELUDE
CANTOR, BRYAN TIMM
- 6:00 P.M. CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE
- 10:00 P.M. FESTIVAL PRELUDE
CANTOR, BRYAN TIMM
- 10:30 P.M. CHRISTMAS WORSHIP SERVICE



We invite you to come, worship, and celebrate the birth of our Lord.



Christmas Day
Thursday, December 25, 2025
Main Church

- 10:30 A.M. PAJAMA WORSHIP
- ONE SERVICE WILL BE HELD ON CHRISTMAS DAY IN OUR MAIN CHURCH.
- 11:30 A.M. FELLOWSHIP

Poinsettia Order Form



As we prepare to celebrate during the Christmas season, we also remember friends and loved ones with poinsettias for the chancel. Poinsettias this year will be \$8.50 each for a 6 1/2" poinsettia. **To place an order, please return the completed form, with proper remittance, TO THE CHURCH OFFICE BY SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7.** Thank you.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED TO HELP DELIVER POINSETTIAS TO OUR HOME-BOUND.
IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP, PLEASE CHECK THE SPACE PROVIDED ON THE ORDER FORM.

_____ Plant(s) in memory of:

From: _____

_____ Plant(s) in honor of:

From: _____

Plants Ordered _____ X \$8.50 = _____

(Please make checks payable to Luther Memorial Church)

_____ WILL TAKE ORDER

_____ GIVE TO SHUT-INS

_____ WILL HELP DELIVER PLANTS TO SHUT-INS

A Little Christmas Trivia

- * **Christmas trees:** The first artificial Christmas trees were made from goose feathers dyed green. The first Christmas tree with electric lights was decorated in 1882 by Edward Johnson.
- * **Santa's suit:** The modern image of Santa Claus in a red suit was heavily popularized by a 1930s advertising campaign by Coca-Cola. Before that, Santa was often depicted in green, purple, or blue.
- * **Rudolph:** Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer was created by an advertising copywriter for the Montgomery Ward department store in 1939 to give away coloring books.
- * **Eggnog:** The first batch of eggnog in America was made in the Jamestown settlement in 1607.
- * **Christmas cards:** The first Christmas card is believed to have been sold in London in 1843, with only 1,000 cards sold.
- * **Xmas:** The "X" in Xmas is the Greek symbol for Christ, making it a traditional and non-secular abbreviation.
- * **Stockings:** The tradition of hanging stockings comes from a legend about a man who secretly left gifts for his daughters in their stockings by the fire to save them from poverty.



Care Ministry – Communion Care Ministers

OUR OUTREACH TO ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL

This ministry reinforces that all members regardless of their limitations or where they live are cherished members of our church family.



In 2006 Luther Memorial introduced a Care Ministry committee of volunteers who continue to provide compassionate, spiritual and emotional support to church member individuals and families who are facing challenges in their lives and extending beyond what a single pastor can provide.

Jan MacInnes is the Care Ministry Leader for the sub-committees listed below:

- Communion Care Ministry to home-bound members including *Christmas Cheer Gift Bags* at Christmas
- Prayer Ministry - Listed in weekly bulletin
- Bereavement - Provides a ministry of presence at the funeral and education on grief to help navigate their loss
- Senior Adult Socials - Older Wiser Lutherans (OWLS) - social group offering internal support to each other

Communion Care Ministry - Jeanne Gaber - Coordinator

This sub-committee are trained lay volunteers who work under the guidance of our pastoral staff as an extension of our mission to care for our members well-being. Their monthly visits provide encouragement while sharing scripture, prayer and Holy Communion. This is an important link to connect home-bound members who experience loneliness and isolation. Since 2015 the December visit includes a *Christmas Cheer Gift Bag* filled with various fresh fruit and snack items, and beginning last year each recipient received a personal Christmas letter from Pastor Jay. Giving an identical gift to the same persons wherever they live in the Erie area set boundaries and established the outreach for our objective and goal. Caring for our elderly members is a fundamental principle of our faith and we continue to focus on their wisdom, faithfulness and legacy because they are a source of inspiration and a living testament to a life well-lived.

In addition to giving a *Christmas Cheer Gift Bag* to home-bound members, the Communion Care Ministers recognize our member's milestone years of age 90 and above. Some of our 90 plus members can and do attend worship services; some are home-bound and cannot. Those who are home-bound and 90+ years will receive one *Christmas Cheer Gift Bag*.

The definition of a home-bound person is identified as not able to live alone or leave home independently due to physical or mental restrictions typically related to age, illness and/or disability. Basically, the person is “housebound”. Examples of home-bound:

- Lives with a family member in their home, receives personal care from their family and has limited mobility
- Assisted Living - needs some help with daily tasks and less intensive medical supervision
- Skilled Care - provides 24/7 medical care

If a home-bound member lives with family or resides in an Assisted Living facility and is able to attend church services to receive Communion, that person would not be on the Communion Care Ministry list nor receive a *Christmas Cheer Gift Bag*. Members who are 90 plus years will receive a *Christmas Cheer Gift Bag*.

In support of this ministry, the decorative gift bags going with our Communion Care Ministers on their December visits are being donated by a church member family and are filled completely and ready for delivery.

Current Communion Care Ministers are listed in alphabetic order:

✝ Cheryl Brown	✝ Betty Pletz
✝ Jeanne Gaber	✝ Lee Swenson
✝ Linda Graffius	✝ Pat Young
✝ Jan MacInnes	



Blessings to our Communion Care Ministry group for continued strength and patience to endure weariness, find joy in their work and recognize the physical and emotional toll on themselves.

You are greatly appreciated by your siblings in Christ

My Commitment to God



Luther Memorial celebrated *Pledge Sunday on November 23*. God gladly receives our offerings of time, talent and treasure. We ask that you please fill out a commitment of your expected giving, either by the form included in your offering envelopes or the form below and return it to the church office. Taking the time to make a commitment really helps Luther Memorial's budgeting process, and more importantly allows you to recommit your lives to our God who gives us all things. **It is critical for you to know, though, that the amount you commit is not as significant as your commitment to giving.** What you give should be with thanksgiving and with joy. Only you and God know the

details of your stewardship.

A Pledge Card is below and at the Welcome Tables. Don't just fill them out. Take some time with them. Pray over them. Open your heart and your mind to listen to how God is taking priority in your life and how you will proportion your support of the ministry here.

MY COMMITMENT TO GOD THROUGH THE MINISTRY OF LUTHER MEMORIAL CHURCH - YEAR 2026

I/we commit my/our entire life in service to our Lord Jesus Christ, and therefore, will offer a portion of my/our income as a thank offering to God in support of the mission and ministry of God at Luther Memorial Church. I promise, with the help of God, to give through Luther Memorial Church during this coming year as follows:

\$ _____	for Current Ministry	Remarks
\$ _____	for _____	_____
\$ _____	for _____	_____
\$ _____	Total () Weekly () Monthly () Annually	

___ I am interested in information about electronic giving.

Name _____

Address _____

Prayers Arise

A Service of Evening Prayer will be offered each Wednesday in January at 6:00pm on our 5th floor. Please join us for this half hour Vespers Service; January 7, 14, 21 and 28.



*Our love and sympathy is extended
to the family and friends of:*

Kathy Morey, Jean Kinner's sister, who died November 11, 2025.

Christian Education

Sunday Mornings



Our children and youth gather the second Sunday of each month for Sunday School and LYO. Our next classes will be held **Sunday, December 14 and January 11**

- Children in grades PreK-grade 5 will gather for Sunday School from 9:30-10:15am;
- Youth (LYO) in grades 6-12 will meet from 9:30-10:15am.

Confirmation Class Revamp! – 11:30am

For students 7th grade through 9th grade, there will be four workshops offered throughout the year on the 2nd Sunday (in odd months: **January 11, March 8, May 10**) after the 10:30am worship service. In order to successfully complete confirmation classes, each confirmand must attend all four. However, the *same four* will be offered every year in slightly different orders to allow for flexibility in attending all four. There will also be a worship leadership and a biblical literacy component that will need to be completed along with the usual service hours. Finally, ConfirCamp is strongly recommended for *at least* one year between the end of 7th and beginning of 10th grade. Confirmation will still be held in the autumn of 10th grade to each confirmand.



Messages for the Young & Young-at-Heart



Pastor Jay will have messages for the young and young-at-heart each Sunday during Advent. Children's messages are offered on all Festival Sundays.

Second Sunday Soirée

Stop in the parlor on December 14 at 9:15am for our Second Sunday Soirée. Thank you to Carol and Bob Davidson for providing this time to visit, catch up with friends and have some refreshments. See you in the parlor.



Faith Formation

We welcome you to join us for Adult Forum, Brown Bag Bible, and Bible After Dark (BAD). **Faith Formation Calendars** for adults are available in hard copy on the Welcome Table near the Ramp Door. There are electronic copies on the Facebook page and information can be also be found on our website.



ADULT FORUM

Offered on the Second Sunday of each month from 9:15–10:15am, Adult Forum is an opportunity to form our faith and continue to grow as disciples of Jesus. Topics are about history, liturgy, faith, and other topics which may or may not be “Bible Study.” **Adult Forum will gather Sunday December 14 and Sunday, January 11.**

BROWN BAG BIBLE

Brown Bag Bible meets on Thursdays at 12:00 noon. Brown Bag Bible is an opportunity to grow more deeply in our understanding of scripture through more in-depth study. You are invited to bring a lunch. We gather in the Conference Room in the Pastoral Suite (Elevator to Floor 4). **Our next gatherings will be December 4, 11, 18 and January 8, 15, 22 and 29.** We are using Josh Scott's *Cross-Examined: Reading the Bible in Times of Division* as our guide.

BIBLE AFTER DARK

We gather on the **FIRST TUESDAYS** of the Month at 6:30pm at Calamari's Squid Row for conversation, fellowship, and mutual support among the saints! **Join us at Calamari's on December 2 and January 6.**

We are studying *Parables: Putting Jesus's Stories in Their Place*. The cost of the book is \$14 and may be purchased through the church office.

Women of the ELCA

Tuesday Circle

December & January:
Meetings will not be held.

Our Circle is open to all women, and we welcome you to contact Pat Young, President, at 455-7736, or our church office, 454-0106, ext. 221, with any questions.



Deborah Circle

December: Tuesday, December 2 at 12:00 noon
January & February: Meetings will not be held.

For more information on the Deborah Circle, please contact Judy Johnson at 833-4600.

Spreading Christmas Cheer



At the November 4 meetings the Deborah Circle and Tuesday Circle filled 40 bags for the men and women of Warren State Hospital. Santa's sleigh will be making a special early stop to deliver these much needed items to the many residents for a merry Christmas.

Thankofferings



If you have not yet turned in your Thankoffering, you are welcome to give this to Pat Young or drop off in the church office. Thank you.

Pennies for Poverty



As a continuing project to aid women and children in crisis, special containers for donations to "Pennies for Poverty" are located by the doors to the Main Church and Faith Chapel. Our women's groups thank one and all for your donations of coins and dollars.

Fellowship

Magic Fingers Grace Group



Make someone's day simply twinklefied and warm them up with a beautiful shawl. Knitting with friends will put that jingle in your step so we hope you stop down on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month with your yarn projects. Join us in the parlor.

Gatherings: December 9, January 13 and January 27 from 10:00am - 12:00 noon.

If you'd like to learn how to knit or crochet, we'd love to show you. Please contact Jan MacInnes, 454-0106, ext. 233 or the church office, ext. 221 with any questions. Please let us know if you are low on yarn and some can be dropped off to you.

OWLS



Valentine Luncheon
Friday, February 13, 2026
12:00 noon
Ambassador Conference Center
7792 Peach St

We're already talking about Valentine's Day, but as you all know this is a very popular event. Reservations will be accepted beginning December 28 and will mostly likely fill up by the end of the year. This is a lovely luncheon so get your reservations in right away.

Reservations are necessary by the end of December. Only a certain number of reservations will be accepted by the Ambassador Center so it is important to get ours in. To RSVP, please contact Jan MacInnes at 833-0476 or Norma in our church office. Thank you.

Our Neighbors' Place



Our Neighbors' Place is a seasonal overflow shelter that ensures everyone has a warm, safe place to sleep during Erie's winter season.

A community effort, ONP used to operate on a rotating basis among several downtown Erie churches during the winter season. This season ONP will take place at the Community Resilience Center, a single site location provided by Erie County. Guests are provided food, the opportunity to shower, a place to sleep, chaplain services, hygiene necessities, foot care, and are introduced to available homeless services.

Where and When:

- Community Resilience Center (450 E 16th St. Erie, PA 16503)
- This program is seasonal and will open in November 2025 - April 2026.
- **Volunteers arrive at 6:30pm and leave at 11:00pm.**

Who We Serve:

- Any homeless man or woman without shelter.

How We Serve:

- Providing a warm overnight space to sleep.
- Supplying one meal to each guest.
- Connection to chaplain services.
- Giving guests an opportunity to shower.
- Bringing in community partners to provide foot care.
- Connection to other homeless resources in Erie County.

How You Can Help:

- **Luther Memorial Church will be volunteering at ONP the week of Wednesday, February 11 - Tuesday, February 17. Your help is needed for 1 night, 2 nights, or as many as you are able. Volunteers hand out towels for showers, offer coffee, hand out meals, provide t-shirts and socks for those that are in need of these items. Meals are pre-made and ready to serve.**

It may seem as though February is long time away, but it comes quickly. Six volunteers are needed for each evening so we ask that you really give some thought to helping. The giving of your time will be greatly appreciated. To volunteer, you may contact Norma in the church office at 454-0106, ext. 221 or Sarah Prylinski at 882-1695. Thank you.

Annual Congregational Meeting



Sunday, January 25, 2026
Joint Worship Service at 10:30am

ANNUAL MEETING - 11:30AM

All members of Luther Memorial Church are encouraged to attend the Annual Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 25 after the 10:30 worship service. Please note that we will NOT have the 8:15am worship service that morning, but one combined worship service at 10:30am in the main church. Following worship, the Annual Meeting will be held in the main church. The agenda will include presentation of 2025 reports, election of Church Council members, and a review of the proposed 2026 budget. Please join us to review the year and look ahead and plan for the ministry year of 2026!

December Birthdays

Erich Pirschel 12-1
 Megan Cunningham 12-1
 Nathan Helsley 12-1
 Michael Pirschel 12-2
 Maryann Fried 12-2
 Tim Thomas, Jr. 12-3
 Rose Lintelman 12-5
 Adam Franks 12-6
 Xyla Lombardozzi 12-8
 Linda Melaragno 12-8
 Christine Satur 12-10
 Marc Collins 12-10
 Frank DiCenzo 12-12
 Sam Laver 12-12
 Ely Cooney 12-12
 Jack McKibben 12-13

Ben Davis 12-13
 Skip MacInnes 12-14
 Susan Long 12-14
 Annabelle Cooney 12-16
 Mark Cadden 12-16
 Joshua Graffius 12-16
 Natalie Montero 12-16
 Gina Snider 12-17
 Brian Franks 12-17
 Jacob O'Brien 12-18
 Marne Brown 12-18
 Robert Kraut 12-18
 Jonathan Hagen 12-19
 Jordan Sturm 12-19
 George Kurtich 12-19
 Elijah Montroy 12-20



Rose-Marie Rose 12-21
 Cheryl Markowski-Momeyer 12-21
 Christine Hickey 12-24
 Ryan Robie 12-24
 Christine Snyder 12-24
 Denise King 12-26
 Matthew Kinzig 12-28
 Joan Lasher 12-28
 Luke Huston 12-28
 Madilyn Mantsch 12-29
 Maura Myhoffer 12-29
 Dylan Ambrose 12-30
 Danielle Graffius 12-30
 Megan Ross 12-30
 Mindy Boyd 12-30
 Evan Andrae 12-30

December & January Sunshine Birthdays

Joanne Dahlstrand 1/11
 Residence at Presque Isle Bay
 1012 W. Bayfront Pkwy.
 Erie, PA 16507



Kathy Weisman 1/27
 Pleasant Ridge Manor
 8300 West Ridge Manor
 Girard, PA 16417

January Birthdays

Natalie Bartlett 1-2
 Nancy Come 1-2
 Madison Chaffee 1-5
 Jerry Keller 1-6
 Leo Blore 1-7
 Caleb DiCenzo 1-10
 Ben Gustafson 1-11
 Joanne Dahlstrand 1-11
 Chloe Meucci 1-11
 Anton Partusch 1-11
 Krista Partusch 1-11
 Aiden Montero 1-12
 Matt Lasher 1-12
 Carol Davidson 1-14

Robert Alvaro 1-17
 Jack Bartlett 1-17
 Catherine McAdoo 1-17
 Cheryl Brown 1-18
 Richard O'Leary 1-19
 Brian Davidson 1-19
 Andres Duran 1-20
 Timothy Dugan 1-20
 Tamara Wettekin 1-21
 Spencer Cadden 1-23
 Sara Wettekin 1-23
 Zackary Helsley 1-23
 Rebecca Brown 1-24
 Ava Romba 1-24



Judy McKibben 1-24
 David Kinzig 1-25
 Gabriel Fracassi 1-25
 Barbara Walter 1-26
 Janice MacInnes 1-27
 Kathy Weisman 1-27
 Dominic Barbaro 1-27
 Tammy Hessinger 1-28
 Christopher Andrejewski 1-28
 Sarah Heintzel 1-29
 Christopher Young 1-30
 Nathan Muhanna 1-30

Toasty Warm

Warm deliciousness is coming your way on Sunday, January 18. Pick up your homemade soup following the 10:30 service.

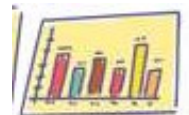


November 2025 Council Meeting

1. **Council Meeting:** Minutes of the October 14, 2025 and November 3, 2025 council meetings were unanimously approved.
2. **Pastor's Report:** New members will be received soon. Advent calendars are being prepared for the church and school. There continues to be Erie Conference conversation about collaboration.
3. **Overflow Shelter:** Volunteers are still needed.
4. **LM Church & Academy Sign:** The sign in the greenspace is completed. Spotlights will be installed.
5. **Maintenance Assistance:** Volunteers will help as needed as David Buerk rehabilitates and recovers.
6. **Greenspace Tree Planting:** Discussion with city arborist about planting trees in the greenspace. It was suggested to plant 3-5 trees in the green space between the two parking lots. Chaffee Landscaping and arborist suggest RedBud trees as they would not have large roots which may cause problems with the lighting, parking lot or pavement. Les Fobes suggested using the memorials of Lois Fobes for this project. Upon motion it was unanimous to move forward with the project.
 - a. It was suggested that if there is interest in additional "memorial" trees being planted that Dogwoods be planted along the main wall on the North side of the Renew Erie building.
7. **Treasurer's Report:** ~71,000 to the good. Total Net Income, -38,366; compared to last year at this time; -109,411. UBS all had positive change in FMV (3rd or 4th month in a row). ECF total revenues as of September: 64,068. Savings earning 4.25%. Payable due to capital campaign; \$6,756.00; still outstanding from pledges; \$15,000.
 - a. Renew Erie expenses are not as high; net income at \$4,528. A unit is currently not rented. The potential tenant discussed last month was unable to secure liability insurance. There is a prospective tenant that sounds promising and further conversation will be had.
8. **Cantor's Report:** A pipe organ will be donated to Luther Memorial. The approximate cost of relocating the organ to Erie will be \$5,000. Adjustments and alterations can be made for the organ to fit/work/play differently that would cost additional money. We would pick up insurance for the organ beginning January 1, 2026. Upon motion it was unanimous to accept the donation along with costs and responsibilities of transporting the organ.
9. **LMA Administrator's Report:** Continue to work on the Safety Grant for the playground; fencing and surface. Thanksgiving Feast is Tuesday, November 25. Caroling at Werner Books is scheduled for December 7 at 10:30am. Saturday, May 23, 2026 is the 50th Anniversary Celebration. Stop into Pressed to find LMA's Golden Lion and be entered to win a Pressed gift card. Take a walk through the first floor of the school and see the graduating class pictures and the hand painted banner done by AJ Noyes.
10. **Council Meeting:** The next meeting will be Tuesday, December 9 at 6:00pm at Pastor Jay's house.

November 2025 Statistics

<u>ATTENDANCE:</u>	<u>8:15am</u>	<u>10:30am</u>	<u>YouTube</u>	<u>Total</u>
November 2	26	96	44	166
November 9	21	77	20	118
November 16	32	67	21	120
November 23	26	71	19	116
November 30	26	56	30	112
AVERAGE	110	73	27	126
<u>SPECIAL SERVICES:</u>	<u>4:00pm</u>			
November 2 (<i>Requiem Mass</i>) 107	N/A			



BAPTISMS: None recorded.

FUNERALS: None recorded.

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED: None recorded.

MEMORIALS: PARSH, DAVID - **from:** Jerry Nellis
 PETERSEN, JOHN CHARLES - **from:** Les Fobes

LETTER OF TRANSFER: None recorded

WEDDINGS: None recorded.

Luther Memorial Academy



50 Year Celebration!

SAVE THE DATE: Our 50th Anniversary Celebration will be on Saturday, May 2. More details will be coming.

We are now accepting donations for our silent auction and basket raffle.

Please contact Michelle Thom at 814-454-0106 if you have an item you would like to donate.

Thanksgiving Feast

A huge thank you goes out to Leah King for all her hard work to make our Thanksgiving Feast truly magical. She took care of the shopping and organized the cooking for our annual gathering of thanks.



Pizza with the Principal & Pastor

The award luncheon for one student from each class that exemplifies the monthly character trait is off to a great start. Congratulations to our October and November recipients:



October – Created to be **PROUD**
Respecting and liking yourself
Genesis 1:27



November’s – Created to be **GRATEFUL**
Appreciating and being thankful
for someone or something
Psalms 136:26

Stay tuned for our upcoming character traits: December; **PATIENCE** and January; **INQUISITIVENESS**

Caroling at Werner Books

Join us Sunday, December 7 at 10:30am to hear our students caroling at Werner Books (Liberty Plaza, 3608 Liberty Street). There will also be a surprise visit from Santa! AND, it’s also a fundraiser for LMA. Our school will receive a percentage of all sales at the event. So enjoy some carols, do a little Christmas shopping, and support LMA all at once!



Christmas Fair



All students will have the opportunity to shop for their family and friends at the annual Christmas Fair held Thursday, December 11 and Friday, December 12. Volunteers will help guide the children as they shop and gift wrapping of their selections will also be available.

Donations of gift bags, all shapes and sizes, may be sent in to the school office anytime. It’s so much fun and easy to shop this way, and the children are so proud of their purchases!

Thank you to Brooke McCall for pulling our shopping spree together.

All congregation members are invited to shop on Sunday, December 14 from 9:00 – 10:30am (between services).

Christmas Caroling



The Christmas season sometimes seems too short and there's not enough time to get all of our carols in. We'll take care of that with our Christmas Carol Sing-along on Tuesday, December 23. Parents are invited to join us at 10:00am in our main church for some fun caroling and a special performance by Northwestern High School.

All students will return to their classrooms after caroling for normal dismissal at 11:30am. All are welcome to join us.

Christmas Vacation



Have lots of fun and a very merry Christmas during vacation. School will be closed Wednesday, December 24 - Friday, January 2.

Dismissal on Tuesday, December 23 will be at 11:30am. The After School Program will not be held.

School will resume on Monday, January 5.

St. Lucia Festival

All are invited to attend the St. Lucia Festival at Luther Memorial Church on Sunday, December 14 at 4:00pm.

Coffee and Swedish refreshments will be served following the program from a table of lighted candles and beautiful Swedish decorations.



Play Auditions

We will be putting on another wonderful play this year! Play auditions will be Monday, December 15 at 2:30pm and practices will begin in January.

Book Fair

Students will shop December 16, 17, and 22.

The Book Fair will also be open on Sunday, December 21 for our church families from 10:30am - 12:00 noon.

Parents are invited to shop on Tuesday, December 23 from 8:30am - 12:00 noon.



TGI Fridays

Thursday, January 22

A delicious way to support LMA ~ a delicious meal at TGI Fridays. AND, 20% of your bill will come right back to our school!



"Well... I think I've been REALLY good, but maybe you should check with Mommy."

Cookie Box Sales

Our PTL will be hosting a Christmas Cookie Box sale and you can help:

- Sign up to bake your favorite cookies to donate;
- Order your sweets: Christmas Cookie Box orders will be accepted beginning December 3 (until sold out)
- Order forms will be available at the welcome tables.



If you would like to help by baking cookies, please scan the QR code or go to <https://forms.gle/QMUviRG6EcGAqD966> by **December 3**.

- Cookie box orders may be picked up after school at 2:30pm on December 22 or from 8:00 - 11:00am on December 23.
- Cost of each Cookie Box assortment of 3 dozen cookies is \$20. Checks are to be made payable to LMA PTL.

Coming up in January 2026

Getting you all prepared for the new year, here are some dates to add to your calendars:

- MAP testing week of January 12
- End of 2nd quarter - January 16
- 2nd Quarter Report Cards released on My School Worx - January 23



Martin Luther King, Jr.

In recognition of Martin Luther King, Jr.,
LMA will be closed:

Monday, January 19



Parent Drivers

Parent drivers are always needed for our field trips, and we thank you for your help! Please be sure that our school office has copy of your driver's license, insurance card, and clearances before driving.



Payments



TUITION BREAK: If you are responsible for a new student(s) attending LMA for the entire year, you will receive a \$500 tuition discount applied at the end of the year. Sometimes word of mouth is our best advertising!! If you know a family thinking of changing schools, let them know about us!!

Wish List

Every little bit helps LMA; thank you.

- Bottled water - small and large
- Cases of paper
- Plates & napkins
- Monetary donations for Art & Music Supplies
- Monetary donations for the MJ Howell fund, which benefit teachers and staff

Be sure to check out the LMA School Newsletter for more great things happening. Great information at your fingertips all the time! Just scan the QR code or to go:

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/sl/IFORHQj/enewssignup>



DECEMBER 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 LMA Closed	2 12:00pm Deborah Circle 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 6:30pm BAD; Calamari's	3	4 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	5 5:30pm Family Christmas Extravaganza	6 10:00am Quilting
7 <i>Second Sunday in Advent</i> 8:15/10:30am Worship 9:00/11:30am Christmas Cookie Fellowship 11:45am St. Lucia Rehearsal	8 	9 10:00am Magic Fingers Grace Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 6:00pm Church Council	10 7:00pm Light the Way Christmas Concert	11 LMA Christmas Fair Shopping 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	12 LMA Christmas Fair Shopping 4:30pm St. Lucia Christmas Party	13
14 <i>Third Sunday in Advent</i> 8:15/10:30am Worship 9:15am Second Sunday Soirée 9:30am Sunday School 9:30am LYO 11:45am St. Lucia Rehearsal 4:00pm St. Lucia Festival & Reception	15 2:30pm LMA Play Auditions	16 10:00am Pericope 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice	17 11:00am OWLS Christmas Party 6:00pm Blue Christmas Service	18 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	19	20 
21 <i>Fourth Sunday in Advent</i> 8:15/10:30am Worship 10:30am Christmas Pageant 10:00am Book Fair open	22 11:30am Pizza with the Principal & Pastor	23 LMA Christmas Caroling Program 11:30am LMA Dismissal	24 LMA & Church Offices Closed 5:30pm Festival Prelude 6:00pm Christmas Eve Worship 10:00pm Festival Prelude 10:30pm Christmas Eve Worship	25 <i>Merry Christmas</i> 10:30am Christmas Day Worship (Pajama Worship) 11:30am Fellowship LMA & Church Offices Closed	26 LMA & Church Offices Closed 	27
28 8:15/10:30am Worship	29 LMA Closed 	30 LMA Closed	31 LMA Closed			

JANUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 <i>Happy New Year</i> LMA & Church Offices Closed	2 LMA Closed	3 
4 8:15/10:30am Worship "De-Decorating" our Church	5	6 10:00am Pericope 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 6:30pm BAD	7	8 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	9	10
11 8:15/10:30am Worship 9:15am Second Sunday Soirée 9:15am Adult Forum 9:30am Sunday School 9:30am LYO 11:45am Conf. Class 7 th -9 th Gr.	12 	13 10:00am Magic Fingers Grace Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 6:00pm Council	14	15 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	16	17
18 8:15/10:30am Worship	19 <i>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</i> LMA & Church Offices Closed	20 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice	21	22 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	23 	24
25 10:30am Worship 11:30am Annual Congregational Meeting	26	27 10:00am Magic Fingers Grace Group 5:00pm LMA Basketball Practice	28	29 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 5:30pm Handbells 6:45pm Choir	30 11:30am LMA Dismissal 12:00pm Teacher Meeting	31