

LUTHER MEMORIAL C H U R C H



Luther Memorial Church • 225 West Tenth Street • Erie, PA 16501 • 454-0106
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Luther Memorial Academy • 220 West Eleventh Street • Erie, PA 16501 • 454-0106

Volume 53, Issue 1

February 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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Dear Luther Memorial,

There’s something about February. It’s just...it’s just so ordinary. But, then, there’s always something rather extraordinary about it as well. There are many memes lately about how LONG January can seem and then how quick every month after seems to go. We also coast through February. But I don’t want us to short shift February this year.

You see, this month, short as it is, tends to be a transition month. We are coming out of the month of the new year, January is the first of so many things for 2026. The first days, the first meetings, the first gatherings. The celebration of the first six days of January that draw Christmas into the new year continue into January itself. Then we reach February. Almost without warning the world screeches into reality, mundanity, and the ho-hum of everyday life. And that’s not even mentioning the weather!

But there is a holiness, I think, to February. We continue in our days of Ordinary Time for a while, more than half of the month this year. These green days remind us that Jesus and the beginning of his ministry is for us a call to get to work! But then we reach the Transfiguration of Our Lord on February 15. This white Sunday among green days is a mirror to the Theophany when we started this season. This entire season of Epiphany – the season of God’s revealing in Jesus – is enveloped by two (perhaps three) truly miraculous events in Jesus’ life.

We start the season with the guiding Light of the star that led the magi across borders, into foreign countries, literally risking their lives to seek out the life that Jesus brings into the world. This is paired with the Baptism of Our Lord when Jesus begins his ministry and is revealed as God’s beloved Child with the rending of heaven and a holy voice. We end this season with the blinding light of Jesus transfigured before a few friends and a holy voice claiming Jesus as the Beloved again.

These reminders of God revealed in the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus bolsters us for the next season of our year. This liturgical transition – as this whole month – draws us necessarily into the Great Fast of Lent.

There’s more within about the Great Fast itself, but I encourage you to join us on Ash Wednesday and not just pass from Transfiguration to the First Sunday in Lent. This holy day (February 18) is our transition, a gentle entrance into the Discipline of Lent. Rather than screeching from Feast to Fast, from Sunday to Sunday, this moment transitions us to this vast shift that will consume the rest of this month and the entirety of March.

With all these transition moments this month, I invite you to pause, to breathe, to regroup, to let the holiness of these moments and the call to this forward momentum in God wash over you. And as always, I’ll see you in church!

Pastor Jay

“Souper” Bowl Tasting



Need something to warm you up? Something tasty, delicious and full of variety? **The “Souper” Bowl Tasting Event on Sunday, February 1 is just what you need!**

We invite you to make a batch of your favorite soup to share. Tables will be set up in fellowship hall for each different soup and everyone will have the opportunity for a sample taste.

If making soup isn't quite your talent we bet tasting is so please come and have a taste of the many varieties available. Thank you to our Congregational Life Committee for making our fellowship time fun and scrumptious.

Toasty Warm

Warm deliciousness is coming your way on Sunday, February 15. Pick up your homemade soup following the 10:30 service.



Annual Reports



A hard copy of Luther Memorial's 2025 Annual Report can be found on our hospitality tables and a copy is posted to our church website at www.luthermemorialonline.org. Please take the time to review the report and be grateful for the wonderful ministry happening in this place. As a reminder, we continue to actively use the church website to post Sunday bulletins, ministry newsletters and a daily calendar.

New Building Usage Policy

After some questions were raised by various congregation members and after deliberation and conversation, Council has decided that a new building usage policy is needed that covers the full spectrum of gatherings that happen at Luther (meetings, worship, outside groups, congregational groups, etc.). The new policy states:



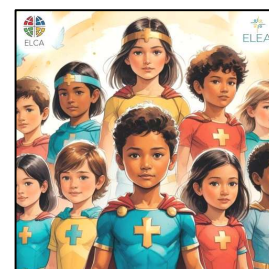
All events and gatherings
on site at Luther Memorial Church
require an affiliated staff person to also be on site.
If a responsible staff person is not available,
security must be present at cost to the group gathering.

This is not, in theory, an *actual* change to policy but is a definitive statement of policy for clarity of all groups and gatherings at Luther.

2026 Lutheran Schools Week

The first week of March (March 1-7) is Lutheran Schools Week. We are getting ready to celebrate being **BRAVE** this year! Look out for opportunities to join in the celebration this year – but be sure to mark your calendars for Monday, March 2 at 1:00pm as we gather for our Lutheran Schools Week Eucharist. We hope our whole community here at Luther can join together to celebrate this great ministry in Erie. We will be welcoming Pastor Ryan Fitch, Associate Director and Pastor of Lutherlyn for worship.

There will also be an opportunity to vote in the annual souPPPPer Bowl to see who earns the Golden Ladle. (Pastor Jay is the 2-time reigning champ!)



Worship Matters!



This month we enter into the sacred Fast of Lent. This holy season is one of the earliest on the church's calendar. These forty (really, forty six) days are a chance to prepare ourselves for the great Feast of Easter. The emphasis in this season is repentance: returning to God with hearts that recognize the ways we have fallen short of God's expectation. Really, it is about taking adequate time to recognize our need for God's action in our lives for good and for grace and for us. We are reminded in our celebration of Easter of all that God has done for us, and Lent is the opportunity to take the time needed to truly consider just how much we *need* all that God has done for us. It is the chance to remember that left to ourselves we are sure to befuddle the whole thing, but with God there is life and love in abundance.

This is why Lent is a *fast*. Now, while the ancient practices of refraining from meat, dairy, sugar, fat, eggs, and other "luxuries" for the entirety of the forty days has largely passed our twenty-first century practices, it does not mean that we are not called to fast. We recognize that in our hectic lives that seem to rush past us day by day faster than ever full of business and information and news and...well, it's a lot. Lent is the time to pare back all the things that distract us from our relationship with God. This is the time to focus on God, who God is, and who we are in light of who God is.

For this reason, we recognize and practice all manner of fasting. We fast *all* our senses in this season. You'll note in worship that the liturgy is particularly sparse. We chant some of the central texts of the service—drawing our attention to these pivotal texts and what they say to us about our relationship with God. We refrain from some of the usual responses—allowing us to focus not on our words but on God's words to us. The music is simpler and smaller—again, allowing us to sit with some space in our time together rather than filling in every moment with sound.

You may have heard of, and perhaps participate in, the practice of *adding* something to your day during Lent. Perhaps it's more reading, perhaps it charitable giving, perhaps it's being intentional in communication. While this practice in recent years has been a rather overt challenge to the practice of "giving something up" for Lent as if adding is better than subtracting, there is a deeper and much more ancient root to this practice. On Ash Wednesday, I will invite you into the season of Lent...but the invitation will be not just to the *time* of Lent, but to the *Discipline* of Lent.

Did you ever notice on Ash Wednesday, that the gospel text we read (every year) from Matthew specifically says to not wear sackcloth and ashes and then we put on ashes? There's a reason for that. We read that particular gospel text of Matthew every Ash Wednesday not for its guidance on the practice of repentance we share on that day in receiving ashes, but rather because it lays out Jesus' instructions on the practices we have come to include in the Discipline of Lent: prayer, sacrificial giving, works of love, and we add the sharing in the means of grace through Word and Sacraments. There is a call in this season in recognizing our relationship with God, in recalling the ways we have fallen short of God's expectations, to strive—discipline ourselves, really—to live more intentionally. It's not that we should be praying *more*, or reading scripture *more*, or participating in sacrificial giving *more* in this season but to recognize that when we're honest we're often distracted away from these practices, less-than-intentional in our participation in these practices, and now in the fast of Lent, we have the opportunity to return to God and our relationship with God with that intentionality and in so doing dwell that much deeper in the holy.

I invite you, therefore, to the discipline of Lent, siblings. Let us return to the Lord and receive again in this season both the reminder of our need for God and the assurance of God's never-failing love for us.

Ash Wednesday



The Lenten season begins on Ash Wednesday, February 18. **Ash Wednesday services will be at 12:00 noon and 7:00pm.**

Pastor Jay will be offering Individual Confession and Forgiveness on Ash Wednesday from 7:00-8:00am, 10:00-11:30am, and from 4:30-6:30pm in the Luther Chapel.

Individual Confession and Forgiveness



Most Sundays when we gather together, we begin worship remembering our need for God's mercy and God's never failing love for us. We begin clinging to the promises of forgiveness that are washed over us in baptism. We begin with what we call Corporate (as in corporal, "body," like Body of Christ) Confession and Forgiveness. This is a particularly Lutheran way to start worship. And for many this means of confession is an answer to the idea of individual confession.

There are those that think that Lutherans somehow did away with individual confession in the Reformation and in the edits Luther made to the Mass. Nothing, however, can be further from the truth! Luther himself and the church that bears his name has maintained the practice of individual confession, though we recognize that our corporate confession is sufficient when done with an honest and penitent heart as well. But Luther in his Small Catechism teaches us how to confess our sins and how to do so in conversation with a Pastor. Any critique Luther may have had to the practice in his time was around the guilt that one might feel for not confessing *every* sin committed and thereby perhaps having some sin remain with the individual unforgiven. Luther, instead, commends us to consider the Commandments and the guidelines of common life in which we live and think of the ways we have fallen short of the expectations.

And in *Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, our primary worship resource and hymnal, there is a rite for Individual Confession and Forgiveness. It is a beautiful opportunity to share in remembering our sins with a Pastor, perhaps delineating any particular individual sin that may be weighing on us, and share in a reminder of God's never failing love for us. It is not offered regularly as is our Corporate Confession, but it is available to you any time you would like. Just give Pastor Jay a call.

In preparation for Lent—and in a renaissance of an ancient practice of being "shriven" (forgiven) before the start of Lent (by the way, this is where the name of Shrove Tuesday comes from)—**Pastor Jay will be offering Individual Confession and Forgiveness on Ash Wednesday from 7:00-8:00am, 10:00-11:30am, and from 4:30-6:30pm in the Luther Chapel.** No appointment necessary. If these times do not work and you would like to share in this practice on Ash Wednesday, please e-mail Pastor Jay directly to schedule a time.

Lent Wednesdays Study Series

Wednesdays in Lent; February 25-March 25

Worship: 12:00-12:30pm(ish)

Lunch: 12:30-1:00pm(ish)

Study: 1:00pm

After the interest shared last year for our study series on Dietrich Bonhoeffer during our Lent Wednesday gatherings, we will again share in a study series following lunch on Wednesdays in Lent. Worship will be from 12:00-12:30pm(ish), lunch from 12:30-1:00pm (ish), and then study at 1:00pm.

This year, our study series will be ***understanding Faith and Civic Life: Seeking the Well-being of All***. This is the latest Social Statement of ELCA ratified at the 2025 Church-wide Assembly. During our series we will look at the process of Social Statements in the ELCA (did you know there's 12 of them?), how they come to be and how they are ratified, what authority they carry within our church, and then specifically at this most recent Statement.

FEBRUARY 25

Week 1: Foundational Teaching: God Acts for the Well-being of All Through Civic Life

MARCH 4

Week 2: God Calls All People to Robust Civic Participation

MARCH 11

Week 3: Assessing the U.S. Constitutional Form of Government

MARCH 18

Week 4: Religion and the First Amendment

MARCH 25

Week 6: Constructive Relationships Between Religious Organizations and Political Authority



This study series was put together (like last year's) by Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania (LAMPa) in collaboration with the Office of Theological Ethics in the Office of the Presiding Bishop. Hope to see you there!

Walking the Palm Sunday Path



During Lent we will gather at **12:00 noon on Wednesdays** for a spoken Eucharist under the theme of “Walking the Palm Sunday Path.” We will share in the sacrament but also in an opportunity to follow Jesus along the path he walked into Jerusalem and eventually to the cross. As he approached the city, he staged a procession, a public display that both called into question the usual symbols and privileges of power and embraced a different way. Of course, we know how the story ended, but it’s important to remember that Jesus’ message was public and provocative. His followers understood the risk. The original Palm Sunday was an occasion of joy and peril; all rolled into a tight and combustible ball of earnest expectation.

This will be followed by our annual Lenten Lunches. After the meal, those who are interested will gather in the Parlor for learning based on a curriculum from Lutheran Advocacy Ministry of Pennsylvania (LAMPa) in the vein of last year’s exploration of Bonhoeffer. This year, we will explore *Faith and Civic Life* which is an opportunity to learn more about the ELCA’s latest social statement adopted by the Church-wide Assembly in August 2025.

For God So Loved the World

Wednesday Evenings in Lent
6:00pm
Fifth Floor



This year, on the Second Sunday *in* Lent, we encounter Nicodemus as he comes to Jesus by night to learn more about Jesus’ work in the world. From this nocturnal meeting, we receive what Luther calls “the gospel in miniature,” and which we often see on

billboards, bumper stickers, and even face paint: John 3:16 “For God so loved the world...” On **Wednesday evenings** in Lent, we will gather on the fifth floor for Prayer Around the Cross under the theme of “For God So Loved the World.” This brief service (about 30 minutes) is an opportunity for scripture, song, and silence; for prayer and the lighting of candles; and for contemplation of the saving deed of Jesus on the cross “for God so loved the *world*.” The format and much of the music for this service comes from Holden Village—the same source as our popular Holden Evening Prayer.

Lenten Luncheons

Lenten luncheons will be offered for each of the five (5) Wednesdays in Lent; February 25 – March 25. Luncheons will be served at 12:30pm in fellowship hall. The cost for each meal is \$10.



February 25	Macaroni & Cheese	March 18	Fish
March 4	Hamloaf	March 25	Stuffed Shells
March 11	Hot Chicken Salad		

Palms to Ashes

We will not be burning palms into ashes this year. Due to a very generous return of palms the previous two years, we are in a surplus of ashes and do not need to burn more. If you would like to learn about ways to dispose of your blessed palms reverently yourself, talk with Pastor Jay.

Lenten Kick-off

Wednesday, February 25
5:30 – 7:00pm

Let’s begin the Lenten season with an evening of fellowship, and of course, food. We’ll provide the meatballs . . . you bring a side dish or dessert to share. Bring the family for dinner, a short Bible lesson and that surprise craft we have fun putting together. Looking forward to spending the evening together!



Looking Ahead to The Great Three Days



Be sure to mark your calendars for the Great Three Days: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil. We will be welcoming in The Rev. Dr. Karoline Lewis, Marbury E. Anderson Chair in Biblical Preaching at Luther Seminary, St. Paul, MN, as our guest preacher for all three services.

Dr. Lewis is the author of "A Lay Preacher's Guide: How to Craft a Faithful Sermon" (2020), "Embody: Five Steps to Leading With Integrity," "SHE: Five Keys to Unlock the Power of Women in Ministry" (including an accompanying facilitator guide, participant guide, and DVD), and "John: Fortress Biblical Preaching Commentaries," as well as numerous articles and book chapters. She was one of the

100 religious scholars in the United States to contribute to the Values and Voices Campaign.

Ordained in the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America, Lewis holds degrees from Northwestern University (B.A.), Luther Seminary (M.Div.), and Emory University (Ph.D., New Testament Studies and Homiletics). She has served as Treasurer of Academy of Homiletics and Regional Coordinator for the Upper Midwest Region of the Society of Biblical Literature. Lewis has served as Program Director of the Festival of Homiletics and Chair of the Homiletics and Biblical Studies Section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

Lewis leads conferences, workshops, and retreats internationally on the Gospel of John, the New Testament, interpreting the Bible, preaching, leadership, and women in ministry. She is a contributing writer for Working Preacher, co-host of the site's weekly podcast, Sermon Brainwave, and regularly authors the Dear Working Preacher column. Visit karolinelewis.com for resources on preaching, leadership, and being a woman in ministry.

Women of the ELCA

Circle Meetings



- The Deborah circle will meet on Tuesday, March 3 at 12:00 noon. We'll take February off and wait for all this snow to melt away. Please contact Judy Johnson at 833-4600 with any questions.
- The Tuesday Circle will gather on **February 3 at 3:00pm** in the church parlor. Pat Young can be reached at 455-7736 with any questions.

All women are welcome at our Circle gatherings.

W/ELCA Board Meeting



Our Board Meeting will be held **Tuesday, February 3 at 2:00pm** in the church parlor. Please contact Pat Young, 455-7736, with any questions.

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.



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

The family of Judith Steff who died January 6, 2026.
Our prayers are with her husband, John.

The family of Joyce Zwilling who died January 10, 2026.
Our prayers are with her daughter, Jeanne Gaber, and family.

Christian Education

Sunday Mornings



Our children and youth gather the second Sunday of each month for Sunday School and LYO. Join us on **Sunday, February 8.**

- 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: **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.



Second Sunday Soirée

Spend some time catching up with friends at our Second Sunday Soirée on February 8 at 9:15am. Take a minute or two after worship and visit in the parlor and enjoy some delicious refreshments. Please contact the church office if you would like to host this time of fellowship. Our next Soirée is February 8.



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, February 8.**

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). **Join us on February 5, 19 and 26.** 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 February 3.** 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.

Fellowship

Magic Fingers Grace Group



Brrrr! It sure has been cold! This is just the right time to curl up and knit or crochet some of those beautiful prayer shawls or blankets. Maybe even start a new project you've been thinking about. We hope you stop in and visit with us for a while on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 10:00am - 12:00 noon.

Mark it on your calendars for February 10 and February 24.

If you'd like to learn how to knit or crochet, we'd love to show you. Please contact Jan MacInnes, 814-833-0476 or the church office, 454-0106, 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
11:00am - 1:00pm



Join us for a lovely gathering in our church parlor as we celebrate Valentine's Day. All are asked to bring a side dish or dessert to share; the main dish will be provided.

Please RSVP to Jan MacInnes at 814-833-0476, or to Norma in the church office by Sunday, February 8. Thank you.

OWLS



Our OWLS group is encouraged to take part in the worship services, luncheons and study series during Lent. Join us each week as we prepare for Easter by attending our Lenten services.

Wednesdays, February 25 - March 25

12:00pm - Service

12:30pm - Luncheon (fellowship hall; \$10)

1:00pm - Study Series

February Birthdays

Jessica Copfer 2-1
Rick Kern 2-1
Cheryl Hessinger 2-2
Linda Burling 2-3
Montie Collier 2-3
Lois Smith 2-3
Vickie Diehl 2-4
Cameron Casey 2-6
Ashley Koziarski 2-6
Elliott Schumacher 2-6
Michael Snider 2-7
Cathy Meyn 2-7
Jackie Lupo 2-8
Adam Nicotra 2-8
Charlie Lintelman 2-10
John Vali 2-10
Lucy Fromyer 2-11



Paul Young 2-12
Rosemari Solt 2-12
Alexander Spaulding 2-12
David Ditz 2-13
Christopher Allen 2-13
Betty Pletz 2-13
Laura Symes 2-14
Mason Henry 2-15
Carl Anderson, III 2-16
Jordyn Williams 2-16
Beth Keller 2-16
Lydia Cowan 2-17
Melissa Fromyer 2-17
Carolyn Carlson 2-18
Shirley Collier 2-18
Lena Donnelly 2-18
Jonathan Ulrich 2-20

Jane Kinzig 2-20
Lila Heckelman 2-21
Coleen DiCenzo 2-21
Sheryl Kern 2-22
Cheryl Andrae 2-22
Cathie Dugan 2-23
Emma Downey 2-24
Pam Arnold 2-25
Nancy Benacci 2-25
Keith Perry 2-25
Grace Spaulding 2-25
Amelia Lang 2-27
John Bartlett 2-27
Robert Carlson 2-28
Kate Martin 2-28
Christine Fracassi 2-28
James Benson 2-28

Thank You

Dear Friends and Supporters,

Thank you – truly – for standing with Inter-Church Ministries this past year. Erie faced many challenges: rising homelessness, increased need for food assistance during the government shutdown, withheld SNAP benefits, and more clients needing transportation to specialists in Pittsburgh. Through programs like gas vouchers and direct support, we worked to meet these urgent needs with care and compassion.

Because of your generosity, your prayers, and your belief that faith is lived not only in worship but in service, ICM has been able to walk alongside individuals and families seeking support, stability, and hope. Your kindness is making a real difference – and its impact reaches farther than any of us can see.

On behalf of the ICM Board of Directors and staff, thank you for your continued presence and financial support. Most of all, thank you for helping light the way for so many in our community.

Peace be with You

With gratitude,

Carol Davis, Inter-Church Ministries Coordinator



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.**

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.

Camp Lutherlyn



Registration for Summer Camp 2026 opens at 6:00am on February 1. For seventy-eight years, Lutherlyn has been combining the love of God, fun, friends, swimming, playing in the woods, adventure challenges, Bible study, worship, cookouts, campfires, discoveries in nature, games, and a few surprises into an unforgettable experience!

Lutherlyn offers a variety of week-long, half-week, and day programs for children entering 1st grade through those who have finished their senior year of high school.

Lutherlyn to Luther Land

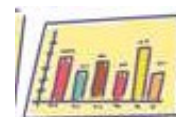
Lutherlyn is heading to Germany September 16-25, 2026 and you can join us! Lutherlyn partnered with Luther Tours to take an adult group from Lutherlyn to Germany on September 16-25, 2026.

So much of the Lutherlyn experience is about community... the feeling of being accepted, loved, and welcomed into the camp community and allowed to learn and grow in a safe environment. In September of 2026, we are taking that community to Germany! **You are invited (adults 18 and older) to be a part of an intentional community traveling together.** Prior to our adventure, we will take some time to get to know each other (including a few optional gatherings prior to the trip). Then, we will spend 10 days together experiencing Life-Changing Adventures in Faith in Deutschland. We hope you will join us for this exciting journey!

If you have questions related to the details of the tour or any of the travel arrangements, contact Luther Tours at info@luthertours.com or 1-844-777-1517.

January 2026 Statistics

<u>ATTENDANCE:</u>	<u>8:15am</u>	<u>10:30am</u>	<u>YouTube</u>	<u>Total</u>
January 4	30	62	41	133
January 11	21	86	45	152
January 18	21	65	50	136
January 25 <i>Annual Meeting</i> <i>(cancelled due to weather)</i>	Not held	36	60	96
AVERAGE	24	62	23	129



SPECIAL SERVICES ~ HOLDEN EVENING PRAYER:

	<u>6:00pm</u>
January 7	4
January 14	9
January 21	7
January 28	

BAPTISMS: None recorded.

FUNERALS: **ZWILLING, JOYCE** - Date of Death: January 10, 2026 / Date of Funeral: January 12, 2026 / Officiating: Pastor Jay Mitchell

MEMORIALS: None received.

LETTER OF TRANSFER: **TELL, Jane & Jack** - from Mt. Calvary Lutheran Church

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED - JANUARY 11, 2026:

Brumagin, Betsy Ann & Ross
Middaugh, Zachary & Ronnell
Tell, Jane & Jack
Timm, Bryan & Patterson, Michael

WEDDINGS: None recorded.

December 2025 Statistics

<u>ATTENDANCE:</u>	<u>8:15am</u>	<u>10:30am</u>	<u>YouTube</u>	<u>Total</u>
December 7	26	83	33	142
December 14	22	57	N/A	79
December 21	26	94	24	144
December 28	19	58	23	100
AVERAGE	24	73	27	116



SPECIAL SERVICES:

	<u>10:30am</u>	<u>4:00pm</u>	<u>6:00pm</u>	<u>10:30pm</u>	<u>YouTube</u>	<u>Total</u>
December 14 (St. Lucia)		83				83
December 17 (Blue Christmas)			20			20
December 24 (Christmas Eve)			173		44	217
December 24 (Christmas Eve)				50	48	98
December 25 (Christmas Day)	30				28	58

CHRISTMAS GATHERING:

	<u>5:00pm</u>
December 26 (Caroling at the BrewErie)	45

BAPTISMS: None recorded.

FUNERALS: MOREY, KATHY - Date of Death:
November 11, 2025 / Date of Service: December 2, 2025
/ Pastor Jay Mitchell officiating.

LETTER OF TRANSFER: None recorded

NEW MEMBERS RECEIVED: None recorded.

WEDDINGS: None recorded.

MEMORIALS: PARSH, DAVID - FROM:
Debra & Bill Galloway
BURY, CHARLENE - FROM
Jessica & Steven Spaulding

BELOW PLEASE FIND THOSE THAT ARE ON OUR LONG-TERM PRAYER LIST

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY:

Abby & Madison	Kevin D.	Bea Leemhuis
Bev	Dave Gilbert	Lorraine Melms
Bill	Suzie Hosterman	David Ruler
Doug Blum	Naomi & John Howard	Sam Ruma
Michael Collins	Jenn	Carolyn & Viktor Soder
Kate Collins	Laura Beth Kraut	Elise VanDamia
Jean Coburn	Tom Kraut	Ben Young



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 in the church office to move a name.

December 2025 Council Meeting

1. **Council Meeting:** Minutes of the November 11, 2025 council meetings were unanimously approved.
2. **Pastor's Report:** LMA & LMC are both participating in the ELCA World Hunger "Stocking the Streets". Caroling at the BrewErie will be held December 26 from 5:30 – 8:00pm. New members will be received Sunday, January 11, 2026. The church offices will be on limited hours December 29 – January 2. Normal office hours will resume January 5, 2026.
3. **Overflow Shelter:** Volunteers are still needed for the week in February that LMC is hosting.
4. **Property Committee:** Luther Memorial Church and Academy sign is in place and running.
 - a. Trees will be purchased and planted in the spring per Doug Chaffee.
 - b. AJ Noyes did a wonderful job on the hand-painted banner above the LMA graduation pictures which are displayed in the school hall.
 - c. The rails which holds the pictures were made by David Buerk.
5. **Fuller Bike Tour:** Arrangements are in place for the bikers to spend the night during this summer.
6. **Church Directory:** The previous church directory was organized by the Hospitality Committee. A volunteer(s) are needed to lead and execute a new directory.
7. **Heat Exchanger:** A new heat exchanger is needed which operates part of the school. This comes at a cost of \$5,500. There is currently only one (1) available in the country and since we are a school we have access to it. On motion it was unanimously approved to replace the heat exchanger at no more than 30% of the estimated bid of \$5,500.
8. **Rabe:** A transition of engineers is taking place at Rabe and conversation regarding continuing with their services will be discussed at the January council meeting.
9. **Church Boiler:** The church boiler is working at 50% capacity and water is leaking. Morewood installed the boiler 14 years ago; insurance covered most of the cost. Morewood is coming this week to inspect and diagnose the issue.
10. **Rentals:** Groups and individuals who are not members of the congregation have contacted the church office requesting to rent fellowship hall. There is a need to address security. In 2026 it will be necessary to have a blanket statement that for all rentals, by members and non-members, there has to be a security person present and a charge will be incurred. If there is not a security person present, then there will need to be a responsible staff person that is present in the building and accepts responsibility for those present utilizing the building. On motion, it was unanimous that a policy goes into effect as of the first of the year that all events and rentals are required to have a security employee or staff member of the church present, available, and accepting responsibility for gatherings.
 - a. The rental of fellowship hall by non-members and outside parties will be discussed at the January 2026 council meeting after the Property Committee has met and discussed this issue.
11. **Treasurer's Report:** Budget for property was over budget ~\$15,500 due to the copper slate roof repair/replacement.
 - a. Total in contributions is up.
 - b. LM Operations is under budget ~ \$3,000.
 - c. Wages, taxes, 403(b) over budget by ~\$7,800.
 - d. Renew Erie – expenses not as high, net income at \$4,528.
 - i. Renters of 204B – Potential tenant declined rental and MHA is looking for an office.
 - e. On motion it was unanimous to accept the Treasurer's Report.
12. **LMA Report:** Administrator, Michelle Thom, wants to piggyback the security grant for anything for LMC.
13. **Cantor's Report:** Bryan Timm and Michelle Thom met with Susan Forsythe about ideas for the music program for LMA.
 - a. An Organ Committee has been created and met once to get the ball rolling and discuss information so everyone is on the same page. Reviewed a couple of the many ideas for use of the gifted pipe organ.

- b. The Concert Series is receiving \$17,500 from a grant that Bryan applied for through Lutheran World Relief. Bryan plans to continue sponsorships and fundraising to stay on top of the “nest egg”.
 - c. IMC is holding a Christmas concert at LM December 10.
14. **Council Meeting:** The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, January 13, 2026 at 6:00pm.

January 2026 Council Meeting

1. **Council Meeting:** Minutes of the December 9, 2025 council meeting were unanimously approved.
2. **Pastor's Report:** New Members were received in on Sunday, January 11, 2026. Additional new members will be received on Sunday, February 8, 2026.
3. **Overflow Shelter:** Additional volunteers continue to be needed for the week of February 11 – 17.
4. **Property Committee:** Signs will be ordered to establish that the parking lot is for members, our staff, etc. The use of rental space by those not connected to Luther Memorial is to be discussed at a future date. Building use regulations have been determined.
5. **Fuller Bike Tour** – Luther Memorial will be hosting the group for a weekend in July 2026.
6. **Church Directory** – A volunteer is needed to lead and volunteers are needed for this to move forward.
7. **Planting of Dogwood Trees in Greenspace Area** – Doug Chaffee will submit a bid with pricing of trees, planting of trees, etc. People may contribute to this as memorials. Signs (in memorial/in honor) will not be used for individual trees.
8. **Boiler Repair** – Additional work is needed but this will take place in the summer.
9. **Treasurer's Report** – Total income for the year; \$27,000 to the good. Over budget for total expenses; \$28,000. Budget is over by \$1,900 overall vs. 115 from last year.
10. **Budget** – Greg outlined what we have at this point:
 - a. Adjusting budget to be lowered on UTILITIES – TELEPHONE.
 - b. Fixing balance in “2026 Budget” column, in the “Income Accounts” grouping, of the 2nd section – States \$189,200, but should state “199,680.
 - c. Change in “2026 Budget” column, in the “Income Accounts” grouping, of the 1st line – ENVELOPES PLEDGED. Went from \$115,090 that was presented in Church Council meeting, to \$130,090 in Final Budget Worksheet
 - d. Change in “2026 Budget” column, in the “Income Accounts” grouping, of the 2nd line – ENVELOPES NO PLEDGE. Went from \$179,575 that was presented in Church Council meeting, to \$161,175 in Final Budget Worksheet
 - e. Pay raises
 - i. Whatever increase they do at the Synod level is what Jay's pay raise is.
 - ii. Greg will prepare a budget with 3% increase to all of the salaries, it will be sent out to all council members and we will vote via email whether to pass the budget or not.
11. **Meeting** – The next Council Meeting will be held Tuesday, February 13, 2026 at 6:00pm.

Luther Memorial Academy



50 Year Celebration!

SAVE THE DATE: Our 50th Anniversary Celebration will be on Saturday, May 2. Additional information about the event can be found at www.luthermemorialacademy.org. Go to "About" and on the drop-down menu click on "50th Anniversary Celebration". Admission information is also located at the Welcome Table in the church.

Save the Date postcards will be mailed on Tuesday, February 3. Help would be appreciated in labeling the postcards. Please stop down to the church parlor at 10:00am and join us as we prepare for this exciting Anniversary Celebration.

Pizza with the Principal & Pastor

The award luncheon continues for one student from each class that exemplifies the monthly character trait. Congratulations to our December students who demonstrated the trait of PATIENCE.

Stay tuned for our January recipients who exhibit the trait of INQUISITIVENESS.



Report Card Day



The second quarter ended on Friday, January 16. Second quarter report cards were released on My School Worx on January 23.

Donations of Canned Goods



LMA will be collecting canned goods for Second Harvest Food Bank from February 2 - February 6. We are doing a class competition and the class with the highest number of donations earns a pajama party!

Early Dismissal

Early dismissal will be at 11:30am on Friday, January 30.

After school will not be available as teachers will be attending school meetings.

School Break



School will be closed:
Friday, February 13 - Winter Break
Monday, February 16 - President's Day
Have a wonderful four day weekend!

The 2026 LMA Theater Production



"THE REAL STORY OF ALICE IN WONDERLAND" BY KRISTEN DOHERTY.

Was Alice really the sweet, innocent little girl the storybooks made her out to be, or was she actually rather beastly? Two narrators battle as they show the audience contrasting versions of Lewis Carroll's classic story.

Performances will take place on Friday, March 27 and Saturday, March 28.

Congratulations to our cast!

Pip: Jaiyana, **Squeak:** Zenen, **Nice Alice:** Tessa, **Mean Alice:** Ava, **White Rabbit:** Ren, **Cheshire Cat:** Jazmariah, **Dodo:** Emmanuel, **Tweedle Dee:** Zayda, **Tweedle Dum:** Rylee, **Mad Hatter:** Mitchell, **March Hare:** Braxton, **Queen of Hearts:** Maliyah, **King of Hearts:** Jack.

Ensemble: Madison, Reason, Carson, Evelyn, Cameron, Mikala, Reese, Anniyece, Jaileele

Trivia Night

Sunday, March 1
2:00 – 5:00pm
Fellowship Hall

Think you've got the brains to win? Join us for a night of fast facts, friendly competition, and big fun at our PTL Trivia Fundraiser! Test your knowledge, support LMA, and maybe take home bragging rights and one of the top prizes. Tickets are \$25/person or \$100/team of six. This includes one free drink. BYOB and snacks; chips, pretzels and other light snacks provided.



Read Across America



This year, the Read Across America Reading Challenge will be incorporated into the Erie Seawolves C. Wolf Reading Club. All the students will be given a reading calendar to start in February. The students will have the opportunity to read during the months of February and March hoping to complete individual reading minutes of 800 or more. Read Across America Week will be celebrated

February 23-27 with fun dress-up days!

Ice Skating

Have some fun ice skating on Saturday, February 21 at the Flo Fabrizio Ice Center, 423 West 38th Street, from 2:30 – 4:30pm. And the best part . . . it's FREE! So c'mon down, strap on some skates and have some fun. Thank you to our PTL for sponsoring this great afternoon.

February is All About Love!

Week of February 2 – LOVE for our community – LMA Canned Food Drive for Second Harvest Food Bank

Week of February 9 – LOVE your Body Week

Week of February 16 – LOVE for our Friends and Family

Week of February 23 – LOVE for God



Lutheran Schools Week

Celebration Service
Monday, March 2, 2026
12:30pm
Luther Memorial Church

Parents and families are invited to join with us on Monday, March 2 when we will be celebrating Lutheran Schools Week. We will have a service of Holy Communion to begin that week and it would be so much more joyful if you were able to be a part of the service.



Following the service there will be an opportunity to gather for some refreshments in fellowship hall. We will also be holding our third annual "SOUPPPPER" contest where Pastor Jay, Principal Thom, the President of our School Board, and the President of our PTL will compete to have their name as the winner of the Golden Ladle.

LMA School Board Update

School safety has been the top priority for our School Board. We recently had a School Safety and Security Assessment completed by Infinity Safety and Security firm that verified our current practices and facility. We have also determined a list of tasks and are working on categorizing items that can be accomplished in 6, 9, and 12 months as well as some long term goals.

We now have Board ambassadors for important areas. This will facilitate more efficient decision-making and focus. Board members have been appointed to concentrate on Advancement (including finance), Alumni, Church/School Relations, Events, PTL, and Safety.

Hiring Substitute Teachers

NOW HIRING! SUBSTITUTE TEACHERS

*Great staff and community, easy hours,
plans prepared for you!*

- Prior teaching or classroom experience preferred.
- Ability to manage a classroom and engage students in learning.
- Clearances required

LUTHER MEMORIAL ACADEMY

Michelle Thom, Principal
mthom@lmaerie.org
814.454.0106



220 West 11th Street,
Erie, PA 16501
www.luthermemorialacademy.org

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>



FEBRUARY 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 8:15/10:30am Worship 11:30am "Souper" Bowl Tasting 	2 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 3:30pm Prayer Group	3 10:00am Pericope 2:00pm W/ELCA Board Meeting 3:00pm W/ELCA 6:30pm BAD/Calamari's	4	5 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 5:30pm Bells 6:45pm Choir	6	7 10:00am Quilting
8 8:15/10:30am Worship 9:15am Adult Forum 9:15am Second Sunday Soirée 9:30am Sun. School & LYO	9 11:15am Teacher Luncheon 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 6:00pm PTL	10 10:00am Magic Fingers Grace Group 5:30pm LIA 6:00pm Council	11	12 9:00am SeaWolves Reading Assembly 1:00pm Grief Group 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 5:30pm Bells 6:45pm Choir	13 LMA Closed 11:00am OWLS Valentine Luncheon	14 <i>Valentine's Day</i> 
15 8:15/10:30am Worship 1:00pm VASA	16 <i>Presidents' Day</i> LMA & Church Offices Closed 	17	18 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 12:00pm Worship  7:00pm Worship 7:00-8:00am, 10:00-11:30am, and from 4:30- 6:30pm Individual Confession & Forgiveness:	19 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 4:00pm School Board 5:30pm Bells 6:45pm Choir	20	21 10:00am Quilting
22 <i>First Sunday in Lent</i> 8:15/10:30am Worship 	23 LMA/Read Across America Week 2:30pm LMA Play Practice	24 10:00am Magic Fingers Grace Group	25 12:05pm Worship 12:30pm Luncheon 1:00pm Bible Study 5:30pm Lenten Kickoff Meal/ Activities 6:00pm Worship	26 12:00pm Brown Bag Bible 1:00pm Grief Group 2:30pm LMA Play Practice 5:30pm Bells 6:45pm Choir	27	28