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ST. LUKE LUTHERAN CHURCH  
1400 MARKET ST., WILLIAMSPORT, PA 17701  
570-323-7309 \* E-Mail: [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com)  
St. Luke Online: [www.stlukeweb.com](http://www.stlukeweb.com)

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## 2024 NEWSLETTER

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### FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

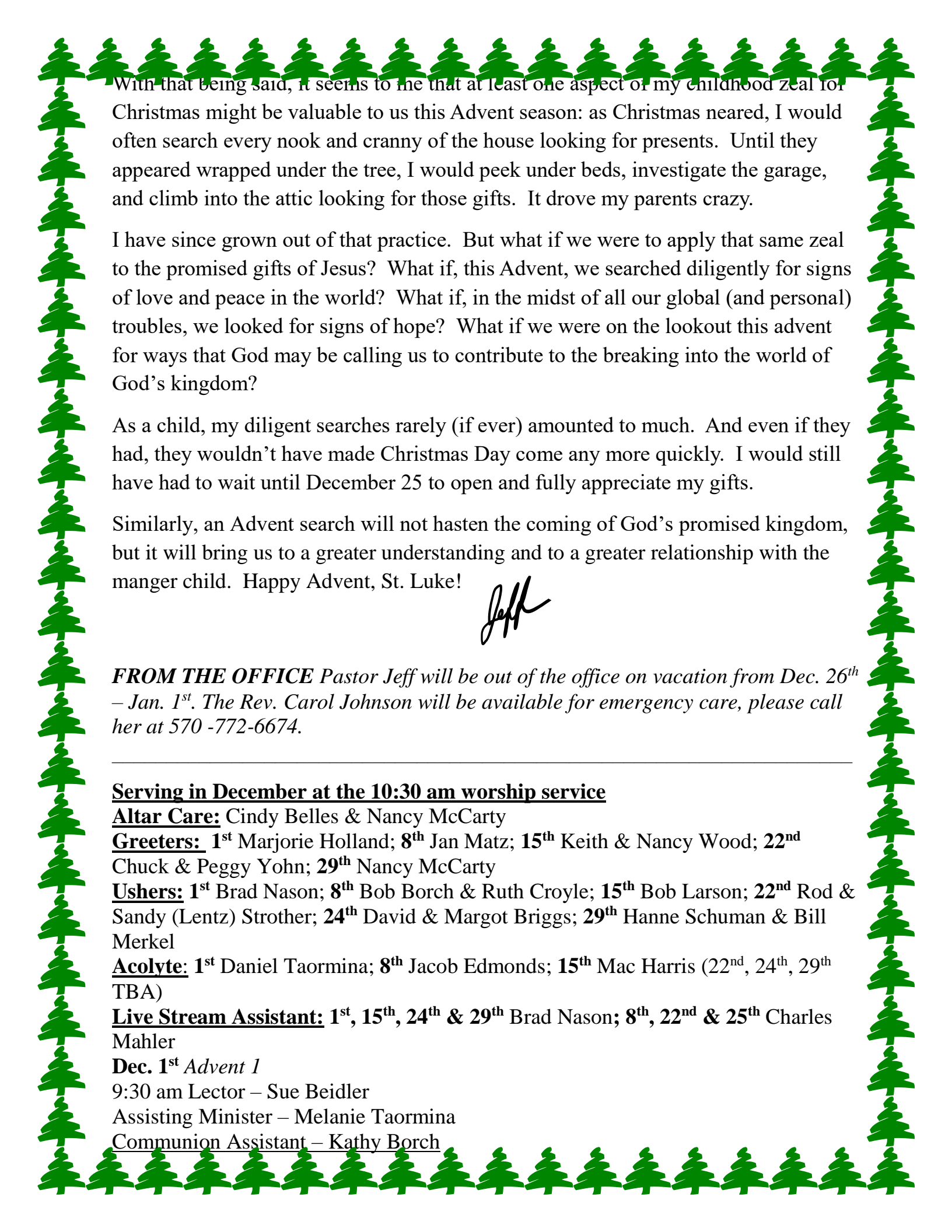
December, 2024

*"The days are surely coming, says the LORD ..."- Jeremiah 33:14a*

I was one of those kids. This time of year, I couldn't wait for December 25. As soon as Thanksgiving was over, my excitement level started to rise. I was ready for the decorations, the music, the goodies, and perhaps most of all, the presents. Christmas couldn't come soon enough.

Many adults feel the same way today. Posts pining for the season to come quickly began appearing in my Facebook feed as early as October. My own mother asked me to put her Christmas tree up on November 1 this year ("You can never get started too early!"). And of course, we've all probably seen Christmas candy and decorations in the stores for at least a month now.

The season of Advent, however, calls us to slow things down by inviting us to a deeper reflection of the meaning of Christmas. In the midst of all those Christmas trappings, Advent allows us to pause and reflect on who it is that we plan to greet at the manger. It invites us to envision what his promises hold for us. It calls us to reflect on the question of theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer, who famously asked "Who is Jesus for us today"?



With that being said, it seems to me that at least one aspect of my childhood zeal for Christmas might be valuable to us this Advent season: as Christmas neared, I would often search every nook and cranny of the house looking for presents. Until they appeared wrapped under the tree, I would peek under beds, investigate the garage, and climb into the attic looking for those gifts. It drove my parents crazy.

I have since grown out of that practice. But what if we were to apply that same zeal to the promised gifts of Jesus? What if, this Advent, we searched diligently for signs of love and peace in the world? What if, in the midst of all our global (and personal) troubles, we looked for signs of hope? What if we were on the lookout this advent for ways that God may be calling us to contribute to the breaking into the world of God's kingdom?

As a child, my diligent searches rarely (if ever) amounted to much. And even if they had, they wouldn't have made Christmas Day come any more quickly. I would still have had to wait until December 25 to open and fully appreciate my gifts.

Similarly, an Advent search will not hasten the coming of God's promised kingdom, but it will bring us to a greater understanding and to a greater relationship with the manger child. Happy Advent, St. Luke!



*FROM THE OFFICE* Pastor Jeff will be out of the office on vacation from Dec. 26<sup>th</sup> – Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>. The Rev. Carol Johnson will be available for emergency care, please call her at 570 -772-6674.

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**Serving in December at the 10:30 am worship service**

**Altar Care:** Cindy Belles & Nancy McCarty

**Greeters:** 1<sup>st</sup> Marjorie Holland; 8<sup>th</sup> Jan Matz; 15<sup>th</sup> Keith & Nancy Wood; 22<sup>nd</sup> Chuck & Peggy Yohn; 29<sup>th</sup> Nancy McCarty

**Ushers:** 1<sup>st</sup> Brad Nason; 8<sup>th</sup> Bob Borch & Ruth Croyle; 15<sup>th</sup> Bob Larson; 22<sup>nd</sup> Rod & Sandy (Lentz) Strother; 24<sup>th</sup> David & Margot Briggs; 29<sup>th</sup> Hanne Schuman & Bill Merkel

**Acolyte:** 1<sup>st</sup> Daniel Taormina; 8<sup>th</sup> Jacob Edmonds; 15<sup>th</sup> Mac Harris (22<sup>nd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup> TBA)

**Live Stream Assistant:** 1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> Brad Nason; 8<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> Charles Mahler

**Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> Advent 1**

9:30 am Lector – Sue Beidler

Assisting Minister – Melanie Taormina

Communion Assistant – Kathy Borch



**Dec. 8<sup>th</sup> Advent 2**

10:30 am Lector – Deb Smith  
Assisting Minister - Allan Husband  
Communion Assistant - Margot Briggs

**Dec. 15<sup>th</sup> Advent 3**

10:30 am Lector - Daniel Lamade  
Assisting Minister - Marilyn Eshleman  
Communion Assistant - Janice Ogurcak

**Dec. 22<sup>nd</sup> Advent 4**

10:30 am Lector - Melanie Taormina  
Assisting Minister – Mark Bergren  
Communion Assistant - Sandy Lentz

**Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve (music starting at 7:00pm)**

7:30 pm Lector - Jay Nau  
Assisting Minister - Deb Smith  
Communion Assistant - Patty Durand, Nancy Wood, Hanne Schuman & Karen Baldys

**Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> Lessons & Carols (one service)**

10:30 am Lector - Readers: Sue Duchman, Melanie Taormina, Wilma Reeder,  
Charles Mahler, Cheryl Newburg  
Assisting Minister - Allan Husband; No Communion

**Offering Counters in December**

1<sup>st</sup> Nancy McCarty & Marilyn Eshleman  
8<sup>th</sup> Terry Belles & Sondra Fisher  
15<sup>th</sup> Ray Schreckengast & Janice Ogurcak  
22<sup>nd</sup> Sue Beidler & Marilyn Eshleman  
29<sup>th</sup> Terry Belles & Nancy McCarty

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**ST. LUKE ANNUAL MEETING**

Congregation, Part One will be held **Sunday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, following the 10:30am worship service.** A copy of the Agenda and 2025 Budget will be available in the back of the nave for pick up on Sunday, Dec. 1<sup>st</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. If you would like a mailed copy, please contact Sarah Young at the church office. Thank you.

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**OFFERING ENVELOPES** 2025 Envelopes will be available for pick up in the West Entrance starting Dec. 1, 2024.

**YEAR-END REMINDERS** Please note all donations to be counted for 2024 must be received in the Church office by the end of business on Monday, December 30, 2024. For any questions regarding your giving for 2024, please contact the Business Manager at [businessmnaager.stlukeluth@gmail.com](mailto:businessmnaager.stlukeluth@gmail.com).



The Adult Sunday School class at St. Luke Lutheran Church meets in the church library at 9:15 AM on Sunday mornings. We will look at the lessons from the ELCA, based on the Year B lectionary. I hope to see you there!

If you want to look at our course materials, all of the Lessons are available here (we are in Lectionary Year B, Sundays after Epiphany):

<https://elca.org/Resources/Bible-Studies>

If you would like to receive weekly lesson emails, please let me know and I will add you to the list. Please contact the church office or Charles Mahler at

[Mahler@lycoming.edu](mailto:Mahler@lycoming.edu) .



### Watch, Wait, Wonder, and Worship: A Midweek Series for Advent

Join us for a contemplative Advent liturgy on Wednesday nights this Advent season!

Beginning Wednesday, December 4<sup>th</sup>, at 7 pm. We will meet on Wednesdays (4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>) for a brief prayer service.

### SEW FINE QUILTERS

Please join us on **Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> from 9:00AM to 3:00PM in Bell Hall.** Come and go as your time permits. If possible join us for lunch at noon, lunch will be provided. No quilting experience is needed, join the FUN!



**CHRISTMAS DONATIONS ARE NEEDED** for filling Christmas bags for our St. Luke shut-ins and friends. A box will be located in the West Hall for your donations. Suggested items: **Juice boxes, tissues, small notepads, puzzle books, hand lotion, chapstick, hard candies, individual packs of crackers or snack items, homemade cookies and treats.**

Anyone interested in helping to pack and helping to deliver the bags is invited to meet in **Bell Hall at 1:00pm on Tuesday, Dec. 10<sup>th</sup>.** Any questions, please contact Cindy Belles.

## DECORATING THE NAVE



On **Sunday, Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>** at **noon**, the Worship and Music Ministry invites all who are able to help decorate the Nave for Christmas. **Pizza and snacks will be provided.** Many hands make quick work!



*The Nave Christmas Tree is given in loving memory of our wonderful husband and father Tom by Ruth, Matt, and Megan Croyle.*

*The Christmas trees above the narthex were given by Charles and Melissa Mahler in memory of their parents: June and Daniel Wolfe, and Clara and Herbert Mahler.*



## GOOD GIFTS GIVING TREE

It is the time of year when we are looking for Christmas presents or wondering what to get that particular person who has everything. Every year at this time, St. Luke supports the ELCA Good Gifts program. Over the last several years, we have provided wells, farms, and schools in developing countries. Last year we provided a computer and internet service for one year to a community in need. This year the Outreach Ministry has decided to support God's Global Barnyard. The Gift total is \$2500. This gift will be used where it is needed most to support farmers and families with the resources they need to thrive. For that hard to buy person on your gift list, please consider donating to our Good Gifts program.

**Order sheets will be available by the Christmas tree located in West Hall starting the first Sunday in Advent, December 1<sup>st</sup>.** Please make checks payable to St. Luke, please put Good Gifts in the memo line. May we all have a blessed Christmas Season. Thank you.

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### SERVING

*(Lectors, Assistant Minister, or Communion Helper)* If you would like to help serve in our 8:00AM or 10:30AM worship service(s), please contact Diane Kohler at 570-419-7085 or email [kohlerdede@gmail.com](mailto:kohlerdede@gmail.com) or Pastor Jeff at 570-323-7309.

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### USHERS

Anyone interested in serving as an usher, please contact the office or email or call Nancy McCarty at: [nmac7149@gmail.com](mailto:nmac7149@gmail.com); (570) 419-7827).

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### GREETERS

Anyone interested in serving as a greeter, please contact the church office or Debra Smith at 570-762-3308 or email at: [mdtmom4@gmail.com](mailto:mdtmom4@gmail.com)

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## ONGOING COLLECTIONS AT ST. LUKE

**THE FOOD PANTRY** Below is a list of items the UCLC Food Pantry is in need of. *Updated 10/29 - These items are collected in our West entryway.* After office hours' drop-offs: Office foyer entrance.

Canned carrots, yams  
Stocks, Gravy, Stuffing  
Juice, coffee, tea  
Potato Flakes  
Salt & Pepper

Pie fillings  
Canned Sauerkraut  
Canned cranberry sauce  
Kids juice boxes

**DANIEL'S CLOSET** is in need of **winter clothing** (*NO hangers*) for infants, children, and adults, as well as accessories (belts, ties, shoes, purses, backpacks/bags, suitcases, etc.). All clothing must be bagged, no loose clothing, please. A collection box is located in our West Hall.

## SHEPHERD OF THE STREETS

Items needed are of regular sizes: Deodorant, Diapers, Wipes, Shampoo, Powder, Oil, Q-tips, Soap, Shaving Cream and Razor, Tissues, Shampoo and Conditioner, Toilet Paper, Women's Hygiene Products, etc. *These hygiene items are collected in the West entryway.*



## WORSHIP SERVICES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON

Dec. 24<sup>th</sup> - 7:30 pm Christmas Eve Candle Light Service (music starting at 7:00pm)  
Dec. 25<sup>th</sup> - 9:00am: Christmas Day Online Service  
Dec. 29<sup>th</sup> - 10:30am: Christmas I, Service of Lessons and Carols (one service)

**INCLEMENT WEATHER**

**CLOSING ANNOUNCEMENT** may be found by checking the church website, and our FACEBOOK page.

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**Bulletin Announcement Deadline** - Wednesday at 9:00 am  
*All article information and materials for the bulletin or newsletter must be submitted using WORD or PDF format. Please email to [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com).*

**Newsletter Deadline** - The 15<sup>th</sup> of each month at 9:00 am

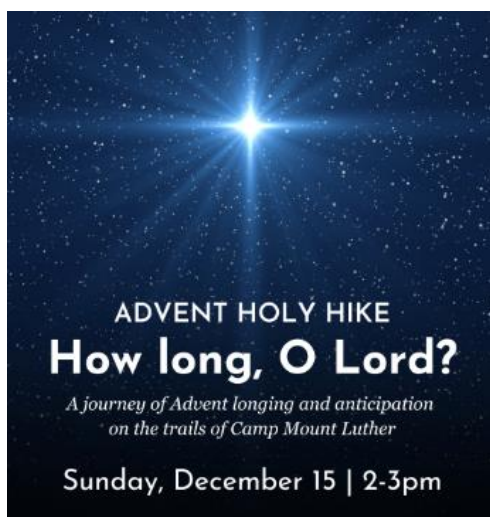
**Ministry Meeting Minutes for Church Council** - Thursday at 9:00 am before Mtg. *Council meetings are held on the second Monday of each month.*

\*If you would like to receive the newsletter (in color!) via email, please contact the church office at 570-323-7309 or by email at [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com). Thank you.

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**ADVENT HOLY HIKE**



We know that December can be a busy time. We know you need to take a breath and remember what the season is all about. What better way than to join friends and spend time with God in creation? Camp Mount Luther's Pastor Jim Vitale and Chad Hershberger invite you to join them on an **Advent Holy Hike from 2:00-4:00 p.m. on Sunday, December 15, 2024.** Join us for a meditative hike reflecting on the promises of the coming Messiah and the Christmas story. Christmas refreshments to follow.

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*West Branch*  
CHORALE

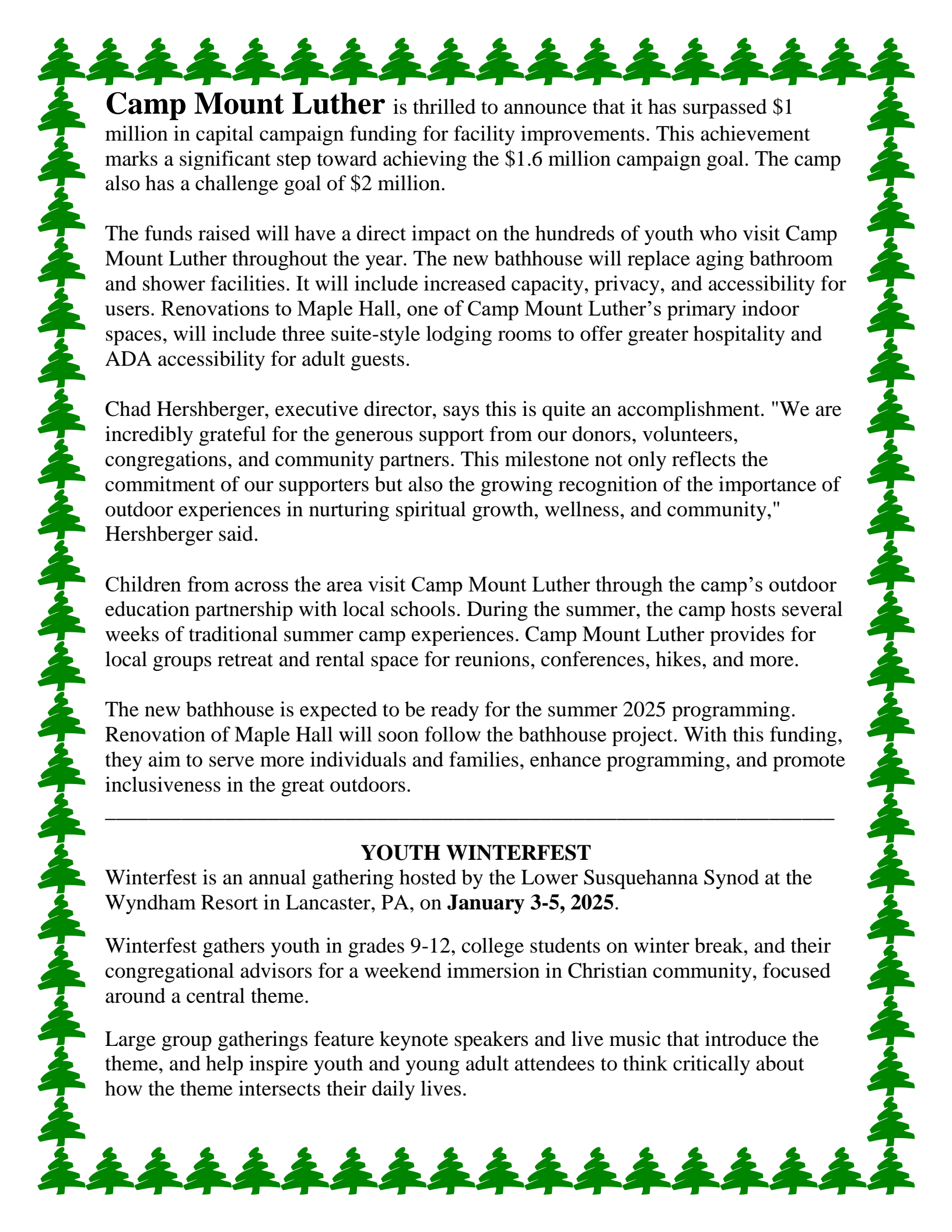
We wish you a  
*Merry Christmas*

**Sunday, December 1<sup>st</sup> at 3:00 PM**  
**Pleasant View Wesleyan Church**  
**Muncy**

**Monday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> at 7:00 PM**  
**St. Luke Lutheran Church**  
**Williamsport**

*Free Admission ★ Donations Accepted*

**Nancy Hodge, Interim Director**  
**Kristin Ivers, Pianist**



**Camp Mount Luther** is thrilled to announce that it has surpassed \$1 million in capital campaign funding for facility improvements. This achievement marks a significant step toward achieving the \$1.6 million campaign goal. The camp also has a challenge goal of \$2 million.

The funds raised will have a direct impact on the hundreds of youth who visit Camp Mount Luther throughout the year. The new bathhouse will replace aging bathroom and shower facilities. It will include increased capacity, privacy, and accessibility for users. Renovations to Maple Hall, one of Camp Mount Luther's primary indoor spaces, will include three suite-style lodging rooms to offer greater hospitality and ADA accessibility for adult guests.

Chad Hershberger, executive director, says this is quite an accomplishment. "We are incredibly grateful for the generous support from our donors, volunteers, congregations, and community partners. This milestone not only reflects the commitment of our supporters but also the growing recognition of the importance of outdoor experiences in nurturing spiritual growth, wellness, and community," Hershberger said.

Children from across the area visit Camp Mount Luther through the camp's outdoor education partnership with local schools. During the summer, the camp hosts several weeks of traditional summer camp experiences. Camp Mount Luther provides for local groups retreat and rental space for reunions, conferences, hikes, and more.

The new bathhouse is expected to be ready for the summer 2025 programming. Renovation of Maple Hall will soon follow the bathhouse project. With this funding, they aim to serve more individuals and families, enhance programming, and promote inclusiveness in the great outdoors.

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### **YOUTH WINTERFEST**

Winterfest is an annual gathering hosted by the Lower Susquehanna Synod at the Wyndham Resort in Lancaster, PA, on **January 3-5, 2025**.

Winterfest gathers youth in grades 9-12, college students on winter break, and their congregational advisors for a weekend immersion in Christian community, focused around a central theme.

Large group gatherings feature keynote speakers and live music that introduce the theme, and help inspire youth and young adult attendees to think critically about how the theme intersects their daily lives.

Small group conversations allow participants to go deeper, and to explore the ways God may be speaking to them through the theme and the surrounding Christian community. And in between these two things are lots of opportunities for fun and fellowship!

The Upper Susquehanna Synod is currently assembling a group of youth and advisors to journey together through Winterfest. If you're interested in attending, please reach out to [cml@campmountluther.org](mailto:cml@campmountluther.org) and let us know! We'll work on coordinating registrations soon.

You can read more about this year's theme, "Footprints," on their website: [lss-elca.org/winterfest](http://lss-elca.org/winterfest)

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**HELP WANTED**  
Position Available

United Churches of Lycoming County is seeking a Food Pantry Coordinator. Candidates should have a heart for feeding our neighbors and being the hands and feet of Jesus. For more information, contact Tammey Edkin, [director@uclc.org](mailto:director@uclc.org) or 570-322-1110

"I was hungry and you gave me food to eat. I was thirsty and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25.35 CEB

United Churches of Lycoming County  
202 E Third Street, Williamsport, PA  
[uclc.org](http://uclc.org)



*To our members celebrating a birthday in December ....*

|                    |             |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Madalyn Fortin     | December 06 |
| Melissa Mahler     | December 09 |
| Jere Eshleman      | December 12 |
| Krista Hiller      | December 12 |
| Marjorie Holland   | December 12 |
| Richard Ogurcak    | December 12 |
| Roger Wyland       | December 12 |
| Deloris Snyder     | December 13 |
| Wendy Kelsey       | December 15 |
| Alex Reed          | December 15 |
| Christian Scampone | December 18 |
| Brenna Beck        | December 20 |
| Rebecca Jean       | December 21 |
| Karl Yoas          | December 23 |
| Carole Harris      | December 26 |
| Scott Seyler       | December 27 |
| James Donnell      | December 29 |
| Ali Wyland         | December 29 |

*Happy Wedding Anniversary.....*

|                                |             |
|--------------------------------|-------------|
| Tom & Debra Smith              | December 09 |
| David & Susan Horn             | December 18 |
| James & Sally Labenberg        | December 23 |
| Rev. Theodore & Bonita Cockley | December 27 |

*(We're sorry if we missed anyone. If we did, please contact the office so we can add you to our records.)*

**STAFF AT ST. LUKE**



**Pastor Jeffrey LeCrone, Pastor**  
Email: [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com)



**Sarah M. Young, Church Office Manager**  
Email: [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com)



**Rebecca Ciabattari, Organist/Choir Director**  
Email: [beckyciab@gmail.com](mailto:beckyciab@gmail.com)



**Chris Knaur, Sexton**  
Email: [info@stlukeweb.com](mailto:info@stlukeweb.com)



**Melissa Eshleman, Business Manager**  
Email: [businessmanager.stlukeluth@gmail.com](mailto:businessmanager.stlukeluth@gmail.com)

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